

**PRINT SALES GALLERY
3 AUG-8 SEP 2018**

**THE
PHOTOGRAPHERS'
GALLERY**



**DAFYDD
JONES:
THE LAST
HURRAH**

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Snoggers, Hammersmith Palais, London, 1981

British photographer **Dafydd Jones** (b.1956) has worked as social photographer since the early 1980s, contracted by such publications as *Tatler*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Observer*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Times* and *Independent*.

After winning a prize in a photography competition run by *The Sunday Times* magazine in 1981 with a set of pictures of the 'Bright Young Things', Jones was hired by *Tatler* magazine editor Tina Brown to photograph Hunt Balls, society weddings and debutante dances.

This exhibition explores Jones's behind-the-scenes images taken in the years that followed, between 1981-1989, known as 'The Tatler Years'.

"I had access to what felt like a secret world. It was a subject that had been written about and dramatised but I don't think any photographers had ever tackled before. There was a change going on. Someone described it as a 'last hurrah' of the upper classes."

Dafydd Jones's best photograph: Oxford rowers leap through a burning boat

My best shot
Art and design

'The winners of the Oxford University rowing race would set a boat on fire and then - after a long, boozy dinner - jump through the blaze arm in arm'

Interview by Edward
Siddons

Wed 8 Aug 2018 15:48 BST

I took this shot at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1984. I had heard that whoever won the summer rowing competition would set fire to a boat in celebration. Oriel had won seven years in a row at that point, and I remember there were complaints that it was all getting out of hand.

The whole event was slightly mad. After a long, boozy dinner, groups of suited men would run arm-in-arm and jump through the blaze, or dash through the embers in their smart shoes. It was dangerous, but nobody seemed to care.

I went to a state school in Oxford but I was never a student at the university. That world hadn't really been photographed before, and it wasn't easy to get into. I would wander in before last admissions to visitors, stash my camera in my satchel, and blend in with the students. For big events, I would leave notes in students' pigeonholes, asking for contacts and finding out when secret parties were happening and who might be there.



Burning Boat, Oriel, Oxford, 1984

I loved the youthful extravagance of it all but I always had my favourite students. Nigella Lawson was working as a waitress in a local restaurant, and Hugh Grant had only appeared in one small film. They were incredible on camera, largely because they were just so good looking.

It was my shots of that world that gave me my big break. In 1981, the Sunday Times ran a competition for young photographers and one of the categories was "The bright young things". My submission was a series inside Oxford's notorious dining societies. I won and I got a call from Tina Brown, editor of *Tatler* who went on to edit the *New Yorker*. She offered me a job as *Tatler*'s party and features photographer. I couldn't believe it: the shots I had submitted were clearly a send-up of the kind of shots *Tatler* used to publish, but when I started the job something clicked.

cont. over page

There was something endlessly exciting about the world in the 80s that I don't think my later work quite replicated. I moved to New York in 1989 and shot for *Vanity Fair* and the *New York Observer*. The *Vanity Fair* years involved a lot of travelling: movie parties in Los Angeles, the downtown sets in New York City, even the political crowd in Washington. But I never felt as inspired as I had in the UK. There's an irreverence and eccentricity to British parties that I never found over there.

Ironically, perhaps, I'm not much of a partygoer myself. Although I think that helped. A lot of other journalists on that scene lost their way; the constant drinking sent them off the rails.

“I couldn't believe it when Tatler offered me a job. My shots were a send-up of the sort of thing they published”

People today are nervous about photos like this. They're cautious of these moments of excess, the class implications and how images might come back to haunt them in later life. In the 80s, the only students who were worried were those going into the army – nobody else cared. But with the rise of smartphones, I'm not sure that people enjoy themselves in the moment in the same way. I've heard the boat-burning is flatter these days, more supervised.

Some other documentary photographers were quite disparaging about my work. They felt I wasn't critical enough of my subjects. And sometimes it was jarring, photographing parties in stately homes in Kent while the miners were rioting, but I never felt it was my role to judge.

Looking back on this photo, it feels like it perfectly symbolises the 80s: the recklessness and risk-taking of hopping over this immense bonfire in their black tie – it's the big bang, the Thatcher years and the rise of the City.



▲ Photograph: Alamy

Dafydd Jones's CV

Born: Doncaster, Yorkshire, 1956.

Studied: “Foundation course at Oxford Polytechnic taught by [Len McComb](#) and [Humphrey Ocean](#), followed by Fine Art at Winchester School of Art.”

Influences: “[Don McCullin](#), [Bill Brandt](#) and the fantastic photos published in magazines like *Nova*, the *Sunday Times*, *Telegraph* and *Observer* in the 70s.”

High point: “Recently when my work was acquired by the Hyman Collection followed by the Parr Foundation.”

Low point: “Photographing Jackie Onassis's wake and funeral for *Vanity Fair* was the worst.”

Top tip: “Keep all your pictures, including the outtakes.”

● [Dafydd Jones's solo show, The Last Hurrah, is at the Photographer's Gallery Print Room, London, until 8 September.](#)

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VOGUE, 30 JUL 2018

VOGUE

LIFESTYLE

Laura Loves: Laura Bailey's Weekly Edit



SEE

Behind the scenes in the '80s ("The Tatler Years"), from Oxford balls to London high (and wild) society, Dafydd Jones's candid documentary images on show from August 3 at The Photographers' Gallery archive and expose the fashion and politics of decadence in *The Last Hurrah*.

I ran into Dafydd the other day on Ladbrooke Grove and realised I'd never seen him without camera in hand and that he'd never seen me in "real" life, a kid on each arm. He was returning from shooting both the pro- and anti-Brexit marches, forever curious and capturing the spirit - and style - of a nation.

A knowing unknowing. Ever discreet and disappearing into the work, Jones has quietly chronicled the stars and signs of our times for decades. Evocative and emotional, the special boxsets of themed prints (*Sleepers* and *Teenage Parties*) on show at TPG are a collector's dream.

Til September 8.

The Photographer Who Captured Decades of Debauched High Society Parties

Dafydd Jones documented upper class knees-ups for publications like *Tatler* and *Vanity Fair*

AUGUST 14, 2018

TEXT Stevie Mackenzie-Smith

Parties have always been a hotbed for naughty behaviour and fashionable show-offs. As such, party photography remains an essential document of what we wear, how we blow off steam, and how social etiquette has changed with each decade.

In the 1970s, *Village Voice*'s Bill Bernstein captured the vibrancy of the New York disco years, pointing his lens towards diehard dancefloor regulars, rather than just the widely photographed fleeting appearances of peacocking celebrities at Studio 54. He gave us a rich record of what New Yorkers did after their nine to five, when it felt like the world was falling apart. Just a decade earlier, American documentary photographer Elliott Erwitt had immortalised on film the era's relaxing of social barriers with the unlikely coming together of princesses, poets, society queens, celebrities and media moguls at Truman Capote's Black and White Ball in 1966.



Heatwave Ball, Hilton, 1983

“A lot of dramas and important moments in people’s lives happen during parties,” says photographer Dafydd Jones, who has captured British high society knees-ups, debutantes pushed fully clothed into lily ponds, and young and sloppy drunken snogs for over 35 years. He worked with Tina Brown during her time as editor at both *Tatler* and *Vanity Fair*, and a new exhibition of his exuberant black and white portraits are currently on display in **Dafydd Jones: The Last Hurrah**, at The Photographers’ Gallery.

Armed with a discreet camera and a dinner jacket to blend in, Jones, who was living in Oxford at the time, photographed a mischievous slice of young society who were emboldened by the political mood of the day; Thatcher had steadily slashed tax rates for the rich since 1979, and

SELECTED PRESS

ANOTHER, 14 AUG 2018

AnOther

Princess Diana was the most photographed woman in Britain. Hippies were out, and ‘Hooray Henries and Henriettas’ were in. “There was a boom,” Jones explains. “They were living in a bubble. It was cool to be wearing black tie and dressing up in reaction against the relaxed style which had gone before in the 70s.”

Jones’ first assignment for Tatler was in 1981; Tina Brown sent him to The Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown Park Racecourse in Surrey where Lady Diana Spencer, still in her dowdy pie-crust collar and wool skirt phase, was the centre of attention following her recent engagement to Prince Charles. Jones hung back to get an eerily prophetic wide shot of Diana dwarfed by curious onlookers peering from the stands, and half of Fleet Street’s photographers all competing for the money shot. It also got him more freelance work from Brown, during a time when she was reshaping Tatler from an outdated high society rag to a ritzy glossy. “Everyone loved working for Tina,” says Jones, “We were all bereft when she left Tatler in 1983.”

Inspired by the striking works of Don McCullin, Martin Parr’s photographic wit, and German photojournalist Erich Salomon (Jones’ long-running Sleepers series has echoes of Salomon’s famous 1930 portrait *The Hague*, which captured an exhausted statesman falling asleep after a day of negotiations), Jones went on to snap exuberant, mesmerising portraits of fallen partygoers sleeping on the lawns in their ballgowns and coiffured society queens with squabbling lapdogs.



Trinity May Ball, Cambridge, 1984

At first, Tina Brown used to complain that he was photographing too many unknown Sloanes, according to Jones. “I think ideally she wanted pictures of a kind of literary intelligentsia,” he says. But after a news story about an Oxford dining club trashing a restaurant broke, she reacted quickly, printing a feature of Jones’ work that celebrated the Hooray Henries of the day. “Tina was very direct. Always competitive. She’d say so if she didn’t like your work. And if she saw another photographer at a party, she’d get their details and ask them to come into the office.”

Five students hot-footing it away from a burning boat in the quad of Oriel College, Oxford is one of the most arresting photographs in *The Last Hurrah*. The high flames, which look straight out of a film set, are incongruous in a collegiate setting. But they bring to mind a longstanding tradition of the carefree upper classes causing havoc; from the infamous and often callous initiation tests of the Bullingdon Club, to the gratuitous chaos being caused by its alumni in British politics today. In that respect, *The Last Hurrah* is a timely reminder of the decadent annual traditions so beloved by Oxbridge students, making the calling of the EU referendum by the Conservatives, and subsequently Brexit, look like just another inconsequential way to pass the time, like jumping into a pool, thrashing opponents in a boat race, or being elected President of the Union. The London gallerist Chris Beetles recently told Jones that his photographs were

fantastic, but there was just one problem: he couldn't stand the people in them.

"Perhaps the British don't hate the upper classes as strongly today," Jones considers. "Now they view their eccentricity with more affection." He cites the recent success of Patrick Melrose, the television mini-series adaptation of Edward St Aubyn's novels about the British upper classes, and notes the new international monied crowd which has "taken over central London".

Regardless of whether you find the subjects charming or charmless, you're sure to appreciate Jones's portraits as a record of when parties were simply better than they are today. With no smart phones, you could awaken the day after a party with a head-splitting hangover, but none of the accountability of an Instagram story of you on the dancefloor. You might actually talk to people in the queue for the toilets. And if you didn't fancy that, you could retreat into your own world beneath a pile of coats or furniture.



Trinity May Ball, Cambridge, 1984

Henrietta Thompson's Hand, a photograph taken at the Falklands Ball at Grosvenor House in May-fair in 1982, shows a hand mysteriously snaking out from under a white cotton tablecloth, apparently to steal a bottle of red from the table top. It's one of Jones' favourites: "One minute I was photographing a couple kissing nearby, and then I noticed this arm appearing from under the table. Afterwards a girl wearing sunglasses popped out from underneath." He adds: "I don't know for sure what was going on, but there's a story there."

These days the equivalent knees-ups are more stoic affairs. Jones remembers a recent Oxford University May Ball at Worcester College: "There were noise restrictions, so everyone was in a silent disco tent, listening to their own music. There was lots of photo-taking with phones, and it was more restrained and self-conscious than it would have been 25 years earlier." The scene made for surreal photographs, Jones notes, but there was noticeably less interaction between guests. The Last Hurrah is a jolly call to counteract all that and loosen up a little. Jump into a pool, smear your lipstick, or at the very least start a wilder party under the table.

Dafydd Jones: The Last Hurrah is on show at The Photographers' Gallery until September 8, 2018, and the book of same name is out now, published by STANLEY/BARKER.

22 August 19, 2018 The Sunday Times

Home

TIME AND SPACE DAFYDD JONES

The society photographer on why bling is king and the joys of a summer dawn in Cambridge



A painting of Jones by his daughter hangs in his hallway



His beloved Olympus 35 RC

TIMES +

Join us throughout September for a special series of private morning events at RHS gardens across the country – a chance to experience their beauty away from the crowds. Visit mytimesplus.co.uk

I was born near Doncaster in the 1950s, but soon afterwards moved to Carmarthen, Wales. My mother was a teacher, my father a quantity surveyor, and I was the eldest of three children. Then we moved to Oxford when I was about 10, and we lived in several houses around the city.

I suppose I picked up the habit of moving a lot from childhood – I have lived all over London and in New York. But I owe my early success to Oxford, to the photos I took of the university's dining clubs in the early 1980s for a Sunday Times Magazine competition. The pictures led to a job offer from Tina Brown to shoot hunt balls, society weddings and debutante parties for Tatler. It was like having access to a secret society, the "last hurrah" of the upper classes. I honestly never had an angle. The only agenda I had was to show what actually happened at the dinners and parties.

In this line of work, you need to be invisible. I didn't want anyone to recognise me. When you know there is a picture to be taken, it hits you in the stomach – boom! Some of the pictures I took at the time seemed irrelevant, but I look back and realise I captured some of the important things that happened at parties. People fall in love and multibillion-dollar takeover deals are made. I once got locked in a cupboard for a few hours by a marquess, who was worried about what I was photographing.

Where is home now?

For the past 12 years, I have lived with my wife, Linzi, an artist, in East Sussex, in a 1930s house with outbuildings, which we converted into studios – my daughter, Poppy, a printmaker, has one here, too. We had to leave our house in Stockwell,



“ I once got locked in a cupboard for a few hours by a marquess who was worried about what I was photographing

south London, because my archive had encroached over both landings. I have worked digitally for the past 20 years, but I used to get through up to 1,200 rolls of film a year, and considering there are 36 shots on a roll... I love living in the country, and am proud of the bare-root hedge I have planted. I don't think we'll be moving again.

Where are you happiest?

Alone in my darkroom, listening to Cerys Matthews on BBC 6 Music or plays on Radio 4 Extra. The perfect darkroom should be designed like a small, simple kitchen – with no windows, of course. You need wet and dry areas, and you should be able to go easily between the enlarger and the sink. I have Ikea cabinets and a

Jones made his name documenting 1980s society dos



SLUMBER PARTY

good safe light – and a stainless-steel sink I brought back from the States.

What was New York like in the 1990s?

When we arrived in 1989, we lived in the Gramercy Park Hotel, Manhattan. It was still bohemian and arty, and you could rent rooms for a month at a time. I loved it. Linzi hated it, though. She missed her things and couldn't cook. Later, we moved into a lovely brownstone in Brooklyn.

Why did you return to the UK?

It was the mid-1990s and I realised there was nothing I needed in the US that England didn't have. And the light, of course – there is nothing more beautiful than a summer dawn in Cambridge. The light is too harsh in the States. Besides, the parties finished too soon. Everybody was in bed by midnight.

What's on your bedside table?

I read a lot, though my daughter steals my best books. At the moment I am reading *The Life and Rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah*. After Andy: *Adventures in Warhol Land* is also very good.

Apart from your archive, what are your most treasured possessions?

A painting my daughter did of me when she was nine, in thick paint, for a painting competition in Brooklyn. It is framed and hangs in the hallway. I have swapped work with other photographers. I have pictures by Helmut Newton, Bill Brandt, Martin Parr and Mary Ellen Mark. Although I can't say I have a favourite camera, I have a lot of affection for a small old Olympus 35 RC.

Are you sociable?

Not really. Which is lucky, as it would have been easy to go off the rails. My perfect gathering would be at home with my wife, my son [Lewis] and daughter, and my one-year-old grandson as guest of honour.

Do you think society parties used to be more fun than they are today?

I actually think they have got better. They have got more bling, as people have got richer. I am hired to do a lot of private parties now, and they are truly amazing – though the photographs will never make it into public view. And no, I can't tell you whose parties they are. I'm very discreet.

Interview by Emma Wells

The Last Hurrah by Dafydd Jones is published by Stanley/Barker (£6; stanleybarker.co.uk), with an accompanying exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery, London W1, until September 8 (thephotographersgallery.org.uk); [instagram.com/dafyddjonesphotographer](https://www.instagram.com/dafyddjonesphotographer)



In the mid-1990s, Jones and his wife left Brooklyn and moved back to Britain. They now live in East Sussex

CHANGE OF FOCUS

Here We Are: British photographers document ways of life – in pictures

Here We Are, Burberry's exhibition of British social and documentary photography, features more than 200 works by, among others, Dafydd Jones, Bill Brandt, Brian Griffin, Shirley Baker, Jane Bown, Martin Parr, Jo Spence and Janette Beckman. The exhibition is divided into themes, and it also showcases important bodies of work by individual photographers. Here, the co-curator Lucy Kumara Moore introduces some highlights from the show.

The exhibition is displayed over three floors of the Old Sessions House in Clerkenwell, London, from 18 September to 1 October

Thu 21 Sep 2017 07:00 BST



Magdalen Comem Ball, Oxford – Dafydd Jones, 1988

Dafydd Jones was hired by Tatler magazine throughout the 1980s to photograph balls, debutante dances and the social season. Over time he noticed that many of the guests would fall asleep during the revels of the night. So he started taking pictures of them, and he now has a huge collection of 'Sleepers'. We are showing a group of nine in *Here We Are*.

Meet the Young London Aristos Who Gave Us Rich Kids of Instagram

by **Stephanie Eckardt**

October 18, 2016 2:00 pm

Had Instagram been around in the 80's and 90's, the photographer **Dafydd Jones** would have had quite the impressive feed: He spent his nights wandering London's balls, galas, and debutante gatherings, thanks to a gig with the then-Tatler editor Tina Brown. As it turns out, the teen aristos he encountered were as at home under tables and on 80's-printed carpets as they were in the ballrooms themselves — a louche side that Jones was more than happy to document. Each morning after, he'd print images in a darkroom with a custom stainless steel sink, the same one he used this year to create just 10 limited edition boxes of his best shots for Idea Books.



26 SEPTEMBER 2011 | *By Dafydd Jones*

Dafydd Jones

When The London Magazine's society photographer, Dafydd Jones, turned his lens to the city's art scene in the early eighties, it was a very different world. He reflects on the changes of the last three decades – and the parties

Way back, in 1983, none of the major institutions, such as the National Gallery, the Tate, or even the Hayward Gallery, allowed for such fripperies as social photographers at their events. But Tina Brown, the ambitious new editor at Tatler, wanted me to cover art world parties and dinners. How could I possibly get around the establishment's reserve about letting a camera into their functions?

The first breakthrough came when I infiltrated the opening for Douglas Cooper's Cubist Collection, which was on display at the Tate. Cooper was delighted that I was taking pictures of his handsome young male friends, and very pleased that there would be a record of all the important people at the opening. I could see the then director of the Tate, Alan Bowness, narrowing his eyes at me, but because Cooper and his entourage were so encouraging, he didn't dare stop me. The magazine ran a page of pictures and was delighted with the scoop.



Lucien Freud, London, September 1983

However, when I turned up for the next opening at the Tate a month later, Bowness had his revenge. Security threw me out before I had a chance to remove the lens cap. (Now Tate actually hires me to cover their openings and dinners.) But it was a different scene in those days. Artists at parties were rare – Lucian Freud literally jumped in fright when I photographed him at one of Lord Lambton's book parties.

There were still memorable moments, such as the topless dancing girls at the Chelsea Arts Club Summer Ball. But the coolest party of that period was in 1986 for Keith Haring's opening at the Robert Fraser Gallery. There was a mixture of aristocrats and rock and roll types, and a huge amplifier in the gallery playing hip-hop music. Afterwards, there was a party at the Titanic nightclub in Berkeley Square.

SELECTED PRESS

THE LONDON MAGAZINE, 26 SEP 2011



By contrast, Andy Warhol's opening at Anthony D'Offay's gallery was a huge disappointment. There was nothing wrong with the cast list – some of the Guinnesses were present, and Warhol's sidekick Fred Hughes was very funny – but all Warhol did was sit down, sign and sell his books.

Things really began to take off in the late eighties. Anthony Fawcett, a former assistant to Yoko Ono, had the brilliant idea of persuading Becks to provide free beer for openings, starting with a Gilbert and George show at the Hayward in 1987.



Fred Hughes (center) entertains Geoffrey Gasperini, Peter McGough and David McDermott, Manhattan, 1992

The idea caught on and suddenly there was free booze at all the openings. Because a product was being promoted, organisers wanted maximum exposure. Cameras were suddenly more welcome.

By the time I went to Venice for the Biennale in 2001, sponsorship was all the rage. Bloomberg hosted the party for the British Council on an island, lit by candles; Tom Ford hosted a dinner with Gucci for Richard Serra on the terrace of the Guggenheim, which he had carpeted in black. At Art Basel Miami, the Krug party had a champagne fountain.

By comparison, the Frieze Art Fair (which began in 2003) was – and is – cooler, and more serious. It has its share of glamorous parties, but the social highpoint is the actual Fair itself (unlike Miami where the satellite shows and parties on the periphery were more interesting).

For the last few years, Martin Parr has photographed Frieze Art Fair. Pleased with himself that Frieze had let him in at 10am, the morning with all the big hitters, he puffed, "You can measure people's importance in the art world by the time they are let in." This is true: Grayson Perry was at the front of the queue with the gallery staff before the doors even opened. But at Frieze, even if you don't know who people are, you can see and sense the pictures. When I saw a military-looking bodyguard with a small dangerous-looking man I clicked first and then discovered it was Boris Berezovsky.

As a rule, the best exhibitions have the best parties. There is a buzz of excitement at seeing something new. When I first saw Damien Hirst's pickled cow, and then Rachel Whiteread's beautiful lozenge casts, in the early 1990s, I could see that the art was something special. It works in reverse too. There was an opening at the Hayward where a big show had been given to an artist only a few years out of college. All the celebrities came, but it was a disappointment and the party felt flat.

One of the landmark events in the 1990s was a fundraiser at the Serpentine in 1995 with the Princess of Wales as the guest of honour. Alongside the various aristocrats, actors, writers and pop stars, there was a small group of artists including Damien Hirst and the twins, Jane and

Louise Wilson. Also from the art world there was Jay Jopling, who was making a name for himself as Hirst's art dealer, and seemed to spend most of the party snogging Annabelle Neilson, who then married Nat Rothschild. Clearly, unlike most of the room, they were not fazed by the presence of the princess.



Damien Hirst, Jane Wilson, Louise Wilson, Maia Morgan, Serpentine gallery, 1995



Mat Collishaw and Tracey Emin, Tate gallery, 1997

The art world (particularly the English one) knows how to party and make the most of having a good time. A room of rich bankers would inevitably be dull. But a mixture of the suits, Russian collectors, socialites, the newly rich, hangers on, models, some starving artists and equally bedraggled journalists, makes for a good party. To cram in more of the madness, I began to take panoramic pictures to capture the scene.

There are moments when one questions if it is necessary for artists to spend their time going to parties at upmarket luxury goods stores. (The recent Louis Vuitton party, for example, had more artists present than any art exhibition.) Hedonism is hard work and I wonder about the constant round of parties where Tim and Sue, Polly, Mat, Keith, Grayson and Tracey are such familiar faces. Is it a distraction? Does it bring in commissions? How does everyone keep up? Tracey Emin was defensive when I pointed out that she'd been at every party I'd been to that week. She said that I only saw one side of her, and that she would spend the next week working in her studio in the south of France.

Now the party scene has gone to another level. When the art world became awash with money, galleries began to have parties in exclusive nightclubs such as Tramp and Annabel's, or smart London hotels like Claridge's or the Dorchester. Some events had VIP champagne rooms, with beer for everyone else. At some point, rules were brought in about no photos in these rooms, although no reason was given; I presume it was due to use of illegal substances. Although the motivation was different, it reminded me of the 'no photography' rule at public galleries when I started. Somehow one privileged class has been replaced by another. After seeing Damien Hirst holding court at his country house in Gloucestershire, having arrived by helicopter, I realised that the new establishment is now so entrenched it has turned into the old one. •