

# RESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 97 NOVEMBER 2014

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## I am not a number, I am a free chap!

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## RETURN OF THE WIDE BOY

Sean Longden on the dress code of the ne'er-do-well





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 5th November in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Matthew "The Chairman" Howard will thrill and shock us with an address entitled *A Package to India*, being, in his words, "the ongoing irreverent travelogues of the Chairman, on this occasion centring on the time he went on a package holiday to Goa by mistake and ended up in Bombay on a Third Class train".

**The Last Meeting**

The speaker at our October meeting was Mr Sean Longden, addressing us on the subject of *Wide*



Something tells me that Matthew Howard's experience of India wasn't quite like this...

*Boys*. In the mid-1930s the term "wide boy" emerged to describe criminals and those working on the fringes of the law. One vital element to their identity was the wide boy look and the fashions that they wore. Historian and NSC Member Mr Longden investigated how wide boys dressed in the literature of the period and how their fashions were depicted on screen.

In attendance were a number of Sean's chums in solidly 1930s and 1940s outfits. Sean himself even sported a bow tie (something he does not normally do) in honour of his observation that in the movies of the time the bow tie is the mark of the villain...

Many thanks to Sean for his talk. An essay version begins on page 4.



(Above) Pandora with a vintage fashion magazine; (right) snapper Hanson Leatherby, looking dapper as ever; (below) Sean delivers his lecture



(Above) Eugenie Rhodes (left) with one of Sean's elegant chums



(Above) Sean with his wide boy crew



(Left) the man they call Incy Wincy Spider with his inamorata Catherine; (above) Mark Gidman (right) and Simon Pile in Smoker's Alley; (right) this young lady was sporting a 1960s look; (below) Hanson can't resist taking a few shots; (left) Sean's chums can't seem to help looking highly suspicious





# WIDE BOYS

## FROM PAGE TO SCREEN

Sean Longden on the villains who liked to dress well

**I**N THE MID-20TH CENTURY British male fashions led the world (Edward VIII is often cited as an icon, although the true impact of his fashion in the UK still stands to be reconsidered). British tailors catered for Hollywood stars and had worldwide exports and influence. Their styles were instantly recognisable: in Eric Ambler's 1937 novel *Uncommon Danger* the British hero borrows an Austrian hat and coat yet is spotted as an Englishman. He confronts the eagle-eyed man who tells him: "It was your jacket lapel, the bit showing under your overcoat collar... It's English." The man has spotted the stitching on the worsted wool and recognised its origin.

So it is no surprise that fashions of the "wide boy"—indeed the overall look, from head to toe, mixed with the walk and the stance—are all major factors in the creation of the wide boy as a staple of page and screen.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term "wide boy" was first used in print by Robert Westerby in his 1937 novel *Wide Boys Never Work*, although the term "wide", referring to those outside respectable society, was in use since the 16th century.

So who are the wide boys? The term is—pardon the pun—widely used to cover a range of criminal and semi-legal activities. We are not really talking about high-level members of



organised crime groups although the cross-over in fashions would be visible. A wide boy could be a petty criminal with aspirations—always looking for the next big "job" that's going to set him up; it could be the bookie with a bit of inside knowledge and the gambler with his ear to the ground for a tip, happy to back the right horse with a nod and a wink; the gang member; the boxing promoter and the boxers happy to throw a fight; the teenage would-be villain hanging around the pin tables trying to impress the local villains; the second-hand car dealer you really shouldn't trust or mechanic mate and the car thief who supplies his dodgy motors.

So let us look at where the wide boy look comes from. The theme of clothing runs through memoirs and historical accounts of the period.

In his 1930s memoir *Low Company* Mark Benney—with nine convictions under his



towards some way of life that will distinguish them from the dull and grinding mass of their neighbours." Benney noted that the clothes worn by the young criminal would be viewed by others in the underworld to make sure it fitted in with the norm: the implication is that criminals want to know that a fellow criminal fits in to their world and could, as such, be trusted—i.e. their clothes might make them

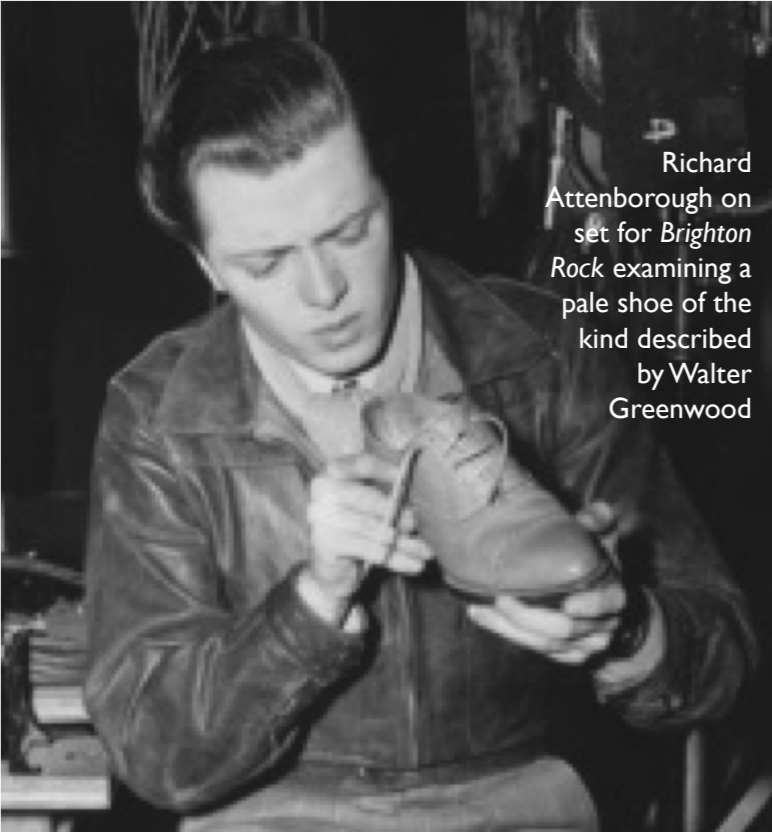
an outsider in the "straight" world, but they can't afford to be outsiders in the world of wide boys. Another observer of the period was Sewell Stokes, who joined the probation service in the early 1940s and spent his time in court or at the homes of many petty criminals. In his memoir *Court Circular* (later filmed as *I Believe in You* (1952) featuring a young Joan Collins) he explains why the young criminals have longer than normal hair. He also notes "Judging by the smart clothes they wore crime did pay." Stokes recounts scenes of the image-obsessed males that passed through his office: "The most masculine individuals imaginable—toughs from the East End and manual labourers with the physique of giants—thought nothing of combing their hair in my presence, or even asking me if I thought the length they wore it suited them. If I questioned the boys as to how they spent their wages, it was usually to be told that they were saving up to buy a "smashing" outfit they'd seen in the Charing Cross Road, or a pair of slacks belt and describing himself as an "amateur sociologist"—wrote of the "high degree of self-consciousness in the criminal". He described the "wide man's cunning slant of lip and eye" and of having "the seal of Soho set upon me, marking now my acceptance as a wide man among the wide". He wrote of himself: "My cigarettes drooped languidly from my lips, my thumbs clung to my waistcoat pockets, my eyes took on a cunning slant, and a half-smile expressing secret knowledge played about my mouth. I was one of the boys." Yet he also knew that "to get a new smart suit became the whole object of my life. I realised the truth of the tailors' advertisements: to be a man of the world, you must dress like a man of the world." He wrote of his determination that, if he was to be caught for his crimes, he would be caught wearing a good suit. Thus the first thing he does after a robbery is to head off to a store in Kensington that specialises in good ready-to-wear clothing. He buys a pin stripe suit and silk shirt.

Of young, potential criminals, Benney wrote: "It can be seen in its earliest stages on almost any street corner in the poorer quarters of our cities. The wasp-waisted yobos with woodbines dangling from their lips, jeering and sniggering together in aimless groups, are obviously groping



Two men up before the beak in *I Believe in You* (1952), one a wide boy and one definitely not





Richard Attenborough on set for *Brighton Rock* examining a pale shoe of the kind described by Walter Greenwood

identical in pattern to those worn by Tyrone Power in a certain film.”

Stokes notes the difference between wide styles and a man before the court who *isn't* a wide boy: he wears check sports jacket, grey flannels, claret pullover and brogues. But, as a counter to the idea of stand-out fashions, it is also worth bearing in mind his observation that perhaps goes against the literature of the period: “On the whole, criminals dress as soberly as solicitors or detectives: the only difference being, perhaps, that their clothes cost more, since they have no taxes to pay.”

The literature of the 1930s and 1940s gives us numerous hints as to the styles enjoyed by these men—who are described in Walter Greenwood’s novel *Only Mugs Work* (1938) as “well dressed men of leisure without visible means of support”. And there are certain themes that run through the descriptions. So let’s start at the bottom, quite literally at ground level.

In Greenwood’s novel, subtitled *A Soho Melodrama*, there is “Matabele Lou”, a black pimp working in Soho’s Lisle Street, running seven girls. He appears to be based on the real life Eddie Manning, a.k.a. “Eddie the Villain”, a black pimp, dope peddler and white slaver described by one policeman as “superbly well dressed—perhaps somewhat overdressed—in a tightly

tailored black overcoat with velvet collar and homburg hat, and a cigar in his big teeth”. Greenwood describes Matabele Lou as “wearing a brown check suit, a navy blue shirt, white tie, hat and banana coloured boots.” Gold teeth, cigar and jewellery. Working in Soho.

What is interesting is his description of the boots as “banana coloured”. Limited by the black and white photos of the era we don’t really think of coloured footwear. But these yellow boots are a good starting point.

They appear elsewhere: Percy Boon in *London Belongs to Me* (1945) by Norman Collins is a would-be wide boy, a garage mechanic who works on “dodgy motors”. He wears over-tight yellow leather shoes: so tight that they don’t do up properly.

Boon’s shoes are reflected in those worn by Shorty Mathews, described as having been “a little spiv” who’d learned to fight on the streets and has five previous convictions, in the 1938 James Curtis novel *They Drive By Night*: he too wears “long, thin-toed yellowish-brown shoes” that were “built for standing outside coffee stalls, not for trudging along country roads”. Similarly, in Graham Greene’s *Brighton Rock*, Pinkie wears orange-brown pointed leather shoes. I shall be saying more about him later

Patent leather shoes are also popular, as are spectators/correspondent brogues. In James Curtis’s 1937 novel *There Ain’t No Justice*, Tommy Mutch wears brown shoes “with bits of black patent leather let into them”.

The late 1930s also sees wide boys going for the relaxed look with suede shoes which, by the mid to late 1940s—as observed by probation officer Stokes—are ubiquitous for the young up-



A pair of trousers with a fob pocket on the front



The dark shirt/pale tie look

one real wide boy “Big Hymie” (as recounted in Robert Fabian’s memoir *London After Dark*) does offer us a trouser-based observation. He and his brother “Little Hymie” carry rolls of cash in the fob pockets of their trousers: these buttoned closed so the contents couldn’t easily be lost or pickpocketed.

Moving up we reach the shirt. As with trousers, there are few mentions of shirts in the literature, but those we see are worthwhile pointers as to the style of the period. In Gerald Kersh’s *Night and The City* (1938) the central character Harry Fabian, a rather pathetic individual, is described as follows: “There was a quality of savagery about his clothes—hatred in the relentless grip of his collar, malice in the vicious little knot of his tie.” The “relentless grip” of the collar makes one think of the tight tab collar shirts of the period that are seen on the necks of cinema’s criminals.

There is another prevalent feature of shirt and tie fashions that we see through cinematic wide boys, that is the dark shirt combined with either a tie in matching colour or a light tie. In *Wide Boys Never Work* Jim Bankley wears a dark blue shirt with a light tie while Mick wears a light grey suit with dark blue shirt and tie. In *London Belongs to Me* Percy Boon wears a purple shirt, handkerchief and tie that all match.

In *Night and the The City* Fabian wears a grey spring suit with light grey shirt, light grey tie and light grey socks, lacking the bold colours

and-coming criminals.

Moving up from the feet, we reach the trousers. Since most of our characters wear suits, the trousers are seldom mentioned and thus there is little to say.

However,

we expect of the wide boy but keeping the lack of contrast between shirt and tie.

Perhaps the best observation of shirt styles preferred by the wide boys comes from the mouth of the Gilt Kid, the central character of James Curtis’s novel of that name. When he has some money he knows what he wants, asking a barber’s assistant to go to the shops and fetch him a new shirt: “I want a blue-one, Yankee style, you know the kind with the collar attached and you put it on like a coat” (i.e. not the old fashioned one that you pull on over your head that has a detachable collar).

So wide boys are at the cutting edge of fashion. It is interesting to read the observation of the tight collars of the 1930s wide boys and see the contrast to earlier times: in *There Ain’t No Justice* Tommy Mutch’s boxing trainer explains how wide boys in his era didn’t wear collar and tie—instead they wore polka dot silk neckerchiefs. This sense of change is also seen from period descriptions of wide boy fashions. Observations of 1920s criminals—an era when suits were relatively narrow—sees the criminals wearing noticeably tighter clothes than “straight” society. By the 1930s and 1940s, as the fashionable fit gets looser, with padded shoulders and drape in the chest, the wide boys take it to extremes—with super-wide padded shoulders. Harry Fabian wears his American overcoat oversized: it’s a “huge overcoat designed to make him look twice his normal size”. In *They Drive By Night* criminals wear overcoats with widely-padded shoulders.

The use of wide shoulders is prevalent



Note the super-wide shoulders





Pencil moustache and jauntily-angled hat, the spiv stereotype

throughout literature and really comes into its own in the cinematic versions of the wide boys. Along with a pencil moustache, loud tie and jauntily angled trilby, wide-shouldered jackets and coats are the uniform of the on-screen wide boy, which seeps into public consciousness as the uniform of the spiv.

Now we come to the one part of the wide-boy uniform that is absolutely fundamental to the look: the suit. The purchase of a flash, up-to-the-minute suit is at the very core of the wide-boy's world. In *The Gilt Kid* Ken's first thought after a successful robbery is to spend his earnings on a new suit. In *London Belongs To Me* Percy Boon's suits are the best in the street and are described as "a bit too good for the neighbourhood". With his wide boy uniform he tells himself "he belonged to a different world altogether".

Boon has a purple cashmere suit and another in a "shadow check". When he wears the purple suit he teams it with a shirt, handkerchief and tie to match. He also likes matching tie and pocket handkerchief sets (which some people now consider vulgar but which were common in this period), including a set in blueish-mauve with a satin stripe running through them. Though he dresses up for an evening out, he dresses down for criminal activities—using a snap-brim trilby (whose brim he can pull down over his eyes) with an old raincoat and scarf and an old blue pinstripe suit. "That was alright. Half London wore old blue pin-stripes."

In *Night and The City* Fabian similarly "dressed far too well, defiant acquisitiveness in the skin-tight fit of his coat". He is boastful, talking about

the price of his suits: "Hand made, only nine pounds. You'd pay a hundred dollars for a suit like that in New York."

In *Wide Boys Never Work* one of the wide boys wears a blue, small-brimmed felt hat with a grey pinstripe suit with a "Charing Cross Road cut" that includes wide trousers. Jim Bankley wears a grey-striped suit.

Some of the best descriptions of outfits—in particular suits—come from *There Ain't No Justice*: When Tommy has some money from boxing he buys a 50-bob suit on Portobello Road: "This suit was generously cut. The shoulders were broad. The lapels were broader. They nearly reached the shoulder seams. They were DB lapels. It was a three-button single-breasted jacket, held by a middle button. The pockets were flapless and cut on a slight angle. The trousers had permanent turn-ups, secured by an extra line of machining that held them elegantly in place. They had only



Note the unusual peak lapels on Tommy's single-breasted suit



*Penny Paradise* (1938)

one pleat at the waist, but while the crease remained in them they hung beautifully, billowing over the toecapless shoes. He set his snap-brimmed black hat on his head at a dashing angle and put on his new tight-waisted grey flannel overcoat. It was a pity to have to have to hide such a smashing whistle."

In the 1939 film the contrast between his clothing before and after he turns professional is clearly shown.

In *There Ain't No Justice* Tommy dresses "cockney style, i.e. tight-fitting overcoat and black hat with snap brim over his eyes. (Mind you his brother Ernie—who is straight—dresses the same). Tommy had "flash cockney swagger".

Yet even Tommy is impressed by one of his opponents (who has earned good money by throwing the fight). The suit makes him look even larger than he had when he was stripped in the ring: "He was wearing a loudly-striped suit, a shirt with a loose, low collar and a black and white striped tie. His shoes were brown with bits of black patent leather let into them. On his head was a cap of grey, so pale it was almost white." Tommy realises that even with his hat carefully adjusted to sit on the side of his head and his silk scarf he still has some way to go to compete with his opponent's flashiness. Tommy becomes determined to own a similar suit: "There was no sense in having a fine pair of shoulders if you would not show them off."

The detail given in the book of the angled pockets is shown in the suit which appears in both *The Gaunt Stranger* and *Penny Paradise* (both made in 1938), perhaps the archetypal wide boy suit of the period.

It is worth noting that the literature of the period misses out one detail that is prevalent in cinematic portrayals of the wide boy: the bow tie. This is not just for real villains but also appears whenever film makers want to tell us just how untrustworthy a man is. In the image above from *Double Confession* (1950), Derek Farr is obviously trustworthy whilst William Hartnell is obviously "wide".

On top of it all are the hats. In *Night and The City* there is a fascinating observation that contrasts the headgear of the wide-boys to those of the rest of society. Harry Fabian sees a man as a mug—he wears a hard felt hat and plain



*Double Confession* (1950)

overcoat, in contrast to his own soft felt hats, as if to say, "Soft hats for hard men, hard hats for soft men."

The snap-brim trilby—brim pulled down low over the eyes—is the mark of the wide boy. Jim Bankley wears a small-brimmed hat, pulled down over one eye, known as the "Ronald Colman hat". Percy Boon favours a pale grey hat with a dark band.

At this stage, you might be asking why I haven't yet mentioned one of cinema's most famous wide boys. In Graham Green's *Brighton Rock* the fashions favoured by Pinkie and his gang are hardly described. It was as if Graham Greene was either uninterested in fashion or was not as acquainted with the subject matter as some of his fellow writers. Or maybe he didn't think it



Pinkie's extraordinary suit back in the film version of *Brighton Rock* (1947)





William Hartnell's delightful suit in *Brighton Rock* (1947)

important. If so he was wrong, something that was obviously noted for both the theatrical and cinematic portrayals of the character

We do learn his suit is smart but shabby, made of cloth too thin to endure much wear. Not even a good fit, being too large on the hips, but tight fitting—a ready-made suit, not the tailor-provided suit as shown on screen and on stage. All we learn about Pinkie's enemy, Mr Colleoni, is that he wears a double breasted waistcoat. On screen and stage, costume designers corrected Greene's error of omission and the costumes for Pinkie were tailored to reflect the styling as presented by Greene's contemporaries. Note the exaggerated back of Pinkie's suit jacket in the film.

*Brighton Rock* also gives us one of the most over-the-top suits seen in British cinema.

William Hartnell's suit is a 1940s interpretation of a 1930s wide boy suit—complete with angled pockets without flaps and belt back—mixed with the three close buttons of the 1920s jazz suit.

There is one group of wide characters who buck the trend for flashiness. These are the second-hand car dealers. In *Wide Boys Never Work* the dodgy second-hand car salesmen don't look like the

spivvy car dealers shown in cinema. These ones wear check sports jackets with grey trousers, or lounge suits—old school ties and drawling voices hiding cockney accents: "Highly polished shoes and vaguely polished manners." The message is clear: they need to play down their wideness since their role is to sell less-than-perfect vehicles to the unsuspecting middle classes.

The sense that the wide-boys are playing a game based around image is prevalent in the criminal literature of the period: in *The Gilt Kid* Ken is a contrast to Percy Boon. Boon is neat and tidy, flash but part-time. The Gilt Kid is, according to the police "a real wide boy" but he's hard up. He cares about his image—he checks collar and cuffs to make sure they are clean but ignores the badly soiled armpits of his shirt.



Dennis Price and Peter Jones as used-car salesmen in *School for Scoundrels* (1960)

He even sleeps in a shirt, rather than pyjamas, because "pyjamas were effeminate things".

In *Night and The City* Harry Fabian wears clean collars, changes his clothes regularly, shaves regularly and carefully, has his hair cut, wears blue silk boxer shorts—yet despite all this he doesn't bathe regularly and has "dingy feet and soiled ankles".

If the image is part of the fantasy, it must be considered along with the sense of aspiration: these characters are all looking for a break that is going to establish them as serious criminals with a reputation or give themselves the money to set themselves up, far away from the drab reality of home.

None more so than Percy Boon in *London Belongs to Me*. The book has many references to him "dressing up"—as if his outfits are less a uniform and more of a costume. This is perfect for Percy: he isn't an obvious criminal and is rather a romantically hapless figure. He wants to be a criminal but is, in many ways, just a mummy's boy who is doted on at home. Also, he doesn't dream of a life of crime, rather he wants to make enough money to learn to play the ukulele, have a good-looking wife and own a house in Purley. The house in Purley may sound ridiculous but maybe it was the 1930s equivalent of the Costa Del Crime.

These literary wide boys are, in many cases, outsiders. In *Night and The City* Fabian is similar to Percy Boon, playing the role of a wide boy, rather than being the hard-man. Boon wants to escape to suburbia, Fabian is a useless criminal whose schemes are funded by his life as a ponce—the lowest of the lowlife. He isn't really accepted as part of the criminal world. The boxer Tommy, in *There Ain't No Justice*, likes the flash image but doesn't want to fight crooked. Even Jim Bankley in *Wide Boys Never Work* is an outsider, a Midlands factory worker who yearns for the thrills of London but soon learns the vicious reality and eventually returns home.

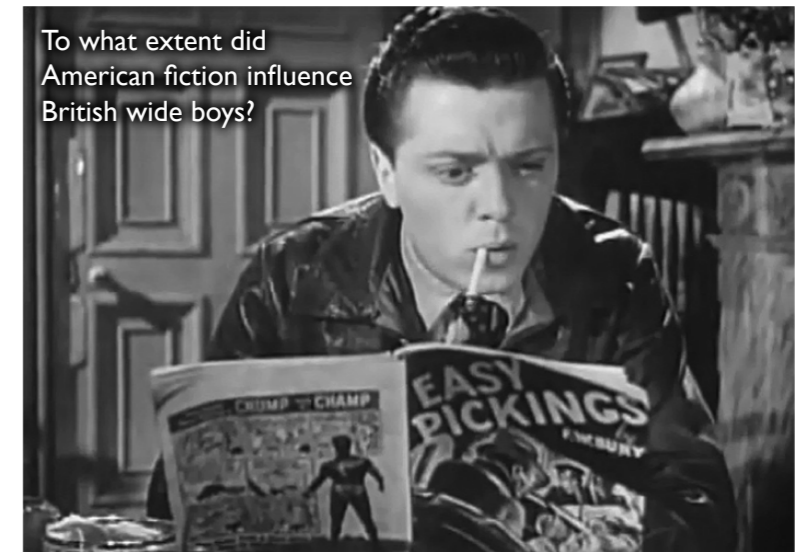
The sense of fantasy and dreaming is also evident throughout the genre—in particular in their desire to appear American—something which as portrayed in films and comic books shouldn't be overlooked.

Sir Harold Scott (Metropolitan Police Commissioner from 1945 to 1953) didn't think films and books turned youths to crime—that was the family/home environment—but youths did

"imitate the externals: the swaggering walk and the boastful methods of the fictional gangster". And for many that meant America.

In his memoir of the late 1940s, *Banana Boy*, the teenaged Frank Norman (prior to spending time in prison) recalls himself and a mate wearing matching powder-blue gabardine suits with crepe-soled shoes. They "swaggered about the town like arrogant gangsters, indeed we emulated the bootlegging film we saw at the local fleapit until we had almost lost our own identities." He retained his "romantic image" of gangsters until he was 25 years old, describing it as "a fantasy played out to the bitter end".

Probation officer Sewell Stokes recalled one would-be criminal youth, who tells the probation officer he'd like to be: "A gangster...in America, where there's plenty of real dough to be got." In



To what extent did American fiction influence British wide boys?

*Only Mugs Work* the gang members speak with "mouthfuls of American movie gangster slang". In *Wide Boys Never Work* Jim Bankley is criticised by his boss for saying "OK" rather than "all right", his boss describing it as "American rot".

One of the most interesting characters to show this influence is Harry Fabian in *Night and The City*. Fabian "just pretends to be American. All fools do when they want to look smart. That's because for the last fifteen years or so, anything that looks big talks with an American accent. It's a tradition." His shirt is a "ten and sixpenny copy of the Barrymore Roll". He shops on Piccadilly in a store advertising "Genuine American Gent's Styles". Trying on a light grey Harvard model Fedora before settling on the Cicero in dark blue—wide-brimmed "exactly as worn by Al Capone". They offer a Humphrey Bogart shirt in



dark brown. He abandons his Fred MacMurray hat for the Capone model.

Of particular note is the screen adaptation: it's post-war rather than pre-war and thus Fabian is no longer a Brit pretending to be an American, but is actually an American. This may be simply to help sell the film in America, but also reflects society and how some dodgy Americans (including army deserters) stayed in London post-war. Thus the idea of the criminal American in London was a recognisable theme for a post-war cinema audience—such as actor Bonar Colleano in *Dance Hall* (1950) or *Pool of London* (1951). This was the real internationalisation of crime rather than just the image of it. In this era every villain and wide boy wears a bold-look American tie, just to confirm his status automatically with the cinema audience.

In *Court Circular*, Sewell Stokes makes an interesting observation that might help explain how the American look spread through British society during the 1940s and in particular among the criminal classes. The probation service played a role in the distribution of donated American clothing to the poor in the UK during the Second World War. Included among the donated clothing were “expensive lounge suits bought on Fifth Avenue by millionaires who had obviously only worn them once”. With probation officers helping to distribute these, and obviously being in close contact with the criminal underclass, did this play a role in the spread of the image of post-war wide boys dressed up in American suits and loud ties? He wrote of the men who waited at the probation office in “keen anticipation...of what was coming to them out of Uncle-Sam’s lucky dip”.

So where are these suits now—lost to time, ruined during arrests and a battering in the cells? Some do survive. Maybe the owner of this rare beauty below was “sent down” for a long time before he got the chance to wear it out?

Resources:

Novels:

- Wide Boys Never Work* by Robert Westerby (1937)
- London Belongs to Me* by Norman Collins (1945)
- Only Mugs Work: A Soho Melodrama* by Walter Greenwood (1938)
- They Drive By Night* by James Curtis (1938)
- There Ain't No Justice* by James Curtis (1937)
- The Gilt Kid* by James Curtis (1936)
- Night and The City* by Gerald Kersh (1938)
- Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene (1938)
- It Always Rains on Sunday* (19??)

Memoirs:

- Court Circular* by Sewell Stokes (1950)
- Low Company* by Mark Benney (1936)
- London After Dark* by Robert Fabian (1954)

Films:

- Night and The City* (1950)
- I Believe in You* (based on *Court Circular*) (1952)
- Waterloo Road* (1945)
- Double Confession* (1950)
- Brighton Rock* (1947)
- There Ain't No Justice* (1939)
- The Soho Incident* (based on *Wide Boys Never Work*) (1956)
- The Gaunt Stranger* (1938)
- They Drive By Night* (1938)
- London Belongs to Me* (1948)

# I am not a number, I am a free Chap!

The New Sheridan Club Christmas Party  
**Saturday 6th December**

7pm till 1am  
The Bear, 2 St John's Square,  
London EC1M 4DE  
Admission: Members free, guests £5

This time we celebrate 1960s suited counter-culture and dandified rebellion, from the dapper youth tribalism of the Mods to playfully surreal TV and film such as *The Avengers* (John Steed must surely be a role model for every Chap),

*Blow-Up* and, of course, *The Prisoner*, Patrick McGooohan's mysterious 17-part series in which a secret agent (presumably the same character he played in *Danger Man*) is held prisoner in The Village and subjected to various tricks, ruses, cajolements and regular brainwashing to try and get him to reveal why

he resigned. As usual we will have silly games to play, the free Snuff Bar and of course our Grand Raffle—entry to which is free but only to Members, including anyone who joins up on the night. So come and help us prove that you can be a free thinker and challenge convention, while still dressing properly. Be seeing you!





# A strategy for roulette

Tim Eyre with a mathematical formula for fun

**I**N THE FIELD of gambling it is quite true that the House always wins. In this article I offer not a means of winning money at roulette but rather a scheme by which a feckless chapette or chap can make efficient use of a set amount of money earmarked for an evening at the wheel.

Let us first recap on how roulette is played. A croupier (casino employee) spins a wheel manufactured with thirty-seven indentations around its edge. As the wheel spins, the croupier launches a small white ball into a track that runs around the rim of the wheel. After a few moments, the ball settles into one of the thirty-seven indentations, each of which is labelled with a number from zero to thirty-six. It's not practically possible to predict the number of the indentation that the ball will settle in, so the number indicated by the ball provides the game with its element of chance. There is no significance to the fact that the numbers on a roulette wheel add up to 666.

Gamblers make bets on which number the ball will land on by placing casino gambling chips on one or more numbers printed in an array on a baize table top that stands next to the roulette wheel. The numbers are alternately coloured red and black, so it is also possible to bet on red or black. The zero is coloured green, which provides the casino with a profit margin

on the 2:1 pay-out provided by colour bets: punters have a slightly less than 50% chance (eighteen thirty-sevenths to be precise) of doubling their money.

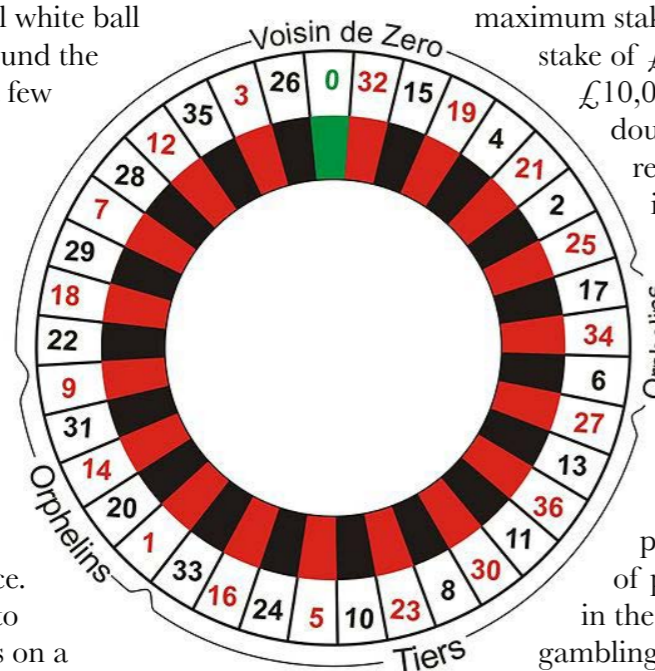
A classic gambling strategy is to double up. This is a scheme whereby the gambler doubles her bet on each successive loss so that when the inevitable win eventually comes, it will cancel out all the losses. This approach is theoretically valid and so, unsurprisingly, casinos nix it by the simple expedient of enforcing minimum and maximum stakes. With a minimum stake of £10 and a maximum of £10,000 it is only possible to double up eight times, thus rendering the strategy ineffective.

I first came to think about roulette strategies during a sojourn in Macau (see *Resign!* issue 77, March 2013).

My doctorate was in an arcane area of probability and the study of probability originates in the rigorous analysis of gambling by the likes of Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat (he of the famous Last Theorem) in the 1650s. As such, the mathematics of roulette was naturally of interest to me.

The approach I suggest here is somewhat more cautious than doubling up. First and foremost, it is predicated on the idea that you are playing roulette because you want to play roulette, not because you want to make money.

The approach I suggest here is somewhat more cautious than doubling up. First and foremost, it is predicated on the idea that you are playing roulette because you want to play roulette, not because you want to make money.



Edvard Munch, *At the Roulette Table in Monte Carlo* (1892)

If you want to make money then a casino is not the place to do it unless you happen to be a top-class poker player. Therefore our objective is to maximize the time spent playing (to “spin it out”, so to say) and minimize the inevitable long-term losses.

First the punter should pick a table that is not offering “American roulette”. American roulette differs from European roulette in that it has an extra indentation labelled 00. This worsens the odds for the gambler and so is undesirable. Secondly, the gambler should select a table that offers the smallest possible minimum stake for bets on single numbers. Thirdly, the gambler should purchase a decent pile of chips, each of which should be valued at this minimum stake. The gambler should be fully prepared to lose all of these chips; although this strategy predicts small average losses per game, it is perfectly possible (albeit unlikely) for the player to lose the entire starting pot for a dozen games in a row.

Fourthly, on each spin the gambler should place the minimum bet on a single number. The number chosen is irrelevant, although betting on the numbers in sequence from 1 up to 36 and then back to 1 will make it easy to keep track of how many spins the gambler has played. Finally, the gambler should stop immediately

if the value of her pile of chips ever exceeds the initial amount acquired at the start of play: although the odds of betting on red or black are as favourable as betting on individual numbers, betting on a single number makes the wins larger and so makes it easier to specify when to stop. The gambler should also stop if the chips ever run out: on no account purchase any more chips in the hope of a change in fortune; this strategy is based on probability, not luck.

Having dreamt up this scheme, I cranked up my portable Babbage Engine while on the boat from Macau to Hong Kong (where I was to visit a tailor) and wrote a programme to simulate it. The wonders of modern computation allow me to run hundreds of thousands of simulations and then calculate the average long-term losses and so forth. To my surprise, the results were somewhat better than I had imagined, although the House still always wins.

With a minimum bet of £2, an initial pot of £200 and a maximum play time of four hours, my simulation programme suggests that a gambler who strictly adheres to the above approach can, in the very long term, expect to walk away from the table having made a profit in 81.5% of cases. The average profit in these cases will be £38. This sounds good





An “American roulette” wheel— note the extra “00” slot

until one considers that in 3.5% of cases the gambler will walk away from the table at the end of four hours having made a loss averaging £125. Worse still, in the remaining 15% of cases the gambler will lose the entire initial pot of £200 before the four-hour deadline expires. From these numbers we can infer that, in the very long term, the average loss in a game in which the gambler employs this method will be  $((0.035 \times 125) + (0.15 \times 200)) - (0.815 \times 38)$ , which is equal to £3.40—£3.40 is undoubtedly good value for an evening’s entertainment, but it comes with the threat of losing the price of a bespoke shirt. Of course, this may provide exactly the frisson of excitement that gambling types seek.

Furthermore, the £3.40 average loss will not, in practice, result in an evening’s entertainment. Allowing one minute per spin, the 81.5% of sessions that result in a win will last, on average, 34 minutes. The 3.5% of sessions where the gambler ends up broke will on average take

two and a quarter hours, with only the 15% of sessions that result in walking away at the end of four hours with an average £125 loss lasting the full four hours. This ties in with the observations of one New Sheridan Club member and expert croupier, who tells me that casino gamblers do indeed sometimes get ahead of the game but typically gamble away their winnings.

To counter this effect, I updated my simulator to mandate a minimum play time of one hour. With this restriction in place, the numbers worsen somewhat. The proportion of games in which the gambler will walk away with a profit reduces to 70%, although the average profit in these wins increases substantially to £68. The average loss across all games increases to £6.42, reflecting the increased amount of time spent playing. For a minimum of an hour’s entertainment many would consider this reasonable value. However, averages conceal as much as they reveal; this low average derives from the fact that the modest winnings of 70%

of games are more than cancelled out by the more substantial losses of the remaining 30%.

As for me, I am not a gambling type at all. As such, I had never put my idea into practice until October this year when my travels took me to the Isle of Man. Here I found myself staying at the Palace Hotel on the beautiful promenade at Douglas. This crumbling concrete edifice was opened by Sean Connery in the 1960s. It has a casino that offers two real-life roulette tables with minimum stakes of just fifty pence. At these stakes I was prepared to take a punt to see my idea in action. I only played one session, in which I placed 21 bets. Against the odds (recall that all this is random), my bets won not just once but twice. At this point, despite having played for less than an hour, I stopped gambling and cashed in my chips, more than doubling my money. I calculated that the chances of this happening were 9%, so I was lucky but it was hardly a freak event.

While playing I learned three new things. The first was that one can spend longer playing with the same number of chips by selecting a busy table; doing so means that there is a longer time gap between spins while the croupier handles the bets of the assembled punters. The second was that I didn’t find roulette particularly

interesting in practice and by my 20th bet I was struggling to maintain concentration. Indeed, this may be a key weak point of my idea: wins could simply be too infrequent to hold the gambler’s interest. The third was that playing low-stakes roulette is far from glamorous: the ambience felt more like that of a bingo hall than of Monte Carlo.

In summary, this probabilistic approach to roulette indicates that it is possible to minimize average losses when playing but the frequent small wins will be swamped by less frequent larger losses. Any members who would like to discuss this further are welcome to accost me at the next meeting. I should also be delighted to share my simulation programme with any members that have boffin-like tendencies; simply contact me by esoteric mail on [mail@nihilist.org.uk](mailto:mail@nihilist.org.uk).



(Above) The Galaxy casino in Macau and (below), erm, the Palace Hotel, Douglas





# THE BROGUES GALLERY

WITH ARTEMIS SCARHEART



In which a Member of the New Sheridan Club is asked to introduce themselves to other Members so that those at Home and Across the Seas may all get to know fellow Club Members. No part of this interview may be used in court or bankruptcy proceedings.



## Cally Callomon

'Near enough is good enough.'

### Name or preferred name?

I am called just Cally, when not being called something worse...

### Why that nickname or nom de plume?

...it is simpler than the name on my passport, a long story behind a longish name: Count Martindt

Cally Von Callomon which, rather irritatingly, people who read *The Chap* seem to think is part of a wizzard jape.

### Where do you hail from?

The Far East: Suffolk

### Favourite Cocktail?

A heady mix of equal parts of muddy lanes, T. S. Eliot, Mark Rothko, The Unthanks, Daniel Auteil, an 1886 50" Grafton Ordinary, Old Town, Talk Talk, L.T.C. Rolt, Coast-To-Coast walking, Evelyn Waugh, Old Glory Molly Dancers and Musicians, Standard Poodles, a 1913 Sigma Roadster, Scott Walker's *Boy Child*, Several Pillars Of Wisdom, The Rumburgh Buck, Narrow Boats, Tritons, Milremo, Sunbeam S7s, all mixed with a large dash of Tanqueray and plenty of ice.

### Most Chappist Skill?

Skilfully avoiding most things appertaining to *The Chap* magazine and remaining an imperfectionist (first dan).

### Most Chappist Possession?

My lifetime membership of the Fanciful Guild of Scribblers, Approximators and Makeshifters

### Personal Motto?

When written: 'Flugel et Vis Fasio' (Flight In The Face Of Fashion)

When acted upon: 'Near enough is good enough.'

### Favourite Quotes?

'We die containing a richness of lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed, bodies we have plunged

into and swum up as if rivers of wisdom, characters we have climbed into as if trees, fears we have hidden in as if caves. I wish for all this to be marked on my body when I am dead. I believe in such cartography - to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience.'

(Michael Ondaatje)

'I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain. One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself, forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.'

(Albert Camus)

'Our memories are card indexes consulted and then returned in disorder by authorities whom we do not control.'

(Cyril Connolly)

### Not a lot of people know this about me, but...

I don't think, and sincerely hope, that I have ever been caught saying 'to be honest', 'actually', 'literally' or, indeed, to pepper my conversation with a garnish of 'like'. Nor, m'lud, have I used the terms 'game-changer', 'diarise', 'fit-for-purpose', 'cohort', 'obvs', 'hard working families' or to use 'impact' as a verb, or to end sentences with a ? (which, to be honest, I have now just done).

### How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Many years though being allergic to London I tend to cheer and cajole from the side-lines.



### How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I think I may have bumped into a fellow member, possibly Clayton Hartley, possibly when a little over-refreshed in a Speakeasy.

### What one thing would you recommend to fellow Members and why (cocktail, night out, tailor, watchmaker, public house, etc.)?

The smell that comes off a lavish, freshly printed book.

### Your three chosen dinner party guests from history or fiction and why?

T. S. Eliot to learn why *The Four Quartets* are not called just *The Quartet* or the *Four Quintets* as they puzzlingly perhaps should be. T. E Lawrence to apologise for making such a bish of the Middle East against all his sage wisdom and advice. Dr Beeching, in order to plead a re-think (with bribes). (Or Winker Watson.)

### Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Artemis Scarheart...as he constantly fails to ask me to re-new my membership with attendant subs and has, for some unknown reason, failed to bar my membership application recommending the club not to consort with the likes of me.

### Have you done a Turn yet? If so what was it on, if not what are you planning to do?

I have a cunning and sprightly agility when it comes to avoiding my turn, or my place in a queue, or, come to that, karaoke, or dance floors, or sporting competition, or mass entertainment, or The Television, or newspapers, faacebook or twitter, or black cabs, or travelling first class even when someone else is paying, or giving short answers to simple questions.

*Thank you for allowing yourself to be interviewed in the palatial surroundings of the NSC Club House. On behalf of the Members may I respectfully ask you to resign.*



# The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members bicker about liquor

## The gentle art of spiking coffee

By David Bridgman-Smith

Last month we looked at tea cocktails and, as the evenings draw in, I thought I'd take a look at coffee cocktails, to help warm the cockles of members.

I say coffee cocktails, but in fact I refer to the coffee cocktail: the Irish Coffee. This was created in the 1940s by Joe Sheridan, who was head chef at Foynes. Foynes was the base for flying boats crossing the Atlantic and predecessor to Shannon Airport.

The drink, a mix of coffee and whiskey, was created to warm passengers who had just disembarked from a flying boat on a wet and starry night. When the passengers asked if their delicious drink was Brazilian coffee, they were told, "No, it's Irish Coffee." The drink remained popular when they relocated to Shannon Airport and even James Bond enjoys one in the book *Diamonds are Forever* as he flies to New York.

As not everyone has the same coffee-making equipment, I've taken it upon myself to experiment with a variety of coffee-producing methods, but first a quick detour to the Continent for a precursor to the Irish Coffee.

**Pharisäer**  
This comes from North Friesland in Germany and, according to its origin story, the drink was invented as a way to disguise alcohol when



Pharisäer



Starbucks Doubleshot Espresso

the pastor was present. 40ml dark rum, 60ml coffee, sweetened with brown sugar and topped with whipped cream.

Made to notably stronger proportions than the Irish Coffee, the sweetness of the dark rum takes away some of the intensity. Working well with the brown sugar, the darker notes of the rum are well-matched with the bitterness of the coffee.

**Starbucks Doubleshot Espresso** (available in the milk aisle)  
This is a pre-mixed serving of espresso, milk, and sugar. To turn this into an Irish Coffee, simply empty the contents into a microwave-safe mug and heat for 60 seconds. Add 100ml of this to every 25ml of Irish whiskey.  
The result is a simple, but tasty drink: creamy and sweet, with a gentle



Instant coffee (reverse layer)



Espresso pot

decided to use Nescafé Gold Blend (years into our marriage, Mrs B. confided that it was my quality taste in coffee that first attracted her to me). To make a Gold Blend Milky, mix up a coffee using hot milk sweetened with sugar, and simply add to a measure of whiskey.

One downside to this method is that you cannot layer it, but, taste-wise, it is not too bad at all. There is a hint of coffee chocolate creme about it.

5/10 Not bad, but lacks complexity and depth. A poor man's Irish Coffee.

I explored a second method using instant coffee: whip up a small batch of coffee (0.5tsp instant coffee to 50ml of boiling water) and mix 25ml of this with 25ml of whiskey and pour over a mix of double cream and sugar.

The result was unexpected—while the coffee flavour was not as strong as I would have liked, the drink is indulgent and tastes like an Irish Coffee. The whiskey comes through well and it is easily possible to layer the drink—although in this instance I sweetened the cream instead of the coffee, leading to a reverse layer (see picture). 6/10

**Espresso pot**  
Add two teaspoons of sugar to 50ml of espresso and add to 20ml Irish whiskey. Gently whip some cream

bitterness from the coffee and a clean, mellow warmth from the whiskey.  
7/10 Not perfect, but incredibly easy to make.

**Instant coffee**  
For this, I

and spoon it onto the top.  
The first thing that you notice in this drink is the fine contrast between the jet black coffee and ivory cream. When you drink this Irish Coffee, the layers are well-defined, with the cooling and luxurious cream immediately followed by rich, dark coffee flavours and the mellow woodiness of the whiskey, plus the sweetness. 9/10 A textbook example.

**Cafetière**  
Add two teaspoons of sugar to 50ml of coffee and add to 20ml Irish whiskey. Gently whip some cream and spoon it on to the top.

This is a very good drink; with the cream on top, you get a sip of cool cream, followed by the warm and intense coffee and whiskey, and those layers are preserved as you drink. For me, its lack of intensity puts this in second place, but, for those who find espresso too bitter, this is a good choice. 8/10



Cafetière

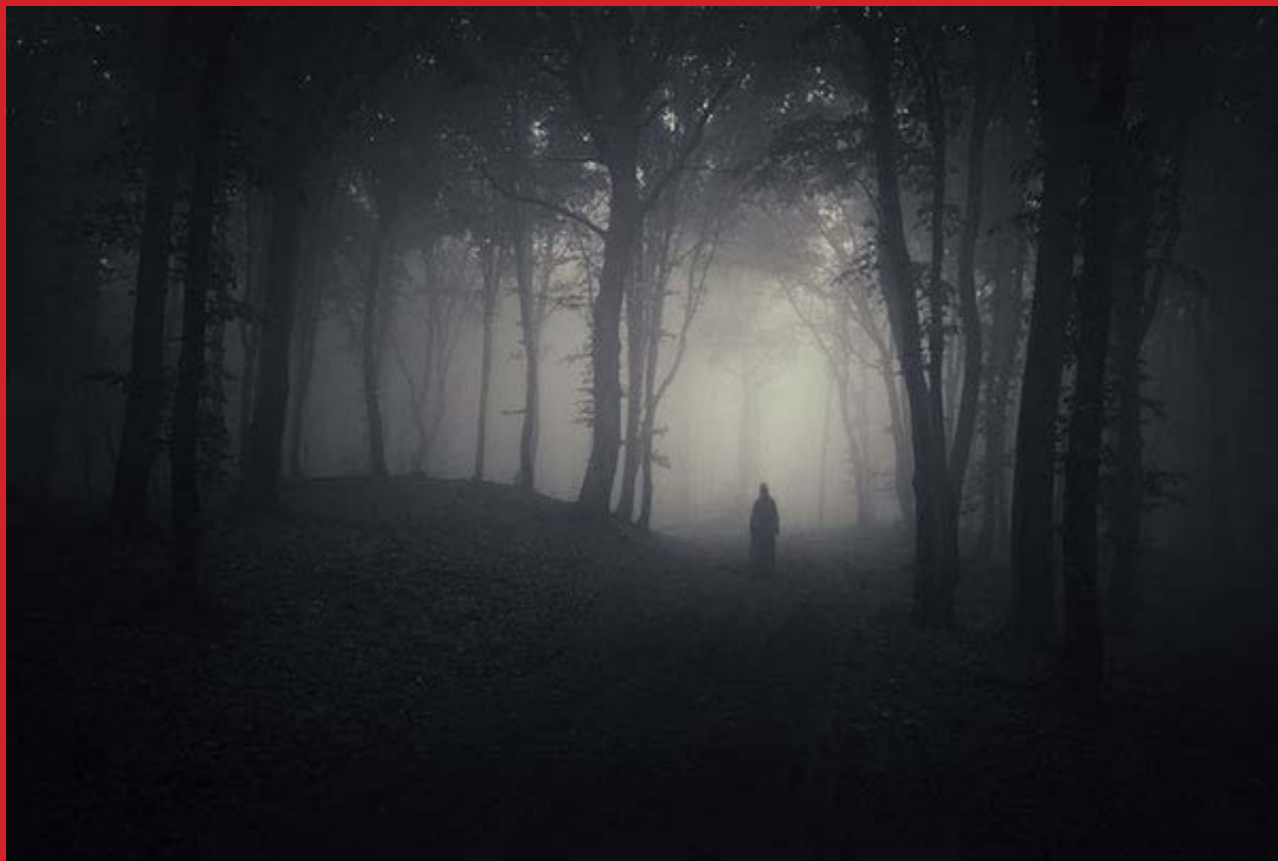
**Camp Coffee**  
Add 1 tsp of Camp Coffee and 60ml boiling water to 25ml Irish whiskey. Whip cream and spoon it on to the top.  
Very little coffee flavour, but lots of nuttiness; I think this would definitely appeal to those who like hazelnut-type flavours, but, for me, there just wasn't enough coffee. 3/10



Camp Coffee

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





## NSC FILM NIGHT

*If I Whistle, Will You Come to Me?*  
An evening of ghost stories

### Sunday 14th December

7pm–11pm  
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,  
London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)  
Admission: Free

Member Mark Gidman is curating an exciting evening of Victorian and Edwardian ghost stories at Christmas. Come and join him by the fireplace in the cosy setting of the Tea House Theatre in Vauxhall, London, as he introduces three wonderful screen adaptations of the stories of Montague Rhodes James and Charles Dickens.

Be inspired as the talent of M.R. James weaves his scholarly knowledge of the medieval, religious and architectural to bring you tales of the supernatural through the charm of the Edwardian period.

This is a rare opportunity to see these films—the titles of which will only be revealed on the night—on the big screen. Midway, a small

supper will be laid on courtesy of that other Victorian venerable Mrs Beeton via her famous recipe book from which an appropriate choice of fare will be prepared to accompany the evening.

Please let Mr Gidman know of your attendance so that appropriate catering arrangements can be made. The easiest way to do this is via the Facebook event ([www.facebook.com/events/789316894465142](http://www.facebook.com/events/789316894465142)). There is a small optional payment for the evening of £3.50—this is just to cover for the cost of the catering and can be made on the door.

So come, slide snugly into the armchairs and make this a very haunting Christmas indeed!



## CLUB NOTES

### New Member

FRESHLY JOINED THIS time is one Greg Taylor, who has an interesting proposition for Members: if you fancy dressing up in Edwardian style then he would love to have you along to the launch party of his new book. See page 28.

### Club Tie Corner

THIS MONTH'S REVELATION of the sinister spread of clandestine NSC Membership through time and space comes from the 1955 film version of the musical *Guys and Dolls*, itself based on a couple of short stories by Damon Runyon and concerning the lives and loves of a bunch of small-time crooks and gamblers in late-1940s New York. Here we see Nathan Detroit, as played by Frank Sinatra, talking to Rusty Charlie (Danny Dayton). Rusty, despite his superficial demeanour of incorrigible wastrel, loser and good-for-nothing, is clearly in truth a man of influence and taste, as witnessed by his tie.



## 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](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk) plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

### 🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 5th November

7pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

### Cakewalk Café

Every Wednesday

7pm–1am (swing dance classes 7–8pm, 8–9pm)

Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston,  
London E8 4AA

Admission: £8 for the dance class, £4 for the





Are you feeling bold enough to join the Great Dinosaur Hunt?

club (discounted if you're doing the class)

Dress: 1920s/1930s preferred

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

The RSS presents Terry Pratchett's

**Monstrous Regiment**

Until Saturday 8th November

7.45pm

Mary Wallace Theatre, The Embankment, Twickenham, Middx TW1 3DU

Admission: £14 (£12 concs)

The Club's own Timothy Williams appears in this stage adaptation of the Terry Pratchett novel: "It was a sudden strange fancy... Polly Perks had to become a boy in a hurry. Cutting off her hair and wearing trousers was easy. Learning to fart in public and walk like an ape took more time... And now she's enlisted in the army, and searching for her lost brother. But there's a war on. There's always a war on. And Polly and her fellow recruits are suddenly in the thick of it. All they have on their side is the most artful sergeant in the army and a vampire with a lust for coffee. Well... and they have the Secret. And as they take the war to the heart of the enemy, they have to use all the resources of... the Monstrous Regiment."

Shows daily at 7.45pm plus a matinée on 8th at 3pm. Tickets from the Mary Wallace Box Office on 020 8744 0547 (10am to 7pm) or online at [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk).

The Order of the Fez presents  
**The Great Dinosaur Hunt**

Sunday 9th November

From 2pm

The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD

Admission: Free

The man they call Incy Wincy Spider, in his role as the Grand High Wizard of the Order of the Fez, is following his earlier great success with a treasure hunt at the British Museum with a similar jaunt at the Natural History Museum. He writes, "I have been told stories of fantastical beasts by an acquaintance, strange creatures of enormous stature, some longer than the omnibuses, others ferocious; all sound fascinating. According to my contact these creatures roam in a land called 'South Kensington'. (I do hope I got the spelling right—it is so tricky with these foreign places.) I propose an expedition to investigate this place, am planning on being there at 2pm on the 9th of November and would be extremely pleased if you could join me. Oh and remember to dress appropriately."

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour's

**Dracula**

Until Saturday 15th November

7.30pm

Mercury Theatre, Balmerne Gate, Colchester, Essex CO1 1PT

(01206 573948)

Admission: £10–25

In a brand new co-production with the Mercury Theatre, Colchester, The Fitzrovia Radio Hour presents its very own adaptation of *Dracula* until 15 November. Yes, Bram Stoker's

classic tale of vampires, stakes and garlic gets the full Fitzrovia Radio Hour treatment in a thrilling new production directed by Cal McCrystal (*One Man Two Gwnors, Mighty Boosh, Cirque du Soleil, Spymonkey*). Performed with cut-glass theatricality and backed by a phalanx of bizarrely created sound effects, the Fitzrovia Radio Hour mixes the attitudes of 1930s Britain with sharp contemporary humour to produce a heady comedy cocktail. Tickets available now at [www.fitzroviaradio.com](http://www.fitzroviaradio.com), or call the theatre's box office on 01206 573948, with a 50% discount off standard tickets in the green and yellow seating areas if you use the code FITZ50.

**The Golden Era of Jazz**

Thursday 6th November

7pm

Jamboree, 566 Cable Street, London E1W 3HB

Admission: £4, I believe

Presented by Ewan Bleach, this is a night of 1920s and 1930s jazz "for individuals disaffected with aspects of contemporary life" offering "a combination of dance-crazy energy and bohemian informality". Every Thursday until 20th November.

**The Original Rabbit's Foot Spasm Band**

Thursday 6th November

7pm

The Blues Kitchen, 111–113 Camden High Street, London NW1 7JN

Admission: Free

Jump Blues and Jump Steady Jazz from this inventive seven-piece who largely play their own original music rather than standards.

**Tribute to El Niño**

Friday 7th November

8pm–3am

229 The Venue, 229 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5PN

Admission: £13

A memorial gig to celebrate the life of DJ El Niño, who died an untimely death last year. In the words of DJ Richard Adamson, one of the organisers of the event, "El Niño was known by everyone into vintage music and felt at ease in all of the various club scenes. As a club promoter, he had a huge influence on clubbing in the UK and set the mould that many of us have been trying to replicate since. With his

partner, DJ Lady Kamikaze, he ran The Lady Luck Club and The Black Cotton Club and sparked off many other clubs on the London roots scenes. The Music was always central and he had an infinite passion and a knowledge that made each night a learning experience. He was always looking for new sounds to stimulate and incite us to dance and the atmosphere he created always urged us to leave the real world behind and enter a new territory of music, mischief and at times, mayhem!" The event will feature a host of DJs, including The Viper, Natty Bo, Daddy Rich, Simon Preacher, Coco Girl, Slim, Marco Traxel and Lady Kamikaze, plus live music from Tony Diavolo's Snakebone and a fire show from Luci Fire. Tickets can be purchased here.

**Black Tie Ballroom Club**

Friday 7th November

London Welsh Centre, 157–163 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8UE

7pm

Admission: £10 from Wegottickets. See the Facebook page for details

Dress: Black tie/evening gowns

George Tudor-Hart's new venture, aimed at those who wish to dress up and meet other ballroom dancers, catering for both beginners and experienced dancers. There will be a free beginners' dance lesson from 7–8pm with the



RIP DJ El Niño

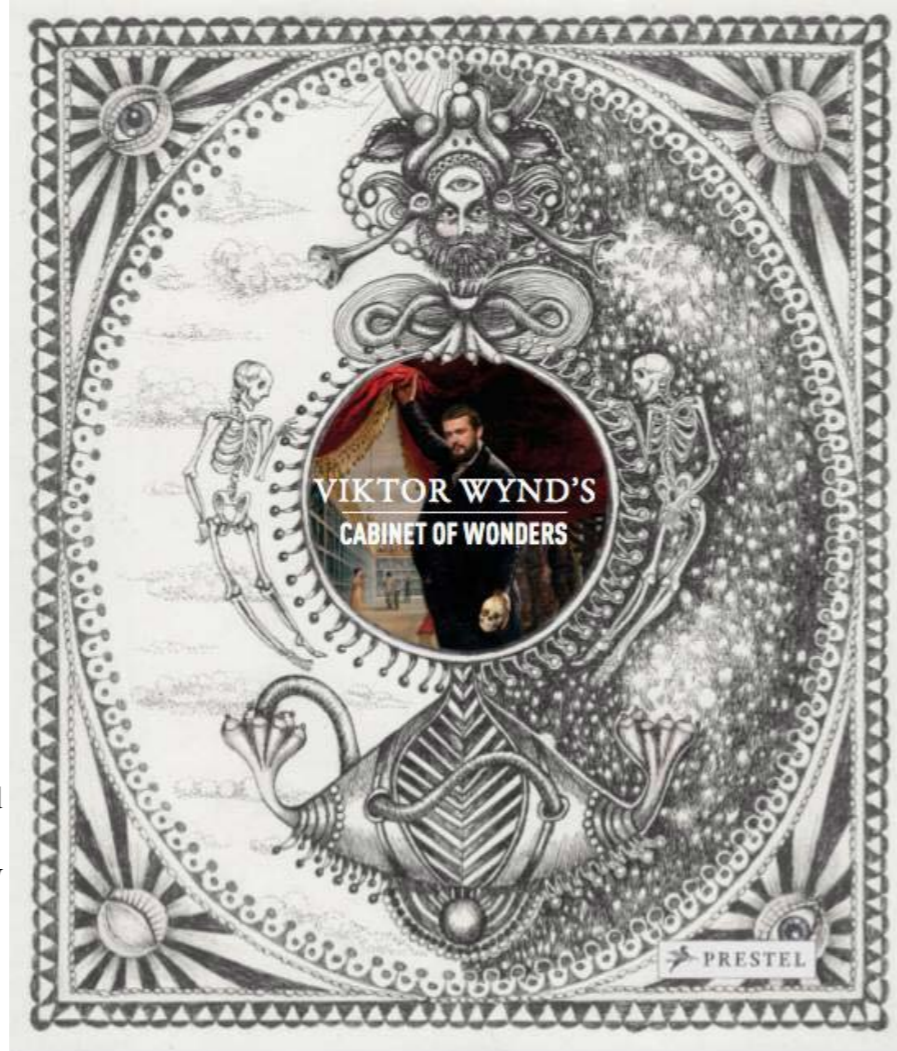


main dancing from 8–11pm. There will be one half-hour set from the Kewdos Dance Orchestra, featuring Alistair Sutherland on voice trumpet, of strict tempo vintage dance music, and the rest of the dancing will be to pre-war, mainly English, dance band records for slow waltz, slow foxtrot, quickstep, tango, rumba, swing, jive, Viennese waltz, and the odd Charleston and cha cha. Four or five male and female taxi dancers are available for all guests at no extra charge. Your hostess, Jean Bentley, will arrange interactive social activities such as “excuse me” dances, “Paul Jones” and “snowballs” and a bus stop throughout the evening. The venue has a large sprung dance floor and tickets are limited to 100 to ensure there is plenty of space. There is a licensed bar at pub prices. Any questions, phone George on 020 8542 1490.

**Viktor Wynd’s Book Launch and Museum Preview**

Friday 7th and Saturday 8th November  
6–10.30pm Friday, 3–10.30pm Saturday  
The Last Tuesday Society, 11 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8 4RP  
Admission: Free (I believe)

Launch event for Wynd’s new book about collecting oddities, “a subversive celebration of



curiosities, art, mess, decay, and self-indulgence, passionately arguing that the world is full of wonder that is in danger of being sanitised and that collectors are the ultimate artists”, as well as his new museum (formerly his shop). The book is, in the words of John Waters, “an insanely delightful how-to guide on becoming a mentally ill, cheerily obsessive eccentric hoarder, told with lunatic humor and absolute joy. Viktor Wynd is a sick orchid who seems like the perfect man to me.”

Mr B the Gentleman Rhymer presents  
**Acid Ragtime: Chapstep Volume One Launch Party**

Sunday 9th November  
4pm–midnight  
Fortune of War, 157 King’s Rd, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1NB  
Admission: Free, I believe  
Dress: “Chap and Chapette, but ready to dance all evening”

Seemingly a launch party for a new album, seeing Mr B. as archivist rather than performer: “Celebrate the launch of Mr B. The Gentleman Selector’s *Acid Ragtime: Chapstep Volume One* with a seafront afternoon tea rave. Mr B. and guests

spinning a century of dance music and exclusives from said long player. Think Ron Hardy meets Ronald Frankau, Todd Terry meets Terry-Thomas, Frankie Knuckles meets Frankie Howerd. Past Meet Phuture!”

**The Sunday Shindig**

Sunday 9th November  
8pm  
The Aeronaut, 264 Acton High St, London W3 9BH  
Admission: £10  
Dress: “Vintage style appreciated but not compulsory”

The Hotcha Swing Dance Company presents a swing and R&B night, featuring live music from Jackson Sloan and the Rhythm Tones plus DJing from Miss B. Nightingale.

**New Sheridan Club Annual Pub Crawl**

Thursday 13th November  
6.30 till closing time  
Admission: free, but you’ll need money for beer  
NSC Member and CAMRA stalwart Mr Ian White has themed this year’s pub crawl around railway station pubs. Here is the itinerary:  
6.30pm: The Victoria and Albert, Marylebone Station. Grand old station pub  
7.30pm: Euston Tap, 190 Euston Road (www.eustontap.com). In two gatehouses on Euston Road, on other side of the bus station.



Mr Ian White looking contemplative on a previous NSC pub crawl

8.45pm: The Betjeman Arms, Unit 53, St Pancras International Station (www.geronimo-inns.co.uk/london-the-betjeman). Situated on the platform of this fine station and its grand roof.  
10pm: The Parcel Yard, King’s Cross Station (www.parcelyard.co.uk). Award-winning converted offices overlooking train station.

**The Candlelight Club: Candlelight Cantina**

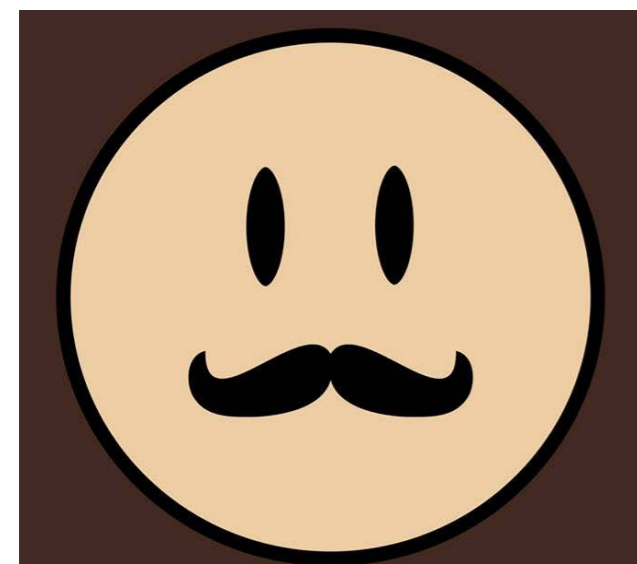
Friday 14th and Saturday 15th November  
7pm–12am  
A secret London location  
Admission: £20 in advance  
Dress: Prohibition dandies, swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes,

corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a secret London venue lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism (frequently from the New Sheridan Club’s own Auntie Maureen). Ticket holders get an email two days before



Main Street, Tijuana, during Prohibition. Notice any themes emerging..?



**MR.B THE GENTLEMAN SELECTOR  
ACID RAGTIME:  
CHAPSTEP VOLUME ONE**

**AFTERNOON TEA RAVE LAUNCH PARTY  
SUNDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 4PM 'TIL LATE  
FORTUNE OF WAR, BRIGHTON  
157 KING'S RD, BRIGHTON, EAST SUSSEX BN1 1NB**



revealing the location.

For thirsty Americans during Prohibition, travelling out of the country suddenly had more appeal—and where more convenient than across the border into Mexico? Suddenly border towns like Tijuana became boozy paradises dedicated to helping gringos party. Tijuana was dubbed “Satan’s Playground” by preachers, who even posted signs along the highway warning drivers of the moral turpitude ahead. Guest chefs from El Nivel will be offering a menu of Mexican tapas along with classic and modern tequila cocktails. Come and swoon at the Mexican-themed burlesque and dance the night away to live gringo music from The Old Hat Jazz Band.

### Riviera Swing

14th–17th November

Victoria Hotel, TLH Leisure Resort, Belgrave Rd, Torquay, Torbay TQ2 5HL

Admission: £199 for two nights; £259 for three nights; £149 for a non-residential weekend pass; see [www.rivieraswing.co.uk](http://www.rivieraswing.co.uk)

A small but potent weekend festival of 1930s and 1940s swing, focusing on British music and featuring live performances from the New Squadronaires, the Alex Mendham Orchestra, Duncan Galloway and his Rhythmic Six and Derek Webber, plus DJing from OK for Sound, Rob Be-Bop and Rick’s Community Swing, all hosted by Viv the Spiv. There are dance classes, tea dances, sing-alongs, classic cinema and a vintage market.

### Mrs Peel’s

Saturday 22nd November

8pm–2am

The Eight Club, 1 Dysart Street, Moorgate, London EC2A 2BX

Admission: £15 in advance, £20 on the door; limited table reservations available

Dress: 1960s

The Swinging Sixties party of your dreams! Inspired by Emma Peel, the iconic character from *The Avengers*, played by Diana Rigg, this club night features live music from Lowrey organ duo Rory More, loungecore and Sixties European DJing from Thomas Dynamic and El Diabolik, compère and lounge legend Count Indigo, go-go dancing from the Meyer Dancers, cocktails, face-painting services from Meghan Jessica Evely, a live art happening, psychedelic light effects and more. See at [www.mrspeels.club](http://www.mrspeels.club).

### Lusitania R.E.X launch party

Tuesday 25th November

6.30–10pm

Royal Institute of British Architects, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

Admission: Free but RSVP to [helenlewis@literallypr.com](mailto:helenlewis@literallypr.com)

Dress: Edwardian

Greg Taylor, whom some of you may recall chatting to in the pub after the Chap Olympics this summer, has not forgotten you. He has written a novel based on the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, spinning a yarn filled with spies and secret societies, superweapons, millionaires and martyrs, which attempts to take account of the known facts and explain some of the abiding mysteries. After being struck by a single torpedo the *Lusitania* sank in just 18 minutes. Passengers such as Alfred Vanderbilt, one of the wealthiest men in the world, had ignored warnings from the German embassy, confident the fastest ship in the world could outrun enemy submarines. But what caused the second explosion that sealed her fate? Imperial

Germany immediately claimed she was loaded with explosives destined for the front. Why did the Admiralty withdraw her escort ship? Who were the three German stowaways arrested shortly after sailing? Why did Vanderbilt give away his lifebelt?

Mr Taylor is launching his book at an event on 25th November and thought it would be fun to have NSC types turning up in full Edwardian costume. There will be complimentary drinks and nibbles, some speeches, the reading of excerpts and possibly some Edwardian-style entertainment. If this appeals then RSVP to [helenlewis@literallypr.com](mailto:helenlewis@literallypr.com). For more on the book see [www.lusitaniarex.com](http://www.lusitaniarex.com).

### The Candlelight Club: Prohibition Paris

Friday 28th and Saturday 29th November

7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £20 in advance

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

The Candlelight Club is a clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a secret London venue lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism (frequently from the New Sheridan Club’s own Auntie Maureen). Ticket holders get an email two days before revealing the location.

With the banning of alcohol in the US, many top bartenders left the country to find work. Some landed in Paris bringing American cocktails and jazz to mingle with European bohemia. Famous US drinkers like Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald drifted here too, along with scandalous dancer Josephine Baker who found the French more accepting than her countrymen. Live music will come



from Café Manouche on Friday and Swingatto on Saturday, playing the gypsy jazz style popular in Paris in the 1920s. To celebrate the city’s famous connection with art, we will see the return of our famous Tablecloth Painting Competition, with a prize for the finest artwork (crayons and felt tips will be provided).

### Dinner Dance at the Savoy

Saturday 29th November 7.30pm

The Savoy Hotel, Strand, London WC2R 0EU

Admission: £125 for full dining tickets, though you can alternatively get

a table at the Beaufort Bar

Dress: The Savoy itself doesn’t seem

to have any standards any more, but Alex encourages guests to dress in formal evening wear

Following in the footsteps of Carroll Gibbons and his legendary Savoy Orpheans, Alex Mendham & His Orchestra have taken up the baton as resident dance orchestra for the Savoy Hotel, playing the sounds of the Art Deco era with unmatched sophistication. Cut a rug under the stunning glass cupola in the Thames Foyer after a three-course dinner. Your evening begins at 7.30 with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner at 8pm and music from 8.30. Dancing till midnight. To book telephone 020 7420 2111.

### Voodoo Doll’s

Saturday 29th November

8pm–2am

Waterfront Bar & Kitchen, KCLSU Strand Campus, Macadam Building, Surrey Street, London WC2R 2NS

Admission: £12 in advance from [londonswingcats.com](http://londonswingcats.com) or £15 on the door

Dance night focusing on 1940s and 1950s West Coast blues and jazz, with DJs Voodoo Doll and Daddy Rich plus live music from Sugar Ray’s Trio.



Take inspiration from Steed and Emma Peel at Mrs Peel’s on 22nd November





New recruit Mr Greg Taylor (left) with Peter Stroud at the Chap Olympics. Mr Taylor has written a novel about the sinking of the *Lusitania* and is inviting NSC Members to the launch party if they dress in appropriate Edwardian garb. See page 28

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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](http://www.newsheridanclub.co.uk). For more photos of Club events go to [www.flickr.com/sheridanclub](http://www.flickr.com/sheridanclub). You can even befriend us electrically at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).