

PLUS:

Putting on my top hat

Everything you always wanted to know about this iconic tifter

Restoring an icon of the Great British Seaside Holiday

ENGLAND'S DREAMING

The dark heart of the soda siphon

Cally Callomon goes in search of the perfect fizz

Rannygazoo!

Your chance to appear in a 1930s-style screwball comedy movie

The New Sheridan Club

Newsletter

LXVI • April 2012



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 April in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB, from 7pm until 11pm. As 2012 marks the 50th anniversary of the end of London trolleybuses and the 60th anniversary of the end of London trams, the Earl of Waveney will return with a talk and slideshow entitled *Last of the Line: London's Trams (and Trolleybuses!)*, looking at the tram's and trolley's presences in the capital from the beginning of the 1930s through to the 1960s. Along with the slides and stories he will vividly depict the tram-versus-trolley debate that clove London Transport (as did later the electric-versus-diesel hot potato), how the systems coped during the Blitz, and what happened to some of the vehicles after their life in London—including those lovingly preserved by people like Waveney.



it is likely that it was invented by a Frenchman towards the end of the 18th century. The first man to wear one in England was allegedly a hatter called John Hetherington who was arrested on the grounds that his outrageous tiffur was disturbing the peace. The shell of the hat is made from pieces of calico stiffened with shellac (with extra layers added for more stiffness if the hat is intended to offer protection in an equestrian context) shaped on a wooden hat block. This is then covered with an outer cloth finish, originally beaver fur felt then silk plush. This soft, glossy, downy silk was mostly made in France and the method was lost when the last factory closed in Lyon in the mid-20th century, allegedly when the two brothers who owned it had an argument and one of them wrecked the machine in a fit of pique. Modern top hats are made from fur "melusine" instead. Charles gave us a few tips on maintaining and polishing toppers, and the correct way to fold the opera hat (or "Gibus hat" after the chap who invented it—French again, I'm afraid), which has a collapsible crown made from a sprung metal frame. Members present who owned a topper were invited to wear it, as you can see from the pictures. An essay of this talk begins on page 4.

The Last Meeting

At our March meeting Charles Henry Wolfenbloode, Duke of Tipa, gave us a passionate talk about the top hat, how it is made and how to look after it. Although the exact origins of the style are lost in the mists of time



(Left) Men in Hats; (above) Sean makes an appearance fresh from some political rally, a blood-soaked banner still round his neck; (below) Charles expounds; (lower left) in honour of the event we awarded ourselves a special dispensation to wear hats



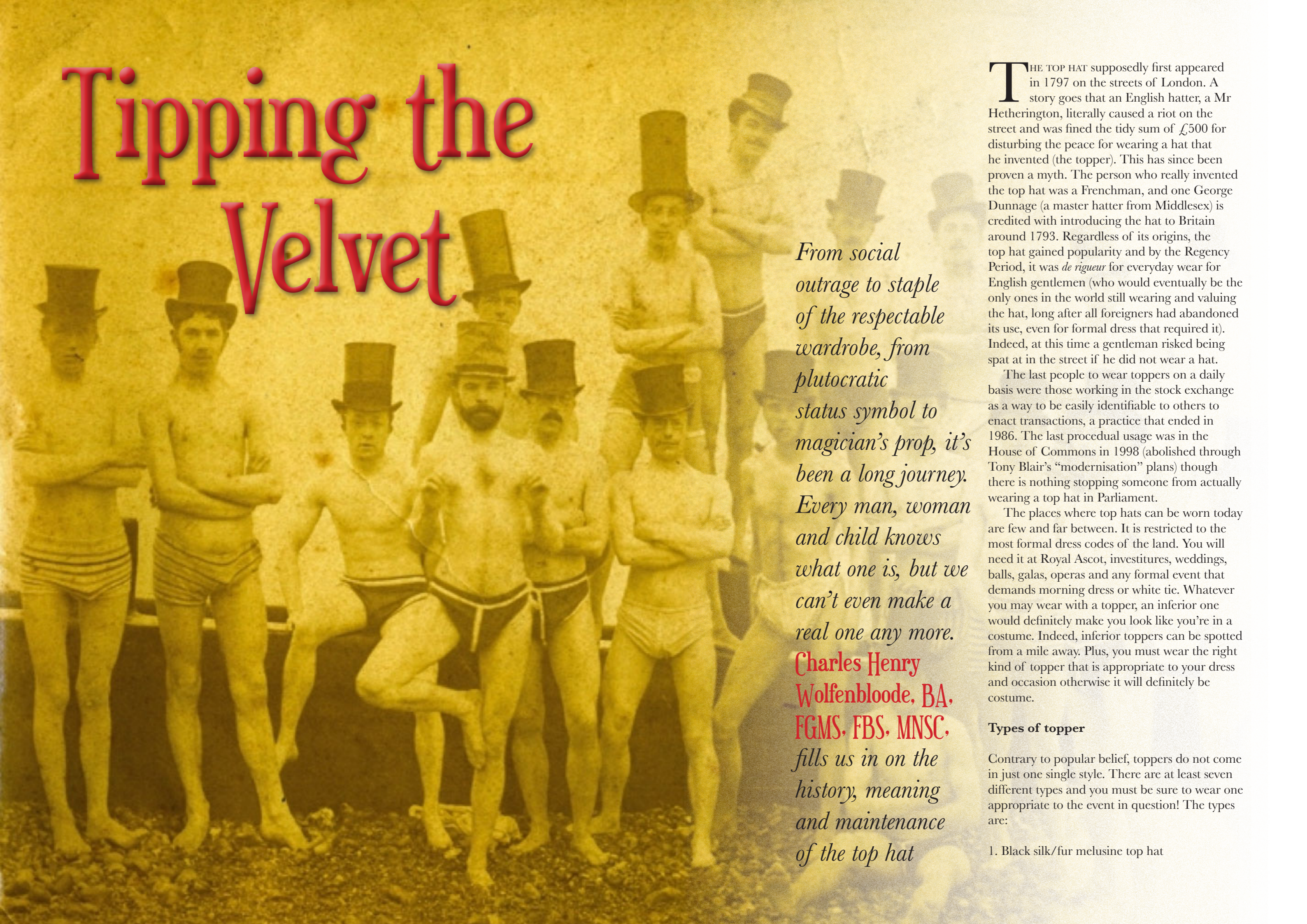
indoors; (below) Scarheart with a rare sighting of Sir Oliver; (below left) Giles Culpepper develops his new Hat Bucket Workout; (below right) Charles shows us the correct way to collapse an opera hat, against the body thus



(Left, l-r) Peng Hui Lee, Compton-Bassett, Mrs H.; (far left) Oliver falls upon his birthday cake; (bottom) a Satanic Mark Gidman tempts Patricia Hammond with cake; (right) Affability Hollander makes his exit



Tipping the Velvet



From social outrage to staple of the respectable wardrobe, from plutocratic status symbol to magician's prop, it's been a long journey. Every man, woman and child knows what one is, but we can't even make a real one any more.

Charles Henry Wolfenbloode, BA, FGMS, FBS, MNSC,
fills us in on the history, meaning and maintenance of the top hat

THE TOP HAT supposedly first appeared in 1797 on the streets of London. A story goes that an English hatter, a Mr Hetherington, literally caused a riot on the street and was fined the tidy sum of £500 for disturbing the peace for wearing a hat that he invented (the topper). This has since been proven a myth. The person who really invented the top hat was a Frenchman, and one George Dunnage (a master hatter from Middlesex) is credited with introducing the hat to Britain around 1793. Regardless of its origins, the top hat gained popularity and by the Regency Period, it was *de rigueur* for everyday wear for English gentlemen (who would eventually be the only ones in the world still wearing and valuing the hat, long after all foreigners had abandoned its use, even for formal dress that required it). Indeed, at this time a gentleman risked being spat at in the street if he did not wear a hat.

The last people to wear toppers on a daily basis were those working in the stock exchange as a way to be easily identifiable to others to enact transactions, a practice that ended in 1986. The last procedural usage was in the House of Commons in 1998 (abolished through Tony Blair's "modernisation" plans) though there is nothing stopping someone from actually wearing a top hat in Parliament.

The places where top hats can be worn today are few and far between. It is restricted to the most formal dress codes of the land. You will need it at Royal Ascot, investitures, weddings, balls, galas, operas and any formal event that demands morning dress or white tie. Whatever you may wear with a topper, an inferior one would definitely make you look like you're in a costume. Indeed, inferior toppers can be spotted from a mile away. Plus, you must wear the right kind of topper that is appropriate to your dress and occasion otherwise it will definitely be costume.

Types of topper

Contrary to popular belief, toppers do not come in just one single style. There are at least seven different types and you must be sure to wear one appropriate to the event in question! The types are:

1. Black silk/fur melusine top hat



(Top row, left to right) Silk plush; fur melusine; satin opera hat; riding hat; (bottom row, left to right) grey fur felt; black silk with wide mourning band; livery hat; felt fancy dress hat

2. Grey silk/fur felt/fur melusine top hat
3. Black cloth/silk opera hat
4. Black silk/fur melusine top hat with mourning band
5. Black silk/fur melusine riding top hat
6. Black silk/fur melusine livery top hat
7. Black wool felt mourning top hat

There are other types but these are the most common. Let us examine their usage and suitability.

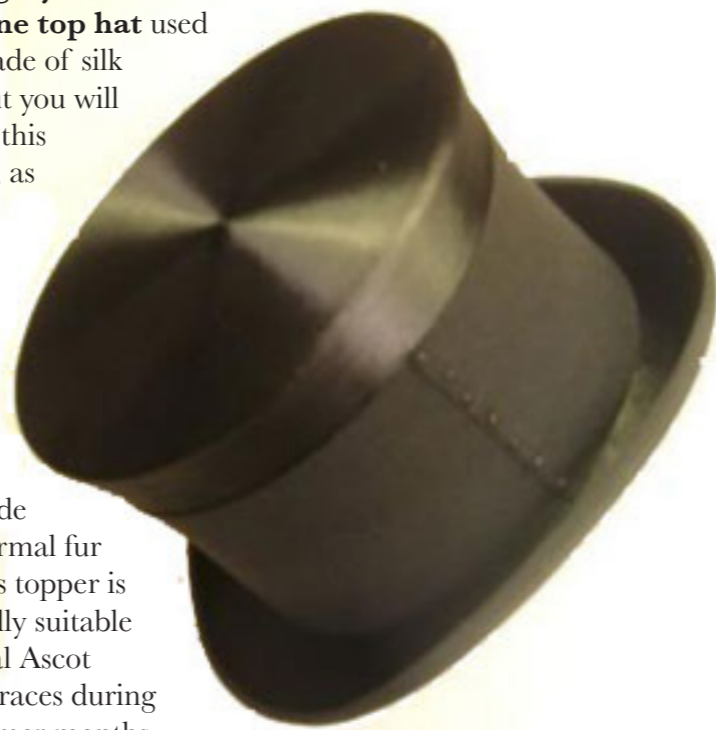
The **black silk/fur melusine top hat** is the most common and is suitable for many events and dress codes. The crown height is typically 5½ to 6¼ inches high and can come in a variety of different shapes (ideally, one should get one with a crown shape and height to suit one's face and body). The most typical is the semi-bell shape but there are others such as "stove pipe" (where the sides are completely

crown is taller than 6½ inches), "chimney" (where the sides taper slightly towards the top), etc. The topper can come in a variety of weights depending on use. The ones worn today are typically "town weight", made with a single layer of goss for the shell of the crown, and so very light.

The **grey silk/fur felt/melusine top hat** used

to be made of silk plush but you will not find this so easily, as silk ones haven't been made since WWII. They are

now made from normal fur felt. This topper is only really suitable for Royal Ascot and the races during the summer months though people nowadays wear it to weddings or any other event. In the past, many stored theirs with Lock & Co. in the winter, to ensure it was not accidentally worn "out of season". It is often known as a "drab shell" top hat or a "white hat". Instead of a silk grosgrain hatband, there could be a band of black boxcloth (also found on black silk toppers:



see below) known as a "mourning band". Never wear this hat with evening wear.

The **black cloth/silk opera hat** is a collapsible version of the topper that was invented by a French hatter called Antoine Gibus. It can be made of wool merino cloth, satin or (the better) grosgrain. These are still being made. They should only be worn with white tie and/or to the opera (hence the name). Never wear this during the day.

The **black silk/fur melusine top hat with mourning band**, as the name suggests, should only be worn at funerals. Instead of a 2 inch black silk grosgrain riband, the topper is wrapped around with a cloth band of around 5 inches wide and secured using a line of



tiny silk buttons. This is to cover much of the shiny silk surface of the crown. The wider the band the more important the person mourned.

Another way of indicating mourning is to have a long length of wide silk crêpe (with unhemmed edges) tied around the lower sides of the crown with the excess length



hanging off behind. These are called "weepers" or "mourning veils" and should only be worn by the chief mourner or announcer of the funeral party (though these days they are mostly worn by funeral directors).

The **black silk/fur melusine riding top hat** is like a normal silk topper but with a lower crown or around 4¼ inches high. This is to avoid the hat being knocked off by branches when riding. Unless you do dressage or regularly go riding, don't make the mistake of buying one. These toppers are often made in "country" or "hunting weight" which means they are heavier and stronger than your average topper.

The **black silk/fur melusine livery top hat** is like a normal topper but with the addition of gold or silver braiding/lace, brim binding and/or hatband. As the name suggests, it should only be worn by doormen and servants as part

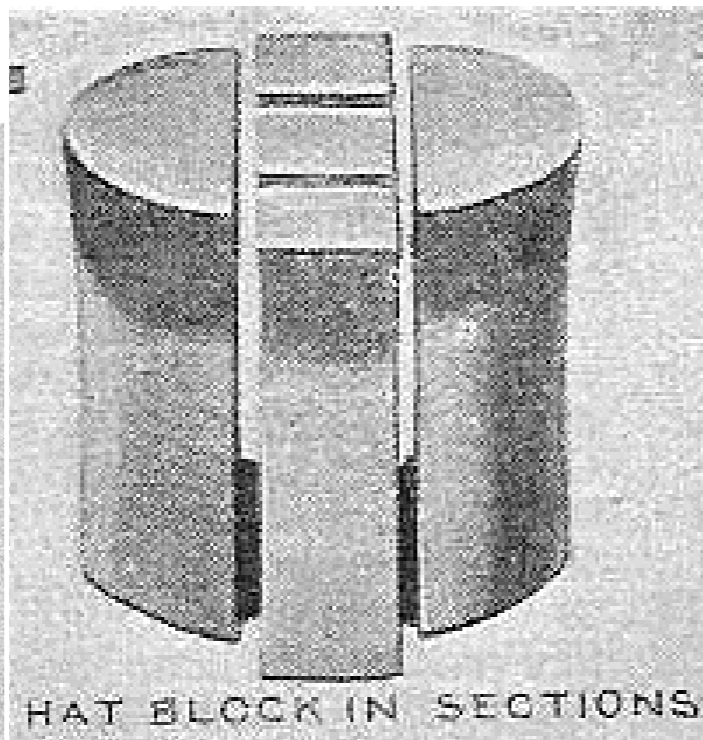
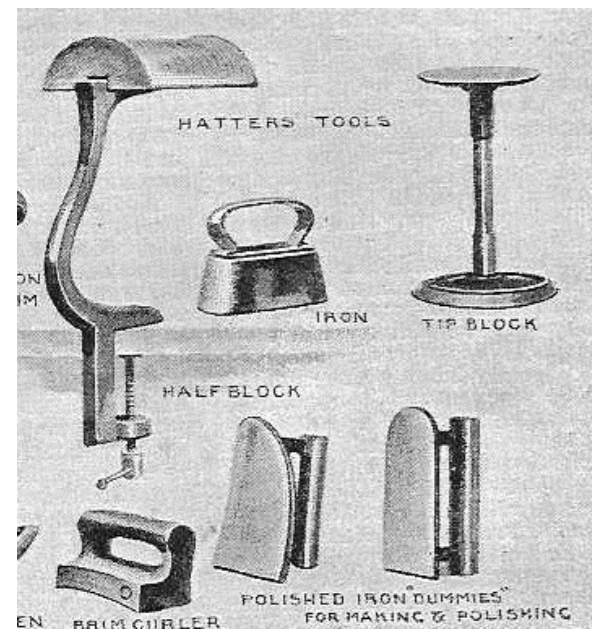




Goss (i.e. gossamer) is made by soaking calico, linen or cheesecloth in shellac and ammonia then stretching it on a frame and leaving it to cure for several months

of their livery which often is trimmed with gold lace itself so the hat matches.

The **black wool felt mourning top hat** is basically a top hat worn by funeral directors, undertakers and mourners at a funeral who can't afford a silk/fur melusine hat with a proper mourning band. Because it is made of wool there is no shine to it, thus indicating mourning. A lot of inferior toppers sold on the high street solely to the trendy are of this type. The hat is felt-like and soft, unlike the hard shell varieties above. One of the dead giveaways is to look at the brim binding which is



simply machine-sewn on and bent upwards like a homburg, a time-saving method. It's relative cheapness makes it the choice for fancy dress and for Goths. Quality varies: Christys' hats at least look similar to their fur melusine ones and these are the hats of choice for funerals. The rest from the high street are only suitable for vulgar use: i.e. fancy dress, fashionistas, etc. Its affordability makes wool felt also the material of choice for toppers with extravagant and ridiculous shapes and sizes, most notably the late Sebastian Horsley's infamous toppers, which would be impossible to make with the limited dimensions of fur melusine plush. Wool felt is simply blocked using an industrial

press while other types require a shell to be blocked by hand before covering with the outer material, a more time consuming and therefore expensive process.

Construction

Beaver and fur hats are constructed by first blocking a felt hood (also how wool toppers are made) before covering the shell with the beaver

or fur plush. Beaver and fur plush is not as black as silk and the nap strands are not uniform.

Silk, however, requires a more advanced process: the goss-layering technique. Supposedly invented by Lincoln Bennett, this method is still used by Patey. First, the goss (or "gossamer") is made by stretching a sheet of cotton calico, linen or cheesecloth soaked in shellac and ammonia. This is left to cure for several months before it is used. The goss is then cut into various strips.

For the crown, a single rectangular piece is seamed together at both ends with an iron (powdered gum dammar is used to stop the iron from sticking to the goss). A hat block, consisting of several wooden pieces, is inserted into the crown side piece. The block is in several parts because it would be impossible to remove if it were in one piece. The inlay protruding at the top is ironed flat on to the tip of the block.

The tip piece is then placed on top and ironed so the inlays of the side piece stick to it. The edges of the tip piece are trimmed and the inlay folded down on to the sides and ironed down. This creates a secure structure. At this point, it is enough for a town weight topper. For a country weight, more layers are ironed on.

The brim piece is then ironed on (again, with enough inlay to secure on to the sides) on a brim block. Four layers are required as the brim takes most of the strain of the hat. The blocks are then removed and the hat is rested for a while before the next stage.

The underbrim merino is ironed on. The silk plush is then cut and the side and tip pieces are sewn together. This part of the process is highly skilled as the silk hood must fit over the shell exactly like a second skin. The silk brim piece is then ironed on and the silk hood eased over the shell, which has been coated with shellac varnish. The seam on the side piece is cut diagonally and it is butted together so the nap of the silk conceals the join.

The whole hat is then given an iron through so the silk hood sticks to the shell. At this stage, the hat is ready to be half-blocked into its final shape and the brim curled. Then the trimmings—the brim binding, sweatband, hatband, etc. are sewn on. The lining is just slipped in, though in the past it was attached to the shell during the initial stages of assembling the crown. After a quick polish and



The most common damage, wear to the plush on the crown



Dents such as these can be ironed out with reblocking



Moth damage to the underbrim

THE CONFORMATEUR
Its Use and Operation

BRIEFLY summed up, the question of the use or non-use of the conformateur may be covered thus: without its assistance it is certain that a great percentage of stiff hat purchasers will be imperfectly fitted, and that the complete satisfaction that makes the truly successful sale will be lacking; the use of the conformateur is the one method of overcoming this difficulty. This one fact, entailing as it does, a larger and more staunch constituency, is sufficient in itself to make the instrument an indispensable investment.

A dozen head conforms taken at random will usually reveal such fearful and wonderful complications of form, such direct opposites in length and breadth and such



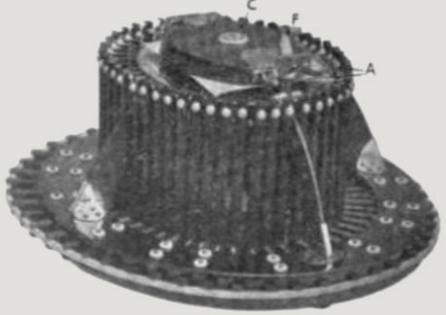
down on the abused bumps; it means that the appearance of the hat will suffer, standing away from the head in places and announcing plainly its slackness of

fit; it means that time and wear will assuredly push the crown out of shape, twisting the brim awry; and, as a matter of course, it means dissatisfaction. In the

strange anomalies in lumps and hollows, that the mere thought of fitting them all with a perfectly rigid and perfectly regular oval will seem too impossible to bear consideration.

Yet this thing is being done, or rather attempted, in every store where a conformateur is not included in the equipment. Sometimes the hats fit, sometimes they do not. It depends entirely upon the sort of head the customer happens to have. If it is irregular—and eight out of ten are irregular—it means that certain curves of his head will be held as in a vise; that at other points there will be gaping spaces where the wind may enter and gain a leverage to tear the hat away, no matter how tightly and painfully it may be crushed

more urgent cases the leather may be padded, and although the shelving appearance will remain unchanged, this operation will help out the fit. But the customer

as dents may not show up in photos unless the silk has been polished to a satin shine making imperfections easier to spot.

3. The underbrim merino may have moth damage or discolouration. This is also troublesome to fix as it requires the sweatband and brim binding to be removed before the merino could be stripped and replaced. But a few spots of moth is not enough reason to have the underbrim refaced, nor is it reason to reject a hat, as it may not be conspicuous.

4. A good hat will have a good brim curl and binding. The classic brim binding is that there should be more silk on the underbrim and less on the upperbrim. Thus when the brim is properly curled, the fore and aft will show only a thin piping of silk above, while as the sides curl inwards they show all of the binding on the underbrim. This creates an elegant sweep and it must all be hand sewn. Bad binding is when a sewing machine is used, creating a line of visible stitches. A bad brim curl is when the edge is simply turned up all the way around, like a homburg brim, making it look

flat rather than sweeping.

5. The sweatband is important as it stops sweat from seeping on to the shell which would weaken it. The sweatband is easily replaced but you must be careful that the thickness of the leather is the same or it will change the hat size.

6. The hatband is easily replaced so it doesn't matter if it is missing. The band could be silk or wool.

Sizing

Because people's heads were smaller in the past, there is a shortage of silk toppers in large sizes

and those that exist are getting expensive. It should be noted that a small topper cannot be stretched into a bigger size.

To tell if a hat is the right size, check the distance between the brim and your ear. If there is a finger's worth of space then it is the correct size. If the brim touches your ear, it is too big. If more fingers fit between the space then it is too small.

If the hat is the correct size but there are gaps or pressure points then the hat is of a slightly different head shape to your head and requires reconforming. To do this, a "conformateur" is placed over your head—this device has an array of pins around its circumference that slide in until they touch your head, creating a pattern that is punched on to card. This card is then used to create a hat block over which the heat-softened hat is slipped so that it forms to your head shape.

Polishing

The quickest way of polishing is using a standard brush and silk velvet pad. Always brush in the direction of the nap. The brush should be of soft bristle and not hard bristle as used for normal felt hats. Brushing will remove any dust. The velvet pad will align the nap.

Using a silk "lure" (or pad) will refine the shine. The lure is placed against a hot iron before polishing



Polishes (top to bottom): dry brush and velvet pad; silk lure, iron and velvet pad; water and velvet pad; tallow, silk pad, silk lure, iron and velvet pad



the hat. In effect, it acts as an iron and lays the nap flat.

To get a very high shine, water maybe applied to the plush before polishing with the velvet pad. However, this must not be overdone as water dries out the silk and may weaken the bond between the silk hood and the shell.

The best way to polish is using tallow. It is advisable that this be professionally done. A tallow polish creates a luminous long-lasting shine.

Conclusion

Although the wearing of top hats has declined, the fact that there are still events that require them in this country has allowed their survival. Moreover, as a result, all the hatmakers with the necessary skills of renovation now reside in this country. It is up to us to preserve the tradition of toppers and to make the most of what we have. Supplies of silk hats are dwindling, but thankfully there are a few sources abroad that may have been overlooked—so if you look hard enough, you can still find a silk hat that fits and is a reasonable price.

This article is an abridged version of my blog guide with some new content in regards to construction. See <http://chwoolfenbloode.wordpress.com/2009/05/15/guide-to-buying-a-top-hat>.

GAS ATTACK!

ONE BALMY SPRING morning my thoughts turned to a Pimms-filled summer season and the deep worries about how to tackle the low content of bubbles in cheap bottled water. The situation was further complicated by the arrival, a donation, of three old glass bar-top soda bottles, all dressed up in advertising regalia and looking as if they may have the answer. They look just the part in the underground Tabac that I have recreated at my home, but I soon found out that re-filling them was to be the very devil and so turned to The New Sheridan Club for help...

From: The New Sheridan Club
To: All Members
Date: Saturday,
10 Mar 2012
Subject: Re: Old soda siphons

One of your fellow Members has a request. "I own a number of the old-fashioned type of soda fountain, oft supplied to inns in crates ready-charged with water and fizz," writes Count Martindt Cally von Callomon. "Does any of our membership know of a place where I could get these re-charged these days? Bear in mind that these do not have removable tops or stoppers and that they do not appear to take the small bomb-like cartridges used in modern soda siphons. I am ever-keen to do this task properly, as I am told that their period fizz was so much more vibrant than the later sort



Sometimes something that feels as if it should be simple turns out to be anything but, as this correspondence on soda siphons attests...

BY COUNT MARTINDT CALLY VON CALLOMON

of, heaven forbid, bottled fizzy water."

You sometimes see these old glass soda water bottles in flea markets or as ornaments in bars. They might have the brand name etched on to them. I suspect they were delivered charged to drinking establishments, then collected and recharged by the water company. I too have heard that this old type was much fizzier than the soda water we get in cans or plastic bottles today, which cannot take so much pressure. If any of you knows how these might be recharged these days please get in touch. If not, perhaps this is an opportunity to form the Sheridan Aerated Water Company...

Such is the power of the NSC jungle telegraph that I immediately received the following:



their corporate Librarian may be able to assist.

From: Stuart Axford
Rather unhelpfully, my answer is, "I don't know, but can you let me know if you find out please." In fact, the tops of these old soda siphons do come off but they require either a special tool or a bit of a knack. They were dismantled for cleaning and to check the seals, then reassembled and

From: Freddie Munday

I'll have a word at my club. They certainly used to stock the old fashioned variety. Then they ran out saying that their supplier had gone bust. Then, a year or two later, they reappeared, presumably after having found a new one. I'm dining there in a week or two and I'll try and track them down.

From: Naomi Liddle

If it is of any help with the detective work, we still use similar glass soda siphons at the theatre bar (South London Theatre in West Norwood), where Dave Hollander and myself volunteer. They are supplied and refilled by Britvic, I believe, and are part of our contract with Fullers brewery. The bottles themselves seem to have been in circulation since the 1970s, if the crates and occasional stamped dates are anything to go by. Perhaps Britvic or Fullers may be able to help? Or possibly BOC?

From: Peter Reedman

In 1975 I worked for the Australian Distributor for Sparklets Soda Siphons (a BOC Company). May I suggest you make contact with BOC. They used to operate out of Hammersmith. Perhaps

re-filled. Refilling was done on special machines which the old mineral water companies had in their factories and which held the siphons upside down.

Siphons were usually filled through the spout with the handle depressed, and this was done at 120-140lbs pressure so the pressure created during this process was enormous. I know of a chap whose family had a mineral water business who had a nine-inch scar on his arm from where a siphon had once exploded on him. One other word of warning—on an antique siphon it is most unlikely that the rubber gaskets and seals would be sound enough to take the enormous pressure, so all the seals would need to be replaced before the siphon could even be attempted to be filled.

So far as I understand it, the last remaining company in the country to make, sell and refill soda siphons is a firm called Adcocks based near Peterborough (<http://www.adcockssiphons.co.uk/adcocks/index.htm>.) They have a minimum order of 32 siphons, although they do also sell through stockists. I very much doubt that they would fill antique siphons on an individual basis, but I suppose it might be worth asking.

From: Neil Desperandum

Sir, a word to the wise: however you proceed, do so with extreme caution. Glass starts to craze almost immediately and continues to do so throughout its life which is why you can't re-cut old glass to fit new frames. Even at what might seem low pressures, compressed gasses can exert enormous forces so do make sure you don't end up with a face-full of glass.

From: Jon Evans

Being the technical type I might be able to sort this out. I keep various compressed gasses—until recently I also had laughing gas which would have been a fun propellant to dissolve. The contents could be super-saturated with CO₂ to make it very fizzy indeed but bearing in mind the vessels are glass, and old glass at that, it might be a plan to start with a lower pressure. The structural properties of glass change a bit with time and surface scratches create stress concentrations. In the case of regular filling, you may want to rent a CO₂ bottle from BOC for all your fizzy drink needs (also quite a handy welding shield gas). It may be that the nozzle is a standard shape and I might be able to make a filling mechanism for them.

From: Cally in response

It sounds to me as if you may be on to something here. I have three of these blighters and am finding people overly generous when it comes to offloading them into my cellar-bar. I'd happily loan one out, one that looks in fairly good shape, for you to experiment with. Should it work, should you advertise, you may get inundated...

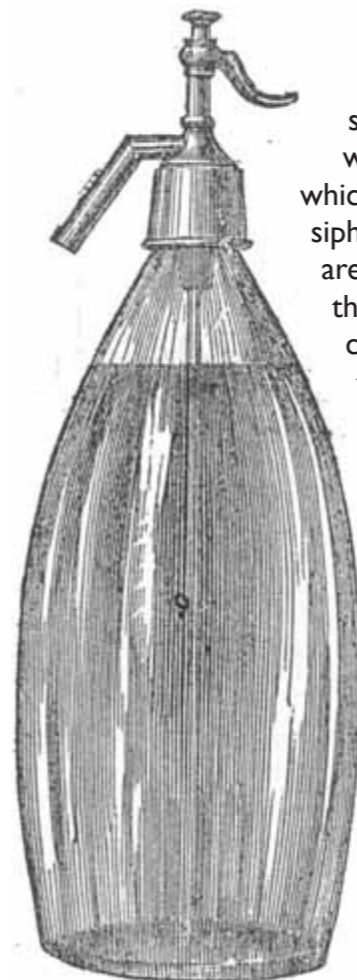
From: Jon Evans

When I first responded, I thought you were writing in the capacity of an enthusiast rather than an enthusiastic business, which changes the legal aspects of it considerably. [In fact Cally's bar is a private one and not run as a business—Ed.] I suspect there could be liability issues in this type of reusable pressurised container and, at the pressures suggested, they would be just the wrong side of pressure vessel legislation in the event that I decided to set up a business filling them. In fact maybe the reason no-one is filling them is because of pressure safety law.

I can enable you to fill your siphons yourself. It would be cheap enough that you could have regular soda siphon fights, you could fill them whenever you wanted and you wouldn't have to worry about the cost. However there are two things you might have to consider. Sterilization of the vessel and pressure safety. I am sure if you filled it and used it fairly immediately, nothing more than a quick swoosh about with water would be required but storing something for days or weeks might enable incubation of nasty stuff. Sterilisation could be achieved by:

- (a) a UV light box;
- (b) removing the glass and heating it in an oven prior to filling (not recommended as this could change the properties of the glass);
- or (c) a sterilising solution, although you would need to be able to unscrew the top.

As for pressure safety, there are a couple of DIY guestimates you could do—but if things went wrong you are talking about glass flying everywhere which could result in death. See <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/scalding-horror-as-coffee-machine-explodes-247490>. The



This 1867 siphon from American entrepreneur John Matthews was apparently tested to 800 pounds per square inch

steamer on a coffee machine works at 147psi or thereabouts, which is a similar pressure to your siphons at filling. Also of interest are the comments on this page that highlight the litigation culture we are developing in the UK.

However, if you want to go ahead there are three ways:

1. Find a company to do it for you. This might require in excess of 30 siphons as some might be deemed as unsafe.

2. If you do have access to CO₂ cylinders I could make an attachment that would enable you to add gas to the siphon. You would remove the valve from the neck, fill it 80% full with filtered water, mineral water, cheap wine or just about any liquid you want, stick the top back on then introduce gas through the spout. The maximum pressure you could achieve with CO₂ is about 75 psi, which is probably a lower pressure than the siphon is designed to work at.

3. It would appear the traditional method would be to invert the unit and just pump water in. The air in the existing container would be trapped and compressed and become both the propellant and the fizz as it dissolves. (Many people think only carbon dioxide can be dissolved.) As any diver will tell you, larger, heavier gasses take more time to dissolve into and out of solution, so using a heavy gas might mean something does not look so fizzy, but it would stay fizzy for longer and also make you burp more. Hence the idea of nitrous oxide—you would end up burping laughing gas.

Mr Axford suggests that they had a filling pressure of 120–140lbs, which in engineering terms is pretty moderate. You could either use a small modified pressure washer, set to

run at 140 psi, rather than 1470+ psi, or use a pressure vessel filled with water and then pressurised by a diving cylinder and regulator. The air from the diving tank would effectively push the water from the pressure vessel into the siphon and the existing gas would be the propellant. Diving tanks are pretty cheap and there are plenty of people like me who could fill them. It might even be possible to modify one of those 12v tyre pumps you can buy for under £10 to do the job.

If the siphon was left for a bit for the gas to dissolve the pressure inside would drop and the unit would be safer to handle—my guess is that if it was going to break it would do so on filling and become safer with time (unless you dropped it).

From: Cally in response

Most grateful for all this work you have put in. My allusion to "a business" was an off-hand quip—I merely own three of these old containers and thought that filling them may be an easy task. I also own an underground French Resistance Tabac in which to use them. However, from what you have pointed out, I value my eyesight and profile enough not to have both modified by flying shards of glass, and will resign the three culprits to "show" status and pursue the tried-and-tested soda siphon with its little gas-filled-bombs...

Most 19th-century siphon fillers were operated by a foot pump and a man in a waistcoat. For a brief history of the evolution of the siphon bottle, see this essay.

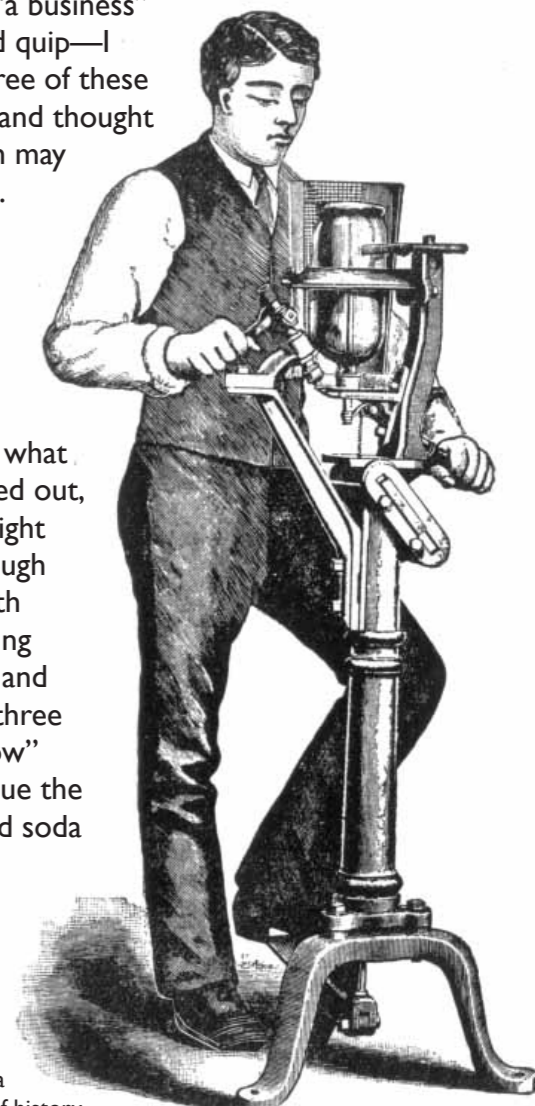


FIG. 307.—SYPHON FILLER FOR ALL SIZES OF SYPHONS.

SWEET DREAMS WERE MADE OF THIS

BY JAN LEANDRO
DREAMLAND TRUST AUDIENCE
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

DREAMLAND LIES AT the heart of Margate in Kent and will be 92 years old this year. Her origins actually lie in the railway boom, when the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company built a terminal building on the site with the intention of operating a service in direct competition with the South Eastern service to Margate. But the company failed to obtain permission to operate its new station and found itself with a very large, empty building. LCDR's caterers, Spiers & Pond, agreed to take on the building, transforming it into the Hall by the Sea entertainment venue.

"Lord" George Sanger, famous circus entrepreneur and former owner of London's Astleys Amphitheatre, took over the site in 1875, introducing his menagerie of wild and exotic animals and further developing the venue to include pleasure gardens, amusement rides and a breeding programme for his animals. In fact three of Sanger's menagerie cages are still on the Dreamland site and are Grade II



*For decades it was an icon of the Great British Seaside Holiday, encapsulating the sleek modernism of the 1920s and 1930s, the shiny optimism of the 1950s and the brash rebellion of the 1960s. But for ten years it has been cruelly neglected and allowed to rot. Now campaigners are determined to return **Dreamland** to its rightful place in the heart of the British holidaymaker*

listed. They are thought to be the last remaining examples of their kind.

In 1919 John Henry Iles bought the site for £40,000 and spent a further £500,000—the equivalent of about £15million today—developing his vision of an American-style theme park based on Dreamland at Coney Island. As a mark of intent he built the iconic Scenic Railway amid the pleasure gardens and amusements.

In 1921 Iles added the wooden roller coaster, described by its patent thus: "Each car will travel along the straight portions of the track and acquire a quick centrifugal motion in passing around the curves, turns or corners, the suddenness of which causes agitation or commotion of the occupants, and hence much



(Above) Holidaymakers enjoy the Scenic Railway in the 1930s; (inset) the Mayor of Margate on the Scenic Railway in 1931; (opposite) a leaflet from 1947



merriment and amusement!" Some 500,000 visitors sampled its climbs, drops and bumps in the first three months of opening. It was soon joined by more rides, such as the Joy Wheel, the Miniature Railway, The Whip and the River Caves. Dreamland was set to become one of the best loved amusement parks in the UK—touted as a surefire provider of "happiness at a price that everyone can afford".

In 1935 the small Variety Cinema on the site was replaced. The new 2,200-seat "super-cinema" was a modernist masterpiece, designed by architects Julian Leathart and W. F. Granger, and was a tourist attraction in itself, with fans of the "Moderne" style travelling just to stare at the exterior. The design would be hugely influential on the development of modern cinema chains across the UK.

The inside was as grand as the outside (the foyer itself now has Grade II* listing), with the

cinema boasting lounges, restaurants, bars and a ballroom, as well as air conditioning—a boon in those times when three quarters of the audience would have smoked their way through the main feature. The original Compton Noterman cinema organ is still in place and up till 2003 was still working well.

The first half of Dreamland's 1940s was, of course, dominated by the war effort on the home front and overseas. The cinema and ballroom initially remained open at the outbreak



(Above) Above an early incarnation incorporating the original "Hall by the Sea"; (right) a 1920s view of the Scenic Railway from the Pleasure Gardens; (below) and aerial view of the Scenic Railway

of hostilities, but prospects of anything like a normal summer season in 1940 were abandoned when the entire site was requisitioned by the Government in June. This order was made on the back of the Dunkirk evacuation, when thousands of British and Allied soldiers were rescued from French beaches after being cut off by the German army.

After the war Billy Butlin invested in Dreamland to



help get her back up and running. The arrival of the 1950s marked a new era of hope and leisure after the austerity of the war years. The Festival of Britain inspired the nation with modern design and the optimism of a coming space age—though the most important feature of this decade, as far as Dreamland and Margate were concerned, was the birth of the teenager.

Rock 'n' roll music, the end of rationing and the availability of fabrics in colours other than army uniform green provided the perfect inspiration for young people. Dreamland

was the ideal stomping ground for a generation who wanted to draw a firm line between them and their parents in looks, tastes and attitude. The noise, the smells and the chance to eye up girls/boys was a great draw and the park became as much a place to promenade in your finery as a place to ride the dodgems.

For many the 1960s was the golden era for Dreamland, with youth culture

booming, the economy on the up and growing numbers of day trippers from London bringing fashion from across the capital. The outfits would often be copied and on sale on Margate's market stalls the following week.

The 1960s are largely remembered as the era of the Mods and Rockers and these groups flocked to Dreamland, which was by then one of the premier music venues outside of London. The Rolling



The revolutionary Dreamland Cinema: (far left) the Modernist exterior; (left) the foyer, now Grade II* listed; (above) the café (evidently with some hep "jazz" band about to play); (below) the Bingo Foyer

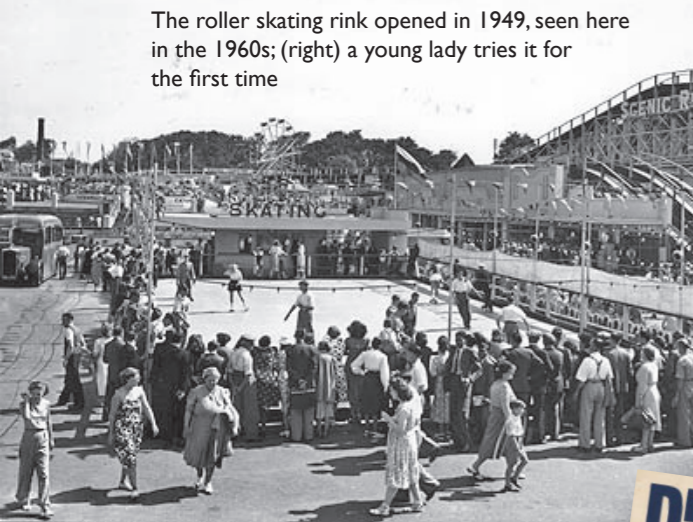


Images © Margate Museum and the Dreamland Trust

Stones, The Who, The Yardbirds, Manfred Mann, Lulu, Desmond Dekker and Gerry and the Pacemakers all graced the stage of the ballroom and you can bet that there was the odd dust-up in the aisles. Margate Magistrates' Court made the front pages of the press in 1964, with fighting Mods and Rockers being



The roller skating rink opened in 1949, seen here in the 1960s; (right) a young lady tries it for the first time



(Above) "Come in Number 9, your time is up!"—electric boats; (below) even The Who played Dreamland. But what became of the Gaylords?

such as dodgems and waltzers. The Big Wheel was dismantled and sold to Mexican buyers, though the double Log Flume, Wild Mouse and the Space Station rides stayed in place, meaning that Margate's skyline retained at least some of

its visible rides. And to mark the Year of the Carousel in 2000 a little history was revived on site in the shape of four carousels. But these were not enough to halt Dreamland's decline as we entered the new millennium.

Rumours of closure, demolition, potential new owners or a change to a supermarket or housing were all rife, with empty spaces on site prompting further speculation about the park's future. One item of major concern for historians and amusement

park enthusiasts was the future of the 1920s Scenic Railway, so moves were made to have the structure declared a listed building. This campaign was successful and the ride received a Grade II listing in March 2002—the first time such a listing had been given to a ride.

It was hoped that the listing would ensure Dreamland's future as an amusement park, yet Jimmy Godden declared that the park might still close for commercial redevelopment, prompting



described as "sawdust Caesars" by magistrate George Simpson as he handed down sentences.

By the end of the decade, the traditional seaside holiday was starting to decline, and television was affecting the numbers of bums on seats at the cinema, but Margate was still an exciting place to be and Dreamland was its epicentre. Now hippies, skinheads and London's post-Windrush black teenagers found their way there, bringing a whole new set of styles for local market traders to interpret. By the 1980s Dreamland was still one of Britain's top ten visitor attractions.

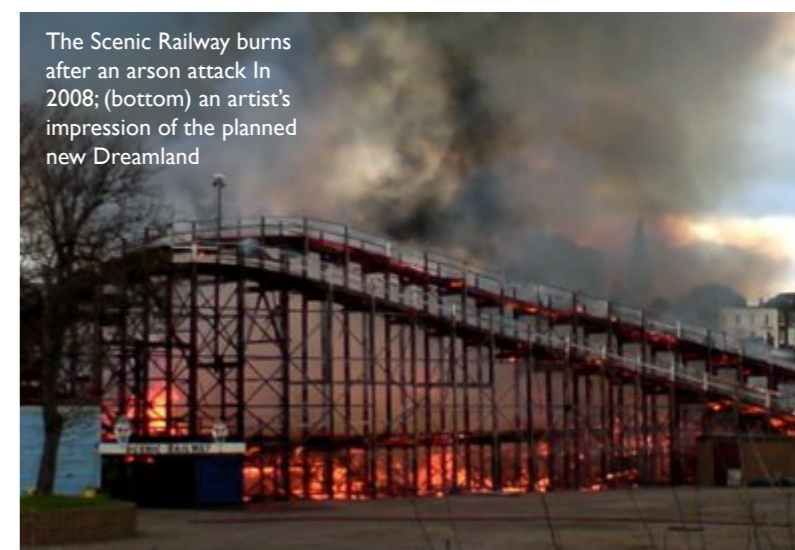
In 1995 Dreamland was sold on to Jimmy Godden, owner of the Rotunda amusement park in Folkestone. Godden wanted to move the park in a more family-friendly direction, dispensing with larger white-knuckle rides in favour of more traditional fairground favourites

the formation of the Save Dreamland Campaign in 2003. The group rapidly grew to 18,000 supporters in the UK and around the world, gaining influence with bodies such as English Heritage. Buyers attempted to save Dreamland as a going concern but were put off by the prices asked. In a property boom it seemed the site was worth more levelled to the ground than as an operating tourist attraction. In 2005 the controlling ownership of the sometimes-open, sometimes-closed Dreamland passed to the Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company, with Godden retaining a 40% share.

The Dreamland Cinema was also suffering, closing in 2007 after a gala screening of *The Smallest Show on Earth*. Only a year before it had hosted the premiere of the film of the 2006 Artangel project *Exodus*, which was filmed in and around Margate. The filming saw a giant "waste man" built on the Dreamland site by sculptor Antony Gormley. The waste man was burnt at a climactic moment in the film—while the fire brigade doused the Scenic Railway lest any stray sparks cause damage. Sadly, firefighters were not so near by in April 2008 when the Scenic Railway burned for real. The suspected arson attack destroyed the middle section of the track, the station and the workshop containing the Scenic's distinctive trains.

The disaster did not deter the Save Dreamland Campaign, which continued to promote its vision for the future of the site, which was to revamp it as an amusement park of historic rides. The Campaign evolved into the Dreamland Trust, a not-for-profit company working with the council to achieve this goal. Things took a step forward with a £490,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, joining £3.8 million from the Government's Sea Change programme and another £3 million from Thanet District Council. When attempts to secure a long lease on the site failed, the council served a compulsory purchase order, citing, among other grounds, neglect of the cinema (now in disrepair with water causing considerable damage to the organ) and the Scenic Railway. The public inquiry closed at the end of March and a decision from the Secretary of State is expected around July.

The new Dreamland will not be a dry historical exhibit, but a living, breathing



The Scenic Railway burns after an arson attack in 2008; (bottom) an artist's impression of the planned new Dreamland

environment resonating with the sights, sounds and sensations that make for a classic amusement park experience. The aim is to create a unique but quintessentially British visitor attraction: the world's first amusement park to feature thrilling, historical rides, classic side shows, cafés, restaurants, gardens, special events and festivals—a multi-million pound investment in the future of Margate that will also provide the home for a national centre celebrating the British seaside and popular street and youth culture. It is anticipated that construction and restoration work will begin in 2012 alongside a programme of events and activities happening both on and off site, providing visitors with an insight into the rebirth of this iconic amusement park.

For the latest news and events see <http://dreamlandmargate.wordpress.com>. To volunteer to help the project email Jan Leandro at jan_leandro_jan@dreamlandmargate.com.



The Cocktail Cabinet

Wherein Members muse on booze

Drinks at Fawlty Towers

By David Bridgman-Smith

Recently, it came to my attention that my good wife had never seen *Fawlty Towers*. After finding the complete collection, we soon put that to rest. What I noticed, though, as we made our way through the episodes, was how many memorable drinks are served along the way—enough, indeed, for an appropriately light-hearted April feature. So what is it like to drink the *Fawlty Towers* way?

Over the two series we see that the bar at *Fawlty Towers* is well stocked, with three varieties of gin: Beefeater, Gordon's and Booth's House of Lords. Whisky also appears popular, with bottles of VAT 69, Johnny Walker Red, Queen Anne, Balentine's and Jameson. There is also advocaat and, for some reason, two bottles of cherry brandy.

The bar isn't the only place where we recognise brands; in the kitchen, you can spot a bottle of Cointreau and, intriguingly, expensive Martell Cordon Bleu. Here is what gets consumed onscreen:

Vermouth

The Lounge Bar stocks both Martini Extra Dry and Bianco and, if you recall the episode "Gourmet Night" (the one where Basil attacks his car with a tree branch), the chaos all begins when the new chef, Kurt, drinks a whole bottle of Martini Rosso.

Sherry

Frequently ordered, whether that be dry (ordered by Colonel Hall, Lord Melbury and Mrs Penoir) or medium, requested by the Fawltys' friend Virginia (which perhaps prepared her being punched in the face by Polly).

Dry Sherry (*Harvey's Fino*) Some sourness with lots of fruit, predominantly grape at the front of the mouth and apple at the back. A touch of sweetness but with a finish that is dry and a tad bitter, with the apple flavour lasting the longest. Light, without being dull.

Medium Sherry (*Harvey's Palo Cortado*) A sweet, nutty nose with hints of maple syrup and pecans. In sharp contrast, on the tongue it is dry, tangy and very complex. After an initial burst of sweetness, an array of different, powerful, herbal and fruity notes came into play, all leading to a distinctive finish of nuts, grape and a celery pepperiness.

Lord Melbury's Sherry Cocktail (*Gin, sherry, and maraschino, served with a cherry*) A cocktail I created in tribute to a peer of the realm so shady he makes Lord Archer seem like a *Girl Guide*. The dryness of the gin and sherry are balanced with the sweetness of the Maraschino, with some juicy cherry notes and a biscuity finish.



Mr Wareing once again tries to order a gin and orange, a lemon squash and a Scotch and water

Screwdriver and Waldorf Salad

Probably the show's most memorable food-drink combination. The freshness of the apple goes well with the juiciness of the drink and the nutty walnuts and creamy mayonnaise are a nice, but fitting, contrast to the flavours of the Screwdriver. The neutrality of the vodka works well; any complex alcohol flavour would clash with the freshness of the salad and



Waldorf Salad and Screwdriver—a classic combination

overcomplicate things.

Hot Screwdriver *OK, but sticky. You can taste the alcohol even less than in a cold Screwdriver.*

Gin and Tonic

This is a popular drink at *Fawlty Towers*, where it is usually served in a wine glass and made using Beefeater gin and Schweppes tonic. The garnish tends to be a wafer thin slice of lemon (we actually see Sybil preparing these in one episode).

The drink is notable for its complete lack of ice—there is a common view that filling the glass with ice diddles the customer out of their alcohol [though it may just be that *Fawlty Towers* isn't organised enough to have much ice on hand—Ed]. The drink is pretty poor, despite the use of good ingredients; a lukewarm gin and tonic just isn't for me.

Gin and Orange, Lemon Squash and Scotch and Water

In "A Touch of Class" Mr Wareing places his order for these drinks at least four times, before finally being given the bottles to make them himself by an exasperated Basil.

Gin and Orange *This used to be very popular drink though I'm not quite sure why. The gin seems to be lost but the fresh sharpness of the juice does not go well with the juniper. If someone took a long time to serve me this, I wouldn't really mind.*

Lemon Squash *Despite being at a disadvantage (non-alcoholic), this is crisp and pleasant. Lemon probably is my favourite fruit squash (I like lemon in a Gin and Tonic, too).*

Scotch and Water

This is a very light way to drink Scotch. With equal parts water and Johnny Walker Red the faint nose is predominantly of fresh grain dotted with spice. The smooth start gives way to a light play of peat that fades to a faint finish of spice and intermittent peat hints.

Other Drinks

Scotch and water with "just sausages", (ordered by Dr Price in

"Kipper and the Corpse"). There is something basic but satisfying about a plate of sausages and nothing else, and the same can be said for the Scotch and water. I found that a Scotch with a bit of smoke, like Talisker 12-year-old, works a little better with the bangers than, say, Glenfiddich 12-year-old.

Port (ordered by Dr Abbott in "The Psychiatrist") *Graham's Finest Reserve: Delicious; rich, with a real depth of flavour and some fruity plum notes towards the end, followed by a slightly biscuity finish. Perfect as a digestif.*

Cognac *De Luze VSOP: Smooth and flavourful, this is rich and complex with a hint of crème brûlée and dried fruit, as well as some deeper notes, such as dark chocolate and cinnamon. This is definitely something that's easy to savour over an evening.*

A Communication Problem (50ml vermouth, 25ml gin) This is a drink inspired by one of my favourite *Fawlty Towers* characters, Mrs Richards (the old lady with the hearing aid). While she seems to drink nothing but tea, I created this drink by imagining what would happen if I ordered a Martini from her. It's a classic dry Martini—but with the proportions reversed. Fresh vermouth is essential, and the end result is a lot better than I would have thought. Crisp, light and refreshing; quite suitable for a pre-dinner cocktail.

*For more cocktail recipes, product reviews and musings on booze, see the New Sheridan Club's **Institute for Alcoholic Experimentation***



The Club Finally Gets Its Own TV Show

THE SECOND OF OUR new Monday evening Film Night screenings took place at the Tea House Theatre, run by Members Harry and Grace Iggulden. This time we finally got to see the episode of *A Very British Party* that features the New Sheridan Club. The idea behind the series was to look at a range of Brits as they prepared for a big party. This time we met a hippy woman who was dressing as a Panda and auctioning all her worldly goods to raise the money for a ticket to a new life in New Zealand, a sex shop owner organising a fetish party, a coke-addled It Girl who somehow never got round to organising anything at all, a woman trying to set up a beauty pageant in Huddersfield... and the New Sheridan Club. The Voice of Reason. The crew followed Scarheart and filmed at Club



(Above) Grace with newborn Isolde. How many children would give their eye teeth (literally, in some cases) to sleep surrounded by such an array of old-fashioned sweets?

Nights, at his palatial residence, at an entirely faked “committee meeting” and at the party itself. Everyone agreed that we came out of it rather well, though perhaps our secret is that it is impossible to lampoon what is already so



Artemis Scarheart introduces the film in which he features so heavily (see also the back cover for a glimpse of his true vision of “a boot stamping on a cupcake—forever”)

Film Night: Sahara (1943)

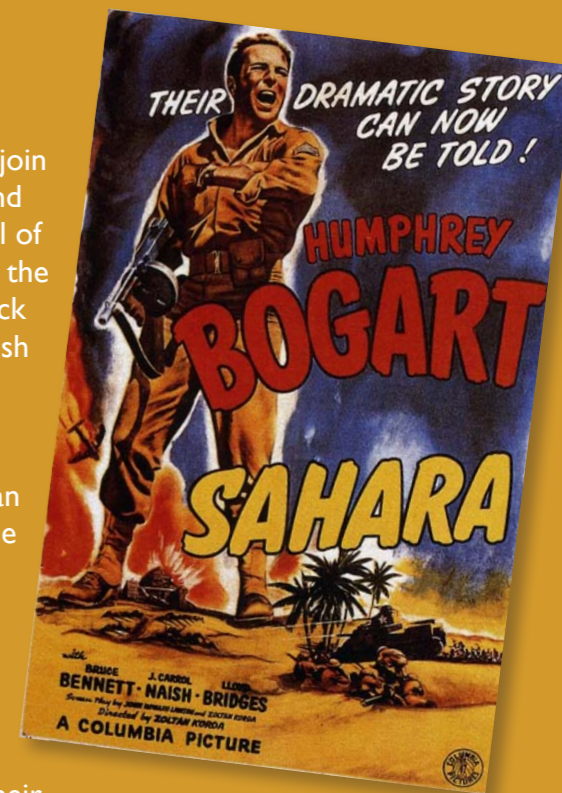
Monday 16th April
7pm-11pm
The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk,
London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)
Admission: Free

This time our Monday evening Film Night screening is *Sahara*, a 1943 war film starring Humphrey Bogart, playing a sergeant in a US



tank crew trying to rejoin his command after the fall of Tobruk. On the way they pick up five British soldiers, a Frenchman, a Sudanese and an Italian prisoner. The Sudanese man takes them to an abandoned fort where there is an oasis. But their problems begin when German troops arrive, also after the water. Can Bogie hold out till British reinforcements arrive?

The evening will be curated by Flt Lt Fruity Hatfield-Peverel and Isabel Spooner-Harvey and there are plans afoot for food to match one classic scene in the movie...



Thanks to Harry and Grace for the screening facilities and the supplies of cakes, teas, beers and wines, and to Scarheart for his introductory comments which fooled nobody.

(Left) The Teahouse Theatre, as its name suggests, has a lot of top quality teas to choose from (see the shelves in the background) as well as an eye-popping array of cakeage, such as this Oreo biscuit number in the foreground; (below) it would be hard to envisage a more Chappitt environment for our Film Nights

tongue-in-check. Mind, you I can't help noticing that the month in which it was originally aired turned out to have the lowest acquisition of new Members of any month ever...





Who Watches the Watchmen? Compton-Bassett, That's Who

ON SUNDAY 11TH MARCH the honourable Compton-Bassett showed a group of Sheridanites around the Guards Museum in London, where he volunteers a few days a week, as a guardian of the Guards, as it were. It was a most enjoyable afternoon and what was meant to be a hour-long tour ended up lasting two hours, which flew by.

There are five regiments of Foot Guards, the Grenadier, Coldstream, Welsh, Irish and Scottish Guards, which along with cavalry regiments the Life Guards and the Blues and Royals, form the Household Division. With the official role of protecting the sovereign and royal palaces, the Division has both ceremonial duties and a role as a modern fighting unit. There seems to be an awful lot of jockeying for supremacy among the five, especially since the order in which the regiments were formed seems to count for so much: the uniforms differ mostly in the way the buttons are grouped singly, in twos, in threes, etc, according to this seniority ranking. The motto of the Coldstream Guards, who thus rank second, is "Second to None". So, no issues there, then.

The museum is choc-a-block with objects and it was a great boon having C-B on hand to draw one's attention to the most significant, or just the oddest, items—such as the head of a goose called Jacob who was adopted by the Coldstream Guards in the 1830s while they were suppressing a rebellion in Canada. One night the goose happened to alert them to a bunch of rebels attempting to sneak up on the regiment. In gratitude they made Jacob a mascot, gave him his own gorget (part of the uniform) and he apparently marched up and down alongside the sentry back at the barracks in London. Until he



(Above) Compton-Bassett sporting a Guardsman's bearskin cap

got run over by a cart. Then they cut his head off and had it mounted.

Elsewhere there are bits of Wellington's uniforms, an array of medals won by Guards and weapons galore, including a selection of gruesome homemade instruments for hand-to-hand fighting in the trenches of the First World War. We also discovered that the Grenadiers did indeed use grenades—for a couple of years in the mid-17th century, until it was realised how dangerous they were to deploy back then. Grenade-throwing may have rapidly become obsolete but they retain the flaming "grenade thrown proper" device on their cap badge. In fact the tall caps apparently date from this time: there is a poster showing the approved procedure for grenade chucking, which begins with slinging one's musket across one's shoulders to free one's hands, and this manoeuvre, plus the throwing of the grenades themselves, was forever knocking off the broad tricorn hats in fashion up to then. (I would have thought a tall cap would be just as much a hazard as a broad one, but what do I know?)

It emerged that the variety of uniforms

on display was partly to do with the fact that the commanders of regiments in those days could pretty much design their own. They had government funds for the men's uniforms, but officers were expected to provide their own: so a good ruse to get rid of an unpopular and impecunious officer was to redesign the uniform to include a mass of expensive gold braid. If the undesirable officer couldn't afford the new uniform he had no choice but to resign his commission.

Many thanks to C-B for taking the time to show us around.

Fancy A Two-Wheeled Sprint Down Memory Lane?

CALLY CALLOMON (whose antics with soda siphons appear on pages 12–15) is also keen on vintage bicycles and has a veritable museum of them at Marlinspike Hall, his country seat. He writes:

"I am a member of the Veteran-Cycle Club. (Please note the positioning of the hyphen: it is the machine that is veteran, not the rider.)

"I am on the committee and am involved in organising a major veteran race meeting at the famous banked Herne Hill Velodrome in South London on Sunday 13th May. The venue is one of this country's oldest open-air velodromes,

with antique stands and a fully-banked circuit. It is situated not far from Dulwich.

"We plan to start racing there at 12.30pm. There will be many stalls, a beer tent, cycle jumble some serious historical racing, as well as some not so serious. I have proposed at least one race on 'roadster' type machines where points and prizes are awarded for attire and a creative adaptation of the rules. All the races are open to non-V-CC members—do you think we could muster a good turn-out of members to attack this one particular race? I would envisage a mass-picnic on the grass in the centre of the track, followed by the race itself.

"To enter the race one needs only a helmet (of sorts) and a one-off insurance payment of £4 that gets you into any or all of the races, depending on eligibility of your machine. For instance, there will be an all-comers race at the end where Ordinaries can do battle with lightweights, tandems and trikes, etc, plus a grand parade around the beautiful track at the end for free, for everybody. The venue is safe, secure and ideal for children, and it'll all be over by tea time—is—a grand day out."

The Herne Hill Velodrome is, it might be poignant to observe, the last surviving venue from the 1948 Olympics! For more details as they emerge see hernehillrevival.com, where you can see a list of the races on the day.

For retro bike action in the Bristol area this month see the Vintage Velo event on page 33.



Preparing for a sprint at the Herne Hill Velodrome in 1929



CLUB NOTES

Club Gallery Acquires New Portrait

AS YOU ARE doubtless aware, one of the benefits of NSC Membership is our free Portrait Service, where we essentially splice you into an historical painting or photograph. All you have to do is decide how you would like to be depicted and supply the component photographs, or arrange for us to take one of you, and we can do the rest. To see some examples, have a gander at the Portraits Page of our website.

The Club's latest acquisition is this handsome snap (right) of Ryan Pike preparing to read the news to the waiting Empire.



Your Chance to Star on the Silver Screen

IF YOUR ASPIRATIONS tend more towards the moving image, then you may be interested in a proposition from Member Jonathan Coote. He writes: "Rannygazoo is a comedy feature

set in 1930 about a pair of jewel thieves. The film will be shot in black and white and very much in the style of movies of that period. The finished work will look like an old movie that has been lost in a vault somewhere and only recently re-discovered and hailed as a lost British comedy classic. It will be brimful of eccentric members of the aristocracy, bright young things, murderous Prussians and dotty Bishops. We

have various scenes that would benefit hugely from the presence of our remarkably stylish membership. In particular there are scenes set in a gentlemen's club, a night club and a high society party.

"I should also mention that it is a low-budget venture so we would, sadly, be unable to supply any financial remuneration. It will, however, be an enjoyable experience in the company of kindred spirits. [Sounds as if you won't get your own trailer—Ed.]

"We have no guaranteed release but the film will be entered into festivals and the



unusual nature of the concept will, I am certain, garner a great deal of interest."

The film is expected to be shot in stages over the course of this year but exact dates have not been finalised. If you are interested in being involved get in touch with Jonathan at jonathancoote@yahoo.co.uk. We will be following the progress of the shoot in this Newsletter as the venture proceeds.

Save Savile Row!

THE OMPHALOS OF CHAPDOM, *The Chap* magazine, has launched a campaign to oppose the proposed opening of a childrenswear shop by Abercrombie and Fitch (some would argue that all A&F clothes are essentially childrenswear...) on the hallowed turf that is Savile Row, traditional home of London's bespoke tailors. Quite what A&F think they will achieve by this is hard to fathom—will their target market be impressed by the association?—but the tailors of the Row have started a petition which they will present to Westminster Council in the hope that it will influence their decision.

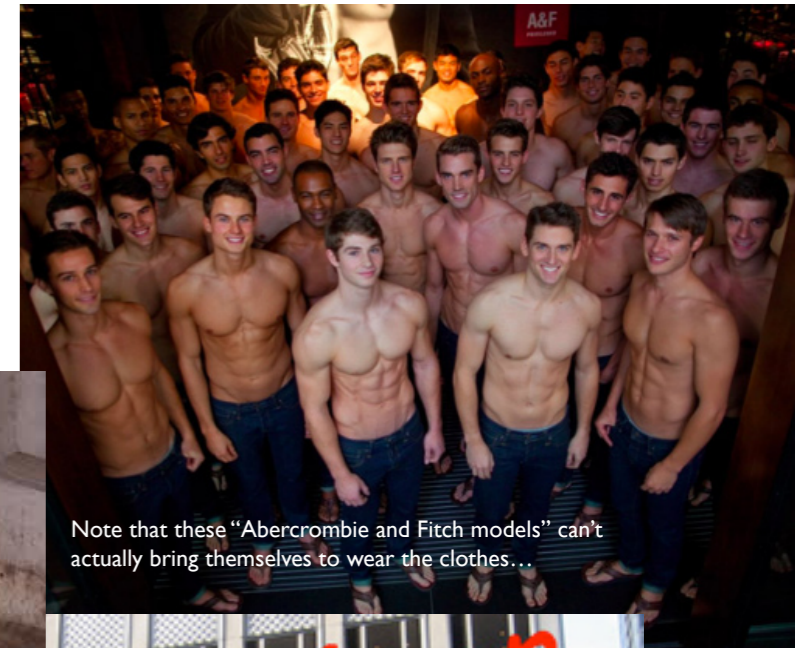
"Savile Row is one of the few streets anywhere in the country to remain exclusively devoted to a single trade," says Gustav Temple, editor of *The Chap*, "and we think the tradition of bespoke tailoring deserves to remain where it began 200 years ago. As well as boasting the manufacture of some of the best bespoke tailoring in the world, the Row is an important tourist attraction, whose value will be entirely lost if chain stores selling overpriced T-shirts are allowed to open up there."

If you would like to voice you opinion you can sign up to a petition at www.petition.co.uk/save-savile-row-from-abcrombie-fitch.



New Members

AS CITIZENS OF a pious Christian bent prepare to spend the weekend contemplating the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, cruelly nailed to a fence for having long hair (I'm a bit hazy on the details, to be honest), I'd like to welcome the following lost souls into the flock of Chappism (not a religion, perhaps, but arguably a belief system), all of whom have seen the light and joined the Club in the last month: Jonathan Coote, Bruce Chopping and Helen Cashin.



Note that these "Abercrombie and Fitch models" can't actually bring themselves to wear the clothes...

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 April
8pm–11pm
Upstairs, The Wheatsheaf, 25 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1JB
Members: Free
Non-Members: £2 (first visit free)
See page 2.

Cakewalk Café

Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th April
8pm–1am (swing dance classes 7–8pm and 8–9pm)
Passing Clouds, 1 Richmond Road, Dalston, London E8 4AA
Admission: £5 (£3.50 if you're in 1920s/1930s clobber) or £8 including a dance class; £12 including both.
Live swing jazz every Wednesday featuring Nicholas Ball, Ewan Bleach and chums, with optional dance classes from Swing Patrol.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Wednesday 4th April
7.30pm
Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
Admission: £13.50–£23.50
Delightful spoof 1930s stage show in the semblance of a live radio broadcast, with much comic business derived from the live production of sound effects. The troupe have previously performed at an NSC party.

Beginners' Lindy Hop Classes

Wednesdays 4th April–9th May
8–9.30pm
The Salisbury Pub, 1 Grand Parade, St Annes Rd, London, N4 1JX

Admission: £45 per person, or £80 for a couple, for the whole course

Six-week course with Gaia Facchini. “Learn the partner dance that started them all in this intensive six-week beginners’ class.

“We will focus on laying strong foundations in the language of Swing Dancing. Strengthen your style, your moves and your dance confidence. By the end of this class you’ll have a solid grasp of Lindy Hop rhythm and musicality, connection, and a grab bag of moves that you can pull out on any dance floor.” Email vintagedancing@googlemail.com.

Détente

Thursday 5th April
7pm till late
The Player, 8 Broadwick Street, London W1F 8HN



The Golden Age of Travel: (right) a poster for the Normandie, probably the pinnacle of luxury sea travel; (above) the vessel's modest dining room. See the Candlelight Club opposite

Admission: Unclear. Free, I think.
Dress: Strictly mid-century
Jet Set/Secret Service
Johnny Vercoutre and Count Indigo



form an uneasy alliance to bring you a new club night, shot through with realpolitik and cool soundtrack jazz. “The Cold War just got hot!” The venue is the perfectly styled The Player, where they take their cocktails seriously (thanks to help from cocktail guru Dale DeGross).

Mouthful O' Jam

Saturday 7th April
From 7.30pm
The Salisbury Pub, 1 Grand Parade, St Annes Rd, London, N4 1JX
Admission: £5

Gaia Facchini's regular swing DJ night, with a swing dance lesson from Gaia at 7.30pm.

Swing at the Light

Mondays 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th April
From 7pm
Upstairs at The Light Restaurant and Bar, 233 Shorditch High Street, London E1
Admission: £8 for class and club, £3 just for the club night after 9pm
Dress: Vintage/retro appreciated
Weekly vintage dance night in a venue with a wooden floor and its own terrace. Beginners classes from 7.30, intermediate classes from 8.15, and “freestyle” from 9pm.

Gormenghast: Titus Groan

Wednesday 11th–Saturday 14th April
7.30–10.30pm
The Actors' Church, Covent Garden, WC2E 9ED
Admission: £15 (£12 concs) from Ticketweb
The Club's own Brice Stratford appears in this stage adaptation of the first in Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, a production endorsed by Peake's estate. More details at www.blackshawonline.com.

The Candlelight Club: The Golden Age of Travel

Friday 13th & Saturday 14th April
7.30pm–12am



The Vintage Mafia know how to have fun

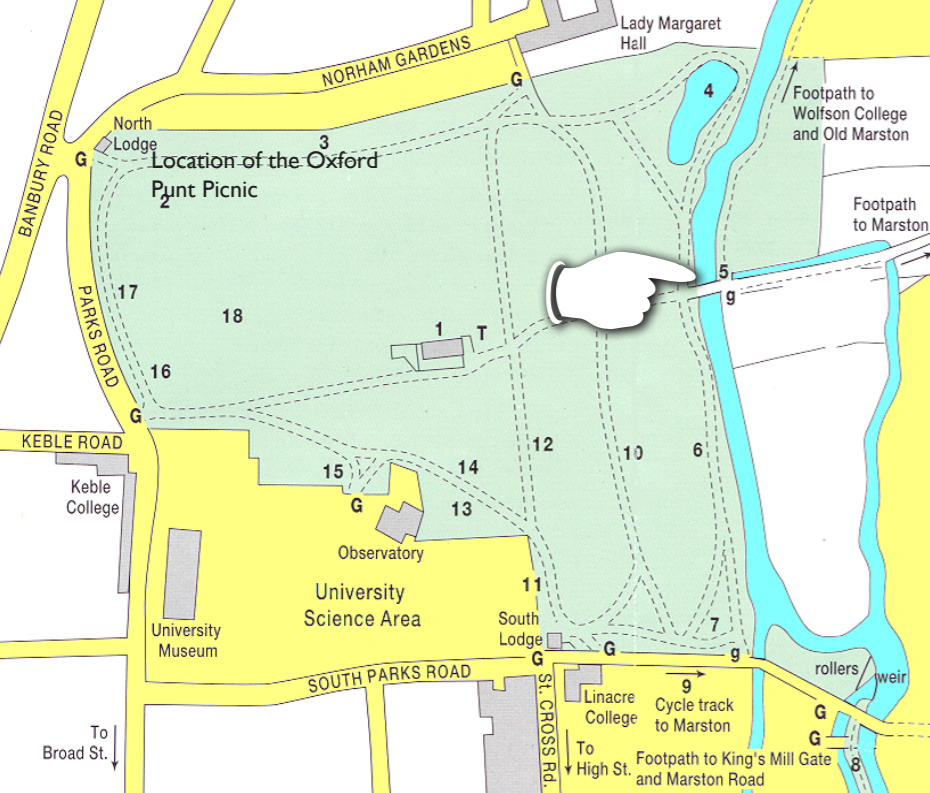
A secret central London location
Admission: £15.75 in advance
Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

The Candlelight Club is clandestine pop-up cocktail party with a 1920s speakeasy flavour, in a secret London venue completely lit by candles. Each event offers a one-off cocktail menu with special themes, plus live period jazz bands and vintage vinylism from the NSC's own MC Fruity. This time, as a salute to the Titanic, which went down 100 years to the day on 14th April, we'll be evoking the era of luxury liners, the Art Deco dream of gleaming speed, the romance, adventure and opulence of First Class travel, in an age when the journey itself could be as important as the destination. Dance the night away to Benoit Viellefon and his Orchestra, who hopped aboard at Deauville, and expect a drinks menu of nautical favourites and souvenir tipples from fashionable ports of call. Anyone for quois?

The Vintage Mafia Sale and Social

Sunday 15th April
4pm–8pm
The Love Shake Café Lounge, 5 Kingsland Road, London E2 8AA
Admission: Free

The Vintage Mafia (“La Maf” to friends), a gaggle of retro-tastic ladies, invites you to come and Hoover up some of their surplus frocks and



Bridge Boathouse at midday where the punts are picked up. Punting then takes place until the traditional picnic spot is reached by the High Bridge (aka the Rainbow Bridge) in the University Parks (no. 5 on the map left). After a picnic lunch the party punts back and usually repairs to a hostelry, frequently the Turf again.

There is sometimes also a black tie meal in a restaurant on the Friday. More details to come, but keep an eye on the Facebook event for the latest developments.

London Steampunk Market
Saturday 21st April
12–6pm

Electowerks, 7 Torrens Street, London EC1V 1NQ

Admission: £2 (concs free)

Gathering together an array of stalls offering steampunk wares and artefacts. If you are interested in being a stallholder contact londonsteampunkmarket@gmail.com. For more details see the Facebook event.

Jack the Ripper Tour and Curry Supper

Saturday 21st April

6.15pm kick-off

Meet at Tower Hill underground station
Admission: £30 including tour and meal

Club member the Laird of Grimmet invites you to join him on a two-hour walking tour of the scenes of Jack the Ripper's crimes, led by a local professional "Ripperologist", followed by a curry supper at the Sheraz Bangla Lounge in Brick Lane—originally a public house called Ye Old Frying Pan, and the location where the final Ripper victim Mary Kelly was last seen alive. The event is limited to 20 places, so if you are interested email david.phillips21@sky.com.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Saturday 21st April

7.30pm

Northcott Theatre, Exeter

Admission: £12.50–£16.50

See above.

White Mischief Royal Jubilee Gala

Saturday 21st April

chat about hair tips, fashion advice and the best entertainment on the vintage scene. This time there will also be manifestations from Heyday Honey Vintage Hair and Make-Up and Brown Paper Bag vintage menswear.

NSC Film Night

Sahara

Monday 16th April

7pm–11pm

The Tea House Theatre, 139 Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5HL (020 7207 4585)

Admission: Free

See page 25.

The Fitzrovia Radio Hour

Friday 20th April

8pm

Plough Arts Centre, Great Torrington

Admission: Unclear

See above.

Oxford Punting Trip

Saturday 21st April

From noonish

Oxford

Admission: A share of the punt hire (around £20) plus you'll need to budget for food and booze

The annual Oxford punting trip is one of the oldest Sheridan traditions, and usually occurs on the Saturday closest to St George's Day. Folk generally gather in the Turf Tavern from around 11am and aim to hit the Magdalen

9pm–4am

The Scala, 275 Pentonville Road, King's Cross, London N1 9NL

Admission: Earlybird tickets £14.99 in advance rising to £19.99 late

Regular steampunk extravaganza White Mischief celebrates Her Majesty's anniversary, with a array of live bands, DJs, vaudeville, aerialism and more. More at www.whitemischief.info.

Mr B.'s Chap-Hop Social

Thursday 26th April

7pm

The Jive Monkey Theatre & Bar, 5 Steine Street, Brighton BN2 1TE

Admission: £7 in advance or on the door

Club Member Mr B. celebrates the launch of his third long player, *The Tweed Album*, at Brighton's most splendid new cabaret bar and venue. Live performances by Mr. B himself and We Are Goose (featuring another Club Member, Timothy Kennington), plus parlour games, disc-jockeying and dancing. The lot.

The Candlelight Club:

A Night in Old Havana

Friday 27th & Saturday 28th April

7.30pm–12am

A secret central London location

Admission: £15.75 in advance

Dress: 1920s dandies and swells, gangsters and molls, degenerate aristos and decadent aesthetes, corrupt politicians and the Smart Set In the Know

See above. This time, we whisk you to Old Havana: Prohibition may have been a curse for American drinkers but it was a blessing for others. Top US bartenders fled to find work abroad, taking their skills and enthusiasm for cocktails: one of the places they landed was Havana—tantalisingly close to the US for a quick flight to a legal libation or three.

Sloppy Joe's bar (the *soi-disant* "crossroad of the world") was rammed with celeb ex-pats and visitors, from Clark Gable and Errol Flynn to Jean-Paul Sartre and the Duke of Windsor. Hemingway became a regular after he adopted Cuba as his home. Also popular with the smart set was Bar Florida (nicknamed "Floridita"), which claimed to be the birthplace of the noble Daiquiri cocktail.

Umbra Sumus (We Are Shadows)

27th April–Sunday 29th April

6–9pm Friday, 11am–6pm Saturday and Sunday
15 Wilkes Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6QF

Admission: Free

Art show subtitled, *An Exhibition of Work by Mr Paul Bommer, Including Works as yet Un-seen by the World*, this is a solo show of work old and new, including many brand new "Delftware" tiles inspired by Spitalfields, its history and people. See examples of Mr Bommer's work at www.paulbommer.com.

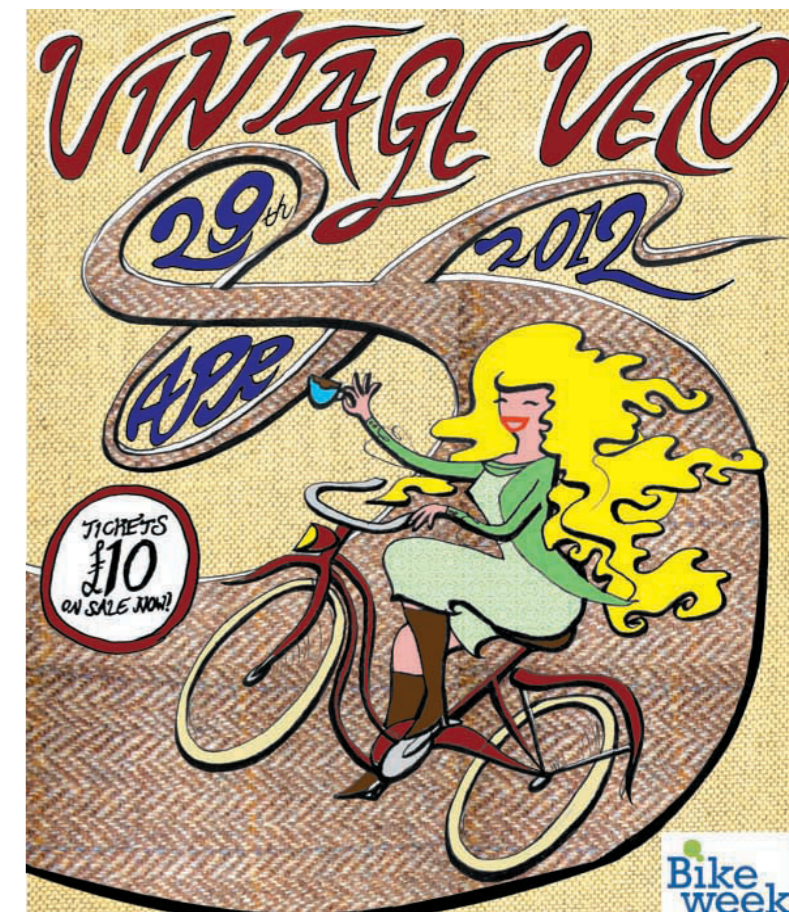
Vintage Velo

Sunday 29th April

Starts and ends in central Bristol. Details dispatched when you register for the event

Admission: £10

Intended as a local version of the Tweed Run, this retro-cycling rally will take a group of pedallers on a route around Bristol, exploring hidden suburbs and tranquil parkland, with range of entertainment thrown in, and doubtless a picnicking opportunity in the middle, all compered by NSC Member Richie Paradise. All proceeds go towards the main Bristol Cycle Festival in July.



A SOPHISTICATED RIDE WITH PICNICS AND ENTERTAINMENTS
IN AID OF BRISTOL CYCLE FESTIVAL 2012
TICKETS AND DETAILS AT VINTAGE-VELO.BLOGSPOT.COM

Scarheart's majestic countenance gazes loving from the screen down at his people, This dystopian vision of the future was glimpsed at the recent Film Night (see page 24)



FOR THE LATEST information on what the Club is up to, who has been arrested, etc., have a squizz at www.newsheridanclub.co.uk. For more photos of Club events go to www.flickr.com/sheridanclub. Those of a technological bent can befriend us electrically at www.facebook.com.



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