



# Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics: A Sideways Look at Twentieth-Century London

*Rob Baker*

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**Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics: A Sideways Look at Twentieth-Century London** Rob Baker  
“I love London society! I think it has immensely improved. It is entirely composed now of beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics. Just what Society should be.” An Ideal Husband, OSCAR WILDE Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics is based on the popular London history website [nickelinthemachine.com](http://nickelinthemachine.com) “Another Nickel in the Machine pretty much justifies the internet’s existence all on its own” – DANNY BAKER “Brilliantly researched” – STEPHEN FRY Entertaining and engagingly written, Beautiful Idiots and Brilliant Lunatics explores fascinating stories from London in the twentieth century. From the return to South London of local hero Charlie Chaplin to the protests that blighted the Miss World competition in 1970, the book covers the events and personalities that reflect the glamorous, scandalous, political and subversive place that London was and is today. Learn about, among many other captivating tales, exactly where and how the spies Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean spent their last ever day in London, the grisly murder of Stan the Spiv and the unlikely death of a defrocked girl-crazed priest. A cast of suffragettes, fascists, ‘nancy-boys’, showgirls, prostitutes, terrorists, Nippies and beauty queens features in stories containing a myriad of unexpected tangents and untold facts that cover the width and breadth of the world’s greatest city.

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