

# BOISDALE

## *Life*

Issue No. 9

LIVING IN LA LA LAND  
RICHARD GODWIN

THE CIGAR AWARDS  
WITH KELSEY GRAMMER

BOISDALE WOMAN OF THE YEAR  
WHOOPI GOLDBERG

PLUS

A LIFE REMEMBERED  
CHUCK BERRY

F.W. DE CLERK ON  
DEVELOPING LEADERS

OFF YER' BIKE!  
NICK FERRARI

LONG LIVE  
THE LONG LUNCH  
TOM PARKER BOWLES



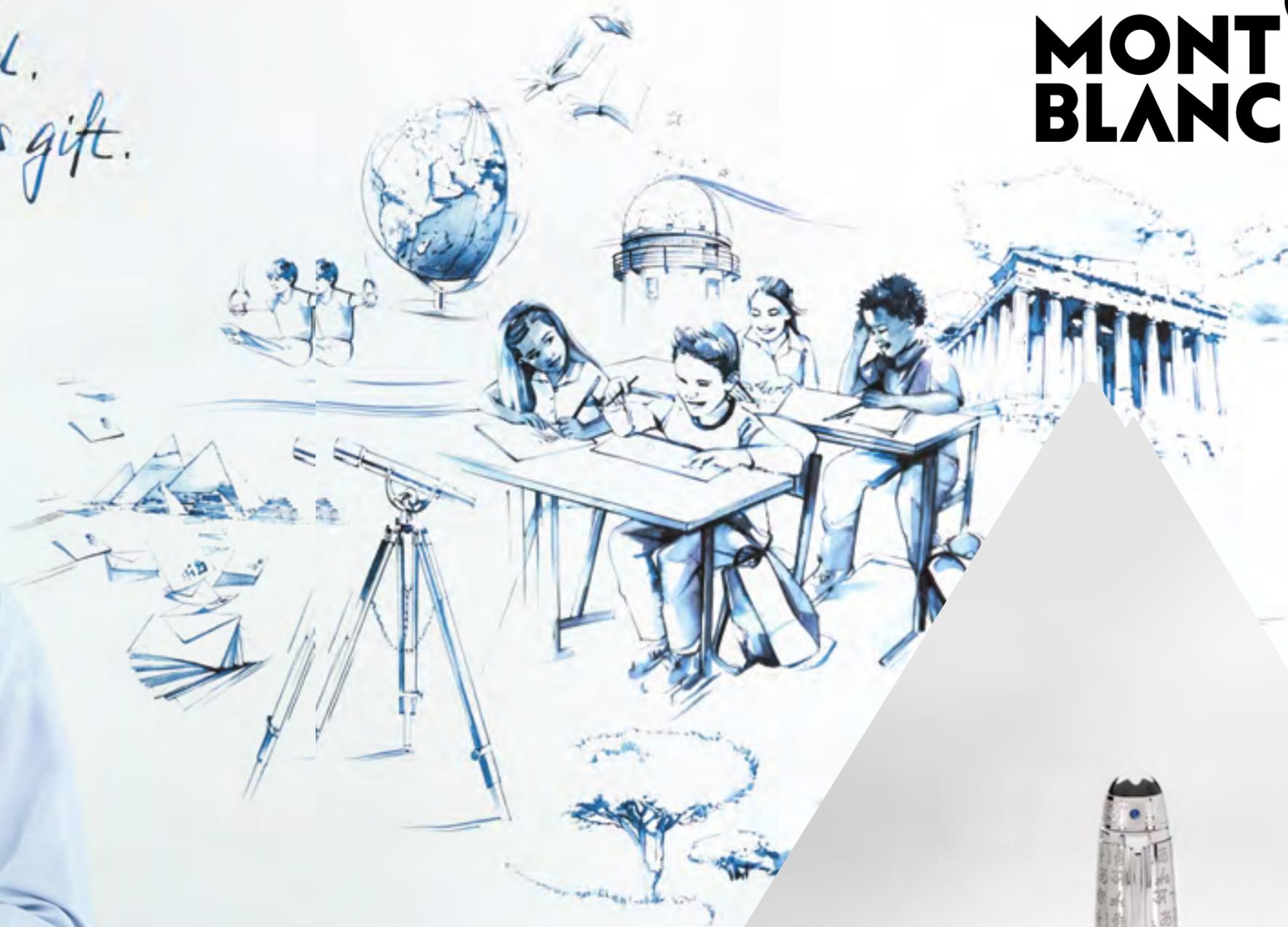
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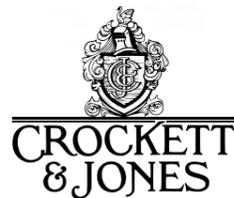
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EDITOR'S LETTER

**JAMAICA COMES TO BOISDALE**

**W**e are particularly honoured and delighted to welcome Nobel Prize winner former President F.W. de Klerk as a contributor to the 9th edition of Boisdale Life. His comments on the somewhat illusive and divisive qualities of contemporary global leadership deserve careful reading. Bruce Anderson takes a broader historical perspective and reminds us that civilization has always been cruel. Orthodoxy is the enemy of mankind because we should never accept that we are completely right about anything, apart from of course our taste and political opinion! Clare Fox questions our right to laugh, whilst Tom Parker-Bowles only wants to lunch. Meanwhile Nick Ferrari takes it out on bicycles. Hopefully your sensibilities will be satisfactorily tickled.

On a less serious note I have always felt a very special and inexplicable umbilical bond with Jamaica and I only very recently discovered why. I obviously adored this drop dead gorgeous island, particularly the coast around Port Antonio (literally nowhere more beautiful on earth apart from South Uist!), and also found the Jamaican people incredibly engaging and friendly with a wicked sense of humour and an almost poetic lilt to their conversation. However what amazed and surprised me was to discover that Jamaica and Scotland are literally joined at the hip. There are more Scottish surnames to be found in Jamaica than anywhere in the world other than Scotland.

I have now done my homework. A combination of deported Scots and waves of emigration caused mostly by failed Scottish rebellions and colonial adventures (The Darien Scheme 1698) drove massive numbers of Scots and Highlanders to Jamaica in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first botched escapade was led by James Scott, the Duke of both Buccleuch and Monmouth, supported by Archibald Campbell, Duke of Argyle (of whose family more later!), who in 1685 attempted, as an illegitimate Protestant son of Charles II, to take the throne from his uncle, the Roman Catholic Stuart King, James II. He was beheaded for his audacity and the more fortunate of his followers were transported to Jamaica. And then ironically in 1715 and 1745 the Jacobite Rebellions, supported incidentally by my family, valiantly fought to bring back the rightful Stuart



Usain Bolt and his team-mates wearing Jamaican tartan after success in the 4x100m relay at the Commonwealth Games 2014. Bolt is returning to London for his last ever race this August at the IAAF World Championships – if you can't make it to the race, celebrate at our Jamaican Terrace in Canary Wharf instead! p.42

line, which had recently been replaced by an act of parliament with the porcine, pudding faced Protestant, non-English speaking Hanoverians, from whom our current Royal family descend, and who were at the time only 50th in line to the British throne. The Darth Vader for the Hanoverian “dark side” was the dastardly John Campbell, Duke of Argyle, the hereditary mortal enemy of the Macdonald Clan. Again the leaders were executed, in many cases far more cruelly, and vast numbers of Highlanders, including numerous Macdonald's, emigrated to Jamaica. From that time the Scots continued to voluntarily migrate to Jamaica in large numbers.

The extraordinary thing to report now and the principal sadness of this tale is that by 2017 with 60% of surnames in Jamaican being Scottish, I am truly sorry to say that by far the most populous name in Jamaica is regrettably, Campbell! Apparently there are more Campbell's per head of population in Jamaica than there are in Scotland!! The good news is that old clan enmity is now long forgiven (my mother is a Campbell) and most importantly, reflecting this symbiotic national relationship, the Scottish Saltire (St Andrew's cross) was rather beautifully incorporated into the Jamaican flag on the occasion

of Jamaican Independence in 1962. It is now the world's most recognised national flag and is coupled with the poignant Jamaican National motto “Out of Many, One People”.

To celebrate 55 years of Jamaican Independence Boisdale, THE Scottish restaurant, are creating the Jamaica Garden Terrace at Boisdale of Canary Wharf to be launched by His Excellency Seth George Ramocan, the Jamaican High Commissioner on Monday 3rd July. The 130 metre Jamaica Garden Terrace with palm and banana trees, tropical fauna and exotic flowering plants will be host to an all-day jerk barbeque, live music and cocktails until 31st August. Do have a look at our web site for exciting Jamaican events that will soon be announced. We very much hope that you will find the time to join us to celebrate 55 years of Jamaican Independence in a place that may well become known, given that “yard” in Jamaica means home, as the NEW Scotland yard. ♦

**Ranald Macdonald**  
Editor-in-Chief Boisdale Life Magazine  
Founder Boisdale Restaurants & Bars



# PURDEY

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## CONTRIBUTORS

### NICK FERRARI



Nick Ferrari is a TV and radio presenter. He hosts the weekday breakfast show from 7.00-10.00am on the talk and phone-in radio station LBC, as well as The Pledge, broadcast weekly on Sky News. In this issue, Nick argues that London's cycle lanes are causing traffic congestion and that when it comes to two wheels, the capital is not fit for purpose. He is a huge fan of England's Rugby team. **p.46**

### FW DE KLERK



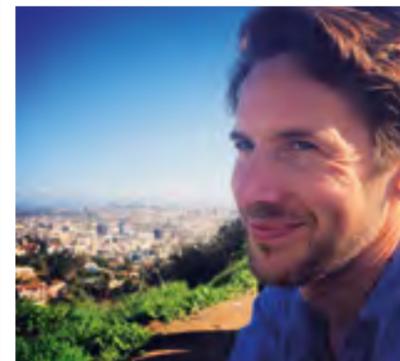
FW De Klerk was president of South Africa from 1989 to 1994. During that time, he oversaw the end of Apartheid. Today, he is chairman of the Global Leadership Foundation, a non-profit, NGO advisory, which he established in 2004. In this issue, FW explains the role of the GLF, which makes available, discreetly and in confidence, the experiences of former leaders to today's crop of national leaders so that can avoid the mistakes of their predecessors. **p.33**

### CLAIRE FOX



Claire Fox joined the Revolutionary Communist Party as a student at the University of Warwick and later became co-publisher of Living Marxism. Taking the position that "left" and "right-wing" no longer should carry any meaning, she founded the Institute of Ideas as a forum where ideas can be contested without any constraint. She is a regular panellist on BBC radio 4's Moral Maze and Question Time. In this issue Claire examines the seriously politically correct business of laughter. **p.43**

### RICHARD GODWIN



Richard Godwin is a freelance writer and dilettante who recently moved from London to Los Angeles with his wife Johanna and son Edward. He files a column for the London Evening Standard, and also writes regularly for the Times, The Guardian, Mr. Porter and Vogue. His cocktail book, The Spirits: A Guide to Modern Cocktailing, has been hailed as a classic and his Martinis are lethal. **p.65**

### TOM PARKER BOWLES



Tom Parker Bowles is a restaurant Critic for The Mail on Sunday, as well as Food Editor of Esquire. He is also a food writer, broadcaster and author of five books on food. The latest, Let's Eat Meat, was published last year. Tom is a patron of the Malton Food Lover Festival, which holds annual food celebrations and competitions in Yorkshire. **p.80**

### MATTHEW BELL



Matthew Bell is a former gossip columnist for the Independent and begun as a receptionist at The Spectator. He found fame after he was portrayed as the archetype young toff on BBC2's "Posh People: Inside The Tatler". In this issue Matthew goes to Florence to interview Charles Cecil, the American painter and art historian at his famous atelier. **p.57**

DIARY

# THE SNOW QUEEN VODKA 'CIGAR SMOKER OF THE YEAR' AWARDS IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZENITH WATCHES

Cigar aficionados and celebrity cigar smokers from around the world gathered at Boisdale on 12 Dec, for the highly esteemed Snow Queen Vodka 'Cigar Smoker of the Year' Awards. The Cigar Smoker of the Year was Kelsey Grammer, runner up to Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2015. Hosted at Boisdale of Canary Wharf, previously dubbed 'The Cuba of London' by the Cuban Ambassador Her Excellency Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolongo, who also attended the event. The evening kicked off with Snow Queen Vodka cocktails and ended with guests returning to Boisdale's famous smoking terrace, to enjoy cigars paired with the award winning Glenfiddich 15 and 21 Year Old Malt Whiskies. Other partners included Small Luxury Hotels of the World, C.Gars Ltd, Matthew Clark Wines, Tors Imports Ltd and Hunters & Frankau.



'Snow Queen Cigar Smoker of the Year', Kelsey Grammer was presented with an engraved Zenith El Primero Chronomaster Cohiba limited edition watch



Hosting the Snow Queen Cigar Awards for the 3rd time was Tom Parker Bowles



The two highest paid TV stars in US history, Kelsey Grammer and Charlie Sheen - watch their acceptance speeches at Boisdale UK youtube channel



Mark E Watson III and Boisdale Life Editor-at-Large, Paddy Renouf



Ronald Macdonald and Charlie Sheen arriving at the awards

# MICA PARIS SINGS ELLA FITZGERALD

On 25th April, Boisdale of Canary Wharf saw the return of Mica Paris. The UK's Queen of Soul celebrated the centenary of the magnificent Ella Fitzgerald with this one-off London date to launch her eagerly anticipated forthcoming new album. Mica performed a selection of her favourite Ella songs, including 'Every Time We Say Goodbye' and 'Holiday In Harlem'.



Not your everyday quartet, Nancy Dell'Olio, Charlie Sheen, Kelsey Grammer and Andrew Neil



Celebrated broadcaster and journalist, Andrew Neil scooped the 'Cigar Smoker of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award', presented by Nicolas Meda, International Commercial Director of Zenith Watches



Cuban Ambassador, Her Excellency Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolongo accompanied by Mr Antonio Rogelio Rodriguez Valcarcel



Mica first discovered the power of Ella Fitzgerald aged eight when she saw her break glass with her voice, in a famous 1972 advert for Memorex



Tammy Byron, Paula Powell and Sandra Miller enjoying the show!

DIARY

# THE BOISDALE LIFE EDITORS LUNCH 2017 HOSTING THE 'FOREST LIBERTARIAN OF THE YEAR'

On 1st Feb 2017 Boisdale of Belgravia hosted 'The Boisdale Life Editors Lunch' to celebrate the very best of the fantastic columnists who have contributed to the amazing success of Boisdale Life Magazine over the last two years. The lunch was delicious and very long. The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the presentation of the first 'Boisdale Life Forrest Libertarian Award' by Forrest Managing Director Simon Clark to Mark Littlewood, Director General of the Institute of Economic Affairs. Forest was founded in 1979 by Sir Christopher Foxley-Norris, a former Battle of Britain fighter pilot, to represent adults who choose to consume tobacco.



Boisdale Life 'Food & Drink Columnist of the Year' William Sitwell, enjoying fabulous wine from the Mouton Rothschild estate in Limoux



Scottish songwriter Bill Martin and Londoner's Diary Editor, Joy Lo Dico



The Daily Mail diarists arrive – Peter McKay and John McEntee!



LBC's Nick Ferrari and Stanley Johnson holding court in Boisdale



Boisdale Life Editor-at-Large Paddy Renouf and Christian May, Editor of City AM



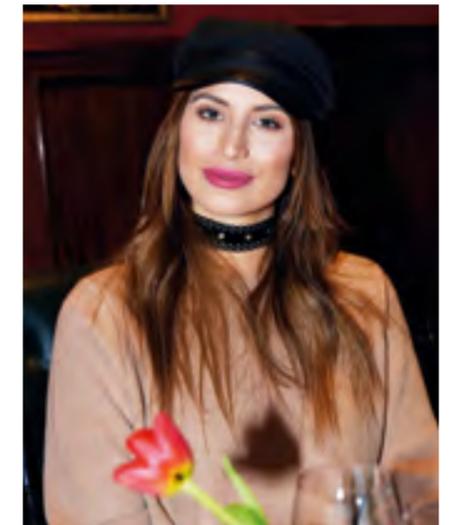
Ranald Macdonald and historian, Nikolai Tolstoy



CEO of Capital Economics, Roger Bootle won the 'Economic & Political Column of the Year'



Winner of the 'Historical Comment of the Year', Bruce Anderson



Showbiz reporter Ferne McCann, arrived straight from filming on ITV's *This Morning*



Winner of the 'Boisdale Life Comment of the Year', Baroness Trumpington



Director of Forest, Simon Clark who presented the 'Libertarian of the Year Award'



Boisdale Life Managing Editor, Michael Karam



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DIARY

# WHOOPI GOLDBERG CROWNED 'THE BOISDALE WOMAN OF THE YEAR DINNER 2017'

On February 10, the Oscar winning actor, outspoken comedian, cult TV presenter and superb vocalist was guest of honour at Boisdale of Canary Wharf to receive the inaugural award which was Presented by JB Gill , formerly of phenomenal boy band JLS, and the globally revered songstress Rebecca Ferguson. Rebecca told a lovely story about the last time she had met Whoopi in LA and finished by saying, "When you're in the presence of a superstar you can feel nervous but she's so down to earth, it's like being with real friend." Whoopi was in town for two sell out nights at the London Palladium, hosted by the legendary Rocco Buonvino. The dinner was stunning as one would expect with the likes of boxer Joe Joyce, television presenter journalist Andrew Marr, the intrepid Fergus Sligo-Young, restaurateur Levi Roots, and singer Egypt. After dinner in the from the by Acton-based choir Sing Gospel and accomplished pianist Jeremy Sassoon.



The sensational Acton Gospel Choir



Whoopi Goldberg receiving the Boisdale Woman of the Year Award



Andrew Marr and Boisdale Life Managing Director, Harry Owen



Boxer Joe Joyce, with Whoopi and his proud mother, Marvel Opara



Rebecca Ferguson and Whoopi Goldberg



JB Gill, Fergus Sligo-Young and guests enjoying Boisdale 1er Cru Champagne

PEOPLE

# LUNCH WITH A PUNK

The Sex Pistols band member Glen Matlock deliberates on punk rock and swearing on telly, over lunch at Boisdale of Belgravia with Harry Owen.

WORDS BY HARRY OWEN  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, BOISDALE LIFE MAGAZINE

Glen arrives on a beautiful, crisp winter's morning and he's looking dapper. Its word I don't often use but in the circumstances it couldn't have been more apt – he is impeccably dressed and has a certain swagger, not pretentious, but there is something in his confidence of movement as he glides towards a discreet corner table in Boisdale of Belgravia. He's earned that assurance, being of course part of the very fabric of music history, as a member of the Sex Pistols. The band made history in many ways, beyond the punk subculture. On the December 1, 1976, the Sex Pistols were interviewed by Bill Grundy for Thames Television. The interview caused national outrage, not least because Steve Jones became the third person to ever say 'fuck' on British TV. The first person was Kenneth Tynan in 1965, followed by Sir Peregrine Worsthorne in 1973, but to date the Sex Pistols uttering of expletives remains the most famous contribution.

I ask Glen if he's aware of this infamous fact, "Funnily enough someone on twitter the other day was saying that I got the bronze medal – but it weren't me – it was Steve what did it, on account of the Blue Nun. He snuck off to some other room somewhere, drunk the lot and then we were on the telly and halfway through the interview, the wine kicked in and all hell broke loose."

So you weren't in third place, but the Sex Pistols did have a reputation for swearing, amongst other things, as anarchy was sweeping late-70's London?

"Here's a funny one, Harry. A few years back, somebody asked me what I thought about swearing on telly. Basically I said, half-jokingly, that I didn't think it was big or clever. The reason I said that was: A) I had kids who were still at school and; B) my local pub in Maida Vale, a nice old fashioned gin palace, was being taken over by Gordon Ramsey. It was really nice upstairs, with a great Thai restaurant and as soon as he took over, he closed them down, slung them out and put one of his own, expensive restaurants – which nobody went to. He's renowned for swearing on the telly and when somebody asked me what I thought about it, I was really

railing against him taking over my local pub! Of course it comes out as, 'Sex Pistols don't like swearing.' Johnny Rotten then thought I was having a go at him. I got embroiled in this whole thing... but it was mainly because of Gordon fucking Ramsay."

Forty years after the Bill Grundy interview and in the same week I'm meeting Glen for lunch, Joe Corré (son of Vivienne Westwood and the late Sex Pistols manager Malcolm McLaren) has set fire to an estimated £5m worth of punk memorabilia on a boat, on the river Thames. Consensus is the collection was nowhere near that value. His motivation was in part, 'To highlight the hypocrisy at the core of this hijacking of 40 years of Anarchy in the UK.' Seems a shame to me – but then again, I'm in my thirties: what

thickness of replacement aluminium panels for buses. Neither does it give Joe, because his dad was Malcolm McLaren, the right to comment on the state of punk rock."

Do people constantly ask him about the Sex Pistols? "I've been trying to duck it for 40 years now and it never changes, so you might as well just go with it." I endeavour to not ask too many more questions on the topic, but can't resist wondering if Malcolm McLaren had been a good manager? "He was good at certain things, bad at others. Malcolm was very good at stirring things up, but he was a useless manager in a traditional sense, you know, the money. Some of those other bands, I think they kind of got it together. The Punks had Malcolm and Bernie Rhodes who managed The Clash and it was always about keeping

It's funny with us all, because we've got something in common that only four people in the whole world have.

do I know about Punk? However, I do know that setting fire to effigies on the Thames these days barely registers in the popular consciousness. Chances are #burnpunklondon entirely passed you by – Joe himself posted a picture on the day of the event that garnered only 19 retweets. I ask Glen what he made of all the punk-burning shenanigans? "Well what was Joe trying to do? He's trying to draw attention to some global warming issue that him and his mum, were concerned about. How the all the countries around the Equator are going to dry up and there's going to be mass migration from the equatorial zones to the northern climes. But he thought the best way to do it was to burn these punk collections. I did say my dad used to work at Hanwell bus garage, but because he did that, it doesn't give me a divine right to come out on the

everything in the state of calamity all the time. Malcolm McLaren always said this though, 'You know when you've got Anarchy – because people went and bought it, they had to save up their money and actually go somewhere, it's a physical thing – it's like a vote for you.' It's funny with us all, because we've got something in common that only four people in the whole world have. No matter what way you cut it, if we get in a room, we're the Sex Pistols and nobody else can say that."

As our lunch arrives, I turn the conversation towards food. To date, almost everyone we have interviewed has been on celebrity Masterchef, you've never been tempted by any of that? "Having a punk background you have to be a little bit careful what you're associated with but I like cooking, maybe down the line. My mate who's

Halfway through the interview, the wine kicked in and all hell broke loose.



an agent, called me once and said how do you fancy going to South Africa? I thought, oh great. Well I said to him, how do I get there? He went, business class flights. I said, where do I stay when I get there? Into a 5 star hotel. How long for? 10 days. Yeah great. I said, what do I do when I get there? He said, you learn to scuba dive. Great, never done that. How much? He told me. I said, what's the catch? And he said, well at the end of

two summers ago now. I found I was sort of telling the story behind the songs, I'd never done that before and it went down really well, I've always done the acoustic shows and it's going from strength to strength, we did Glastonbury this year."

What music are you currently listening to? "Well I was quite saddened that Mose Allison passed away recently, so I've been listening to him a lot. He

my life, you know. I just like any kind of music as long as it's well done."

I end our interview wondering if Glen ever reflected on the idea he had been part of a moment in history that would last forever. "Well it almost has, I turned 60 this year. It's funny though, I'm still always looking to what song I write next and what record I will release." And beyond that anti-establishment rhetoric, there was a definite sense of anger in the music? "Yes, we wanted to shake things up. You can't take it out of context, in the early to mid-70s, there was a real air of despondency. Everything was on strike, there was power cuts, there was rubbish piled high in the streets and totally ineffectual government and it wasn't even the Tories, it was bloody James Callaghan. It just seemed like there was no future and we wrote a song about it, it was called No Future but then that got changed to God Save the Queen."

As we are drinking our coffee, Glen nonchalantly asks, "Have you got the gist of it then? Are you ready to do the interview now?" I explained my two hour recording of the lunch we had just enjoyed, was in fact 'the interview'. Glen took this all in his stride, "OK then... great." And just like that, he's gliding onto the next appointment, the next lunch, the next recording, the next acoustic performance and no doubt, another 20 fucking questions about the Sex Pistols. ♦

I'm not jazz at all, apart from I've worn a beret a couple of times in my life.

the week you have to go and get in a cage with a Great White Shark... basically it was celebrity shark bait."

As he has worked as a professional musician for close to 40 years (including the bands the Rich Kids, the Faces, the Spectres and the London Cowboys), I'm curious about the plans for the rest of this year? "I've put a blues band together, I've got a record in the can that is coming out, I'm doing a pledge music campaign, the record industry doesn't exist like the way it did for blokes my age, but I feel quite ok about that." What about the festival scene? "I actually did the festivals

was like a beatnik kind of jazz but he wrote really good songs. In fact the Yardbirds did one of his songs, I'm Not Talking and The Who covered Young Man Blues which he wrote and also My Generation. He's got this way of playing, it's all a funny groove, it's almost like... (Glen begins banging out the beat on the table, much to the restaurants amusement)... one, two, three, four, most rock bands are like that ... but it's more like this... (cue more loud beating on table), it's almost like... (Glen now breaks into song to accompany the beating). I'm not jazz at all, apart from I've worn a beret a couple of times in



Glen Matlock outside Boisdale of Belgravia and the dish he enjoyed from Head Chef, Chris Zachwieja – Cornish monkfish tail, crispy octopus, braised purple globe artichoke, iron bark pumpkin puree, trompette mushroom and sea herbs



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PEOPLE

# TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER... ACTOR!

Prolific actor Neil Stuke, whose best known TV series include *Game on* and *Silk*, lays out his plan to save our highstreets and, most importantly, the Great British pub over a very long lunch at Boisdale of Mayfair.

WORDS BY ARABEL WINDSOR-HOYE

What do you call a Royal Marine Cadet, punk band member, club promoter, professional chef, property developer, farm-shop owner, campaigner, saviour of our pubs and general champion of, 'all things that make this country great'? Well... you might start by calling him an actor.

The man in question is Neil Stuke, star of *Silk*, *Reggie Perrin*, *Doctor Foster* and *Silent Witness*, to name but a few. He is a successful, prolific and popular actor, who's been gracing our television screens since the early 90's. We meet at the new Boisdale of Mayfair on a sunny winter's morning and explore what's driving this 'living life to the full' polymath, husband and father. I couldn't help thinking throughout, of Edison when he said, 'If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.'

A myriad of careers eventually led Neil to acting, but it all began in Kent, specifically in Deal where he grew up – as it turns out – mostly watching films. "We were very lucky, there was a gang of us down in Deal that were obsessed with French films. Aged fourteen or fifteen, we were watching Louis Malle films, before we moved to Mike Leigh and then Ken Loach. We thought we were quite sophisticated, going to France all the time, drinking Pastis, eating moules et frites, smoking Gitanes and wearing Eau Sauvage!"

So far, so good, Kent-lad obsessed with films, ends up treading the boards. Not quite that straightforward. There's a huge amount crammed in, before the pivotal casting of Neil in the role of Matthew in the 1996 series *Game On*. My apologies to both Neil and Boisdale Life readers for my obsessive *Game On* quoting, not forgetting his immortal line to flatmate Martin: 'I can't believe she's gone into the bedroom with him. I can't believe she's gonna shag that psycho when she's never had the common decency to give me or you one!'. However, in Neil's own words, "before acting I had five years of chaos."

So I ask, before that role, what the disarray entailed? "It started with the Royal Marines, which had always been an integral part of my life. The Royal Marine School of Music is based in Deal and growing up, we had the band march through the town, I thought they were



Neil Stuke pictured in the Stable Bar at Boisdale of Mayfair, lunch included salt marsh spring lamb with turnips



fantastic. I was a drummer in the Cadets for about three years and then I became a punk. Being a punk and a Marine doesn't go. I remember twisting my cap around, in a form of anarchy, coming back from a display one day. The Regimental Sergeant Major saw it and I got banned."

"After that, I was running club nights at Legends, I was running stuff in Ibiza, I'd gone a bit mad. When I decided to become an actor, I needed a night job

Talk of Franklins (Neil's restaurant on Lordship Lane, serving seasonal British produce) brings us neatly round to his key passion outside of acting. Before our lunch was set up, we started following each other on Twitter. I'd heard Neil was a 'local pub supporter' – naively thinking it might be a fairly casual relationship with the cause – quite the contrary! I refer you to @NeilStuke for proof. He is absolutely at the forefront of saving our high streets

I'm always running to something, people used to call me 'the man in a hurry!'

after drama school. So I became a chef at Fred's, the member's only club on Argyle Street. It was a fantastic place, on three floors and Dick Bradsell, who died sadly last year, was the cocktail barman. He said to me, 'you're too good looking to be a chef; I need you down on the bar.' Suddenly I became a mixologist, trained up by Dick Bradsell and Nick Strangeway. Nick and I are actually now partners in the farm shop and Franklins."

and pubs in particular.

I wondered where the passion came from? "Well it's more an interest in the fabric of our society and Britishness, localism, history and community. What I first got into was trying to save high streets, obviously having a Farm Shop on what is a quintessential high street, in East Dulwich. But you've got to try and get people out of their apathy, 7,000 pubs closed in seven years and people think

it's because of the smoking ban. That's bullshit when you know the facts of why so many pubs are closing."

And what are the facts? "The asset stripping starts with Punch Taverns and Enterprise, who are now closing pubs because they've overbought and they are bankrupt. They don't even sell them

can't bear it. It used to be fantastic to have a lovely local pub; everybody knows each other, there's weddings, people meet each other, they fall in love. They have drinks after the rugby game and local kids start working there. Now they are going to work in Morrison's. I mean seriously, really?" I'm enthused by all Neil's rhetoric, its

as pubs. They run them down, churn the landlords, put the rents up, put the beer prices up, remove whatever the locals were drinking, take away the bar stools and make sure it's unsuccessful. After this they go to the Council and say 'We can't make it work', they get planning permission and developers build another Tesco Local, Morrison's, McDonalds, Costa, Starbucks, whatever. To me it's a vision of hell; I mean this is not how I want this country to be. I'm fucking angry about it."

A cursory glance at the research shows he's not wrong. CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) figures indicate pubs are closing at a conservative rate of 27 a week and the introduction of new business rates are unlikely to help matters. Neil goes on to add, "We recently lost a huge battle in Kent – I say huge, it really wasn't that huge – not that many people cared. But we lost a 764 year old Grade II listed pub which is cited in the *Doomsday book* (so remember that's up in the 5% of most important buildings in Britain). It's going to be turned into two houses. A 764 year old pub, referenced by Chaucer is to be turned into two houses."

Is this battle built on your love of our history and culture? "It's community, society and localism. All the things that made this country great, we're losing and I

compelling stuff, I ask where Boisdale Life readers might lend their support? "We've got Protect Pubs, People's Pub Partnership and Pub Defender, but we've had no help in our crusade from the Heritage Minister, Tracey Crouch, I mean no help whatsoever and that only leads us to believe that she's been told not to intervene."

So what is driving this longing for the picturesque and is that the right sentiment? "I think I have it built into me. I've been trying to work it out recently, trying to analyse it. I can't cope with anything that's ugly. So a supermarket, to me, is ugly. What it does to the town is ugly. A high street is pretty, a village is pretty, with small independent shops. For me, that works. If you go to the Cotswolds, or Tuscany, or to Spain, you have the aesthetics and people take care about where they live, the society, the community, all those things are more important, but there is so little support for it. Starbucks is ugly to me. The problem is you can come across as being a bit of a loon. If trying to save high streets, villages, pubs... if that's just a romantic vision of England... then I'm fucked really."

Changing tack, what are you working on at the moment? "Well we've got Doctor Foster II coming out soon. I had Paranoid on last year, that's now number

one in America on Netflix. It didn't do very well here on ITV, but we've got these lunatic fans in America demanding a second series." I remember the cast of *Doctor Foster* was particularly good – it must have been a pleasure working with that very high calibre of acting? "I know, I've been very lucky, I've worked with a lot of good people but it's hard to beat Pete Postlethwaite. We did a series together called *Sins* – he was a proper old school theatre actor. I look at British television now and my heart sinks, there are literally only a handful of things that are very good and they, of course are very successful. I feel very lucky to have been in a lot of them." Has it always been an ambition to break America? "Yes always, in fact I was up for *Green Wing*, years ago, so it's always been a big thing. It's difficult when you've got a family and I've got a lot on here, developing houses, running the Farm Shop."

What's been the constant thread in your life? Your marriage? Your children? The countryside, farm shops, music, acting, partying – it's a lot of great stuff, what keeps you anchored? Or doesn't that matter? Are you rolling with the punches? "You're cleverly trying to get into my psyche and see what makes me tick. I think I'm kind of on the spectrum, possibly, of all sorts of different things. I'm always running to something I think, people used to call me 'man in a hurry', but striving for more is great. It can affect the people around me; my wife worries about me, because she thinks I'm never satisfied. It's exhausting being around me. She will also be the first to say it's fantastic because you really live a full life, you never really stop. Why would you want to? You're really only on the planet for a very short amount of time. Cooking is my thing – it's the one moment where I have clarity. When I cook, I'm in heaven."

By this point in proceedings we have moved over to the Groucho, Neil is greeted warmly by the staff at the door. It's been a long afternoon of good food, good wine and engaging company. I've even managed to hold off the *Game On* references, although as soon as we walk into the Groucho, none other than Ben Chaplin walks out (Neil's predecessor in the role of Matt in the sitcom) which I feel warrants a mention! Neil is definitely the 'real deal' when it comes to our pubs, he's abundantly talented and if he wasn't an actor we would call him an entrepreneur. For the sake of my Sunday night on the sofa and British television in general, thank god he is acting. Now we just need the BBC to get on and commission another series of *Silk*... set in a local pub. ♦

PEOPLE

# CHUCK BERRY: 'THERE'S ROCK, BUT IT'S THE ROLL THAT COUNTS'

While no individual can claim to have invented rock and roll, Chuck Berry laid down its foundations and assembled all the essential components by magically blurring the boundaries between blues, R&B and country.

WORDS BY JONATHAN WINGATE



Chuck Berry the American guitarist, singer, songwriter and pioneer of rock and roll music, died on March 18, 2017 aged 90. Amongst many accolades, Bob Dylan called Berry "the Shakespeare of rock 'n' roll" and John Lennon said, "if you tried to give rock and roll another name, you might call it 'Chuck Berry'."

Chuck Berry's impact on popular culture was incalculable. As a songwriter, singer and guitarist, his influence far surpassed the sales of his biggest records. He instantly changed the sound and the feel of music from the moment he first burst into earshot in 1955.

Elvis Presley will always be known as the King Of Rock and Roll, but it was Chuck Berry who wrote the rulebook. While Elvis gave rock and roll its sexy, hip-shaking image, Berry composed the songs that tapped into the zeitgeist and set the narrative for a new generation of teenagers with transistor radios in their hands and money in their pockets who were beginning to raise questions their parents would never have asked. Berry added clever lyrics and an electrifying edge to rock and roll to create music that white America had never previously been exposed to.

Although John Lennon once famously said - "If you tried to give rock and roll another name, you might call it Chuck Berry" - he was an unlikely leader for the subculture that he wrote about in the mid-50s. Many of his songs perfectly summed up the teenage experience, but Chuck Berry was a long way from adolescence by the time he became a star. In fact, he was 29-years-old and married with two young children when he recorded his debut single.

Charles Edward Anderson Berry, who died in March at the age of 90, was born on 18th October 1926 in St. Louis, Missouri, the fourth of six children. He grew up in a predominantly middle-class African-American area of St. Louis known as The Ville. His mother, Martha, was a schoolteacher, and his father, Henry, was a carpenter and Baptist deacon whose passion for poetry and literature left a deep impression on his children.

He sang in the choir at his local Baptist church and gave his first public performance at the age of 15 while still a student at Sumner High School. "I wanted to play the blues, but I wasn't blue enough," Berry recalled. "We always had food on the table."

When he was 17, he was arrested in Kansas City after he and two friends stole a car and robbed three shops at gunpoint. He was convicted and sent to a young offenders institution in Missouri, where he formed a singing quartet before eventually being released on his 21st birthday in 1947. Back in St. Louis, he got married and worked at an automobile assembly plant before training to become a hairdresser and cosmetologist. Berry cut his teeth playing in a trio in the evenings with drummer, Ebby Harding and legendary pianist, Johnnie Johnson, who stayed with him throughout his recording career.

Chuck Berry's key musical influences were Nat 'King' Cole, Charlie Christian, Muddy Waters and T-Bone Walker. In 1955, he headed to Chicago to see Waters in concert. He got an autograph after the show and asked for advice about securing a record deal. Waters told him to get in touch with Leonard Chess, producer and head of the blues label, Chess Records.

Berry was convinced that his brand of blues and R&B would pique Chess' interest. In fact, it was his adaptation of *Ida Red*, a 1938 recording of a traditional 19th century folk tune by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys that caught the label owner's ear. He had been on the lookout for something new for a while after watching sales of blues and R&B records rapidly sinking in the mid-50s.

Berry and his band had already been playing country songs for black audiences for a few years before they stepped into the Chess studio to cut his debut single on 21st May 1955. "After they laughed at me a few times, they began requesting the hillbilly stuff," he explained. It was Leonard Chess who came up with the title after he noticed a Maybelline mascara box lying on the studio floor.

Maybellene set out Berry's stall in a little over two minutes of country blues and primal guitar twang. In return for radio airplay, influential DJ Alan Freed was given some cash and credited with co-writing the song, which soon gathered momentum and sold over a million copies, reaching Number 1 on Billboard's R&B Chart and Number 5 on its Pop Chart. He began touring on the back of Maybellene's success, although some regions of the United States were still racially segregated, and promoters frequently didn't realise that Berry was actually black until he arrived at the venues to play.

Maybellene tells the story of a man in a V8 Ford chasing after his unfaithful girlfriend in a Cadillac Coupe De Ville and features one of the most memorable opening verses in popular music: 'As I was motorvatin' over the hill / I saw Maybellene in a Coupe De Ville / A Cadillac a-rollin' on the open road / Nothing will outrun my V8 Ford / The Cadillac doing 'bout 95 / She's bumper to bumper rollin' side by side.'

The song sounded like nothing that had come before it and featured a propulsive drumbeat, a distorted guitar riff and a classic tale that was told using intricate, witty wordplay and some hip brand name-dropping. Although individually, none of these essential elements were unique to Berry, when combined, they became the hallmark of many of his most iconic records.

Berry's songs were quintessentially American, rather than black, and his music, his image and his attitude epitomized rock and roll's rebellious spirit. He broke down all cultural barriers like nobody before him, casting a spell on everyone from the Beatles and the Rolling Stones to Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.

Dylan, the most literate lyricist of the 60s, said he considered Berry to be "the

& Blues. The song became a mission statement for Berry, ushering in an exciting new era: 'Roll over Beethoven / And tell Tchaikovsky the news.'

Chuck Berry's scintillating double-string staccato licks mixed Chicago blues with a country twang. No matter how many times you have heard his records, his guitar playing still sends a shiver up your spine. He sang with a clear, precise enunciation and could

He sang with a salacious smile that left his audience in absolutely no doubt that he was mad, bad and dangerous to know.

Shakespeare of rock and roll." He created rock's lingua franca and found pure poetry in the everyday lives of young Americans in *Back In The USA* ('Looking hard for a drive-in, searching for a corner café / Where hamburgers sizzle on an open grill night and day') and mythologized the youth culture he seemed to embody in *Rock and Roll Music* ('It's got a backbeat / You can't lose it').

One of his most famous anthems, *Roll Over Beethoven*, articulated the generational divide on both sides of the Atlantic by urging radio DJs to replace staid classical music with Rhythm

conjure up evocative images in his lyrics, describing a girl who 'wiggles like a glow-worm, dance like a spinning top,' or capturing the pure thrill of rock and roll: 'You know my temperature's risin' / And the jukebox blowin' a fuse.'

"I wrote about cars because half the people had cars, or wanted them," Berry explained. "I wrote about love, because everyone wants that. I wrote songs white people could buy, because that's nine pennies out of every dime. That was my goal - to look at my bankbook and see a million dollars there. It amazes me when I hear people



Mick Jagger chats backstage with Chuck Berry at Madison Square Garden, in a concert that was recorded and later released as the live album 'Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out' in 1969



Chuck Berry continued performing well into his 80s. He usually played with local pickup bands, as he had done for most of his career, but sometimes he played with fellow rock stars.

say 'I want to go out and find out who I am.' I always knew who I was. I was going to be famous if it killed me."

Between 1955 and 1964, Chuck Berry fired off a machine gun run of revolutionary rock and roll records that has never been bettered. Popular music has always been perceived as an ephemeral art form, but numbers like Sweet Little Sixteen, Nadine, No Particular Place To Go, Memphis Tennessee and Brown Eyed Handsome Man never grow old.

His most iconic song was Johnny B. Goode, which contained the most instantly recognizable guitar intro in the history of rock and roll ('Just like a-ringin' a bell'). Although melodically it was almost identical to Louis Jordan's 1946 jump-blues hit, Ain't That Just Like A Woman, Johnny B. Goode sounds so fiery that it is hard to believe that there is only 12 years between them.

It's a semi-autobiographical rags to riches tale of a black man born into segregation who lived to see 'his name in lights.' "The gateway from freedom was somewhere near New Orleans where most Africans were sorted and sold into slavery," Berry recalled. "I'd been told my grandfather lived 'back up in the woods among the evergreens' in a log cabin. I revived the era with a story about a 'colored boy named Johnny B. Goode.' I changed it to 'country boy,' or else it wouldn't get on the radio."

Johnny B. Goode was one of four pieces of music included among the cultural artefacts that were put on the two Voyager space probes that were launched in 1977. On a Saturday Night Live sketch, comedian Steve Martin reported on the first communication received from aliens: "Send more Chuck Berry."

By the end of the decade, Berry was a huge star with a string of million-selling records under his belt, but in December 1959, his career came to an abrupt halt. While on tour in Texas, he was arrested for transporting a teenage girl across state lines for 'immoral purposes.'

He was sentenced to five years in prison, although he immediately appealed, arguing that the judge's comments were racist and had prejudiced the jury against him. The appeal was upheld, and a second trial resulted in another conviction. He eventually served a year and a half before finally being released in October 1963, by which time the Rhythm & Blues revival was at its peak. With his songs being regularly covered by the Beatles and the Stones, he was discovered by a new generation, but although he scored a few more minor hits, Berry's time at the top of the charts was all but over by the end of 1964.

In 1972, he enjoyed the biggest hit of his career when he reached Number 1 on both sides of the Atlantic with My Ding-a-Ling, a double-entendre novelty number

originally recorded by New Orleans songwriter, Dave Bartholomew. Although it proved to be his last hit record, interest in Berry's original brand of rock and roll resurfaced every few years.

Whilst he was certainly aware of the huge influence he had exerted on successive generations of musicians, as a black man in a predominantly white man's industry in the 1950s and 1960s, the nagging feeling that he had been ripped off never left Chuck Berry. He was jailed again in 1979 for tax evasion, having spent his entire career demanding cash upfront from promoters before he would set foot on stage. Famous for his prickly personality, he invariably arrived just before showtime, used local pickup bands in order to save money and refused to rehearse or do soundchecks.

Stories of Berry's wild off-stage shenanigans are the stuff of legend, but one particular tale stands out from the rest. Back in the mid-80s, a journalist I know was waiting for his interview with the great man in a hotel somewhere in the Midwest. After a while, his publicist went up to his suite to see if she could locate him. Finding the door ajar, she went inside, but he was nowhere to be seen, so she walked into the bathroom, only to find Chuck chomping away on a sandwich in the Jacuzzi as a young woman was enthusiastically giving him a blowjob. As his publicist stuttered her apology, Berry barked: "Do you mind? I'm trying to eat my fucking sandwich."

Magical, mystical, exciting and exotic, nobody sounded like Chuck Berry, a man who personified the rebellious appeal of rock and roll. "Chuck had the swing," explains Keith Richards. "There's rock, but it's the roll that counts." With his lithe body, chiseled cheekbones and perfectly pomaded hair, nobody looked like him either. He would stride around on stage doing his signature 'duck walk' as he unleashed flurries of incendiary guitar licks and sang with a salacious smile that left his audience in absolutely no doubt that he was mad, bad and dangerous to know. Chuck Berry may well have been rock and roll's ultimate showman, but his wild persona was no act. ♦

On Saturday 12th August Boisdale of Canary Wharf will pay tribute to Chuck Berry featuring the wonderful Earl Jackson and his band. The evening will feature all of Chuck's greatest hits including Roll Over Beethoven, Sweet Little 16, Johnny B Goode and many more. To book tickets go to [www.boisdale.co.uk](http://www.boisdale.co.uk) or call 020 7715 5818

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PEOPLE

# THE LOVEABLE CURMUDGEON

Celebrated diarist, raconteur and renowned author John McEntee remembers the latter years of the award winning novelist, script writer, journalist, and legendary imbibor Keith Waterhouse.

WORDS BY JOHN MCENTEE

Sometimes in the early evening gloom of Old Brompton Road I catch a glimpse of a shambling figure. He is wearing a creased, Colombo-like raincoat, his long, unkempt, white hair blowing in the breeze. His step is unsteady. As the traffic lights wink green, he shuffles towards the swing doors of O'Neill's cavernous public house on the corner of Earls Court Road.

It is the ghost of Keith Waterhouse, author of the immortal *Billy Liar*, journalist and bon viveur. His spirit is recreating the journey he took every day during the last decade of a life that ended in 2009 at the remarkable age of 80. I say remarkable because Keith's alcohol consumption alone – not to mention his sparse diet – should have seen him off at least 20 years earlier. I was privileged to share Keith's twilight drinking years. I still miss him greatly.

In O'Neill's, Keith invariably sat alone at a table surrounded by a jumble of newspapers and magazines, sipping on a large glass of Pinot Grigio. A professional curmudgeon he constantly complained, about the noise of the pub, the rudeness of the staff, the long journey up the grand stairway to the gents and the type of customer with whom he he was obliged to rub shoulders.

But it was the environment he preferred. Still tip tapping out two brilliant columns a week for the *Daily Mail* on his manual typewriter as well as columns for *Saga* magazine and work on a still unseen play, he rewarded himself daily with a trip to O'Neill's, before which he would have polished off a bottle or more at home at nearby Coleherne Court. Sometimes, Stella, his former wife, who in his final reclusive years nursed him tenderly, joined him. But he was often rude to her, sometimes suddenly staring at her in the chair beside him in O'Neill's as if she'd just landed from another planet.

He did not welcome visitors to his table. Once mischievously returning in a taxi from lunch in Chelsea, I told my companion, the writer and journalist Noel Botham, that the great man was probably in O'Neill's. We halted the cab outside and found Keith sitting with Stella. Botham, six foot two and carrying a large internal cargo of Chablis rushed



over and attempted to lift Keith from his chair with a huge embrace.

"Please forgive me, Keith," he gushed, referring to an earlier fall out. "I love you. Let's have dinner, on me, on Thursday." Extracting himself from Botham's embrace Keith produced from the inside pocket of his manky battered tweed jacket a tiny pocket diary which he thumbed through. Peering at an open page he said "I'm sorry Thursday is out. I find I am cleaning my tennis shoes that evening."

Waterhouse frequented O'Neill's so often, that the staff gave him the key to the disabled lavatory on the ground floor. On one occasion, Keith excused himself from the table and walked shakily the 20 yards across the shiny wooden floor to the door of the loo. When Keith emerged, he was even shakier on his feet. As he closed the door he peered intently at his distant chair and gamely put his first foot forward. Just then the jukebox burst into life playing a rap record.

Keith's spasmodic, shoulder movements and mini lurches as he negotiated the vast ocean of floor brilliantly, and inadvertently, kept time with the music and when he was safely

berthed in his chair a group of young men reacted with a cry of 'Bravo!' and a round of applause. Keith was baffled but from then on the record became known as *The Waterhouse Rap*.

Regularly Keith would enjoy lunch at Richard Shepherd's *Coq d'Or*, adjacent to O'Neill's. He enjoyed the company of colleagues from *The Mail*, the late Ian Wooldridge, John Edwards, Peter McKay and Jeff Powell. On one occasion, after ordering his usual eggs benedict, he complained he couldn't reach the bottle of white wine marooned in an ice bucket just out of his reach.

Three times he asked the Polish waitress to bring it to him and three times she misunderstood and merely topped up his glass. Eventually I called her aside and pointed at the bottle, while Edwards lifted the dripping bottle from its moorings and plonked it down in front of Keith.

By 4pm, Keith was slumped in his chair, most of two bottles residing in his tummy with the barely nibbled eggs benedict abandoned in front of him. "I must go to my beautiful home," he slurred. He tried to rise and slumped back

in the chair. I went out into Old Brompton Road and hailed a taxi explaining to the driver that I had a distinguished, if feeble writer who lived within sight of the restaurant but was unable to get home unaided. He needed assistance to get home. Then, with the help of the former newspaper editor, Bill Hagerty, I half-carried half dragged Keith to the waiting cab. I climbed in beside him and pointed towards the nearby red bricked block of flats on the other side of the road.

A few hundred yards through the traffic lights the driver did a U-turn and parked outside Colherne Court. Keith was now asleep, inert and incapable of independent movement. The driver came round to the passenger door and we both manoeuvred Keith so his feet were dangling out of the taxi. The driver lifted his feet, but as I left the cab Keith's jacket slipped off and he gently glided to the pavement.

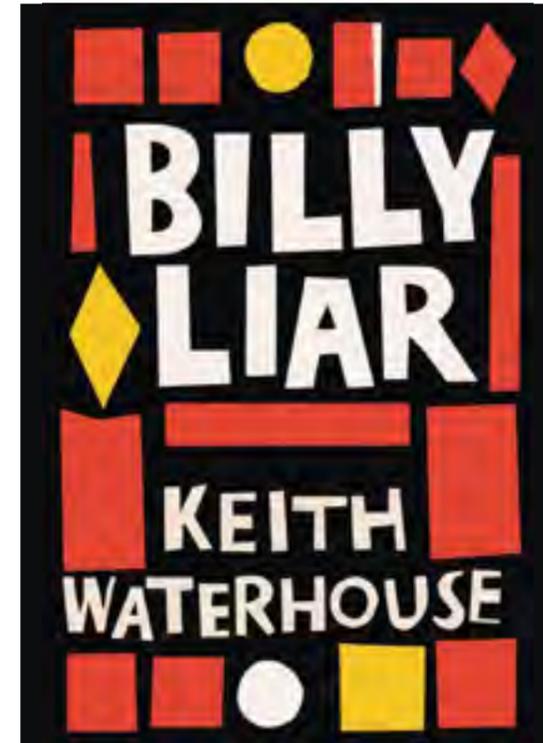
His blue shirt was now scrunched up around his neck exposing his scrawny stomach. Just then, the burly Irish housekeeper and his wife dashed to our assistance. Depressingly familiar with Keith's routine, they helped us get Keith through the door and into an armchair in the hall, before dragging him into the tiny lift and up to his flat where we left him on the floor of his bedroom. "It'll stop him falling out of bed," sighed the housekeeper. The following morning, appropriately April Fools' Day, I telephoned to see if Keith was ok. "I'm fine," he said. "Just a little stiff, see you soon." Click.

Our next lunch was a meeting of the 'Useless Information Society'. The all male grouping was simply an excuse to get very pissed in congenial company while pretending to enjoy fine food and witty repartee. Members were also obliged to rise to their feet at the pudding stage and recite a new piece of useless information such as "banging your head on a wall for an hour and a half burns 150 calories."

Once again Keith had to be carried home, this time by the *Daily Mail's* John Edwards. Nonetheless, the pair needed help from a friendly pharmacist from nearby Zafrash, the all night chemist who had been watching the drunken ballet and came out of his shop to anchor Keith and John to the railings on Old Brompton Road. Unfortunately the housekeeper was not on duty that day but John somehow managed to deposit Keith in his bed. At some stage in the night Keith fell onto the floor fracturing his right arm.

If Stella had not arrived in the morning, it would have been the late Keith Waterhouse. Even so, he never fully recovered and if it weren't for the compassion of Stella he would have spent the rest of his life in care.

But even recuperating at the nearby Chelsea and Westminster Hospital he had lost none of his vinegar. Pointing to a large wicker basket containing fruit sent by his editor Paul Dacre, he asked if anyone wanted a banana. Then musing on the gift he sighed: "I suppose the basket will come in useful for holding pens."



'Billy Liar' was written by Keith Waterhouse in 1959. The novel was later adapted into a play, a film, a musical and a TV series. The semi-comical story is about William Fisher, a working-class 19-year-old living with his parents in the fictional town of Stradthoughton in Yorkshire. Bored by his job as a lowly clerk for an undertaker, Billy spends his time indulging in fantasies and dreams of life in the big city as a comedy writer.

But so successful was the 'Useless Information Society' that publisher John Blake brought out a handbook of information based on our dinners. Noel Botham carried out the bulk of the research and work and the book went into nine editions and was a great success. But the problem was that no one apart from Blake, a member, and Botham, a co-founder, saw any of the royalties.

At an extraordinary general meeting upstairs in the French House, we discussed the matter of the absent

royalties. Noel proposed a Society-funded trip to New York to have lunch. Waterhouse counter-proposed that the money go to charity, in particular the homeless centre in Westminster where the Society's chaplain Fr. Michael Seed ministered. Fr. Michael, a very thirsty Franciscan monk, who became a celebrity of sorts for converting to Catholicism Ann Widdicombe, John Selwyn Gummer and the Duchess of Kent, sat next to Botham at the fateful meeting at which we voted overwhelmingly in favour of giving our invisible earnings to Fr. Michael's charity.

Botham rose to his feet, produced a piece of paper he described as the articles of association of the Society and pontificated. "According to this document, I, as co-founder, can overrule any vote and I say we are going to New York for lunch."

He sat down and Waterhouse rose, shakily to his feet and pointed at Fr. Michael. "I don't care if you do go to New York but whatever happens I want my share of the royalties to go to Fr. Michael." Fr. Michael whispered frantically in Botham's ear. He rose gravely and declared "Fr. Michael says that if Keith gives him the money he will use it to go to New York for lunch with the rest of us." Uproar ensued and Keith stood up and declared that he was resigning from the Society and would not be back. He never returned.

After his fall Keith slowly retreated from O'Neill's. Pre-planned lunches at Langan's had an empty chair invariably in place of Keith but for the man who agreed with Kingsley Amis that the worst phrase in the English language was, "Shall we go straight in?" Keith never again lingered over a pre-lunch glass at Langan's or anywhere else.

Just before Christmas 2008, Peter McKay and I visited him at his apartment. Although frail and sporting a Howard Hughes like beard he still craved Fleet Street gossip. He had his bottle of Pinot Grigio on the floor adjacent to his left, undamaged arm. Stella was looking after him. I urged him to make 2009 the year he resumed his perambulations. "I don't do 'out' any more," was his answer.

He died in September 2009, but if you've had a few and find yourself of an evening on the corner of Old Brompton and Earls Court Road look out for a shambolic figure in the battered raincoat and the white hair. And if you listen carefully you might hear the *Waterhouse Rap*. ♦

## Love and all that Jazz

COMMENT

## DEVELOPING WORLD, DEVELOPING LEADERS

Former President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 alongside Nelson Mandela, for his role in the dismantling of apartheid. In this inspirational essay he outlines his roadmap for successful leadership and the challenges facing new leaders of developing nations. De Klerk is also chairman of the Global Leadership Foundation, an organisation which works to support democratic leadership, prevent and resolve conflict, through mediation, as well as promote good governance in the form of democratic institutions, open markets, human rights and the rule of law.

WORDS BY F.W. DE KLERK



F.W. de Klerk was born on 18 March 1936, in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 1972, de Klerk was elected to Parliament for the National Party and in 1986 he became leader of the House of Assembly. In 1989, he won election to the South African presidency, placing himself at the head of verligte ('enlightened') forces within the governing party, which had come to believe that apartheid could not be maintained forever.

One thing that we have learned since the beginning of the millennium, is globalization means that none of us can ignore developments even in the most remote societies. For example, who would have thought that twenty years ago, Islamic fundamentalists living in the remote mountains of Afghanistan could possibly have any impact on the United States, or on the world's global business and financial hub in New York City? Who would have dreamt that technological developments on the West Coast of the United States would fundamentally change the way China processes information, or the manner in which peasants in Kenya communicate

and carry out financial transactions on their mobile phones?

As a result, none of us can ignore the factors that affect stability and progress anywhere in the world. Globalization is making the world smaller. Everywhere people are on the move, seeking access to the better lives, security and freedom, they see on the internet. The dominant image of our times may well be the hundreds of thousands of people crossing the Mediterranean and scaling the border fences in Ceuta along the Mexican border. All this means that people in the developed world must become more aware of the factors that are making it increasingly difficult for millions of people in developing

countries to remain where they are.

Why are some of these societies failing to create a better life for their people, while others are succeeding? One of these factors is the quality of leadership, in the more than 120 countries that have emerged onto the global stage since the end of the Second World War; as well as the disintegration of European colonial empires and the collapse of the Soviet Union. One way to measure the success of these emerging societies is the degree to which they have been able to develop and sustain genuine democratic systems. There is generally a high correlation between economic / political freedom and successful human development.

Nevertheless, independence has delivered mixed results. According to Freedom House, of the 120 countries that have become independent since 1945 only 41 are free; 40 are partly free and 39 are not free at all. Undoubtedly, one of the critical factors that determine the success of emerging states is the quality of their leadership. Leaders of newly independent states face many challenges that their counterparts in well-established democracies do not generally experience.

Firstly, there is the 'continuing liberation' syndrome. Many leaders of newly independent states emerged from revolutionary movements that were good at fighting liberation wars but had very little idea of the humdrum challenges of day-to-day governance. In South Africa our governing party, the African National Congress still regards itself as a National Liberation Movement, with an unfulfilled historic mandate, not as an ordinary political party.

Secondly, many leaders of post-independence governments fell into the ideological trap of radical socialism. Emerging leaders, many of them trained

The sad reality is that history is more often driven by bad, rather than good, leadership. History is replete with examples of leaders who have consistently taken the wrong decisions. Had Charles I, Louis XVI and Nicholas II been better leaders, the histories of their countries would have been fundamentally different. Just consider the foolishness of Napoleon's invasion of Russia; the folly of the Europeans in precipitating the First World War and, in our own time, the disastrous consequences of the Second Gulf War.

So how could we promote the qualities of a good leadership for the present generation of leaders, especially, but perhaps not exclusively, in developing countries? What have I, at the age of 80, learned from my experience of leadership?

Firstly, I have learned about the corrosive nature of power. Lord Acton was right: 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. The problem in South Africa before 1994 was that the White Parliament was supreme. It could, and did, make any law that it pleased. It is also true

apartheid and separate development.

Thirdly, it is much easier to reach agreement on the future than on the past. I strongly supported South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but unfortunately it did not succeed in promoting reconciliation. Its greatest flaw was that it was not representative. There were no commissioners who could speak for the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party - two of the main groups in the conflict. Reconciliation cannot occur if there is no consensus and consensus is not possible if all sides are not properly represented. Our inability in South Africa to reach agreement about the past has been one of the greatest failures of our post-conflict society. The past still intervenes like an unseen barrier, in virtually all our national discourses and provides the fuel for continuing recrimination, guilt and polarisation. As George Orwell observed, "He who controls the past, controls the future. He who controls the present, controls the past."

Fourthly, the key to harmonious relations in multicultural societies is respect for diversity beneath an over-arching umbrella of common values and loyalties. A United Nations Development Program report, published in 2004, affirmed that cultural liberty was a vital part of human development. If handled well, it could lead to greater cultural diversity and enrich people's lives. However, if mismanaged, it can quickly become one of the greatest sources of instability within states and between them. The answer was to: "respect diversity and build unity through common bonds of humanity". The UNDP Report also recommended that states should promote cultural liberty as a human right and as an important aspect of human development. It is only within such a framework that all of us, who live in multicultural societies, can achieve our full potential as human beings.

Lastly, I have learnt the enormous value of political and economic freedom, under a system of caring and humane law. Freedom is crucial to the happiness, success and prosperity of societies everywhere. The top 20% of countries that best promote economic freedom have per capita incomes seven times greater than the bottom 20%. They are also more equal. This should come as no surprise since freedom means empowerment. It empowers the individuals, companies and associations of which society is composed and it encourages the freedom of debate and research that is

that, in the absence of deeply ingrained values and strong and independent watchdogs, those who have power will tend to abuse it to promote their personal and political interests. That is why it is so important to limit and monitor the power of governments and political leaders.

Secondly, the worst episodes of human history have been caused by ideologies. Think of the 120 million victims of Nazism, Fascism and Communism during the past century. Ideologists develop theories about how to achieve an ideal society and then try to force reality into the narrow channels of their theories. They are all inspired by millenarian visions: the classless society, manifest destiny or the thousand years Reich. They all conjure up enemies: the liberals, the bourgeoisie or the Jews. They all ignore realities that do not fit in with their theories. They all trample on the interests of ordinary people, in order to achieve their goals. South Africa itself suffered under the ideologies of

in the old Soviet Union, were inspired by the ideals of the classless society and the abolition of private property. Chairman Mao and Che Guevara were their role models and they were surprised when their economies collapsed.

Thirdly, most leaders of newly independent countries have had to contend with divisive ethnic forces. Most such countries were artificial creations of European imperialists who drew borders on the colonial maps, with little or no consideration for the people that they were artificially dividing, or forcing to live together in the same states. Too often, emerging leaders tended to favour people from their own ethnic group and alienate those from other communities.

Finally, there is the ever-present threat of corruption. In states without strong civil society institutions and well-established traditions of probity, there is always the temptation to use power to advance the political and economic interests of the leader, his family and his friends.

**Distrust ideologists and all those who base their policies on beliefs, rather than on realities and experience.**



For their work toward dismantling apartheid, de Klerk and Mandela were named co-recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. The following year, on April 27, 1994, South Africa held its first multiracial elections. On May 10, 1994, a 77-year-old Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first black president of South Africa, and De Klerk became his first deputy.

the foundation of all innovation. By so doing it gives free societies an enormous competitive advantage.

So what advice would I give to developing leaders in the developing world? Vigilantly limit the power of those who are invested with political, bureaucratic and economic authority. Distrust ideologists and all those who base

But how can we in practice convey these messages to leaders struggling with the complex challenges of developing societies? In 2004, in the company of a small group of like-minded former leaders from around the world, I formed the Global Leadership Foundation as a non-profit organisation. Over the past 13

and advisers had their own agendas and filtered the information that they passed it up to us.

It is for these reasons that we now make our advice available to leaders who are dealing with transitional problems. We do so with the utmost discretion since the last thing that a leader wants is to create the impression that he needs external advice. We put together teams from our members comprising of former leaders who understand the region involved and who themselves have dealt with similar economic, developmental and political challenges. We do not want publicity; we are not paid for our work; we want only to help and we are finding increasingly that this approach resonates with leaders in developing countries.

We have no illusions. The task is never easy but if we can help leaders to avoid catastrophic decisions; if we can share our experiences of success and failure; if we can nudge policy in the right direction with tried and tested experience – I believe that we will indeed have made a contribution to developing leaders in the developing world, with beneficial consequences not only for their own people but also for the rest of the globalized world. ♦

**The sad reality is that history is more often driven by bad, rather than good, leadership.**

their policies on beliefs rather than on realities and experience. Accommodate and respect cultural, linguistic, religious and political diversity and base one's outlook on a shared future, rather than on a divided past. Ensure that government promotes maximum freedom within the law for ordinary people to pursue their legitimate personal, economic and political interests because freedom is empowerment.

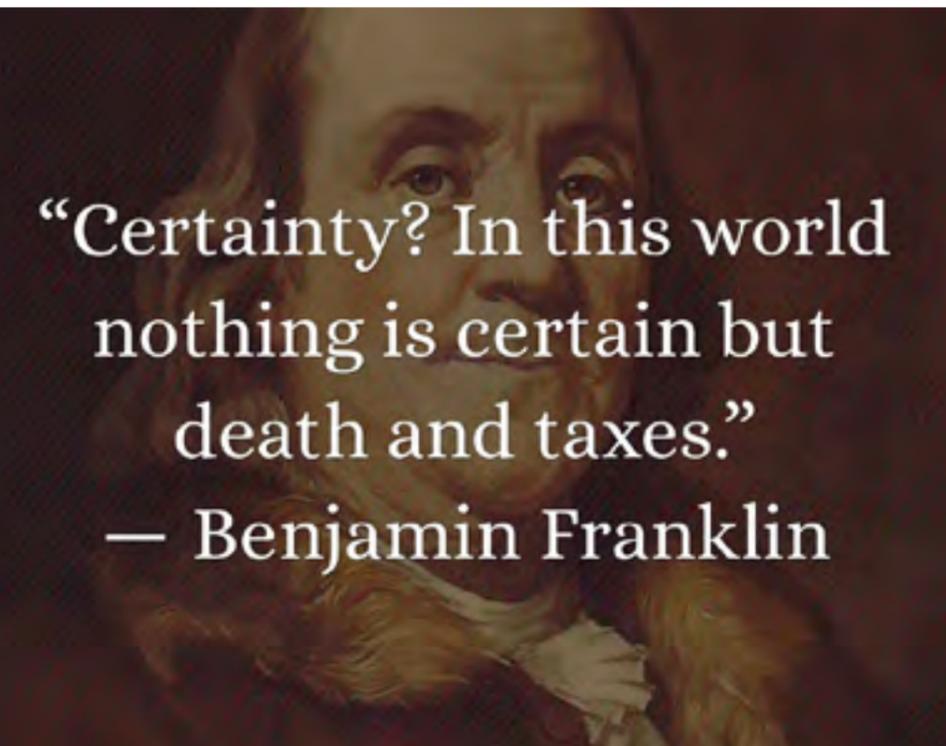
years, we have assembled a panel of 39 former Presidents, Prime Ministers and distinguished leaders from countries all over the world. As former leaders, we understand the excruciating challenges with which new generations of leaders must wrestle. We understand the loneliness of leadership; we have experienced the difficulty of obtaining well-based, disinterested advice and we know that many of our closest allies

COMMENT

# INHERITANCE TAX EXPLAINED

In our regular wealth management feature, we asked Katharine Arthur, a partner with chartered accountants and tax advisers, haysmacintyre (business advisers to Boisdale) for a tax planning update.

WORDS BY KATHARINE ARTHUR  
PARTNER, HAYSMACINTYRE



Nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." A much over-quoted statement from Benjamin Franklin, but 2017 is proving no exception in continuing uncertainty, with Brexit and the General Election on June 8th. The truncation of this year's Finance Bill in anticipation of the Election also leaves us wondering when and if some tax changes will take effect.

Neither death nor taxes are of course pleasant topics, and the sum of both, Inheritance Tax (IHT), can prove very costly. IHT is charged at 40% on your estate, subject to a nil rate band (NRB) (exempt amount) of just £325,000. The NRB has remained unchanged for many years, nearly doubling the number of estates subject to IHT this decade. All is not lost though, and planning to reduce your future IHT bill is possible: here I set out some ideas for you to consider.

**MAKING GIFTS**

There is an IHT annual exemption of £3,000, in aggregate on gifts to

individuals is £6,000 for 2016/17 where you did not use this exemption in 2015/16 and can reduce your estate. Separately, gifts of up to £250 to any individual during 2016/17 are also exempt. Increased relief for gifts is available if made in consideration of marriage/civil partnership. Other gifts to individuals made during your lifetime, which are potentially exempt transfers (PETs), will be disregarded when calculating any IHT due on your death once you have survived seven years from the making of the gift. Gifts into trust can be considered up to your (unused) nil rate band of £325,000 without creating an IHT charge at lifetime rates. Regular gifts out of income which do not impinge on that needed to support your usual standard of living can be IHT exempt, even if made within seven years before death, and should be carefully recorded.

**NIL-RATE BAND**

The existing threshold at which IHT become due of £325,000 will remain fixed until 2020/21.

**YOUR MAIN RESIDENCE**

An additional nil-rate band will apply where a residence is passed on to descendants on death. It is intended to start in April 2017 at £100,000 and rise to £175,000 by 2020/21. Any unused nil-rate band can be transferred to a surviving spouse for use on their death. The new band only applies to properties used by the deceased as their own residence, so buy-to-let properties will not be covered. The additional band will be tapered away for estates worth more than £2m. Measures will be introduced to allow those who downsize or sell their homes before death to benefit from the increased inheritance tax bands.

**BUSINESS PROPERTY RELIEF**

With appropriate reviews of investment risks, shares in unquoted trading companies, including those listed on AIM, can qualify for business property relief once held for two years thereby effectively removing their value from your estate.

**PENSIONS**

Previously when your defined contribution pension was passed on following your death, before 75, it was subject to tax at 55%. You can, since April 2015, pass this on to anyone you choose, including non-dependents, free of tax. For people who die over the age of 75, their benefits can be passed on to anyone but will be subject to tax at 45%. Since April 2016 the rate of tax charged has been linked to the beneficiary's marginal rate of tax. Leaving a pension to your beneficiaries can therefore be an efficient way to pass on wealth and plan for grandchildren's school and university fees.

Katharine Arthur is head of tax at chartered accountants and tax advisers, haysmacintyre. She advises individuals, businesses and trusts on all aspects of tax compliance responsibilities and planning opportunities. Katharine is a member of the Taxation Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland. [www.haysmacintyre.com](http://www.haysmacintyre.com)

IHT planning, like all tax planning, must be tailored to suit your circumstances and requirements. ♦

COMMENT

# THE END OF HUMANITY: SYRIA AND THE MORAL DILEMMA

Michael Karam is a Lebanese author and journalist, who was until recently based in Beirut. His writings on politics, business, war and wine have appeared in The Spectator, The Times, Esquire, Decanter, and Monocle. In this article he brings profound insight into the impossibly tangled issues of the contemporary Middle East.

WORDS BY MICHAEL KARAM



As of 31 March 2016, Lebanon hosted 1,048,275 registered refugees from Syria, 53% of them are children

In early February, in a report published by Amnesty International with the rather dramatic title, Human Slaughterhouse, it was alleged that as many as 13,000 opponents of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad were secretly hanged at Saydnaya jail in Damascus. The executions took place over a five-year period, starting in 2011 as the country descended into civil war, and were carried out on orders from the highest level of the Syrian government. Saydnaya is one of the most dreaded detention centres in the whole of Syria. A guard interviewed by Amnesty call it "the end of humanity".

The hangings were reportedly held twice a week, between midnight and dawn, in batches of 50 after prisoners were given a summary, two-minute "trial". The regime, of course, denies everything. "The justice ministry condemns in the strongest terms what

was reported because it is not based on correct evidence but on personal emotions that aim to achieve well-known political goals," SANA, the Syrian national news agency, said in a statement.

So what are the "goals" in today's Syria? For the opposition, depending on who

women-rape and enslaving caliphate as the first phase of a plan for global Islamification.

For the regime, as we in the West like to call it (President Assad would argue that Syria is founded on genuine democratic principles), it is to beat

I asked the Swedish diplomat how long he gave the Assad regime. "Longer than we think, but not as long as he thinks," he winked.

you talk to, they range from the removal of the Assad regime; the holding of free and fair elections and the beginning of a new, democratic, prosperous and vibrant phase in the history of one of the world's oldest countries, to the establishment of a Wahabi-inspired head-chopping,

back and defeat the forces of Sunni fundamentalism that it claims is poised to engulf the region, and to do this it has embraced the help of its Cold War benefactor, Russia, its regional ally, Iran and a host of Shia mercenaries including battle-hardened Hezbollah



Asma al-Assad, the First Lady of Syria was born in London to Syrian parents and is married to the 19th and current President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad

fighters from neighboring Lebanon.

But the Syria conflict isn't just about a struggle for regime change or even the aspirations of a berserk and bloodthirsty religious movement. It isn't even about a powerful, corrupt, authoritarian dynasty desperately clinging to power. The Syrian civil war is also the main event in a regional Cold War between the Sunni, West-leaning,

course of this war.

Without bringing in any of the fringe players, such as Turkey and the Kurds (sworn enemies of each other and of the Islamic State), Mr. Trump will discover that if, as he has pledged, he does succeed in defeating ISIS, it will most likely see the perpetuity of a regime that if Amnesty international is to be believed, is guilty of mass murder and

other minorities, that the Assads have protected over the decades. To listen to them in the best restaurants of Beirut, London, New York, Paris and Istanbul is to understand first hand just how weird the conflict has become.

They will coo about how the President and his wife are such a modern couple who met the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 2002. They will point out that Asma, the first lady, was educated in the UK and was a successful banker before Bashar, himself a dapper, if geeky, former eye doctor, came a-wooing.

They will explain that the Middle East is a rough neighborhood that plays by different rules; that in Syria if you don't poke your nose into things that don't concern you, you'll do just fine; that the state was a model Arab nation in terms of social services and that the Assad family had massive approval ratings. It matters not one jot that all these points can be dismantled with ease; the fear of the Jihadist tsunami and the potential destruction of centuries of dynastic trading interests and religious freedom has forced them to see the world through a very unique lens.

In 2011, it was assumed the Assads would be gone in less than a year. It was

the use of chemical weapons on its own people. It would also strengthen Iran, the nation President Trump has singled out as the greatest threat to US interests and its allies in the Middle East.

This absence of moral clarity has also given those with most to lose an excuse to support the Assad regime. They include the Syria's small but hugely wealthy business elite, Christians and

### Saydnaya is one of the most dreaded detention centres in the whole of Syria. A guard interviewed by Amnesty call it "the end of humanity".

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the, Shia, Islamic Republic of Iran, an ally of an expansionist Russia. But as the new US President Donald Trump has just found out (and as the world discovered years ago) it is also a conflict of head-spinning contradictions and breathtaking hypocrisy. It will take more than 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles fired at an insignificant airbase to change the

a time we called the Arab Spring or the Arab Awakening. Dictators like Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Libya's Muamar Ghaddafi had all been deposed in one way or another. Why not the Assads?

Back then I lived in Beirut and roughly half of Lebanon waited feverishly for the moment the regime would crumble (three decades of occupation does that to you); while the other half feared his overthrow would

Syria, Jordan, Iraq and beyond, would suffer if it closed and the economy would take a hit. And then there was the question of what to do with the ever-increasing number of, mainly Sunni, Syrian refugees.

In those early days, the debate over Assad, the mild-mannered ophthalmologist who had been thrust into the role of heir apparent to his father, the mighty and uncompromising Hafez el Assad, after the death of his elder brother,

the nerdy Syrian President probably wasn't really the one calling the shots and that it was more likely his brother, Maher, along with the army command and Iranian advisors, who were quarterbacking the show. They felt, quite reasonably, that Bashar had to go if the region was to genuinely embrace democracy and realize its potential in terms of human rights and economic prosperity. My God we were so naïve.

But there was a reason to hope. This part of the Middle East was clearly in a state of flux, , democracy was the buzzword among a new generation of Arabs with access to cell phones and the Internet. And, let's not forget that in 2005 in the wake of the bloody assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, 1 million Lebanese, 25% of the population, had taken to the streets of Beirut to force the Syrian army out of Lebanon, ending a 29-year, often quite authoritarian, occupation that had cost the country dearly. If the fractured and partisan Lebanese could unite to pull that off then surely anything was possible.

But sadly not. Six years later Syria's sneeze has become a pandemic, the biggest refugee and displacement crisis since World War II, one that would shake European and US politics to their core; inspiring Right wing parties in France, Austria and Greece; influencing the UK's Brexit and helping none other than the ridiculous Donald Trump win the race for the White House on a wave of xenophobia, ignorance and paranoia. Meanwhile, ISIS has become global enemy no.1 after terror outrages in Paris, Nice, Berlin, Istanbul and Brussels.

That night in Beirut six years ago, I asked the Swedish diplomat how long he gave the embattled Assad regime. "Longer than we think, but not as long as he thinks," he said with a wink. We all laughed, ordered more drinks and relit our cigars. Yes indeed. Not tomorrow but soon enough.

But despite the death and destruction, the refugees and the brutality, the Assads now look like they will prevail. On the one hand we want them to win (or is it a case of we don't want them to lose?) because an ISIS victory in Syria too awful to contemplate and yet a regime that has allegedly used Sarin gas on its own people in two occasions, the most recent being in the town of Khan Sheikhun on April 4, is clearly beyond the pale by anyone's standards.

Assad will simply argue that he has done what is necessary to survive. Syria's war may soon force us to reset our moral compass. ♦

### Many Arabs see Assad as the only regional leader capable of stemming the Sunni extremism popping up in the Levant and North Africa.

mean another victory for the growing number of Sunni extremists in the region. All agreed that either way, when Syria sneezed Lebanon caught a cold, hence the new sense of anxiety that had gripped the country.

But as 2011 drew to close, I remember sitting in the bar at Beirut's Gabriel Hotel. The room was thick with the smoke from cigars and cigarettes. The inhabitants of the Lebanese capital decided long ago that they had more important concerns than the long term effects of tobacco. If it wasn't the deadly grind of the 1975 -1990 civil war, it was successive skirmishes with Israel, political upheaval, popular revolutions and attempted coups. That year, it had been the Syrian conflict and the

Bassil, veered between the idealistic and pragmatic. Those Lebanese with a pro-Syrian bent (and there were many who saw the country not only as a natural ally but as an historic extension of Lebanon) overlooked his less than tasteful methods because they felt he was the only regional leader capable of stemming the Sunni extremism that was popping up in the Levant and North Africa.

Indeed one only had to see what had happened to Iraq after the disastrous US-led invasion of 2003 to recognize that Saddam Hussein, whose ways of getting things done were also not to everyone's liking, had in fact been holding the balance rather well between Iraq's tribal and religious factions. When the Americans and the British

### His supporters will coo about how Assad and his wife are such a modern couple who met the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 2002.

way 2012 was looking, no one was considering giving up any time soon.)

I was with a group of friends including a senior Swedish diplomat based in Damascus who had just had just crossed over the Syrian-Lebanese border at Masnaa and was ready to see in the New Year Beirut style. The border was still open, but the fear back then was that Beirut's port, a vital transshipment hub for goods heading to

went in without a plan, disbanding the army and creating a vacuum, there was only going to be one outcome.

And then there were those in Lebanon, the region and the world, who saw the Assad regime for what it was – a ruthless crime family, slightly less bloodthirsty than Saddam and his psychotic sons, but more murderous than the urbane but wildly corrupt Mubaraks. It mattered not whether



Jacob Reese-Mogg in Boisdale of Belgravia reflecting on, "The symbolism of tradition, which provides an air of permanence in a transitory world"

COMMENT

# DON'T ROCK THE BOAT

Jacob Rees-Mogg argues that Britain's constitution, institutions and traditions have been a bulwark against violent change.

WORDS BY JACOB REES-MOGG

“A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation”. This view, expressed by Edmund Burke in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, is something Conservatives need to remember. There is always a need for moderate and modest alterations, otherwise that which ought to be preserved may be lost in a more thoroughgoing disruption. In historic terms, this applies to the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, while the United Kingdom has remained remarkably stable over centuries, accepting enormous cumulative change within the apparent confines of a steady constitution.

Avoiding rupture is a benefit to society in terms not only of prosperity but also of life itself. Revolutions almost always bring with them periods of terror as the new regime seeks to assert its authority, which may then lead to further revolutions. It damages commerce and people's standard of living by destroying rights of property and through the often-arbitrary confiscation of opponents' goods. A stable and steady polity can avoid this and last year was an example of how secure our constitution is. In a few weeks, the basis of British engagement abroad was turned upside down and the government was thrown out. This happened with widespread acceptance and the smoothness of the change was not even considered exceptional.

The evolution of our constitution and the traditions behind it create this stability. The buildings themselves where the various branches of the State are housed declare the permanence of our system. Westminster Hall is preeminent among all of them. Almost all visitors to the House Commons pass through this noble building and indeed it is one of the most uplifting and important structures in our island. Every major English political figure since the reign of William Rufus (1089-1100) has passed through it and every British one, probably from James I and VI (1603-1625) but certainly from the Act of Union in 1707.

The state trials of Thomas Moore and Charles I among others have been held there, coronation banquets until they stopped after the reign of George IV and

the lying in state of monarchs and other notables have all taken place there. Its walls breathe history and its famous hammer-beam roof from the reign of Richard II (1367-1400) looks down upon the mighty in all their transitory nature.

This structural statement of tradition links the current set of politicians to history and ought to remind them of their impermanence, again as Edmund Burke said in the House of Commons “individuals pass like shadows; but the commonwealth is fixed and stable”. Maintaining historic and splendid buildings not only honours the purpose of government, recognising that our constitution is a great one that should be cherished, but may also inculcate some degree of humility in today's participants.

Traditional activities are additionally useful in reminding people that practices accumulated over centuries

not what it is commanded to do.

What is true of proceedings is valid for appearances. Both the Lords and Commons have attendants whose uniforms illustrate the prestige of their activities. The doorkeepers have special badges and tailcoats; the clerks until now wear court dress and the Speaker used to be bewigged. All this matters because it shows what is occurring is important. The doorkeepers are protecting something special. They are not the store detectives in Grace Brothers; this would depersonalise them.

The authority of the clerks to rule on procedure comes partly from their learning but crucially from their office so that the figure sitting at the table in the Chamber at the House of Commons is not your friend but Mr Smith whose opinion on an essentially arguable matter is certain. Likewise the Speaker is independent from party affiliation

As Edmund Burke said in the House of Commons, “Individuals pass like shadows; but the Commonwealth is fixed and stable.”

had a purpose. Although this may be less obvious now, it could be a bulwark against a malevolent government in the future. When the Queen opens Parliament, the House of Commons makes two obscure statements to assert its independence. The first is well known: the door to the Chamber is slammed in the face of Black Rod who as the sovereign's messenger needs permission to enter. This has come to serve as a reminder of Charles I's attempt to arrest five members who disagreed with him and so it is an assertion of democratic liberty. The second symbolic act is to have the first reading of a bill on Outlawries before debating the Queen's Speech. The Commons will discuss what it chooses,

and has no views other than those of the Commons itself. He needs to set himself apart to maintain this dignity and to make it clear that the views of the former office holder are not those of the current incumbent.

To conclude once again with Edmund Burke “custom reconciles us to everything”. The familiar routine of a settled constitution allows for peaceful transitions of power in accordance with the majority will, while respecting established rights that minorities have developed. The symbolism of tradition assists this by providing an air of permanence in a transitory world. Energetic modernisation risks turning into revolution, which never benefits the broader population and rarely even the revolutionaries. ♦

COMMENT

# OFF YER' BIKE!

Nick Ferrari, LBC show host with 1.3 million daily listeners, argues that London's cycle lanes are not fit for purpose and will only cause aggravation, massive delays and unnecessary loss of life.

WORDS BY NICK FERRARI

**P**icture the scene: a dark, government issue Land Rover Discovery, bristling with state of the art technology that would enable the occupant in the back to watch live a drone strike on a terrorist camp in Raqqa, or make a totally secure call to anywhere in the world. The driver is trained in both the art of rapid convoy travel and high speed defensive driving that could see him reverse at speeds up to 90 miles an hour before performing a perfect U-turn by judicious use of the hand brake. Beside him sits a detective armed with a police issue Glock 17 revolver.

Meanwhile, in the back sits a distinctive figure. But beneath his world-famous and characteristic unruly blond mop, his face is growing redder by the second. Think of one of those big Spanish tomatoes with some icing on the top and you've got the picture. The reddening countenance belongs to our Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, and he's as frustrated as a spotty teenaged virgin unable to get even a snog at the high school dance. His anger and annoyance have been caused by just one thing, and he's far from alone. They've been blamed for businesses collapsing, moving or even closing down. Medical appointments have been missed, interviews for jobs have never taken place and countless relationships put in mortal jeopardy as partners and lovers have turned up so hideously late for dates that not even a bunch of flowers the size of a Great Dane or a bottle of the finest red have ameliorated the rightful fury.

"They" are the ghastly cycle lanes that have caused more damage to this city than anything imagined in the wildest dreams or expectations of a Luftwaffe pilot back in the days of the Second World War. They have also helped to take the speed with which traffic can get across London back to a pace unseen since the late 1800s. Yes, that's right. One of the busiest and greatest cities in Europe, if not the world, now has its business journeys being conducted at the speed of a horse and cart.

All this as residential and commercial building in London kicks in at a scale unseen since the times of Queen Victoria and the number of vans delivering for Amazon and all the other

delivery services continues to soar at an unprecedented rate. Factor in the unceasing explosion in the number of Uber cars with drivers flooding onto London's streets from just about every corner of the planet, and you can see that you've got a perfect storm being played out on a daily basis on the city's streets.

Million Bicycles In Beijing,' why doesn't she start counting in London? We surely can't be that far behind.

As with many things concerning government, whether central or local, the intentions behind it were entirely sound but it was the execution that has been flawed. Faced with a tragic increase



## Cycle lanes have helped to take the speed with which traffic can get across London back to a pace unseen since the late 1800s

So, just how did London, enjoying an economic boom many times larger than any of its European counterparts find itself jammed like a third world city, meaning the likelihood of being able to get to appointments on time is about the same as that of John Prescott becoming principal male lead for the Bolshoi Ballet. And if Katie Melua is looking for a follow up to her hit 'There Are Nine

in the number of cyclists being fatally injured on London's streets, which was also being outstripped by the additional rapid increase in the number of cyclists being seriously injured, urgent action was required. Carving off some of the road and painting it a different colour and with white lines serving as borders wasn't working. While we're on the subject of the painting of the road, why on earth did



Seen here are Boris Johnson and Boisdale Cigar Smoker of the Year 2015 winner, Arnold Schwarzenegger aboard 'Boris Bikes' in 2011. In 2015 David Cameron arrived late for the Spectator awards at the Savoy Hotel, telling the audience: "I apologise for being late, thanks to Boris's cycle lanes, London is virtually impossible to travel around by car."

they choose to paint it blue? For as any motorist knows, blue signifies motorways which, in turn, signifies hitting speeds of up to 70 miles an hour. It might be a subliminal thing, but where was the logic in splashing around a colour that denotes the fast lane of the M1?

Clearly something far more radical was required and a physical demarcation of the space for cyclists was deemed necessary, so the idea of cycle lanes was born. Then, the scheme moved to the construction side and planners had to figure out precisely where to place them.

This would prove to be the undoing of the £900 million cycle superhighway scheme. Because successive boroughs refused to allow the side roads under their jurisdiction to be used, then London Mayor Johnson and his team of cycling zealots were left with just the roads under their control: the once fast flowing highways responsible for keeping the city moving.

Cycling advocates delight in citing examples of the superb provision and planning of facilities for cyclists in a raft of other cities. They talk of Amsterdam and indeed most of the Netherlands as a free-wheeling nirvana, totally ignoring that even at its busiest, the average Dutch city is about as busy as Dawlish on a Sunday afternoon. They marvel at Manhattan, without pausing to remind themselves of the extraordinary width of the avenues and streets. Or they "ooh" and "aah" at a city such as Copenhagen, where, again, the boulevards are wider. If they love it so much, why don't they just bloody well move there!

London is an awkward, narrow, sprawling, ancient city whose roads have been built in piecemeal fashion. Make your way out to the west on the road towards Heathrow airport and you thunder alongside the river on roads that vary from two to three lanes of traffic. Suddenly, as you head close to Chelsea harbour you come across a tight, one lane, right-hander that wouldn't disgrace the Monaco Grand Prix. Buses, trucks, vans, taxis, cars, motorbikes and bicycles have to merge into one lane. And with the arrival of the east-west cycle superhighway cycle lane that runs along the Victoria Embankment from the City of London to parliament, this murderous merging can be seen ever more frequently.

Shortly before Johnson left the Mayoralty in the spring of 2016, he inaugurated the hugely significant route, running as it does alongside the Thames, past such historic landmarks as the Tower of London, the Palace of Westminster and close to the Monument. As Johnson, a keen cyclist, pedalled



In October last year Nick Ferrari held a race across London, pitting LBC reporters against each other in three different modes of transport. Pictured here is Charlotte Wright, who travelled by black cab and lost the race. In first place was Rachael Venables who took the Thames Clipper and Theo Usherwood who rode by horse & cart came second in the challenge.

along the new highway, he saw at first hand the wildly mixed emotions cycle lanes have the power to bring out of road users. Fellow cyclists whooped and hollered, while taxi and van drivers yelled abuse and gave him the sort of hand signals you'd be hard pushed to find in the Highway Code.

As more and more road space was given over to cycle lanes, an unexpected and dangerous psychological mindset developed among cyclists. Suddenly they felt empowered, as if the road belonged to them. Let's get this straight: the road belongs to everyone from a pedestrian on a crossing to the driver of the biggest juggernaut in the land. No one has, or should expect, preferential treatment. There must be mutual respect.

But these special lanes breed an unhealthy sense among many (note,

the last four days. This horrific statistic supports the argument that city planners are trying to squeeze too many cyclists on to too little road space. Put simply, there is not enough room.

At the same time, it is reported the City Hall coffers will be left £90 million short because not enough people are using the buses and tubes. With regular fare rises, it's little wonder that commuters have taken to two wheels, but the promises of future fare freezes now seem like pie crust promises: easy to make and easy to break.

This mix is as toxic as the poisonous London air. We're encouraging more and more people to take part in a potentially fatal experiment that has neither been fully thought through nor properly implemented. On some cycle lanes, the protection simply comes to



## As with many things concerning government, the intentions behind it were entirely sound but it was the execution that has been flawed

not all) cyclists that they are a special breed. Suddenly, some of the city's major highways started to resemble sections of the Tour de France as cyclists competed ruthlessly to try to beat each other. They downloaded apps that allowed them to compare each daily ride so they could try to shave seconds off their "record times."

As I write this, in the middle of February, it's been my grim duty to tell listeners to my daily LBC breakfast show that no fewer than three cyclists have been killed on London's roads in

an end and the cyclist is thrown back onto the regular road.

Back to that protected Land Rover and its occupant who looks out at those speeding past him in the cycle lanes he created and wishes he could be one of them, but knows he is not allowed due to the government position he holds. Soon something else will dawn on him. That his legacy as Mayor will be a network of cycle lanes which at the least choke our city, at the worst cause ceaseless harm. ♦



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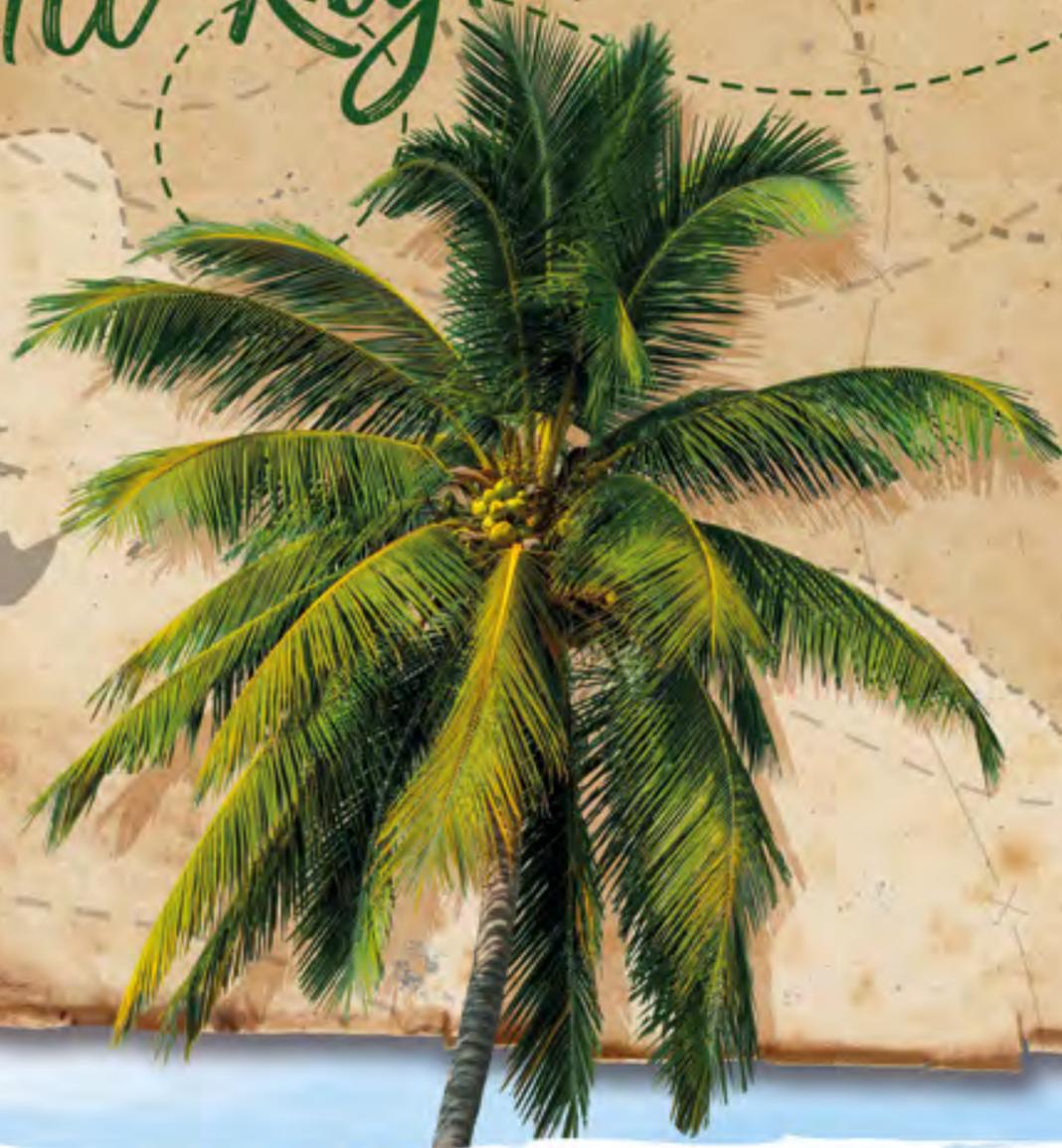


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COMMENT  
**THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF LAUGHTER**

British Libertarian campaigner Claire Fox goes after the joke police and takes no prisoners taking serious offense at being called offensive.

WORDS BY CLAIRE FOX



**Eddy:** 'Mother, are you still on the computer?'

**Gran:** 'Yes, dear. Sometimes you get into a porn loop and just can't get out.'

Whether we like it or not, we now have to think twice about when to laugh at or even tell jokes, at least without checking whether someone, somewhere, might...wait for it...“be offended”. When the likes of Dave Allen and Lenny Bruce broke the taboos of their day, they incurred the wrath of conservative prudes, politicians and the

with the slogan 'Drunk Lives Matter', a play on 'Black Lives Matter'. But I soon realised I had committed a sin against comedy correctness. There's been a huge furore about the shirt, denounced as 'racist and disgusting' for allegedly making fun of the 'brutal killings of an entire race of people'. Oh dear. Had I laughed inappropriately, unconsciously showing insensitivity to

*If we have to walk on eggshells and deconstruct every line of humour to check its political ramifications, we'll kill the joke.*

Church. Now it is liberal online activists, chattering classes, faux feminists and anti-racists who regularly use the outraged heckler's veto if you dare laugh at the wrong joke.

Admitting what makes you laugh can be a minefield once humour is caught up in endless “You can't laugh at that” controversies. Recently, I laughed when I saw someone wearing a t-shirt designed for a St Patrick's Day pubcrawl, emblazoned

black activists campaigning against police brutality in the US?

But when the complaints expanded to moans about the t-shirt stereotyping the Irish as drunken and implying St Patrick's Day is an excuse for 'debauchery and binge drinking', I felt less guilty and on surer ground. I'm from an Irish family, and have been known to use St Pat's Day as an excuse for the odd Guinness and tipple of Jameson's, and I'm not offended.

Surely – in these days of identity politics - laughing at ourselves, at our own identities, can't be considered a 'thought crime'? Don't be too sure: consider the ludicrous situation of the arrest of Tottenham Hotspur fans for a racially aggravated public-order offence because they call themselves (with a wry smile) the 'Yid Army'. Let's remember when black American comedian Reginald D Hunter was effectively accused of racism for an ironic use of the N-word at an after-dinner speech at the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) awards, resulting in the bizarre spectacle of the white PFA chair apologising for an anti-racist joke, told by a black comedian, to 'everyone who was offended – and everyone who wasn't'.

There is always more offence on the horizon. One irate Amazon reviewer wrote about the Drunk Lives Matters saga: “This shirt is...bigoted. It belittles two ethnic groups, the Irish and Blacks. It also makes fun of a disability called alcoholism.” And although I was also amused by another jokey Irish t-shirt reading 'Kiss Me, I'm Irish', but with the word 'Irish' crossed out and replaced with 'Drunk', it was attacked for trivialising the issue of rape. One feminist commentator, Carmella Farahbakhsh, explained that

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COMMENT

# THE CRUELTY OF CIVILIZATION

The mighty Bruce Anderson examines the precepts of civilization and reveals its true character in history and potential role for humanity going forward.

WORDS BY BRUCE ANDERSON



*Civilisation: A Personal View* by Kenneth Clark—was a television documentary series outlining the history of Western art, architecture and philosophy since the Dark Ages. The series was produced by the BBC and aired in 1969 on BBC2. The series is considered to be a landmark in British Television's broadcasting of the visual arts and was commissioned during Sir David Attenborough's controllership of BBC2.

Over a clubland drink, we all discovered that we had been reading the same book: James Stourton's biography of Kenneth Clark, who will always be known as Lord Clark of Civilisation. Entitled *Life, Art and Civilisation*, it is an excellent book on an engrossing theme. But it led on to an obvious question, which was hard to answer. Does civilisation in the sense of great art have much to do with civilised behaviour?

uncured animal hides. The Marquess went on his final journey with bronzes, ivories and pottery - now the Museum's contents - plus cloth and scrolls which have perished. All this is a testimony to an advanced state of civilisation.

But there was more. As a demonstration of his importance, and to arrive in style in the next world, the Grandee did not only want objects. He wanted followers. This took the form of twenty-four virgins, aged about fifteen. They were put into

The BBC is thinking of commissioning another series: *Civilisation Mark II*, as it were. Imagine the disputes. There would have to be women.

In addressing this, I thought of Wuhan. A city on the Yangtse River, it has an important museum. Yet the contents take one beyond art and aesthetics. It is also a monument to the paradoxes of the human condition. The art comes from the grave goods in the tomb of the Marquess Yi. This resplendent nobleman died around 430 BC, when we Brits were still at the stage of woad, rude huts and

their coffins alive: several girls to each coffin. So we can imagine the scene. In one room, the Wuhan equivalent of a chichi interior decorator would be touching up the gilding on the bronzes' high-relief work. Next door, some local hoods were bundling the girls into their coffins. To minimise any resistance, their arms and legs were broken. One wonders whether those entrusted with the gilding were able

to shut their ears to the screams. Even across millennia in which so many human lives were a cry of pain, it is not pleasant to contemplate those girls' final hours.

Wuhan is testimony to the advanced state of early Chinese civilisation. Like "culture," civilisation can be used in an anthropological sense. Yet it would always be implicit that such a civilisation would have a high culture: the sort of culture that Matthew Arnold saw as a first line of defence against barbarism. China did have such a culture, but this does not support the Arnold position. On the contrary, it should disabuse us of the notion that civilisation is anything to do with humane behaviour. Throughout history, great civilisation and great cruelty have found it easy to co-exist. We feel that civilisation ought to ennoble mankind; that it ought to be impossible for anyone to spend their working hours administering a death camp, and their evenings listening to Bach or Beethoven. Some men did. This is enough to turn one into a Manichean. It certainly makes an almost conclusive case for the doctrine of original sin.

It also illustrates another facet of civilisation. It can be a form of escapism. The death-camp attendants may have used music to distance themselves from the horrors of their daily routine: as a way of persuading themselves that they had a private personality, untainted by evil. Just so, the Chinese mandarin class often used art as a means of insulating themselves from the pullulating chaos of Chinese life. Within their walls, everything could be regulated, even down to the way the trees were pruned: the way that their wives' feet were allowed to grow. The husbands of the girls with bound feet were often connoisseurs who patronised artists and wrote verses. Equally, the art which they enjoyed, especially the scrolls and the pottery, often had a miniaturised quality, as if the master of the household had been trying to create an enclosed world in which he had total control. But he would always have known that if the wheel turned in the wrong direction and his enemies took power in Beijing, he would be flying for his life - if he got away in time. Art may have been a consolation. It was not a defence against original sin.

Nearly 2500 years after the Marquess Yi, "original sin" leads us to the BBC, and to another paradox. Anyone who takes the Matthew Arnold view of high culture ought to regard television as an implacable foe, with its relentless dumbing down and its distaste for any hierarchy of value judgments. But in the mid-Sixties, BBC2 wanted an *éclat* to celebrate the advent of colour television. David Attenborough

had an inspiration: a series on civilisation, presented by Kenneth Clark. It was a brilliant idea, which became as successful as it deserved. Yet even in that era, when deference had not entirely vanished, it was a controversial choice. Already knighted, Clark was rich and patrician. As an art historian, a curator, an aesthete and a collector, he was immersed in old European high culture. Although he took some interest in Chinese and Japanese art, to him Western art was central. That reflected itself in the thirteen programmes. Sir Kenneth was his own curator.

He started at the end of the Dark Ages, when mankind had escaped cultural destruction by the skin of its teeth. He then delighted in the high points of the gradual recovery, when the classics and Christianity came together, to provide the inspiration and the techniques for new masterpieces. It made wonderful television. At a time when travel was harder, the camera took fresh audiences to fresh delights and broader horizons. Few television series have ever received so much praise. Even the Sun, admittedly less vulgar in those days, described Clark as "The Gibbon of the McLuhan age." But throughout, there was an implicit assumption: the superiority of Western civilisation. Clark also believed in heroic individuals: the world-historical artists who conquered new frontiers and reinvigorated the Western tradition. In those days, everyone took it for granted that those individuals would be men. If Sir Kenneth had been accused of concentrating on dead white European males, he would have been bewildered - that anyone should have felt the need to make such a plonking statement of the obvious. Such dead males were the coral reef of great art.

As James Stourton makes clear in his book, Clark would not have believed that life was worth living without art and civilisation, which he would have regarded as symbiotic, if not indeed synonymous. Throughout his life, he assumed that there must be a connection between civilisation and social improvement. He also felt that it should be possible to prove that artistic greatness was based on objective criteria, not personal preference. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism and an irritating fellow, believed that it all depended on pleasure. The quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin was as good as poetry. Those who claimed that their pleasures were more refined because of their superior taste were combining snobbery with irrelevance. All that mattered was the greatest happiness of the greatest number.



Wuhan is the capital of Hubei province, China, and is the most populous city in Central China, with 10,607,700 people as of 2015. Seen here both 'new' and 'old' civilization - in the foreground is the Yellow Crane Tower (黄鹤楼) constructed AD 223, on the Wuchang side of the Yangtze River.

This was not good enough for Clark. Marx described Bentham as "that facile, leather-tongued oracle of the ordinary bourgeois intelligence." Clark would probably have regarded that as unfair to the bourgeoisie. Partly in order to refute Bentham and other Philistines, he was interested in the philosophy of art. Few men have ever responded to great art with his level of intensity. In humble worship, he wanted to justify the ways of art to man, just as a Christian would have wanted to exalt his creed. Then again, modern Christians have given up trying to prove the existence of God and are content to rest their belief on faith. That was not enough for Clark. He did not merely wish to assert that beauty is truth. He wanted to prove it. Yet he never wrote the book. This may have been because he allowed himself to be distracted by public duties. In his day, he was just about the highest-ranking member of the Great and the Good. But there are those who think that he might have sought all those posts and committee memberships, because he subconsciously knew that the philosophical challenge was beyond him.

It may be beyond everyone. Perhaps there is only one solution: to place one's faith in the canon. The collective judgments of learned aesthetes down the centuries have surely established a title to authority. Living and dead, they constitute an artistic academy. Back in the 1960s, that was good enough even for the BBC. The choice of Kenneth Clark as civilisation's spokesman was

a mighty tribute to the canon. It was almost certainly also a final one. The BBC is thinking of commissioning another series: *Civilisation Mark 11*, as it were. So imagine the disputes. There would have to be women. There would have to be racial and sexual minorities: the more clamorous the minority, the more it would force its way on to the screen. We would end up with the whole gamut of LGBH, or whatever. Nor could it be Euro-centric - and as for value judgments. Some tribe, a thousand miles up the Amazon, whom our recent forbears would have described as savages, but who have learned to sharpen pieces of bone to adorn their nostrils: how dare some public school and Oxbridge white male have the nerve to say that their pieces of bone do not belong in a programme about civilisation?

I suspect that the programmes will never be made. But if only cameras were admitted to the planning sessions, there could be the richest material for a comedy series. So no second *Civilisation* - any more than there will be an answer to the question which troubled Kenneth Clark, and has vexed many others. Those who take a reverent pleasure from art, and its combination of the spiritual and the sensual, often join him in wondering why personal uplift cannot be transmuted into social benefaction. Anyone tempted to an optimistic answer should remember that we could ask the same question in Wuhan, or in Nazi Germany. We may be forced to conclude that art is a palliative, not a cure. ♦

COMMENT

# JOBS FOR THE BOYS

Award winning economist Roger Bootle explains why we should seriously worry about how much senior corporate executives earn.

WORDS BY ROGER BOOTLE  
CHAIRMAN, CAPITAL ECONOMICS



I suppose we all have an idea of people or professions that earn – or at least receive – more money than they deserve. My own favourite candidates include lawyers, estate agents and headhunters. Other people may well want to include economists although, for obvious reasons, I am unable to add the followers of that humble calling to my list.

One group that has come in for special attention over recent years is senior corporate executives – and particularly chief executives. The average CEO of a FTSE 100 company now earns – sorry, “takes home” – between £4 and £5 million a year. You might think that that is a sum well worth getting out of bed for. However, this pales into insignificance compared to senior executive rewards in the United States.

Why does this matter? To be fair, lots of people think it doesn't, including

parts of the Conservative-leaning press, which often argues that such rewards pose no significant issues for the rest of us. Sometimes they claim that such executives are paid so lavishly simply because their contributions to the companies that employ them is so enormous. In that case, why shouldn't their companies' pay them so well and why should we, who are the beneficiaries of successful companies' activities, be at all perturbed?

In any case, it is up to their owners, and not the rest of us, to assess the value of senior executives and to pay them accordingly. In other words, it is simply none of our business.

I think that this view is fundamentally misguided. In the market economy all sorts of things happen which would not strike a fair-minded person as desirable or justifiable. But outcomes that are outrageously out of kilter with

underlying reality or rough conceptions of fairness are not the norm. And when they occur, the market mechanism tends to cut them short.

The size and ubiquity of unjustifiable market outcomes has a key bearing on whether and how much popular opinion supports the capitalist system. In my view, during and after the financial crisis we came perilously close to a point where public tolerance was about to snap. This really matters. If support for capitalism falters, we will end up with socialism. That would mean lower pay for chief executives, all right. But it would also mean lower pay for everybody else too.

In practice, it is extremely difficult to measure the contribution of a chief executive. It is common to look at the progress of the company during the executive's tenure as some sort of guide to what he or she has achieved. What has

happened to sales, profits or the share price are commonly used yardsticks. But as we all know from other walks of life, just because someone is there when the good news appears does not necessarily mean that they themselves are responsible for it.

Nor is pay determined in anything that could remotely be called a market. Big companies decide on senior executive pay as the result of the deliberations of a remuneration committee that consists of other executives from inside the firm and

then it should be quite ok if the business loses them. There is a huge supply of executives ready and willing to step into their shoes.

The enormous sums paid to CEOs are the sort of rewards that in the past would normally have accrued only to entrepreneurs who might have risked everything to build their businesses. Now they are falling into the laps of mere corporate functionaries who have managed to climb the corporate ladder. Once there, they have all the corporate

Big companies decide on senior executive pay as the result of the deliberations of a remuneration committee that consists of other executives from inside the firm.

outside, nearly all of whom will come from the same coterie and will often sit on the boards of other such companies. My old friends, Sir Timothy Whatnot and Dame Eleanor Flibbertygibbet, are unlikely to rock the boat.

They are often aided in their deliberations by the services of firms of Remuneration Consultants who supply data about pay practices in other comparable businesses, broken down into four quartiles. It is common for such

apparatus around them to enable them to ooze competence and a sense of gravitas. In practice, however, often they have risen without trace.

Fairness – and the perception of it – are one thing. But as an economist I am especially interested in efficiency and production. My fellow economist, Andrew Smithers, reckons that the move towards share price-based systems of executive remuneration in the United States and the UK over the

The average CEO of a FTSE 100 company now earns – sorry, “takes home” – between £4 and £5 million a year.

consultants to ask the board whether they would want their CEO to be paid anything other than in the top quartile. They usually don't. You don't need to be Warren Buffet to work out that if all companies are trying to get their CEO to be paid in the top quartile then, although they won't all succeed, executive pay will continue to soar.

It is often alleged that it is necessary to pay chief executives these mouth-watering sums because if they are not so paid then said executives will leave and the company will thereby lose their services. This is a very weak argument. If a CEO is being paid far more than their real contribution to the business

last 30 years is primarily responsible for those countries' sluggish economic performance. If you gear chief executives' remuneration to the share price, this will incentivise short-term behaviour that tends to boost that price; equally, it will disincentivise long-term investment whose benefits will only show up some way into the future, long after said executive has moved into his perhaps not so well-earned retirement.

The aggregate numbers tell you that in both the US and the UK, fixed investment as a share of GDP has been pitifully low. Low investment means low rates of productivity growth. With

low productivity growth it is bound to follow that average real incomes will grow only slowly.

These problems are comparatively recent in the evolution of capitalism. They didn't occur in the classic early stage of the Industrial Revolution. For those top-hatted Victorian entrepreneurs who so often feature in the socialist rogues gallery but who, I think, ought to be objects of admiration, there was no conflict between ownership and management. They filled both roles. If they paid themselves “too much”, this money would come from themselves. By contrast, today's executives are in conflict with the long-term interests of shareholders and the economy as a whole.

Things are not bound to stay this way. Institutional investors are coming to recognise their responsibilities in relation to executive pay. Over the next few years I expect to see their influence brought to bear such that, at the very least, senior executive pay stops rising at these ridiculously inflated rates. But it may take more than this actually to bring such pay down. This could well require changes in capital gains tax to tax assets held for short periods more heavily, and also changes to the rights of shareholders to receive dividends and to vote.

If you are familiar with my writings, I doubt that you will have thought of me as a socialist firebrand. You'd be right. If it comes to the revolution you won't find me at the barricades. In fact, you are likely to find me ensconced in Boisdale enjoying my favourite tippie. My intense concern about senior executive pay is not because I disapprove of, let alone hate, the market economy, but actually the reverse. I don't see these ludicrously high rewards as being the outcome of a market process in any realistic way. Rather, they emerge from the dealings of a club of like-minded and like-interested people.

I wish there was someone on these remuneration committees who was prepared to say that they thought it was appropriate that their CEO should be in the fourth quartile and that they wouldn't mind if the current incumbent decided to seek their fortune elsewhere because there were plenty of other candidates available who would do at least as good a job for a fraction of the money.

I would willingly volunteer my services for this role. But, as you may have guessed, with views like mine, I haven't exactly been inundated with offers of board directorships at major companies. I suspect that as I move into my anecdotal age, I am just going to have to spend more time having fun, with or without the barricades. ♦

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## SIZE DOESN'T REALLY MATTER

You don't need a satellite dish on your wrist to cut a dash argues Michael Karam.

WORDS BY MICHAEL KARAM

Today's men – from astronauts to hedge fund managers – love their watches. And you can't really blame them. A watch is one of the few ways a man can express himself. And they're getting bigger, as big as 50mm in diameter. Hublot, Ball and Panerai are known for their oversize creations, but if we are being honest all the famous and venerable watchmakers, without exception, have added more than a few millimetres to their watches. In today's world, the bigger the watch, the bigger the statement... or so the manufacturers would have us believe.

But it was never always thus. In 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary climbed Mount Everest wearing a 1950 Rolex Oyster Perpetual,

the ancestor of what would be the Rolex Explorer, a timepiece with a modest 36mm diameter. Just over a decade earlier Battle of Britain pilots probably wore even smaller watches as they sprinted to their Hurricanes.

When, in 1953, Rolex launched the Submariner, arguably the most masculine timepiece ever made and designed for professional divers to operate at skull crushing depths, even that came in at a shade under 40mm, a size that today is entry-level for a chap looking to cut a dash.

So in a bid to assuage status anxiety, Boisdale Life has chosen ten "smaller" watches – 40mm and under – for the chap who instinctively knows that size really doesn't matter. ♦

ROLEX SUBMARINER  
40 mm



The most famous watch in the world? Only the Omega Speedmaster comes close, and like the "Moonwatch", the Submariner has changed very little since it was introduced in 1953 with a 39mm diameter. Contrary to what most watch fans might think, Rolex followed Omega, Panerai and Blancpain in producing a decent dive watch but the Submariner remains the most famous. It's a sports watch that has transcended its purpose and is worn under the cuff of a dinner jacket as often as it is strapped to a wet suit. We have gone for the non-date model, which is faithful to the original design – the "Cyclops" magnifier was added in the late 60s.

RRP £5,450

JAEGER-LECOULTRE RESERVE DE MARCHÉ  
39 mm



Jaeger-LeCoultre is probably better known for the famous Reverso, the watch that could be turned inside out to avoid being bashed by a polo mallet. But JLC also has the exciting master series, which gives us among others the achingly beautiful Reserve de Marche complication with its understated lines, hour zephyrs, power reserve needle, date dial, internal second hand and "exhibition" caseback. N.B. Until a few years ago, it was 37mm, but JLC clearly felt that two more millimetres would have greater appeal to modern consumers.

RRP £6,950

**OMEGA SPEEDMASTER**  
39mm



The early Speedmasters, worn on almost every lunar mission, were a few millimeters smaller in diameter than the current 41mm model. This “special numbered” edition is a pleasing 39mm and released to commemorate the very first “Speedy” worn by astronaut Wally Schirra during his Mercury Atlas 8 mission in October, 1962. It has the same manual movement as the Speedmaster Professional but this one comes with a scratch sapphire crystal that consumers might prefer to the more Hesalite crystal designed to not shatter in space but which is prone to scratches on Earth.

RRP £3,520

**PATEK PHILIPPE AQUANAUT**  
39mm



Patek, quite simply the gold standard of watchmaking, are more known for their ‘boardroom watches: Calatravas, moonphase chronographs and those rarities, which achieve eye watering sums at auction. The Aquanaut is for the man, or woman, who thinks the Submariner is simply too butch and is clearly one of the company’s more “fun” models. Yet it reflects Patek’s gravitas without neglecting any of its more functional credentials. PS Those looking for a more sober Patek should consider a Calatrava, a watch that reassuringly doesn’t stray above 38mm.

RRP £13,750

**AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK**  
37mm



Time for a bit of jet set bling. The Audemars Piguet Royal Oak is another classic design, created by Gerald Genta and first launched in early 70s as the company’s last roll of the dice to avoid bankruptcy during what was known as the “quartz crisis”. This version, with the iconic “dive helmet” bezel, has an 18-carat gold case; gorgeous blue dial with the famous hobnail or Grande Tapisserie pattern, a sapphire crystal and “exhibition” caseback. Oh and it’s waterproof to 50 meters if you fall overboard.

RRP £13,750

**IWC PILOT**  
36mm



Levison Wood wore the 46mm big brother on his travels across the Himalayas but this is the descendant of the watches on which IWC built its reputation back in 1936 with some of the first timepieces designed especially for pilots. It is beautifully crafted, adorned with delicious propeller hands, an in-house automatic movement with a 42-hour power reserve and slate grey dial on a brown strap with the ever popular a deployment buckle. Stylish, understated, versatile and not at all “shouty”.

RRP £3,490

**TAG HEUER CARRERA**  
39mm



Created by Jack Heuer and launched in 1963, the Carrera’s clean lines are what makes it ultra-versatile. We also like the blue dial with rose gold hands, which gives the model a hint of Riviera swagger. Tag Heuer is a company that is rooted in sport, motoring in particular – Steve McQueen made the square Monaco a collectors’ favorite – and it could have gone nuts making watches that resemble Jodrell Bank. But, while not totally ignoring the trend for bigger watches, it has remained faithful to its heritage.

RRP £1,500

**BREITLING TRANSOCEAN**  
38mm



Breitling is known for watches that resemble chunks of space debris. One model, the aptly named Emergency, has a personal locator beacon should the owner have ditched in the ocean; got lost in the jungle or is simply too pissed to find his way home. Elsewhere, the iconic Navitimer was a pleasing 38mm when it was launched in the late 50s. Today the watch beloved by stunt pilots and Saudi teenagers weighs in at a whopping 47mm. A sign of the times if ever there was and this is why we love the love the relatively modest Transocean 38mm with a midnight blue dial, automatic chronograph function and mesh strap that oozes 60’s Riviera appeal. Now, where’s my Riva launch?

RRP £5,100

**TUDOR BLACK BAY**  
36mm



Tudor has arguably come up with the most exciting range of watches in recent years stepping out of the shadow of its parent company Rolex. That said, Tudor is not shy where when there is heritage to be mined and this functional watch with the lovely snowflake hands is a nod to the early Rolex Explorers, especially the Ref 1016. It was deemed ‘Watch of the Fair’ at Basel 2016 by Hodinkee, the online watch mag and perfect for those who want a understated perfectly proportioned and durable watch that does nothing but tell the time well.

RRP £1,940



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**PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST**

Intrepid bon vivant journalist Matthew Bell visits Charles Cecil, the American painter and art historian, at his Florence atelier.

WORDS BY MATTHEW BELL



American painter and art historian Charles H. Cecil in his studios in Florence

Velazquez. At a time in the art world when novelty is often prized over beauty, it is reassuring to step into his studio in Florence, in a converted monastery on Borgo San Frediano, and witness young apprentices diligently learning the craft of life-drawing.

Charles Cecil is an American raised in Boston. He moved to Florence as a young man, and has never left. You will see him, if you spend any length of time there, darting around the city on his bicycle or lunching at one of his regular haunts. Every Thursday, he gives a lecture on a different subject, delivered with panache and much chaotic to-ing and fro-ing of slides. He is the far side of 70, but his demeanour is that of a young man: puppyish, energetic and endlessly enthused. A raffish sweep of hair gives him the aura of a Hollywood idol. No wonder so many of the porcelain-skinned English roses who study here fall slightly in love with him.

But they fall not just for the man, but for the opportunity his school provides: to study in the tradition of all the great artists, from Da Vinci to Titian to Reynolds. That, and the chance to live and work in one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is no coincidence Cecil is based in Florence, birthplace of the Renaissance. This is the city where Giotto experimented with perspective and where Michelangelo trained in the workshops of Ghirlandaio. It is also the city where Sargent was born (to American parents) and later returned to study.

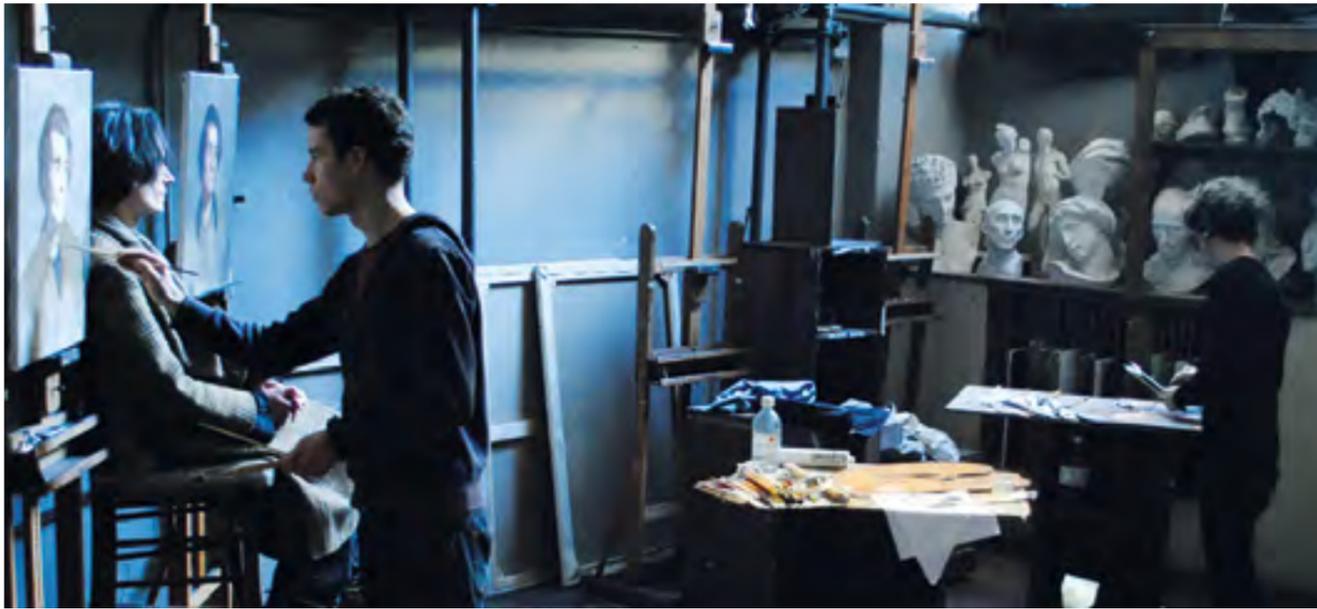
The links between Cecil and Sargent are remarkable. Charles studied in Boston in the 1970s under R.H.Ives Gammell, who in turn, 45 years before, had known Sargent. "Gammell was born in 1893!" exclaims Charles as we sit down to lunch. "He was old when he taught me, but that direct link to Sargent is there." The method that Sargent practised, and which Cecil teaches today, is called sight-size. It requires the artist to periodically stand back from the easel as he or she is working, so that the drawing or painting appears the same size as the subject when viewed together from a distance.

When Charles opened his studio in

If you have ever visited London's National Portrait Gallery, you will have gazed upon the work of some of the world's greatest painters. Thomas Gainsborough, John Singer Sargent, Sir Henry Raeburn – all are represented here. You may also have noticed some more contemporary works, like the double portrait of Princes William and Harry by Nicky Phillips, or even her painting of Paddy Renouf, Boisdale

Life's own Editor-at-large. And you may have spotted a link between old and new, a consistency in style and technique.

You would be right. That link is Charles Cecil, a cult figure in the art world, whose teaching of traditional methods has produced some of the finest artists of modern times. And yet, there is nothing modern about his technique. It looks defiantly towards the past, to the studios of Van Dyck, Reynolds and



Students hard at work in the Charles H. Cecil Studios occupying the most historic Florentine atelier still in active use, the studio offers training in classical techniques of drawing and oil painting

1982, nobody else was practising the sight-size technique. Today, there are several schools across Florence offering similar courses. Chief among them is the Florence Academy, founded in

The Florence Academy is the larger of the two, and lies some way out of town. The Charles Cecil Studios are in two sites in the centre and much smaller, taking only two dozen pupils per year. The idea is

From the street you would hardly know it was there, but step inside and you enter a world of soaring dark studios, illuminated in that flat north-facing light so beloved of artists. Curiously enough, Charles's great-grandfather visited the studio during a visit to Florence in 1908, as he recorded in his diary: "Took a trip up to San Miniato, for fine view of city. Then visited Romanelli's sculpture studio and introduced to Romanelli, the great sculptor of Florence... He is fifty-two years old, very affable and simple in his habits and manners, and has a great liking for Americans, whom he is always glad to meet."

It is hard not to fall for Cecil's charms: try to buy him lunch and he steadfastly refuses. He is greeted like a family member at Cambio, his local restaurant. He was married for 18 years, but is presently single, or at least, ostensibly so. He maintains his youthful aura by spending time among young people.

To be a student of Charles Cecil is not cheap: fees are 3600 euros per term. But unlike many British art schools, where students are left to their own devices for much of the time, tuition at Charles Cecil is daily, running from 9am to 4 pm every day, with a one-hour break for lunch. It means that a lot can be achieved in a week. The academic year runs like a university, from October to June, and students are encouraged to dedicate three or four years to their apprenticeships, though it is possible to visit for just a term. Being a small privately-run enterprise means that no money is wasted on unnecessary

1991 by Daniel Graves, Charles's former business partner. Also an American, Graves at the same time as Cecil started out in Florence, running what was then the Cecil-Graves studios. But after seven years, they parted company, and

to simulate the master-pupil relationships of artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, who studied as a pupil of Verrocchio alongside Sandro Botticelli. "We're a private atelier, not a school, and as such we are not bound by a curriculum," he

went their separate ways. To say they are rivals might be to push the point, but there is certainly something of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines in the way their two schools have staked out opposite ends of the city.

explains. "It creates a very particular and intense environment."

Part of the charm of his school is the building itself, which he shares with the show-room and studios of Romanelli, a family firm of cast-makers.

Some students have barely picked up a pencil before enrolling, and emerge producing work of startling technical ability.

Artists who have passed through Charles Cecil in recent years include Nicky Phillips, Bella Watling, Vanessa Garwood, Freya Wood and Hugo Wilson.

administration. It also means that if students ever fall on hard times, Cecil can find ways to keep them on, such as employing them as studio assistants. He is like a master craftsman, with his school of devoted apprentices. And he is old-fashioned in other ways: he enjoys a drink at lunch-time, he eschews technology, his mobile phone is an ancient relic and you won't find him on Instagram. He would be just at home in a novel by Henry James or E. M. Forster - the cultured American abroad.

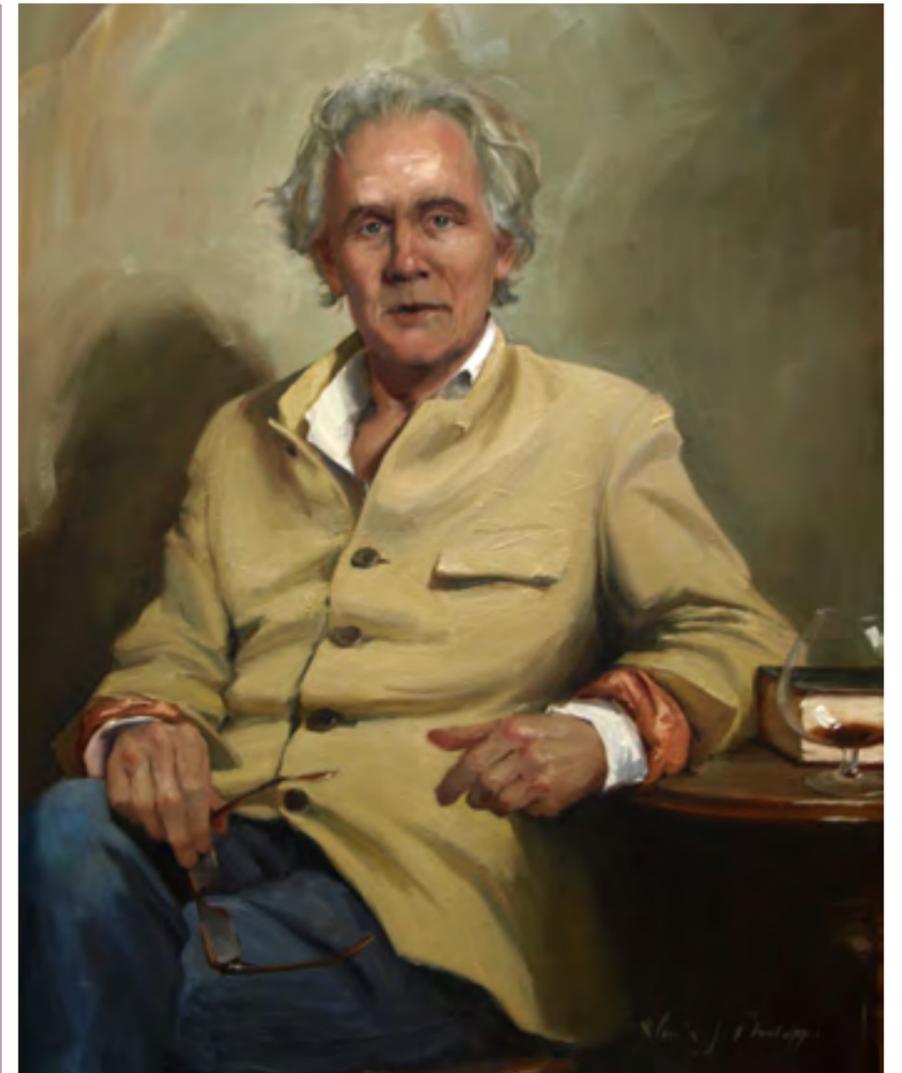
Artists who have passed through Charles Cecil in recent years include Nicky Phillips, Bella Watling, Vanessa Garwood, Freya Wood and Hugo Wilson. Their works regularly sell for thousands, and even if their styles have diversified away from classical realism, all were attracted by the idea of being taught the rudiments of 'proper' drawing. As Wilson told the Daily Telegraph when he was nominated for the prestigious BP Portrait Awards: "I went to the Cecil Studios because very few English art schools could teach me how to draw and paint. Most of them are still teaching conceptual art."

This is the point that Cecil makes time and again, of the need for all artists to be grounded in rigorous technical training, whatever they go on to do. But he is not without his critics. There are those who deride the Charles Cecil approach - and end-product - as too rigid and uniform, extinguishing the creative spark of the artist as an individual. Others say it is a finishing school for girls who want to float around Florence. What is undeniable is that everyone who attends a Charles Cecil course comes out being able to draw. Some students have barely picked up a pencil before enrolling, and emerge producing work of startling technical ability.

Cecil does not demur from defending his backwards-looking stance.

He was married for 18 years, but is presently single, or at least, ostensibly so. He maintains his youthful aura by spending time among young people.

"A sight-size portrait is not static or photographic," he says. "It is characterized by a freedom of brushwork that comes into focus when observed from afar. Rather than restrict artistry, it liberates individual expression." When Sargent died, in 1925, he was



A portrait of Paddy Renouf (Boisdale Life Editor-at-Large), by Nicky Philipps, on display at the National Portrait Gallery

considered out of date, an anachronistic relic of another age. Impressionism then Fauvism then Cubism had captured the zeitgeist, while Sargent, much derided, soldiered on like an old Victorian,

are more schools teaching the method than when he started says something about the appetite for returning to old-fashioned methods. Talking to Cecil, it is touching to see how strongly he feels his calling in life is to pass on the sight-size technique. "I would like to think that some of my students might carry on my work, and teach future generations of artists how to draw," he says.

Emerging from his studio into the daylight, one can't help marvel at how Cecil has ridden against the tide, carefully restoring the rule books that art teachers have for years been tearing up. His dedication has paid off, as the success of his school and pupils attests. Should you find yourself wandering around the National Portrait Gallery in years to come, or even centuries from now, I have no doubt you will find yourself gazing upon the work of a pupil of the great Charles Cecil. ♦

producing watercolours, portraits and landscapes. It was thanks to Gammell, after the war, that the life-size technique was revived, and thanks to Cecil now that it continues.

Cecil has been banging his drum for 35 years, and the fact that there

## LIVING IN LA LA LAND

Richard Godwin transplants to Los Angeles, the city that conforms to its own clichés.

WORDS BY RICHARD GODWIN



When you put it about among your friends and acquaintances that you're moving to Los Angeles, you tend to receive two responses: condescension and/or jealousy.

Condescension because there is a certain British snobbery that always attaches itself to Los Angeles, city of stars, cars and spontaneous big-band musical numbers straddling five-lane freeways (La La Land was a documentary, didn't you realise?) Hell, there is a certain American snobbery that attaches itself to Los Angeles - which most of the rest of the United States sees as a licentious suntrap of botox and socialism.

"The thing about L.A. that you have to understand is that everyone here believes their own bullshit," as one New York transplant put it. But then again, L.A. is full of New York transplants. And it's also full of British transplants, and French

transplants, and Brazilian transplants, and pretty much every kind of transplant you could hope to go boogie-boarding with. So there must be something in the bullshit. It's good fertilizer, bullshit.

Jealousy because I'm afraid that the episode of Fawlty Towers with the American tourist couple is correct. It's sunny here an obscene amount of the time; it's full of hot bodies in yoga-wear and you can literally go skiing in the morning and surfing in the afternoon (though to be fair, it is awfully tiring). Simply spending a couple of hours around Venice Beach will enhance your Instagram feed by a factor of 100. Oh look, a palm tree silhouetted against the Hollywood sign. Check it out! It's a wannabe model taking a selfie on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Check it out! It's wannabe model taking a selfie on Abbot Kinney Blvd. Check it out! It's a wannabe model taking a selfie on Abbot-Kinney

Bld. So deeply embedded is the city's iconography, you can point an iPhone and the crummiest donut joint and it looks like something from a Quentin Tarantino movie.

The truth is L.A. conforms to its own clichés so willingly, it's almost quaint. I am yet to visit an L.A. home that doesn't contain at least a few crystals with apparently mystical properties. People have fairly gross dogs that they expect you to find cute. Everyone walks around with a cup of liquid in their hand and the contents of the cups form a de facto class system (from the reliably blue-collar Gatorade up through Taco Bell soda, Arrowhead water, Starbucks coffee, Intelligentsia coffee, cold-pressed kale juice, micro-brewed kombucha, turmeric and macadamia latte. It is illegal to drink alcohol in any public place, so people put a lot of thought into their non-alcoholic drinks).

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You will also meet lots of people in – or more likely, trying to get into – the film business. All the Uber drivers are wannabe actors; all the people you thought were intimidatingly successful jangle with insecurity and I once saw Jesse from Breaking Bad in Chateau Marmont. Also, if you hang around in the sort of place you can buy a turmeric and macadamia latté (\$5 from Go Get Em Tiger on Larchmont Blvd, delicious) you’ll find an assortment of writing duos, discussing

On the table next to me, three women are eating avocado on toast at a table arrayed with jewelry. I think they’ve brought the jewelry here to sell to someone, possibly each other, possibly to someone attending the Oscars. One of them is talking about her healer. Healers are the new therapists. This particular healer encouraged her to sway backwards and forwards in order to reveal her aura. The aura revealed that there was a lot of tension in her life right now. Another

of walking five minutes to buy a pint of milk is an anathema and pedestrians fall somewhere between terrorists and Mel Gibson in the popular imagination. No, you must drive 15 minutes to buy a gallon of milk. Then afterwards spend a further 15 minutes trying to park. The whole business of driving takes on the status of the weather in Britain - the predictable but unpredictable fluctuations of traffic, the reliable conundrum of where to park and the specific combination of freeways the reliable points of commonality.

In L.A.’s defence, the municipal authorities have cottoned on to the fact that climate change is bad and a functional public transport system is not a sign of weakness. And there are advantages to spending lots of time in the car. It’s convenient. It’s picturesque. Almost any song that comes on the radio sounds cool with an L.A. backdrop. What remains surprising to me is why everyone still drives as if they’re Alicia Silverstone in Clueless when they spend so long in their cars. The daily traffic reports are apocalyptic: “We got a fender bender on the 405 coming out of the Valley; there’s a truck fire taking up three lanes of the 110 and what looks like a rapture happening on Sunset Boulevard and La Brea.”

Once you’ve seen how people drive these daily horrors are unsurprising. Need to send a text message? Why not do so at a seven-lane intersection! Nasal hair getting a little long? Why not trim it at 70mph while consulting Google Maps! And the general carnage is not helped by some eccentric traffic rules. You’re allowed to turn right on a red light for some reason – and yet, if you turn right on green, you’re liable to run into all the pedestrians also crossing on green. If you slow down to be sure you don’t, for example, kill a family of four, the person behind you is liable to honk at you. In fact, if you cause anyone else to so much as touch the brake: HONK. HONK. HONK. “Asshole!” To retain sanity, you must imagine that anyone honking you is simply saying hi! Thanks for driving safely!

Then there are the surprises. L.A. has some of the best public libraries and book shops I’ve ever been to. It has a peerless radio station, KCRW – sort of like Radio 4 with amazing playlist instead of the embarrassing radio plays – and fantastic museums. While it has some of the worst architecture in the world, it also has Spanish villas and Googie carwashes and Gothic mansion blocks and Frank Gehry concert halls. It has actual canyons and mountains in the actual middle of the city, with cougars and rattlesnakes. The

the place screaming. I was so proud when a man looked up from his sunlounger and said: “You know if those were American kids I would’ve drowned them by now - but they’re so adorable.”

Which is not to say that life in L.A. is without its maddening aspects. In fact, serene bliss punctured by moments of insane infuriation is the default mode here. Most of these moments happen on the freeways that criss-cross the county - since thanks to an idea of urban planning that made sense in the 1930s, the notion

what to do with the pilot episode of their sitcom.

“Hang on a minute... Do you think we should make one of these characters Asian?”

“Oh yes. And maybe one of them should be like trans?”

“Cool and we should give one of them a normal job - they shouldn’t all be creatives?”

“Why don’t we make Roxy a personal trainer?”

“Awesome! [LONG SILENCE] How are you doing for time by the way, I got a Flywheel class at four.”

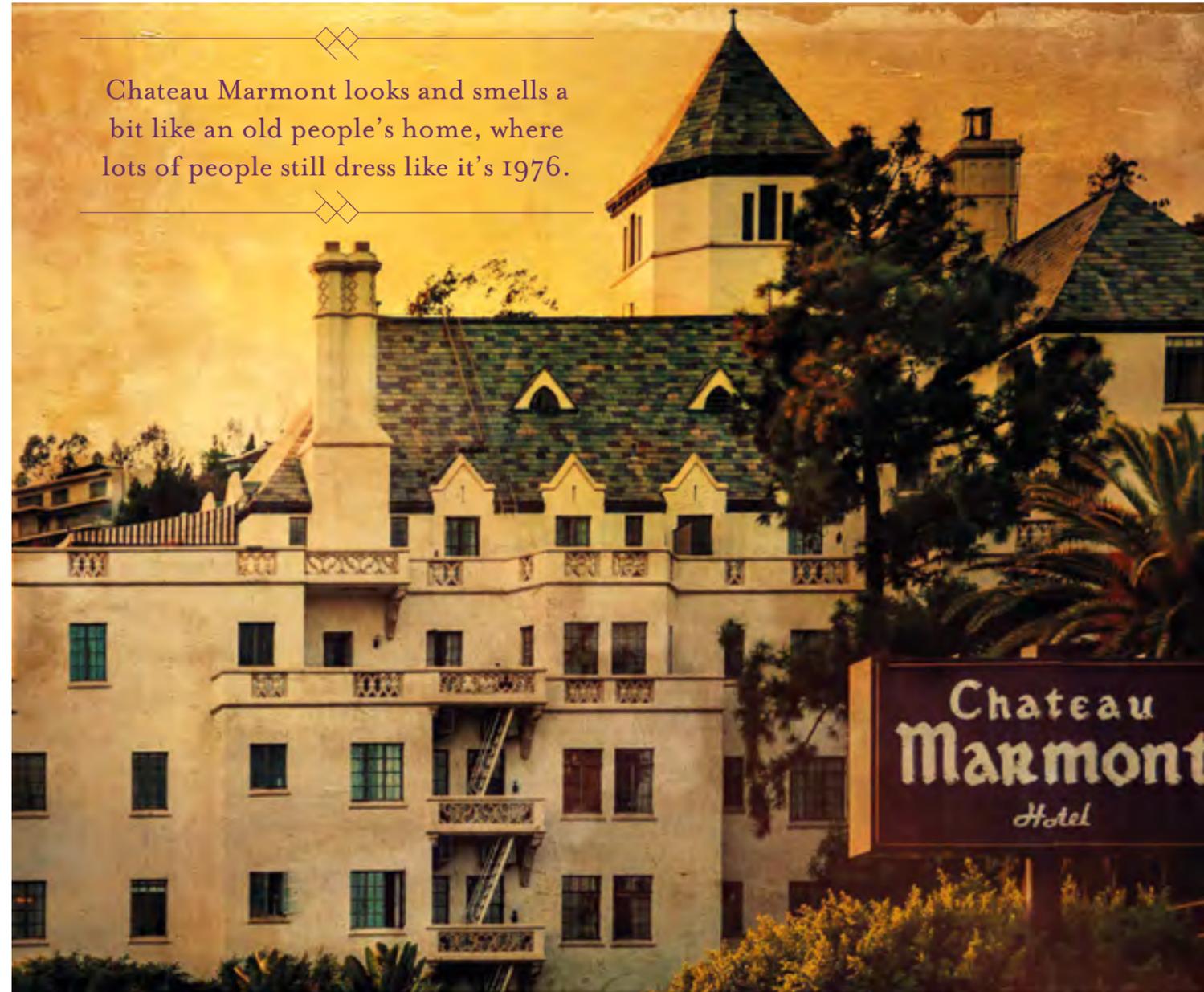
If you’re not in the movie industry, this is all part of the local colour and it needn’t get you down. There are plenty of people who are designers and chefs

The truth is L.A. conforms to its own clichés so willingly, it’s almost quaint.

You must drive 15 minutes to buy a gallon of milk. And then spend a further 15 minutes trying to park.

and even personal trainers if you want to mix things up a bit. Or jewelers. At this precise moment, I’m in the Tower Bar of the Sunset Hotel which is where the movers and shakers of Hollywood come to move and shake. It’s awards season (in the absence of marked meteorological cues, the seasons go: Awards (January-February), Pilot (March-April), Beach Party! (May-September) and Pumpkin Spice (October-December, encompassing Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas).

Chateau Marmont looks and smells a bit like an old people’s home, where lots of people still dress like it’s 1976.



Built in 1929 Chateau Marmont was furnished by antiques bought from estate sales in the Great Depression. Sharon Tate and husband Roman Polanski took up a short-term residency in 1968, as did Jim Morrison in 1970. Others who have stayed there include Billy Wilder, Hunter S. Thompson, Annie Leibovitz, Dorothy Parker, Bruce Weber, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Tim Burton. Regrettably John Belushi died of a drug overdose there in Bungalow 3 on March 5, 1982.

vegetation is WILD. Despite what I said about the sun, when it’s cold it’s really cold (it’s the desert after all) and this means there’s a palpable undercurrent of melancholy that heightens things just so. It is at once completely futuristic and weirdly old fashioned: the fabled Chateau Marmont looks and smells a bit like an old people’s home when you go up a few floors and lots of people still dress like it’s 1976. People refer to eating as working. For example, if there is a half-eaten croissant on your plate when a service person comes to collect your coffee cup, they will say: “Are you still working on that?” I’ve

also heard people refer to taking drugs as “work”. As in: “I did a little work with hallucinogens but these days I’m mostly working with nootropics.”

I’ve realised that most of my favorite movies are set in L.A. too and in fact love letters to L.A.: Chinatown, Sunset Boulevard, Mulholland Drive, L.A. Confidential, Jackie Browne. I live in hope that I will run into Lana Del Rey at Whole Foods.

Isn’t everyone superficially upbeat all the time? Yes! And what’s wrong with being superficially upbeat? Here, to be upbeat is both a survival mechanism and a basic form of politeness. Most

people in L.A. came from somewhere else and there’s a sense that it’s your duty to gee one another along. It’s nice when someone asks you how your day is in the elevator or says “Cool shoes!” as you stroll down Melrose Avenue. If it’s not entirely sincere, who cares? When I returned to London it struck me that our own native downbeatness is not entirely sincere either. “Oh God was it awful?” “It’s murder out there” “Yeah, it’s alright I suppose.” This is one of the reasons you travel that you may know whence you have come. Though if you ever see me in a baseball cap, you have permission to slap me. ♦

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Tingle Creek  
Christmas Festival

RACE ON

## STARTERS' ORDERS

Colin Cameron talks to the highly successful racing trainer Hugo Palmer about betting well and winning on the day over lunch at Boisdale of Belgravia.

WORDS BY COLIN CAMERON

It's easy to feel a shade sorry for Hugo Palmer. Raised in the borders of Scotland, the Newmarket trainer is now based in a part of Britain not exactly renowned for culinary excellence. That is if the town's Chinese restaurant and takeaway mainstay is any sort of yardstick. But a stable with 190 choice thoroughbreds, including Galileo Gold, winner of last season's 2,000 Guineas, should offset the need for any sympathy.

In any case, Pol Roger, the champagne favoured by Winston Churchill, sponsors Palmer's Kremlin Cottage yard. His love of the turf made the tie up, along with Palmer's haul of over 75 winners last season, a serendipitous union.

There is also the comfort of a distinguished pedigree. Palmer is the son of Adrian Bailie Nottage Palmer, the 4th Baron Palmer, and heir to the peerage. Consequently, the Honourable Hugo Bailie Rohan, to give him his full billing, is completely at home in Belgravia and he studies the menu with an intensity usually reserved for bloodstock sales catalogues and racecards.

There is nostalgia in the air. We are in the very place where, earlier in the trainer's life, after apprenticeships in the bloodstock world and with Patrick Chamings, he decided to quit after three rewarding years as assistant to Hughie Morrison at his Berkshire yard and head for Australia. Home became Gai Waterhouse's east coast stables for the final leg of his racing education. "As my grandfather always would say, leave a party when you are still enjoying yourself," Palmer laughs.

With the horses Palmer has to hand, we should really pity other trainers. By the age of 35, he had already registered two Classic race winners – his 2,000 Guineas hero, ridden by Frankie Dettori, and the 2015 Irish Oaks winner, Covert Love. Galileo Gold remains under his care. "I convinced myself that, at very least, he had some sort of a chance in the Guineas at Newmarket," Palmer recalls (even if a photograph of him after the race shows a degree of disbelief!). "After five runs as a two-year-old some held the view that we already knew how good he was and that



Hugo Palmer pictured in disbelief just after his horse, Galileo Gold, had won the 2000 Guineas last year

wouldn't be quite good enough. But on the gallops in the weeks before the race he was outstanding."

In fact, as a two-year-old Galileo Gold showed every sign that he was a talent. In his nap hand of outings, he was first three times in a row after managing runner up on his debut. A disappointing final run of the season in France last October, when he managed only third with the stable hopeful. To make success at Newmarket seem a distant memory.

Recalling the classic race, Palmer pauses for a moment. There were guests staying with him and his wife Vanessa. "So just a bit of pressure," he jokes. "We had given Galileo Gold a racecourse gallops up Newmarket's Rowley Mile

where the Guineas is run – so a chance to experience the track, where he had never raced, in the company of other horses. These outings usually take place after racing so there were a few in the grandstand. Altogether the excursion got his heart rate up. Plus he had a chance to stretch out on stunningly beautiful ground."

That day Frankie Dettori partnered Galileo Gold. On dismounting after the gallop, the Italian couldn't stop talking up the horse. Palmer smiles at the memory. "Toby Atkinson was Galileo Gold's usual rider on the gallops in the morning. He would always say what a kick he got riding him," he adds. The special ones, among which Galileo Gold definitely numbers, are rare indeed,

assures Palmer. A feature of the very best is that they are also usually more reliable than the less talented. In this respect, then, a less risky prospect when betting (at least relatively speaking). At the same time, with ante post Classic race punting – wagering on races like the 2,000 Guineas weeks and months before they are run – Palmer suggests that sometimes caution is profitable. “For a race like the 2,000 Guineas, horses don’t usually feature in public much between October and the spring. So, unless you hear something, why punt? Galileo Gold was priced at

backing classic runners on the basis of their trial runs. “For some, the classic trial is more important than the Classic, itself. Take a race like Newmarket’s Craven Stakes, which Galileo Gold missed in preference for a racecourse gallop. That is an opportunity for a colt to win a Group 3 pattern race and prize-money. That, not success in the 2,000 Guineas can be the goal,” he warns. For a racecourse gallop, which is usually held at the end of an afternoon’s racing with work riders rather than jockeys in silks, Palmer urges folk to stay on and watch, even after a bad day’s

A notch below in racing’s pecking order are the handicaps. In these races, in which runners are allotted weights so in theory they will all finish at the same time, big prices like the 14-1 starting price of Galileo Gold in the 2,000 Guineas are wholly feasible with the application of shrewd judgment. Palmer muses over what is an altogether different challenge to winning classic races. “For the big handicaps, the field is not going to be full of the highest calibre of runner, which it is my main aim to train. For me, handicaps would be for one of my progressive types, who may not be great or even potentially great but are nevertheless getting better every time they run and with a particular handicap coming into view seem to have something more to give.”

A crucial aspect might well be the location. Palmer concurs. “The particular track configuration of the racecourse does come into it, especially at venues like Chester and Epsom,” he insists. “These are unusual tests; Chester is a very tight circuit, Epsom is a steep climb and then the ground falls away in the home straight towards the middle of the track. Experience of these features can be crucial. Horses who like running at these distinctive tracks show their best at them time and time again.”

He adds that tracks like York, which are very flat and regular in shape, dilute the benefits of having run there before. “The course specialist is neutralized as every runner should be able to perform to the

**I said to Frankie Dettori that our aim was to build up Galileo Gold’s confidence after the knock he took in France. In other words, make a fuss of him!**

up to 40-1 over the winter and pretty much the same odds when he emerged for the spring.” The betting market can begin to move around the time of the spring trial races, upon us in April and May at Newmarket, Newbury, York, Chester and Sandown - ahead of the Classics (May’s 1,000 and 2000 Guineas, and the Oaks and Derby at Epsom June). The winners of trial races and those who perform well in them shorten in price. Again, Palmer suggests folk be wary of

punting. There can be much to learn, he argues. “Key to it, is what a trainer hopes to gain from the outing,” Palmer explains. “Often this is not widely known. So you have to work out what might be the objective. I said to Frankie that our aim was to build up the horse’s confidence after the knock he took in France. In other words, make a fuss of him. When Frankie got off, he was sold on the horse’s chances. What’s more, with Galileo Gold, on the basis of how he performed, some locals backed him for the Guineas.”



Hugo Palmer and Colin Cameron enjoyed sautéed veal kidneys with a mustard and tarragon sauce, whilst discussing Galileo Gold’s chances this season

best of their ability,” Palmer maintains. Scotland’s most famous race, the Ayr Gold Cup, is a historic handicap. For all the pleasure a native might take from lifting this prize, Palmer admits he might enjoy more winning the Northumberland Plate just south of the border at Newcastle, where he studied at university. “Ayr is on the other side of what I would consider my Scottish roots,” Palmer explains. “The Gold Cup? Good prize-money, and a very special race, no doubt about that. Equally, my connection

For before the Plate in July, our guest trainer dons a lucky Boisdale Hat from Bates of Jermyn Street for inspiration to make the weeks and months of the spring and early summer profitable. A Derby to pair up with last year’s Guineas? The dream, admits Palmer, six years on from the start of his training career. “Best of Days has had three runs as a two-year-old and will hopefully show himself good enough to run at Epsom. Last year he won the Royal Lodge Stakes and was second in the

nothing,” Palmer shrugs. In preparation for her hopefully being the first of these, she is entered in the Oaks at Epsom. Whisper it, but her owner is the Australian distributor for Pol Roger. Palmer smiles. As you would when well covered for success in that particular race, and, with the champagne house sponsorship, for all other occasions when Kremlin Cottage finds a way to the winner’s enclosure. There may be bubbles ahead. ♦

**Of the five of that stallion’s progeny, four of them have been good enough to win stakes races and the fifth is now a polo pony.**

with Newcastle is very strong. The history of the Plate, which locals call the Pitmen’s Derby, is also tremendous and the prize-money is also jolly good.” Palmer leans forward and speaks with a quiet voice. An experienced horse with stamina is what is needed, he confides. There is a short moment’s contemplation. “Maybe a horse called To Be Wild,” Palmer moots. A very nice four-year-old, he assures.

Acomb Stakes. The plan this year would be to run in one of the Derby trials as preparation for June and Epsom.” He laughs: “The colt is by Azamour. I have had five of that stallion’s progeny and four of them have been good enough to win stakes races with the fifth now a polo pony.” Such are the vagaries of racing. Similarly, Vintage Folly, a three-year-old filly could be ‘everything, anything or

**HUGO PALMER – HORSES TO WATCH**

**To Be Wild, 4-year-old colt**  
(Big Bad Bob out of Fire Up by Motivator)  
Trained by Hugo Palmer  
Owned by Carmichael Jennings  
Bred by Mary Davison

**Best of Days, 3-year-old col**  
(Azamour out of Baisse by High Chaparral)  
Trained by Hugo Palmer  
Owned by Godolphin  
Bred by G. Schoeningh

**Vintage Folly, 3-year-old colt**  
(Makfi out of Katimont by Montjeu)  
Trained by Hugo Palmer  
Owned by Mr. RW Hill-Smith  
Bred by London Thoroughbred Services Ltd



Hugo Palmer, racing trainer outside Boisdale of Belgravia, wearing Boisdale’s lucky beaver-hair racing fedora, courtesy of master hatters, Bates of Jermyn Street [www.binksatbates.com](http://www.binksatbates.com)

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## THE GREAT FESTIVAL MYTH

In its final year, we ask Cornbury founder, Hugh Phillimore to sum up fourteen fantastic years of fun filled festivals.

WORDS BY HUGH PHILLIMORE



The final Cornbury Festival - 'The Fabulous Finale' - will be held at Great Tew Park, Nr. Chipping Norton Oxfordshire from Thursday July 6th to Monday July 8th [www.cornburyfestival.com](http://www.cornburyfestival.com)

As I approach my 14th and final Cornbury Festival I wonder what was the point of the whole mad adventure? From a financial point of view the whole festival model makes as much sense as taking your house down to the bookies and gambling it, at very bad odds. Since we started back in 2004 the festival market has been completely saturated with fellow idiots following the festival dream. 'It will be our own mini-Glastonbury stuffed with all our friends and we'll make enough money to live on the land forever' they cry - NO NO and NO. What no one tells you is that Glastonbury took 11 years to turn a small profit and is still a pretty scary ride for the independent Eavis's. Your mates won't come anyway and if it just happens that they aren't busy doing something much cooler they certainly won't be paying for a ticket! If we'd sold every ticket we've given away over the years, I could have built a reasonably large refugee town which would have made losing our shirts a little more palatable. The problem is that running a festival is an addiction, a sticky trap - yes really. As long as you manage to pull off your first year without too many disasters (the AA

lost our order and forgot to put out our signs) some people will have had a good time, assuming they can remember it. The local school will have raised a bit of money on the Tea Tent and there will be HOPE for the future - so on you'll push. Unfortunately there will be a lot of competition - there will be several other festivals within a 20 mile radius (there normally are) and of course the idea that you might base your entire mental & financial well-being on the vagaries of the British weather is an act of pure genius.

Most medium to large festivals in the UK are now owned and run by large companies. They can better afford to roll with the punches, when the loss of a few thousand tickets can mean £250k in lost revenue. Independent festivals teeter on the financial cliff and quite a few of them are choosing to retire gracefully. Along with us, Secret Garden Party has announced that 2017 will be its final year; Scotland's T in The Park is no more; Larmer Tree in Dorset is taking a year off and others are looking decidedly wobbly. Glastonbury owner, the great Michael Eavis, had possibly one too many ciders (whilst falling in love) at the Bath Blues Festival in

1969, when he decided to start his own festival and he's had many, many rocky years. Only since the BBC took such a full involvement with the festival could the organisers use the huge worldwide TV exposure as a bargaining chip, when negotiating artist fees. Chances are that if I'm playing £10k to secure a hot new US country star, Glastonbury will be paying a third of that.

So why continue with this ridiculous and marvellous endeavour? Because it's the closest us mere mortals come to the artist's drug - the roar of the crowd - and we've all seen how addictive and confusing that is. We've run the nicest, poshest, safest festival in the UK for the past 13 years - one arrest, lowest policing bill of any event etc. We've booked some frighteningly fantastic talent over the years; Paul Simon, Robert Plant, Amy Winehouse, Joe Cocker, Ray Davies, Buddy Guy, Bryan Ferry to name but a few. And we probably raised over £250,000 for local good causes, including a local girl who'd had a quadruple amputation following meningitis, we helped buy her blades to walk on. We've created lots of life changing moments for lots of people at our lovely warm little event - 'a farmers market with a dancefloor, a village fete with a rock 'n' roll twist' - one family have their annual reunion with us every year to commemorate a son who died of cancer. The ladies from the Finance Department of Croydon Council have been with us since the beginning and are now joined by the Tuneless Choir - an admirable group of ladies from an august Nottingham based ensemble and we're hugely grateful that Cornbury has become their regular summer event. 74% of our audience comes every year.

I'll not forget the bear hug from my hero Joe Cocker, the wet kiss from Amy Winehouse or the dry peck from Debbie Harry. The funny insult from Robert Plant ('your festival is very beige'), the lovely support from Waterboy Mike Scott ('a charming inclusive eccentric English gathering') or the thank you letter from the great Humphrey Lyttelton ('as jazz musicians we are not used to being looked after so well. Thank you'). All for this and the reward of doing a thing well with a lovely team. Being supported and treasured by the local community, providing some gainful employment for youngsters, an essential first musical experience for hundreds of Oxfordshire children and yes, having a jolly lovely party. Will I miss it - heck yes! Will I miss the shaking stress, the night sweats and crushing financial blows - possibly? ♦

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR OPINIONS AND COMMENTS - EMAIL THE EDITOR [RANALD@BOISDALELIFE.COM](mailto:RANALD@BOISDALELIFE.COM)

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## THE WORLD AS I SEE IT

Chilean poet, author and film maker Santiago Elordi, takes us on a global journey using art as his passport.

WORDS BY SANTIAGO ELORDI



The Selk'nam are an indigenous people of the Patagonian region, who painted their bodies and covered their faces with masks of tree trunks. They were one of the last native groups in South America to be encountered by migrant ethnic Europeans in the late 19th century.

of the villagers and in turn they lent us a hammock and cooked us whole grilled turtles. Indeed, over the last 5,000 years the development of agriculture, animal domestication, writing and technology, namely all human achievements, have been made possible by the interaction and exchange of culture and creativity from one society to another.

Meanwhile, my daughter is travelling through the Argentinean Patagonia. She is writing her thesis on the now extinct Selk'nam Indians from Tierra del Fuego, a seal-hunting tribe that navigated the icy seas in their wooden canoes, and who, paradoxically even in that extreme and freezing environment, took time to paint their naked bodies with beautiful drawings. We remember them as a tribe concerned with art, even after their disappearance.

As with trade, diplomacy and sharing food, art can be a tool of integration. I haven't really read much science fiction, but I have always liked the idea of what to do if an alien was suddenly beamed down into a human home. The father would be afraid and want to protect his family (for he does not know if the aliens are peaceful or violent), he may decide to be hospitable, offer something of interest or typically human to the new comer. Basically we would start to negotiate.

Maybe it would be a good idea to cook a good dinner for our extra

Chile is the final stop for aeroplanes in South America. It is an island, but not one surrounded by sea. It is separated from the world by the driest desert on earth, the ice of Patagonia, the enormous Andes and 5,000 km of Pacific coast. My family descends from the first Spanish conquerors and for 500 years they have been "mixing" between themselves (my grandparents were first cousins).

In this geographic and inbred isolation my childhood passed but through the tales of Robert Louis Stevenson, Emilio Salgari and Mark Twain, I was able to leave my confinement and experience the world. And as soon as I finished school, I travelled, recording my trips in notebooks that later would become stories and poems. Since then, as a trader, miner, rider, journalist, and diplomat, I have kept travelling.

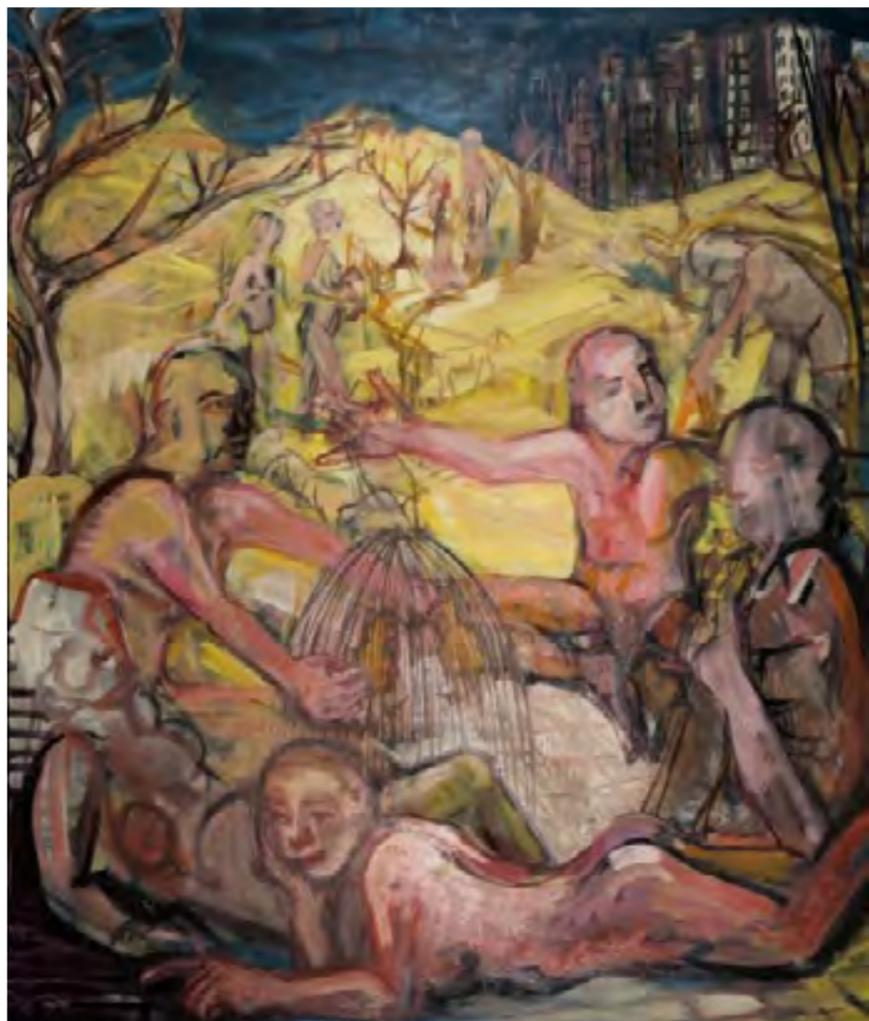
I want to show how art can be part of our daily identity and a "passport" that helps us in our relationships with others and I want to make my point through some personal experiences. As Jorge Luis Borges wrote, "what happens to a person, happens to humanity."

Some years ago, with my wife, the artist, Kate Macdonald, we created 'Candy Lips'. This is a factory of ideas in which we develop different artistic projects, anything from long walks to documentaries and public art. We once travelled 6,000 km inland in Brazil to the state of Matto Grosso, following the route

Kate painted murals in the villages we visited and in turn, the villagers lent us a hammock and cooked us whole grilled turtles

of the British explorer Percy Fawcett, who in 1927, looking for El Dorado, disappeared in the jungle with his son Jack. We never found the Fawcetts, but while we were looking, Kate painted murals in the villages we visited. The locals were curious and pulled up chairs to watch the paintings progress, paintings that were a reflection of themselves. In this way we won the trust

terrestrial, sea urchins with parsley, crab empanadas and spaghetti with white truffles, followed perhaps by a glass of twelve year old single malt and a cigar? Hopefully the alien smokes and likes a good drink. After dinner we could make our way to the living room, where I would place our strange new friend on the sofa in front of one of Kate's paintings, in particular one of a woman



Incorporating art into our daily lives is a spontaneous and necessary exercise

holding a birdcage. The cage is open but the birds do not fly away. I hope this painting will move them and while they contemplate our very human art, my children Flora (6) and Luca (5) would sit

uprooting of identities in our global world and Seven finds her escape through art, anonymous actions like drawing on napkins or writing phrases on mirrors.

Art and life are like boats dragged by the same current.

on their galactic knees (if they have any) playing with their Interstellar weapons as if they were harmless toys.

My last novel, Seven, recently published in Spain, takes place over seven days in an exclusive hotel in Shanghai. It is a love story between Macgregor, an old British trader and Seven, a beautiful young Cambodian girl who was taken from her village as a child. It is a tragicomedy about the

A couple of months ago I was invited to present the novel at a rural school in the the dry north of Chile, as far away from the setting of the novel as you could find. Happily, I noticed that the students listened carefully to the story. At the end of my presentation a boy gave me a paper cat. Art can touch myths and archetypes in all cultures.

Currently Kate and I are working on a documentary about work and

leisure, on how people deal with work and free time depending on their cultural heritage. We have interviewed economists, politicians, factory workers and hairdressers to name but a few and we have filmed all over the world from beaches in Havana, to polo tournaments in Buenos Aires and shopping malls in Shanghai. We are building a platform so that people from all over the world can send their personal images of work and free time, so as to create an interactive film reflecting on a theme that goes back to the origin of humanity, a film that highlights art when finding its necessary place, in the everyday.

Let's believe for a moment that the imagination transforms reality. Imagine an ideal day: for some it will achieving success at work, or a trip to an exotic country, or simply to wake up at home with loved ones. Whatever it may be, because of those moments, that day will be made more powerful. It will become a sure and fixed recollection, memory tied to time through the music listened to, a single word or conversation, aroma, food or an object given or received. Art and life are like boats dragged by the same current. A song while jogging in the park can give us a new form of perception. A strange gesture, a street seen as for the first time, we hope such new connections may make us rethink our standing in reality.

Identity is also a projection, of how we want to appear before others. Just think of the trillions of selfies that appear in social media. These also belong to the art of representation. Incorporating art into our daily lives is a spontaneous and necessary exercise.

As a child I read stories that took me from the distant confinement of my country and so I began to write. Whatever its expression, art is present from what we eat to the way we set the table. The truth is that in a moving identity, reality changes. We mutate. Today, I live near a park in London with my family, I do not know for how long, but I cross the river every morning when I take the children to school. When we walk on the pavement, it is an art not to tread on the lines and the first one to see the Lolly Pop lady wins ten points. "Good morning Miss Georgina", we greet her while she gently stops the cars. I say goodbye to the children at school and walk back home. Continuing the day, I make coffee or tea from Ceylon, and I look out of the window at the aeroplanes in the cloudy sky of London, this unique, unfathomable, multifaceted city, where each one lives a sense of art according to their needs, to live better, we hope. ♦

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# SMOKIN' HOT!

WORDS BY NICK HAMMOND  
CELEBRATED CONNOISSEUR AND SPECTATOR CIGAR WRITER OF THE YEAR 2013

**B**oisdale's resident cigar man runs the rules over some of his best recent Cuban and New World smokes... ♦

The **100 point scoring system** explained:  
**10 points** for appearance  
**15 points** for construction  
**10 points** for combustion  
**60 points** for flavour and finish  
**5 points** for value for money

**Romeo y Julieta Belicosos**  
5 ½ ins x 52 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £20 **TOTAL PTS 90**

What a delightful surprise this stick was on a stinker of a London day. I'd forgotten my broly, ruined a perfectly serviceable pair of shoes and generally had an awful day until I stole into Davidoff of London for some respite. Here I discovered this 10-year-old R&J which eased all my problems into indifference. Rich, smooth, leathery and deeply satisfying.

**Tatuaje Café Noellas**  
5 1/8 ins x 42 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £13 **TOTAL PTS 88**

A little slice of Nicaragua, this one, smoked alongside a Dutch canal as I wandered through the maze of streets, markets and food stalls that is Amsterdam. It looks like a Cuban Montecristo, even down to the band, but tastes a lot more earthy to my palate. Those rich, chewy, spicy flavours so typical of the country were in every puff and a delicious counterpoint to the hot coffee I sipped while I watched ice skaters behind the Van Gogh museum.

**Bolivar Tubos No.3**  
5 ins x 34 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £10 **TOTAL PTS 89**

This one took me back. I remember popping these like sweets many years ago at a wedding aboard a Thames cruise. The little humidor on board had a hefty stock, so a pal and I tried one then came back for a few more to see us through. The one I smoked in early 2017 was similar to my memory; not as full as many Bolivars but deep in flavour and surprisingly complex in development. Back then it was the perfect punctuation to Battersea Power Station slipping past by moonlight, and judging by this example, I suspect it still is.

**Davidoff Year of The Rooster**  
6 ¼ ins x 50 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £50 **TOTAL PTS 91**

A hefty stick with a hefty price tag and while it didn't live up to the ethereal splendours of the recent Davidoff Art Ltd Edition cigars I've enjoyed, it was still a wonderful example of the cigarmaker's art. Initially sweet and woody, in turns turning peppery and spicy, it finished with quite a hefty punch as I enjoyed it after a hedonistic lunch at Mayfair's Oriental Club.

**Montecristo Edmundo**  
5 1/3 ins x 52 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £20 **TOTAL PTS 89**

Ah, how I've always treasured the Monto Edmundo. When it first came out it was spectacular; medium to full with a lip-smacking tang familiar of its Marque and unflinchingly satisfying. But for some reason it fell off my radar. And after a gargantuan meal for the convention of Boisdale Life Editors recently at Belgravia, I staggered onto the cigar terrace and ordered one. It was as if I'd never left it and a wonderful way to end a wonderful lunch. As it was, I wandered off, got chatting to someone else, forgot my phone and bar bill and weaved my way home. Sorry Ranald and Harry, but if you will throw such sterling lunches...

**Macanudo Inspirado Petit Piramide**  
4 ½ ins x 52 Ring Gauge  
RRP around £10 **TOTAL PTS 90**

Macanudo were renowned for being America's best-selling cigar and for being universally mild. Not sure if the former is still the case, but the latter certainly isn't, for this stubby little torpedo was a pleasant surprise enjoyed on a shooting break in the Northampton countryside. Several pheasants to the good and the dog working well for once, I took the parting of the clouds and the arrival of watery sunshine as an omen for a cigar and duly fished this one out of a tube I'd secreted earlier. It's bold for sure, featuring Honduran, Nicaraguan and Dominican Republic leaves as it does, but is also remarkably 'smokeable'. Fullish in flavour, it also weathered the breeze well and served me well into the next drive where I proceeded to botch the birds that came my way and thereby revert to form. And the dog ran off with someone else's pheasant.



# JUNIPER DREAMS

Valentine Warner tells the windswept story of Northumberland's Hepple Gin.

WORDS BY VALENTINE WARNER



From the age of ten, I've spent happy days with my dearest friend Walter Riddell in Hepple, a small village with surrounding moorland high in the eastern corner of Northumberland. We would chase trout up the streams in our underpants, smoke autumn leaves taped in loo roll and roamed far and wide, always reluctant to return to the warm windows of home.

A remote place, as wild as is left in the UK, Hepple was a wondrous kingdom for young boys with lungfuls of cold air and nature all around. In fact, so remote and wild is Hepple, that when an Italian barman recently visited, whilst staring wistfully at the Cheviots he remarked, "is a very hard to finda da wi-fi here...and a wife no?"

Thirty-five years later, Walter and I were discussing our shifting sands over dinner, particularly as he had moved back to Northumbria. Extolling all of Hepple's assets, we realised that a business might be under our very noses and that our

childhood fantasies of one day running a toy or paint factory together had found a more adult theme.

For there exists on the Hepple hills a community of 300-odd ancient junipers sprinkled across the moor, shivering under the whip-prickle of rain driven by the northerly gales. This wet, boggy world also provided an active spring of the purest water, supporting an abundance of herbs and trees in a brimming cabinet of natural curiosity.

There was also an empty coach-house sitting idle, uninhabited for a number of years and which acted as a games room for murderous owls and hundreds of nervous mice. We realised this might be the place where we could start something special, which would have no impact on the environment and at the same time use the bounty mother nature had provided. Hepple indeed offered a unique package.

At the time, I'd been working with bar wizard Nick Strangeway and I suggested to Nick and his business

partner Cairbry Hill, a drinks process developer, that we might be looking at prospects further North.

Thus the longest conversation I've ever had began between two friends and two relative strangers. Like the starts of all good things, we whittled away hours beside a crackling fire and the sound of big ice cubes rattling in heavy tumblers.

We concluded that, yes, there was room for another gin, but this one would be different. You see, although mature purple juniper berries (correctly called cones) are made for delicious gins, the inclusion of 'green' or unripe juniper may also bring some lively adolescence into the bottle. The whole life of juniper was the idea, a family day out rather than a coach load of pensioners. We would to make a gin as alive as Hepple hills.

We wanted our gin to be genuinely and distinctly different and Cairbry insisted it was essential to look beyond the copper pot still. Other technology was out there, he said, and so, soon after the distillery build began, we not only had a shiny new still, but also a rotary Evaporator and a Supercritical CO2 Unit.

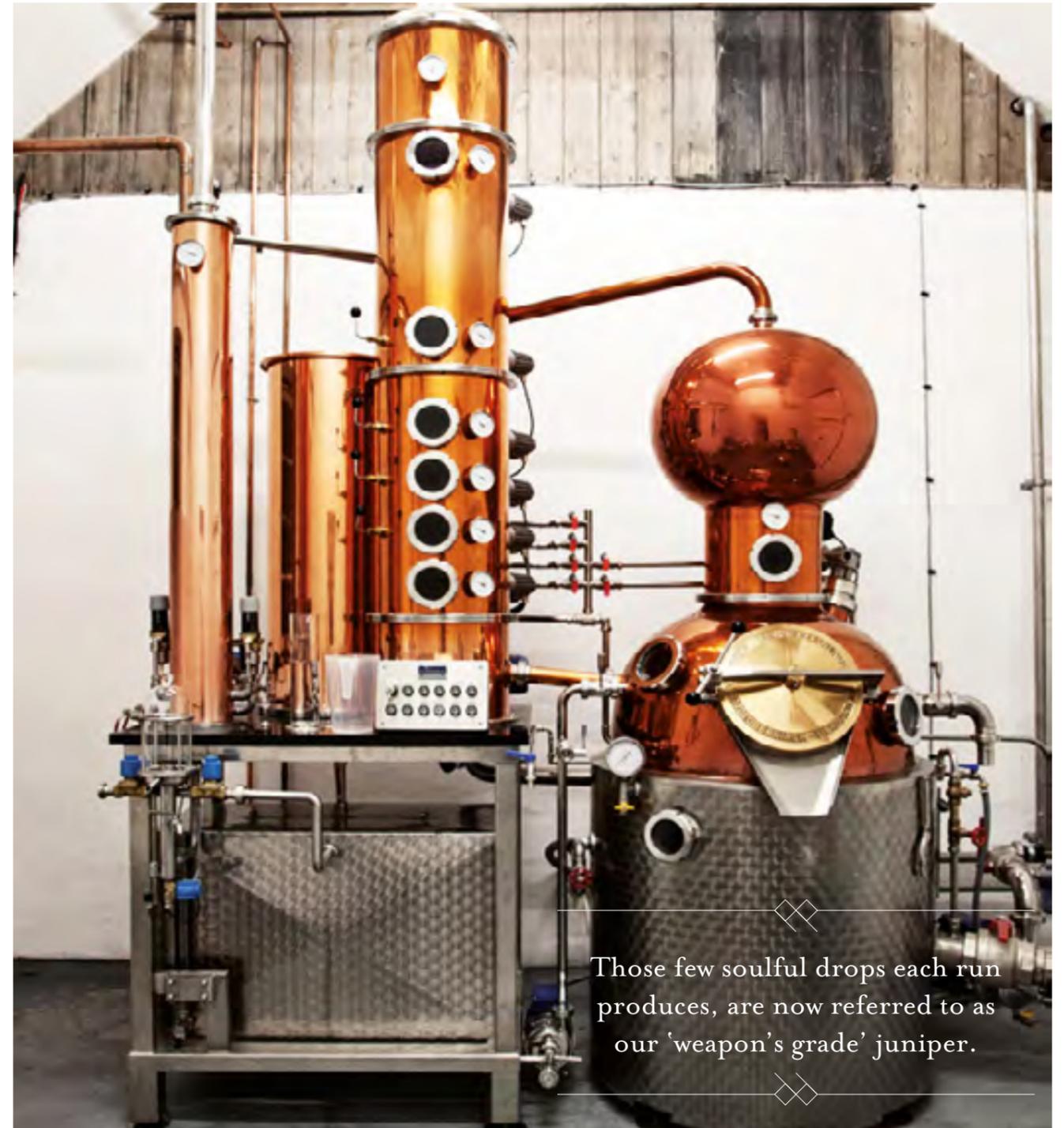
Serendipity was also on our side. At the launch party of Sipsmith's new distillery, I found out that Chris Garden, their head distiller, had left and moved back to Newcastle. Striking like a kingfisher, I slipped from the party to run home and call him. Chris accepted and Sipsmith generously waved his gardening leave.

Chris was soon making good base gin from the still but the super critical Co2 extraction unit, used to produce a clean, unaltered, consistent-yet-flexible product was an unknown beast. Neurotic as a film star's salad, it required the most tender of touches, capable of exerting pressure that could fold cars like napkins, we experimented on mature juniper. The machine's fragility soon saw us weeping at the dry stone wall, leaving us asking ourselves what the hell we'd gone and bought. Christ! We'd be mad eyed, bearded wrecks before we'd ever see the results we needed.

But we persevered, finally reaching the "eureka" day, sampling this ripe juniper extract and tasting its explosive olfactory resonance. We finally felt we were on our way with 'weapon's grade' juniper.

The rotary evaporator gave us no such trouble, producing wonderful distillations and confirming a hunch that green juniper did indeed deliver brighter, greener, dancing flavours and our decision to vacuum-distill it at a lower temperature further protected this delicacy.

All ingredients were soon sorted into the correct three stables of two distillation



Those few soulful drops each run produces, are now referred to as our 'weapon's grade' juniper.

Hepple's 'steampunk' upper pot still. Photography Credits: Flynn Warren

processes and one extraction. We tasted in hundreds if not thousands of combinations. Nick and I were drunk pretty much throughout that year, our hearts knocked silly with a dangerous balancing act of tasting sessions and doses of night-black coffee.

The "Yes!" moment came in 2015, when we all decided that we had achieved the right harmony from the copper still, the rota-vap, CO2 extraction and spring

water. We'd crawled over the finish line, wearied by tasting, and Walter's arms and mind grazed with moorland harvesting and fastidious paperwork. But we had a final product. We had Hepple Gin.

But I must also mention Mother Nature, our other business partner, without whom nothing could have happened. Today Walter and his wife Lucy run one of the largest juniper propagation programmes in Europe.

The community of ancient junipers twisted and bent on the Hepple hills now see their "children" sprout across the moor. The work they are doing to restore the woods and moorland from the ravages of farming is remarkable.

So when whenever I ask a barman to try our gin and he replies "Not another gin?" I don't exit with a blush and an apology. "No," I say "this certainly isn't just another gin, this is Hepple Gin." ♦

# THE PLEASURE OF CALVADOS

Best of Wines, Douglas Harrison, explains why we should all be considering a return to Calavados this summer.

WORDS BY DOUGLAS HARRISON



The Lecompte Calvados range – now available across all Boisdale restaurants

Legend has it that the name Calvados came from an old Spanish galleon, El Salvador, which was wrecked off the coast of Normandy in 1588 and its cargo of wooden barrels, when washed ashore, were found to contain apple brandy. An interesting fate given Normandy is where some of Europe's finest orchards are to be found.

exported with the top two destinations being Belgium and Germany.

It is made from more than 200 different apple varieties, although some pears are also permitted. The juice is first made into Cider before being distilled into Eaux de Vie either by a single distillation or a double distillation, according to the producer's preference: it must spend

Aromas of vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, candied fruits and prune.

So, what exactly is Calvados and why is it so good? Quite simply, it is a brandy distilled from cider which has been made from apples; and therein lies the key to its greatness. A lovely fruity flavour of apples is to be found in its taste, which makes it very agreeable to most people, especially those with a more sensitive palate. In addition to apples, one can also find aromas and flavours of vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, candied fruits, prune and many others dependant on the age and style of the Calvados.

Around 6 million bottles of Calvados are produced each year from some 7,500 acres of orchards. Of this, 65% is

a minimum of 2 years maturing in oak barrels. There are three classified regions of production: Pays d'Auge 25%; Domfrontais 1%; and Calvados AOC 74%.

Whilst those growing the fruit, those distilling the liquid and those composing the blends may all strive for perfection, there is another contributor whose influence is critical – Terroir (soil, aspect, micro climate, etc.) and that is Nature's contribution.

The Pays d'Auge is blessed with the finest calcareous terroir, hence producing the finest Calvados, which brings me neatly to the House of Lecompte. Personally I've never tasted

better than Lecompte, although I will admit to having tasted the odd one which does come close.

The House of Lecompte really got started in 1923 when Alexandre Lecompte, a local wine and spirit merchant, decided to sell his business but hold on to his treasured collection of Vintage Calvados and solely concentrate on that. In 1980, the business was in the hands of the Pellerin family who brought a rather special expertise to Lecompte; Yves was the owner of the perfume company Roger & Gallet and his grandfather, Jean-Marie Farina, was the creator of L'Eau de Cologne. Such an ability to work with wonderful aromas and flavours naturally led to Lecompte Calvados winning many awards in numerous tasting competitions.

The Lecompte distillery and cellars are in the picturesque village of Notre-Dame-de-Courson in the very heart of the Pays d'Auge, conveniently surrounded by orchards producing the finest apple varieties in Normandy. The cellars house some 800 oak casks, an extraordinary array of Vintage Calvados Pays d'Auge, peacefully maturing under the ever watchful eye of the Cellar Master, M. Richard Prével. He has been the Cellar Master for over a quarter of a century and it is he who imbues each Lecompte Calvados with its own unique personality.

After the distilled spirit is safely in its cask, the vital process of ageing begins. Here, time is key, there is no way of producing great Calvados quickly. This is "Production Artisanale", where the Calvados must be left to a long, slow, gentle maturation in the traditional way with no additives to try to speed up the process.

Currently, Lecompte offers a 5 year old, a 12 year old (this won the World's Best Spirit Award at Vinexpo in 2007), an 18 year old, a 25 year old and a Single Vintage from the year 1988. Never a House to rest on its laurels, Lecompte also creates unique limited edition blends of Calvados: Multi-Vintage, a special blend of their 5 best vintages, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992 – presented in a special bottle made by the last remaining master glass shapers in Normandy.

Such an impressive range of Calvados can be daunting when trying to make your choice but I can assure you that whichever you choose, you will never be disappointed. Whether you are trying a new and exciting Calvados Cocktail made with the 5 year old or slowly sipping a glass of 25 year old as a digestif, you will find Lecompte Calvados wonderfully intriguing and, most important of all, tremendously satisfying. ♦



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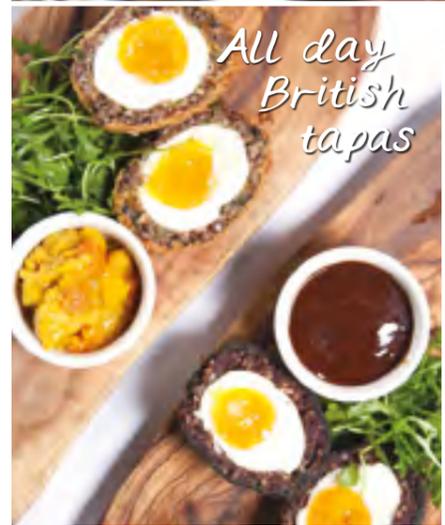
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## LONG LIVE THE LONG LUNCH

Food lover, champion of incorrectness, journalist and author, Tom Parker Bowles extolls the virtues of a lunch taken well.

WORDS BY TOM PARKER BOWLES

Much depends on lunch. Well of course it does. A long lunch, I mean, not some dreary sandwich, stuffed full with dolour, chewed sullenly while hunched over one's desk. That is not lunch, rather the very definition of dyspeptic despair. Nor is anything involving spreadsheets, bank managers, "colleagues", "reaching out" (unless it's for a chilled bottle of Sancerre), "projections", "blue sky thinking" or "paradigm shifts". Oh, and anyone uttering such offensive tripe as "just the one course," "I'll stick with the salad", and, most appalling of all, "a bottle of fizzy will do" should be banished to the distant, icy depths of the supermarket ready meal chilla cabinet, the modern incarnation of Dante's treacherous 9th circle of hell.

Keith Waterhouse, a man who certainly knew his way around a long lunch (in fact, he probably hewed the path by hand) had very strict views at

most stinking of all. To which the only answer is "yes, I come in, eat, pay the bill and bugger off. But thanks for asking all the same." But a pre-prandial sharpener - something crisp and preferably dry, be it icy glass of Manzanilla, a negroni, deep crimson and dangerous, or simply a positively arid Tanqueray martini, served painfully cold - is foreplay of the most exciting kind. A tease, a tickle, the filthiest of winks, something to get the taste buds tumescent, a promise of high jinks ahead.

That's not to say that booze is the be all and end all. Hell no. An essential component, sure, but just one part of the happy cavalcade. Nor should this exquisite affair be a daily event, even a weekly escapade. And although some legendary lunches have admittedly sprung from parched ground - starting with a "fancy something to eat?" on a dull Monday morning in Shepherd's Bush, and ending, 10 days later, in some

a whiff of the subversive, a snifter of the illicit, a whisper of the ne'er do well. The very best lunch spots encourage much languorous lingering over a carefully chosen sticky - iced poire, kummel and vieux prune; Calvados, Cognac and Armagnac as warm as the waitresses' smile. So that the afternoon skips gaily by, and before you know it, the tables are being re-laid and dinner saunters in. Such splendidly sybaritic behaviour is, of course, encouraged. As long as good manners are observed, then all is well in the world.

So where to go? Some of the great lunching temples of my early life have long paid Charon their obol, and been paddled, sadly, over The Styx. Kensington Place, of course (the physical body might still dwell on Kensington Church Street but the soul has long since ascended), and Le Café Anglais. Both Rowley Leigh joints, as you'd expect from a true long lunch master. Mimo's D'Ischia and the late, great Foxtrot Oscar, where you could sup louche by the pint. And the much missed 192.

But many of the greats still endure. St John. That goes without saying. Quo Vadis, under the divine guidance of those brothers Hart, and Jeremy of Lee, a patron saint of the lengthy repast, just like Mark Hix, with the eponymous Soho, and Oyster and Chophouse. Time passes merrily, in both his presence and his venues too. Scott's and Le Caprice never fail to please, along with Bentley's, Andrew Edmunds and Sweetings. As well as Bellamy's, Boisdale, Bibendum (in its old guise), Bocca di Lupo, Locanda Locatelli, The Wolseley, The River Café, Riva, Moro, Le Gavroche and Otto's. Plus relative newcomers, Barrafina, 10 Portland Road, 45 Jermyn Street, The Colony Grill Room and 8 Hoxton Square. Not just great restaurants, but places that understand the true art of the long lunch, imbued with the very soul of their owners and chefs. "Lunch is a celebration", sighs Waterhouse, "like Easter after the winter. It is a conspiracy. It is a holiday. It is euphoria made tangible, serendipity given form". Fortunes may dwindle, unions break, and nations founder and fall. But as the world seems to shatter around us, thank god that we'll always have lunch. ♦

Afternoon skips gaily by, and before you know it, the tables are being re-laid and dinner saunters in.

to "What Lunch is Not", as laid down in his slim classic, *The Theory and Practice of Lunch*. "It is not when either party is on a diet, on the wagon or in a hurry. It is not taken perched on stools at a ledge [the honourable exceptions being Barrafina. And the bar at Sweeting's. Obviously]. It is not a duty. Or a bribe. Or a penance." Kingsley Amis, another legendary luncher, once declared that the most depressing words in the English language were "Shall we go straight in?" closely followed by "red or white?" I do get the feeling that both Waterhouse and Amis, heroes of the half twelve both, were perhaps a touch TOO offish when it came to the eating. There's no fun in a purely liquid lunch.

And while I feel the Old Devil's pain, The King obviously hadn't had to endure the vile linguistic effluvium that is sprayed with such filthy abandon over the unwitting modern diner. "Are you familiar with our concept?" being the

far off Bordello, in thrall to a nubile troupe of Nubian dancing girls - it's best to cite Baden Powell and be prepared. Meaning: the afternoon cleared; the kids dispatched to Grandma; and one's wife, soothed, mollified and apologised to profusely in advance.

Because lunch is undoubtedly the most civilised of meals, a last bastion of succour and bonhomie in an increasingly unpleasant world. Breakfast is admirable, as long as it involves eggs and a few variations of cured and processed pig. Never those foul, infernal cereals. And the less said about the Continental breakfast, the better. Save that no Empire was ever built upon sweaty cheese and Danish pastries. Brunch is an abomination, simply because it takes two meals and crams them into one. While dinner is fine, Fergus Henderson notes, "at dinner you are tired, and it forms a full stop to the day." Quite.

Lunch, though, done properly, retains

Fortunes may dwindle, unions break, and nations founder and fall. But as the world seems to shatter around us, thank god that we'll always have lunch.



2nd May, London

Dear Zelda

I am extraordinarily excited that Château Minuty Rose, the toast of St Tropez, finally arrives at Boisdale this summer. I am not entirely sure I can really wait that long!

Thine,

*F. Scott Fitzgerald*



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## WHAT MAKES ME LAUGH

The Countess of Carnarvon, who lives at Downton Abbey also known as Highclere Castle, finds delight and humour in the people who inhabit her world.

WORDS BY THE COUNTESS OF CARNARVON



Lady Carnarvon at home with Clemmie and Winnie

stream of water mixed with red brick began. Geordie strode out of his office demanding to know what was going on and where was I. Pat the painter called my mobile "I take it you have not told His Lordship about the paint stripping?" she said. I confirmed that I had not and asked how he was taking it. "Not very well - I am hiding behind a kitchen wall" replied Pat. "Everyone has taken cover". "Excellent plan, Pat - stay there and let's give him half an hour and it will get better".

Highclere Castle's manager John has been at the helm with us for perhaps ten years and his incorrigible sense of humour is unique and much valued, particularly when disasters loom. Asking him a simple question about the bottom passage (corridor) and its condition leads to digressions and unceasing laughter within about a minute. He is very fond of donning wellington boots and you only need to mention a water leak and he is off to his fully equipped car, which seems to be ready for all possible emergencies. He has about 100 photos of puddles and leaks on his phone, which must be thrilling for his family.

The gift shop girls, whose totalled age would exceed that of the Castle (and therefore, according to the IT manager cannot really be called girls) recently attended a manual-handling course. You only have to enquire of their experiences of the day for gales of laughter from the ladies, most of whom are retired but who thoroughly enjoy their part time jobs in the summer. Part of this involves a certain degree of health and safety in the workplace. Once, Sally, their boss in the gift shop, promptly mended her reading glasses with superglue but prematurely balanced them on her nose which glued them in place. Unable to drive home as she could see not see from the fumes of the glue, one of her gift shop elves, acted as chauffeur.

Highclere matters to us and Geordie and I care enormously for our home, a building which, fundamentally, was not really designed for 21 century living. We, and the people we work with, live and love our life here together but it is often the laughter that really makes it all so fun. ♦

The joy of living and working at Highclere is fuelled by the diverse collection of people, some of whom have been here for almost 60 years. Every day is marked with laughter. We are all very aware of our own sense of the ridiculous.

Luis, Highclere's butler, has a tendency, in the temporary absence of a formal guide, to conducts Castle tours in his own inimitable style. Unsuspecting victims are shown entrances to tunnels, which he says run all the way to Newbury (6 miles away), paintings by "Van Cabbage" and a large silver platter, which I apparently won at Wimbledon.

Once, catching a train from Newbury to London with my PA Louise, I left her on the platform for a minute to look for a second-class carriage with spaces. She came running in consternation saying they were all first class - what should we do? It was not true of course: simply the fact that the train line is called "First Great Western" and those words were painted on every carriage. I laughed until I cried - as did she - it was a splendid start to the day.

Don, one of our inimitable gardeners, has been here nearly 50 years. He has so many stories. One of my favourites is about my husband's grandfather who

one day decided to pick some flowers. Since it was raining, he took his car and drove down the gravel footpaths to the walled Monks' Garden. Aiming for the gate, he failed to realise his car was far too wide and scraped noisily through the entrance onto the lawn leaving bumpers and trim behind whilst Don watched in safety from behind a hedge.

Undeterred, Lord Carnarvon hopped out and started cutting roses before calling for Don or one of the other gardeners to drive the car back. They all, respectfully, refused, citing fear of Missen, the chauffeur, in case any further mishaps occur. So Lord Carnarvon had another go and, of course, got stuck. Missen found out and was so furious with Lord Carnarvon, shouting and calling him every name he could think of.

Like any wife I find it simpler not to tell my husband Geordie every small detail. He seemed to like brick walls painted in cream gloss paint - just as his father and grandfather had. I decided that they would be much more charming if they were stripped back to the original brick and allowed to breathe. So I experimented with some scaffolding at one tall end of the Castle courtyard. That afternoon, a tremendous noise and

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