

By George

A peep into the world of George Davies

Huzzah!

Stewart Lister Vickers on the influence of military uniform over civilian fashion—and one iconic jacket in particular

Hot seat

Francis Hull wants to share his chair with you

DESIGN!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW SHERIDAN CLUB • ISSUE 136 • FEBRUARY 2018



The New Sheridan Club traditionally meets in the upstairs room of The Wheatsheaf, just off Oxford Street. The Wheatsheaf is one of Fitzrovia's historic pubs, a one-time haunt of Dylan Thomas, George Orwell, Augustus John and Julian Maclaren-Ross. In fact Thomas met his wife Caitlin in The Wheatsheaf and, legend has it, he was known to flash at women there as well. Fitzrovia's associations with literature go back to the eighteenth century. In the twentieth century both Woolf and Shaw lived in Fitzroy Square; Pound and Lewis launched *Blast!* at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel in Percy Street. John Buchan lived in Portland Place and in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* Richard Hannay has a flat there. Both Lawrences (D.H. and T.E.) took rooms there, as did Aleister Crowley, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke and Katherine Mansfield.

The Next Meeting

The next Club Meeting will take place on Wednesday 7th February in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. Craig "Craigoh" Young will talk to us about Wing Commander F.F.E. Yeo Thomas, GC, MC & Bar, an Anglo-French couturier turned British WWII spy—better known by his Gestapo nickname "The White Rabbit". (Those who saw Ensign Polyethyl's talk about Kiwi female agent Nancy Wake, will be interested to know that her own nickname, The White Mouse, was a reference to Yeo Thomas.) Parachuted into France for fact-finding missions, Yeo Thomas would find himself dining with infamous Nazis such as Klaus Barbie, but he is best known for what he underwent after he was betrayed to the



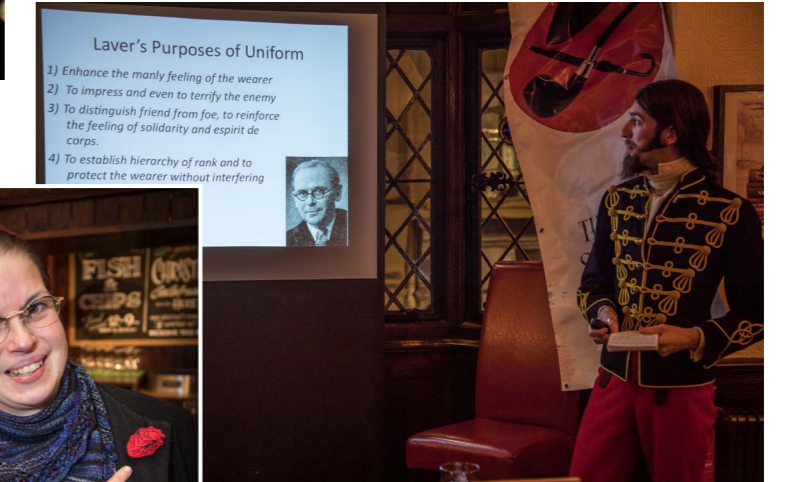
Gestapo, repeatedly tortured to the point of needing artificial respiration to keep him alive. At times he passed himself off as either a British pilot or a French national. He twice tried to escape from Fresnes prison and ended up in Buchenwald, where he organised resistance—and briefly escaped. He went on to be a key witness at the Nuremberg trials, identifying Buchenwald officials.

The Last Meeting

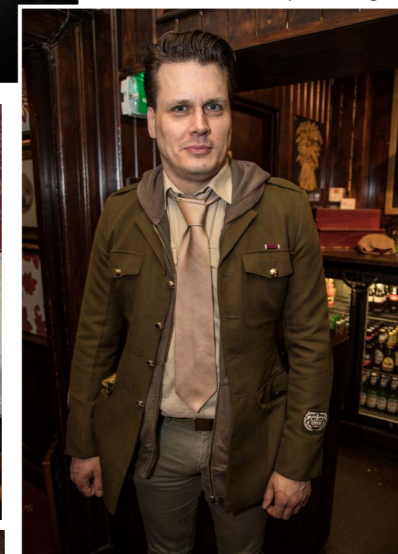
Our speaker for the first meeting of the year (just three days in) was Stewart Lister Vickers, talking about the influence of military uniform on civilian fashion, with a specific emphasis on the hussar jacket—why was it designed that way, and what has made it appeal so much to pop stars from Jimi Hendrix to Adam Ant and beyond. An essay from the talk begins on page 4.



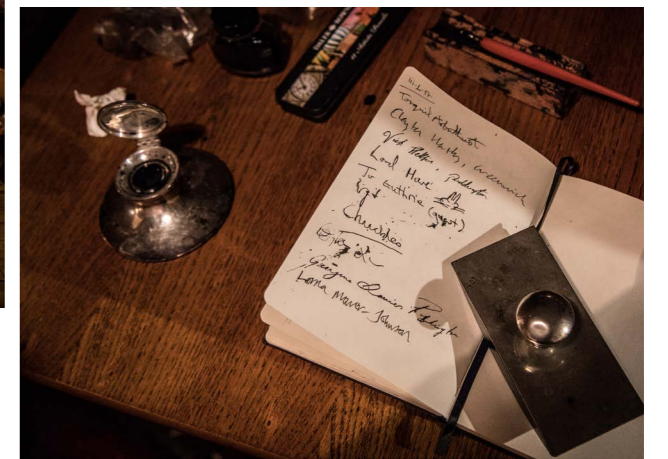
(Above) Torquil opens proceedings; (above right) Stewart and Darcy in a Clash of the Dandies; (right) Stewart elucidates some uniform theory



(Far left) Luca has shaved off his moustache, explaining that he "did not want to become known as the guy with the moustache"; (left) Birgit wears her heart on her... lapel; (below left) new visitor Phil just heard about the event on Facebook; (below right) Lord Hare there



(Upper left) a rare sighting of Tabitha Maynard-Addersley; (lower left) Culpepper expounds while Ian White puts his thoughts elsewhere; (below) still life of the faithful signing-in book and pen



From Beau Brummell TO MARILYN MANSON

Military Uniforms as Civilian Fashion

By Stewart Lister Vickers



TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, military style and civilian fashion have always been intimately linked. We need only see images of Elizabethan courtiers clutching their swords or the war paint of historic tribal cultures to see that dividing the two is highly problematic. Nevertheless, as a focus point the Napoleonic Wars saw a formalisation of European armies that

culminated in the most glamorously-dressed armies in history. This occurred almost simultaneously with the development of the modern tailored suit—something generally accepted to have been invented by Charles II but perfected by Beau Brummell, who is a key figure in this discourse. This period also saw the rise of the hussar dolman as a distinctive item of high-end military gear that has reinvented itself constantly in the two centuries since.

The eminent fashion historian James Laver condensed the purposes of uniform in the military to a few simple points: (1) enhance the manly feeling of the wearer; (2) impress and even terrify the enemy; (3) distinguish friend from foe; (4) reinforce the feeling of solidarity; (5) establish hierarchy of rank; and (6) protect the wearer without interfering with his movements.

Laver also described how it was that the distinctive style of Hungarian national dress came to sweep through European armies as the hussar uniform. Whatever light cavalry had existed before had become so cluttered with armaments as to have become heavy cavalry—so armies recruited light auxiliaries from eastern Europe. As a result the hussar style that has become a legend in its own right is a development of Hungarian national dress, and while the first mercenaries from Hungary joined Louis XIV's army this assimilation of style was certainly completed by the end of the 18th century.

Tailored menswear

It is now that we introduce one of our most significant figures in George “Beau” Brummell. His influence on menswear draws significantly from his military experience which also serves as a suitably masculine backdrop for his influence to be taken to heart by the male populace. In



A Hungarian Hussar (oil painting, c. 1700–1710)

elaborate version in dark blue with pale yellow facings and silver-thread braiding. It also consisted of a blue sleeveless “upper jacket” or “shell” with braided epaulettes, cut long on the body and worn over a sleeved under-jacket. Both items were frogged and looped or embroidered with horizontal braidings in white satin, and were decorated with real silver tassels and “Elliot” balls. The headdress was a large “Tarleton” helmet: a peaked leather skull, with a leopardskin turban fastened with large silver Prince of Wales feathers on the left side and surmounted, from front to rear, by a black fur crest. Understandably while this gave Brummell great networking benefit—the camaraderie aspect from Laver’s list—the practical matter of paying for this uniform made his persona unsustainable. It was partly this extravagant cost, with every promotion requiring a new uniform, that led to his resignation from the army—which had in itself a major impact on civilian fashion since the cost of military style led to Brummell becoming a man of fashion rather than a career soldier.

The next impact is more straightforward as

1794, at the age of 15 and with both parents dead, Brummell went to Oxford University. But after just a matter of months he convinced the chief executor of his father’s will to let him use his extensive inheritance to buy an army commission. At 16 years old he took up the rank of Cornet in the 10th Light Dragoons, the Prince of Wales’s own regiment, in a purely aesthetic role of looking good on horseback while bearing the standard. His uniform allowed him to win the friendship of the Prince and the elite, in effect using the anonymity granted by a uniform to allow him to craft a new persona. He was allowed to miss parade, shirk his duties and, in essence, do just as he pleased. Within three years he was made a captain, to the envy and disgust of older officers.

That uniform was not the standard hussar style, as the Tenth had its own extremely



The Prince of Wales in the uniform of the 10th Light Dragoons

Brummell took with him the military discipline and applied it to his civilian life. The cramped conditions of camp life depended on rigorous hygiene and washing which themselves are associated with access to water which is a condition of Enlightenment. Such “drills” as his famous tying of the cravat were military in a style of repetition and display. But he still wanted to associate with the elite and the Prince, and believed the control of the body to be the ultimate way to transcend his class. The newly-formed manners and courtesies of city living in the early 19th century occurred simultaneously with the arrival of codified menswear stemming from military uniform. The structured jacket and high collar were elements of control, very real techniques of the body that gave civilian men the manner of soldiers.



1805 caricature of Brummell by Richard Dighton

Early fetishism and frivolous masculinity

Even at this early stage the fetishisation of the hussar uniform is present—which is a key factor in why it was this military style that so captured civilian minds and presents a strong discourse on power, violence and sex. The *Suite of Thirty Plates Representing the Imperial Guard* by Charlet offers an incredible contemporary insight into this, where just the back of a hussar takes up the whole image to the almost complete exclusion of the battle carnage around. The fact that the uniform is so opulent and expensive alone is a great contradiction as it is hurled into battle like a precious gem.

Hussar braiding emphasised the chest while the tight trousers borrowed by Brummell emphasised the groin area. This period also saw widespread corseting among elite

officers and the Prince of Wales was said to be encased in a “Bastille of Whalebone”. The neck stock designed to bring a healthy flush to soldiers’ faces influenced civilian high collars, while epaulettes enhanced the shoulders of officers who did not work. The public perception of the hussar is given weight by *The Wounded Trumpeter* (1819) by Horace Vernet in the Wallace Collection. This gloriously-decorated young man is entirely anonymous but for his uniform and his rank in the title. He takes a deeply classicised pose of a young and eroticised death. An interesting comparison to this image is *The Death of Nelson* by Arthur Devis, as Nelson is presented naked—to the extent that he is the only figure not in uniform. However his uniform is still unmistakably present in the foreground—a uniform that, ever since, has been viewed by some as the symptom of a vanity that caused Nelson’s death when his medals caught the

eye of a French sniper. Clearly a celebrity like Nelson transcends his uniform while the trumpeter, like Brummell, finds a rare chance to be immortalised through what he wears and transcend a more modest birth.

The embellishment of the hussar showed no signs of ending after Napoleon. Throughout



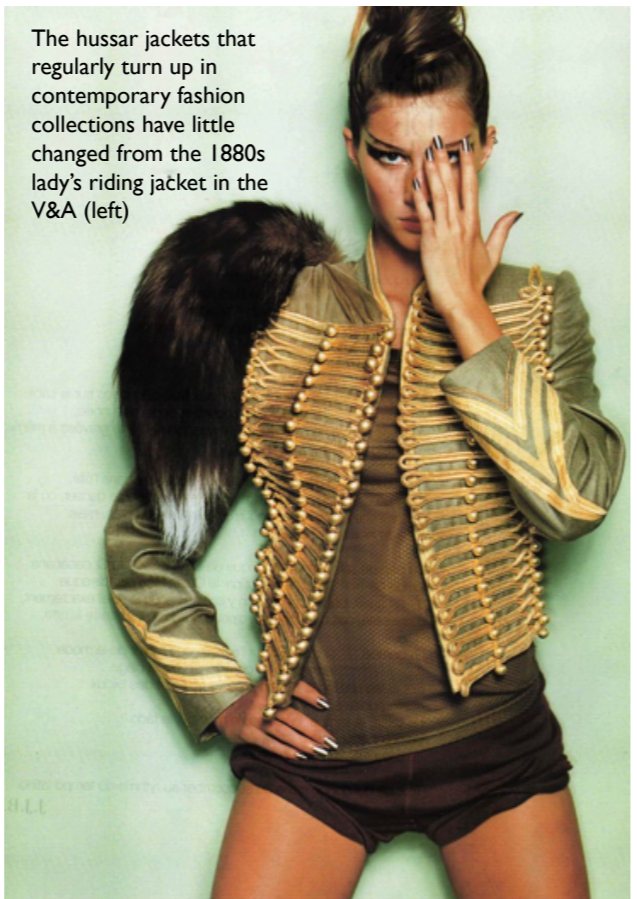
(left) *The Wounded Trumpeter* (Horace Vernet, 1819); (above) *The Death of Nelson*, 21 October 1805 (Arthur William Devis, 1807)

the 19th century, as civilian dress became more austere, military garments got more elaborate. One source says there arose “a science of measuring widths of ribbons, arrangements of medals, lengths of feathers, specific dyes and so on”. The frivolities that came to be associated with female dress were given masculine military credentials. This was the official code of military masculinity and deviance was punishable. Young men who had “absolutely no intention of risking themselves on any battlefield further away than the Palais-Royal, affected high military collars a *la hussarde* and tightly buttoned topcoats”. This, then, is where we see uniform go post-modern and subvert its own function. Laver said uniform has to aid and protect the wearer but at this point the hussar was so decorated that he was no longer remotely fit for battle. This was probably a symptom of enduring peace on mainland Europe during the early 19th century, when a sense of establishment and ceremony became more important than a functioning soldier.

It was at this point that the military uniform was finally adopted in its own right as a mode of civilian dress. “Although it was denounced as frippery and a source of degeneracy, many men adopted the decorative excesses of military clothing while some bought second-hand officers’ uniforms to “cut a dashing figure and strut around”. The mechanics of this adoption were quite simple in that, after so many years of trying to perfect the best-looking uniform, it was only natural that the aesthetic qualities of this masterpiece were desired outside the



One of Charlet's Thirty Plates Representing the Imperial Guard



The hussar jackets that regularly turn up in contemporary fashion collections have little changed from the 1880s lady's riding jacket in the V&A (left)

military. More significantly, ex-soldiers had spent a fortune having these high quality garments made to last and so it was simply counter-intuitive to not wear them. Equally, wearing the uniform was, going back to Brummell, a sign of discipline and control that made these men more employable and more highly regarded. A fascinating modern reinvention of this concept can be found in 2012's film version of *Les Misérables* in which the costume department went against the precedent of depicting Thenardier, a Waterloo man, in a regular army

tailcoat and instead made a hussar jacket. In contrast to "frillery and degeneracy" the wearing of uniforms outside the military establishes a kind of social cohesion from military control—something that also extends to Brummell's



Thenardier's hussar jacket from *Les Misérables* (2012)

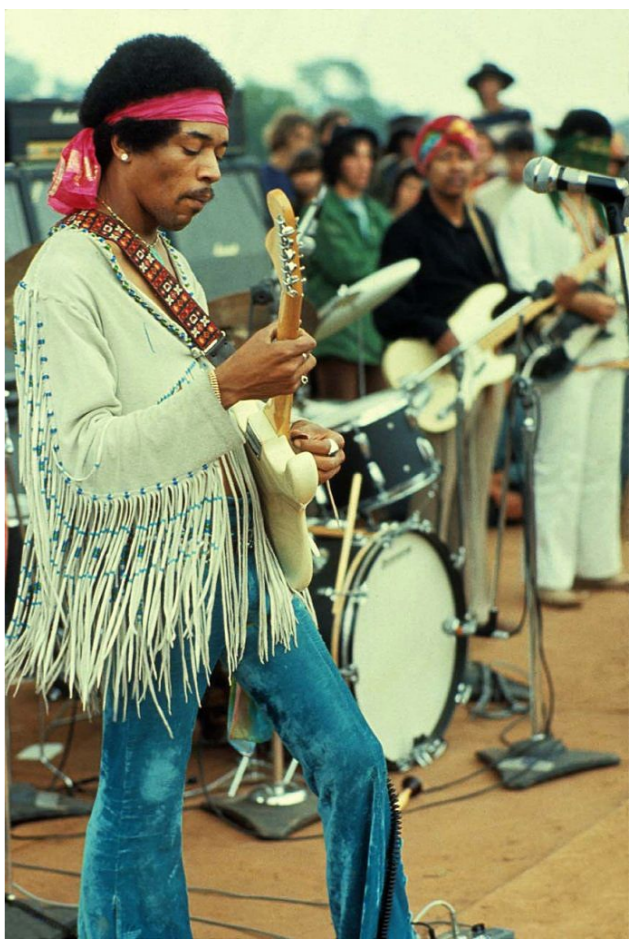
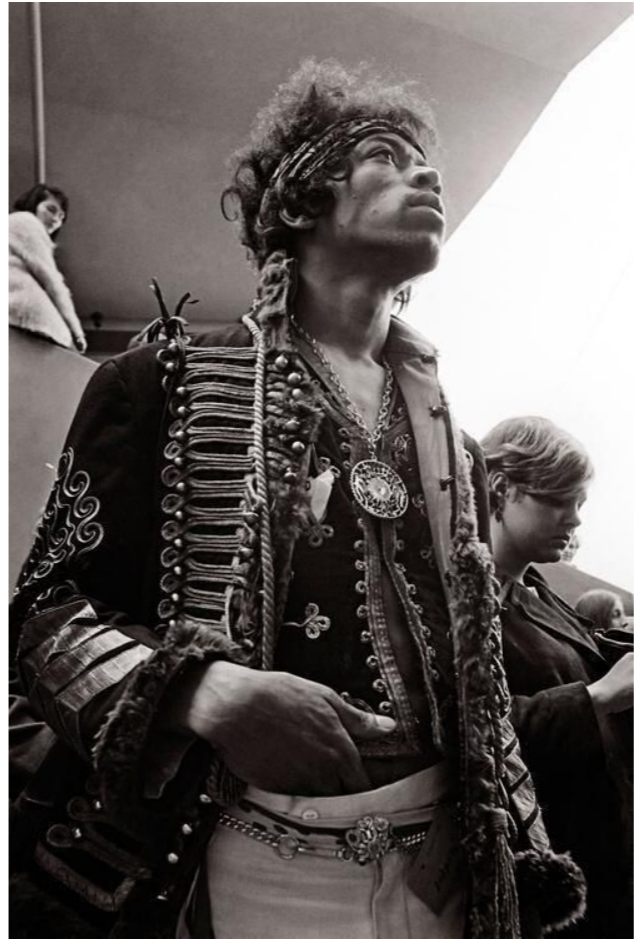


structured tailoring that became the modern suit. While actual military garments passed into the civilian wardrobe, the civilian wardrobe also began to appropriate elements of uniforms, especially those of hussars. Throughout the first decade of the 19th century we see women's fashion plates depict fur pelisses, shako-styled hats and spencer jackets that unmistakably resemble hussar jackets. That was a trend that never really went away: the V&A holds an impressive 1880s riding habit with a frogged and looped front and braiding across the chest. Even today it is women's fashion that most often takes the 200-year-old design, frequently with surprisingly few changes. High street chains in particular regularly bring out lines of braiding on much lighter cloth.

Subversion, fetishism and modern fashion
How then did uniform leave the aristocratic circles of the 20th-century battlefield and re-appear half a century later on the rock music stage? The 1960s saw an explosion of vintage uniforms worn by the likes of Eric Clapton, Mick Jagger, the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix. Most



(Above) Mick Jagger in what looks like a Welsh Guards jacket; by the time public opinion turned against Vietnam, Hendrix's military look (below left) had been replaced (below right)



of us naturally associate this with flower power and counter-culture subverting aristocratic colonialist hierarchies of rank. The reality is less simple. Hendrix himself served in the US 101st Airborne Division before his musical career and supported intervention in Vietnam. Hendrix himself said in response to criticism that he insulted the British Army through his choice of outfit that he wore it out of respect, saying he disliked war but respected a fighting man and his courage. By the time public opinion had turned against Vietnam Hendrix had left military style and moved on to the style seen at Woodstock.

Rather than a political statement a commercial motive seems the likely reason for the popularisation of uniforms in this period. Vintage fashion was in vogue and it was a very easy task for vintage shops to bulk-buy ex-army uniforms at a rock-bottom rate and sell them on to the Mod scene for significant profit. Designer Paul Smith described this process: “It was really the shops of the times that led the bands and the bands who made a particular look a mainstream fashion,” he said. “They all made the looks that the bands took on, and that led to acceptance by the mainstream. These shop owners and designers were the unsung heroes of fashion.” Another consideration at this point that particularly relates to Sergeant Pepper is the influence of pop art and the British art schools that cultivated such bands as the Beatles and Rolling Stones. This was also the golden age of colonialist war films featuring glorious uniforms and heroic military leaders. Adam Ant’s own hussar jacket was worn at this point by David Hemmings in *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968).

The 1970s saw a very different subversion of uniform when Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin and Lemmy Kilmister of Motörhead wore Nazi memorabilia on stage. This represented a dark turn from the camp pop-art element of Sixties military style to a provocative punk attitude. For the history of the uniform as civilian fashion this was certainly the moment that uniforms were taken up not for their decorative qualities but their connotations. There can be no doubt that Led Zeppelin cultivated an image of excess through drugs, underage groupies and Satanism that Page was simply adding to but at the same time this is arguably an early example of military fetishism in the public eye. Both bands represent the kind of role-play associated

with Nazi fetishism that is quite simply using Nazi symbolism as the ultimate signs of evil and dominance. These bands wanted to be the loudest and scariest in these early days of what would become heavy metal and so visually they used props to create this persona visually. For those involved in Nazi uniform fetish and role-play, to be perceived as “evil” is the favoured outcome and this performance is facilitated by the wearing of a Nazi uniform.

Lemmy’s view seemed to be a simple admiration of the aesthetic—something that matched his musical principle of “everything louder than everything else” combined with his interest in 20th-century history. In 2010 a very probing documentary film scrutinised his Nazi taste—showing his LA flat full of flags with a wall of bayonets before he went to a tank range to drive a Panzer in uniform. Claiming freedom of expression he said “Well, I’ve had six black girlfriends so far so I’m one of the worst Nazis you’ve ever met. I just dress how I like to dress. I don’t ask anyone else to do it. I’ve often said if the Israeli army had the best uniforms I’d collect them but they don’t, you know. It’s ridiculous to think I’m a Nazi as I’m about as far from it as you can get.” His general attitudes towards collecting militaria and war very much resemble Hendrix’s, that while regrettable war is an opportunity for courage and these artefacts are testament to that. Intriguingly Lemmy’s consistent style of tight black jeans and biker boots created much the same silhouette as a hussar while his hedonistic lifestyle certainly matched hussar ideals. Even his famous bullet belt is much like the barrel sash as a figure-hugging ornament that doesn’t actually perform a function like a belt.

I placed Marilyn Manson within the scope of this talk with the intention of deepening the contrast in the use of uniforms in popular culture further than the next top mascot Adam Ant could have—seeing as he followed the same glamorous intentions of Hendrix. The problem with this new addition was I stalled when I realized I had not fully defined what Manson’s contribution is to the uniform through his frequent use of Nazi-inspired designs. The conclusion I now realize is that this is a very conscious effort to shock and offend, rather than a historical or libertarian view held by Hendrix or Lemmy.

A constant theme of this essay is the



Lemmy Kilmister



Jimmy Page

contradiction of when it is and isn’t acceptable to wear a uniform. What defines these examples is their deliberate performances as aspects of popular culture which have made them acceptable, as opposed to being mistaken for impersonating soldiers or promoting fascism. The reverse effect is accidental misinterpretations of uniform. For instance, celebrity chef Paul Hollywood was recently criticized for wearing a Nazi uniform to a fancy dress party and said it was meant to be in homage of the TV comedy *’Allo ’Allo* in which the Nazi occupiers of France are comical buffoons. Even today it seems rock stars like Manson are still deemed controversial enough for such actions to be ignored while a TV chef causes deep offence.

Meanwhile the hussar uniform, an object of immense luxury and opulence that witnessed the horror, smoke and bloodshed of the battlefield, is now an icon of popular culture emulated by high-end designers and musical stars, having hardly changed in more than 200 years.

But for the majority of us the link between what we wear as we battle through our daily lives and the smoke of Waterloo was a hussar who returned to civilian life with a rank and status that allowed him to change the face of menswear forever.



Marilyn Manson

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.



George Davies

"Anything can be fixed..."

Name or preferred name?

George (Frida) Buurman Davies

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

Frida and George are both nicknames for Georgina, my full name, which I don't really care for.

Where do you hail from?

London! Born and bred.

Favourite Cocktail?

A very difficult one—either a French 75 or a Gibson. Who don't love a good bit of gin?

Most Chappist skill?

Sewing historical clothing while drinking pints of Guinness. Just my regular past time.

Most Chappist possession?

An original 1890s boy's Eton uniform. It's delicate but still wearable, although not the most comfortable suit I own.

Personal Motto?

Anything can be fixed with a cup of tea.

Favourite Quotes?

"Built by faith' indeed! That simply means the workers weren't paid properly." Mr Emerson, *A Room With a View*, E.M.Forster

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

I am quite the fan of Mr Eminem and his musical offerings.

How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Hesitates as she tries to remember how long she's been with Stewart (sat next to her). About a year and a half? Maybe two. Hopefully many more! *[According to your Facebook page you've been in a relationship with Stewart since 24th May 2016 —Ed]*

Mr Marshall Mathers, aka Eminem. What a nice young men



How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

Stewart Vickers. It was when we first met, at the pub after the Tweed Run when he insisted I come to the Club!

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

The Escapologist, a great bar in Covent Garden, just off Seven Dials, styled like a Masonic temple and Victorian men's club mash-up. They have a great cocktail menu and an even better happy hour.

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

Frida Kahlo—she's just one of the most incredible women ever. Freddy Honeychurch from *A Room with a View*. He was my first ever crush, so why the hell not.

May Morris, as she's one of my biggest influences in style and life.

Favourite Member of the Glorious Committee?

Answer: Artemis Scarheart.

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

Not yet. It will probably be something on historical dress/sewing, as that's all I really talk about anyway.

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.





CLUB NOTES

Retirement

“ESTEEMED SIR,” WRITES Valentine “Chip” Butty from New South Wales in Australia.

“Having now attained the age of 70, and mindful of the need to keep the Club’s median age at a less than geriatric level, I respectfully request the approval of the Glorious Committee for Life not to resign from the Club, but to retire quietly.

“The Club will no doubt continue to play a central role in the maintenance and renewal of English Insouciance (EI), so much more important in the current emotional climate than AI. Wizard wheezes and japes will no doubt continue to abound, no more in evidence than in the annual Chap Olympics.

“My very best wishes will always be with the Club, and particularly with the Young

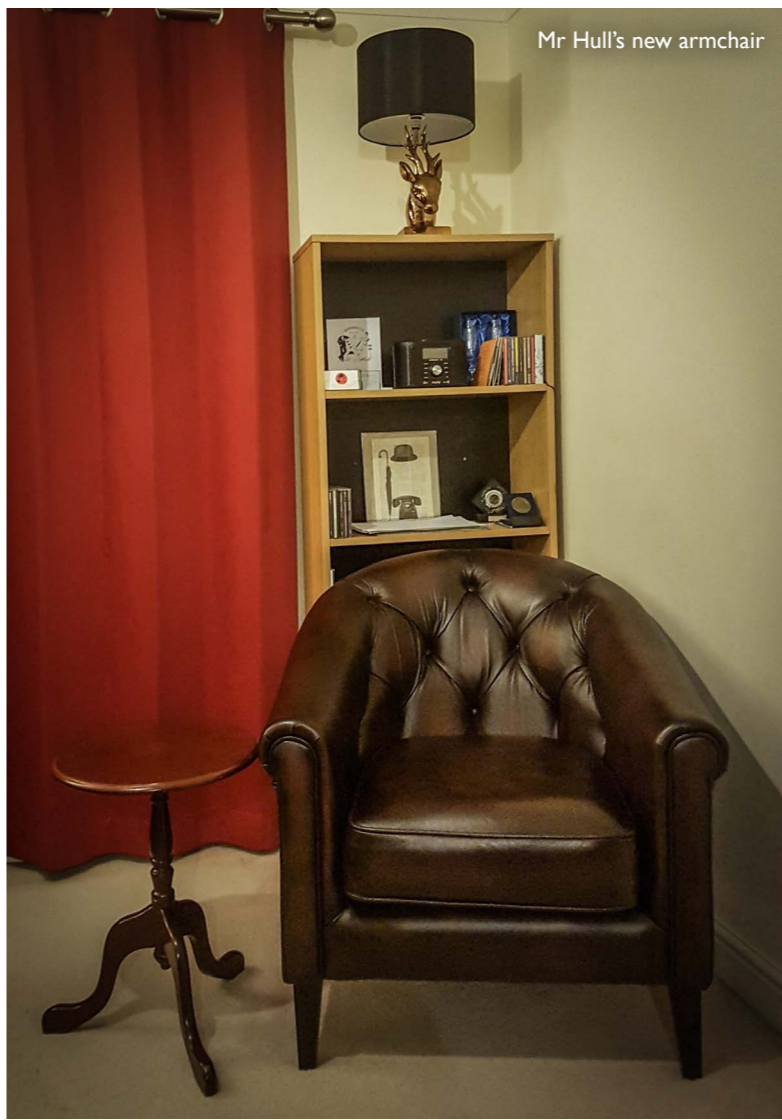
Sheridanite Wing, on which the future of the Club will depend.

Clubbily,
Keith J. Petersen
a.k.a. Valentine “Chip” Butty

I confess that, even after more than ten years of Club activity—and even though we have had Members die in the saddle, as it were—we have never actually had someone raise the subject of retirement before. Indeed there is nothing in the Club Rules and Regulations to cover this. Perhaps I had always imagined it would be a bit like *Logan’s Run*, with Members who had reached the end of the line spiralling ceremonially up into the air, sucked into a huge briar, becoming one with the Chapposphere as aromatic smoke. But I accept that in practice there might be legal issues with that idea.

Scarheart’s only comment was that retirement should only be permitted if the Club is made the sole beneficiary of the Member’s will.

Mr Petersen is quite right, of course, that the healthy future of the Club lies with the next generation (not necessarily young in age but new to the NSC). But, as this page shows, each month there is new blood being transfused into the Club’s veins. (OK, it’s sounding like a dystopian sci-fi movie again.) For now I’m sure all Members will joining me in wishing Mr Petersen a happy retirement



Hat mystery

Sir,

After seeing the Royal Family attending church on Christmas Day I observed that the ladies looked lovely in their hats: but may I ask, why don’t the male members of the Royal Family wear civilian hats?

I have been told that the HRH Duke of York was wearing a trilby, but I must confess I did not witness this. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and HRH Prince William looked very cold and could have done with something to keep their heads warm.

Both HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and HRH The Prince of Wales provide their respective Royal Warrants to a very well known hatters in London, but neither of them chooses to wear hats. Why is this? Especially in this cold weather.

If HRH Prince Harry started wearing hats, it would quickly become fashionable for gentlemen to do so and they would fly off the shelves!

Yours faithfully,
Mr Francis Hull

Below: the Royal Family on Christmas Day



Hot Seat

“I HAVE NOW HAD my Winchester Club Chair for over five months now and I absolutely love it,” reports Member Francis Hull from Nottingham.

“When it was delivered by the efficient delivery chaps, the moment they took off the plastic wrapping my sitting room was filled with the wonderful smell of leather.

“I have received so many compliments on how good the chair looks and it blends in so well with my brown leather sofa. For such a handmade quality British product, the price was very reasonable.

I have now added some side tables, book shelves and classy lamps to give my sitting room the look and feel of a London Gentlemen’s Club.

“If like me, you like handmade beautiful



quality leather furniture, I can't recommend Thomas Lloyd highly enough!"

Mr Hull has been especially busy this month and has also written to us on the subject of Royal headwear.

New Members

A COUPLE OF NEW BUGS this time. Helen Swanston from Cromer adds that her "roller derby accomplices" know her a "H.P. Shovecraft", that her address is "Shipping Container Vista" and she is an expert in get-away driving and guerilla warfare. Dr Tim Fenn, on the other hand, tells us only that he likes a G&T and is a member of the Royal Society of Medicine.

Club Tie Corner

ON THIS PAGE we have agent Van Alden from *Boardwalk Empire*, courtesy of Richie Paradise; and Lionel, 6th Earl of Portarlington, from *Actuarius*. On the opposite page, clockwise from top right: something mysterious from Ivan Debono; a scarf called "Wispy Vanya" (Debono again); a vintage skiing image from Benjamin Negroto; a four-panel Walz cap that E. Tory Laitila had made for himself for his "bicycle commutes around town"; and this image of Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Corbyn in a photograph from *The Week*.





Forthcoming Events



BOTH OFFICIAL NSC JAUNTS (AND) AND THIRD-PARTY WHEEZES WE THINK YOU MIGHT ENJOY

FOR THE LATEST developments, see the Events page at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk plus our Facebook page and the web forum.

NSC Club Night

Wednesday 7th February
7pm–11pm

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

Members: Free

Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)

See page 2.

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.

Tiger Rag

Every Friday

Arcola Bar, Arcola Theatre, 24 Ashwin Street, Dalston, London E8 3DL

10pm–2.30am

Admission: £7 entry after 10pm; dance lessons £10

Live jazz, blues, swing, calypso, Dixieland, ragtime, musette, tango, etc. Try your hand at the beginner lesson in swing, Lindy hop, shag, balboa and Charleston dancing, with no partner or prebooking required. Intermediate lessons 8–9pm and beginner lessons 9–10pm.

Black Tie Ballroom Dance Classes

Every Friday (except, presumably, when the BTBC itself is taking place at the same venue)

6.30–8pm, followed by social dancing till 10.15pm

The Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6AQ (02073870411)

Admission: £15 for lesson and social dancing or £10 just for the social from Design My Night

From the makers of the Black Tie Ballroom Club (see below), the method of these beginners classes assumes new students have musicality or experience in other dance forms such as Lindy, places the emphasis on moving in time to the music, and aims for 80% of beginner students to confidently and gracefully get around the dancefloor with a partner after the first lesson, and be ready for the improvers class after two lessons.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 9th February

Beginners' class from 7pm, main dance from 7.30–11pm

The Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6AQ (02073870411)

Admission: £10 earlybird from Design My Night, £15 on the door

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage

Dance progressive partnered dancing to a strict-tempo ten-piece orchestra and a selection of pre-war records of slow foxtrot, waltz, quickstep, tango, rumba, Jive and Charleston. Free ballroom dance lesson for absolute beginners from 7pm to 7.30pm. Candlelit tables and chairs for all guests, a balcony area with tables for those who don't choose to dance, and four or five male and female taxi dancers available free of charge for those who do.

The venue is dry, but free tea and coca cola is provided, and guests may smuggle in their own drinks if they are discreet. Tickets are £10 online or £15 on the door. We have a large wooden dance floor and are located in beautiful Fitzroy Square, London W1. In the same building (the Indian YMCA) the excellent in-house canteen does a set vegetarian three course meal for just £8 from 7pm to 9 pm. Dress code is strictly black tie and evening dress only, and we have sold out for the past four dances. Activities include a quickstep bus stop and ten most glamorously dressed women able to get around the floor doing a slow waltz competition. Any questions, please phone George Tudor-Hart

on 020 8542 1490. For more details see the Facebook group.

The Candlelight Club's Valentine Ball

Saturday 10th February
7pm–12am

A secret London location

Admission: £30 in advance

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

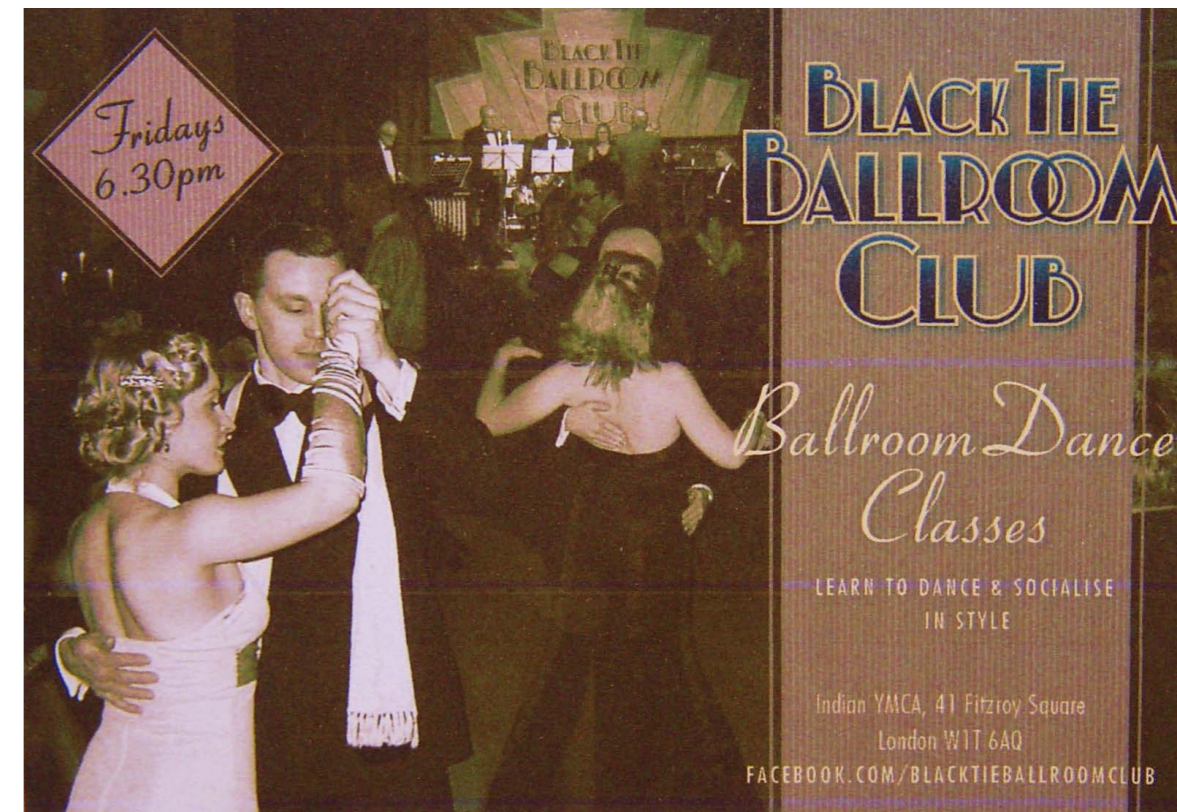
A 1920s clandestine speakeasy party in a secret London venue completely lit by candles, with live jazz bands, cabaret and vintage vinylism, a cocktail bar, and kitchens serving bar food as well as a three-course bistro dinner menu. See www.thecandlelightclub.com.

This time you're invited to a special 1920s Valentine Ball, in a long-forgotten, candlelit hall in east London where a host of flappers and Bright Young Things will frolic in two rooms of entertainment.

In the Ballroom get ready to glide and shimmy to live music from the London Dance Orchestra. Dancing along to the band will be Charleston dance troupe the Gatsby Girls, showing you how it's done. When the band aren't playing DJ Auntie Maureen will be spinning vintage platters into the night.

There is also a three-course dinner menu to preorder, or the option to reserve tables with Champagne, plus a menu of bar snacks to order on the night.

Meanwhile in the Cabaret Lounge there will be another bar, and in the early evening Café Manouche will be playing dreamy jazz from Paris, the city of love, followed by two variety shows hosted by the Cupid of Cabaret Champagne Charlie, with elegant acrobatics from duo Deux Ailes, comedy magic from



Christian Lee and riotous routines from tap-dance tornado Josephine Shaker.

Want to know if he/she is the one for you? Our fortune tellers Foxglove and Lucius will be on hand to advise.

“The closest you'll find to an authentic Jazz Age experience in central London. Its unique ambience, fuelled by hundreds of candles, is truly a scene to behold.” —*Time Out*

Carradine's Cockney Sing-Along

Tuesday 13th February

8–10.30pm

Wilton's Music Hall, Graces Alley, London E1 8JB

Admission: £6.50–£16 from wiltons.org.uk

NSC Member Tom Carradine leads an evening of timeless songs with audience participation. In the atmospheric surroundings of Wilton's Music Hall you'll bellow along to traditional tunes from the music hall era, the First and Second World Wars, the West End stage and popular tradition from across the decades. See www.wiltons.org.uk.

Ramsey Campbell in Conversation with Stephen Jones

Thursday 15th February

7–10pm

The Horse Hospital, 30 Colonnade, London

WC1N 1JD

Admission: £10 in advance, £11 on the door, £8 concs

If your interest in the 1920s and 1930s includes the weird fiction of H.P. Lovecraft then you may be interested in this interview with Ramsey Campbell, whose start in writing horror, back in the 1960s, was inspired by Lovecraft and published by August Derleth's Arkham House imprint. Campbell is generally regarded as the most respected living horror writer and has received more awards than any other. The event is presented by the Miskatonic Institute (another Lovecraft reference).

IACF Antiques & Collectors Fair

Sunday 18th February
9.30am–4.30pm

Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way,
London N22 7AY

Admission: £6 (or £3 with a 2-for-1 offer with a voucher from popupvintagefairs.co.uk/alexandra-palace)

London's largest antiques fair, taking place just four times a year, this time incorporating stalls curated by the Pop Up Vintage Fairs team offering Vintage Fashion, Accessories, Jewellery, Furniture, Furnishings, Posters, Mid-Century Homeware, French Brocante, Taxidermy, Lighting, Collectables & Curiosities. BBC's Bargain Hunt expert James Lewis of Bamfords will be there from 10.30am–3pm to offer free valuations and appraisals, so bring along your antique treasures and find out how much they're really worth.

Luisa Casati, the Bewitching Muse

Monday 19th February
7.30–9pm

Treadwell's Bookshop, 33 Store Street,
London WC1E 7BS

Admission: £9 (call 020 7419 8507 or visit the website to book)

A vibrantly-illustrated lecture by Dr Will Visconti on Marchesa Luisa Casati, one of the greatest muses and art patrons of the early 20th century. Hers is one of the most painted faces of modern art, and hers were the most flamboyant parties in Europe. She was involved in fashion too, and treated herself in some ways as an artistic creation. The Marchesa was known as a mastermind of opulent spectacle, but she had a private, esoteric side. In the enclosed chambers of her grand villas, she studied and practised the occult arts: necromancy and hexes, divination, binding spells and more. Dr Visconti will uncover Casati's little-known occult practices then show how she incorporated magic and witchcraft into her projects, where the hints are there in plain sight. The occultism even fed into her identity as "a living

work of art". Dr Visconti is a lecturer at Central Saint Martins and holds a Visiting Fellowship at the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory at London's School of Advanced Study.

Brixton Mardi Gras Festival

Saturday 24th February
12–11.45pm

Pop Brixton, 49 Brixton Station
Road, London SW9 8PQ

Admission: Free

If you like New Orleans style trad jazz then Dom and the Ikos will be playing at this free mini-festival. It's a mixed bag of an event, with craft- and child-orientated events during the day, a Dionysian parade and wine festival and other musical acts that include Afro-Latin ten-piece 7Suns, 1960s-style Latin/New Orleans gris-gris combo the Voodoo Love Orchestra and brass/rap mutant Dat Brass. There is also a best-dressed competition, which I assume will be won by a Member of the NSC. More details at popbrixton.org.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 25th February
11am–5.30pm

Freemasons Hall, 60 Great Queen Street,
London, WC2B 5AZ

Admission: £4 (£2 with NUS card)

Appearing for the first time in a central London venue (i.e. not in Clerkenwell) the CVFF features some 45 stalls offering vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s to the 1980s. There is also usually a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk.

Black Tie Ballroom Club

Friday 2nd March

Beginners' class from 7pm,



main dance from 7.30–11pm
The Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6AQ (02073870411)
Admission: £10 earlybird from Design My Night, £15 on the door

Dress code: Strictly black tie, evening dress or vintage
See above.

Nelson's Chelengk

Monday 5th March
6–8.30pm

Goldsmith's Hall, 13 Foster Lane,
London EC2V 6BN

Admission: £15 from goldsmithsfair.co.uk

Join jewellery expert Joanna Hardy in conversation with historian Martyn Downer (author of *Nelson's Lost Jewel*), jeweller Philip Denyer and the Deputy Chairman at Lock & Co. Hatters, Roger Stephenson, on the topic of Nelson's Chelengk, one of the most iconic jewels in British history. The turban/hat ornament, a plume of more than 300 diamonds and one of Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson's most treasured possessions, was presented to him by Sultan Selim III of Turkey after the Battle of the Nile in 1798. The piece was stolen more than half a century ago, and a new replica (shown here) has recently been recreated by Philip Denyer using the original drawings and plans from Nelson's original lost jewel. The replica will continue to be on display at Goldsmiths' Hall, Monday 12th–Friday 23rd March (weekdays only), 10am–4pm (free entry).



Wakey, wakey! It's time for the Brixton Mardi Gras Festival

Luisa Casati relaxing at home



At our January meeting Adrian
deploys his Christmas present to
himself, an elaborate e-pipe.

