

Taking The Pith – How To Dress Steampunk

By Mr Peter Harrow, Esq

Steampunk started as a literary sub-genre of science fiction, but is now developing its own sense of style and fashion sense, which is starting to bleed over into mainstream fashion. Science fiction fans as fashion icons, disturbing but true.

Anything Victorian or Edwardian is a good start but here are a few important fashion tips for ladies and gentlemen on how to dress steampunk, or at least fake it for fun.

Clothing for men – Three piece suits, waistcoats, blazers, formal wear (black tie and white tie, which haven't changed much in over a century) are all acceptable, as are pre WW1 military uniforms, lab coats and frock coats. Proper shirts with cuffs and winged collars are encouraged, accompanied by a tie, cravat or bow tie. Natural fibres are preferred so silk, linen, velvet, cotton, leather, fur (including fake), tweed and corduroy are all acceptable.

Clothing for women – Women can go for the whole hooped skirt, corset and bustle look, but can in the alternative utilise any of the men's items set out above.

Hats – Toppers, bowlers, homburgs, military, boaters, fez, flat caps, flying helmets and pith helmets are all standards, and are unisex. Ladies may also utilise miniature top hats and fascinators.

Accessories – Pocket watches, monogoggles, gauntlets, bracers goggles, binoculars, ray guns, canes, respirators, jewellery.

The temptation is just to pile everything on which is the first mistake, most experienced steampunks go for a comprehensive 'look' such as air pirate, military, explorer, mad scientist/inventor, gentleman or lady of leisure, noble etc. See for example King Tupou of Tonga with regard to the last category at :-

[http://www.dailymail.co/news/worldnewsarticle-1040271/Poverty-stricken -Tonga- forgets-woes-day-king-crowned-lavish-ceremony.html](http://www.dailymail.co/news/worldnewsarticle-1040271/Poverty-stricken-Tonga-forgets-woes-day-king-crowned-lavish-ceremony.html)

A true king of steampunk and a very nice ensemble.

Many pictures of the attendees of The Asylum, the UK's First Steampunk Convivial in Lincoln in September 2009 give an idea of what is and what is not acceptable in terms of steampunk apparel, and may be downloaded at ones leisure from the aethernet. I would also recommend Brass Goggles (<http://www.brassgoggles.co.uk/blog/>) as a jumping off point for further research and entertainment in what today's young lady or gentleman is wearing from yesteryear, in an alternate universe.

And... oh yes, don't forget to take your pith helmet with you..