

"WHEN THE GEORGIAN GROUD WAS ESTABLISHED A HIGH ORDER OF UPPER CRUST INSOUCIANCE REIGNED

BLAST TROM THE PAST The Young Georgians, Fittrey Square

## On a crisp morning the drawing

room on the pason noble overlooking. Fitmoy Square resouncie with laughter, Seven hierds clamber into silk hose, saucy bodioes and dardier jalone. Sectorical gots approximating our 21st-century idea of 19th-century fashioes. The group then composes their to be photographed under. Reymoth's factors portrayed of that motoricus figure. Lady Worsley, in bet be used a soulet riching habs.

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Gerrath, whose day job as an a counterferor, has his own blos on the Group's distinguished accestry: "When it was established it was a very social set – people like jobs Bergeman rubbed shoulders with Nexcy Mithral, so a high order of upper-crust. iznousiance reigned".

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At our shoot, most of the mirthful dialogue is immends around the various prope employed. Flop-shoot-town Henry Conway makes the most of the opportunity afforded by a random reig be in delighted to have identified as pussy willow. Sophie Edesauth, a driving force helical the movement, betray her day job credentials as a performer and every plaurer in the arch manner is which she doller out ten from an un.

Edmonds and Gernish reach the height of their powers at their Townstroace Parties, whose themse have included royalor, essentiat and heither. The latter's pession for historic architecture has already brimmed over into selection appearances, and he makes no secreof his ambition to do more presenting it seems only a matter of time.

A new generation of informed counter-outrant English ameleurs steps up to the plans.

georgiangroup org.uk: Rillow Cliver's blog at archimiziones blogspot on ak-



OPHIE EDMONDS - WHO

DELIGHT IN ALL THINGS

BTH-CENTURY

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Young Georgians, Fitzroy Square

## On a crisp morning the drawing

room on the piano nobile overlooking
Fitzroy Square resounds with
laughter. Seven friends clamber into
silk hose, saucy bodices and dandies'
jabots – historical garb approximating
our 21st-century idea of 18th-century
fashions. The group then composes
itself to be photographed under
Reynolds' famous portrayal of that
notorious figure, Lady Worsley, in her
brazen scarlet riding habit.

"It's undeniably escapism," says the Young Georgians' chairman Oliver Gerrish, dapperly dressed in a tailcoat rivalling that of the portrait over the chimney piece. "The idea is to bring light-hearted appreciation to a period that defined itself by fun and extravagance."

The group is an offshoot of the parent conservation charity that, since the 1930s, has been championing Georgian architecture.

Gerrish re-established the younger membership circle in 2002 to corral like-minded admirers of all things 18th-century. But while he describes himself as a self-trained architectural historian, it would be folly to assume the group was a coalition of fusty historians. Humour, not pedantry, is the esprit de corps behind their visits to historical sites and gatherings at Six Fitzroy Square for music and dancing.

Gerrish, whose day job is as a countertenor, has his own take on the Group's distinguished ancestry: "When it was established it was a very social set – people like John Betjeman rubbed shoulders with Nancy Mitford, so a high order of upper-crust

insouciance reigned".

The serious undertow which binds the group is its ongoing education in art and architecture from 1700 to 1840. Members' tours range from those of grand piles like Renishaw Hall (seat of the literary Sitwell clan) to meticulously restored Soho town houses. Their appetite for the authentic, and an extensive contacts list, often takes them to places inaccessible to the public gaze, adding to the appeal of membership, which now numbers more than 350.

At our shoot, most of the mirthful dialogue is innuendo around the various props employed. Fop-abouttown Henry Conway makes the most of the opportunity afforded by a random twig he is delighted to have identified as pussy willow. Sophie Edmonds, a driving force behind the movement, betrays her day job credentials as a performer and event planner in the arch manner in which she doles out tea from an urn.

Edmonds and Gerrish reach
the height of their powers at their
Townhouse Parties, where themes
have included royalist, anarchist
and hellfire. The latter's passion for
historic architecture has already
brimmed over into television
appearances, and he makes no secret
of his ambition to do more presenting;
it seems only a matter of time.

A new generation of informed counter-cultural English amateurs steps up to the plate.

georgiangroup.org.uk; follow Oliver's blog at archmusicman.blogspot.co.uk