

## Apocalypse knot!

Many oil companies don't make staff wear them. And dress-down Fridays are the norm these days in most offices.

And now the once-essential tie could be dropped by one of Britain's most traditional institutions.

New MCC president Mike Brearley has called for a relaxation of the dress code in the members' pavilion at Lord's cricket ground in London - and this includes no longer having to wear its "egg and bacon" tie.

For Mike Hampton, managing director of Aberdeen creative design and marketing company Hampton Associates, this doesn't come as a surprise. He hasn't worn a tie for more than 10 years.

"It's important to be smart in appearance," he said. "But for companies like us it's more important to be meeting clients armed with good design ideas and enthusiasm rather than the right neckwear."

Mike Salter, president of the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, believes it's about the image you want to project.

He said: "By wearing a suit and tie, you are portraying yourself in a certain way and showing respect to those you are meeting."

And for Banchory-based image consultant Janie Mackintosh, the importance of ties is underestimated.

"The tie is the smallest garment, but it is the most important that a man can wear," she said. "It can say a lot about your personality, confidence and status and it can make or break an outfit."

Ties date back to the 1600s and come in a variety of colours and patterns and can be tied in a range of way, including Windsor - invented by the Duke of Windsor - Half-Windsor, and Four-in-hand.

In recent years skinny ties, mostly the preserve of musicians and rock stars, have become more popular for everyday wear. Other fashion trends included the wide kipper tie, popular in the 1970s.

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