

London letter

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London Letter

Accent on youth

Although the great and dignified stores in the heart of the West End continue to throng with smart and knowledgeable shoppers, the Knightsbridge and Belgravia area across « the other side of the Park » is gradually becoming the smartest shopping venue of London.

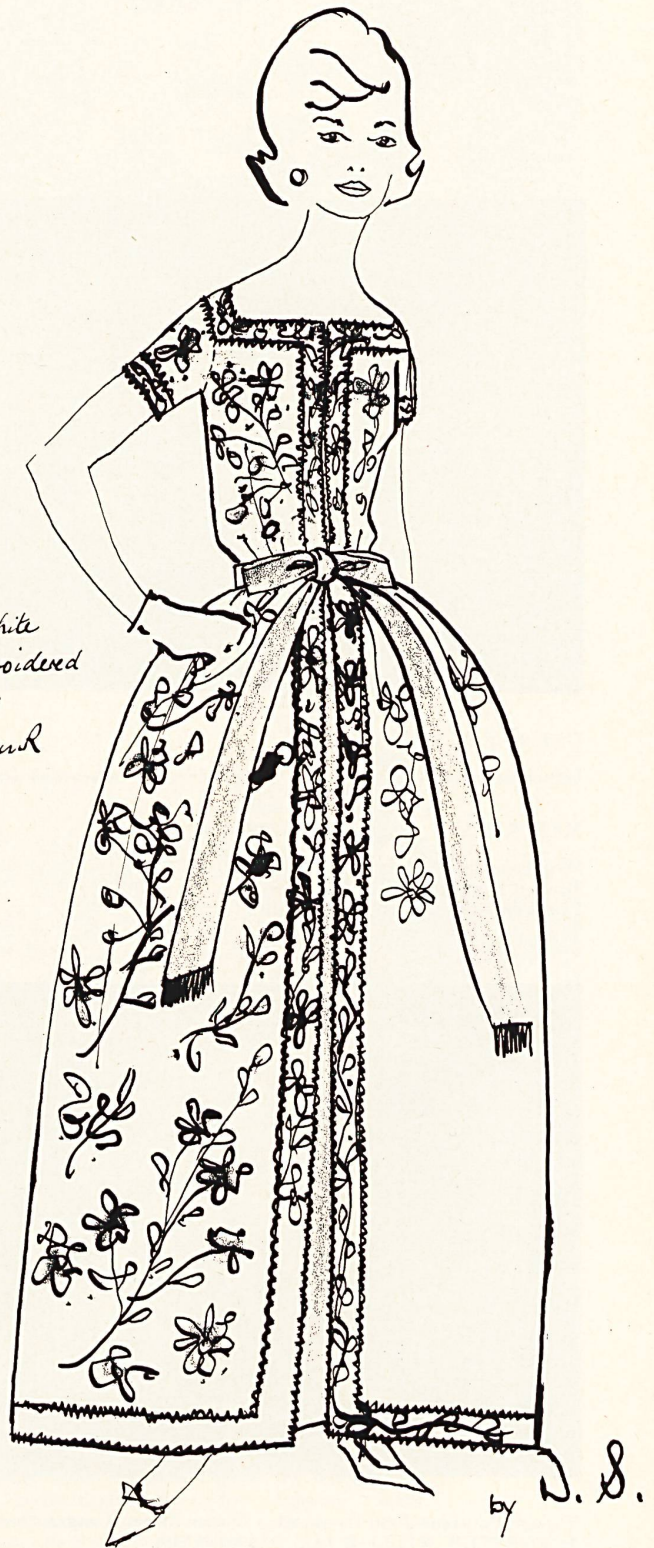
From the heart of Mayfair, one travels through the magnificent gardens of Hyde Park to the popular shopping locale of Knightsbridge with its three huge world-class stores, Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Woollands.

*Ball Dress
in lilac white
St. Gall embroidered
organdy by
Walter Schrank*

WALTER SCHRANK & CO. S. A.,
SAINT-GALL

Organdi de soie brodé
Robe de gala de :
Bellville & Cie, Londres

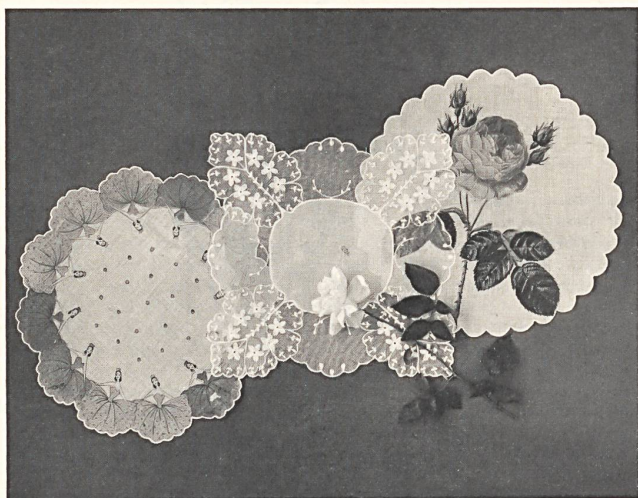
Here, interlacing the « Big Three », all within a short walking distance of each other, one finds the smart and elegant boutiques, and on the outer circle into fashionable Belgravia, where live the rich and the famous, are some of London's foremost interior decorators, antique shops and attention-making young designers.



Bellville et Cie

This gradual swing to the South-west of the Park has brought into prominence two young women designers of completely different metier, Mary Quant, of Knightsbridge, who says, « I design 'beat' clothes, but not for the beatnik », and Belinda Bellville, of Belgravia, who says, « I design high fashion for the young and young-marrieds ».

Mary Quant, hailed as the « young Givenchy » of London, still in her twenties, is married to a charming Englishman, Alexander Plunket-Greene, who is also a designer, and this gay husband-and-wife team is referred to in



UNION S. A., SAINT-GALL

Mouchoir brodé (au centre) — Embroidered handkerchief (center)

MAX KREIER CO., SAINT-GALL

Mouchoirs imprimés (gauche et droite)

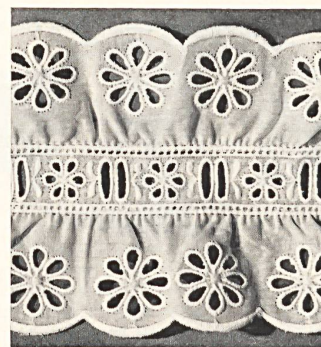
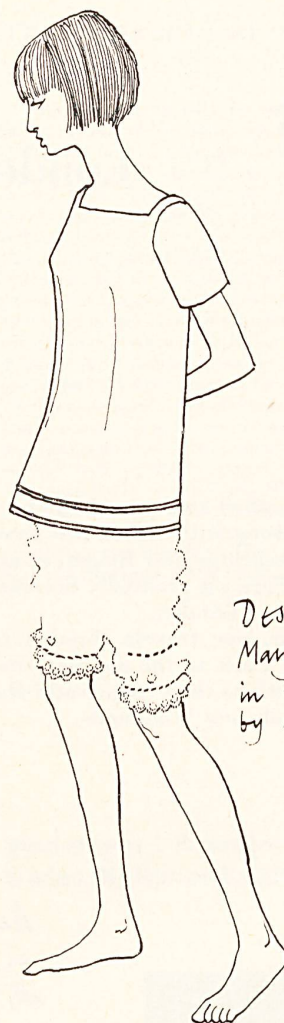
Printed handkerchiefs (left and right)

Photo Brien Kirley at John French



Etalage Boutique John Cavanagh à Curzon Street, Londres, broderies de FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL

John Cavanagh's Boutique display in Curzon Street, London, embroideries by FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL
Photo Brien Kirley at John French



THEODOR LOCHER
& CO., SAINT-GALL

Broderie anglaise
Modèle de Mary Quant
of Bazaar, Londres

*Designed by
Mary Quant of Bazaar
in Swiss Lace
by Locher*

Mary Quant
Photo
Terence Donovan



Belinda Bellville



METTLER & CIE S. A., SAINT-GALL

Piqué blanc — White piqué
Modèle Z. V. Rudolf Ltd., Londres



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL

Broderie genre petit-point — Petit point embroidery
Modèle Graham Smith of Michael
Photo Turnbridge Ltd., London



METTLER & CIE S. A., SAINT-GALL

Coton jaune à bandes blanches frangées — Yellow
cotton with white fringed stripes
Modèle Lachasse, Londres
Photo Turnbridge Ltd., Londres



STOFFEL & CO., SAINT-GALL

A gauche : tissu « Aquaperl » crème, térylène et coton
Left : Cream terylene and cotton « Aquaperl » fabric
Modèle Brigitta
A droite : tissu « Aquaperl » coton
Right : Cotton « Aquaperl » fabric
Modèle Heptex
Photo Photonews Ltd., Londres



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL

Organdi de soie vert brodé de blanc
White embroidered green silk organdie
Modèle Victor Stiebel, Londres
Photo Turnbridge Ltd., Londres



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL

Organdi pure soie blanc rebrodé de fleurs bleues
White pure silk organdie re-embroidered with blue
flowers
Modèle Hardy Amies, Londres
Photo Michael Boys, Londres



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL

Organdi de soie blanc brodé — White embroidered silk organdie
Modèle John Cavanagh, Londres
Photo Turnbridge Ltd., Londres

London as « our fabulous fashion pair ». With two boutiques and a workshop under the banner, Bazaar, they hold fashion shows which literally enchant the press, shock the public, but create tremendous vogue and following.

This season, Mary Quant's look is « the creamy look », and for the first time, she is featuring Swiss fabrics in her avant-garde designs, and two which are attracting considerable publicity are from materials by Reichenbach and Theodor Locher, of St. Gall. The Theodor Locher model is regarded as « great fun » (see sketch page 182).

She told me, « I am using St. Gall fabrics this season because I think they enhance beautifully the creamy look which is so soft and feminine, and around which I am building my entire collection. » This creamy look is her leit motif for Spring, 1961, and is personified by a pale, creamy face with bold eyes and heavy, fringed hair, pale beige fingernails, very pale lipstick and creamy, pale stockings.

Belinda Bellville, who trades as Bellville & Cie, of Belgravia, is of an entirely different school of design. A tall, lean, attractive girl, also in her twenties, her reputation has risen to a high peak as a designer of the romantic gowns for debutantes. Her beautiful party and presentation frocks, shown in a series of parades in March, featured many of the superbly-suitable embroideries and laces from St. Gall and Zurich. Walter Schrank, Forster Willi, Naef and Union all provided inspiration for many of the charming dresses which will be seen at glittering parties during London's social season.

« Swiss materials », said Belinda Bellville, « are ideally suited to these romantic gowns which remain so dear to a young girl's heart. »

The three great shops of Knightsbridge, Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Woollands, continually attract the crowds with their gay, artistically-presented windows and are always thronged with eager shoppers.

Harrods, probably the best-known shop in the world, has great « snob » value with the Royal Warrant firmly announcing its high prestige and a cable address which is simply, « Everything Harrods ». Here, the Royal Family often shop personally, and one can order anything from a model gown to an elephant. Much of the merchandise is international, and Switzerland contributes greatly in both the budget and luxury class. Amongst the model gowns, one finds such well-known names as Haller, Marty and Macola, and there are superbly-cut model suits by Vollmoeller.

On the huge ground floor in a fascinating display of materials, one finds the famous names of Abraham, Stehli, Reichenbach, amongst others, the wonderful embroideries by Naef, Union and Forster Willi, and on display during March and into April is the original painting by Chinese artist Zao Wou-Ki, accompanied by the glorious fabric known as « Soraya » by Mettler, which was inspired by the artist's design. The collection of paintings from the « Artist's Series » will be displayed in top stores throughout London during March and April co-ordinating the paintings and fabrics.

Woollands is a store controlled by youth at the helm — dynamic managing director, Mr. Martin Moss, who is still in his early thirties. He is a charming man with an obviously-international outlook, which lends itself to every aspect of this fascinating store. Here again Switzerland makes its impact ; on the ground floor, the perfectly-finished materials by Abraham, Brauchbar, Hausamann, Stoffel, Reichenbach, Mettler, amongst others, create a colourful impact with the accent on quality and Continental individuality.

The third great store — but by no means the least important — in this trio is Harvey Nichols, a very top-class establishment where one finds extremely elegant garments



A. NAEF & CO., FLAWIL

Organdi de soie blanc brodé en rose
Pink embroidered white silk organdie
Modèle Bellville & Cie, Londres
Photo Turnbridge Ltd., Londres



from the top couturiers, and where the whole theme of this great store seems to express superb taste. In the materials, we find the newest fabrics in winter-weights, mixed silk and wool or terylene and wool of high quality, novelties featuring the lavish use of metal thread, some of the loveliest cotton prints ever made, screen prints, Jacquard designs, Minicare satin cambrics, etc. from such great houses as Schwarzenbach, Heer & Company, Bégé S. A., Mettler, Honegger, Abraham, and Union.

One has a feeling of excellent co-ordination and superb taste throughout this prestige store, and undoubtedly the sure hand and fashion knowledge of Harvey Nichols' fashion director, Michael Gillespie, plays a very big part in this.

Today, with the accent on youth in everything from politics to fashion, the challenge has been universally accepted, and nowhere in London in the fashion field is it so noticeable as on «the other side of the Park», where so many young and vital people are making their presence felt with their artistic flair and their greater knowledge of international fashion into which this season, the great Swiss fabrics are forging ahead in no uncertain manner.

Margot Macrae

L. ABRAHAM & CO. SILKS LTD., ZURICH

Surah pure soie imprimé — Pure silk printed surah
Modèle Roter Ltd., Londres
Photo John French, Londres