

# GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

# 18



The *Gatehouse Gazette* is an online magazine in publication since July 2008, dedicated to the speculative fiction genres of steampunk and dieselpunk.

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# LIVING IN THE PAST BUT LOOKING AHEAD

BY NICK OTTENS

We are “Living Steampunk” this issue with a wide array of articles, from fashion to lifestyle to home décor. If ever you wondered how to steampunk your life, this issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette* should be an excellent guide.

Gentlemen, especially, will take delight in a column we add. Ian Brackley, who has contributed to the *Gazette* before, will write “Gents” from this edition onward. We are glad to have him on board.

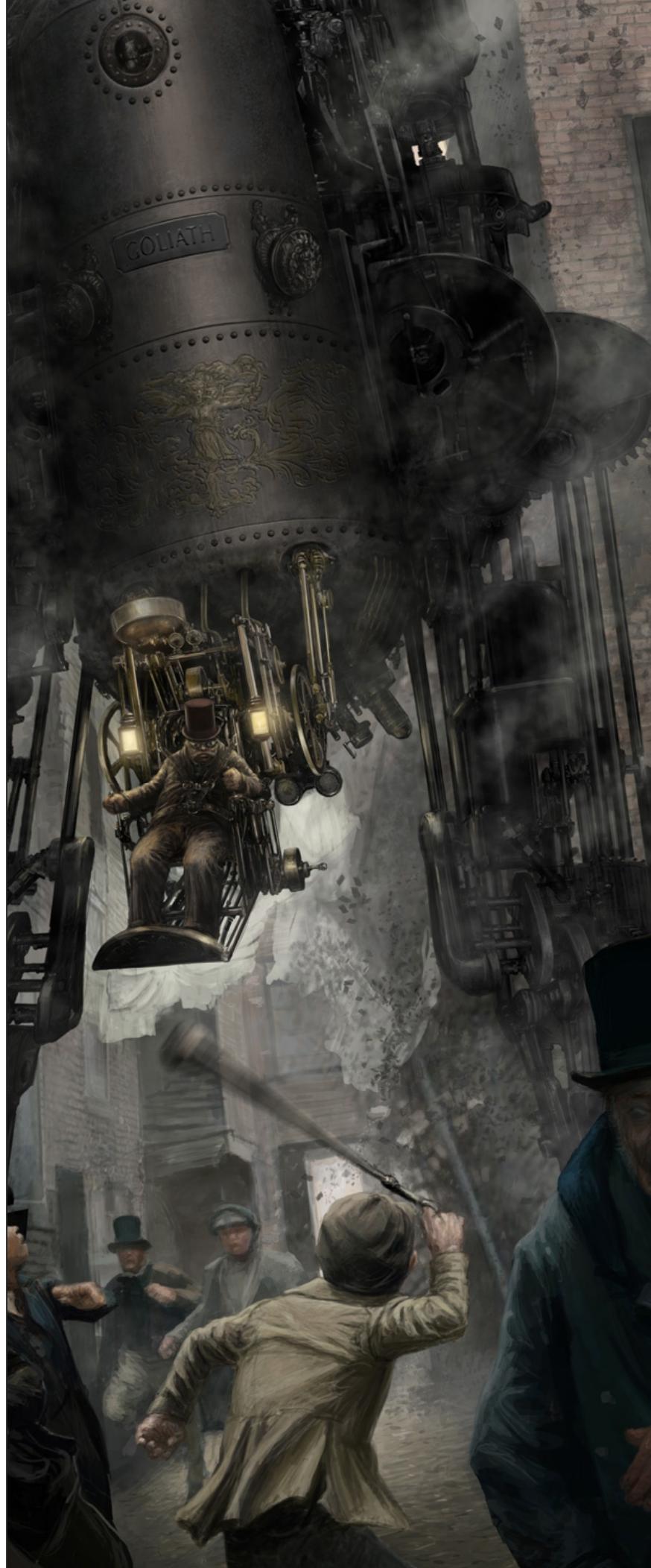
We also have two interviews. J. Parkin sat down to talk with one of the proprietors of Sanguine Gryphon, a design outfit from Maryland. Halfway across the globe, Lorenzo Davia chatted with Frederick Von Guss, creator of the Italian steampunk portal *Laboratory of Time*.

Most discussions about steampunk lifestyle, including Jacqueline Christi’s in this issue, correctly note that what defines the movement, maybe every subculture, is its unwillingness to conform—to the fashions of its era, the time’s political consensus or even the ruling class.

People outside of the “mainstream” may like to think of themselves as little Davids, battling modern day Goliaths in the form of popular culture, Big Business, government, convention.

Steampunk rejects the twenty-first century in part, in that it dislikes the anonymity of science and technology and the carelessness of costuming that characterizes most fashions today. But steampunk is at the same time a thoroughly modern phenomenon if only because what we cherish is optimism and progress. We long for the turn of the century (not the most recent one) because it was a time of invention and experiment. Everything seemed possible before the First World War so crushingly frustrated the ambitions of thinkers and tinkerers alike.

Steampunk revives that nineteenth century mentality and mixes it with twenty-first century innovation. Steampunk’s charm is that very impossible combination of yesterday’s mindset and today’s knowledge and knowhow—in the broadest possible definition. So let’s not just look back. Let’s remember what made yesterday so great instead and built it anew. •



## WHAT STEAMPUNKS MEANS TO...

I'm good at steampunk because steampunk is often kind of scruffy and I like scruffy. Don't get me wrong. I don't like dirty clothes but I like the scruffy feel to the type of steampunk I wear. I don't do the elaborate noble type styles, I do the comfortable casual every day type of steam, the clothes that allow you to move, to live in. Some call it ragamuffin, others call it contemporary.

Steampunk is often not a fashion that's all about nice, which suits me fine because I'm not a girlie girl and never will be one. Some types, like Victorian aristocrat and the dress uniform types of the military variant are about pristine and luxurious garments but by and large steampunk is gritty, about the tinkerers, adventurers, sky pirates and all sorts of practical types. I love how it's mostly comfortable clothes and brilliantly insane contraptions and accessories. Keys and pocket watches, goggles, gears and gadgets. Browns and earth tones mixed with splashes of color or black or grey or whatever you damn well please. That is steampunk to me: adventure, comfort, the promise of life outside the box.

—Hilde Heyvaert

For me "steampunk" translates as people that are bored with plain vanilla clothing and buying everything at Wal-Mart in prepackaged cellophane then throwing away things that were cheap, but also really cheap, after one use.

We encourage people to locate and dust off old things that others have devalued, take them apart and reconstruct them into something beautiful again. The process is very entertaining and creative but what is even more important than the recycling and artistic aspects is that we take ourselves apart, dig up old skills and recreate ourselves into something greater than we were before. We take out old creative and useful talents and refine them into an art form, any form or art at all, so long as it improves ourselves and our world.

—Ramon Fagan

A great tinkering hobby, where I meet and talk with tonnes of talented builders, designers, creators, thinkers, writers and do-ers. Plus, waistcoats and basement mad scientist laboratories are cool.

—Professor von Explaino



It's a hobby, a social arena and an opportunity to restore the idea of a little wonder and grace in my life. I know some of the more dedicated steampunks see this as a way of life, and more power to them, but it is a pleasant diversion that allows me to resume an interest in costuming that we dropped more than twenty years ago.

As a social arena, it is more genteel and friendly than most I've participated in. The common interest attracts us together, and the more genteel atmosphere encourages us to compliment each other on what our costuming efforts have yielded. Perhaps the best thing is that it resets our time to one where there was wonder in the world, wonder as to what the bright future would hold, and a sense of grace, as in more manners, and the gentle niceties of life, not to mention the styles of clothes that were expected. The pace of life was also much slower, a welcome respite from today's overly fast world.

—Lloyd Penney

# EXPLORATIONS INTO STEAMPUNK LIFESTYLE

BY JACQUELINE CHRISTI

HERE IS A LABYRINTH OF smoking city streets. Cobblestone and soot stretch endlessly before your eyes. No one walks the abandoned roads now that personal flight machines were made affordable. Whisking by at incredible speeds brass and steel flash in the sky, glimmering like a swarm of insects.

This is a picayune example of the color which illustrates the wonder that the world of steampunk provides. The fanciful aspirations of the future combine with the exaggerated elegance of the past. These are the dreams this subculture is founded upon. The emergence of steampunk as a lifestyle has only been with us briefly but it has made its impact on our society nevertheless. Over the past thirty years the seeds of an obscure niche in literature have grown into a vibrant community. I recognize that

subcultures are finite in their nature, and this is why I feel that it is important to clarify and define the convoluted features of steampunk. Though aspects of their unique modes will be remembered for generations, only a few subcultures remain steadfast in maintaining the lifestyle after it has fallen out of fashion. Like the hippie movement of the 1960s or the Punks of the 1980s, steampunk has found the new millennium to predominantly stand. With elements' discovery and advancement at its core, I feel that the present time is charmingly appropriate.

The earliest examples of what are now considered to be quintessential guides to comprehending the steampunk genre were originally science fiction. Authors like Jules Verne, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and H.G. Wells all drew creativity from following the

scientific progress of their time. They were living in a world powered by coal, with the harnessing of electricity still being contemporary and expensive. Flight was a dream, come to life after centuries of failed experiments. Modern conveniences of today were only just being realized then. Technologies, that have already become antiquated to us, were brilliant innovations of their period. It is no surprise then to read their stories depicting fantastic journeys to the moon or voyages to the center of the Earth transported by incredibly extravagant machines. It was logical to assume that the prosperity and genius at the opening of the new century would continue. Warnings to encourage contemplation of moral dilemmas were focal points to many Scientific Romances. The same themes of how to cope with the impact of technology and societal hardship influence science fictional

Ben Z Mund Photography  
Benzmund.com



writers today.

Steampunk was not always the distinct genre it is presently. It evolved gradually from a handful of despondent science fiction novelists. Authors such as Michael Moorcock, K.W. Jeter, Tim Powers and James Blaylock had grown weary of the cyberpunk stettings of their time and wanted something new. To achieve this they looked to be inspired by their predecessors. Presently, in the past, they conjured floating towers of copper clockwork, crystalline powered monorails, spiraling flight machines, and submersible ships barreling through the unknown. By throwing away overused models like cyborg computer hackers and conceiving of steam powered monstrosities these authors continued to deliver potent allegories to their readers. In the year 1987, K.W. Jeter, sent a letter to the magazine *Lotus*. "Personally," he wrote, "I think that Victorian fantasies are going to be the next big thing.... Something based on the appropriate technology of the era; like 'steampunks,' perhaps." Though the term was originally intended as an off handed jab at the cyberpunk genre that was in vogue at the time, 'steampunk' was rapidly accepted as a distinctive classification.

With a new word to express the subdivision that arose from science fiction, fans wished to fill it out with

fantasies of their own. However, it is speculated that due to the Internet, steampunk evolved from a background of alternative and countercultural movements such as Punk, Goth-Industrial, and DIY hobby groups, rather than from a background in science fiction. Finding ways to emulate the romanticism of the Victorian era

without the negative social ideas attached to the historical period and doing away with harmful schemas like racism and misogyny, people could focus on the jubilation of discovery. Individual perceptions on this trend were as diverse as each person imagining it. There were those who felt steampunk was a phase and others who saw it as a revolution. There were people who insisted that the feared creatures of "Penny Dreadfuls" were steampunk and those who raged at the thought. Some saw it as a fashion statement with the resurgence of corset. Still others saw it as an opportunity for invention. With the nook in society being so fresh every outlook was recognized as being correct and acceptable. Steampunk was capable of encompassing all of the visions held by remaining fluid and dynamic. Because the whole genre remained subjective in its nature it was able to thrive and flourish where other subcultures were suffocated by restrictive classification.

Though the steampunks are still young today they have had time to mature into a community that is open and welcoming of new thoughts. There is a strong appeal to those who have an appreciation of

the Victorian aesthetic. Because of this, many find themselves involved within the steampunk world almost by accident. By infusing the stylistic designs of the past into modern concepts of art and fashion they invariably find themselves involved with a community they hardly knew existed. As with many aspects of the subculture, art and fashion are conjured upon the reflection of a past that never was. Depictions of time traveling steam engines and gardens that grow brass roses inspire an enchanting twist of fantasy in our history. Costume becomes increasingly important in order to immerse them further into the setting that they have built. Clothing comprised of leather, brass and lace dazzle the eyes. There is no outfit that is alike to another unless it was deliberately created as such. It can be as complicated as a fully hand sewn gown full of lace and cogs or simplistically utilitarian and functional in its design. Every person has their own personality to saturate into their manner of dress and the whimsy of creation can be found in every piece.

Creativity and invention are the tools of this community and nothing has inspired the steampunk culture

In order to rebel  
against the  
commercialization of  
our modern world  
steampunks strive to  
build whatever they  
can with their own  
hands.



more than the resurgence of DIY hobbyists. While not all do-it yourselves are involved in the steampunk society, the inspiration to make one's own projects has become central to the subculture. People want to understand the environment that they are living in and we are surrounded by technology. Our world is filled with machines that are comprised of wire, chipboards and circuits. Electricity flows through our lives and people desire to comprehend why it works, not only that it does. All of the answers have been hidden by smooth panels and the fear of voiding warranties. In order to encourage invention there must be knowledge. Without it there would be no way to grasp the dreams to transform them into reality. As Lev Grossman proclaims, "Steampunk isn't mass produced; it's bespoke and unique, and if you don't like it, you can tinker with it till you do."

No one in the steampunk world looks to be considered a model for their community. Everyone is encouraged to be true to themselves as extraordinary individuals. As with any group though there will always be persons that distinguish themselves as role models regardless of intent. People who find themselves in positions of respect learn that through example they have become the voice of this fascinating subculture. Sean Slattery is an example of one of these "leaders" in steampunk. Better known by his pseudonym, Jake Von Slatt, Sean has inspired many through the Internet. He has a site named *The Steampunk Wardrobe*. It started when he converted an old school bus into a Victorian style RV and wanted to share it with the world. Never realizing there was a subculture he soon became an advocate for the lifestyle. He was able to bring people together and create connections with others who were ignorant of the community's existence. "Again and again, people post, 'I had no idea there was a name for what I am,'" he says. "A lot of it seems to have come

from the same place simultaneously, a mysterious force bringing us together."

Being a fresh and youthful culture, steampunk has had little time to make any claims to an agenda. It is still important, however, to find what binds a gathering of people together as a culture and not just a crowd. One of the elements that unify steampunks as a whole is Romanticism. They are overwhelmed with passion and inspiration. The skill and knowledge to transform reality are only ways to express the desire that is burning within each soul of those who have chosen this

life. It is not as important to understand as it is to aspire to obtain that understanding. It is the fascination, the curiosity, and the yearning to discover what is unfamiliar. This is a compelling reason to believe that this may be why steampunks are so open to new ideas. With a foundation built on emotion it isn't about the solid finality of the idea but the inspirational muse that surrounds a concept. By remaining abstract the steampunk subculture ensures its place in our larger society through adaptability.

This is not to say that the

Photo by "Studio d'Xavier" on Flickr



people involved in this lifestyle are not serious about their search for wisdom. Many members are determined to learn and develop themselves through their natural inquisitiveness. This curiosity is usually the main drive to study and create their place in the steampunk lifestyle. Science and technology are predominantly researched in this community as inspiration. New advances and inventions would not only be a source of grand accomplishment personally but lends hope towards making the future a better place.

Sociology and history are also highly regarded in steampunk society. The importance of learning from the mistakes of the past will not be lost to this community. It is important, to them, to not fall to the prejudices and environmentally detrimental hazards of yesterday. By considering the situations that have been experienced in the past a better future can be crafted for generations to come.

It is important to the steampunk community to always be unique in everything it does. Whether this is accomplished through art,

music, science or something else it is essential to be a distinct individual. This is frequently done by creation. Many people in the community will design spectacular contraptions and gizmos to capture the feel of steampunk. People are not content with everything being impersonal and mass manufactured in our society. With computers being encased in sleek featureless shells and mechanical wonders locked away to be unobtrusive, people feel unable to interact with the world around them. In order to rebel against the commercialization of our modern world steampunks strive to build whatever they can with their own hands. Richard Nagy, better known as Datamancer is a popular artisan in the steampunk realm. He says, "Steampunk has a way of making technology, which is becoming more transparent and taken for granted every day, seem novel and fun again."

Steampunk is an amazing and encouraging subculture. To see a community built on diversity, creativity, and discovery is very motivational to me. To see people that have not given into despair and hate for the world we live in gives me

confidence that one day more people will keep their aspirations alive. The steampunks have stimulated our society with a dream crafted from a stylized past to express hope for the future. Fueled by steam and desire this subculture is strongly present in our lives today. People wanting to have more involvement within their own lives should step back and consider their dependence on technology and strive to learn more about the world they exist within. I am heartened to know people are starting to *live* life and not just surviving it. It isn't necessary to take part in subcultures in order to be passionate for life but it is good to find others that you feel comfortable enough to be yourself around. I think that it is important for people to escape the mundane droll continuance of routine. If people don't stop to think and enjoy life for themselves I fear misery and boredom will consume them. Steampunk encourages normal people to tinker and explore the unknown. Innovation can be inspired by the past but is pioneered by those willing to risk everything to pursue their visions. •

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## Steampunk

*We are explorers moved a hundred years  
That hail from times of steam and shiny cogs  
Some of us wear a thousand useless gears  
Or goggles, some sort of industr'ial togs  
I must admit we do enjoy ourselves  
Our worlds of tea and airship piracy  
We must have Wells and Verne upon our shelves  
To guide us through the darkest æther seas  
Although we're from a time that never was  
We feel at home there as we never have  
And you may scoff and giggle at our cause—  
We know how much discovery can move.  
So do not mock the steampunks if you're wise—  
We've rayguns and brass cybertronic eyes.*

—Maria May Jespy-Worthing

# STEAMPUNK HOME DÉCOR

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

MOST STEAMPUNK enthusiasts probably first think about personal gear when it comes to displaying their personal steampunkness. When browsing the ætherweb for steampunk related items, jewelry is the most common category, followed by garments of various sorts. Relatively few places offer home décor or at least have something to steam up your home in their range. Also, few of us have the skills, the equipment and the time to create their own furniture, appliances, etc.

There are actually a handful of very good companies online offering dedicated home improvement services, for a price. But most of us will not have the necessary funds. So, this article is aimed at all those who have neither the skill, equipment nor the purse to go the whole way and turn their home into a proper steampunk abode.

Apart from all these considerations, note that a completely steamed up home might not be what your significant other or family desires.

Unless you are an interior designer or have a gift for interior decoration, start small. Time restraints are something else you may want to consider. After all, what good is a project that is going nowhere fast because you never got around to working on it? If you do not see progress, you might be inclined to scrap the whole thing. So maybe you want to turn your desk or the part of the living room where you enjoy your afternoon tea into something you could find on board the *Nautilus*.

Come up with something of a plan of what you'd like your desk to look like, then go hunting for the things you need. I will consider a few possible approaches for small to

medium scale steampunk interior design.

## Steampunk in a corner

A number of small items can, when placed strategically, have quite a dramatic effect on the general mood and feel of a room or part of that room.

It is entirely possible you have a few of those already somewhere in the attic, which would give your project quite a head start. If not, there are several ways of getting them.

I have found that most antiques shops have very fitting items, ranging from clocks of various sorts to old cameras and the like but maybe you get lucky and find a gramophone or discover parts of an old airplane or car.

Novelty shops are also rather good addresses to check out. The Victorian railway station clock in our living room for example came from a novelty store. It cost less than €20 and looks quite the part. Looks is really all that matters. There are plenty of examples on the ætherweb of various every day appliances being steamed up by a clever paint job and some extra bolts and gears. Take a look and be inspired. If all else fails, the most popular place on the ætherweb for flogging antiques is open around the clock and there is almost nothing there you cannot find.

## A piece of furniture

Another good way to start is



tinkering with a piece of old furniture. Once you have found a chair, table, desk or whatever you prefer, you can start modifying it. Go to your local DIY, hardware store, junkyard and get the pieces you need. Some junkyards are also great places for finding parts that are more on the dieselpunk side of life, if your tastes go this direction.

If you happen to have or find a genuine period piece of furniture, maybe all that's needed is a new paint job and some brass. You may be surprised what effect a little tinkering can have.

## A little here, a little there

There is quite a myriad of other possibilities you might not even have considered. For example, you can find very fitting pillow covers and sheet designs on the æthernet, which look very much the part.

Also, there is the possibility of getting a retro design phone. Some antiques stores specialize in lamps. An old lamp on your desk may be all that is needed to change the atmosphere to your liking.

I hope I have given you some ideas and maybe I have even kindled the spark of the home improver in you. And whatever project you have in mind now: The main thing is, you like it. We may all have different views on what steampunk is, it is your home. You decide what it is to you. •



REVIEW «

# SUCKER PUNCH

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

**S**UCKER PUNCH TELLS THE story of Babydoll, who after the death of her mother ends up in Lennox House for the mentally insane due to the machinations of her evil stepfather.

It becomes quite clear from the start that if she wants to survive with her cranial capacities intact, she'll have to escape. Enlisting the friends of fellow inmates Rocket, Blondie, Amber and the reluctant Sweet Pea, she starts on a mission to gather items that will aid them in their escape. To help her in all of this, Sweet Pea withdraws herself in her own fantasy world, which seems to be some kind of parallel to the grimy reality of where she really tries to survive in.

Visually the movie is extremely pleasing. The scenes are extremely well set up and are a fabulous mix of fantasy, steampunk and dieselpunk with grimy noir mixed into it. The soundtrack was pretty awesome too in my opinion. So if you want to go for something that just looks awesome, you'll probably love this movie.

Especially if you're into video games because graphics are at times reminiscent of those.

Plot wise, it's put very well together. It leaves you wondering just how much is real and how much is in Babydoll's imagination. Of course at times that's blatantly obvious, but it's often very subtle too, making it more than the fantasy adventure it's made out to be. It tends to reach out and grab you, making you root for the characters and hope they get out safe, escape the asylum they're being held in against their wills.

Its real strength is that it's not one of those "oh my god must escape the bad guys but this is Hollywood so we'll have a big adventure and succeed!" kind of movies. No this is very bittersweet, and right up to the very end you keep on being surprised.

It's not a movie for those expecting a straight on happy ending, and it's definitely one of those movies that may leave you wondering whether you love it or think you've just wasted some good cash on the ticket. •



# EVENING

A CHAPTER FROM ANDREW BENNETT'S *FEARLESS*

**W**ITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF *THE FALCON* leaving the Airdock at Whitby Eva had finished unpacking and arranged the few belongings she had brought with her in the cabin when a knock came at the door.

'Enter.' She said sharply. The door was slowly pushed open to reveal the small, shaking form of Josiah, the Cabin Boy.

'The Captain wants to see you miss' he said in a shaky voice. Clearly something about talking to her or possibly acting on the orders of The Captain worried him. Eva presumed it was the latter, given the way she had seen The Captain deal with the boy in Hull.

'Very well, then. Lead the way'. The boy simply nodded and turned on his heel before walking swiftly up the companionway to the uppermost deck. Eva noticed that he was clearly unnerved by something as she closed the distance between them. She put it down to the fact that she was most likely the first woman the boy had seen since he had left his mother's side, or at the very least the first one he had dealt with for some time and was probably unsure of how he should act, his only role models being these ruthless men. As they reached the top deck of the companionway Eva could hear a heated discussion going on behind the door on the right hand side, which she guessed to be The Captain's Cabin given that one of the raised voices she heard belonged to him. Josiah tentatively strode forward and knocked at the door. Although the knock was not particularly loud, all other sound on the other side of the door immediately ceased.

'Come in' The Captain's voice tersely called. Josiah turned the door knob and Eva was granted her first view of the Captain's Quarters. She was not surprised to find it quite bare of decoration, it was very much like the cabin she had been assigned albeit much larger and brighter, with the rear wall taken up by two large windows and what furniture there was seemed to be of a higher quality than in the lower cabin. As Josiah stood aside and she entered, her nose crinkled at the acrid smell of stale smoke, which was mixing with the foul aroma being produced by the small private bonfire burning in the bowl of the Captain's pipe, which he held clenched between his teeth and the smell of which was currently adding its pungent strength to assault of her nostrils. The Captain looked up from the desk where he was leaning forwards and studying a chart spread across its' top, with a glass of brown liquor beside his left hand. Before the desk were stood the lofty frame of a man whom Eva instantly recognised as the Mate, Mr. Crabbe and the imposing bulk of the man who had met outside the church in Hull and

whom she assumed was the Boson, but whose name she did not know.

'Ah, Miss Wood. Now that we've left England, would you mind coming over here and telling us, where the bloody hell we're supposed to be going? "Somewhere in France" might be good enough for your colleagues in Whitehall but I can't set a course when I don't know where I'm going.' He quickly looked away from her and gazed at diagram resting on top of the chart. It showed a group of large rectangles, filled with spidery lettering. These were surrounded by a number of smaller squares and rectangles. Eva instantly knew what this picture showed. It was a reproduction of the last reconnaissance sketch that the MIS had received of the French Military base they were to infiltrate from the missing agent. This was the base where Leonairde's 'ore carriers' were currently being assembled and made ready for flight, in the utmost secrecy.

Eva advanced toward the desk and the two men stood before it moved aside to let her see the chart spread on top of the desk before her. As Eva surveyed the chart she noticed for the first time, an irregularity on the cuffs of the blue serge jacket The Captain was wearing. By resting his weight on his knuckles he had inadvertently made clear to her three bands on the cuffs which were slightly darker than the rest of the jacket, where something obviously had been removed, albeit some time ago. Fearing her silence might have drawn attention to her study of the Captain's clothing Eva quickly dropped her gaze and stared intently at the Aerial navigation chart before her. It showed much of Western Europe, from the Southern Coast of Spain to the tip of the British Isles and from the Atlantic coast of Iberia to the German border with Poland. Although it was not particularly detailed it identified the major cities and, more importantly any which was equipped with a sizeable airdock, along with the major trading routes. Eva quickly found the place she was searching for and she jabbed at it with her finger.

'Here.' She said simply 'San Denis-en-Val, just outside Orléans.'

'Hm.' The Captain grunted in reply 'Looks like our best bet would be going via The Hague and Amiens as Der Adler before docking at Orléans and we'll see about obtaining transport from there.' He said, picking up a pair of dividers and beginning to measure out the distance; 'Very well then, to your duties, I should have a heading for the helmsman momentarily and we'll most likely arrive the day after tomorrow. Please leave me and Miss Wood to discuss the more intricate details of the Mission.' Crabbe clicked his heels together and nodded whilst the Boson merely nodded.

'I'll make a start on the necessary papers immediately, sir.' Crabbe said before turning and exiting the Cabin, followed the bulk of the Boson. Once they were alone The Captain turned to Eva and fixed her with his steely gaze.

'I feel I should inform you at this point that my orders' Eva noted that he spat the word out, as if saying it left a bad taste in his mouth whilst withdrawing a sheaf of papers from his jacket's inner breast pocket. He continued; 'say that I am to accompany you during this mission. Most likely as protection, since you'll have to make contact with this group of local dissents that it appears your missing agent was working with.' He explained, rapping a particular paragraph on the top sheet with his finger as he spoke.

'Yes, I know. My orders included this stipulation.'

'Did it also include that myself and my crew shall be rewarded for any information we can provide about the Aeronautique Nationalè, mainly new and or experimental weapons and current or future ship deployments? As such I intend to accompany you into the base where these airships are being assembled. I should say I'd also be of use for identifying any individuals of high rank present.'

'Very well Captain.' Came Eva's terse reply.

'Furthermore' The Captain continued, beginning to pace up and down behind his desk 'since for much of the duration of this mission you shall be onboard MY ship, you shall at all times abide MY decisions and obey all my orders. What is more you shall at all times refer to me by my rank or simply as Sir, is that clear Miss Wood?'

'Yes, perfectly.' Having him continually call her 'Miss' was starting to irritate Eva and she decided to tackle this habit immediately;

'Although, Captain, if you wish me to refer to you by your rank then I would have to ask that you in return refer to me by mine. And as such I would very much appreciate you referring to me as Agent Wood, rather than merely as Miss. Wood.' The Captain stopped his pacing and turned to face Eva;

'Why should I do that? I fail to see what other identity you could possibly apply to me, Miss Wood.' The Captain made sure to stress the 'Miss' and was somewhat pleased by the reaction he gained. Eva replied, barely keeping her temper in check;

'I am more than aware of your true identity Sir, or would you prefer me to call you James Harrier?' The Captain's face took on a look of complete surprise before he recovered and he slowly removed his still burning pipe from his mouth, laying it on the desk with his right hand, showering the chart with ash, whilst he reached for his drink with his shaking left hand, taking a deep swig the moment it reached his lips. Afterwards, he returned to resting the knuckles of his right hand on top of the desk and letting out a long, loud sigh. Whilst retaining the glass in his left he said simply;

'So, you know, do you?'

Eva replied;

'So, you do not deny it? I had suspected for some time that your true identity is James Harrier, the notorious Airship Pirate.'

'Yes, I am he. Anything else you'd like to ask?' The

man gloomily responded. Eva replied;

'No, I am more than familiar with you and your crew's exploits. Including most notably; robbing banks throughout Britain and the Empire, stealing shipments of gold and diamonds from South Africa and India, attacking merchant Airships in both the Atlantic and Caribbean' The Captain's face hardened into a scowl as he lowered the glass from his lips

'And of course, your most infamous crime was the destruction of HMA Fearless five years ago.'

'THAT'S A LIE!' Harrier screamed, throwing the glass he still held in his hand against the wall, where it shattered into countess shards, each one glinting in the light. The glass' collision with the partitioning wall shook it as a brown stain materialised on the wall, leaving long, snaking tendrils as the fluid ran downwards. 'I didn't wreck that ship. Nor did I attack any of those British ships that they claim I destroyed.' Dropping his head low he failed to notice Eva reaching down to her shoe and removing a stiletto knife from where it was hidden in the heel. Quickly rising she pointed it at Harrier's throat, and moving around the desk she began speaking with steely resolve;

'You expect me to believe you?' Harrier looked up as she advanced on him and slowly began backing away 'There were dozens of witnesses who saw your ship, *this* ship, ram the Fearless and send all those men to their graves, including him.' Eva halted and removed a locket from around her neck and after opening it, placed it on the desk. Harrier, barely taking his eyes off the shining blade, inches from his throat slowly reached out and looked at the portrait inside. It showed a young, fair haired man in naval uniform.

'Who was he?' Harrier asked 'Your Husband? Brother?'

'He was my fiancée.' Eva retorted pressing the knife closer to Harrier's exposed throat. He leaned back to avoid having the blade penetrate his neck. 'Give me one good reason why I shouldn't avenge him and all those men who died that day by slitting your miserable throat right here and now.'

'So, you think you were the only one to lose someone that day?' Eva was puzzled by this remark and stayed her hand as Harrier continued;

'I lost my beloved in that damn collision as well. But I lost much more than just her that day. I lost my life! My family, my position, my business, even my freedom. All those men did.' Pointing at the door leading out to the deck; 'You think I care about dying? I welcome it! I'd do almost anything to be reunited with her again. I'd finally be free from this tortuous existence. We didn't choose this life, we were forced into it.' Eva wilted slightly in the face of this violent outburst from the now red-faced Captain, holding his nose high, with the veins in his neck quivering and Eva was struck by the man's similarity to his feathered namesake. The Captain saw an opportunity

and took it in a moment. His hand shot up and grabbed Eva's wrist and he began twisting it outwards, before he spoke with a voice like a winter frost;

'Alright you little tart, drop it!' Eva let out a sudden yelp in pain as Harrier twisted her wrist further causing her to drop the knife, which fell to the desk with a clatter. Still holding her wrist tightly, Harrier drew the woman closer to him and looked deep into her round face, before he spoke through clenched teeth, spraying spittle;

'Don't think I didn't know about that damn thing. You're not the first one to try it.' With that he threw her violently to the floor. Eva lay dazed for a moment on the cabin floor. She gathered her senses and lay perfectly motionless, staring at the bare boards beneath her, fearing further blows or punishment may be forthcoming from the now silent Harrier. It was only when she realised that all she could hear was the scratching of a pen and she felt that nothing further would be done that she felt safe enough to move. As she slowly rose she could feel a bruise beginning to form on her cheek where it had collided with the deck, as well as a severe stinging in her wrist where Harrier had held her. Thankfully, she thought, as she probed her mouth with her tongue and ran her hands lightly over her face, there wasn't any blood, and nothing felt broken. When she rose fully and turned, smoothing her dress and trying to remove the dust from it, she found Harrier leaning over his desk, scribbling furiously on a small piece of paper. When he had finished he stood up and called;

'Josiah!'

The boy came running into the Cabin as though he had been listening at the door and presented himself to Harrier, standing, smartly before the man's desk.

'Give this to the Helmsman, that's our heading. Tell him I said to follow it until morning. You understand?'

The boy nodded vigorously in mute reply.

'Well then get to it.' Harrier instructed. Eva watched this short exchange in silence and as the boy exited Harrier dropped himself into the chair behind the desk and a scowl crossed his face as he took in the knife still sat on the desk before him. He casually picked it up and began toying with it as he addressed Eva;

'So,' he began 'what was it that gave my identity away?'

'Well,' Eva replied 'to be honest nothing did. It was more of a suspicion than anything else.' Harrier's eyebrows rose in curiosity and he gestured for her to continue 'There was one thing in particular which made me almost certain I had seen your face before, but I wasn't sure of your identity until I had this forwarded to me from London, when my superiors confirmed you were connected to James Harrier.' Eva paused to remove a piece of paper, yellowing with age, which she had earlier rolled into a tube around her arm and hidden beneath her sleeve. She stepped forward and presented it to Harrier who took it without making a sound. He gazed upon it

and grunted in response;

'They never could get my ears right.' The paper showed two detailed sketches of a man's head and shoulders, beneath a banner of block text which read:

WANTED,  
FOR MURDER AND ACTS OF PIRACY  
'CAPTAIN' JAMES HARRIER  
AND ANY AND ALL OF HIS ASSOCIATES

Beneath the two sketches in smaller print it read:

SUBSTANTIAL REWARD AVAILABLE FOR ANY  
INFORMATION LEADING TO HIS CAPTURE

The two sketches, one of them from a frontal viewpoint, the other was of the man's profile. He was quite young, with dark hair and a prominent Roman nose and large ears sticking out from the side of his head, like a pair of jug handles. It was clear that the man in the image was Harrier, even though in reality, his nose was straight and his ears were much flatter and closer to the sides of his head. In the bottom right of the poster there was a date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 1882.

'It was your profile which gave you away. Your nose is fairly remarkable.' Eva explained

'At least it's better than the one they replaced it with.' Harrier responded as he removed a sheaf of paper from a drawer and placed it next to the one Eva had produced. It was another poster almost identical to the first, although it was dated the previous month, the text was the same but the image was decidedly different. Here there was only one sketch showing the man from the front, it was certainly more detailed than either of the first two. But in this picture the bottom half of the man's face was obscured by a handkerchief, the top of which sat halfway up his nose. Eva studied the poster carefully, wondering how Harrier could move about so freely when this poster, showing more than a passing likeness to original was seen on almost a daily basis by millions across the Empire.

'Now, Miss Wood.' Harrier's voice broke the silence, as he checked a watch, which seemed to be secured to his left wrist by a broad leather strap 'I do believe supper shall soon be served in the Wardroom across the companionway. You shall be dining with myself and my officers.'

'Very well then.' She responded and turned on her heel to exit the room when she was halted by Harrier calling out;

'Miss Wood.' Eva turned to face him, he leaning over the desk whilst holding her knife by the blade in his outstretched right hand 'I assume you would like your knife back.'

This time she accepted the 'Miss.'

## INTERVIEW <

# THE SANGUINE GRYPHON

BY J. PARKIN

The Sanguine Gryphon is a fashion design outfit from Maryland, the United States. We interviewed one of their proprietors.

*Please tell our readers what first interested you in steampunk? What about it appeals to you?*

I think it's the anachronistic aspect that I like best. I wear historical clothing in my daily life, sometimes accurate, more often historically inspired, anything from about 1300 to 1900. Often I am asked about its historical accuracy or even picked at by people pointing out inaccuracies, and I find it somewhat comical. I'm not seeking to live in a different era, merely to dress any way that makes me happy. The steampunk movement embraces that attitude, picking from history anything it wants and mixing it together any old how. It borrows without being enslaved.

*Do you have a personal steampunk aesthetic or do you feel happiest dipping in and out of a wide range of historical periods*

I'm not especially drawn to the steampunk aesthetic, I like to range through history. Lately I've been increasingly drawn to the late Victorian period and am quite fond of wearing a corset and bustle, but not so inclined to dress it up with more sci-fi elements. I like the Victorian silhouette, particularly the mid- to late 1870s, the so called 'natural form' era, though of course there was nothing natural about it. It was great fun to dip into steampunk for our fall pattern line, though, and I really enjoy throwing myself into a particular aesthetic for the sake of design. That foray probably has had an overall influence on my choice of dress, but subtle.

*How did the steampunk collection*

*come about? How did it evolve?*

Funny, I can't recall whose idea it was, maybe my partner Sarah's, maybe one of several of our employees who are circus and sideshow performers and do some steampunk specific events. It was only our second pattern collection and the first hadn't had a very clear theme. That's fairly normal for knitting collections, they tend not to have obvious themes, or they have themes like 'color,' 'texture,' 'asymmetry,' that sort of thing.

When the steampunk idea was floated, we jumped all over it, because we both really like the aesthetic and because we saw that it was a great way to approach a pattern line, giving it a very strong theme like that. Designers responded amazingly when we put out the call for submissions, coming out of the woodwork with ideas. To my knowledge, none of them are particularly involved in anything steampunk but the aesthetic seemed

to speak to so many people. I suspect part of it is the whimsicality—we got a lot of excited response from designers who feel that there isn't much room for whimsicality and fun in the traditional venues for publication and they were thrilled that we were looking for it. Since then, we've looked for similarly aesthetically driven and off beat themes.

Once the pattern ideas started to roll in, we were even more inspired, hunting for the perfect buttons, jewelry and costume ensembles for each pieces. We spoke to jewelry makers and other artisans who were generously willing to loan accessories, and we had a grand time figuring out ways to alter clothing we already had on hand to make it more steampunk. Finally, we had the good fortune to live not far from the amazing Tuckahoe Steam and Gas Association, which happens to be run by our landlord's family and houses an incredible collection of steam engines and machines. They kindly allowed us to hold our photoshoot there and we all ran wild, climbing over machines and finding fun ways to showcase the knitting in that setting.

*Sounds almost serendipitous! I think that's part of what makes the aesthetic speak to people; the ability to express themselves in a way which is a little off kilter, more personal and, as you put it, whimsical.*

*Your latest collections have been inspired by literature and art nouveau. Do you think you'll be doing a second steampunk collection, or a dieselpunk one, perhaps?*



I am all about whimsical self expression! Today I've come to work dressed as a pirate, complete with boots, ruffed shirt, and dramatic bodice. Life's too short for jeans and t-shirts.

We haven't specifically planned another steampunk collection, though we've been asked about it. I think it's been the most exciting theme for our customers yet. As for dieselpunk, however—our planned theme for this fall is *film noir*, which I think could easily venture into dieselpunk. We want to make the photoshoot an actual story this time, perhaps a murder mystery which plays out through the sequence of photographs, and is left to our customers to solve. We have a good location picked out: a local hotel which dates to the turn of the century, and are currently on a quest for a gorgeous 1930s or '40s car to borrow. I'm looking forward to seeing designs for knitwear inspired by the trim silhouettes of the period, tailored jackets and fitted skirts, with



the occasional more dramatic evening piece. I'm also excited about naming potential. I think we could draw well from the slang of the first half of the twentieth century. One planned design is for a pair of thigh high stockings, to be entitled "Gettaway Sticks;" a 1920s American slang term for legs.

*Does your interest in the genre run over into the color ways of the yarn you are known for?*

Our yarn color inspirations come from pretty much everywhere; nature, paintings, books, architecture, anything's fair game. For the fall line we definitely thought about colours that would work well for steampunk, especially beautiful shaded rusts and bronzes. Sarah spent I don't know how long at one point obsessing over creating a colour like oxidising copper.

*Final question: do you have a favourite design or two from the steampunk collection?*

I don't think I'm allowed to count Tirtoff as a favourite, because it's my design. Industrial Revolution I badly want to knit and loved modelling in the shoot. Besides that, I really love the Kitty Hawk mitts and the Scavenger Skirt blows me away; both are definitely in my knitting queue. •

Visit [sanguinegryphon.com](http://sanguinegryphon.com) to learn more.

## L'ENFER, C'EST LES AUTRES

A RANT BY HILDE HEYVAERT

**N**O ONE SAID IT BETTER THAN THE FRENCH: hell really is other people at times.

I'm sure every steampunk has found themselves in this situation, same with anyone of a lesser known subculture. It's always a challenge encountering people that have "questions." Sometimes you encounter people that genuinely are interested in your style: the kind of friendly people you spend ages talking to and that you enjoy explaining steampunk to and what it means to you. Then there are polite and friendly people that respectfully want to know about it. They're never a bother explaining things to either, even though you'll probably spend less time talking to them.

And then there are—pardon my bluntness—the ignoramus and the total douche. I'm sure everyone has encountered them at some point. Those that are only faking interest to have a laugh about it, to try to mock you right in your face. Those that ask questions because they're expected to and think it makes them look clever,

interesting and intelligent. Which it doesn't, it just makes them as annoying as they were from the start. It gets worse when you encounter people that are doing it in some kind of official capacity. Let's say, a subsidized youth culture website or a magazine. (Not this magazine obviously or our chief editor would go from benign dictator to actual dictator of evil doom, and rightfully so.)

Let me regale you all with the tale of what happened at the newest addition to conventions in Belgium (not that we have many to start with being a country the size of a handkerchief): the Antwerp sci-fi, fantasy and horror convention. Which was generally awesome by the way.

I was there with my boyfriend and a close friend. Said close friend tends to go to cons in an assimilated Starfleet costume. I had decided to make a steampunk inspired pilot costume for the occasion, because I'm a Trekkie at heart. (I blame my mother.)

My friend is stopped for photos a lot, which isn't a

surprise due to the awesomeness of his costume. Seeing I was wearing black and yellow too, we got stopped together quite a few times.

At one point we were stopped by a guy and a girl somewhere in their twenties. They're all "can we take your picture?"

We: of course you can.

She proceeds to take our photo, he proceeds to fumble with his camera.

She: did you make your own costumes?

My friend explains that he bought the clothes but that he made his own Borg tech. I tell them I made mine and notice that the guy is still pointing the camera at us.

So I ask: are you filming this? They explain they are, mention the publication and I tell them I know about it. Which prompts him to ask, "You *know* about it?"

Note that he didn't seem surprised that someone knew about their publication. He was surprised that the person in front of him wasn't a complete vapid.

Up to that point I had thought they really needed to buff up their way of dealing with people but now I'm starting to get annoyed.

I politely repeat that I indeed know the thing they work for. He: but *how* do you know about it?

I mentally sigh, deeply. I did consider just pointing out to them that they were mentioned on the youth channel of national TV. But of course then I'd have to explain why I was watching that in the first place because there isn't a single adult on this planet that likes cartoons! [/sarcasm]

Deciding to try to lift his shock that a female blonde can indeed possess a working brain I go for another road and explain to him that I used to write for a youth magazine for several years. (Which I did.) This seemed to satisfy the both of them.

Then they decided that they needed to be "interesting."

Now if you work for something like that I totally get that you have to or want to ask questions, but seriously, ask some proper questions and don't be stupid and insulting to people.

Her: are you friends? "I mean, outside of conventions."

Me: of course we are, being friends just for this would be really strange.

Him: you know, it's interesting to see people older than the average guest, if I can say it like that.

Me thinking to myself: I'm fine with you pointing out that we aren't teenagers but seriously you don't have to do it with that arrogant smile nor with a tone implying we have no business being here.

At this point the girl gives this stupid little laugh and decides to just point blank ignore my friend (who is older than I am. I am 30 but look younger, I declined telling them my actual age).

Her (focusing on me): do you have hobbies?

Me: yeah, steampunk mainly.

She attempts to get it right a couple of times before saying something that sounded suspiciously like "freemprunk."

At this point my boyfriend, who had stood next to us witnessing the entire ordeal had to walk off to the other side to laugh. A lot.

My friend, who was still standing next to me was giving the "interviewer" a look that said, "you did not just say that." I'm pretty sure I was shooting daggers at that point.

I took another deep breath and slowly repeated myself: "steam – punk." So she produced another little laugh and said, "Oh well, that's new too, then."

I had to mentally count to ten to stop myself from going on a tangent.

He, instead of wondering what it was, asks what's my opinion of steampunk then?

Me (being totally and utterly fed up at the way they were acting): you know what, why don't you google for the *Gatehouse Gazette*, you can read my opinion every issue of that magazine.

Him (using the tone that people reserve for the chronically stupid): but I want to hear *your* opinion.

Me: like I just said, you can read it in *every* single issue. I write for it every issue, you can just read it and you'll know all you ever wanted to know about steampunk.

At this point the guy gets out his "notebook", which was the kind of dire pad that would make every self respecting journalist that saw it cringe. Seriously I'm not saying you should carry the Moleskine reporter or somesuch, but do carry something that isn't falling apart.

He looks at me expectantly and says "*Gatehouse Gazette*, is that written in the French or Dutch way?"

I just know I must have given him one of my blank and very unimpressed looks. "*Gatehouse Gazette*, that's *English*."

He laughs a little. "Oh yeah!"

Well they have my name and my email, I doubt I'll ever hear from them. And I doubt they'll ever find this magazine either. I tried to find them online and I couldn't.

And this ladies and gentlemen, has been brought to you by request of our chief editor, Nick Ottens, who was rather amused by my tale of convention woes and annoyance. I know we're probably enforcing stereotypes here, but sometimes you just have to share this kind of thing with the world and allow others to have a bit of a laugh at the daftness we encounter in our daily lives.

I just wish these two had been genuinely interested so I could have told them about steampunk. I could have tried more, sure, but when someone isn't interested to start with you can't make them listen anyway. Thankfully there's awesome and honestly interested folks enough and sublime fellow steampunks to make it all worthwhile. Laugh at the fools, have fun with the great people! •

## ROARING TWENTIES «

# THE LOST GENERATION

BY TOME WILSON

**F**Ollowing in the horsemen's wake of World War I, the story of America in the 1920s was one of a country weaving itself together from the tatters of plague and poverty. It was a time when the citizens danced to Nero's fiddle while the republic battled its self made robber barons and gentlemen thieves. It was a time when the populace cried out and told the heavens that no matter what was thrown their way, they were still alive. It was the Roaring Twenties.

The driving force of the decade was the country's embrace of technology and its willingness to forge ahead toward a better future. While the Great War brought great suffering, it necessitated an industrialized world and forced an augmentation of the lifelines of transportation, communication and medical science, alongside all the other cornerstones of modern civilization. Within a few sparse years, America turned those advances to celebration and danced in the weaning shadow of war's spectre to the sounds of Jazz and ragtime.

The dance of this age was no waltz either. The youth culture of America stole the nation's spotlight while the older generations who were rigamortised by Victorian customs and formalities, stood aghast as the last icebergs of their traditions eroded from civility. These youngsters of the Lost Generation refused to listen to those same adults who, less than a handful of years ago, almost destroyed the world. For the first time in America, the younger generation lead the dance as they bonded together into cliques and looked to each other rather than the past for direction and inspiration. They built the world as they saw it, and in return, the world entertained their radical notions of reform.

That's not to say that the children were left to run the house alone. While the Lost and the flappers were playing their games, the last vestiges of Victorian restraint were fueling the careers of outlaws in the name of the Volstead Act. Barely a year before women could stride into the voting booths alongside men, the law proclaimed liquor to be the root of evil. Gangsters and common citizens alike did their best to prove this

sentiment, and war's presence was felt once again. Returning from the front, a great number of men reentered America and found their old jobs no longer waiting for them. With no work and no money to make ends meet, many ex-soldiers turned their skills (and guns) to crime. These men pressed against the law with ruthless organization and mechanized rifles that had never barked before in a city street. Once again, warfare pressed a need for technology and Uncle Sam obliged. The Roaring Twenties turned these smugglers and bank robbers into speakeasy folk heroes but quick advances within the once feeble FBI allowed justice, however meager, to be served.

It's not enough to focus on the decadence though, for the 1920s were a time when America perfected its wartime technologies. Advances in building and city planning shifted the population to urban centers. Henry Ford's Model-T finally became the true successor to real horsepower. Flying machines were no longer made of paper and cloth but of lightweight metals allowing intercontinental travel for the masses. Electricity

ceased to be a luxury and flowed along the streets into every home that wanted it.

In all, the 1920s were exemplified by a break from tradition. The Lost saw that the ways of the past lead only to death and rushed to build their own sandcastle kingdoms from the ashes of war. They fought just as hard as any soldier but they were fighting to build something new and something better. They were creating a new society that could have never stood on the rotten foundations left by their parents. So, they built, and they danced to forget the sins of the past.

The celebration ended however on October 29, 1929 when the stock market crashed. Caused by the same banks that gilded the era for a decade, the crash restarted the cycle of poverty and financial depression that would hold America in the dust for another seven long years. •



Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a reverie of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken...

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise* (1920)

# COLUMN « GENTS

BY IAN BRACKLEY

THE CONVENTION WEEKEND HAS ENDED. THE goggles are back in the drawer, the ray gun is back on the shelf, the silk and brocade finery hung in the closet. Now the historically inclined gent is faced with perhaps his most challenging sartorial quandary: Monday morning at the office.

If you are fortunate enough to have a day job that requires you to wear a suit or at the very least a tie you may be wondering how to express your inner Edwardian, how to have some fun and take some delight in dressing for your place of employ.

There is a great misperception that traditional 'Western' men's daywear or "business attire" is boring. Well, rather the misperception is that it *is required* to be boring. The great majority of ready to wear suits produced by multinational garment manufacturers are indeed very boring but classic men's dress should not be understood or defined by its most degraded and debased form.

Internet forums are loaded with advice on the pros and cons of black suits, grey suits, the inoffensiveness of blue, the merits of two buttons or three, single or double breasted, but there is very little to amuse the eye of the casual beholder.

Clearly the white collar Neo-Victorian must look further afield if he aims for self expression through his clothes. It is the opinion of this author that until a gent is in sufficient pocket to command bespoke or made to measure clothes that the best way to dress for the professional sphere while expressing his retrocentric leanings is a just barely remembered mode from the previous century, the director's suit.

Alternately known as the stroller, 'stockbroker's rig' or Stressemann it consists of a black lounge coat, a grey, black or cream coloured waistcoat (vest) and light grey or striped grey trousers. In combination, these components present a day mode that is at once recognized as formal but not so formal as to be overdressed. It offers a refreshing break from the uniformity of the matching trousers and coat. The director's suit is a fossilised cultural memory of late Victorian fashions that will meet the office's professional dress code and set the wearer apart from the crowd all while offering dignified deference to tradition.

The advantage of the director's suit is that the vests and trousers can be alternated to provide variety; differing hues and cuts of waistcoats and varying shades and patterns of stripes or even checks for the trousers

can be paired with one or two basic black coats. Coupled with the opportunity for subtle expression afforded by varying ties and pocket squares, the director's suit need never look exactly the same twice in a fortnight.

The inclusion of a waistcoat makes a decisive connection with the past in the popular imagination, as the popularity of waistcoats amongst the steampunk set can attest. A further advantage is that in hotter weather the jacket can be left off while the form defining waistcoat still leaves the impression that the gentleman is 'dressed'. In order to make the overall impression appear cohesive, make certain the waistcoat comes down low enough and that the waistband of your trousers are worn high enough (just below your natural waist and not your hips) so that your belt buckle is covered. Nothing derails a waistcoated suit more than the unfortunate appearance of a man's shirt through a gap between waistcoat and trousers.

Solid colours are advocated for waistcoats intended for office wear. This will avoid clashing with striped trousers and prevents the ensemble from being overly loud. A good round selection will run the gamut from black to charcoal, varied shades of grey through to cream and tan for summer. Three or four pieces are perfectly adequate to provide variety.

Once waistcoats are settled upon, attention should next be turned to the coat.

The lynchpin of the director's suit should be the coat, (in some places called a "blazer" if there are not matching trousers). Here is where you should be prepared to spend a little. If you find a suitable jacket 'off the peg', spend the bit extra to have it "taken in" and its fit improved. Keep a wary eye out for low armholes on jackets and avoid these like the plague. When buttoned, your coat's shoulder pads should not rise towards your ears when you lift your arm. It is a misconception that a low, roomy, cavernous arm hole is more comfortable. The opposite is actually true. The limitation of natural bodily movement created by a low armhole is partly the reason why many young men subconsciously dislike wearing suit coats and doff them at every chance. It may take some looking to find a quality black coat. Start off on the right foot by setting one's standards above "close/good enough" and bear in mind that a well selected coat should last you several years of daily wear.

Other touches of traditional material culture to play around with are cufflinks. Described by Toronto author Russell Smith as "a poor man's sports car", cufflinks can make the humblest office clerk look and feel like Charles Foster Kane. Another charming antique touch is the collar bar or collar pin. This slender metal clip fastens to the collar points of the shirt underneath the necktie. A fossilised relic from the days of detachable collars that needed to be buttoned and pinned in place, the tie bar enjoyed a nostalgic revival in the 1960s. Both tie bars and cufflinks are readily and cheaply found in many antiques and vintage markets. One can rapidly build a collection of these articles. Differing types of metal should be pared

with differing shades and pattern of necktie. These amusing pieces of male jewellery can enhance the depth of one's personal presentation. They also make for a wonderful excuse to go vintage hunting.

Another accessory to quietly hint at one's historical bent is the lapel pin. Here is where subtlety is called for. Many local artisans in cities the world over have long cordoned on to the theme of using clockwork gears and other salvaged mechanic material, a good number of these pieces are quite tastefully and professional executed. *Etsy* is full of them but I would suggest first visiting local one of a kind shows, craft fairs and vendors at convention stalls in order to see a piece in person to inspect it for quality as well as scale. To be effective, a lapel pin should be very discrete. There is a present trend (originating with Japanese pop stars as far as I can tell) of men sporting lapel jewellery so large as to be considered a broach. These larger, more extravagant pieces are distracting and sorely out of place during daylight hours. They are better left for evening socializing or venues where such loud ornamentation is more appropriate.

A final word on the topic of male jewellery must be reserved for the pocket watch. In an age when the cell phone and PDA have taken the place of a single function timepiece, the adoption of a pocket watch, either electric or clockwork, is a popular signifier of one's retro

dandyish leanings. Here I will say resist the urge to hang your watch chain from your waistcoat pocket while at the office. This reading of obsolete fashion is cutting things rather close and risks pushing the ensemble into the realm of outright costume. Note that the majority of mass produced pocket watch chains are fitted with a *belt* clip. Don't work against the design, put your watch in your front trouser pocket and save the Mr Monopoly display of sparkling chain for the club after work.

If however, you insist on wearing your chain in your vest pocket, then acquire a proper watch fob.

What makes dressing for real life so very much more challenging than dressing up as a fantasy character archetype is that one must paint with more narrow brushstrokes.

Traditions, customs and style guide outlines, often misunderstood as codified hard and fast 'rules,' do not limit self expression through dress: They provide a framework, a language through which one speaks most effectively. Within a long established medium such as men's business attire, it is the small variations that have the greatest impact.

A working knowledge of the terrain, coupled with a view from the historical perspective allows the retrocentric gent to navigate dressing for the white collar world with a timeless style and grace. •



From left to right: A 1902 successor to the Victorian antecedent to the director's suit, worn with lounge instead of bodycoat and grey checked trousers; The director's suit at its most formal c. 1920, note the satin bound edges of the coat, waistcoat and false turnback cuffs; The color scheme imposed on the fashionable cut of the 1930s; A style guide image from the 1950s, demonstrating the longevity of the style.

## INTERVIEW «

# THE LABORATORY OF TIME

BY LORENZO DAVIA

*Laboratory of Time* is the main Italian steampunk portal. We interviewed Frederick Von Guss about his many projects and the state of steampunk in his country.

*How did you first learn about steampunk?*

I have always been enchanted by the fantastic and by ancient things; this is a passion that probably my father gave me when he used to take me to see antique shops where I got fascinated by wood and brass. When I was young, like many children, I started with fantasy role games and comics. Eventually I became interested in the fantasy that contained gear machines and similar devices. After some time I learned that it had a name—Steampunk.

Science fiction came in the same period and as I was a fan of science and uchronia, I soon did the math to find out the steam.

*Tell us about Laboratory of Time.*

It's a challenge. It's an attempt to put together all Italian fan and lovers of this genre. We are few and we are widely spread across Italy so there is need for a reference. The forum is a place where to confront ideas, discuss new inventions and initiatives. Something like a Victorian tea room, where artists can meet up and interact.

*Can you tell us something about your initiatives?*

Once a year there is the *Fumetti d'Ottone* ("Brass comics") at the Lucca Comics & Game, the biggest comics and games manifestation in Italy. We had some meetings in downtown Florence and a wonderful excursion on the walls of Lucca, a live role playing game in a steampunk club in Milan and many other projects. I collaborate with many

writers about steampunk inspiration and technical questions about the genre for their tales, but like me, the members of *Laboratory of Time* create, collaborate, elaborate and encourage other people into doing the same.

*Why do you think steampunk is attracting more and more people?*

This is a tricky question. Many of the people attracted by steampunk say, "Oh! Is that what it's called? I did those things for years!" The fact is that people don't search genres like steampunk or cyberpunk but those genres are the result of a personal evolution. Steampunk tells about a positive epoch full of inventions and discoveries. Everyone could do everything. This, in some way, hits our subconscious, and certainly inspires me a lot.

*What do you think about dieselpunk?*  
Strictly speaking, dieselpunk is a branch of steampunk in which the stories are set some years after the invention of the diesel engines and after the diffusion of electric current. I like it! It is, in my opinion, the dark side of steampunk, but like other subgenres, it is only a further subdivision of a genre already detailed and particular.

*What future do you see for the Italian steampunk?*

Frankly, I'm a little worried for Italy. A style doesn't endure if it hasn't any commercial value. But I don't care very much about the future. Many people are attracted to the steampunk movement but it's not a

novelty for them: it is to give a name to their passions.

In Rome a dear friend of us opened the first true steampunk club and this is an important step forward. Many writers and publishers are taking steps forward. I hope this doesn't enter in the wrong heads and becomes a market issue.

*Eighteenth century Italy is virtually absent in steampunk. Why is this, you think?*

Steampunk goes arm in arm with the Victorian age and style, that in Italy was scanty. The stories of Verne, Wells, Doyle have an Anglo-Saxon fashion that is impossible to reproduce, with the same emphasis, in a tale about steamy Italy with Italian names. We have a lot to tell about the Italian eighteenth century but it will never have the desired charm, the one created by the aforementioned authors. Steam is born there, and for this reason it is normal to return to the Victorian roots.

*Recently Edizioni Scudo published the first Italian anthology of Steampunk tales: Steampunk! Vapore Italico. You contributed with a short introduction.*

That has been a wonderful initiative! If I'm not mistaken, it is a lot of years since they published something similar. I'm happy a publishing house was aroused by steampunk. It has been beautiful to collaborate with Luca Oleastri (Edizioni Scudo) for the creation of that volume. I know many writers involved and they are really valid elements.

## COLUMN «

# THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

**F**INDING STEAMPUNK CLOTHES AS AN ADULT CAN be pretty difficult when you're on a budget, but it's manageable. There are plenty of articles and shopping guides floating about on the Internet while browsing at local flee markets and the high street, you can often find wonderful additions to your wardrobe. If you can throw money against it, it becomes even easier to find awesome pieces. And if you can sew, well, then your options are as limited as the materials available at your suppliers.

When it boils down to garb for the little ones, it remains daunting to find good pieces however.

Children grow fast and so it is entirely understandable that people don't want to throw heaps of money at kid's clothing. Especially not as they will only attend events with parents and probably have grown out of their get up within a matter of months.

But fear not, here I am with some handy tips for parents that want to steam up their kids!

If you can sew, knit or crochet, you can of course make lovely pieces yourself in the fabric and colour you prefer. But if you can't do any of these things, you are definitely not out of options.

And even if you're not crafty so to speak, DIY remains an option, the following can be done by anyone that can hold a brush and/or knows a basic sewing stitch. You don't have to be super crafty to alter pieces.

Buy plain basics such as rompers, t-shirts, even jackets, skirts, dresses and trousers and alter them.

Adding a few well placed patches (make sure to use stretch fabric on stretch clothing!) will immediately create that ragamuffin street urchin look.

If you want to go for a print: look through the stencils in your local craft shop. There's plenty out there with imagery, such as keys or airplanes, suitable for the tiny steampunk. Most stencils will even have a little manual on the back explaining how best to use them.

If you want to do gears easy, have a look at the tutorial in this magazine (for those that have a little girl, there's also a bell skirt tutorial that can be used for children as well as adults).

There is a wide variety of colours available in fabric paints, even metallics that will do the job nicely.

Definitely go check out high street shops that carry children's fashion, because fashions for adults often translate through to kid's clothes these days and you may do some sublime and affordable finds there.

Make sure to check chains such as H&M at the end of the year because with the holidays around the corner, there will be many affordable fancier clothes and accessories on sale, often Victoriana inspired pieces that would be awesome to wear all year round or to combine with other pieces into a fabulous wardrobe for your daughter or son.

Whether your are religious or not: springtime, with communions behind the corner, is an excellent time for shopping also, for the same reason as holiday season.

Finding accessories will be a lot easier. Stores with children's fashion carry basic things like (leather) belts and sometimes even cool hip bags, bags and backpacks that work perfectly. If you want goggles specifically for your child, you can buy cheap swimming goggles and repaint them into a more steamy shade. If you can't find the hat you are looking for on the high street, the Internet is bound to offer solace. Bowler and top hats for instance are easy enough to locate online. The same goes for footwear.

In short, with some customizing and shopping both on the high street and the Internet, you will be able to find anything you need to make your child look as steamy and awesome as you do! •



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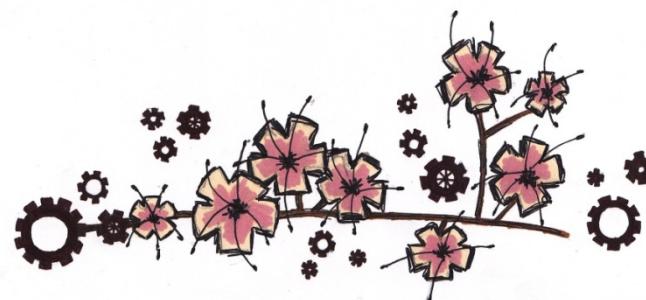
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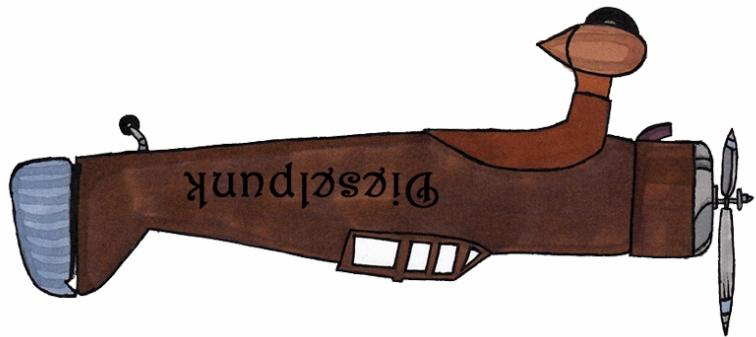
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This year, Hilde Heyvaert provides two steampunk themed **birthday calendars** with each issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette*.

The calendars for July and August will be attached to our next edition.



**HAPPY DIESelpunk DAY!!!**

May 21st, celebrate in style!

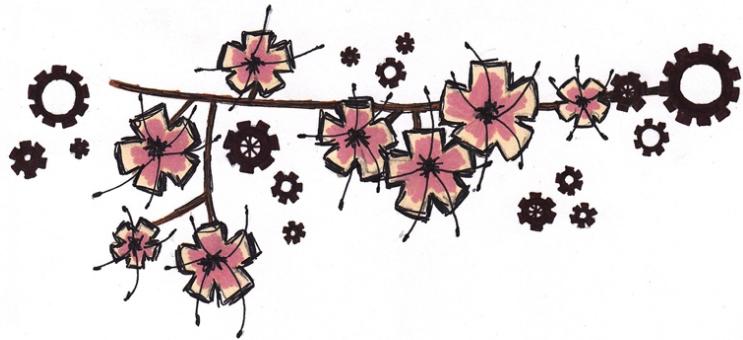
The Smoking Lounge  
<http://www.ottens.co.uk/lounge>

The Gatehouse Gazette  
<http://www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/gazette.php>

Happy Steampunk Day!!!

Happy Steampunk Day!!!

June 14th, celebrate in style!



The Smoking Lounge  
<http://www.ottens.co.uk/lounge>

The Gatehouse Gazette  
<http://www.ottens.co.uk/gatehouse/gazette.php>