

A black and white photograph of Marlon Brando wearing a leather motorcycle jacket and a flat cap, sitting on a motorcycle. The motorcycle has a large headlight and a chrome gas tank with a 'John' logo. The background is slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

LEATHER CHAPS?

Ed Marlowe argues the case for the leather jacket as a Chappist staple

Mad Jack Churchill

"Chip" Butty on why this unhinged war hero was a true Chap's Chap

Small town boys

Tim Eyre on the brothers from an Armenian backwater who made names for themselves in very different ways

Oil and water

The Earl of Essex on his Film Night choice, *The Two Jakes*, sequel to the seminal *Chinatown*

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 113 MARCH 2016



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 2nd March in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Mr Robert Beckwith will deliver *A Languid Tour Through the World and Arts of Punting*, “featuring a live pricking demonstration”, whatever that means.

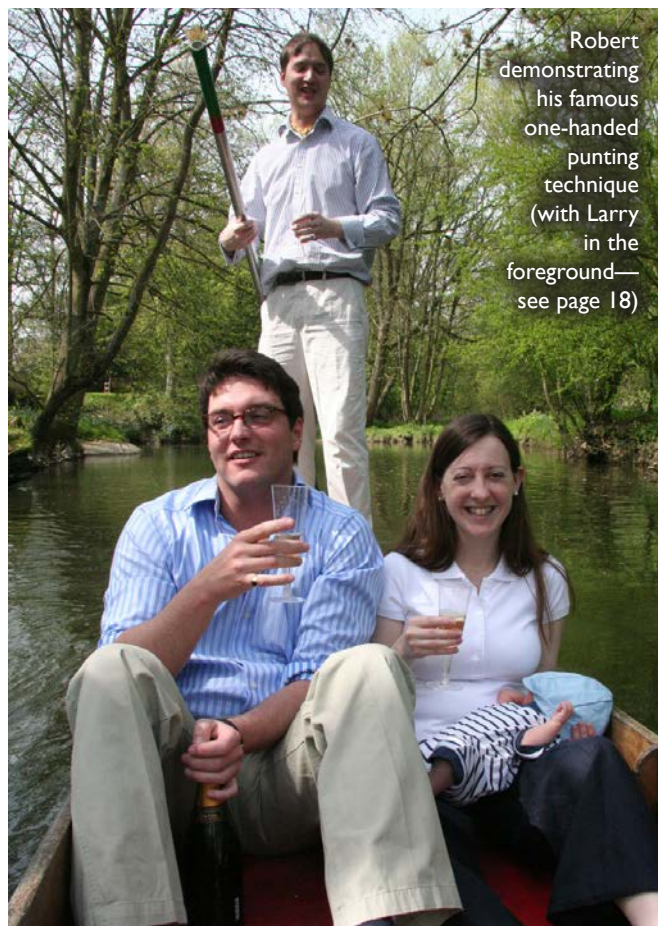
The Last Meeting

At our February meeting our speaker was Ed Marlowe, with an address entitled *Leather Chaps*, or more accurately *Leather, Chaps*, making the case for the leather jacket as a wardrobe essential. This may have raised a few eyebrows, perhaps as the leather jacket is often lumped with jeans as the garment of choice for the anti-smart. But Ed took us through the history, how these items were developed as warm, wind-proof protection

for dashing aviators and motorcyclists, and how they were partnered with collars and ties like any other kind of suit or sports jacket. He showed us the various styles that were developed by both sides in both wars—although the Germans did not for a long time issue them to their own airmen. WWI German airmen tended to be aristocrats who

simply bought civilian jackets that took their fancy; by WWII the RAF had the cheap but effective sheepskin Irvin jacket, and Luftwaffe pilots took to wearing their own Irvins, bartered from captured Allied pilots. A number of members of the audience wore leather jackets in support of the theme, including Mr Eyre who wore an entire outfit of black leather, including a leather shirt and tie. Many thanks to Ed for his stimulating and expertly delivered address.

An essay version of Mr Marlowe's talk begins on page 4.



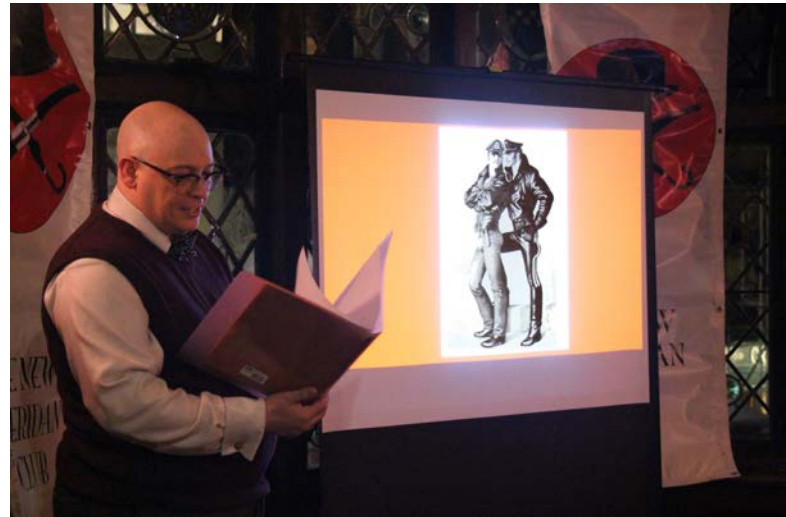
Robert demonstrating his famous one-handed punting technique (with Larry in the foreground—see page 18)



Leather Chaps

With Edward Marlowe

(Above) Torquil delivers his introductory remarks; (right) Ed starts by ruling out certain misconceptions; (below and below right) a goodly turn-out throngs the bar



Ed's slides (above) were complemented by a parade of the real things (right)



Simon Pile arrives, better late than never



(Left) Ed is illuminated by his closing image; (right) Tim Eyre takes the prize for the most leather worn at one time



LEATHER, CHAPS!

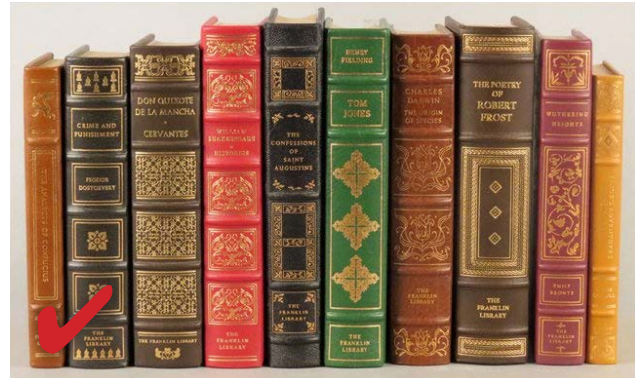
The case for the leather jacket as Chappist wardrobe staple by Edward Marlowe (aged 41½)

DEAR READER, it is my mission over the course of this short piece to make the case for the humble leather jacket as an essential part of a chap's wardrobe. As essential, dare I say, as tweed itself.

Now, when a chap's thoughts turn to leather, he may think of something to bind his books, or a stout pair of brogues to cover his feet. Perhaps a fine, leather Chesterfield sofa upon which to rest his posterior. Experience reveals that when one says "leather jacket" to some chaps, they recoil. Some of them even conjure up rather unchappist images. The Village People, say, or perhaps a Tom of Finland painting. (I invite the reader not to imagine such a scene featuring the various members of the Glorious Committee for Life. Some things one simply cannot unsee. Well, quite.) However, I digress. As we already have a mental picture of folks dressed like John Major's cabinet colleagues on a night out, let us, as the man said, go back to basics. I would remind my audience of the First Commandment of the Chap Manifesto:

"THOU SHALT ALWAYS WEAR TWEED. No other fabric says so defiantly: I am a man of panache, savoir-faire and devil-may-care, and I will not be served Continental lager beer under any circumstances."

So, one may ask, Why do we wear tweed? Clearly, that marvellous cloth has a strong element of panache, the soupçon of devil may care, the *je ne sais quois*, the *je voudrais un promenade dans votre chambre, madame...* but we'll come back to that. Tweed is gloriously practical. It can shield us from the elements, as well as protecting the body. Tweed is durable: a quality tweed will do for many years, gaining a glorious patina





Clothes shopping in the days before the anti-fur lobby

as it ages; not the dreaded polyester shine or saggy bum of contemporary leisurewear. Chaps enjoy fine tailoring involving Tweed. There is the craftsmanship in putting together a beautifully cut, yet practical pair of plus fours, or trousers, hacking jacket, indeed, the whole suit. Not only about style, this is also about supporting and preserving small-scale, local tailoring and bespoke industries. So can leather possibly manage this same feat, to be all the things that our beloved tweed is or represents? Why, yes. Yes it can. In spades.

To fully appreciate the qualities that the leather jacket has in common with our beloved tweed, we must turn to the pages of history. When man first came down from the trees and realised he was naked, it was to the animals he turned. Seeing that they fared pretty well in their own skins, he set about



The Romans made a good fist of leather armour



Plucky English archers, unencumbered by metal armour



Royal Flying Corps observer's flying kit, 1917

formed protection for the torso, were made from studded leather belts long before Jodie Marsh got in on the act. Despite the arrival of chainmail and even plate armour as time wore on, leather armour remained popular, as it was, by comparison, much easier in which to move quickly (important in a fight) and also cheaper. Cost was, of course, an issue for the average fighting man, who in the Middle Ages was expected to be ready to be called up and sent off to die for the vain glories of the feudal system. Ease of movement, however, should not be underestimated: the greater freedom of movement afforded by a padded leather jerkin rather than plate armour or even chainmail was important in particular for English archers, the most significant reason for Henry V—as his “happy few”, his “band of brothers”—being able to triumph at Agincourt. (Or so I’m sure I remember Kenny Branagh telling me back in ’84, when I saw Henry V as my first exposure to Shakespeare. Mostly I remember Brian Blessed’s laugh and the cannon effects, but still...)

The protective qualities of leather would become even more important when we reach

acquiring those skins to wear for himself, as the reader will no doubt be aware, quite possibly from having observed that classic work of archaeological research and reconstruction *The Flintstones* by Messrs Hanna and Barbera. Over time, man learned the skills of stripping an animal’s skin and treating the hide so that it would not rot, and leather as we know it was born.

As he progressed, man realised that leather not only hid his nakedness, but helped to keep him warm, leather being a natural windbreak. Important, as life in these times was hard. Very hard. And it only got worse when man invented war. They say necessity is the mother of invention. Well, while the “mother of all wars” may yet have been millennia away, man realised pretty quickly, through a lot of trial and error, and not a little death, that a furry tutu with which he had mainly clothed himself to this point is all very well for duelling through the medium of interpretive dance, but once you involve slings and arrows, and swords, spears, daggers, morning stars, flails, clubs, halberds, axes... something rather more robust is required.

At this point, he began to fashion for himself leather armour. Leather Armour! The Romans did it rather well—and with not a little panache. Their tutus, skirting the bottom of finely



Unknown British pilot in a “Barnstormer” style jacket

the 20th century, the true age not only of the leather jacket, but also the arrival of the two most significant human activities behind its rise to prominence: aviation and motorcycling. From the Wright Brothers' first experiments with gliders in 1900, manned aircraft (true aircraft, not airships, hot air balloons or any of that malarkey, but proper planes) developed apace. By the time of the Great War, planes could fly somewhat higher, and in an open cockpit, up there for some time, you needed protection from the cold; both low temperatures, and the windchill factor. Plenty of layers helped with the cold, but leather really added something by giving that elusive windbreaking factor. Leather coats with blanket lining really helped. This became increasingly important, as military aircraft, initially only used for reconnaissance and initially pretty much unarmed (parachutes were not issued, lest they encourage cowardice and bailing out, and the revolvers with which pilots were issued were intended not to shoot at the enemy with—although the first dog fights involved exactly that—but as a means to end it quickly for a pilot who had caught fire), became involved in direct combat with the enemy, and flying hours increased.

An early style of flying coat, ankle-length and heavily lined, was commonly seen worn by British pilots around the time of the Royal Flying Corps evolving into the Royal Air Force, the first dedicated, separate military flying service in the world, as of 1st April,



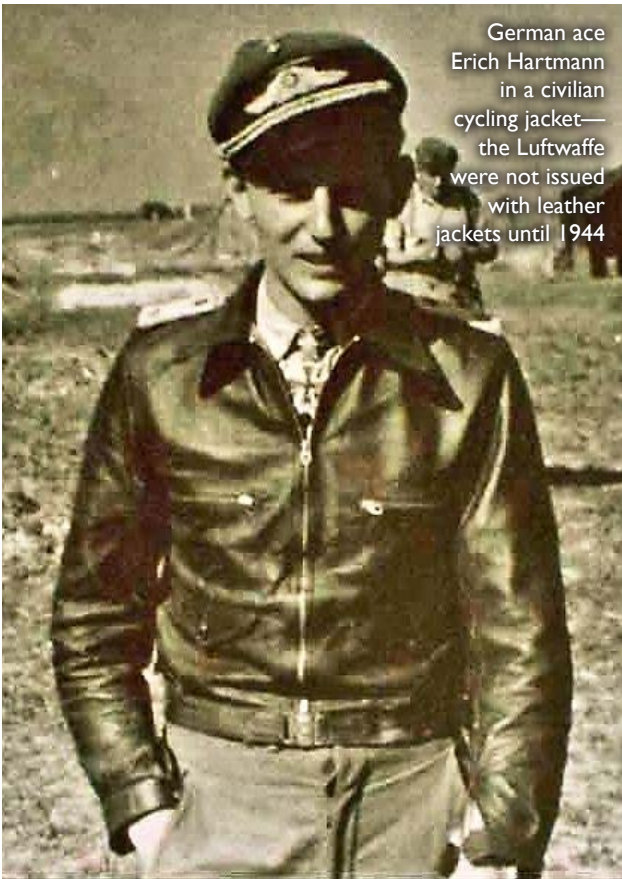
The revolutionary Irvin jacket

1918. These were utilitarian, if perhaps not quite so stylish as a Chap might hope. Warm, but not exactly promenading wear. Mainly these early flying jackets were civilian items, pressed into military service via private purchase, and at least some of the guys wearing them showed a lot of flair. More stylish pilots opted for a thigh-length, belted leather

jacket of a kind that was especially popular among civilian aviators, and is still commonly known today as a “barnstormer”, named after the display stunt pilots who performed as a public entertainment, a spectacle that was particularly popular in the USA during the interwar years. Perhaps the most famous wearer of a Barnstormer style jacket was German aristocrat, Manfred Von Richthofen.



The iconic A2 jacket



German ace Erich Hartmann in a civilian cycling jacket—the Luftwaffe were not issued with leather jackets until 1944

Various military designs came and went during the interwar years, but the real heyday of leather jackets in aviation in general, and the military in particular, was undeniably the Second World War, for the RAF, the United States Army Air Forces (the USAF not appearing as a separate branch of service until 1947), and even the Luftwaffe. Even in the early 21st century, the USAAF sheepskin B3 jacket is both practical and pleasing to the eye, but arguably the most stylish flying jacket was, of course, the RAF “Irvin”.

Leslie Irvin, an American, set up in business in the UK in 1926. An established provider of parachutes (he invented the rip-cord parachute, and he was the first person to do a freefall parachute jump), he also was the first to use sheepskin to make flying jackets. This revolutionised production, both in terms of speed and cost (which would be phenomenally important during the war years), as instead of lining another hide with sheepskin for warmth, these jackets used a single layer of treated sheepskin. Very light to wear, and surprisingly resilient.

Adopted by the RAF in the mid 1930s, early Irvins had a simple design with just four panels making up the body. By the Battle of Britain in 1940 an eight-panel body design was in place. Later in the war more panels were used, as resources became scarce and every bit of fleece was valuable. An interesting variation was the Coastal Command Irvin, which featured a hood in a bilious yellow hue, designed to make a pilot forced to ditch in the sea easier to spot. These were, of course, not issued to pilots flying over occupied Europe on bombing missions. Irvins, B3s (and other, less-well-known sheepskin types experimented with by the USAAF) were short, waist-length jackets, as they were paired with trousers as part of a suit. Later versions even had electrical wiring and could be plugged into a socket in the plane console.

On a global scale, the most famous leather flying jacket is doubtless the A2. A beautiful piece of classic design from the USAAF, with leather to keep the wind-chill out, and knits at the waist and cuffs to keep out the draft. Not as warm as the sheepskin B3, obviously, and while it saw its share of active service it was probably more commonly worn while not in the air, especially when trying to impress English girls at hangar dances. The original specification from 1930 required horsehide, though during the war years they were also produced in goat, and even

Air ace Adolf Galland in a British Irvin



During the golden age of the 1950s and 1960s the British were quick to get in on the act with some great designs, and there are still small, artisan firms producing entirely British-made jackets; on the left, from top to bottom, are the Lewis Lightning, the Eastman Irvin and the Aero Aeromarine

steer. Tens of thousands of A2s were issued, most between 1942 and 1943, and many were in service long after that, despite being superseded by textile jackets in 1943.

The propaganda image of the dashing young airman of course boosted public interest in the design, along with many imitations of varying accuracy and, indeed, quality, and the basic A2 design remains popular to this day, with some fans paying up to 1,500 US dollars for a bespoke, perfect recreation. Of course for we Europeans, at least those of us under about 60, what really cemented the A2's cool factor was, and remains, famous motorcyclist Mr Steven McQueen, playing Captain Virgil Hiltz who, despite being entirely fictional, remains by far the most famous of all of those involved in the so-called "Great Escape" from prisoner of war camp Stalag-Luft III in 1944.

US Navy pilots had their own equivalent of the A2, the M422a, an equally lovely piece of design. Unlike the A2, which was phased out in 1943, only to be returned in a new, less attractive form in 1988, the US Navy jackets remained in constant production under various names (M422, M422a, AN6552, G1) from the 1930s until today, largely unchanged, with only a short hiatus in production between 1979 and early 1981.

The Luftwaffe boys were not so lucky; they were not issued with their leather jackets until 1944. Strange that a military nation with uniform contractors of the capability of Hugo Boss didn't think to design and manufacture a stylish flying jacket of their own until much later than everyone else—though perhaps the small matter of the Treaty of Versailles' bar on a German air force meaning the Luftwaffe had to be assembled in secret until 1938 had something to do with it. Prior to that they had to make do with privately purchased civilian items, often sourced from outlets in occupied France. Indeed, what many think of as "a Luftwaffe jacket" is actually a civilian cycling jacket, a typical example being the famous one sported by Luftwaffe Ace Erich Hartmann. Others opted to wear jackets acquired in trade with captured Allied pilots, and many



photographs exist of Luftwaffe aircrew wearing captured A2s and B3s, traded for items of their own as “war souvenirs” with captured American airmen. Perhaps most famous of all these Allied-made, Luftwaffe-worn was the British Irvin jacket proudly sported by Adolf Galland. A charming and noble knight of the air, by all accounts, with a real fondness for his dogs. Such a shame his boss was rather a twerp. In 1944, the sheepskin Kanaljacke finally arrived for the Luftwaffe, bearing a strong design influence of the Allied alternatives.

Sadly, while the USN nobly kept on with their G1 jackets (and still do), and the US Air Force eventually reintroduced a “version” of the A2, the stylish leather jacket largely disappears from military and even civil aviation at this point. This, of course, is where motorcycling picks up the panache baton. The first production motorcycle was built in Germany in 1894 by Hildebrand & Wolfmüller—also the first machine to be called a motorcycle, or *Motorrad*. In the early years of motorcycling, tweed was common, also waxed cotton jackets. In the early days leather jackets were simply sports jackets to be worn with collar and tie

and wool. But leather soon began to gain a following, owing to its capability to keep out the wind, its durability, and, of course, its panache.

Back in the interwar years when civilian motorcycling really got going, there was little in the way of specialist motorcycle clothing. Some existed, notably that manufactured by Harley Davidson and Lewis Leathers, but most of the stuff the dashing young motorcyclist would wear was simply considered a “sports jacket”—always worn with a collar and tie, naturally. The real boom in motorcycling jackets designed and produced specifically for that purpose came in the post-war years, as motorcycling arose as a distinct culture. This is the era that saw the birth of the Hell’s Angels, the Boozefighters, the Black Cats and indeed the Hollister Incident of 3rd–6th July 1947, as fictionalised in 1953 film *The Wild One*, starring a young Marlon Brando in the leading role of Johnny Strabler (see this issue’s front cover).

This late 1940s–50s period was a golden age for stylish motorcycle leather jackets. Even the Brits got in on the act, with some stunning new designs from many diverse firms, most now long gone. Rivett’s of Leytonstone, Highwayman, Wolf and myriad others. The mighty Lewis Leathers, still in business today, clothed 1950s bikers, 1960s rockers and 1970s punks. For all of them, leather kept the wind and the cold out, and acted as a form of armour, just as it did the Romans—albeit less an enemy’s spear and more a spill on the tarmac, or some Teddy Boy revivalist’s straight razor, that it protected the body against. Even in early 2016, the leather jacket continues to offer protection from such attack: on 10th February this year, the *Evening Standard* reported that a Mr Du’wayne Holness “was stabbed four times after asking gatecrashers to leave his niece’s 14th birthday party”. “He was,” according to the *Standard*, “stabbed in the back, side and arm in a frenzied attack, but two blows he believes would have hit his heart were deflected by his [leather] jacket.” As in flying, so in motorcycling: leather protects the body, and looks good into the bargain.

Now, as the reader will have realised, in order to be protective, both against the elements and in the sense of armouring, leather must be hardwearing and durable; given a quality hide, well-tanned and fit for purpose, it certainly is. So, protective and durable. That leaves us

America's No. 1 SUED LEATHER SPORTS JACKET
JUBILEE SPECIAL \$7.89

Smartest of the Season
 • Best quality selected suede leather.
 • Swagler action back with inverted center pleat, trim tucks at yoke and at stitched-down half belt.
 • Popular concock style with slide fastener front. Deep slash pockets.
 • Full side gussets up to armbolts.
 • Adjustable side buckle straps.
 • Full lined throughout body and sleeves with lustrous rayon.
 • Collar and wide inside front facings made of smooth grain leather. Facings extend to bottom of pockets. Average length of jacket, 25 1/2 inches.

41 D 629—Cocoa Brown Suede Leather Jacket..... \$7.89

for Style... Wear Leather

B Swanky!
\$8.50

C
\$6.45
27-In. Long

D
\$5.39
Complete Outfit

Newest "Ostrich" Grained Leather
 • Swanky sports back with shirred yoke and inverted center pleat. Four tucks at the stitched-on half belt.
 • One-half wood grained knit waistband. Jacket is 27 in. long—two to four in. longer than others selling at a similar low price. Collar, adjustable cuffs and piping on handy slash pockets made of smooth-grained leather. Strong saateen lining.

41 D 613—Brown "Ostrich" Grained Leather..... \$8.50
41 D 614—Black "Ostrich" Grained Leather..... 8.50

Big Values! Suede or Pig Grained!
 • Inexpensive cocoa brown suede leather. Also new pig grained leather in brown or black. (See small view.)
 • Smart shirring across new curved yoke back.
 • One-half wood grained knit waistband. Jacket is 27 in. long—two to four in. longer than others selling at a similar low price. Collar, adjustable cuffs and piping on handy slash pockets made of smooth-grained leather. Strong saateen lining.

41 D 623—Cocoa Brown Suede..... \$6.45
41 D 625—Brown Pig Grained..... 6.45
41 D 626—Black Pig Grained..... 6.45

High Quality! Low Price!
 • Top quality cocoa brown suede leather, made by the best tanners from the choicest skins. Full saateen lined.
 • Full length, 27 inches. Two to four inches longer than garments selling elsewhere at similar prices.
 • It's proven in favor with the sportsman, the college student and the busy young man. One-half wood grained knit collar, cuffs and one-half wood grained knit waistband. One-piece front and back. Full length with extra comfort, extra warmth to the very extremes of temperature. One-piece front and back. Full length. Money-saving low price.

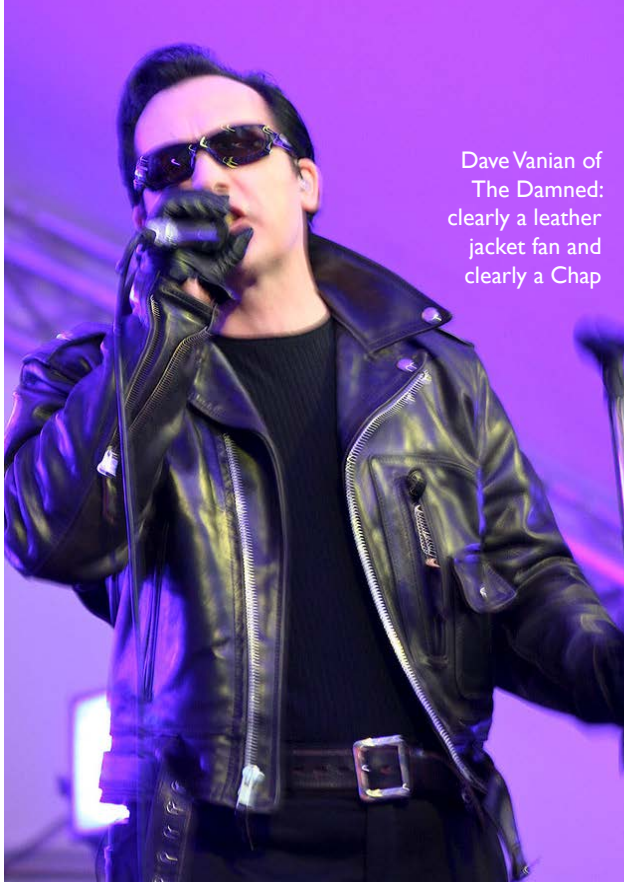
41 D 627—Cocoa Brown Suede..... \$5.95
41 D 628—Navy Blue Jacket..... \$2.95
41 D 629—Navy Blue Slacks..... 2.69
41 D 630—Brown Slacks..... 2.69
Jacket and Pants outfit..... \$5.39
 of either of above colors..... \$5.39

Swanky Corduroy
 • Concock style jacket has snappy inverted center pleat in back. Striped on half belt. Adjustable cuffs. Side gussets with adjustable buckle straps.
 • Slacks have wide 22-inch bottoms, strong semi-slash pockets, adjustable side buckle straps.
 • First and foremost in the race for sporty, dandy, high-tobed style. This strong, thicket narrow wale corduroy outfit invaded the college of the country and now holds a firm place in the wardrobe of style-minded young men. Tough, wear-resistant service for a small sum. A dandy combination!

SIZES: Jackets, even chest sizes 34 to 44 in.; Slacks, even waist sizes 28 to 36 in.; all mens sizes 29 to 34 in. State measurements. For easy instructions, see Page 341 for Jackets; Page 332 for Slacks. Shipping wt., Jacket, 2 lbs. 8 oz.; Slacks, 2 lbs. 12 oz. Combination outfit, 3 lbs. 4 oz.

41 D 628—Navy Blue Jacket..... \$2.95
41 D 629—Navy Blue Slacks..... 2.69
41 D 630—Brown Jacket..... 2.95
41 D 631—Brown Slacks..... 2.69
Jacket and Pants outfit..... \$5.39
 of either of above colors..... \$5.39

SEARS-ROEBUCK 337



Dave Vanian of
The Damned:
clearly a leather
jacket fan and
clearly a Chap



only craftsmanship, bespoke industry, and panache to establish. Well, whether you favour a Lewis Lightning or an Eastman Irvin, an Aero Aeromarine or any one of dozens of other styles, you can still today go to a small, British specialist firm run by enthusiastic craftsmen who make beautiful things. There are many other companies in the UK, but these three are notable for each designing and manufacturing their product wholly in the UK, using well-trained and well-treated machinists who love their jobs. London-based Lewis specialise in their own historical 1950s and 1960s designs, Eastman, located in Devon, mostly WW2 era military jackets and, up in the Scottish Borders, Aero are untouchable for civilian leather jacket designs from the 1920s through to the late 1950s. Local craftsmanship and design: what more could a chap want? If you go to Aero, you can even order your jacket to be lined with Harris Tweed to help keep out the chill!

These are all small-scale British businesses who really make beautiful products. Not exactly cheap, it is true, but then for the price of an Old Town suit, you can have a leather jacket that will, with a little care and upkeep, be something you can hand down to future generations, who might merely need to reline it, and give it a little polish. Not bad for something which could have 20 or 30 years of wear in it before that. It's worth bearing in mind that many of the original jackets which these companies reproduce are

still in regular wear 70+ years since they were first made, and the wearer can reasonably expect similar service from the modern equivalent.

So, we come to the final question. Yes, leather is protective, durable, and lovely jackets spring forth from a small-scale industry providing thriving craftsmanship, but are they, ahem, "Chap"? Well, Dave Vanian, for one, seems to think so, and if you can't take style tips from the most Chappish of all punk rock nobility, who can you? Even back in the day, the manufacturers of motorcycle jackets and sportswear leathers considered a collar and tie to be the way they should be worn, a notion with which a Chap can wholeheartedly agree. The adorning of one's back with a fine leather jacket need not lead to slippage elsewhere on the style front, far from it. Indeed, it can serve to enhance a sound look.

So in conclusion, dear reader, leather jackets, like tweed, are protective, durable, involve supporting small-scale, local craftsmen, and they are undeniably stylish, debonair, rakish, even. Uber-stylish, one might say (to which I'd inevitably reply, get a real taxi, you cheapskate). Ladies and gentlemen, there is undeniably a place in the Chappist wardrobe for a good leather jacket, and I strongly support those of you who choose to acquire one or several.

MAD JACK CHURCHILL.

Was he a Chap?

By Valentine "Chip" Butty

LIEUTENANT COLONEL John Malcolm Thorpe Fleming ("Mad Jack") Churchill, DSO and bar, MC and bar (1906–1996), professional soldier (Infantry and Commandos), adventurer, actor, model, archer, surfer. This amazing man's story is now more widely known, and bears comparison with the life of that 19th-century adventurer Sir Richard Burton, and with his contemporary, that other professional soldier and sometime thespian, Sir David Niven.

Even though Mad Jack was known for carrying a Scottish officer's basket-hilted broadsword (often erroneously referred to as a "claymore"), playing the pipes as he waded ashore and occasionally shooting the enemy with an English longbow, did Mad Jack go above and beyond? Was Mad Jack truly a Chap?

Just as certain individuals will be described as a man's man, or indeed a woman's woman, I will endeavour to prove to fellow Members that Mad Jack was not just a Chap, but indeed a Chap's Chap.

Mad Jack's life prior to the age of 20 was uneventful, but he appears to have developed an early interest in his lifelong pursuits of archery and the bagpipes. His archery talents led to a minor role, at the age of 18, in the 1924 film *The Thief of Baghdad* starring Douglas Fairbanks, not to be confused with the better known remake of



1940. (Just after the war, possibly while on leave, Mad Jack was asked to play another minor role, as an archer shooting from a castle wall, in the film *Ivanhoe* which starred his "old rowing companion" Robert Taylor.)

Enlistment and the East

In 1926 young Churchill graduated from RMC Sandhurst and was allocated to Infantry, serving with the Second Battalion the Manchester Regiment in Burma. After ten years of service, distinguished by a solo motorcycle trip through the wilds of Burma

(using railway tracks as the most reliable roads available) he left the Army as a Captain.

Civilian interlude

Between 1936 and 1939, the only non-military period in his early working life, Mad Jack worked as a professional piper, a newspaper editor in Nairobi, and as a male model.

"A gentleman", it is said, "is one who knows how to play the bagpipes but refuses to do so." Mad Jack defied that observation, taking second place in a piping competition at the Aldershot Tattoo of 1938. In 1939, he represented the United Kingdom at the World Archery Championships in Oslo. His achievements there are unrecorded, but his later military use of the longbow suggests a high degree of skill.



Jack Churchill (far right) leads a training exercise, sword in hand, from a Eureka boat in Inveraray

Re-enlistment and France

Mad Jack rejoined the Army in September 1939, “the country having got into a jam in my absence”. May 1940 found him back with the Manchester Regiment, moving purposefully through western France towards Dunkirk. It was in this campaign that Mad Jack applied his considerable archery skills at the tactical level.

During the Dunkirk campaign, his last as a line Infantry officer before transferring to the Commandos, Mad Jack shot the enemy with his long bow on two known occasions. I quote from the Wikipedia entry:

“...in May 1940 Churchill and his unit, the Manchester Regiment, ambushed a German patrol near L’Epinette... Churchill gave the signal to attack by cutting down the enemy Feldwebel (Sergeant) with a barbed arrow, becoming the only British soldier known to have felled an enemy with a longbow in WW II.”

According to his son Malcolm, “He and his section were in a tower and as the Germans approached he said, ‘I will shoot the first German with an arrow,’ and that’s exactly what he did.”

Later in the campaign (from the Dundee *Evening Telegraph*, May 1945, quoted in the *Daily Mail Australia*, 1 January 2013): “ He was on patrol when some

Germans were detected in a thicket about 200 yards away... He shot two arrows into the thicket. There were some strange noises and no answering fire.”

In one of many probably typical engagements, Mad Jack is quoted (1940) as saying of a German machine gun posing an immediate threat, “I’ll cover you with my bow and arrow. Don’t worry, it’s only an MG42.” Rather peevisly, the relator adds: “Those must have been the last words some men heard.” (Pedantically, a connoisseur of German support weapons adds that in 1940 the weapon in question must have been an MG34. We’ll tiptoe quietly away from all that.)

Mad Jack earned the Military Cross for his part in the BEF expeditionary campaign.

Jack (front) during a landing exercise





Inspecting a captured gun

Commandos and Marriage

An unlikely combination, one might think. On return from France, Mad Jack volunteered for a new military organisation promising varied and interesting service. Aspiring commandos were sent to a remote and inhospitable part of Scotland for training, along with their American counterparts, who began commando training with the British. The training course was marred (for others) by Mad Jack's habit of playing the pipes in the wee hours of the morning on the rare occasions when they were billeted at a hotel, and not undertaking night training.

It was in Scotland that Mad Jack met Rosamund Denny, the daughter of a Scottish baronet and ship-builder. They were married in Dumbarton in 1941. The happy marriage produced two children and lasted till Mad Jack's death a mere 55 years later.

Norway

In December 1941, Captain Churchill, now a qualified commando officer, was 2IC of 3 Commando Company when it raided a German garrison in the fjord-town of Vagsoy (or Vaagso) in Norway. The objective was to take out two shore batteries located on nearby Maaloy Island and to do as much damage as possible to the local infrastructure. The operation was a resounding success.

After jumping from a landing craft, Mad Jack played "The March of the Cameron Men" on the bagpipes (who was on drums is not recorded) and threw a grenade at the German

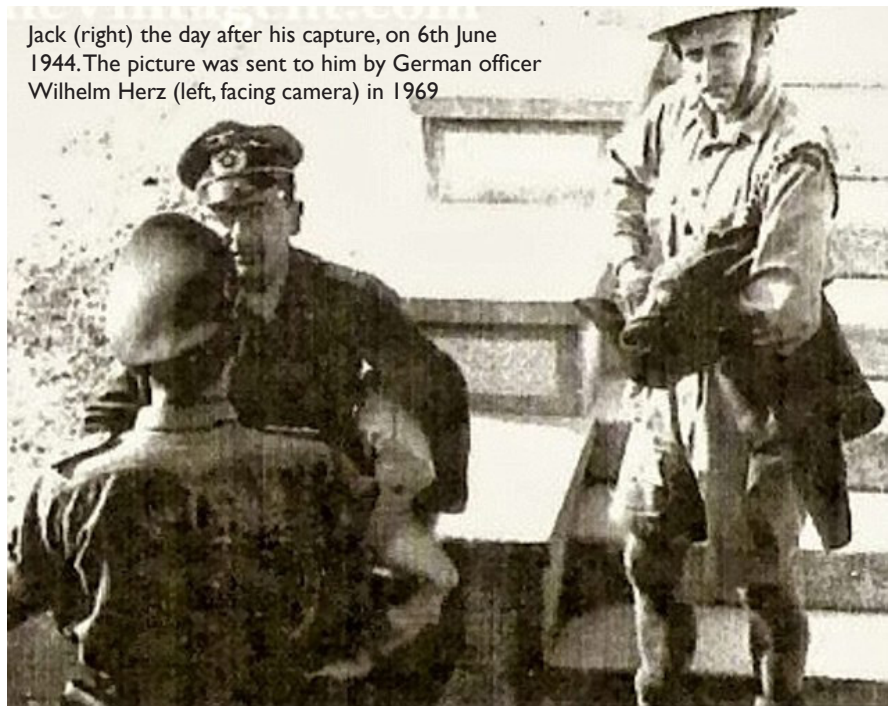
position to commence the attack. James Hart (cited later) records that the batteries were silenced and the German garrison obliterated. Shipping, docks, warehouses and vital fish-oil plants were destroyed. Mad Jack signalled to the raid commander: "Maaloy battery and island captured. Casualties slight. Demolitions in progress. Churchill."

During the demolition phase, a poorly timed demolition charge "thoughtlessly blew down a wall [Mad Jack] happened to be leaning against". Of Mad Jack's head wound, he later said: "I had to touch it up from time to time with Rosamund's lipstick to keep the wounded hero story going." For his role in this successful operation, Mad Jack received a second Military Cross.

In reply to a senior officer's question about his carrying a sword on operations, Mad Jack was quoted as saying: "In my opinion, sir, any officer who goes into action without his sword is improperly dressed."

Italy

By July 1943, Major Churchill, now Officer



Jack (right) the day after his capture, on 6th June 1944. The picture was sent to him by German officer Wilhelm Herz (left, facing camera) in 1969

Commanding 2 Commando Company, was leading the charge in Catania, Sicily, correctly dressed, from his viewpoint, with basket-hilted broadsword, longbow, arrows and bagpipes. Clearly a pattern was beginning to emerge, one that was at variance with doctrinal reliance on surprise and concealment. Well, concealment anyway. Given Mad Jack's *tenue de guerre*, surprise was almost guaranteed.

In the same year, 2 Commando Company took part in the move to the Italian mainland at Messina and the Salerno Landings. Mad Jack was ordered to capture a German observation post near the town of Molina that covered the Salerno beachhead. Uncharacteristically relying on a more conventional form of surprise, Major Churchill and Corporal Ruffel crept from position to position *seriatim*, capturing one soldier or group of soldiers after another using those famed tools of war, a basket-hilted broadsword and a German human shield. Forty-two prisoners were quietly marched down to the beach, the wounded being wheeled in barrows by the uninjured. "It was like a scene from the Napoleonic Wars", quipped Mad Jack, who received a DSO for this exploit.

The Adriatic

In 1944, the Commandos, along with a variety of Allied Special Operations teams, were involved in an ongoing campaign of support to resistance fighters and partisans conducting raids and sabotage operations in the Balkans. In May of that year, Mad Jack was ordered to raid the German-held Adriatic island of Brac from Josip Broz Tito's partisan base on the island of Vis. His force consisted of 1,500 Yugoslav partisans led by 43 Commando Company with a Troop from 40 Commando Company.

The landing by day was unopposed, but the beach was covered by strong German positions on the heights beyond. Things got off to a clunky start when the partisans, observing how well-placed the German defenders were to give

suppressing fire, decided to put on the kettle and wait for the next morning. Undeterred, Mad Jack sounded the Commandos to charge in characteristic fashion, but a chance strafing of his force by an RAF Spitfire decided him to defer the assault as well. By now, any chance of a surprise attack against a well-positioned enemy was well and truly lost.

Next morning, the 1,500 partisans decided to stay on the beach, while Mad Jack led the 40 Commando troop in a frontal assault, with the larger 43 Commando Company attacking the German flank. Daring, unconventional, but workable, you might say with your Directing Staff hat on. Unfortunately, the Germans threw much of what they had at the frontal assault, killing all in the forward section with a mortar round, and stunning Mad Jack, who had been



Far right, on 15th September 1943 on Salerno, with Lt. Gen. Dick McCreery directing operations; you can see the tassel on Jack's broadsword pommel beneath his arm

leading while playing "Will Ye No Come Back Again." The operation failed and Mad Jack was captured.

The accounts of Mad Jack's captivity and eventual release are fragmentary and inconsistent, but, reconciling inconsistencies and filling in the gaps from additional sources, the story, as best I can piece it together, is as follows.

Captivity and Release

After recovering from his near death experience on Brac, Mad Jack was flown to Berlin for interrogation. He was then interned in Stalag Luft III, a POW camp run by the Luftwaffe,



Letting off steam at Land's End

Outnumbered, the SS guards moved out, leaving the prisoners behind. The prisoners were released and after the departure of the Germans, Churchill walked 150 kilometers to Verona...where he met an American armoured force.”

Back to the East

Returning to active duty after repatriation, Mad Jack was posted to Burma once again, presumably in a regular Infantry

who had been given a variety of ground combat and guard duties following the recent loss of nearly all of their aircraft. The camp was located in Sagan, Silesia, 100 kilometres south-east of Berlin, now Zagan in Poland. A US Air Force Academy research project describes it as one of six camps run by the Luftwaffe for captured US and British airmen and “a model of civilised internment”.

It was from Stalag Luft III that the Great Escape occurred in late March 1944, though Mad Jack is not listed as one of those involved. Several of those recaptured, with Mad Jack as well, were transferred to the infamous Sachsenhausen SS prison camp near Berlin as punishment, or because they were considered to be hard cases.

It was in September 1944 that Mad Jack and five RAF officers escaped via a tunnel prepared by two of them, moving unobtrusively towards the Baltic coast. They were recaptured and returned to Sachsenhausen, later being transferred, in April 1945, to a suitably remote facility in the Tyrol. There the POWs petitioned the local Wehrmacht officers, warning that they might be shot by the SS (as had been the fate of 50 Allied officers after the Great Escape). Not for the only time in the war, the Wehrmacht intervened to save the lives of captured Allied airmen, either from civilian lynch-mobs or from the SS. The Wikipedia entry records that, “An army unit commanded by Captain Wichard von Alvensleben [a decorated officer from an old aristocratic family, and of a religious bent] moved in to protect the prisoners.

role. While in India he learned of the Japanese surrender. He commented: “If it wasn’t for those damn Yanks, we could have kept this war going for another ten years.” (Possibly the least intelligent remark he ever made.) In 1946, at the age of 40, Mad Jack got his Para wings and later transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders.

Palestine

By 1948 Major Churchill was in the midst of troubled Palestine as 2IC, 1 Highland Light Infantry. In May of that year, a Jewish medical convoy was surrounded by Arab fighters in a small Jerusalem street near an HLI outpost. Mad Jack, coming straight from a battalion parade, rushed to the scene in a small armoured vehicle to conduct a quick recon.

Assessing the potential for the Jewish group to be wiped out, he radioed for backup in the form of two Staghound armoured vehicles. While awaiting their arrival, Mad Jack dismounted and walked into the teeth of the fray:

He was resplendent in full dress...kilt, Glengarry bonnet, red-and-white diced stockings, Sam Browne belt and white spats... “I grinned like mad from side to side... as people are less likely to shoot at you if you smile at them... [That] outfit in the middle of the battle, together with my grinning at them, may have made the Arabs laugh because most of them have a sense of humor. Anyway, they didn’t shoot me!”

(James Hart, “Mad Jack Churchill—A Rare Breed of Warrior”, *Warfare History Network*, 29th May, 2014).

The Jewish convoy refused offers of help,



Jack in later life

preferring to rely on the expected arrival of the Haganah. After their repeated rebuffs and the mortal wounding of one of his men, Mad Jack withdrew his small force to the nearby HLI outpost, where they continued to provide fire support to the medical convoy. The Haganah never arrived, and the Arab attackers prevailed, killing 77 in all.

In a later, happier episode, Mad Jack planned and led the evacuation of 700 patients, staff and students from the hospital on Mount Scopus, correctly assessing that the surrounding Arab force would not attack British infantry.

Australia, Retirement and Death

In later years Mad Jack was an exchange instructor at the Australian Army Land Warfare Centre at Canungra, not far from Queensland's Gold Coast. He became a devotee of board-surfing and, on his return to England, designed his own board and was the first person to ride the River Severn's two-metre tidal swell. He retired from the Army in 1959, moving straight into a bowler-hatted position in the Ministry of Defence (or the War Office, as it probably then still was), supervising the training



You know you've arrived when you can buy a model of yourself

of London District Cadets.

Now working in plain clothes, Mad Jack would travel into town by train. Returning home to Surrey in the evening, he would throw his heavy briefcase out of the train window at a certain stage in the journey, later explaining that it would land in his own back garden.

Mad Jack and Rosamund spent much of their spare time sailing (full-sized) coal-fired steam launches on the Thames. Mad Jack was also noted for building radio-controlled model warships to a high standard. He died peacefully at his home in Surrey in 1996.

Chappish Qualities

The *Punch* cartoonist Pont (Graham Laidlaw) produced a series of cartoons in and around 1938 under the title "The British Character", reproduced in *The Best of Punch Cartoons* (2008). I mention those which are relevant to our present theme. They are:

1. Refusal to Admit Defeat
2. Ability to be Ruthless
3. Love of Keeping Calm
4. A Disinclination to Sparkle
5. Importance of Not Being Intellectual
6. A Regard for Good Tailoring
7. A Disregard for Modern Tools and Methods.

To these one might add:

8. A Studied Insouciance
9. A Deliberate Eccentricity
10. A Love of Travel and Exploration
11. The Possession of Sangfroid
12. An Apparent Egotism concealing an Underlying Altruism
13. A Fondness for Bagpipes.

As the history above indicates, each and every one of these qualities is demonstrated in Mad Jack's crowded life.

He was indeed a true exemplar to us all — a Chap's Chap.

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.



Laurence Bennion

“No good deed goes unpunished”

Name or preferred name?

Larry. OK, I'll invent a chappist name... How about Lord Clifford Saville-Harris of Yewtree?

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

Let's move on.

Where do you hail from?

Betley [near Crewe, Staffordshire].

Favourite Cocktail?

Brandy with Cognac and a splash of Remy Martin.

Most Chappist skill?

Having no skills.

Most Chappist possession?

My wife... no, apparently she's not a possession.

Personal Motto?

No good deed goes unpunished.

Favourite Quotes?

“I don't want to see a ghost,
It's the sight that I fear most,
I'd rather have a piece of toast.”
—Des'ree

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

I've three nipples, a potent sign of sexual prowess and invulnerability. *[I can vouch for the three nipples, though not the rest of it —Ed]*

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Since it was a mere glint in the Committee's eye.

How did you hear about the Club to



At our Dickensian

begin with?

You told me, right after you told me Gustav had closed the last one.

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

Dagfields Crafts & Antiques Centre. Off the A51, coaches welcome.

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

Jack the Ripper and the Zodiac killer so I could find out who they were and Gemma Arterton for personal reasons.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Artemis Scarheart

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

No turn yet. How about my interpretation of the hit play *Warhorse* with the pantomime dobbin from *Rentaghost*?



At our undersea party in 2015



Enjoying a pipe at the 2010 punting trip

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.



an party in 2012 with wife (not possession) Catherine



With Niall Spooner-Harvey at the Sheridan Christmas House in 2006

THE CURSE OF THE SEQUEL

The Earl of Essex explains his choice for the February NSC Film Night, *The Two Jakes*

The *Two Jakes* was the long awaited—and I mean that literally as well as metaphorically—sequel to the much-lauded neo-noir mystery film *Chinatown*, set in Los Angeles in 1937.

Produced in 1973, *Chinatown* starred Jack Nicholson as private detective Jake Gittes, drawn into a municipal water rights scandal via a seemingly innocent request to act for a wife in a matrimonial dispute. Produced by Robert Evans for Paramount Pictures and directed by the acclaimed Polish director Roman Polanski, the film was nominated for 11 Academy Awards in 1975, winning Best Original Screenplay for Robert Towne.

Towne had written *Chinatown* as the first part of a trilogy illustrating the rise and corruption of Los Angeles in the 20th century, seen through the eyes of Gittes, with *Chinatown* concerning water, *The Two Jakes* concerning property and oil, and the third film, *Gittes vs Gittes* (never scripted), concerning air and Jake's own divorce.

However, in March 1977 Polanski was charged with statutory rape of a minor. He was

arrested but fled to France in February 1978, for fear of a lengthy prison sentence, and remains at large in Europe to this day. He was therefore unavailable to direct the sequel.

Towne, Evans and Nicholson set up a company to produce the film, with shooting scheduled to begin in 1985. Towne would direct, with Nicholson again starring as Gittes and Evans producing, while Paramount Pictures distributed. Evans had actually been the head of Paramount in the 1970s, turning the failing studio around, and eventually made an agreement with them to produce his own films, with Paramount having the distribution rights.

Evans was also to co-star in the film opposite Nicholson. (Although he had begun his career with some acting roles in the late 1950s, he had given it up as a lost cause in favour of producing.) With filming due to begin in April 1985 Towne had second thoughts about Evans's ability to handle the role and tried to drop him from the part. There was a vicious fight between the two and the film fell apart, with Paramount pulling production and a million pounds' worth



Jack Nicholson directing on set



Cue the metaphor: Jake Gittes learns how wild flowers can change colour if their seeds get scorched by summer fires...

of sets being torn down. Lawsuits ensued.

The film was eventually resurrected by Nicholson, with filming beginning at last in 1989. This time Nicholson himself was directing from the original Towne script, as well as playing Gittes, and now Harvey Keitel was co-starring as property developer Jake Berman (hence the film's title). Robert Evans remained as co-producer, with Nicholson.

The Two Jakes is again set in Los Angeles, this time in 1948, some 11 years after the events in *Chinatown*. Gittes has had a comfortable war in naval intelligence and now runs his detective agency from his own building, is a member of a country club and is engaged to be married. (Nicholson deliberately put on weight for the film, to show how comfortable Gittes has become.) The film begins with his character becoming involved with another seemingly innocuous matrimonial case—Jake Berman suspects his wife of having an affair with his business partner. Gittes arranges for Berman to burst into a hotel room and find the lovers, making a recording and taking photographs for the court case, but a gun appears from nowhere and the “outraged” Berman shoots his partner. When it emerges that the partner's death gives Berman sole ownership of the property business, the killing begins to look premeditated—and Gittes is in danger of being charged as an accessory to murder.

At the end of *Chinatown* Gittes's client Evelyn Mulwray is shot dead by police, and a subplot in *The Two Jakes* involves her daughter Katherine. Gittes never stopped feeling guilty

about Evelyn's death and tried to look out for Katherine, before losing track of her. Now he realises that he recognises Berman's property: he has been there before, in the previous film. The case soon develops into a much deeper conspiracy concerning the conflict between the post-war property boom and the existing oil and gas industry in the Los Angeles area, with the plot revolving around mineral rights and the recording made at the hotel, which everyone is trying to get hold of and which only Gittes knows captured a mysterious revelation about Mulwray.

The Two Jakes was released by Paramount Pictures in the US in August 1990. It's fair to say that it bombed at the box office—suffering from its delayed release, bad publicity and the struggle to live up to *Chinatown*—with takings at \$10 million against costs of \$19 million. It had only a limited “art house” release in the UK, its premiere held at the (185-seat) ICA in Pall Mall.

But critic Roger Ebert bucked the trend of naysaying by describing the movie as “such a focused and concentrated film that every scene falls into place like clockwork. It's not a thriller and it's not a whodunit, although it contains thriller elements and at the end we do find out whodunit. It's an exquisite short story about a mood, and a time, and a couple of guys who are blind-sided by love.” Now, 25 years after its release, it is perhaps due a reappraisal based on its own merits rather than as a sequel to an icon of its genre.

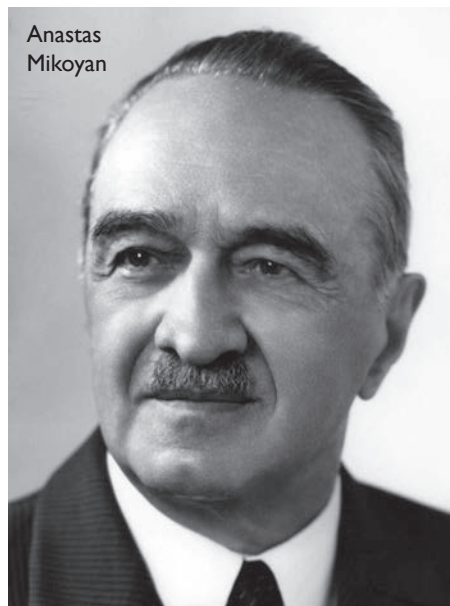
For details of our March Film Night see page 26.

THE MIKOYAN BROTHERS

Tim Eyre on two Armenians who made their mark in very different ways

THE SMALL EX-SOVIET NATION of Armenia lies in the Caucasus, with the troubled region of Chechnya to its north and Iran to its south. Slightly smaller than Belgium, Armenia is home to a population of three million. The country is notable for its rugged rural scenery, its long history and its many remnants of the Soviet era.

In the north of the country there stands a monastery called Sanahin, which dates back to the 10th century; Armenia was the first country in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion, having done so in the 4th century. The monastery is



Anastas Mikoyan

inscribed on the prestigious list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, putting it in the same league of tourist sights as Stonehenge and the Statue of Liberty. “Sanahin” simply means “this one is older than that one”, a reference to the nearby monastery of Haghpat which is a few decades newer.

These monasteries are quite rightly important stops on the tourist trail around Armenia. As well as being old and well preserved, they are fine examples of Armenia’s distinctive ecclesiastical

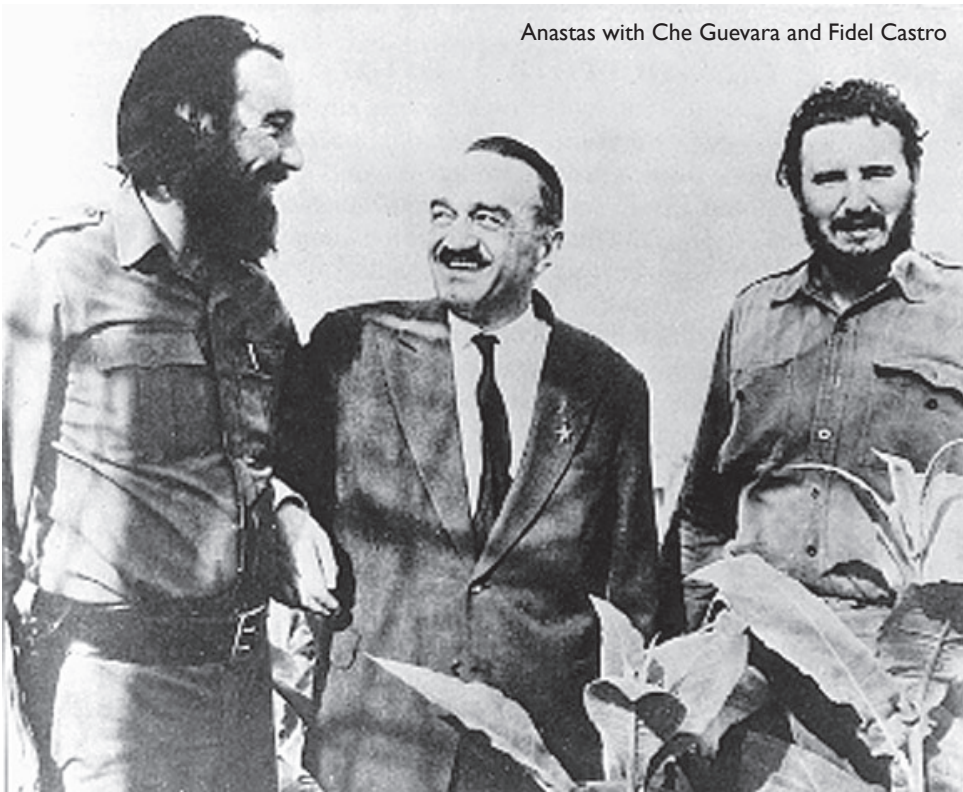
architecture. However, the village around Sanahin has another trick up its sleeve: it was the birthplace of not just one but two of the

personalities that helped shape the Soviet Union and the world of the Cold War. Furthermore, not only were these personalities born and raised in the same modest village in rural Armenia, but they were in fact brothers.

Anastas and Artem Mikoyan were both born a short walk from Sanahin monastery around the turn of the 20th century. Their mother was a rug weaver and their father a carpenter. Anastas was to become a leading Soviet statesman and Artem a leading Soviet aerospace engineer.

The 10th-century Sanahin monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that stands a short walk from the birthplace of the Mikoyan Brothers





Anastas with Che Guevara and Fidel Castro

from the Ottoman Empire, Anastas and 26 other commissars attempted to flee but were captured by another short-lived revolutionary party. The other commissars were executed but Anastas managed to survive, possibly by denouncing his comrades. This dodging of death was to become a theme throughout his life.

Anastas's work in Baku saw him elected to the Bolshevik Central Committee in 1922. He attracted the attention of Stalin,

The Statesman

Anastas was the older brother, having been born in 1895. He studied at an Armenian seminary but this religious education clearly had little effect on him because in 1915 he became involved with the Bolsheviks and was soon leading a revolutionary movement. After the revolution of February 1917, Anastas became a commissar in the Red Army and fought against anti-Bolshevik forces in Baku (now the capital of Azerbaijan). He then helped found the ill-disciplined and short-lived Baku Soviet. When this Soviet collapsed in the face of a threat

who sent Anastas to work in the Caucasus where he skilfully brought the local people under Bolshevik rule with relatively little brutality. When Lenin died in 1924, Anastas supported Stalin as his successor. This backing paid off because Anastas was duly made People's Commissar for External and Internal Trade in 1926. His meteoric rise through the ranks took him to the Politburo in 1935. In such a senior position he was able to visit the United States and his experience there combined with his influence in the USSR enabled him to introduce items such as popcorn, corn flakes and



Anastas with Stalin in 1925



Anastas with John F. Kennedy

hamburgers into the Soviet Union. He showed a particular enthusiasm for ice cream, a passion shared by many Soviet citizens.

During the Great Purge of 1936 to 1938 Anastas managed to avoid arrest despite the terror happening all around him. Again, it appears that he dodged death by signing the death warrants of others, this time when he was tasked with purging Armenia of the enemies of Communism.

Anastas's signature also appeared on the order for the execution of 26,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Massacre. However, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, Anastas was able to keep blood off his hands by undertaking the crucial work of directing the distribution of food and other material. For these efforts he was decorated as a Hero of Socialist Labour in 1943. Just after the war, in 1946, he became Minister of Trade and a Vice-Premier of the Council of Ministers.

Anastas's luck held out until Stalin's death. Although Stalin started to turn against Anastas in 1953, Stalin died before he was able to take action. Instead of being executed, Anastas was able to continue in politics and deftly navigated through the power struggle between Beria and Khrushchev, avoiding backing anyone until it became clear that Khrushchev would become the next leader. Anastas then gladly helped Khrushchev in the de-Stalinisation drive and secured the leader's trust by opposing a coup made against him in 1956.

Anastas's diplomatic skills were of especial use in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. It was he who persuaded Castro to remove Soviet nuclear missiles from the island, and thus was instrumental in averting nuclear catastrophe. A year later he represented the USSR at John F. Kennedy's funeral.

Come 1964 Anastas Mikoyan was promoted to Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the highest office in the country, although this role was primarily ceremonial. The same year, he skilfully kept out of trouble during the transfer of power from Khrushchev to Brezhnev.



Artem Mikoyan and (above) depicted on an Armenian postage stamp



However, by this time he was becoming elderly and he retired in 1970. He died of natural causes in 1976, quite an achievement for one who spent 40 years in the top echelons of Soviet politics, more than half of them under Stalin. One official said of Anastas Mikoyan "The rascal was able to walk through Red Square on a rainy day without an umbrella and not get wet. He could dodge the raindrops."

The Engineer

Artem Mikoyan was born in 1905, ten years after his brother. After completing his military service he studied at Zhukovsky Air Force Academy. On graduating in 1936, he worked on designing aircraft at a Soviet design bureau where he met a fellow aircraft engineer by the name of Mikhail Gurevich. In December 1939 these two men founded their own aircraft design bureau in Moscow called (simply enough) the Mikoyan-and-Gurevich Design Bureau. This name led to the designation MiG for the names of their planes.

The first design to be put into production was the MiG-1, a fighter aircraft made of steel and wood to minimise the use of scarce aluminium. Despite a number of deficiencies, 100 of these planes were issued to the Soviet Air Forces in 1941. They were mostly destroyed in the German invasion of the USSR. The MiG-3 was more successful and boasted a top speed at altitude greater than that of both the German Messerschmitt 109 and the British Spitfire. However, its speed was inferior at the lower altitudes where fighting typically took place on the Eastern Front.

Greater success came to Artem after the war. In 1946 the Soviet aviation minister approached Stalin and suggested that the USSR should attempt to buy the plans for advanced jet engines from the British. Stalin reportedly scorned the idea, saying “What fool will sell us his secrets?” Nevertheless, Stalin consented to the idea and a delegation travelled to Britain to make the request. Thanks to the pro-Soviet leanings of the British Minister of Trade, Sir Stafford Cripps (who had been British Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1940 to 1942), the delegation was granted a license to manufacture the Rolls-Royce Nene jet engine along with information about the underlying technology. Artem Mikoyan was a member of this delegation and so once the Soviets had reverse-engineered the British Nene engine, it was only natural that it should be incorporated in the next production MiG, the MiG-15 fighter plane. Rolls-Royce attempted to claim £207 million in royalties for the Soviet copy of their

engine, but unsurprisingly the money was not forthcoming.

The first MiG-15s entered service in 1949. When the Korean War broke out in 1950 the USSR supplied MiG-15s to China and North Korea. The USSR also covertly provided MiG-15 pilots. These fighter planes proved to be highly effective against UN forces and the area around the Chinese-Korean border became known as MiG alley. Today North Korea continues to use the MiG-15 for training. The fact that the plane could be mass produced was as significant as its technical superiority: it is thought that over 18,000 were manufactured in all, making it the most produced jet aircraft of all time.

Artem went on to oversee the design of the MiG-17, which was an improved MiG-15. In 1956 his bureau released the supersonic MiG-21, which was used by North Vietnamese forces in the Vietnam War and remains in active service to this day. Artem was presented with many awards throughout his career, including the prestigious Lenin Prize in 1962. He died in 1970, six years before his older brother.

This pair of distinguished brothers from a humble background are honoured by a museum in their home town of Sanahin. The building is pink, this being the colour of the local stone. A MiG-21 stands outside and inside visitors can see photographs of Anastas with the world statesmen of the Cold War. The success of these brothers in the Soviet system is truly remarkable, even if their net contribution to world peace is, at best, a matter of debate.



A MiG-21 on display outside the Mikoyan Museum in Sanahin

NSC FILM NIGHT

His Girl Friday (1940)

Wednesday 9th March

7.30pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,

London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

In this era of CGI and blockbuster action entertainment, there aren't many movies that rely largely on dialogue for their impact. So for a change of pace our March Film Night presentation is *His Girl Friday*, widely considered the best of Howard Hawks's comedies (he also made *Twentieth Century*, *Bringing Up Baby* and *I Was a Male War Bride*).

The film is based on a play, *Hold the Front Page*, by former newspapermen Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, which opened on Broadway in 1928. It is the story of a conniving managing editor Walter Burns (based on *Chicago Tribune* editor Walter Howey) who is trying to persuade his sometime ace reporter Hildebrand "Hildy" Johnson (modelled on MacArthur himself) to come back and work for him again.

Nearly a decade later at a dinner party filmmaker Howard Hawks was holding up *The Front Page* as an example of choice dialogue. He pulled out a copy of the play and started



reading it, taking the Burns role. A female guest read the part of Hildy Johnson—and Hawks suddenly realised the mileage in making that character female. He decided to remake it with Hildy now not only Burns's ex-ace reporter but also his ex-wife, adding sexual tension to the mix. When Burns learns that Hildy is planning to give up her metier as a reporter to get married and retire to domestic bliss he has a double reason to want to sabotage her plans...

The film features lightning-quick overlapping dialogue—be warned that to get the most out of it you have to stay on your toes. So fasten your seatbelts to enjoy what cinema guru Leslie Halliwell called "the fastest comedy ever filmed, and one of the funniest". Hell, even Quentin Tarantino named it as one of his favourite movies.

Oh, and you'll also get to enjoy some of Rosalind Russell's extraordinary outfits...





Laura Whitehouse
and companion



CLUB NOTES

New Members

TWO DOUGHTY SOULS have signed up in the last month: Laura Whitehouse, from Enfield, pictured above at the Chap Ball (not sure if she is showing off her boots, having her ankle inspected or delivering a kick to an assailant's groin), and Wilberforce "Berfie" St John-Thynne (right), from Memphis, Tennessee.



Wilberforce "Berfie"
St John-Thynne



At the Eight Club private member's club, an NSC tie is clearly something to aspire to

Club Tie Corner

AT THE EIGHT CLUB in Moorgate (home of Mrs Peel's, the Swinging Sixties clubnight), in one of the artfully arranged "lifestyle" cabinets I spotted what is clearly an NSC 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 plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

🎩 NSC Club Night

Wednesday 2nd March

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

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

Admission: Free before 9pm, £5 after that

Dress: 1920s/1930s preferred

Live swing jazz every Wednesday hosted by
Ewan Bleach with guest performers each time.

The Golden Era of Jazz

Every Thursday

7pm

Jamboree, 566 Cable Street, London E1W 3HB

Admission: Free before 8pm, £4 between 8 and
9.30, £5 after that

A weekly night of 1920s jazz and 1930s
swing presented by clarinettist Ewan Bleach
with various guests.

🎩 NSC Film Night:

***His Girl Friday* (1940)**

Wednesday 9th March

7.30pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,

London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

See page 26.

Old Town Come to Town

Saturday 12th–Monday 14th March

Shop hours (please telephone 01263 710001

ahead of time to make an appointment)

A discreet London location (probably Spitalfields
if it's the same place as usual)

Admission: Free, though the clothes will
obviously cost

The marvellous Old Town, purveyors of
new clothes cut to vintage patterns make their
biannual trip to London from their shop in
Holt, Norfolk, to show their current range
of wares. The whole enterprise has a very
carefully considered aesthetic, from the clothes
themselves to the website and even the brown
paper packaging and the invitations issued to
alert us of this event. The emphasis is primarily
on salt-of-the-earth vintage workwear rather
than Savile Row, though their jackets, trousers
and waistcoats can be combined to make smart,
characterful and yet rugged suits. Last time I
popped into one of these open house events I
bumped into Mr B. the Gentleman Rhymer.

Miss Willey would prefer customers to book
ahead of time so that she is not overwhelmed,
but bear in mind that the number given is for
the Holt shop, so obviously there won't be
anyone there while the event is going on.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 18th March

Beginners' class from 7pm, followed by the main
dance from 7.30pm

The London Welsh Centre, 157–163 Grays Inn
Road, London WC1 X 8UE

Admission: £15 in advance

Dress code: Black tie, evening dress or vintage

Ballroom dancing to vintage records and the
strict-tempo ten-piece Kewdos Dance Orchestra
featuring operatic vocalist Alistair Sutherland
singing through the voice trumpet. Candlelit
tables for all guests (limited to 100 number
to ensure plenty of space on the large sprung
dance floor). Beginners' dance lesson in slow
waltz from 7 pm to 7.30 pm. Main dance from
7.30 pm to 11 pm. Fully licensed bar at pub
prices, four or five male and female taxi dancers
available at no additional charge, quickstep Bus

Old Town's distinctive "vintage workwear" look comes to London



Stop, an Excuse Me dance and five minutes tuition en masse for the Lilac Waltz sequence dance. A free glass of bubbly for the ten most glamorous female guests. For more info call 020 8542 1490.


Cigar Walk with Nic Wing

Saturday 2nd April
From 9.30am
Begins at the Churchill and Roosevelt statue on Bond Street
Admission: £21.79 from Eventbrite

If you missed the NSC cigar walk organised by the Earl of Essex, then here is another chance: cigar expert Nic Wing will take you on a walking tour (a good two hours or more) of various shops, hotels and historic sites connected with the world of cigars. You



can get an idea from this video.

 **The NSC Annual Punt 'n' Picnic**
Saturday 23rd April
From 11am
Oxford
Admission: A share of the punt hire (around £20)
The Annual New Sheridan Punting Trip is traditionally held on a Saturday close to St

George's Day. Since that day, 23rd April, actually falls on a Saturday this year the choice of date is a no-brainer.

There may be a (black tie) dinner on the Friday night and a potter around the shops on the Sunday for those who wish to make a weekend of it but we will meet on Saturday as usual in The Turf Tavern for an eye opener at 11am, then on to Magdalen Bridge Boathouse to pick up the boats at midday, before punting up river to a picnic spot. Then down river again to return the boats and into the Oxford night for pies and pints.

There was splendid weather last year and no one fell in so the Plunge Pot sweepstake for this year is already into double figures. More details to come next issue.



Nic Wing, a man who likes a cigar or four

Tim Eyre gets a bit carried away with the leather theme at the February Club Night (see page 3)



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FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk.

For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. You can even befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.