



A ledger at Anderson & Sheppard signed by actor Gary Cooper.

relocated to its current premises at 32 Old Burlington Street and in 2012 opened a second store at nearby 17 Clifford Street selling ready-to-wear clothing.

By the 1930s the business was hugely successful in America, where they liked a roomy coat, and the popularity of the Anderson style had much to do with its close alignment to the hugely successful American outfitter Brooks Brothers. It was a look the wealthy American was familiar and comfortable with.

When Fred Astaire was given his marching orders by Teddy Watson at the old Hawes & Curtis for daring to suggest they make him a copy of the Prince of Wales' shirt and waistcoat, he turned instead to Anderson & Sheppard, which was more than happy to oblige. Astaire became a long-term customer, one of many of the early greats of Hollywood to be clothed by the house. Other customers of the era included Rudolph Valentino and Noël Coward, all drawn to the soft-shouldered comfort of the Anderson cut. Douglas Fairbanks was another star from the early years of Hollywood to patronise Anderson, and his influence brought a long list of leading actors and actresses of the 1920s and 1930s, including Marlene Dietrich, to their door. It was not just actors who put their faith in the house, however. Victor Fleming – director of *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* – was a customer, as was Sam Spiegel – producer of *Lawrence of Arabia*, and studio heads including Joe Schenck, one of the founders of 20th Century-Fox. The irony was that Scholte, Anderson's master, had publicly shunned the flashiness of Hollywood types.

Despite its relatively late start, Anderson's is the largest of the bespoke tailors on Savile Row, a position it has enjoyed since the 1980s at least, when its books revealed a turnover of more than £1.5 million (about £7.5 million in today's money). Its trade then, as today,

was dominated by America. Anderson & Sheppard workshops turn out twice as many garments as the second-largest firm, and its output accounts for close to one-third of all Savile Row bespoke suits.

## DEGE & SKINNER

The story of Dege & Skinner (the 'Dege' rhymes with prestige), is a family affair. It began in 1865 when German tailor Jacob Dege opened his first shop at number 13 Conduit Street. Jacob had a big family and his two eldest sons joined him in the business, so in 1900 his youngest son, Arthur, set up on his own, with his school friend William 'Bill' Skinner, whose family were tailors in Jermyn Street. Together they formed the rival firm of Arthur Dege & Skinner, trading from nearby Grafton Street until Bill died in a riding accident, aged just 42, leaving behind a widow and two young sons. In 1914 Arthur Dege & Skinner closed and Arthur joined his father in J Dege & Sons, while Jacob Dege paid for the schooling of William 'Tim' Skinner, Bill's son, and in 1916 took him on as an apprentice. Tim went on to serve the company faithfully until his retirement 54 years later.



Winston Churchill at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

In 1939, J Dege & Sons Ltd bought Wilkinson & Son, robe makers by appointment to HM King George VI, and two years later opened outposts in the military garrison towns of Aldershot and Catterick. Military uniforms have been a vital part of the firm's success, especially since 1967, when Dege bought Rogers & Co and John Jones, both tailors to the Household Division and the Cavalry, making the firm a pre-eminent force in Army tailoring.

Tim Skinner bought the firm in 1947, 31 years after first joining, and in 1953 his son Michael entered the business. That year saw Dege & Sons dress several peers of the realm for the Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth, including Sir Winston Churchill, upon whom Her Majesty had conferred the honour of Knight of the Garter.

Dege & Skinner have held Royal Warrants to HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Sultan of Oman, and the King of Bahrain. For Oman and Bahrain, Dege made everything from personal uniforms to the uniforms worn by the Royal Camels and Royal Pipe Bands. Most recently they made the Blues & Royals uniform worn by Prince Harry at his wedding.

Today the firm is run by another William Skinner, the third William and the fifth generation of his family to take the helm.

## RICHARD ANDERSON

The youngest of the genuine bespoke tailoring houses, Richard Anderson opened for business in 2001. It used to be commonplace for head cutters, or foremen, to leave one house and set up under their own name, but when Richard Anderson – former head cutter at Huntsman – and Brian Lishak, Huntsman's former managing director – moved a few doors down to establish their own house, it had been 50 years since anyone else had done so.

Richard started in the business at 17, serving his apprenticeship under the great Colin Hammick, the man who cemented Huntsman's place in Savile Row lore. Richard's cutting ability was clear, and he quickly rose to become the youngest head cutter in Huntsman's long history.

Brian began his career in 1956 in the era of Robert Packer, the other great Huntsman tailor. As a fresh-faced, 16-year-old junior sales assistant, he was the youngest employee at Huntsman. In his 45 years at the house, his considerable charm ensured that Hollywood royalty – including Katharine Hepburn, Paul Newman, and Gregory Peck – were loyal customers. He once had the unwelcome job of turning away Steve McQueen (his

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Richard Anderson at the board.

demands for the speed of delivery could not be met), and was lucky enough to watch from the roof of number 11 Savile Row as The Beatles played their famous gig on the roof of number 3 in 1969. Brian has been plying his trade on the Row for more than 60 years and is universally admired and respected by the Savile Row community.

Richard has built a fantastic reputation for the excellence of his cutting and his management of the tailoring team, and Brian has a customer list and charm