



- often copied,
never equalled

Celebrating 25 years of after-hours clubbing in Islington

An idea was born in October 1990 that changed the face of clubbing forever ...

The 1980s gay-club scene was already thriving, playing disco, alternative electronic and early house music in venues such as Heaven, the gay superclub in London's Charing Cross. Then the arrival of dance music and a new drug, ecstasy, in the late 1980s changed the face of clubbing forever. Trade, London's first legal after-hours dance club, was to take it to yet another level.

Advertised as 'the original all-night bender', Trade was launched by Laurence Malice on 29 October 1990 at Turnmills, 63b Clerkenwell Road, Islington. It had the unusual opening time of 3am (until 1pm) on Sunday mornings. This set it apart from other clubs and it soon became 'the' place to be. Its exclusivity further fuelled the desire to be a part of what Trade had to offer.


Trade changed club culture through the people that it brought together. While the club night was perceived to cater for the LGBT community, as long as an individual had the right attitude they were welcome at Trade, regardless of their sexuality, social background or gender. The freedom to express through art, music and fashion saw this unique after-hours experience become a haven for creativity.

The music at Trade was also innovative. It was first to offer club goers the concept of a journey through sound. Hard-edged Techno music intensified the whole experience and Turnmills proved the perfect venue. Due to the creativity of Trade's DJs, including Tony De Vit and Pete Wardman, it became the birthplace of Hard House. As a result, albums were released and tours outside London were undertaken, boldly taking Trade's distinctive sound to a mainstream audience. Trade went on to have a hugely influential and profound effect on the British and international club scene, as well as to all those who stepped onto its dance floors. It also made appearances on TV, most notably in the Channel 4 documentary *Trade: the All-Night Bender* in 1998.

Trade ended its regular Sunday slot in October 2002 but often returned to Turnmills for one off events; the venue closed six years later. Trade continued to 'party' at other places across London, including Egg on York Way, Islington.

This is the story of Trade - often copied, never equalled.

An idea was born in October 1990 that changed the face of Clubbing forever...



trade

The Pioneer of Afterhours celebrates it's Fifteenth Birthday
Saturday 29th October 2005
5:00am til Late @ Turnmills 63b Clerkenwell Rd EC1
Fat Tony, Guy Williams, Kelly Marie, Lisa German, Malcolm Duffy, Pete Wardman,
Steve Thomas, Tom McMillan, Tyrone & special Guests TBC

THIS IS NOT A TICKET ONLY EVENT
STRICTLY LIMITED Advance Tickets available online: www.tradeuk.net
First come, first served...so get there early to avoid disappointment!

Poster advertising Trade's 15th Birthday, 2005



ISLINGTON

TRADE: THE BEGINNING



Laurence Malice, who launched Trade at Turnmills, Clerkenwell on 29 October 1990

Laurence Malice

Irish-born Laurence Malice grew up in London's East End. Influenced by Hollywood costume designers, he developed a talent for sketching, drawing and sculpting; he also became obsessed with Pop Art and David Bowie. Later, Laurence worked as an actor and as a musician, forming bands including the Big Bang, who came second representing England in the International Songwriters Competition.

Laurence became one of London's Blitz Club faces and soon launched his own events, the illegal after-hours Sauna Club and 'An Esoteric Extravaganza', which he hosted in New York and at London's Heaven. Proving a success, Heaven offered Laurence a Wednesday night slot, Pyramid; this was one of the first mixed gay clubs to play House Music. As Acid House exploded during the mid/late 1980s, Laurence landed a club producer role at Soho's Bill Stickers, where he was instrumental in launching the first Sunday night house club, Confusion.

Pre-Trade

Time spent in his band, the Big Bang, brought Laurence success but not an income. Aware of his experience of running illegal after-hours parties and promoting clubs – such as Confusion at Bill Stickers in Soho's Greek Street – Laurence's manager Terry Hollingsworth came up with an idea. He suggested a wine bar on Turnmill Street, Clerkenwell as a possible venue for a new venture. Laurence began co-promoting the FF club at Turnmills on Sunday evenings. After leaving FF, he wanted to remain at the venue in order to stage a regular, legal, post-Saturday night after-hours party, when clubs finished at the "ridiculous time" of 3am.

A safe haven

Laurence's aim was to create a safe haven where people could be themselves and to help stop the risks gay men faced after clubs closed, such as queer-bashing or arrest from cruising. Above all, he wanted it to be a place where clubbers could escape the fear and homophobic backlash that the AIDS crisis brought during the late 1980s. Choosing a strong gay name, Trade, was his own counterattack to the mainstream AIDS reaction.

After-hours

John Newman, Turnmills' owner, was encouraged to apply for an after-hours licence, as there was no precedent that stopped an all-night licence being approved. The only condition was that alcohol could not be served. Therefore, without any opposition a licence was granted in 1990. Promotion of Trade duly began with flyers and a full page advert in *Capital Gay*.

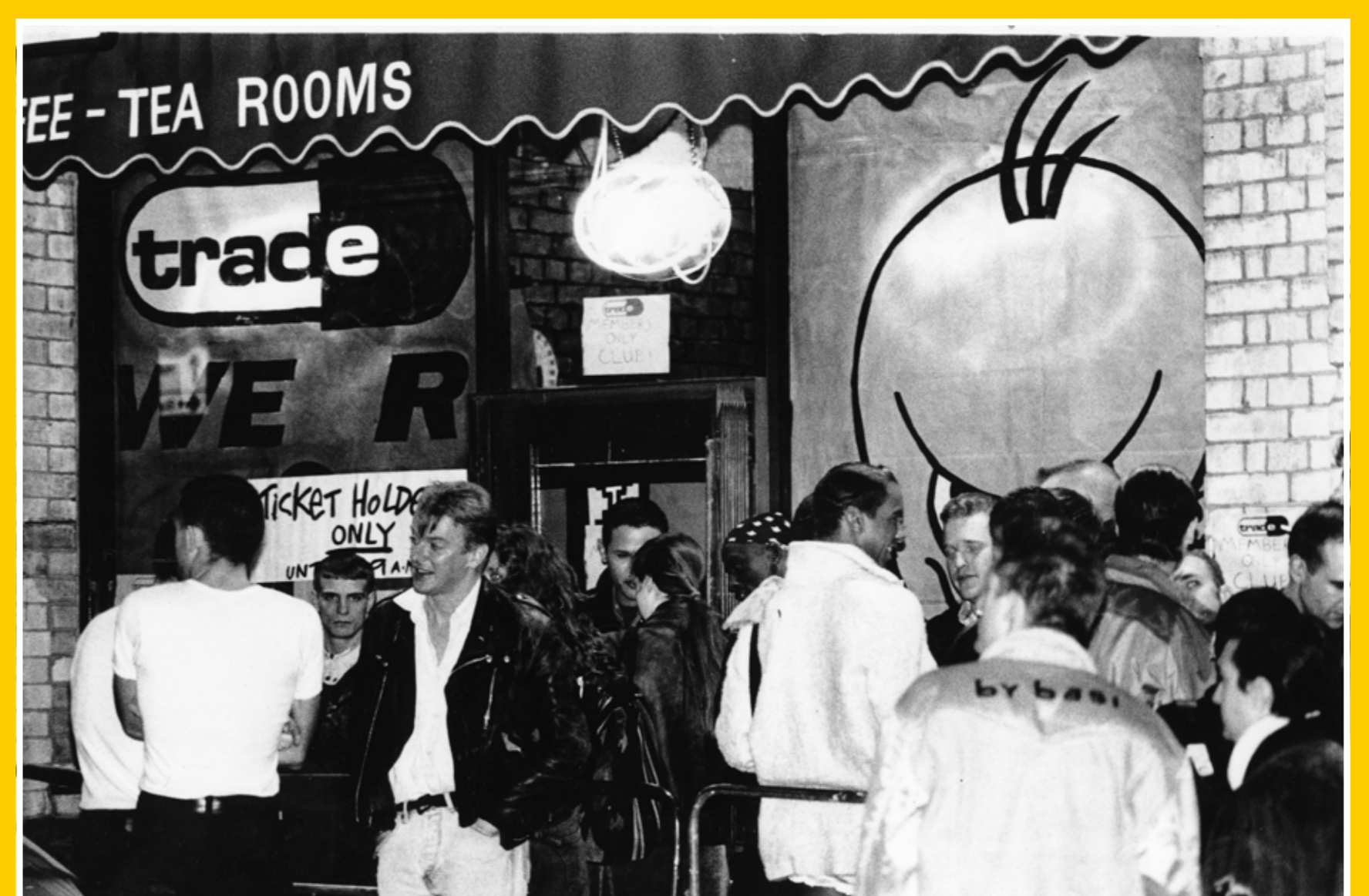
Trade opens

The first Trade after-hours club night opened on 29 October 1990 at 3am. Appearing were DJs Martin Confusion, Malcolm Duffy, Smokin' Jo, Daz Saund, Trevor Rockcliffe and Tall Paul. Also on board to assist was Mark Wardel (Trademark), with Tim Stabler joining a few months later. Tim also became co-promoter until 2000/01.

Trade had arrived and was to change the face of clubbing forever!



One of the first flyers for Trade, October 1990



Entrance to Trade at Turnmills, early 1990s

TURNMILLS

Clerkenwell

Clerkenwell was to become a spiritual home for the followers of Trade. For centuries the area had a history of being a sanctuary for those not wishing to conform to conventional living. These people all found a home and a voice among the districts' many streets and alleys.

63b Clerkenwell Road - Turnmills

On the corner of Turnmill Street and number 63 Clerkenwell Road stood a warehouse and stables once occupied by railway companies. From the mid-1930s to the 1970s, the building was used by Booths Gin Company as storage for its wine department. In 1985, the premises became Gaudi's restaurant, with an adjoining club space at number 63b known as Turnmills. This area of Clerkenwell seemed an unlikely place to go weekend clubbing; city workers frequented the district during the week, visiting Gaudi's restaurant, while the weekends were quiet with little passing business. The arrival of Trade dramatically altered the situation.



Turnmills' laser effects at Trade, Christmas 2004



Refurbished interior of Turnmills, showing bar area, designed by Steve Howie and inspired by cult David Lynch film Dune, early 1990s (Photo: Courtesy of Steve Howie Design and Build)

In-coming Trade

Initially the venue was fitted with carpets, a small metal dance floor and a covered piano, with walls decorated with film posters that Laurence had to disguise with black cloth. However, when the venue was later granted a 24-hour licence, its footfall increased, leading to further investment to fund construction of a large wooden dancefloor and installation of new sound and lighting systems, complete with lasers. Its interior was refurbished and extra seating, bars and chill-out spaces fitted. There was no grand re-opening. The changes made were very organic and the club's environment was to alter 'shape' on a regular basis.

Events at Turnmills

Turnmills quickly became one of the UK's most renowned and state-of-the-art night clubs hosting other famous events such as The Gallery, Heavenly Social (feat. Chemical Brothers) and Smartie Party. On special events, such as Trade 'birthdays', the rear-located gym and other rooms were opened to cope with demand; club capacity could reach over 1000 people.



TRADE COLLECTIVE

Trade would not have been as successful as it was without the hard work of Laurence Malice, Tim Stabler and the team of staff behind the scenes known as the 'Trade Collective'.

Recruitment

Recruitment to the Collective was undertaken on a casual basis. Word that positions needed to be filled was informally broadcast, friends were introduced or those with particular skills offered their services. After this, it was left to the manager to decide who was employed - if it all worked out, new recruits were kept on.

Roles

Roles could change as staff helped out in other non-designated areas, such as being on the cash desk, distributing memberships, working the 'make-shift' VIP corridor or shadowing photographers - some customers were understandably camera shy!

However, it wasn't all glamour working at Trade - the manager counted out the day's takings in a cupboard next to the toilets. In addition, the transition from the end of the Saturday night event to Trade opening could be a massive headache. But the manager and Turnmills staff got this down to a fine art, shuffling one set of clubbers out, while also allowing the Trade club goers entrance.

Trade office

For the first seven years the Trade's operation was run from Laurence's flat in Little Russell Street, a short distance to the west of Turnmills. The flat acted as an office and was frequently visited by DJs and the Trade Collective. In 1997 operations were moved to an office and studio in York Way, King's Cross which later became Egg nightclub.

Special events

Trade would regularly employ go-go dancers and drag queens and, on special occasions, such as its birthdays and themed nights, extra performers and singers were hired to intensify the production.

Staff also enjoyed running other special Trade events. These included Pride, London's annual LGBT march and festival, and Christmas Day when 10pm was the opening time and the atmosphere totally different; it felt even more decadent to be partying that particular night! This was in stark contrast to the frantic New Year's Day parties at Trade which nobody enjoyed working.



The Trade Police were first used in Manumission and Privilege in Ibiza in 2000. They made their debut in London at Trade's 10th Birthday in October the same year and have since appeared at various themed events.



Trade 'Tropicana' themed event at Turnmills, 2003

TRADE MUSIC AND DJs

The Journey

Laurence Malice's ongoing vision for Trade was to introduce a new concept – a musical journey. Music was to be carefully assembled to feature a clear progression of House and Techno in order to finally reach euphoric heights. This journey was realised by Trade's first DJs.

DJs

By 1994/95, Trade DJ Malcolm Duffy was joined by Alan Thompson, Steve Thomas, Tony De Vit, Ian M and Pete Wardman. They were given the freedom to develop their own unique style, while still very much complimenting each other's work. Guest DJs were rarely used as it was difficult to fit into this Trade line-up and seamlessly perform to the expected high standard.

Gender at Trade was never an issue, only talent. Among the talented female DJs brought in by Laurence were Smokin'Jo, Sister Bliss, Queen Maxine, Vicki Red, EJ Doubell and Rachel Auburn.

There was very little competition among the resident DJs and while new vinyl record labels were disguised to ensure exclusivity for each DJ, Trade was regarded as a family. It was their club in which they loved to perform!

The Test Lounge

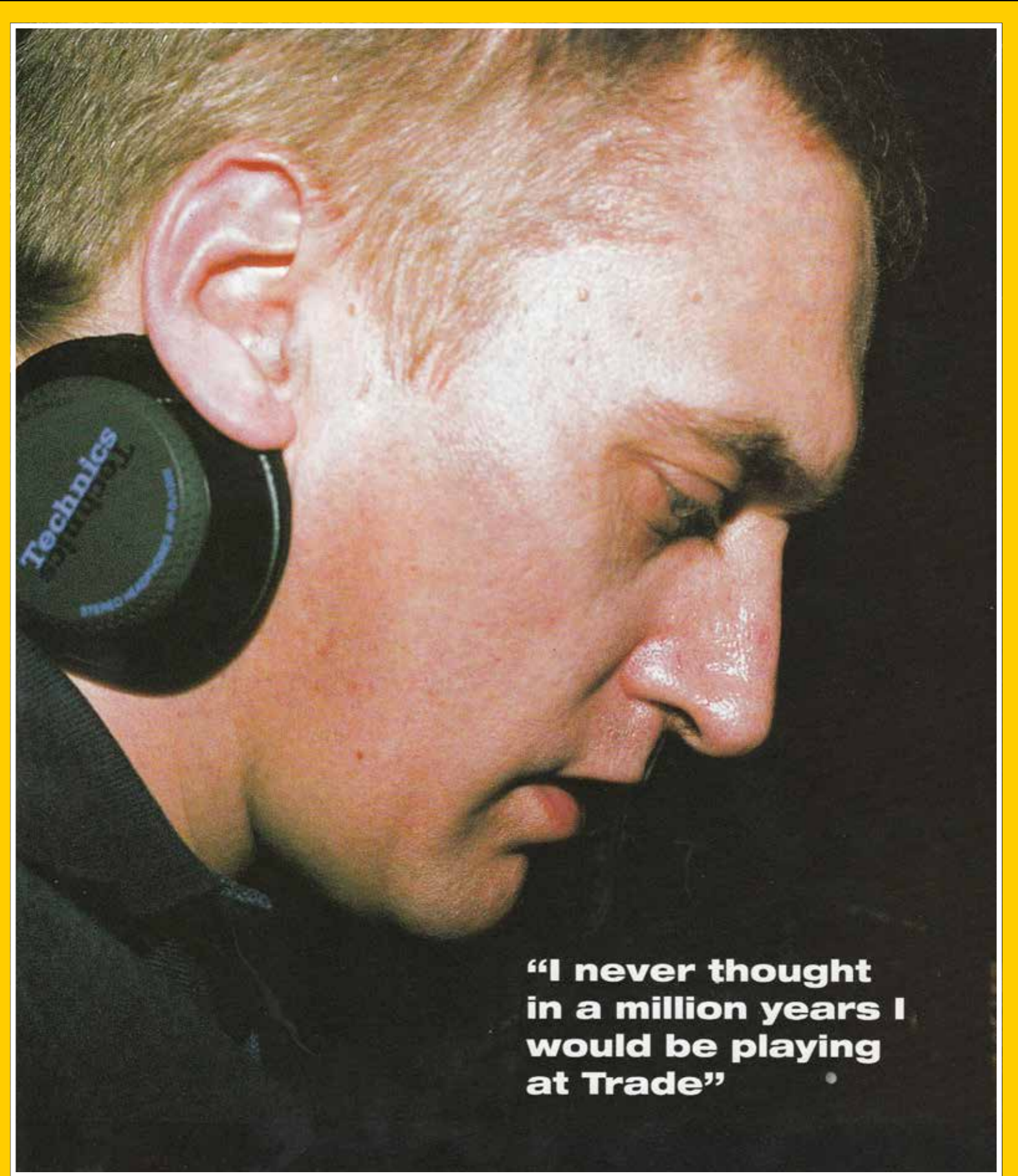
Every week, the pockets of Laurence Malice and Tim Stabler were bulging with cassettes given to them by wannabe Trade DJs. To address this, the Test Lounge was opened. This was an extra room at Turnmills where new DJs could play their music and the crowd's reaction gauged. DJs discovered in the Test Lounge included Fergie, Lisa German and Gonzalo.

Trade Lite

Ever evolving, Trade Lite opened in 1997 for those clubbers who enjoyed a lighter sound. This showcased music presented by the likes of the Sharp Boys, Peter Ward and the madness and mayhem that was DJ Fat Tony. To add a twist, Trade Lite also featured weekly live performers, percussionist Joy and vocalist Tonic accompanying the music.

Trade music

Trade later released compilation albums and also had its own record label, Etrax. The club attracted many from the dance music industry who worked with Trade's DJs to establish a creative musical outlet.



DJ Ian M at Trade, 1999/2000 (Photo: Xfade magazine)



DJs 'Match of the Century' at Trade, mid-1990s



TONY DE VIT (1957-1998)

Tony De Vit was a British club DJ, producer and remixer and one of the most influential musical creators of his generation. His performances at Trade were legendary, never to be forgotten by staff and club goers alike.

Early career

Tony De Vit began DJing at just 17 in his home town of Kidderminster, playing pop and Hi-NRG before moving on to Birmingham and, eventually in 1988, a residency at Heaven, London's gay superclub.

Trade

On his first visits to Trade in 1990/91, Tony was mesmerised by the music being played on the dance floor. Consequently, he completely changed his record box and began learning to play the Trade sound, combined with his own style. After a few months of pestering Laurence with tapes of his set, Tony's music was played in the Trade café to a great reception and soon he enjoyed his very own residency.

Tony loved Trade because there were no restrictions on what he could play and this encouraged him to push musical boundaries. His number one passion was music and he had found somewhere where he felt truly at home.

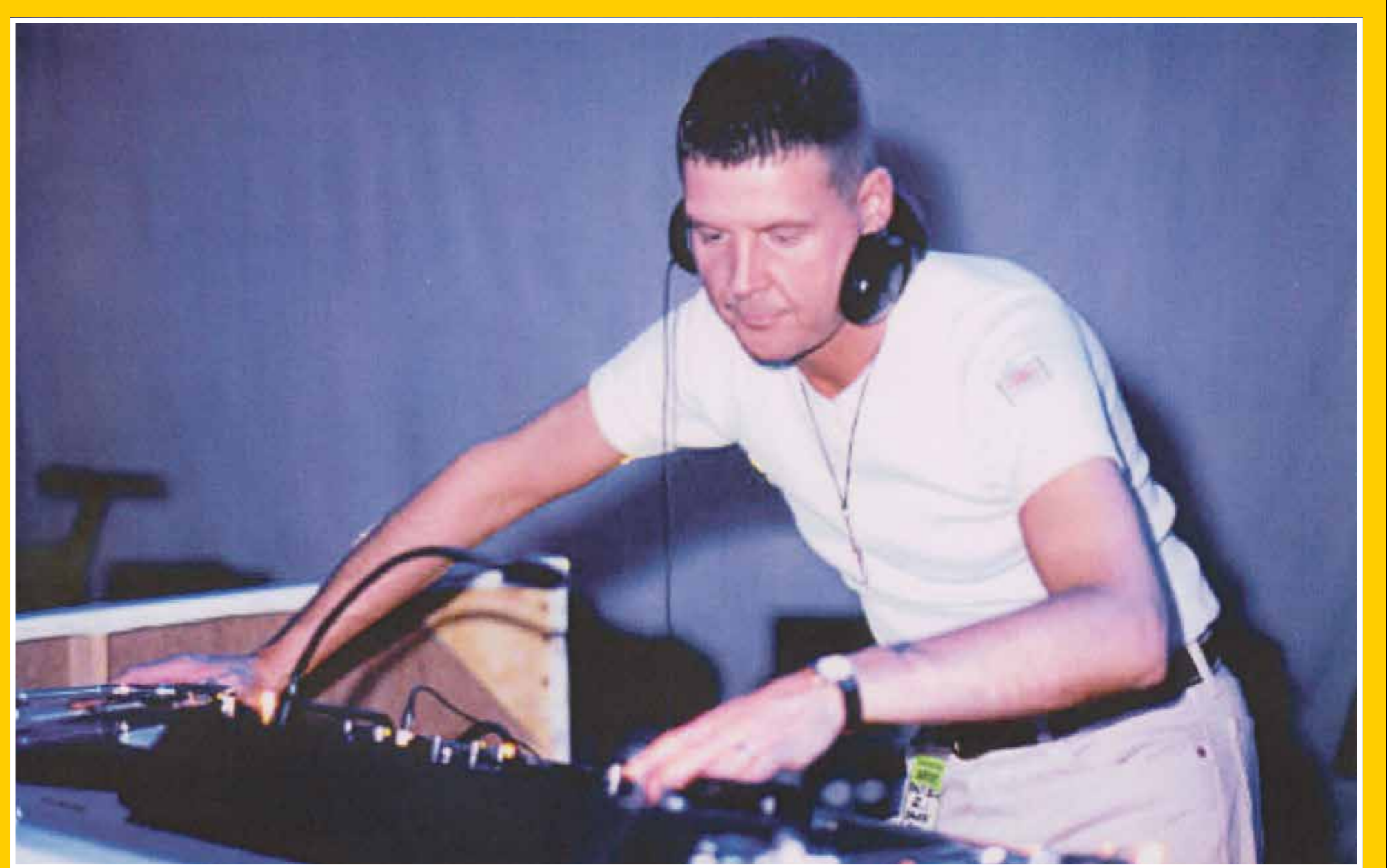
Tony De Vit had an excellent relationship with other Trade DJs. They supported each other's gigs, toured together and began producing their own tracks and remixes, which were played at Trade. Tony often welcomed the other DJs for a session at the Custard Factory, his Birmingham studio.

From Trade to the world

Tony was always willing to listen to advice, as well as being happy to share his own knowledge with upcoming DJs. He was a masterful remixer, had radio shows, chart hits and toured the world, winning both awards and admiration from the dance music industry. Tony is also credited with helping to take the Hard House and Hard NRG sounds out of the London gay scene and into mainstream clubs.

Legacy

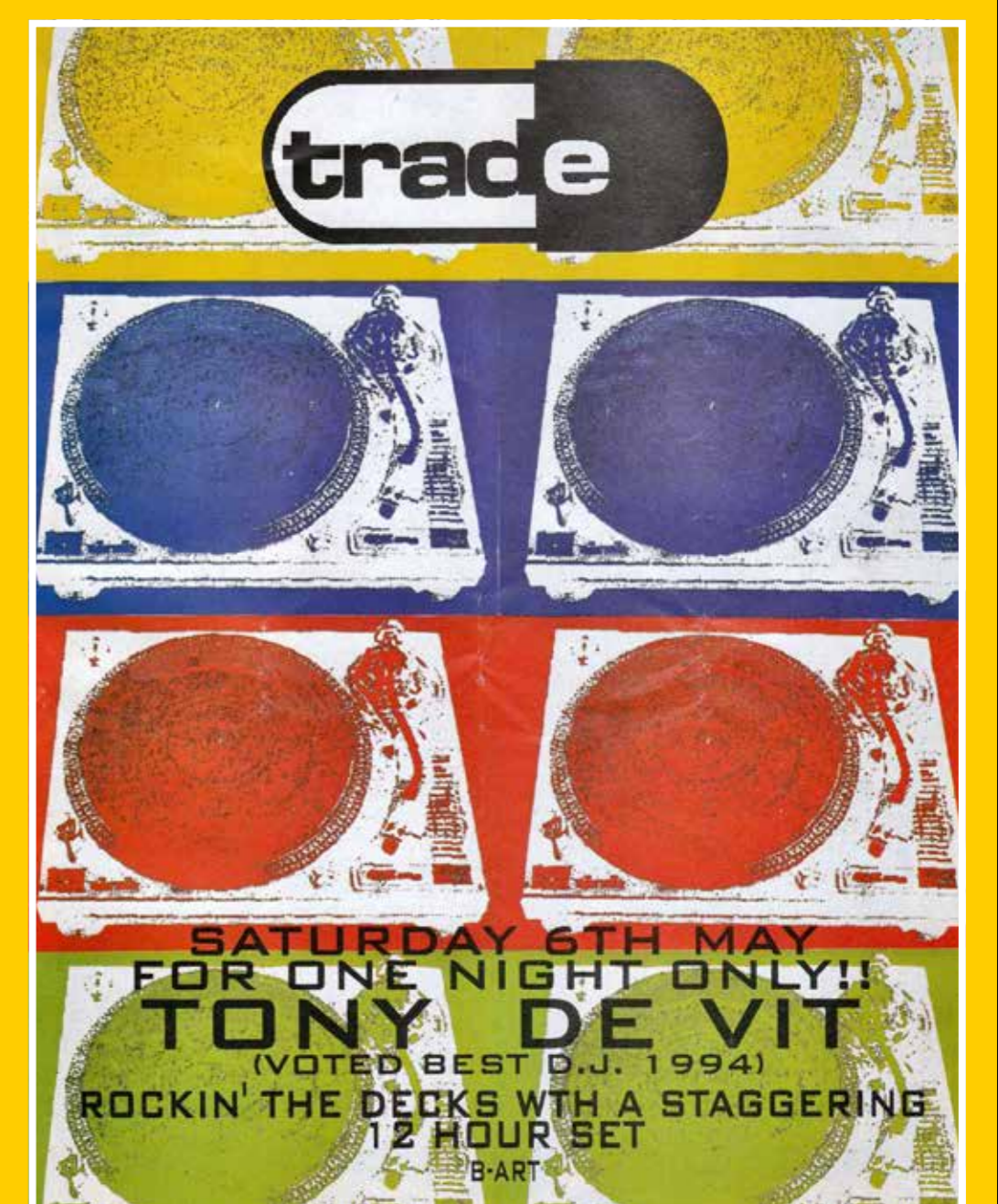
Tony's death at the age of 40 on 2 July 1998 was a huge loss. He died of HIV-related bronchial failure. All at Trade were devastated, coming at a time when he was considered one of the top DJs in the world. However, his close association with Trade, together with his influential and legendary work beyond, ensures that his legacy to the music industry and club scene continues to live on.



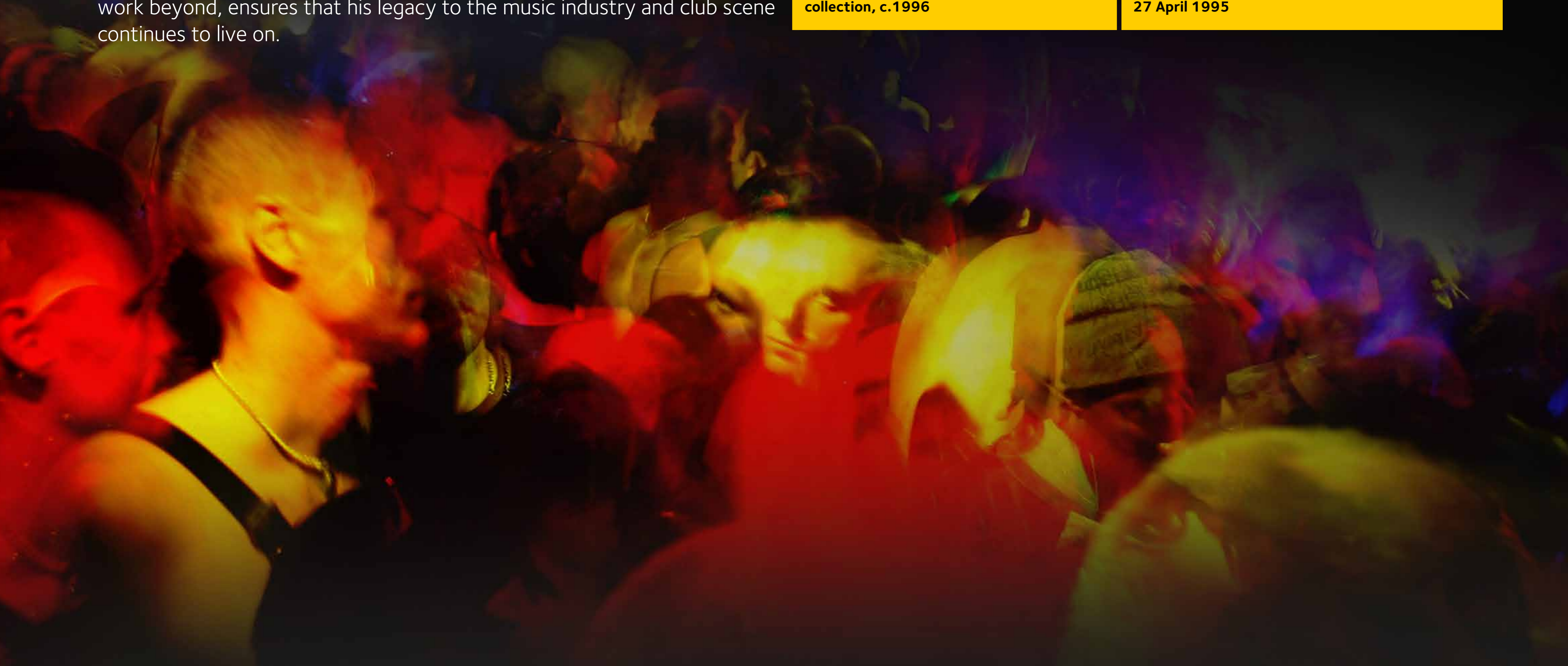
Tony DJs at the Custard Factory, Birmingham, c.1997



Tony sitting in front of his vast record collection, c.1996



Trade advert published in QX magazine, 27 April 1995



TRADE ARTWORK AND PROMOTION

Gay club imagery around 1990 was conventional but the artwork for Trade set it apart from everyday design. Influenced by pop art, New York graffiti, punk graphics and Russian propaganda material, it was liberally used for club décor and promotional material.

Trade logos

Initially created by artist Mark Wardel, who hand painted all his work, and later Martin Brown (B-art) who used his computer graphic design skills, Trade's artwork became instantly recognisable.

In 1991 Wardel created the 'capsule' logo and started using it in conjunction with accompanying imagery on decor and promotional designs. The logo has evolved over 25 years but still remains identifiable to the original iconic concept.



Original Trade 'capsule' logo created by artist Mark Wardel in 1991

Artwork

At the venue, ultraviolet, fluorescent-coloured backdrops hung on the walls, while crazy sculptures created by Tim Stabler were suspended from the ceiling. Assisted by Mel Kimlock and Edna, creating artwork was very much a Trade Collective effort, as everyone joined in to paint the backdrops during the week when Turnmills was quiet. They also used the Trade offices as a makeshift studio. As Trade expanded during the 2000s, 'décor' items were sourced from external, professional companies.

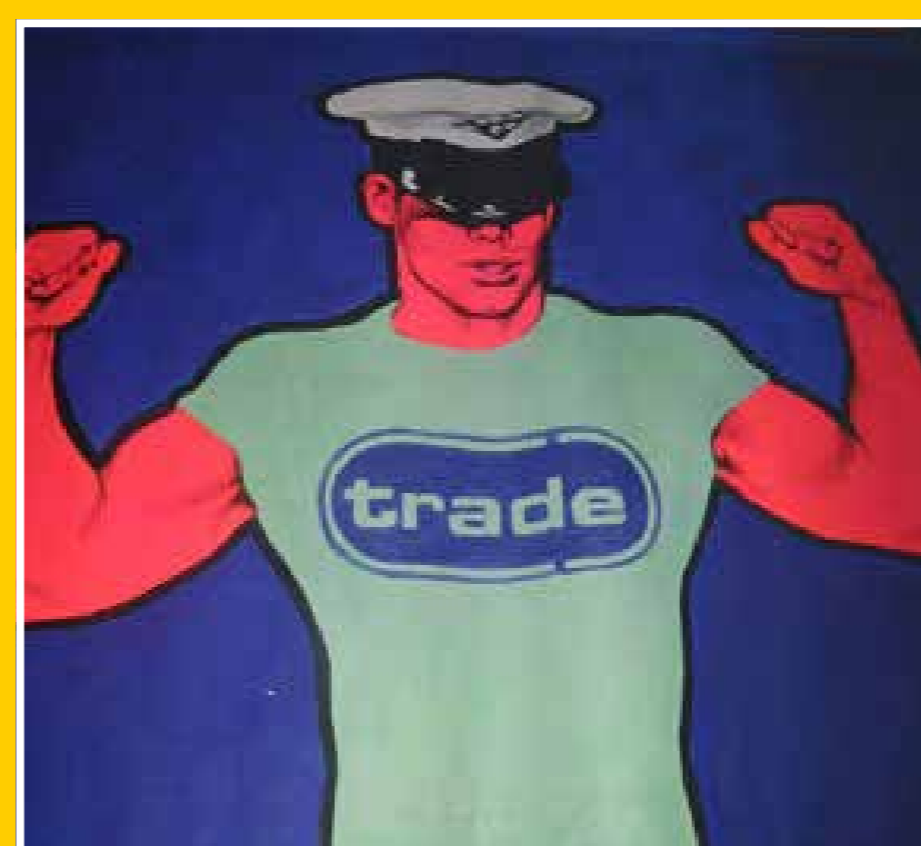
Promotion

During the 1990s the gay press enjoyed success with magazines such as *Boyz* and *MX* (later *QX*). This resulted in most of Trade's promotional material initially appearing as press advertisements, with flyers used for basic publicity. As London's gay scene grew in the late-90s, flyers became more elaborate. Memorable tag-lines were also added to flyers by Andy Stick and other members of the Trade Collective: 'Keepin' the vibe alive in 95', 'Your weekly fix for 96' and 'Stay out late in 98'.

Promotional teams handed out flyers around gay pubs and clubs and tickets could be bought for special Trade events. Always adapting to change, the introduction of the Internet and, later, social media and online ticketing companies has seen Trade use these platforms to promote one-off events.

Trade brand

The Trade brand was to become instantly recognisable and the management wanted to create flyers and posters, doubling as artworks, which people could collect and display at home. Today, there is a thriving collector's market for all things Trade.



'Muscle Man' backdrop, c.2000s



Front cover of *QX* magazine featuring Trade's 10th Birthday poster, showing a decade of artwork, 18 October 2000

TRADE CLUBBERS

For some, the hedonism, sexual undercurrent, Techno music and sheer energy at Trade could be intimidating. However, for clubbers who attended, it was a safe environment where they respected each other and their space.

Door policy

A 'picker' worked the door to ensure those admitted possessed the right attitude. Clubbers would queue for hours, with the line to get in often stretching back 250 metres to Farringdon Station; there was always a chance of being refused entry. The guest list, for a long time managed by 'Guestlist Lee', was just as busy and many tactics were used to get through the doors. In later years, as rival club competition grew, Trade's door policy relaxed and became less exclusive.

The Trade experience

Having gained entry, clubbers would walk downstairs and into 'Muscle Mary Alley'* and realise straight away how different it was to other clubs – a journey to a different dimension! In the early years, the experience upon entering was so intense that it was likened to descending into Dante's *Inferno*.

* Muscle Mary: a gay man with a muscular physique

As well as fantastic dance floor productions, there were also small, kindly gestures, such as gifts given to clubbers at special events. The crowd knew their music and how it should be played, so much so that new tracks and dubplates (vinyl test recordings) were often debuted at Trade. Fashion also played its part and many stunning, homemade creations could be witnessed at club nights.

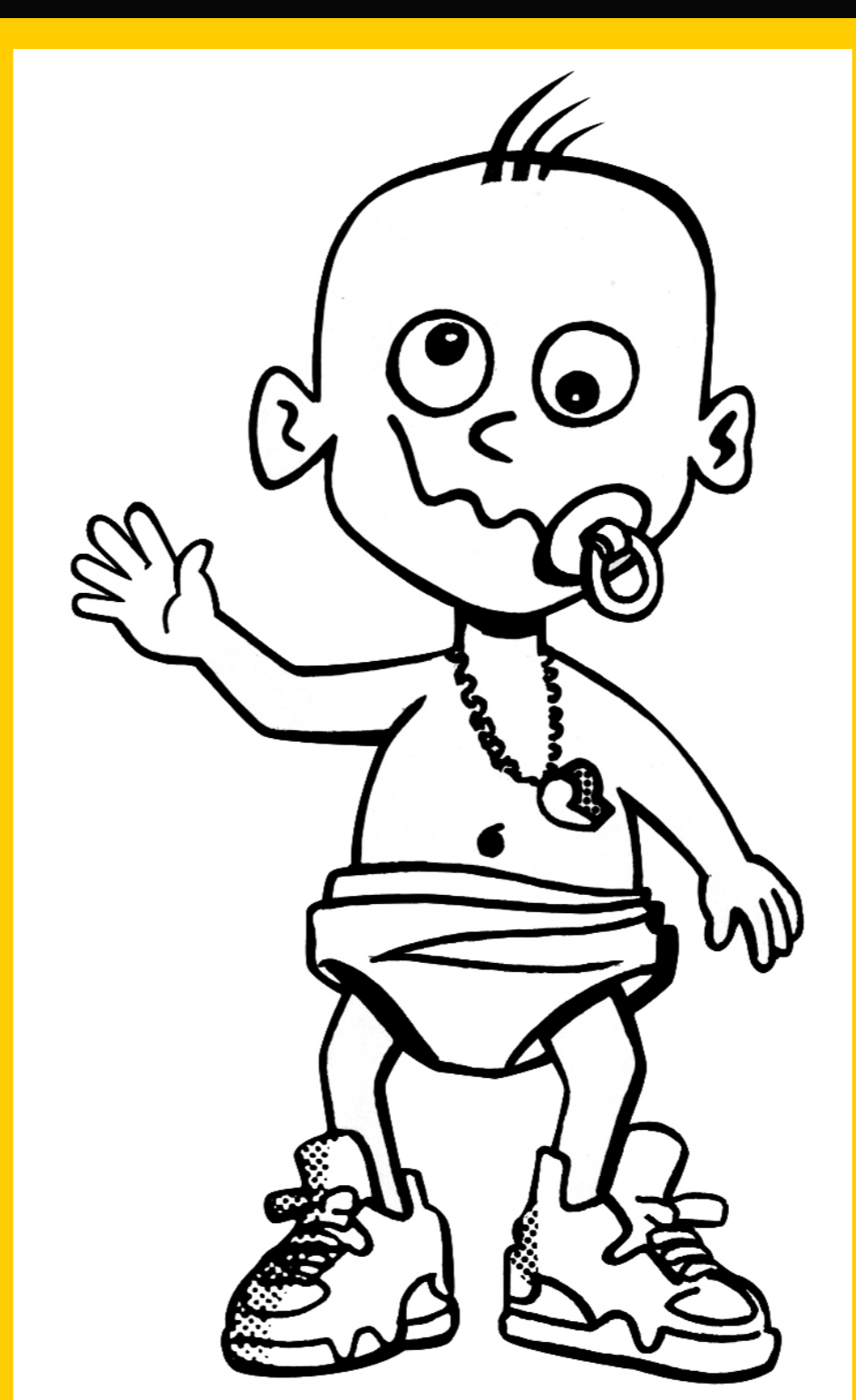
Numerous celebrities went to Trade but the policy was not to give them any special treatment. This meant no separate entrance or VIP area and no large entourages.

Trade weekend

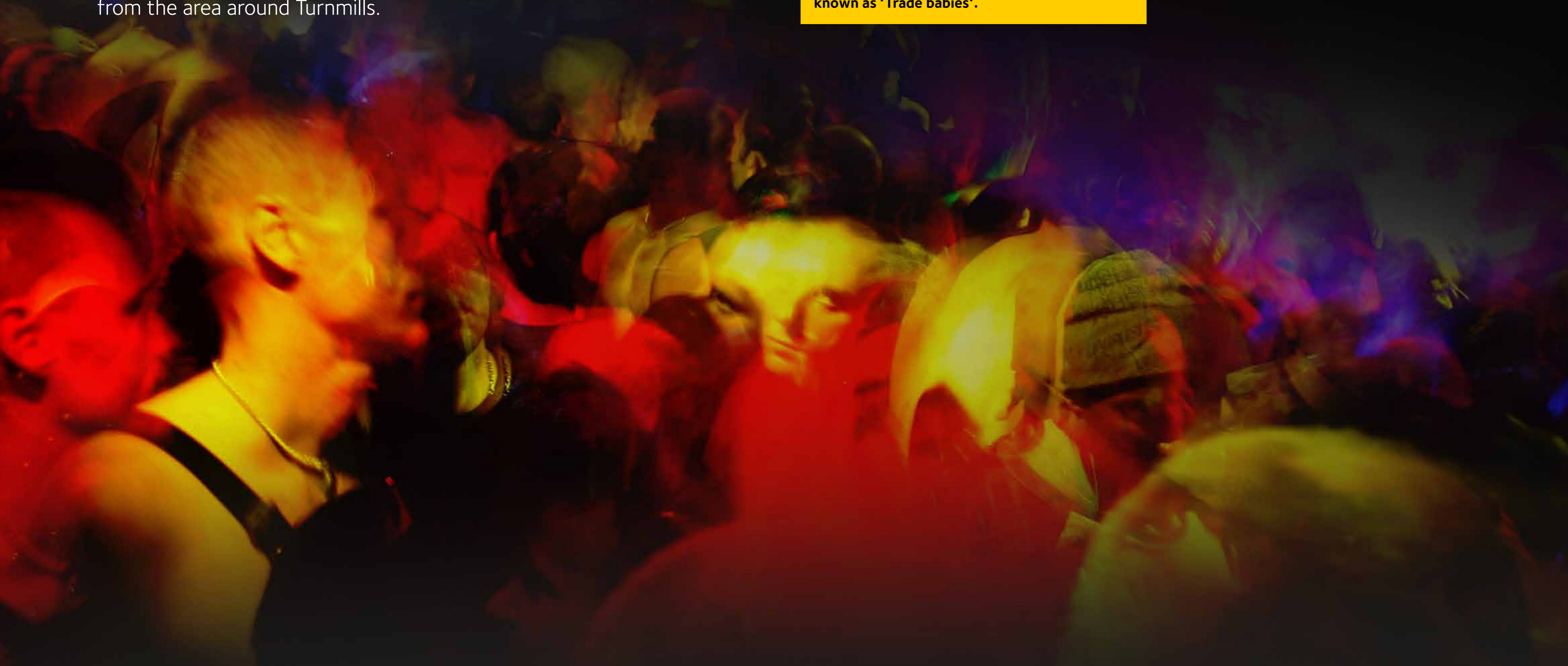
The whole weekend was built around Trade – it was about the before, during and after. Some clubbers arrived fresh to pace themselves, while others partied all weekend. Upon leaving Trade, revellers and their cassette players would often descend on Clerkenwell Green and its pubs to continue the party. This was not always appreciated by landlords and local residents and, following complaints made to the police and Islington Council, DTPM (Delirium Tremens at Post Meridian) club was started in 1993 at Villa Stefano, near Holborn Tube Station, to 'lure' clubbers away from the area around Turnmills.



Trade scene at Turnmills, October 2004



The Trade baby logo was used in lots of artwork and merchandise. The clubbers themselves adopted the name and were known as 'Trade babies'.



TRADE BRAND

Trade in the community

Trade was very much a part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. It regularly hosted a dance tent at Gay Pride, followed by a large, themed event at Turnmills. This was always a special occasion for those involved. Trade has also collaborated with other gay clubs at other events, as well as supporting the community in other ways. From the outset, Trade collected on the door every week for Body Positive, a charity offering support and information for people living with HIV/AIDS.

UK and international tours

Trade didn't restrict itself to London. It often toured with its resident DJs, taking Trade music and the experience to new audiences.

It visited most of the major cities in the UK, including Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester. Trade also had its own arena at a Creamfields dance music festival.

Trade was a brand whose name and music reputation was to spread across the world, with events in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Dublin, Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Miami, Rio, Sydney, Tel Aviv and many more. Trade also enjoyed residencies in Ibiza, Los Angeles, New York, Paris and even Moscow. Many events were organised by Tour Manager Rod Lay.

Trade on television and radio

The *Queer Street* series of television programmes on Channel 4 broadcast the documentary *Trade: the All-Night Bender* in 1998. Trade also appeared on BBC2's *Gaytime TV*, a late-night gay-themed comedy and lifestyle magazine show aired during the late 1990s. Meanwhile, an episode of the well-known US-TV show *Sex in the City* featured a scene using a mock-up of Trade in New York. And, due to its success, Trade enjoyed a regular weekly radio show on Atlantic 252, an Irish-based station broadcasting across Ireland and the UK, as well as Trade DJs often performing on Kiss FM.

Trade at Love Parade

Despite winning club awards from the gay and music press, one of Trade's proudest moments came with the spectacular Love Parade festival in Leeds in 2000, when BBC Radio One approached Trade to take part in the festival entertaining nearly 500,000 people. Trade dominated the occasion and it was seen as a real sense of achievement that a gay club occupied the main stage at a national Radio One event.



Australia : Sydney

Friday 17th April

Saturday 18th April

Following on from the sellout Trade event at the Metro in November 1997 Trade returns to Sydney this time over two nights. Those of you who attended last time and were still stomping and clapping for more at 7am will undoubtedly be back. For those of you who didn't go do not miss your chance to be part of the Trade Experience.

Metro : 624 George St. City.

Flyer for Trade in Sydney, Australia, 1998



Tonic performing on the Trade Stage at Love Parade, 2000

TRADE: THE FINAL YEARS

Trade residency

Having one of the longest residencies at any one venue, each and every week, inevitably resulted in some pressures arising.

By the early 2000s there was increasing competition from rival clubs and club nights. In addition, music was becoming more commercial and venues faced more rigorous regulations which affected 'the vibe'. Consequently, the underground feel on which Trade thrived was rapidly disappearing from the scene. In response, off-shoots Kinky Trade and Trade Future were developed to offer an alternative direction, with new sounds and new DJs.

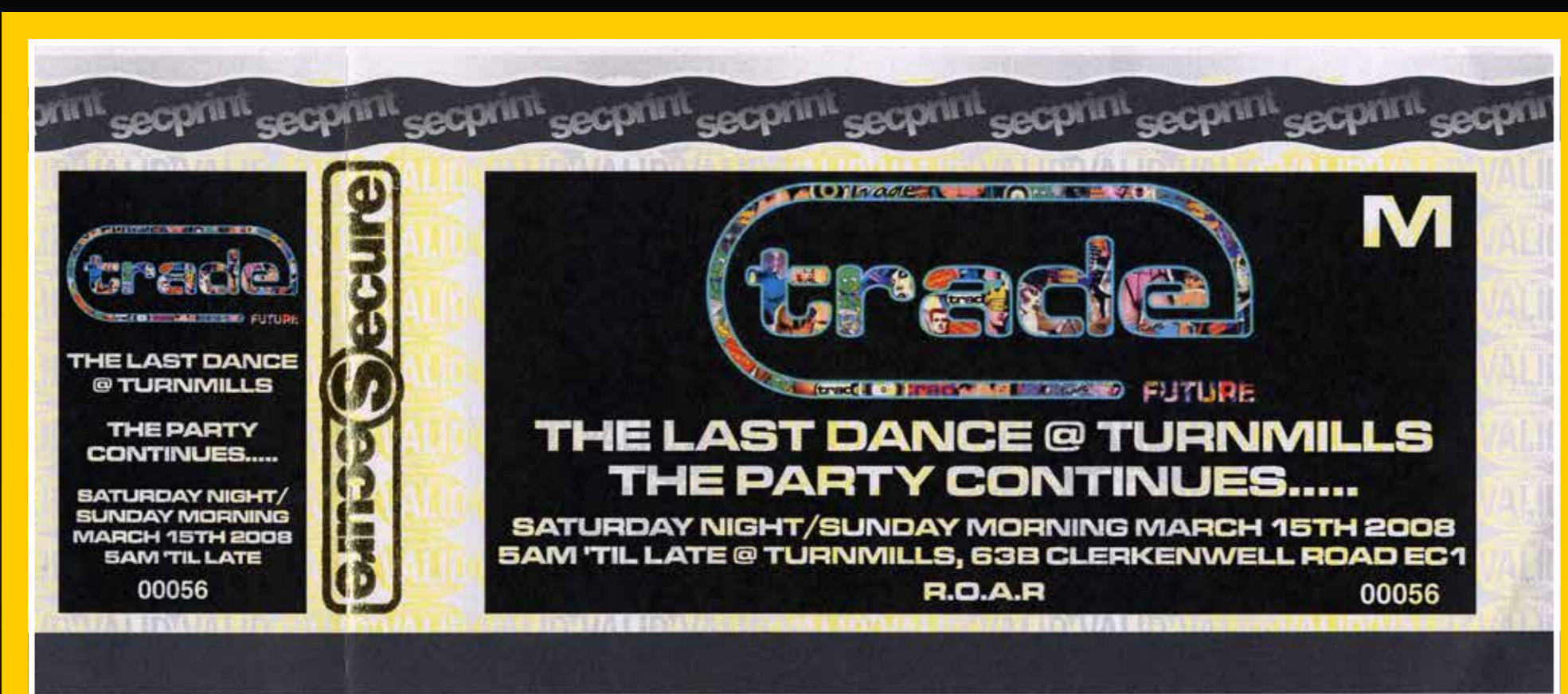
Trade's weekly residency at Turnmills ended on its 12th Birthday in October 2002. Club nights went monthly for a while and then only returned to Turnmills for big events, such as New Year's Day.

Egg

Laurence Malice enjoyed the one-off parties as these were less pressured. It also allowed him time to work on his new project, Egg, which saw the Trade offices in York Way, Islington being turned into a club venue. Egg opened in May 2003 and was a great success, winning the prestigious Bar Entertainment and Dance Association (BEDA) Award for best club in London the same year.

Final Trade at Turnmills

On 18 January 2008, a Trade press release announced that the final Trade event at Turnmills would be held on Easter weekend, 22-23 March of that year. This was due to the closure of Turnmills as a clubbing venue. However, as there were so many events booked at Turnmills on these dates, it wasn't practical to run Trade after-hours over this weekend. So the final Trade was brought forward a week to Sunday 16 March.



Members ticket for the Last Dance at Turnmills in March 2008

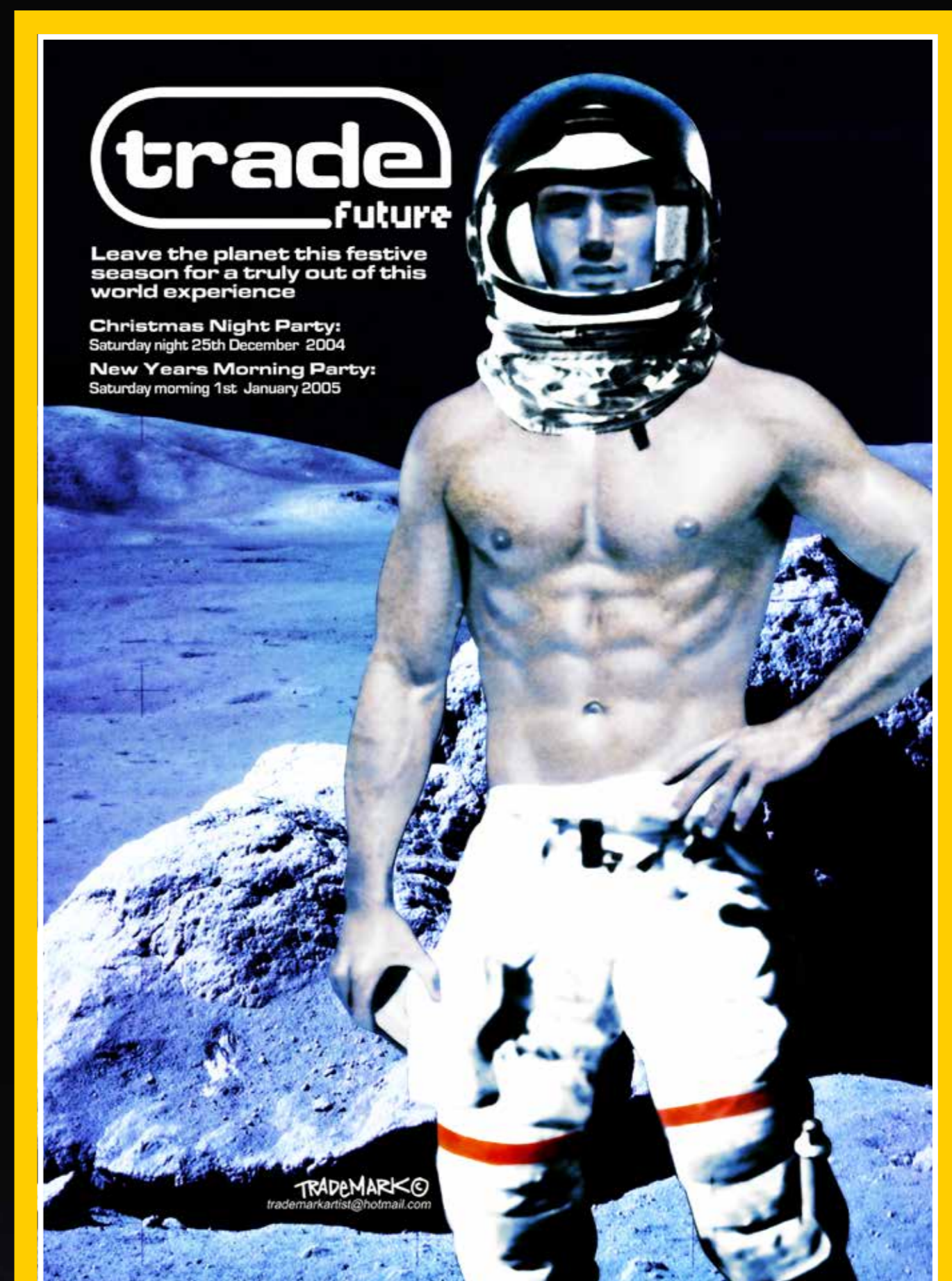
The club opened its doors at 05:00, finishing over 12 hours later at 17:45. During the event, Laurence Malice thanked clubbers and associates for their support and requested that everyone "really go for it!" Trade DJs past and present, including Malcolm Duffy, Ian M, Steve Thomas, Daz Saund and Pete Wardman, all performed to a sell-out crowd, and it fell to Wardman to play the last set; the final record being Marmion - *Schöneberg*.

Trade continued having one-off events in venues around London before settling at Egg and then only celebrating its birthday each year.

Trade 25

It was decided that Trade's 25th birthday event at Egg in October 2015 would be its last, ending in a glorious celebration of Trade History.

The sheer drive and creativity of Trade saw it become the first gay super-club night, an innovator in music and fashion and a unique brand, promoting for many, a unique way of life.



Flyer for Trade Future events at Christmas and New Year 2004/05