

REVIEW!

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

ARCH 2020

DANDY ARCHITECT?

Philip Hancock on
the life, times and
neckwear of
Charles Rennie
Mackintosh

Our man in Oamaru

Tim Eyre finds a vintage oasis in
the Land of the Long White Cloud

Champagne frenzy

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Perignon's great gift to the world



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 4th March** in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm, when Mark Christopher will offer us *An introduction to cognitive biases: how to avoid them or use them (with help from Warren Buffett and Charles Munger)*. “Donations and charitable giving, Wall Street bonuses and joining a cult—a few concepts links these together. Come and find out why decisions, both

personal and group, can be enlightening—or devastating.”

The Last Meeting

Addressing a healthily full house, our speaker last month was Professor Philip Hancock, inviting us to consider the career of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the question of whether he can be considered a dandy architect. He certain was an architect, though one who struggled to find work, as his genius was too

radical for many during his lifetime—inspired by Japanese design his rectilinear style and clean minimalism were at odds with Edwardian love of frilly clutter. Yet he was well regarded on the Continent and influential on the Art Nouveau, Secessionist and Art Deco movements. Whether or not his trademark moustache and distinctive louche, floppy neckwear qualify him as a dandy, he certainly ploughed his own aesthetic furrow.

Many thanks to Prof. Hancock for his inspiring oration. An essay version of the address begins on page 4.

Find out what Warren Buffett has to tell you about cognitive bias





(Above and right) Philip presents his thesis



(Above) The room hangs on the Professor's every word



(Above, left) Tim Eyre, in a magnificent bowler hat; (above, right) Ilan White in his natural environment; (above right) Giles Culpepper holds forth at the bar; (right) Luca Jellinek with a mysterious stranger who is always there, always promises to come back next month dressed to the nines, and never does; (below right) Philip delivers a devastating *bon mot*; (below) James Rigby offers a light to Francis Giordanela



CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH DANDY ARCHITECT?

By Philip Hancock

FOR MANY A READER of *Resign*, the name Charles Rennie Mackintosh is one that will be associated with not one, but indeed two significant contributions to the betterment of humanity.

Firstly, there is that staple outer garment so necessary on this sceptred isle of ours, the Mackintosh raincoat. Secondly, who among you has not, after an evening spent in the company of rich food and fine wine, felt profound gratitude at the appearance of that little white indigestion tablet of relief, the Rennie?

In truth, of course, neither of these can actually be credited to the Scottish architect, designer and artist who is the subject of this article (although the former was indeed invented by a Scot called Charles Mackintosh, but that, as they say, is another story).

Rather, the Charles (Rennie) Mackintosh who is the subject of this article was to eventually become recognised as one of the most important innovators in early twentieth century British architecture and design. Combining the practical and vernacular sensitivities of the Arts and Crafts movement with the organic and sensuous forms of European Art Nouveau and Secessionism, he created a unique and individual style that would, among other things, pre-figure the emerging

Arts Décoratifs—or Art Deco—designs popular during the inter-war years.

Mackintosh was born in Glasgow in 1868 to a lower middle-class family of 11 children. He attended both state and private schools

until the age of 16 when he became apprenticed as an architect, eventually joining the thriving Glasgow practice of Honyman and Keppie of which he would ultimately become a partner himself.

At this time, Mackintosh also started to attend evening classes at the Glasgow School of Art (GSA) where he was not only exposed to the aforementioned and burgeoning *fin de siècle* art movements both at home and across continental Europe, but where he also met kindred

spirits and collaborators Herbert McNair and the sisters Frances and Margaret Macdonald (the latter of whom would become his wife and primary collaborator).

While their early work was often considered strange and unnerving (fig.1)—garnering them the nickname of the “Spooks”—the then director of the GSA, Francis Newbery, encouraged their attempts to explore and

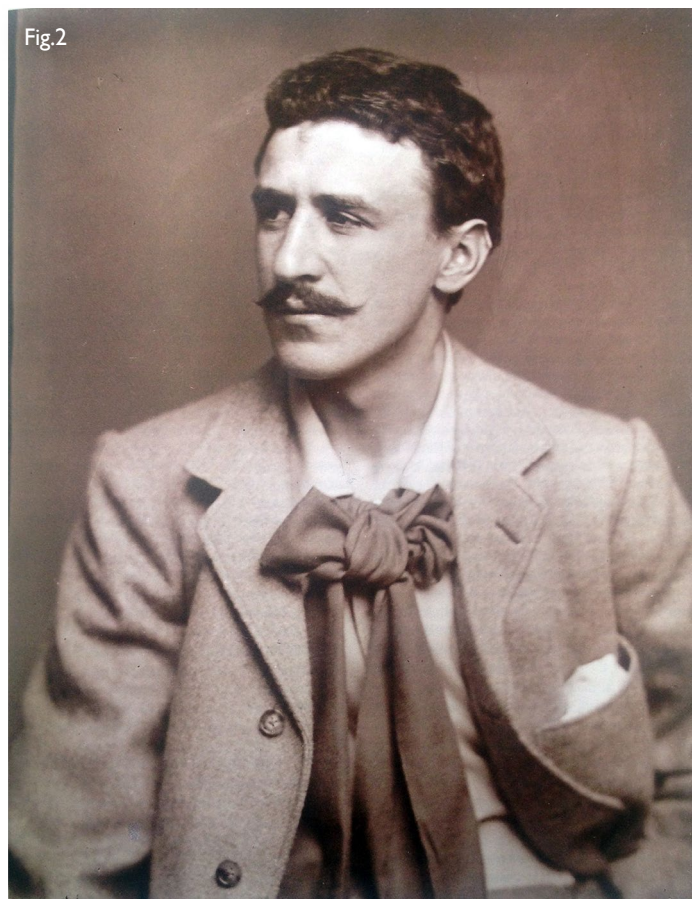


Fig. 1



develop new styles of art and design that broke with the then dominant principles of classicism, and which embraced a desire to reconcile natural forms and motifs with the geometry and linearity of modern industrialism.

Before I dwell more on the specifics of Mackintosh's work, however, let me say something about the question I have posed within the title of this piece—namely in respect of his status as a “dandy architect”—focusing initially on perhaps the most obvious aspect of his candidature for dandy status, his personal style.

Often renowned for those who have adopted a “dandy pose”, the artistic world can be considered a haven for those who choose to dress and stylise themselves in such a way as to garner public attention. During his lifetime, Mackintosh was certainly recognised as such an artist displaying “a certain style to his manner and dress” that distinguished him from many of his contemporaries. Today, his most iconic personal portrait suggests a capacity to combine the flamboyancy of his trademark bow tie with a restraint resonant not only of his Presbyterian upbringing, but also a Brummelesque masculine minimalism, something evident in a number of images of him particularly during his younger decades (Fig. 2).

Furthermore, while there is no evidence that he actively disapproved of being referred to as one of the “Spooks”, he seemed to prefer that his collaborative public persona was subsumed under another moniker, that of “The Immortals”. While this was perhaps a somewhat tongue in cheek self-titling, it also suggests a possibly less than modest self-

Fig.3



consciousness that embraced the idea that it was not only his designs, but his life that might be considered a work of art in its own right.

More than any of this, however, I want to suggest that Mackintosh's dandyism went beyond a fascination with his own self-stylisation and that a dandy sensibility can also be found within the very practice of his architecture and design.

In doing so, I want to appeal to the idea that dandyism is not simply the adoption of a personal sartorial style, but equally a calculated attention to detail that produces a seemingly effortless but wholly integrated effect on the senses. Dandyism is, to cite D'Aurevilly, a "complete theory" [of life], a total sensibility that incorporates the aesthetic into the mundane everyday and whereby clothes, as a "uniform for living", are just one expression of this.

To me, this defines the contribution of Mackintosh's architecture and design—its genius if you will—as an attempt to create a unified or total aesthetic experience. One that through a stylised reconciliation of the demands of both necessary form and utility, and of decorative, sensuous and spiritual expression pursued, to cite that well-known champion of the dandy, Charles Baudelaire, a "burning desire to create a personal form of originality, within the external limits of social conventions".

Take, as an illustration of this, what many consider to be his most significant public architectural achievement, the now sadly



Fig.4

destroyed Glasgow School of Art (fig.3). His first major architectural commission, the GSA was designed and built in two phases (1897–9 and 1907–9) and combined three primary design principles.

The first was a recognition of, and adherence to, the materials and conventions of a more Scottish vernacular architecture. There was nothing vulgarly classicist or showy about this city centre building. Secondly, and relatedly, this was also a decidedly rational and functional building—a "uniform for living" to return to my previous point—with its large light-maximising studio windows and flowing corridors. Finally, it was also, however, a building that exhibited a total and precise design sensibility throughout. It was a building in which the decorative aesthetics and functionality of its interior and exterior were harmonised, generating a complete experience that was both "appropriate" to its environment and function, and yet sensuous

and, for its time, strikingly original.

Take, for example, the decorative flowering window brackets that graced the exterior studio windows (fig.4). Each was created from an “intricate whorl of metal”, that changed from window to window gradually shifting from seed head through to a fully developed flower similar to the Mackintosh rose that would feature in so much of his artistic work. These were not simply superfluous adornments, however. They were designed both to support the large studio windows and to act as functional supports for the planks of wood used by window cleaners, ensuring that the studios within would be supplied with the best and brightest daylight possible—an even more important consideration than perhaps usual given the school’s location in a dirty industrial city on the often dreich west of Scotland.

Throughout the building this integrated aesthetic could be seen at work, from the design of clocks and furniture to, perhaps most notably, the library (fig.5). While lacking the more sensuous, organic curves and shapes of some of his earlier design work (the library was part of the second phase of the building completed in 1909), it again demonstrated a total aesthetic sensibility that, especially through the use of light, its overwhelming use of dark wood and proto-Art-Deco designs such as those found in the lighting, seems to reconcile—without subsuming—competing tendencies in respect of (bookish) intellectual activity as both informed by reason yet, and perhaps especially in the arts, inspired by affect.

Despite the public recognition that Mackintosh eventually received for the GSA, his dandyesque approach to architecture and design as an integrated form and practice was perhaps most evident in his domestic and commercial work. Private houses such as Windy Hill in Kilmacolm and The Hill House in Helensburgh (fig.6) once again combined imposing but unostentatious Scottish vernacular



Fig.5



Fig.6



Fig.7

exteriors—with more than a hint of the Scottish Baronial—with interiors, which included fittings and much of the furniture, that continued to reconcile functionality with the decorative arts. Take, for example, the entrance hall to Hill House (fig.7). As has been observed, it has the grandeur and presence of a baronial residence, but utilises scale, decorative design, and lighting to suggest a warm, almost seductive passage that one might want to associate with the embrace of a domestic dwelling.

Two other important examples of his domestic work—albeit somewhat distinct from Windy Hill and Hill House—are to be found at 78 Derngate in Northampton, England, and The House for an Art Lover in Glasgow. The former emerged from a private commission to redesign the Georgian terraced town house of Northampton toy maker Bassett-Lowke in 1915. Today it is a museum containing one of Mackintosh's most complete original integrated interiors—and one which speaks perhaps more than any other to his preceptive role in the emergence of Art Deco (fig.8).

The House for an Art Lover (fig.9) is a relatively modern building, being constructed in 1988, but it was built almost entirely in

accordance with competition designs drawn up by Mackintosh in 1901. Again, the exterior design speaks to Mackintosh's desire to create buildings that are both sculptured, but that wear their adornments discreetly so as to project an effortless rapprochement with their physical and cultural landscape. The interior, on the other hand, as perhaps befits a competition entry, runs riot with his ambition for a totally integrated aesthetic. Combining the sinuous, sensual, and floral motifs of his wife Margaret, alongside the geometrical fancies of his proto Art Deco styling—all combined with an arts and crafts eye for minimalism and utility—The House for an Art Lover is perhaps the most playful of Mackintosh's buildings (fig.10).

To the casual visitor to Mackintosh's home city of Glasgow today, his perhaps most frequently encountered legacy, however, is the work he undertook on the Glasgow Tea Rooms once owned by one Kate Cranston. Cranston pioneered the opening of such facilities in Glasgow during the early twentieth century, conceiving of them as meeting places that lacked the ubiquitous access to alcohol so problematic in the area at the time. Several of these were spread across the city, and



Fig.8



Fig.9

Mackintosh was responsible for the design of their interiors, as well as the exterior of the one located on the city's Sauchiehall Street.

Today, despite various upheavals over the decades, both this and the one on Buchanan Street survive. They provide an incredible insight into the combined efforts of Mackintosh, and Margaret, to create what at the time remained aesthetically radical total works of art, yet ones within which the everyday activities of tea drinking and polite intercourse might take place (fig.11).

Despite such a legacy, however, and as is often the case when we speak of the lives of great dandies, Mackintosh never really achieved the recognition or success in his lifetime that he felt he deserved—certainly not in Britain anyway. Despite individual patronage of the type discussed above, the British art and architectural establishment found his work too unorthodox, too “Continental” for their tastes—although it was indeed on the continent where he garnered the most recognition and fame. And, like so many dandies before him, this purportedly led to increasingly heavy drinking and depression and, as such, with



Fig.10



Fig.11

his work on 78 Derngate aside, his activities as an architect never really recovered after his completion of the final stage of the GSA.

Also, once again like certain purported



Fig.12

dandies before him—Brummell and Wilde immediately come to mind—Mackintosh ultimately left Britain for France, eventually settling in Port-Vendres where, alongside Margaret, he focused more on painting; returning in particular to his love of nature and the juxtaposition of form within his immediate environment (fig.12). Mackintosh died of cancer in relative poverty on 10th December 1928 while convalescing back in the UK. He was cremated at Golders Green Cemetery in London, but his ashes were scattered back at what had become his beloved Port-Vendres home, where there is now a small Mackintosh museum.

So, what of Mackintosh’s legacy as architect, designer and indeed dandy? Well there can be no doubt that in his home city of Glasgow, and indeed across Scotland, he is today revered as one of the great sons of Scotia. In 2009 Clydesdale Bank issued a £100 note featuring Mackintosh, while the 150th anniversary of his birth was marked in Glasgow with a major 2018 exhibition of his work. Each year, his remaining buildings, and various



Fig.13

museums dedicated to him across the city, attract many thousands of visitors from home and abroad. Outside Scotland, in 1996/97 the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art held a major retrospective exhibition of his work and, at the time of the publication of this issue of

Resign!, a similar event is taking place at The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore before moving to Liverpool in England.

For some, it must be said, Mackintosh's renewed reputation has been somewhat sullied by the proliferation of what is often despairingly referred to as "Mockintosh" (fig.13). This is the seemingly endless trail of merchandise reproducing, or based on, Mackintosh's designs and sold not only to the Glaswegian tourist market, but kitsch sentimentalists the world over. Yet while it is certainly very easy to tire of rose-adorned mugs, coasters and even plastic ducks, part of the beauty of Mackintosh's vision is that, despite all I have said here, much of what he and his wife created can be independently valued as of great beauty and vision. From early poster designs to contemporary adaptations of his style in say jewellery and furniture (fig.14), it continues to resonate with a contemporary sense of aesthetic possibility and radicalism.

What, though, of Mackintosh's legacy as a dandy? Well, certainly from what we know and have seen of him, both his style of dress and



Fig.14

sense of self-worth clearly suggest a dandy disposition. As I have suggested, however, it would be insufficient to reduce Mackintosh's credentials in this department simply to his clothes and youthful ego, nor even simply to the aesthetic qualities of his designs.

Rather, it was his attempt to create, to return to D'Aurevilly, "a complete theory" of architecture and design—one that was confident, beautiful and stylish and yet, at the same time, both consciously precise and restrained by its environment and the needs to which it was put—that marks Mackintosh out in this respect.

Mackintosh's dandyism was, therefore, best encapsulated in a vision of art—for let's call it that—in which nothing was left to chance, no detail was overlooked, and no effort was too great but which, as a result of these efforts, was often rendered seemingly

effortless. It was an attempt to remain both stylish and dignified in a world that was, in retrospect, about to go to hell. An elegant, minimalist silhouette, albeit one adorned with an outrageous bow tie and a finely curled moustache (fig.15).



Fig.15

OAMARU

Austral vintage heaven

By Tim Eyre

I STOOD AND WATCHED as a heritage steam train chugged along its track. I turned and saw two women dressed in Victorian clothing riding penny-farthings along the seafront. I felt I had hit a vintage jackpot. However, this was just another ordinary day in the extraordinary New Zealand town of Oamaru.

Oamaru is located to the south of Christchurch on the south island of New Zealand (fig.1). The town is approximately antipodal to Bordeaux. So far south is Oamaru that it was the first point of contact with the outside world for the sailors carrying news of the demise of Robert Falcon Scott's polar party. At two o'clock in the morning on 10th February 1913, the *Terra Nova* appeared unannounced at Oamaru's harbour. Lieutenant Harry Pennell RN and Dr Edward Atkinson Surgeon RN were rowed ashore. They did not break the news of the expedition's fate to the local harbourmaster, Captain James Ramsey. Instead, Ramsey assisted them in sending a coded message to Christchurch. News of the polar party's demise reached Oamaru the following day, by way of London.

My wife and I had decided to visit Oamaru on account of its colony of little blue penguins (fig.2). In addition to being ignorant of the town's role in early Antarctic exploration, we had also failed to notice during our planning that Oamaru is a major destination for all things vintage and steampunk. Thus we were in for a much busier two-day stay than we were expecting.

The origins of Oamaru's status as a vintage destination date back to the 19th century. Europeans started to settle the area in the 1850s and by the 1870s the town was flourishing as the urban service centre and port for a prosperous farming district. At this time Oamaru's population was greater than that of Los Angeles. High-quality limestone was available locally and





Fig.3



Fig.8



Fig.4



Fig.5



Fig.6

many fine buildings were constructed (figs 3, the former post office, 4 and 5). In 1877–80 the town constructed an impressive aqueduct, 50km in length. This was important not just for drinking water but also for mechanical water power in a town where steam engines were unusual. Part of the aqueduct was built of iron pipes, cast in Glasgow, transported to Oamaru by sailing ship and then carried into the nearby hills by horse and cart for installation. Two pieces of these pipes are on display in Oamaru today (fig.6). The aqueduct was not decommissioned until 1983 and the original pipework remains in service.

Unfortunately, the cost of the aqueduct almost bankrupted Oamaru. Development slowed in the town from 1881. As a result, the developer's wrecking-ball never toppled Oamaru's attractive Victorian buildings. In the 1980s Oamaru started to recognise the importance of its built heritage. The fine limestone edifices were restored and the precinct of Victorian buildings by the former port was developed into a tasteful tourist attraction (fig.7).



Fig.7



Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11

Today Oamaru thrives as a heritage tourism destination, despite its remote location. The Victorian Precinct amply rewards exploration. Unsurprisingly, there are some vintage retail establishments (fig.8). The volunteer-run steam railway line runs for a mile along the

seafront, offering visitors a half-hour return trip on Sundays (fig.9). Penny-farthing bicycles abound (figs 10, 11); the Oamaru Ordinary Cycle Club (OCCC) maintains a fleet of these fine machines (fig.12) and one member even offers lessons (fig.13). Indeed, the Ordinary is something of an emblem for the town: one even features in the seafront children's play park (fig.14).

Quirky establishments abound in Oamaru. A former warehouse on the Victorian Precinct houses a large secondhand bookshop specializing in adventure and discovery. A large quantity of high-quality stock is on display, as is a full-size replica of the



Fig.12

Penny Farthing Lessons  0210.448.209
\$30 per person Wheelwoman Sophia

Fig.13



James Caird, the lifeboat in which Shackleton and five companions sailed 800 miles through the Southern Ocean from Elephant Island to South Georgia (fig.15). Dorian Loveday described this epic voyage with characteristic eloquence in *Resign!* issue 71, September 2012. The bibliographic theme continues with another quality second-hand bookshop called Slightly Foxed (fig.16) and a bookbinder. A street cabinet outside a supermarket brings together the town's book and penguin themes (fig.17).

A small museum at the local radio station displays vintage radios (fig.18). This hints at Oamaru's status as a significant centre for the steampunk subculture. This is most evident in the truly remarkable establishment of Steampunk HQ (fig.19). This large Victorian building acts as an artist collaboration space and display gallery. Atmospheric lighting and highly original work make for a memorable experience. I was especially impressed by the laboratory of





Fig.17



Fig.18



Fig.19



Fig.20

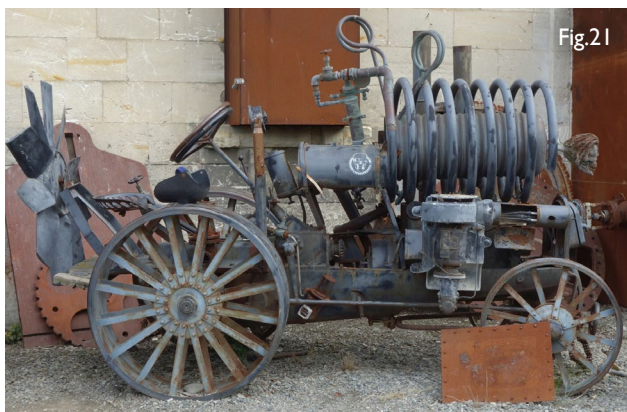


Fig.21



Fig.22



Fig.23

a Wellsian scientist (fig.20). Outside the building is a large yard containing quantities of industrial junk that the artists use to create enormous retro-futuristic contraptions (fig.21). Similar works are dotted around the town (figs 22, 23). Oamaru features in the *Guinness Book of Records* for hosting the world's largest-ever gathering of steampunks. This occurred in 2016, with 228 participants. (Larger gatherings at the Asylum steampunk convivial in Lincoln have not been officially recognised; chat with the Earl of Waveney to learn more.)

Also of note is the Grainstore Gallery (fig.24). This space is home to renowned artist Donna Demente. While not specifically steampunk or vintage, her style is influenced by mediæval, Byzantine and Renaissance art, specializing in extreme close-ups, eyes and masks. Ms Demente moved to Oamaru in 1995 and has had a significant influence on the development of the town's prevailing aesthetic.

Touring these sights is likely to bring on a thirst. Those seeking alcoholic refreshment in Oamaru between 1906 and 1960 would have been disappointed because the sale of alcohol was banned during that period, thanks to the town's strong Presbyterian influence. Fortunately, this is no longer the case and the Victorian Precinct offers two notable purveyors of alcohol. The first is a microbrewery specializing in Belgian-style beers. Known as the Craftwork Brewery, they offer beer for sale and on-premises tastings (fig.25).

For something stronger, the New Zealand Whisky Collection stands at the seaward end of the Victorian Precinct (fig.26). Three entrepreneurs founded the firm in 2010 when they bought 443 barrels of fine *usquebaugh* that came up for auction after the liquidation of Wilsons distillery in nearby Dunedin. Today visitors can visit their warehouse and taste tipples such as the Oamaruvian and the High Wheeler. The company hopes to set up a distillery of its own. Given the region's

strong Scottish roots, this would be a welcome development.

Oamaru lies distant from most of the world's population. However, those of a Chappish persuasion who can visit will be amply rewarded for their efforts. Next time I visit I shall be sure to take my tweed.



Fig.24



Fig.25



Fig.26

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.



Molotov.

Most Chappist skill?

Horse riding (badly).

Most Chappist possession?

Moustache comb or shaving mug.

Personal Motto?

You can never own too many hats.

Favourite Quotes?

"A lie told often enough becomes the truth"
—V.I. Lenin

"You can leave in a huff. Or you can leave in a minute and a huff." —Groucho Marx

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

I can play the ukulele (to an indifferent standard) and I'm a reenactor/living historian.

Bruce Chopping

Name or preferred name?

Bruce Chopping.

Why that nickname or nom de plume?

With a name as daft as mine I've never felt the need for one.

Where do you hail from?

Enfield, North London.

Favourite cocktail?





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, but possibly on Susan Travers, the only female member of the French Foreign Legion.

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.



How long have you been involved with the NSC?

Some years [eight –Ed] but with a shamefully poor attendance record.

How did you hear about the Club to begin with?

I read about it somewhere but I honestly can't remember where.

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

Learn to dance the Argentine Tango, a dance for which you can never be over-dressed and which requires a minimum of physical effort.

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

Humphrey Bogart—the original Rat Pack leader, how could you not?

Ernesto Che Guevara—the man who made revolutions stylish.

Maria Botchkareva—Commander of the 1st Russian Women's Death Battalion in the First World War (obviously not seated next to Che).



Why you should be drinking more CHAMPAGNE

Francis Giordanella on Dom Perignon's sparkling gift to the world

CHAMPAGNE IS A UNIQUE wine in so many ways. It is the only wine region in the world to focus exclusively on sparkling wine. It is dominated by big brand names such as Billecart-Salmon, Bollinger, Gosset, Krug and Moët & Chandon, to name just a few, and is intrinsically linked to the spirit of celebration. At least, it is in the UK and America—in France, although it's a special wine, it is more often drunk without the need to wait for a special occasion. It has, through the development of specialised winemaking techniques and by virtue of its cool climate, become the benchmark against which all other sparkling wines are judged.

Champagne is unique among the AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) wines of France in that one appellation covers all the wines. It was in 1927 that the appellation was founded and the main areas of focus are the traditional method of production, grape varietal, quantity per hectare, method of pruning, hand picking only, maturation times, alcohol level restrictions, labelling and packaging. There are no regional subdivisions or quality classifications. There are certain villages who have been granted *cru* status—44 are rated Premier Cru and 17 Grand Cru. The remaining territories, although they may yield exceptional grapes, have no *cru* status at all. Five villages were given promotion in 1989 making the list of Grand Cru villages in Champagne as follows: Ambonnay, Avize, Ay,

Beaumont-Sur-Vesle, Bouzy, Chouilly, Cramant, Louvois, Mailly Champagne, Le Mesnil-Sur-Oger, Oger, Oiry, Puisieulx, Sillery, Toures-De-Marne, Verzenay, Verzy.

The five main production regions are Montagne De Reims (Pinot Noir dominant), Côte des Blancs (Chardonnay dominant), Côte des Bar (Pinot Noir dominant), Vallée De La Marne (Meunier dominant), Côte De Sezanne (Chardonnay dominant).

So what are the defining characteristics of Champagne?

Three grape varieties

There are three grape varieties allowed to be used in the production of Champagne: Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Meunier.

All grapes used must come exclusively from allocated villages known as *cru*s. When the AOC was set up the *cru* system was devised, with each village rated from 80 to 100 based on three factors: soil type, terroir and the quality of the grapes produced, thus creating the Grand Cru, Premier Cru, and the Cru.

Méthode Champenoise

Champagne must be made in the traditional way (see below), which dates back to the 1700s when a Benedictine monk called Dom Perignon, while trying to perfect his still wines, accidentally discovered that by trapping the carbon dioxide (CO²) in the bottle you would get a pleasing effervescence in the wine.



Alcohol levels restricted

Most still wines in the world are between 8% and 15% alcohol by volume. The AOC in Champagne restricts it to a maximum of 12.5%.

Hand picking only

All grapes are hand picked in whole bunches, by around 120,000 pickers each harvest. This all has to be done quickly, usually in a period of around three weeks.

Limited amount of picked grapes

An average of 10,500 kilos per hectare with a maximum of 15,000 kilos per hectare is allowed. The amount of juice extracted from the grapes will also be dictated depending on the harvest to ensure the highest quality control.

Maturation

All non-vintage Champagne must spend a minimum of 15 months maturing before being released. Vintage Champagne has a minimum resting time of three years. But most Champagne houses will mature for a longer period.

The Crayères

The Crayères (cellars) are one of the most important additions to the maturation process of Champagne. The *maisons* in the main cities of Reims and Epernay are cleverly built on top of miles and miles of tunnels which are perfect

for storing and maturing the millions of bottles produced every year. The advantages are a cool and constant temperature (11 degrees), perfect humidity, and freedom from vibrations and sunlight.

The *terroir*

The cool temperatures retain freshness in the grapes with an average temperature in Champagne of 18 degrees. There is regular moderate rainfall in the region, and limited sun exposure, balanced out by the hilly topography, all leading to slow-ripening grapes. The chalky soil and the exceptional geology help to create Champagne's typical mineral notes.

The grapes of Champagne

Although the AOC specifies three permissible grape varieties, there are no prescribed proportions, and each house has their own secret recipe. (In fact some wines may use only two or even one of these varieties.) "How," I hear you ask, "is it possible that Pinot Noir and Meunier are used when they are black grapes and Champagne is white wine?" Very easily if you don't allow contact with the grape skins. The juice of all grapes is clear: the colour of red wine is leached from the crushed skins which are left to soak in the juice after pressing.

Pinot Noir is used in some of the world's finest wines. It prefers cooler climates but can be tricky to grow. It has a thin skin which means



Champagne cellars



it's susceptible to frost and can be burnt in too much sunshine. But it has great body, structure and intensity and gives fabulous red fruit aromas.

Chardonnay is not a fussy grape and it will happily grow in any winemaking region. It's the local climate that dictates the flavour characteristics, ranging from crisp to lush tropical fruits. This grape adds elegance, acidity, freshness and notes of citrus and white flowers to the wine.

Meunier as a grape has for a long time been underestimated for its ageing ability. However it is gaining a good reputation among wine producers for the body, richness, suppleness, roundness and fleshiness that it adds to a blend.

The traditional method

The Méthode Traditionnelle or Méthode Champenoise has been used for over 300 years and is still being perfected to this day. There are ten main stages:

1. Harvest

The grapes by law have to be picked by hand and only in bunches. Naturally this is very labour-intensive, and is one of the contributing factors to the end price of a bottle of Champagne.

2. Pressing

In order to maintain quality, only 102 litres can be extracted from 106 kilograms of grapes. The first 82 litres is called the *cuvée* and the remaining 20 litres is called the *taille*. The best Champagne

will only be made from the *cuvée* juice.

3. Primary fermentation

The best producers will store and ferment the *cuvée* and *taille* from each of the three grape varieties from each village separately. Generally fermentation takes place in temperature-controlled stainless steel vats, but some producers, such as Bollinger and Krug, still favour oak vats and barrels. I personally prefer this method as I find the wine to be more unctuous. The resulting wines will have neutral flavours and be completely dry, high in acidity and with only moderate alcohol. Most of the wines will undergo a process known as malolactic fermentation (see below) but not all, as it depends on the style of wine the house is seeking to produce. Most base wine is used to make up the blends the year after the harvest. However, some wine is stored in inert containers for use in future years, and these reserve wines have an important role to play in the blending process of the higher end Champagnes.

4. Malolactic fermentation (MLF)

So what is MLF? Once a wine has come to the end of its primary fermentation with yeast it will, if allowed to, go through another natural fermentation carried out by lactic bacteria. They convert tart malic acid (found in green apples) into softer lactic acids (found in milk) as well as creating further flavours and carbon dioxide. All red wines undergo MLF, but it is sometimes avoided in white wines. MLF reduces acidity and can be a source of flavours like

butter and hazelnuts, but at the same time some of the pure fruit aromas might be lost, and the richer, rounder, softer white wines will be less refreshing to drink. MLF may be encouraged by increasing the temperature of a wine and by not adding CO² after the alcoholic fermentation. It can be avoided by storing the wines at cool temperatures, adding CO² or by filtering out the bacteria.

5. *Blending*

Champagne is a region that depends on blending its wines. The vagaries of the climate mean that the best way of consistently producing the necessary volume and quality of a wine from one year to the next is to blend wines from different villages, varieties, and vintages from within the region of Champagne. Generally blenders aim to blend a wine that conforms to a particular house style, although a small number of wines are blended with the aim of expressing the character of particular villages or vineyards. The grape varieties are used to give the wine its unique character and structure, whereas the reserve wines are vital in smoothing out vintage variations and adding complexity to a blend. It is easier to achieve a house style if the blender has at their disposal as many wines as possible. And it is for this key reason that the base wines are fermented in so many different parcels. This is one of the reasons why the Champagne trade is dominated by the big houses as they have access to the largest number of base reserve wines. The large producers can use as many as 70 wines in their blends, and Krug Grand Cuvée contains no fewer than 120 different wines from ten or

more different vintages up to 15 years in age, producing a product with a price tag of £200 pounds a bottle—and this is not even a vintage Champagne. (Yes, vintage Champagnes are also the result of a complex blending process.)

6. *Secondary Fermentation*

Once the blend is made up a small proportion of *liqueur de tirage* is added before it is bottled. This is a mixture of wine, yeast, sugar, and a clarifying agent. The bottle is then closed with a crown cap, the kind you find on a beer bottle. The bottles are then stacked horizontally in the producer's cellars where the temperature will be 10–12 degrees Celsius. At these temperatures the secondary fermentation takes six to eight weeks to complete. This slow fermentation also encourages the development of flavours and raises the alcohol by about 1.5% to 2%. The CO² produced by the yeast, unable to escape, dissolves into the wine creating the effervescence for which Champagne is famous. This creates a pressure within the bottle of about six atmospheres.

7. *Yeast Autolysis*

Once the secondary fermentation has completed the yeast will die and leave a sediment called the “lees” in the bottle. Over a period of months or years these dead yeast cells begin to break down releasing proteins and other chemical compounds into the wine, an action known as yeast autolysis, which contributes to the flavours in Champagne. The palate will be rewarded with notes of bread, biscuit, toast and brioche, all characteristic of sparkling wines made following this method.



Rows of pupitres



A remueur riddling

Autolysis typically lasts for around four to five years but has the ability to continue for up to ten. Wines that are allowed to spend longer on the lees tend to be vintage bottles of Champagne. These wines will naturally benefit from a more pronounced yeast character. However this process cannot continue indefinitely and, once finished, will in fact keep the wine fresh for years, even decades—although wines that are kept on the lees for an extended period, once disgorged (see below), tend to mature very quickly.

8. Riddling

After the period of maturation, the lees have to be removed in a process of two stages. The first, riddling, involves gradually moving the bottle from a horizontal position to an inverted vertical position so that the yeast sediment is carefully dislodged and slides down to the bottle neck where it collects. Traditionally this was done by hand by a person called the *remueur*. The bottle was placed in an A-framed wine rack called a *pupitre* and each day the remueur would give it a gentle twist to loosen the lees while raising the bottom slightly higher till eventually, after eight to ten weeks, the bottle is vertical. This was a very labour intensive procedure. These days it is mostly done mechanically with a machine

called a gyropalette, which can hold up to 500 bottles, rotating and inclining them in imitation of the remueur, but able to complete the job in just eight days. But there are still a few houses who follow the tradition of *remuage*.

9. Disgorgement and corking

Now that the lees are gathered in the neck of the bottle, how to get them out? The solution is to dip the neck of the bottle into very cold brine, which freezes the wine in the neck around the collected lees. The bottles are then returned to the upright position and the crown cap is removed. The pressure of the CO² that has built up in the bottle during the secondary fermentation ejects the frozen sediment and the bottle is quickly fitted with a cork to seal it and a *muselet* (wire cage) to hold the cork in under the pressure. This whole process is fully mechanised and takes just a few seconds.

10. Liqueur d'expédition

The sugar added in the *liqueur de tirage* will have all been consumed by the yeast during secondary fermentation leaving the wine completely dry. So before corking the bottle is topped up with a *liqueur d'expédition*, a mixture of wine and cane sugar. The amount of sugar used depends on the degree of sweetness intended for the Champagne: most are dry or slightly off dry, but they can be sweet too. The sugar in the liqueur d'expédition is often referred to as the *dosage*.

Categories of sweetness

The terminology on the label indicates how sweet the Champagne is. There are seven categories corresponding to levels of sugar:

Brut Nature	dry	0–3 g/l
Extra Brut	dry	0–6 g/l
Brut	dry/off dry	0–12 g/l
Extra-Sec	off-dry to medium sweet	12–17g/l
Sec	medium dry	17–32g/l

Demi-Sec	sweet	32–50g/l
Doux	very sweet	50+g/l

Champagne houses and their styles

Bollinger

The champagne of James Bond—in the movies at least (in the novels several others are mentioned). The recently disgorged (RD) is the classic style of this house. Rich, complex, full-flavoured, mouth-fillingly yeasty wine across the board.

Gosset

Founded in 1584, this is one of the oldest wine companies in the world and remained in the same family hands for over four centuries until it was purchased by Beatrice Cointreau. The Gosset style is very traditional in that they still use old oak barrels in the fermentation and use a higher proportion of black grapes. All their wines are of very high quality, from the non-vintage Grande Excellence to the top wine, the vintage Celebris. There is also a rose expression within their repertoire. The non-vintage Grande Reserve is an excellent wine to accompany food. A slow developing Champagne with more biscuity flavour than is often fashionable these days.

Alfred Gratien

Their wines are fermented in old oak barrels and are given unusually long periods of contact with the yeast used to start the second fermentation. They do use the malolactic

fermentation process, creating a wine with a richness and the freshness of recently disgorged wine. They are mature when sold but will improve with a little ageing and go particularly well with most foods. One of the most distinctive, richly old fashioned, full-flavoured, biscuity Champagnes.

Charles Heidsieck

This house demonstrates the importance of skilled blending as well as commitment to quality and investment. In the 1970s the wines from Charles Heidsieck were sold in supermarkets and made to standards that this implies. Then under the late Daniel Thibault the quality was transformed, and non-vintage wines were launched the labels of which revealed the year when the cuvee was blended. These wines regularly beat other vintage Champagnes in the international wine challenge. They are richly flavoured and work well with most foods.

Jacquesson

This family house proudly claims Napoleon as one of its most distinguished customers and presents its Champagnes with gorgeous, instantly recognizable labels. The contents of the bottle are of a creamy yet dry style, ranging from the non-vintage expression called Perfection, to the Blanc de Blanc (Chardonnay only) and their vintage Brut. Jacquesson's late disgorged vintage Brut is their convincing answer to Bollingers RD, a gloriously mature yet fresh wine. Their wines work well with food. A rich and complex Champagne.



Krug

The Rolls-Royce of Champagne and now, like Moët & Chandon and Veuve Clicquot, part of the LVMH group. This is a wine to drink at dinner, but not for refreshment. There is also a long lived vintage wine and a single vineyard Blanc de Blanc called Clos de Mesnil, but none of the wines can top Krug's non-vintage and non-vintage rose, both of which contain an unusually high proportion of vintage wines. Rich and mouth-filling.



The lees gathered in the bottle neck after riddling

Lanson

Lanson's name, but not its vineyards, were bought in 1991 by Marne et Champagne, the region's second biggest producer. The non-vintage Lanson remains one of the region's reliable rather than best examples, but the vintage can be long-lived wine that is well worth purchasing. Lanson's top wine is the Noble Cuvée and is highly recommendable, as is their revived demi sec. Rich flavoured wines that reward with some patience.

Moët & Chandon

This is the one Champagne that most of us

have heard of, which is hardly surprising when you consider that over 20 million bottles are sold every year and the contents of the larger bottles are regularly sprayed around the winners at sporting events along with launching new sea vessels. While the non-vintage is very reliable the vintage Brut and the vintage Rose are among the best in the region. The brilliant Prestige Cuvée Dom Perignon, which is also produced in surprising volumes, is worth leaving to cellar for a decade or so. They are lovely toasty wines and will accompany any meal, or can be drunk on their own.

Pommery

Pommery boasts cellars named after the cities to which the biggest shipments were sent in the 19th century, as well as no fewer than 300 ha (450 acres) of great vineyards. Since joining the LVMH group along with Moët & Chandon, Ruinart and Veuve Clicquot, Pommery has managed to keep its light delicate style. The Cuvée Speciale Louise Pommery, named after the daughter of the founder, is among the best of all the Prestige Cuvée wines. smoothly rich and classic, complex wines. The Louise will only improve with careful cellaring. These wines will work well with all styles of food.

Ruinart

The oldest Champagne house, Ruinart was founded in 1792 by a priest called Dom Ruinart. It has grown enormously since it was acquired by Moët & Chandon but continues to enjoy its independence. The style of wine is full flavoured and old fashioned. The emphasis is on the Chardonnay grape much of which comes from Ruinart's own vineyards. Their expressions of wine include Blanc de Blanc, R de Ruinart, and Dom Ruinart Rose. The wines offer a nutty, appley flavour, rich and smooth, with a velvet touch as it slips down the back of one's throat with an excellent, elegant long finish.

Roederer

One of the big family-owned Champagne houses, Roederer is also quietly one of the most dynamic, having taken over Deutz Champagne

and made investments in vintage port, the Rhône Valley, Bordeaux, and a winery in California producing sparkling wine. Roederer's flagship wine is Cristal. Their reputation for the clear glass bottles dates back to the days of the czar of Russia who was a keen customer of the wine. The excellent Brut Premier is worth leaving in a cellar for 5–10 years, an ultra-rich wine influenced by the Pinot Noir grape. Richly approachable when young, this house's non-vintage wines develop great complexity with some time. They also have frequent success in unfashionable vintages.

Salon

The adjective “unique” which is used far too flippantly these days does certainly apply to this Champagne, which is a subsidiary of Laurent-Perrier that sells only one style of wine: a vintage cuvée that is only made in the finest years. Less unusually, Salon prefers not to allow its wine to go through MLF. The result leads to the wine being released long after all the other houses wines have sold out. I urge you to purchase Salon Champagnes when you see them, they are among the most exquisite Champagnes of all, and are slow-evolving. Salon only uses a single grape variety, Chardonnay.

Taittinger

Taittinger, with more than 250 ha (620 acres) of top class vineyards, is one of the biggest producers of Champagne. The light creamy style of the Champagne can be explained by the firm's preference for the use of Chardonnay, of which it has a fine selection of vineyards in the Côte des Blancs. The vintage wine is beautifully biscuity, but the jewel in their crown has to be Comtes de Champagne Prestige Cuvée, according to some wine tasters and sommeliers the best Blanc de Blanc of them all. I concur!

Veuve Clicquot

The instantly recognisable yellow label and the connection with Nicole-Barbe Clicquot-Ponsardin, the woman who helped to elaborate the way in which Champagne is disgorged, have both helped to make this an internationally renowned wine. This is not a Champagne that wins top marks from lovers of more refined and delicate wines like Roederer or Pol Roger, but anybody who appreciates Champagne will enjoy

Champagne Bottle Sizes

Quarter Bottle	¼ bottle
Half or Demi	½ bottle
Bottle	1 bottle
Magnum	2 bottles
Jeroboam	4 bottles
Rehoboam	6 bottles
Methuselah	8 bottles
Salmanazar	12 bottles
Balthazar	16 bottles
Nebuchadnezzar	20 bottles
Melchior	24 bottles
Solomon	26 ⅔ bottles
Sovereign	33 ⅓ bottles
Primat	36 bottles
Melchizedek	40 bottles

the richness and consistency of Veuve Clicquot's top wine La Grande Dame. This is a wine that is thought by many to be one of the best Prestige Cuvées. In their expressions, one may find white and rose as well as a rich reserve semi-sweet.

Pol Roger

Sir Winston Churchill's favourite Champagne! He was one of the wine's greatest fans. The wartime leader is commemorated with the black border around the label of the Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill. The wines made by this family-owned firm are highly popular with those who like delicate, finely structured, non-vintage and vintage Champagne. Unusually, Pol Roger like to use the region's three grape varieties in equal amounts. Their strongest overseas link is with the United Kingdom, where Pol Roger's first exports were sent. This is one of the region's most delicate Champagnes, a complete opposite to the rich Bollinger style. Expressions include Brut Chardonnay, Cuvée PR, Reserve Special, and Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill.

This concludes my journey with you through the world of Champagne. I hope I have inspired some interest in this wonderful beverage and I can't emphasize enough that you should not wait for that special occasion to arise! Champagne should be drunk as any other wine—as and when you feel like it.

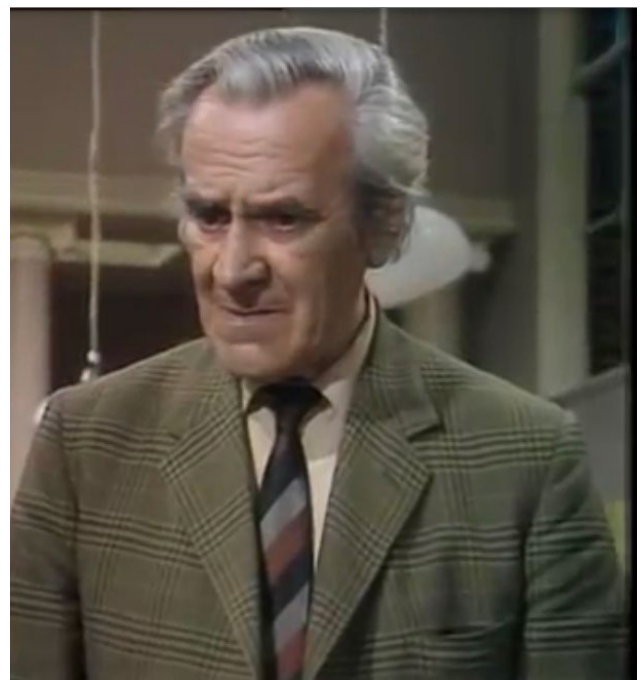
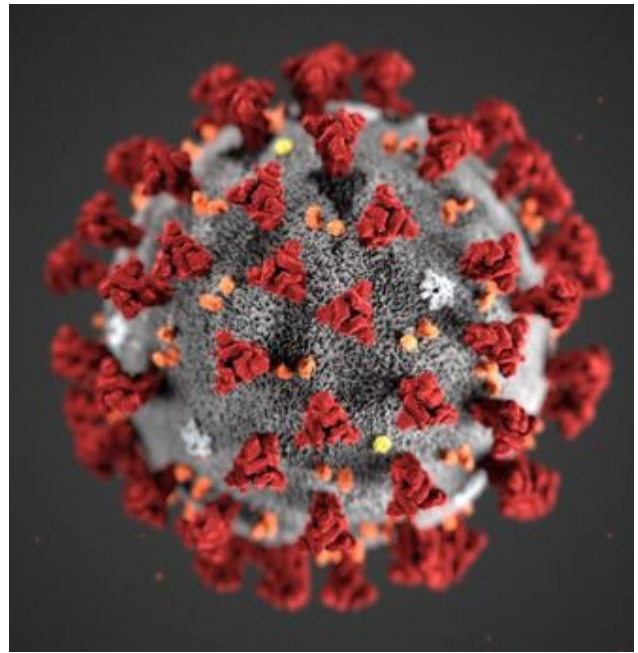
Santé!



CLUB NOTES

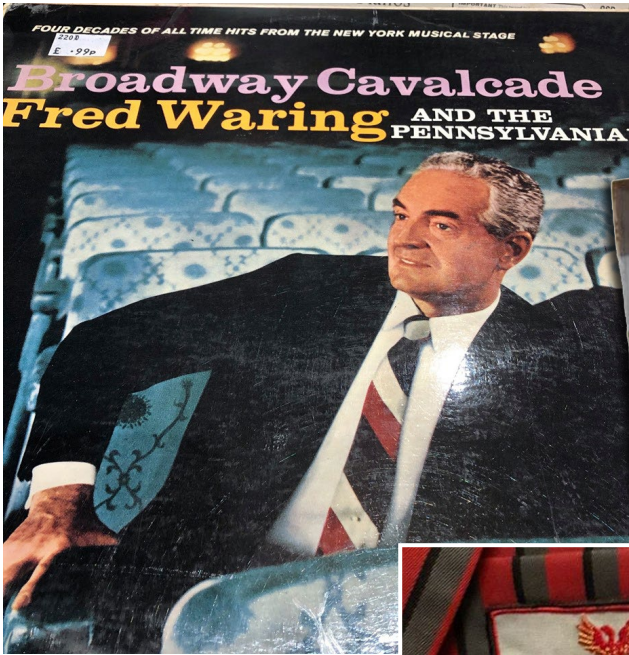
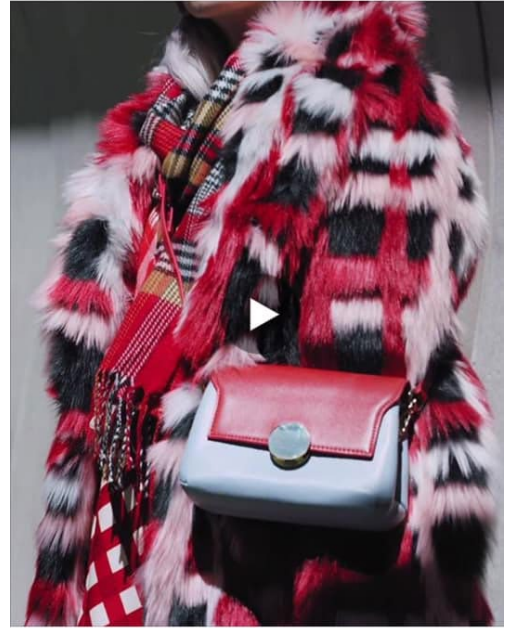
Club Tie Corner

THE CLUB GRABS centre stage this month as Ivan Debono points out that even the Coronavirus itself (right) is affiliated—but suggestions that it was engineered by Club bio-boffins clearly over-estimate their competence, which is mostly limited to perfecting cocktails. Carrying on clockwise: Rachel and Rowan, on a field trip to New Zealand, discover the Club’s tribal roots; Lindsay Sinclair spots John Le Mesurier well dressed in 1970s ATV series *Thriller*, commenting, “I seem to think he wears the same tie as the prison governor in *The Italian Job*”—which, as you can see, he does. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: more Coronavirus news as Germany’s interior minister refuses to shake Angela Merkel’s hand for fear his tie might be contaminated (Debono again); Stuart Turner offers this... garment of some sort; Debono also spots this pleasing Club kimono; Stephen Smith and Mark Christopher both leapt to alert us to this image of Tory minister Jim Prior in Club silk; here’s a treat: Kiwi member Dirk Heinsius has only gone and had a Club blazer badge made, which you can see him sporting here on a Club-ish blazer to represent us at the Napier Art Deco Weekend; Steven Myhill applauds Fred’s proud sporting of the tie, but questions the wisdom of having your album cover photo taken in an auditorium of empty seats...



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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 4th March

7–11pm (lecture around 8pm)

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, 27 Three Colt Street, London E14 8HH

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.

Sunday Afternoon Swing with the Prospective Collective

Every Sunday

3.30–10pm, live music 4–6pm

Jamboree, 27 Three Colt Street, London E14
8HH

Admission: Free on the door with a donation in
the hat, or free online advance booking at www.jamboreevenue.co.uk

Sunday Afternoon Swing is back at Jamboree
with The Prospective Collective, a band of
London-based jazz musicians who perform a
repertoire of classics.

Tweed Run tickets on sale

Friday 6th March

12pm

Admission: £35 from www.tweedrun.com/
tickets

At midday precisely tickets will go on sale for the
12th annual Tweed Run. And presumably will
sell out 3 minutes and 26 seconds later.

Cecil Beaton's Bright Young Things

Thursday 12th March–Sunday 7th June

10am–6pm (9pm on Fridays)

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place,
London WC2H 0HE

Admission: £18–20

This major new exhibition explores the
extravagant world of the glamorous and
stylish “Bright Young Things” of the 1920s
and 1930s, seen through the eye of renowned
British photographer Cecil Beaton. It will bring
to life a deliriously eccentric, glamorous and
creative era of British cultural life, combining
High Society and the avant-garde, artists and
writers, socialites and partygoers. Featuring the
leading cast of the Bright Young Things, many
of whom Beaton would call friends—Anna May
Wong, Oliver Messel and Stephen Tennant
among others—this show charts Beaton's
transformation from middle-class suburban
schoolboy to glittering society figure and the
unrivalled star of *Vogue*. In addition to Beaton's
own portraits, the exhibition also features
paintings by friends and artists including Rex
Whistler, Henry Lamb, and Augustus John.

SJC Pop-Up Shop

Thursday 12th–Wednesday 18th March

5–9pm

The Clerks House, Shoreditch High Street,
London E1 6JE

Simon James Cathcart has an online business



Cecil Beaton caught off guard in his studio

selling menswear inspired by the 1920s and 1930s, with a particular interest in workwear and Norfolk-style suits. Now for the first time he's having a physical shop, for just six days, located in the iconic 18th-century Clerk's House in Shoreditch, just around the corner from Spitalfields Market and Brick Lane Market. The building is just next to St Leonard's Church, and you'll easily spot it for its unmissable red door.

SJC Ladies Night

Friday 13th March

6–9pm

SJC pop-up shop (see above)

As part of their week-long pop-up shop, SJC are having a night aimed at women—did you know that the brand is currently developing a

womenswear line? If you'd like to find out more about what's coming, share your thoughts on women's fashion and let them know what you would like to see from SJC in the future, come and join them for a night of style, drinks and snacks. Show off your best style, take pictures for the SJC photo wall and join a community of ladies passionate about beautiful clothing.

The Candlelight Club

Saturday 14th March

7pm–12am

A secret central London location

Admission: £25 in advance

Dress: Prohibition dandies, gangsters and molls, peaky blinders, decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know



Get your Dandy Victorian Goth on for a group visit to the Beardsley exhibition

London's award-winning immersive 1920s-themed speakeasy party, with live jazz, cabaret and cocktails in a secret London venue filled with candles.

After February's unique mansion party in a Georgian town house, for March the club is back at its secret speakeasy for a night of 1920s glamour, delicious cocktails and wild jazz—courtesy of sizzling seven-piece band the Silver Ghosts.

Leading the charge will be cabaret MC Champagne Charlie, and when the band aren't playing DJs the Bee's Knees will be spinning vintage platters for your dancing pleasure.

Ticket-holders receive an email two days before, revealing the secret location. More at www.thecandlelightclub.com.

"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*

SJC Party

Saturday 14th March

5–9pm

SJC pop-up shop (see above)

SJC are having a party at their pop-up shop.

At 5pm Sean Longden, NSC Member, vintage style enthusiast and author and historian specializing in British social history during World War II, will deliver a talk on classic menswear. Then from 6pm the party gets going with live music, performances and a chance to see a showcase of SJC's new products, try on SJC's latest designs and meet other menswear enthusiasts.

SJC & The Chap

Sunday 15th March

11am–9pm

SJC pop-up shop (see above)

SJC have invited *The Chap* magazine to show off their range of grooming,

clothing and magazinical wares as part of the pop-up. During the afternoon readers of that publication are invited to join the SJC crew for a select gathering in the shop and upstairs in the social chambers of the building for a drink or twain.

Clerkenwell Vintage Fashion Fair

Sunday 15th March

11am–5pm

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

Admission: £5

Some 45 stalls offering vintage clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, gloves, textiles and jewellery from the 1800s to the 1980s. There is also a tea room, alterations booth plus sometimes live entertainment too. More details at www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk.

Benoit Villefon Hot Club at Ronnie Scott's
Sunday 15th March
6.30pm

Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's, 47, Frith Street, Soho, W1D 4HT

Admission: £10 in advance, £12 on the door

Candlelight Club stalwart Benoit Viellefon has various bands, but his Hot Club are inspired by the hot music that emerged from the infamous Parisian Cafes and nightclubs of the 1920s and 30s, gypsy swing numbers made famous by Django Reinhardt. With a nod to the American jazz virtuosi who visited Paris, such as Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet, the Hot Club features both clarinet and trumpet alongside the timeless two-guitars-and-double-bass line-up. But they are also often true to the original "Hot Quintet De France" Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grapelli line-up, with the addition of a virtuoso violin player, or a killer brass section.

Gothic/Dandy Meet-Up at the Beardsley Exhibition

Saturday 21st March

1pm–5pm

Tate Britain, Millbank, London SW1P 4RG

Admission: £16 full price

James Blah is organising this group trip to see the Aubrey Beardsley exhibition at the Tate. "Turn up in your finest Dandy or Gothic garb, just to show modern society that we can still be decadent in this day and age," he says. "The more Victorian deviant the better!" Afterwards we'll doubtless all troop off to the pub (he proposes the Windsor Castle). For organisation details and late-breaking news see the Facebook event.

London Gypsy Jazz Festival

Wednesday 25th–

Sunday 29th March

Toulouse Lautrec, 140 Newington Butts, London SE11 4RN

Admission: £10–25 for individual performances or £90 for a festival pass, from Design My Night

South London's only French jazz club, Toulouse Lautrec, launches London's first Gypsy Jazz Festival in collaboration with Gypsy Festival of London, featuring some of London's acclaimed performers, international legendary masters and elite royalty. Their goal is to establish an official annual festival that celebrates the music originally created in the 1930s by Django Reinhardt.

The Men Who Made Menswear Walking Tour

Saturday 28th March

2.30–4.30pm

Meet at the Atheneum Club, 107 Pall Mall, St James's, London SW1Y 5ER

Admission: £15 from Eventbrite

A rare opportunity to attend NSC Member Russell Nash's signature walking tour, giving the story of menswear over the past 200 years, told through the lives of the men who commissioned, wore and made it. From Beau Brummell to Montague Burton, Mr Fish to the Duke of Windsor, this walk examines how the men of Mayfair, St James's and Soho changed the way men dress themselves.



Catch Russell Nash's iconic menswear walking tour

Luigi Sbaffi stokes an impressive meerschaum at the February Club Night

