Fashioning Social Aspiration: Lower-middle-class rational recreational leisure participation and the evolution of popular rational recreational leisure clothing, c.1880-1950

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PART I: c.1880 -1914

1.1 Introduction: Aims and Objectives

In the opening chapter of David Kynaston's *Austerity Britain*, entitled 'Broad Vistas', a vision of post-war Britain is contrasted with the realities of life in the years immediately following the end of the War in Europe in 1945.[1] In a long introductory paragraph, Kynaston differentiates the two eras in terms of a huge list of 'haves' - corner shops, mangles, back-to-backs, Woodbines, Fynnon salts and so on - and an equally long list of exemplary 'have not yets' - supermarkets, motorways, teabags, frozen food, legalized abortions, washing machines etc. Towards the end of this list he finally reaches clothing, the wartime 'haves' being: 'Suits and hats, dresses and hats, cloth caps and mufflers, *no leisurewear* (my emphasis), no "teenagers". Heavy coins, heavy shoes, heavy suitcases, heavy tweed coats, heavy leather footballs, no unbearable lightness of being.' For Kynaston, 'leisurewear' like all the other perceived benefits of life beyond austerity is situated as part of a panorama of affluence realized through leisure and consumption, and as representative of Britain on the threshold of something else - arguably better, as yet unavailable, but by mere association something younger, freer and lighter.
What is 'leisurewear'? And why is it conceptualized as a post-austerity phenomenon? Leisure certainly existed before this time, and shifting forms of leisure clothing have shared its long history. Yet, Kynaston's reference to a new, all-inclusive nomenclature forged in a pivotal period in British history, implicitly suggests that the term in itself functions as trigger to a whole network of meanings around radical social and sartorial change.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine this inter-relationship between leisure, leisure clothing and ideals of 'something better'. However, this research looks at the

[1] Kynaston, D. (2007), *Austerity Britain, 1945-51*, London and New York: Bloomsbury: 19.

expansion and development of mass popular recreational leisure and the evolution of fashionable and activity-specific leisure clothing in the just over half-century *before* Kynaston's supposed watershed, a period from the 1880s to1950. The focus is those social groupings historically understood to constitute the lower middle class in Britain and their participation in a range of leisure activities culturally constituted as 'rational' and 'recreational' within the context of modern industrial capitalism and the rise of mass popular consumption. Since the late-nineteenth century, cycling, walking/hiking or rambling, physical exercise - and to a lesser extent camping - are all activities that are representative of a particular trope of leisure behaviour in Western culture. Not quite organized sport, but never completely outside of social organization nor state intervention, they are defined by their capacity to serve as the physical manifestation of a culturally constituted concept of meaningful 'active' leisure and 'healthy' recreational exercise.

Chris Rojek in his outline of contemporary leisure theory suggests that, '[I]n order to understand leisure accurately we should begin not with our central object - that which we take to be the thing-in-itself - but rather with the context within which the thing-in-itself becomes an "object", "an issue", "a problem" or what have you.'[2] This thesis, following Rojek, is not necessarily concerned with the nature of rational recreational leisure in terms of an 'object-in-itself' – although specific activities are explored. Nor is it concerned solely with a particular issue – although the ideology of rational recreational leisure is central to the investigation. Rather, this research is concerned with the nature of rational recreational leisure activities at a discursive level as a strategy of 'improvement' - socio-political and economic as well as moral, philosophical, physical and cultural - and the wider ideological mechanisms and various different institutions and agencies that have historically sought to shape lower-middle-class leisure choice and behaviour. However, the research breaks new theoretical ground by examining firstly how such a discourse might be distinctively and differently expressed in terms of lower-middle-class access to and participation

[2] Rojek, C. (1995), *Decentring Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory*, London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications: 2.

in new forms of leisure; secondly the parallel evolution of affordable, popular recreational leisure clothing and the potential this offered for their self-conscious 'fashioning' of a modern leisured identity. Both are explored in relation to the complex historical processes of political and social change from the late-nineteenth century that produced and reproduced the social conditions of modern class relations.

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to interrogate the nature of lower-middle-class social aspiration in terms of this crucial leisure and fashion historical dynamic. How, historically, have concepts of certain 'right' kinds of leisure sought to produce the 'right' kinds of classed and leisured bodies through a shared discursive moral universe of highly complex shifting meaning? More particularly how is this discourse transformed and embodied in and through the design, manufacture, production and consumption of new forms of activity-specific and fashionable recreational leisure clothing by new types of consumers? An evolving 'landscape' of modern leisure is examined through three leisure historical contexts: the nineteenth-century Rational Recreation Movement and the development of popular leisure before the First World War; the growth of the highly influential Outdoor Movement and the transformation of mass popular leisure in Britain between the wars; and lastly the constraints imposed on leisure and consumption in the Second World War and the immediate post-war period of austerity.

Lower-Middle-Class Leisure and Social Aspiration

Discussion of the impact of a Victorian reformist agenda on the nature of modern sport and leisure and the impact of the Rational Recreation Movement has in the past predominantly focused on the decline of pre-industrial working-class communal life and its ritualized recreations and the suppression of its continuance within an urban working-class culture. Recreational leisure provision and the rhetoric of rationalization were interpreted in terms of attempts to control and constrain popular pleasure and entertainment through the imposition of a coercive

middle-class value system.[3] This critical framework was a key part of the development of radical new understandings of popular leisure across the social sciences and humanities since the 1970s and pivotal to revisionist social and cultural historical accounts of a wide range of (predominantly masculine) working-class leisure forms and practices.[4] This project differs from the majority of these previous interpretations in its explicit focus on men and women belonging to social groupings that can be understood to constitute the suburban lower middle class, and their consumption of fashionable recreational leisure clothing. Leisure and social historian Peter Bailey's work is a notable exception and is clearly of some significance. Bailey outlines the cultural politics inherent in attempts to impose middle-class concepts of 'rational recreation' on a lower middle and working class increasingly realizing and exploiting the opportunities and attractions offered by modern leisure.[5] Leisure placed a new responsibility upon the individual's capacity for self-direction and control he suggests because it was an increasingly fluid psychic and physical territory. The modern city offered new and highly entertaining forms of mass popular amusement and ambiguous opportunities for both spectacular display and anonymity. The middle and lower middle class, Bailey argues, responded to the challenge by creating a viable leisure culture 'which successfully assimilated the priorities of a modern industrial society to the sensibilities of an often tender class conscience'.[6] Bailey's work is useful, clearly because of his focus on the historical lower middle class in Britain. More importantly, his wide-ranging studies emphasize how leisure's moral regulation was always formulated in relation to both an emerging bourgeois consciousness, *and* the

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[3] See for example Malcolmson, R. (1973), *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Thompson, E. P. (1967), 'Time, work-discipline and industrial capitalism' in *Past and Present*, 38: 56-97; see also Jones, G. Stedman (1974), 'Working-class culture and working class politics in London, 1870-1900; notes on the remaking of a working class' in *Journal of Social History* 7: 460-508.

[4] For example Clapson, M. (1992), *A Bit of a Flutter: Popular Gambling and English Society, c. 1823-1961*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Gaskill, S.M. (1980), 'Gardens for the working class' in Victorian practical pleasure', in *Victorian Studies*, 23: 479-501; Hey, V. (1986), *Patriarchy and Pub Culture*, London: Tavistock; Kift, D. (1996), *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[5] Bailey, P. (1978), *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1855*, London: Routledge.

[6] See Bailey, P. (1977), '"A Mingled Mass of Perfectly Legitimate Pleasures": The Victorian Middle Class and the Problem of Leisure' in *Victorian Studies,* 21:1, (1977: Autumn): 26.

threat posed by the counter-attractions and more subversive pleasures offered by new commercial forms of entertainment to an emerging suburban consumer. Bailey explores how for example the Victorian music hall, or the degenerate cult figure of Ally Sloper featured in the weekly comic paper *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, offered much more ambiguous models of social aspiration that defied any simplistic admonition of a slavish adherence to bourgeois norms and values - and functioned to both confirm and confound contemporary anxieties about dress and attitudes to popular leisure and its enjoyment.[7]

This concept is of some import, not just because of Bailey's acknowledgement of the importance of style in the context of an emerging mass popular leisure culture in the late-nineteenth century. Rather, it provides an interpretive framework that extends such a concept to a socially aspirational English lower middle class. Few, if any, discussions around the definition and nature of this social grouping, including Bailey's, can avoid the need to acknowledge both their critical intellectual neglect, and the historical problems associated with its empirical identification and socio-political definition.[8] The two, of course, are clearly inter-connected and there is a tendency for the one to act as a critical justification for the other. A supposed inherent classificatory ambiguity is frequently cited as a key contributory factor in retarding the spotlight of historiography and poses the question whether the lower middle class can be considered a class at all. Geoffrey Crossick, in his significant collection of essays on the emergence of a stratum of white-collar salaried staff in the mid- to late-nineteenth century argues that the British lower middle class have escaped attention because of two key reasons.[9] Firstly, they slipped through the net as it were of a wider intellectual abandonment of the established middle class in the

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[7] Bailey, P. (1986), 'Champagne Charlie: Performance and Ideology in the Music Hall Swell Song' in J. S. Bratton (ed.), *Music Hall: Performance and Style*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press ; see also (1983), Ally Sloper's Half Holiday: Comic Art in the 1880s' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 16, No.1:4-32; (1998), *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[8] See Bailey, P. (1999), 'White Collars, Gray Lives? The Lower Middle Class Revisited' in *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 38, No.3, Special Issue: 'Masculinity and the Lower Middle Class', July 1999, pp 273-290: 274

[9] Crossick, G. (1977), 'The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion' in G. Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, London: Croom Helm.

post-war period, and the correlative skewing of emphasis towards working-class history. This shift, coupled with a British commitment towards empiricism, Crossick argues 'effectively narrowed the interests of too many social historians'. Secondly, more specifically and more damning, he maintains that the lower middle class have not warranted critical analysis because of their 'sheer lack of heroism' and failure 'to do anything very striking'.[10]

Arno Mayer's parallel pioneering work also lays out a number of key points of congruence that define the historical lower middle class.[11] Mayer emphasizes the plasticity and misuse of even the very descriptor in everyday language, political rhetoric and social scientific discourse which only further underlines the difficulty of arriving at a clear and precise definition. Furthermore, even the acknowledgement of an inherent heterogeneity exposes particular difficulties for critical analysis. The term '*the* lower middle class' is sometimes used to reference the class *per se* while in actuality discussing *only* a specific stratum of mid- and lower-grade white collar salaried and non-manual technical, commercial and minor professional staff to the exclusion of other groups such as shopkeepers, merchants and small businessmen, small masters and certain independent artisans. In turn, these oftimes excluded workers are themselves defined as a specific social grouping by a term - 'the petty or petite bourgeoisie' - that is equally prone to being used as an alternative collective terminology for the class as a whole and *all* its variants. Never revolutionary, Mayer argues, the lower middle class lacked 'the romance of utter wretchedness' that has motivated the re-evaluation of the working and labouring class and as a result enjoy 'little sympathy and still less empathy'[12]. However, Mayer adds a notable rider: the 'benign neglect' of the class that colours academic opinion of all political shades is a consequence of a hesitancy of many within its ranks to expose their social and cultural roots within it.[13]

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[10] Crossick 1977: 11.
[11] Mayer, A. J. (1975), 'The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem' in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp 409-436.
[12] Mayer 1975: 409.
[13] Mayer 1975: 409.

This last point is similarly developed by Peter Bailey who describes the clear relish employed by some academics in 'putting the intellectual boot in'. This must, he suggests, operate as a form of social and cultural 'exorcism', a way of evading exposure of 'the guilty secret so many of us share as closet petit bourgeois denying our own class origins'.[14] Citing for example George Orwell's description of many of their number as 'Tories, yes-men and bumsuckers', Bailey argues that those who belonged to such a class certainly had never suffered enough to generate a partisan historiography, nor precipitate its own E.P. Thompson. So, for example, 'one could not imagine their fortunes being exhumed in some inky-fingered session of a Ruskin history workshop. Compared to those rugged darlings, the working classes, surely the office clerk and the shopkeeper deserved the condescension of posterity'.[15] Bailey points to the continued deficiency of critical discussion of the pivotal role of the lower middle classes in contemporary history, but challenges a notion of the lower middle class as 'unheroic' by investing such lack itself with cultural significance.[16] The more contradictory pleasures of lower-middle-class life are expounded by way of the supporting contributions from other empathetic literary voices - a minor autobiographical genre as well as those of popular novelists Charles Dickens, Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells and J.B. Priestley whose characters frequently epitomized a singularly lower-middle-class mix of social aspiration and disappointment. These authors' attempts to accord lower-middle-class posterity,without condescension if not without self-deprecation Bailey argues, reveal the sometimes heroic and often mock heroic experience of life in the suburbs.[17]

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[14] Bailey 1999: 274.

[15] Bailey 1999. E.P. Thompson was a key figure in the radical social history movement in Britain in the early 1960s particularly after his seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964), London: Victor Gollancz. This reference is Bailey's ironic re-working of Thompson's classic description of his attempt to redress the balance of historiography by writing the history of those who had suffered 'the enormous condescension of posterity', 'the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the "obsolete" hand-loom weaver, the "utopian" artisan...' 1964: 12

[16] See also Bailey 1987.

[17] Bailey cites as examples of memoirs of lower-middle-class suburban childhood, V.S. Pritchett's *A Cab at the Door* and Richard Church's *Over the Bridge* (both of whom are also noted in Crossick ed. 1978.

More recently, Rita Feltski writes, 'Being lower-middle-class is a singularly boring identity, possessing none of the radical chic that is sometimes ascribed to working-class roots... lower-middleclassness is not so much an identity as a non-identity'.[18] Feltski's feminist literary approach looks at 'lower-middleclassness' in terms of the psychic and semiotic as well as the social and economic and the 'messy, contradictory amalgam of symbolic practices, structures of feeling, and forms of life'.[19] Feltski's work is important because it explores the paradoxes of lower-middle-class identity in terms of the complex mix of autobiographical shame and literary critique that inflects the work of authors such as George Orwell, E.M. Forster and T.S. Eliot as well as more recent offerings from Hanif Kureishi. But in doing so Feltski, like Bailey, offers a counter-culture of more complexity than that of the inward-looking, culturally vacant spaces of suburban banality that dominate other intellectual and literary understandings of the lower middle class. Her analysis of Kureishi's *Buddha of Suburbia,* for example, opens up debate around the fluidity of lower-middle-class identity and the processes of self knowledge as well as self-loathing that are at the core of aspirational desire and social mobility. She argues that the petite bourgeoisie might be 'particularly resistant to the romance of marginality', but this should not preclude their serious intellectual consideration - particularly within cultural studies. The issues that historically dominate lower middle class life - fluctuating market situations, family dynamics, consumerism and social aspiration might also offer key insights into the contemporary meanings of classed identity.[20]

Interpreting the Historical Lower Middle Class

The lower middle class that emerged in modernity has been negatively represented virtually since its origins in the nineteenth century, characterized in terms of 'smallness' of physical and moral stature, 'narrowness' of mind and outlook, and

[18] Feltski, R. (2000), 'Nothing to Declare: Identity, Shame, and the Lower Middle Class' in *PMLA*, Vol. 115, No. 1, Special Topic: Rereading Class (Jan 2000), pp.33-45: 34.
[19] Feltski 2000: 35.
[20] Feltski 2000: 44.

'littleness' of spirit.[21] However, the studies outlined above focus on the class' scholarly appraisal and its lack, to demonstrate how cultural indifference, coupled with classificatory non-feasance, is ironically both confounded and compounded by the wealth of social critique that implicitly and explicitly inflects its widespread discussion and parody in both academic writing and mass popular culture.[22] They also evidence how accusations of corporate 'non-existence' are similarly countered with a limited but nevertheless critically significant body of work that demonstrate the historically pivotal role of the lower middle class in British society and the mechanisms of modern mass consumer society. This tension between classificatory ambiguity and cultural recognition, cohesion and instability, indifference and interest signals the arguments that are central to this research.

There are clear difficulties involved in examining cultural phenomena such as popular leisure and fashionable dress that are subject to constant historical change in relation to a social grouping characterized by a lack of classificatory cohesion, critical analysis and historical account. This entails addressing a number of conceptual and theoretical problems that require some detailed preliminary discussion in this introductory chapter. Firstly, in order to understand lower-middle-class leisure action and behaviour as discrete and distinctive it is necessary to establish the basis of such an assertion: the specificity of particular features that define and describe this class in terms of their socio-economic situation, political dimensions, ideology and cultural traditions, their concrete historical manifestation, and their critical and historical analyses. Section 1 interrogates the challenges involved in establishing a cohesive system of stratification by examining the various diverse groupings understood to historically constitute the lower middle class; and the implications of such ambiguity for their collective structuration and recognition as anything other than a residual category. Nominal and classificatory confusion is not a question of mere semantics. Such ambiguity arguably underlines

[21] See Hammerton, J. (1999), 'The English Weakness? Gender, Satire and "Moral Manliness" in the Lower Middle Class, 1870-1920' in A Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[22] Bailey 1999: 276-277.

the wider political and ideological conceptual framework that has frequently been used to disavow the existence of the lower-middle class as a singular social grouping, and implicitly justify their critical intellectual indifference. It is, therefore, of some importance to this research to also establish the factors that *unify* this social through a range of critical perspectives that investigate and understand the lower middle class in compositional terms that are both distinctive and differentiated: the specificities of lower-middle-class social relationships, cultural activities and organizations, market situation, residential or occupational status, religious belief, political affiliation, ideals and values and their popular cultural representation and critique.

Mayer argues that the lower middle class 'has been and continues to be of sufficient historical and political moment to study in its own right. He suggests that, having decided which of the many descriptive terms is the least misleading and most serviceable for their purposes, historians should empirically investigate the composition of the lower middle class, '... its inner life, its sinews for survival and renewal, and its boundaries with other classes in periods of normalcy ... its class consciousness as well as its political behavior under conditions of stress'.[23] It is important to note here that the focus of this research is concerned with the nature of lower-middle-class *aspiration* rather than social *mobility*. The two concepts are in some ways inextricable and the latter term came to dominate post-World War II socio-political thought in the context of post-war reconstruction and the building of a 'new Britain'.[24] Social mobility became almost *the* interpretive framework for attempting to address and measure both the need for radical social, welfare and educational reform and its success in relation to new analyses of social stratification allied to social as well as occupational status. However, this research would argue that social aspiration gives a much broader critical umbrella which, while superficially vague, facilitates a much more complex exploration of classed

[23] Mayer 1975: 410.

[24] The work of D.V. Glass was instrumental in bringing about significant shifts in the way social mobility was understood and measured in Britain see Glass, D.V. (ed.) (1957), *Social Mobility in Britain*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. For a discussion of trends in social classification, see also Edgell, S. (1993), *Class*, London: Routledge, particularly Chapter 5 'Class and Social Mobility'.

subjectivities - what mobility might *mean* to a significant proportion of working men *and* women. This last point is worth emphasizing to note the lack of critical examination of women's relationship with socio-economic aspiration and in particular their absence from studies of social mobility. While women and women's bodies have been characterized in terms of the articulation of bourgeois aspiration and social status since the late nineteenth century (and fashionable consumption itself understood as inherently 'feminine'), their role in the productive ideological and industrial mechanisms of modern capitalism that drove it are still largely neglected, particularly within social sciences. The idea of separate spheres is a powerfully politically-charged concept that has formed the basis of a considerable feminist critique across disciplines but the exclusion of women from mobility studies continues to be the subject of acrimonious debate among British sociologists.[25] Many key figures continue to argue that a conventional approach grounded in the concept of the western nuclear family unit as the foundation of the class structure remains largely valid.[26] Because men arguably remain the principal wage-earners within many families it is they who determine its position in the social hierarchy and movement within it, hence, women's exclusion because of their subordinate position in the economy.[27] Women's social status and classificatory identity is effectively generated by the occupational status of their fathers before they marry and their husband's thereafter - and their own comparative mobility is essentially subsumed rather than ignored in the process. Dina Copelman's study of women teachers in London of a comparable class and over a comparable period to that which is the focus of this research is especially apposite on this point.[28]

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[25] See Miles, A. (1999), *Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England,* Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, particularly Chapter 10.

[26] Notably, John Goldthorpe, defends this position, see Goldthorpe, J.H. (1983), 'Women and Class Analysis: In Defense of the Conventional View' in *Sociology*, Vol. 17, No. 4: 465-488. Marshall et al provide a comprehensive summary of debates around women and class and argue that a focus on male mobility has generated a misleading picture of the class structure in Britain, see Marshall, G., Rose, D., Newby, H. and Vogler, C. (1988), *Social Class in Modern Britain*, London: Hutchinson.

[27] Critics point out that this fails to take account of the rapid rise in the female labour force since World War II, but this is countered by Goldthorpe by pointing out that low paid and often part time or discontinuous employment does not fundamentally alter the study of class and mobility, see Miles 1999 *op cit.*

[28] Copelman, D. (1996), *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism 1870-1930,* London and New York: Routledge.

Copelman suggests that the combination of traditional concepts of respectability, self-help and independence provided the labour aristocracy and the lower middle class with a distinctive culture where women's work was both highly visible - serving behind the counter serving as assistants or proprietors in shops both large and small, or increasingly working in offices in all forms of commercial enterprise - *and* considered both respectable and desirable. She argues:

> In this world, women's work was respected and relatively common, and the world was not rigidly divided into male and female spheres, public and private domains. This gave labour aristocratic and lower-middle-class women different attitudes towards work and about themselves as workers. While notions of respectability were important, and those were still tied to concepts of female propriety, the standards for appropriate work were different. Since it was considered normal, it did not have to be justified by an appeal to women's special mission, although women were still employed in sectors that were ruled by a sexual division of labour. Work conditions were still important - especially given the concern among the lower middle class to remain distinct from the mass of the working class - but they did not have the same meaning that they would have for middle-class women. Instead these women were already used to being in situations where their class position was somewhat ambiguous; where there might be considerable close contact with workers and their children; and where they would be both in a position of power and privilege and of powerlessness at the same time - all of these conditions were characteristic of labour aristocratic/lower-middle-class employments.[29]

Copelman wrestles with the divisive intrusion of understandings of these two social groupings in terms of class conflict but seeks to overcome this through 'a non-deterministic rounded view of class and power, a class analysis sensitive to culture, to the interplay of different forms of identity'. Copelman's focus is primarily gender, but her emphasis on ambiguity is significant in evidencing the constant overlap of community and family life, public and private domains, and the domestic and the workplace, that distinguishes the structuring of upper-working and lower-middle-class social identities.

[29] *Ibid*: 43.

This object of this thesis is not to look at any one stratum of the lower middle class in isolation, nor at the actions and composition of any one particular historical grouping that might or might not be considered representative of the class as a whole. Rather the overriding focus is to explore how shared ideals of socio-economic aspiration were articulated through popular leisure and consumption. To what extent has access to and participation in new forms of rational recreational leisure functioned as an historical strategy for lower-middle-class 'improvement' and advance? This research seeks to utilize a unifying concept of aspiration as a way of overcoming the diversity of accounts of the 'old' and 'new' social groupings that formed and reformed the modern lower middle class, and avoiding the continued ideological and political polarization of a skilled labour aristocracy who might or might not be included within it. However, the nature and understanding of rational recreational leisure and its clothing as a generative element in expressing such aspiration for 'something better' and/or its achievement individually or collectively is the motivating force of this thesis. Aspiration and the idea of its self-fashioning through both popular leisure and popular leisure clothing allows for a much more fluid and ambiguous understanding of how differently-motivated social groupings might use the same clothes and the same activities to express very different and disparate ideological, religious, political and commercial understandings of what that 'something better' might mean - including the 'merely' fashionable.

According to their critics, this disparate collection of social groupings unlike the aristocracy, have no patronage to dispense; but unlike the 'authentic' haute bourgeoisie and traditional middle class they supposedly they have no 'taste' because they only ape rather than instigate stylistic innovation and its aesthetic embodiment. Unlike the working class they do not collectively organize and are, in Marxist terms 'un-conscious'; in their emulation of middle-class propriety and their rejection of working-class excess they are perceived as politically impotent, ideologically embourgeoised and stylistically banal. This multi-dimensional lack, it is reasoned, inhibits critical historiography, encourages aesthetic disregard, and

even offers little that can be deconstructed and scrutinized in the light of postmodern approaches to the subjectivities of gender, race and sexuality that have come to rival and (in many cases) outweigh the burden of traditional class categorization.[30] As a result, unlike the working class there is no over-arching account of their 'making'; unlike the middle class nor is there a widespread body of contemporary and revisionist understandings that outline their socio-economic and ideological prominence. The focus of this thesis is not to offer a re-interpretation of British class history, but to look at the nature and culture of lower-middle and upper-working-class leisure as a significant conduit of classed and gendered social relations in modernity. By understanding such aspiration, its spectacular display and fashionable embodiment in the context of this particular historical 'community' it is hoped to firstly, demonstrate the distinctive nature of mainstream consumption in order to, secondly, offer a more complex interpretation of wider concepts of class and its leisure and fashion historical critical account.

[30] Bailey 1999: 276-277.

1.2 Methodology

This thesis is concerned with interrogating what rational recreational leisure *means* rather than merely investigating what people did or did not do at any particular time, and with understanding the nature of fashionable recreational-leisure-specific clothing as an embodied social practice.[1] This complex of ideas, however, involves a programme of empirical research with few temporal or spatial boundaries, and an engagement with a breadth of debate across critical frameworks and disciplines. For this reason this thesis uses a cultural studies' approach to fashion history progressively developed and expanded over the past thirty or so years since the publication of Elizabeth Wilson's groundbreaking *Adorned in Dreams*.[2] The development of new approaches to the study of fashion history and theory was a crucial part of wider shifts within the post-war British academy exemplified by a vanguard of cultural theorists who established the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary and Cultural Studies (BCCS).[3] The search for new historical sources, and new methods and approaches to their interpretation and parallel developments in European structurist thought and philosophy provided an intellectual springboard for the radical critical advance of social and cultural historical studies in Britain.[4]

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[1] See Entwistle, J. (2000), *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

[2] Wilson, E. (1985), *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, London: Virago.

[3] See in particular Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (ed.) (1976), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Sub-Cultures in Post-War Britain*, London: Hutchinson; Hebdige, D. (1979), *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen. The BCCS grew out of postgraduate reading groups from which jointly written articles and books emerged as a way of examining new areas of research and shared ideas from different disciplinary backgrounds and insights. There was also a loosely defined socialist and feminist commitment to mutual support and collaborative work that was extremely important and significantly demonstrated in the work of Angela McRobbie's studies of young women's popular taste and consumption, see McRobbie, A.(1978), 'Working Class Girls and the Culture of Femininity' in CCCS Women's Studies' Group (eds.), *Women Take Issue*, Birmingham: CCCS.

[4] Exemplified by the work of Edward Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was a radical re-interpretation of the past to which a Marxist paradigm of class consciousness and power inequality was central, see Hobsbawm, E. J. (1962), *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848*, London: Weidenfield & Nicholson.; (1965), *Labouring Men: studies in the history of labour*, London: Weidenfield & Nicholson; Thompson, E.P. (1963), *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Victor Gollanz. Cultural historical commentators such as Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams equally drew on their own working-class roots and were influential in consolidating the idea of the movement towards 'History from Below', see Hoggart, R. (1957), *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-class Life, with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*, London: Chatto & Windus; Williams, R. (1958), *Culture &*

Within a context of theoretical confrontation and methodological innovation, historical positivism was challenged through an engagement with new ideas about what constituted historical reality that paralleled developments in European structurist and philosophical thought around popular consumption most notably being established in the work of Roland Barthes.[5] As a result of such changes, and long-standing debates around the previous extent of theoretical rigour, fashion historical studies progressively generated 'a critical literature that it can properly call its own'.[6] Christopher Breward has outlined what a cultural studies' approach to fashion involves:

> ... a method of analysis that takes account of multiple meanings and interpretations. Reductive connections between social influences and fashionable appearance have dogged much fashion history, unaware as it has sometimes seemed to be of the difficulties and complexities of agency. It is here that the new cultural history, in tandem with more recent work in cultural studies, is of use, presenting a more questioning framework which allows for explanations that are multi-layered and open ended.[7]

Society: 1780-1950, New York: Columbia University Press; (1961) *The Long Revolution*, London: Chatto & Windus.

[5] The work of critic Roland Barthes was hugely influential within British cultural studies. Barthes established a 'semiotic' framework for understanding any form of cultural text or image as part of a whole 'system of signs' through which cultural meaning is 'made', and the exploration of the nature of the 'visual myth' by which the 'naturalness' of imperial and patriarchal understandings of race, gender and sexuality for example were maintained and reinvigorated. 'Reading' an image in this way allowed access to meanings 'between the lines' and opened the way for the idea of representation itself to be questioned across the academy but particularly in the humanities, see Barthes, R. (1957/1973 translated from the French by Annette Lavers), *Mythologies* , St. Albans: Paladin; see also (1977), *Image, Music, Text*, London: Fontana.

[6] Breward, C. (2003), *Fashion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 9. Christopher Breward was a key part in challenging the ways in which fashion as historical system and as a vehicle for wider subjective expression had been analysed and interpreted in the past, see Breward (1998), 'Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol.2 No.4, pp.301-31, Special Methodologies Issue for a discussion of traditional costume and object-based relationship with new art and design historical analyses that incorporated ideas around social identity, the body, and gender. This is also discussed in the same issue by dress historian Lou Taylor, 'Doing the Laundry: A Reassessment of Object-Based Dress History' 1998: 337-358, and further outlined in (2002), *The Study of Dress History*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

[7] Breward (1998: 303) argues that such an approach aimed to 'incorporate elements of art historical, design historical and cultural studies approaches ... to provide a fluid framework for the study of fashion in its own right. They could also be set within a wider argument concerning the nature of cultural history generally, which has fostered concepts of diversity rather than prescriptive or narrowly defined readings of historical phenomena'..

Cultural studies as a methodology is a composite of critical frameworks whose very ambiguity lends itself to inter- and multi-disciplinary research, and conceptual and critical analytical frameworks that need to take account of, in Breward's terms, multiple meanings and interpretation. Fashion and dress as object, image, and as an embodied social practice invite such an approach, and in many ways multi-disciplinarity has become a key factor in the development of new approaches to the historical study of fashion and dress.[8] Liz Wells and Martin Lister argue, 'Cultural Studies' is no one thing, nor a fixed set of methodological systems, nor a schema of critical practice; it is a 'compound field' constituted in an amalgamation of various, if previously discrete, scholarly enterprises. But Wells' and Lister's description of what this actually means in terms of research practice very succinctly summarizes what is most useful in such an approach. They suggest that a cultural studies' method possesses the critical flexibility 'to re-appropriate and re-employ elements of theoretical frameworks and methodologies from other disciplines wherever they seem productive in pursuing its enquiries'.[9] This strategy offers a particularly useful methodological umbrella within which to explore the wider aims of this thesis. For Wells and Lister, the role of the researcher using such an approach is to interpret material within an appropriate critical framework which is made explicit, and which can be contested and critiqued - but one which is both clearly relevant to and demonstrably generated from the research material itself. They conclude:

> Cultural Studies is, then, not only methodologically eclectic, but open and experimental in the ways that it frames its objects of study. While it may borrow its methodological resources, it seldom assumes that it unproblematically has a set of objects "out there" or before it, about which it can then ask questions formulated by and inherited from other disciplines.[10]

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[8] For a discussion of multi-disciplinarity in action in relation to a particular set of research questions see Palmer, A. (1997), 'New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England ' in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Vol. 1 No.3 August 1997: 297-312.

[9] Lister, M. and Wells, L. (2001), 'Seeing beyond belief: Cultural Studies as an approach to analyzing the visual' in T. Van Leeuwen and C. Jewitt,, *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Los Angeles and London: Sage Publications: 62.

[10] *ibid*: 63.

In this thesis, particular emphasis is given to two key methodological issues: firstly, the interrogation of a wide range of historical visual sources; secondly the use of oral sources in the form of oral history interviews. The relationship between the *production* of rational recreational leisure and its *re-production* in modernity in actual leisured bodies, and their individual and collective, private and public visual representation is pivotal to the critical impetus of this research. Personal photographs provide an ideal avenue of enquiry through which to question both the ideological mechanisms that surround concepts of 'healthy' appropriate forms of recreational leisure in western culture, the nature of the rational recreational 'subject', and the parallel development of its material culture. Leisure photography was always an integral part of leisure activity and there is a considerable amount of original and previously undocumented archival material in the form of photographs, ephemera, club records and magazines that all provide a rich source for examining the development of popular forms of recreational leisure from the nineteenth century right through the twentieth century. An ethos of anti-commercialism unites various ideological perspectives that motivated informal and formal recreational leisure participation for a range of religious, political and social groupings. However, the expansion of various forms of popular recreational leisure activities and the development of new forms of popular recreational leisure clothing are inseparable from their commercial exploitation in the form of an expanding new leisure industry and the growth of a manufacture and retail sector that grew up to meet its needs, making and selling leisure-specific equipment and clothing. A rapid and massively expanding ready-to-wear market emerged in the late nineteenth century through changes in manufacturing process and the parallel explosion of new forms of marketing and promotion.[11] Fashion plates in the trade and popular press, illustrated trade guides to the design and manufacture of leisure clothing, knitting patterns and a growing proliferation of fully illustrated wholesale and retail catalogues all function as significant forms of historical evidence to support arguments around the targeting of a popular lower middle class market for recreational leisure.

[11] See Breward 1999.

The range, diversity and quantity of the visual sources outlined above, and their utilization throughout the thesis, might invite accusations of superficiality by seeing such images merely as illustrations. However, to see images in this way is contrary to the very critical foundation not just of this research project but of the cultural studies' approach to fashion and dress that sustains it: fashion and dress and its images and representation need to be taken seriously. Structural and post-structural theories opened the way to question the very concept of photographic or textual 'reality' by revealing the political and ideological dimensions of photographic production and consumption and the wider social historical context of which it was a part. Michel Foucault was also concerned with systems of representation and the 'regimes of truth' they powerfully embodied and created: images were integral to the discourses of institutional power and knowledge and systems of surveillance through which the human 'subject' was observed and 'disciplined'.[12] A wide-ranging deployment of images from a wide range of sources is used in this research project as historical evidence of an equally wide-ranging discursive complex of ideas around class and gender. A cultural studies' approach sees all forms of cultural practices and texts not as just reflections or symptoms of *a priori* conditions, events and socially determined circumstances, but as evidence of the ways in which race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion are located in ways of seeing, presenting, representing, imagining, writing about, classifying, and categorizing the social world and its experience.[13]

A cultural studies' approach to fashion and dress critically understands clothing as an embodied social practice, i.e. a cultural form and practice invested with meaning

[12] The French philosopher Michel Foucault examined how *discourses* of power and knowledge created the modern subject. New ways of thinking, writing and discussing and in particular classifying citizens, workers, subjects etc. as mad or sane, sick or healthy, normal or deviant were incorporated into new systems and institutions of justice, medicine, education, religion etc. See in particular Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, for Foucault's theorization of the discourses of surveillance and the technologies of self and self-management that operate as way of disciplining and controlling social bodies.

[13] For a summary of cultural studies as a critical methodology and examples of its practice see Hall, S (ed.)(1997), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press

through a whole discursive network of social, economic and cultural contexts. Fashion objects, ephemera, and images, their design, manufacture, production and consumption are therefore inseparable elements in what Paul du Gay has defined as 'the circuit of culture'.[14] Critical and theoretical perspectives on the nature of the historical record (including images) and concepts of 'truth' were a major force in wider postmodern debates around the fragile nature of any sort of narrative certainty including and particularly that pertaining to the historical record.[15] However, while new forms of analysis, new theoretical frameworks, new methods and new sources, all radically impacted on the way images were critically studied, interpreted and written, the *use* of images as historical evidence still remains quite rare. Ian Jeffery argued as early as 1982 that there was a sense of 'an endless drawing up of rules for a game which is never played'.[16] Peter Burke in his examination of approaches to all types of visual evidence of the past similarly notes that what the critic William Mitchell has termed the 'pictorial turn' has resulted ironically a turn away from critical interrogation of historical images.[17] By way of example Burke cites the influential journal *Past and Present* as representative of new trends in historical writing and notes his shock at discovering that only a handful of published articles included images.[18] Images are central to this historical research project and its critical impetus and their use in the exploration of the

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[14] Du Gay, P. (1997), *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. Paul Du Gay argues that a 'circuit of culture' - representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation - suggests that 'meanings are produced at several different sites and circulated through different inter-related processes and practices of cultural production. See also Hall, S. (1997), 'The Centrality of Culture: Notes on the Cultural Revolutions of Our Time' in K. Thompson (ed.), *Media and Cultural Regulation*, London: Sage.

[15] For example the work, in particular of Hayden White on the concept of all historical accounts as 'narratives' and the idea 'that the so-called "historical method consists of little more than the injunction to "get the story straight"...', White, H. (1978), *Tropics of Discourse*, London: Johns Hopkins University Press: 127, but see particularly Chapter 5, 'The Fictions of Factual Representation. For a very thorough overview of these debates see Jenkins, K. (1995), *What is History: from Carr and Elton to Rorty and White*, London: Routledge.

[16] Jeffery, I. (1982), 'Some Sacred Sites' in *Creative Camera*, No. 7, November 1982: 215.

[17] Mitchell, W. (ed.) (1992), Art *and the Public Sphere*, Chicago, Introduction cited by Burke, P. (2001), *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London: Reaktion: 11.

[18] Burke, P. (2001), *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, London: Reaktion Books: 12.

material culture of the past is both obvious and methodologically well established, particularly in relation to clothing. [19] As Peter Burke concludes:

> So far as the history of material culture is concerned, the testimony of images seems to be most reliable in the small details. It is particularly valuable as evidence of the arrangement of objects and of the social uses of objects... images allow us to replace old artifacts in their original social contexts.[20]

However, images are inseparable from individual leisure behaviour and its self-conscious fashioning. Abstract concepts and the iconography of healthy, are always formulated through actual social relations and actual social bodies. Understanding these is reliant on an interpretive mix of narrative data and cultural historical context that can be situated in relation to critical theories around leisure practice and fashionable consumption to support and sustain hypotheses around the nature and political dimensions of its embodiment. This thesis therefore seeks to integrate visual data with narrative data in the form of oral historical interviews to situate recreational leisure and its clothing as part of a system of complex and ambiguously contested meaning around class, class identity and class participation in certain forms of leisure. Images and the spoken recollections of the experiences of particular individuals combine to allow the exploration of the leisure actions, behaviour and experiences of a social grouping, an era and a generation arguably largely ignored by the historical record.

The Value of Fashion-Historical Oral Testimony

Oral history was a crucial part of key academic debates that emerged from the 1950s around class in Britain in terms of its historical account, and to which a Marxist paradigm of class consciousness and inequality was central. Within this context of theoretical confrontation and methodological innovation, social

[19] Taylor, L., (2002), *The Study of Dress History*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 115.
[20] Burke 2001:99.

historians Paul Thompson and Raphael Samuel were key figures in developing oral history practice in the 1970s. Their work challenged historical positivism through an engagement with new ideas about what constituted historical reality, and sought to clarify the political dimensions inherent in historiography.[21] Thompson's seminal text *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* questioned the authority of the written text by demonstrating the capacity for oral sources to re-connect history with its fundamental social purpose. Oral history extended the scope of enquiry beyond the boundaries of the essentially socio-political interests of an historically literate ruling class in order to 'give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place'.[22]

Whilst progress has been slow, oral history methodology is now increasingly recognized as a vital element within contemporary fashion historical research.[23] The opportunity to examine the experiences of particular individuals, a social grouping, an era, and a generation largely ignored by the historical record is highly pertinent to the questions posed by this thesis: the relationship between ideals of improvement and aspirational desire realized through recreational leisure and leisure. This thesis utilizes a series of interviews conducted with seven individuals, one man and six women now aged in their eighties, for whom a range of recreational leisure activities were both an integral part of their lived classed

[21] Samuel was the founder of what was essentially the History Workshop movement which prioritized the presentation and publication of historical research based on people's own lives and communities. The *History Workshop Journal: a Journal of Social Historians* was launched in 1975 as a collective experiment in the democratization of history and history writing integral to which was a commitment to oral sources. The journal became a vital forum for debates around the nature of historiography in the twentieth century. Samuel's classic exposition on the nature of popular memory is (1994), *Theatres of Memory*, London: Verso.

[22] Thompson, P. (1978), *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Thompson's work fused historical scholarship with political activism to advance the role of oral history in transforming an understanding of what history is, and how it is written. In his pioneering research at the University of Essex, Thompson interviewed and archived over five hundred life stories of men and women born between 1872 and 1906, 'from whom it was possible to ask directly about whole areas of undocumented experiences' see Thompson, P. (1975), *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society*, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 'Introduction': xviii. For an overview of Thompson's contribution to oral historiography in Britain see Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (1998), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, particularly the Introduction to Part I, 'Critical Developments'.

[23] Biddle-Perry, G. (2004). 'Bury Me in Purple Lurex: Promoting a New Dynamic between Fashion and Oral Historians' in *Oral History*, 33: 1.

experience in the immediate post-war period, and pivotal to ideals of social aspiration (understood in terms of their own self-definition and wider objective socioeconomic descriptors).

The telling of stories, and the narrative constructions entailed in both their constitution and their oral articulation, for Alessandro Portelli, is what 'makes oral history different ... it tells us less about *events* than about their *meaning*. Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did'.[24] Oral history allows the voices of those 'hidden from history' to speak for themselves.[25] But as feminist leisure historian Clare Langhamer, observes, 'Rather than acting simply as a compensatory source, filling in the gaps left by incomplete documentary sources, oral history can provide an invaluable means of reconceptualising, and thus re-presenting, understandings of leisure ...'.[26] A dialectical approach to oral historical methodology allows ordinary recollections and their interpretation to be understood in a way that allows subjective experience and critical discourse to come together to challenge theoretical orthodoxy. The concept of 'recovery' and 'revision', and the recording of life experiences previously overlooked or 'hidden from history', almost without exception, has provided the critical impetus to fashion, costume and dress historical research using oral history methods and interviewing techniques. Oral history interviews offered a way of documenting particular aspects of fashion and dress historical experience outside of its traditional historiography such as home dressmaking and knitting.[27] The recorded testaments demonstrated how home

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[24] Portelli, A. (1981) 'The Peculiarities of Oral History' in *History Workshop Journal*, 1981, No.12: 97.

[25] Thompson 1978..

[26] Langhamer, C. (2001), 'Towards a feminist framework for a history of women's leisure, 1920-60', in A-M. Gallagher, C. Lubelska and L. Ryan (eds.), *Re-presenting the Past: Women and History*, Longman Publishing: 204.

[27] For example, Barbara Burman's research looked at home dressmaking practice - previously seen as the poor relation of fashion studies - and involved the recollections of eighteen very elderly ladies of not just on when, what and how they sewed, but also how sewing was an integral part of their lives and effectively 'gendered' the domestic environment, Burman, B. (1999), *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption & Home Dressmaking*, London: Berg. See also Buckley, C. (1998), 'On the Margins: theorizing the history and significance of making and designing clothes at home' in *Journal of Design History*, vol.11, no.2: 157-171. Buckley argues that for the home dressmakers she

sewing and ideas around women's own sense of their creative and technical expertise crucially shaped their self-esteem and challenged both the concept of how individual creativity might be defined, but also a wider understanding of craft itself as formulated in the act of both production and consumption.[28]

Oral history challenges the partiality of the historical record, but the process of remembering and recording 'invisible' lives through recollections of dress also functions as a form of social and political empowerment.[29] Advances have taken place within fashion and dress historical studies over the past ten years within which an interest in oral history has progressively, and more recently, rapidly, expanded.[30] Liz Linthicum's recent study, for example, is concerned with inclusive knitwear design and uses oral history to examine differently-abled bodies' relationship with clothing and clothing design. Writing in a special issue of the *Journal of Design History*, Linthicum's exploration of this previously under-researched and misunderstood area demonstrates the contribution that recollections of clothing might make to the cultural history of disability. Linthicum outlines how initial questions, for example about the importance of clothing to interviewees or the first outfit they remember wearing, prompted different and divergent responses according to how long they had lived with disability. The importance of clothing in

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interviewed, the making of particular clothes at particular times connected emotions and feelings with 'memories of family and friends. It related intimately to specific places and locations in which they lived.

[28] Jo Turney's work interrogated the stereotypes of creative 'lack' (of creativity and 'taste') associated with needlecrafts made from kits and patterns. Turney argues that although these humble home craft objects 'are not "art" objects per se, they are significant and "special" enough for the maker/owner to display them ... These objects become part of the meaning of making.' But they also become part of the making of meaning. Turney, J. (2004), 'Here's One I Made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain' in *Journal of Design History*, 17(3): 267-282:

[29] Shaun Cole's examination of gay men's fashionable clothing consumption in the 1950s offers a useful example of filling in the gaps of traditional and, here, 'straight' histories of men's dress. Cole's interviews with gay men about their memories of shops and shopping were concerned with the 'invisibility' of gay men and the importance of clothing and clothing choices, Cole, S. (1999), 'Invisible men: gay men's dress in Britain, 1950-1970' in A. de la Haye and E. Wilson (eds.), *Defining Dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 143-54. See also Lomas, C. (2007), ' "Men don't wear velvet you know!": Fashionable Gay Masculinity and the Shopping Experience in London 1950 - Early 1970s' in *Oral History*, Vol. 35, No.1, 82-90.

[30] *"What About Us?" Oral Historical Approaches to Fashion Dress and Textiles*, held at University of the Arts London, London College of Fashion, 14 September 2007.

terms of cut and colour, and of the act of choosing, adapting and customizing clothes offered fascinating insights into wider aspects of the interviewees' life views and approaches to disability as a whole. Across a continuum of different personal experiences such memories were a significant part of 'recording the experiential, emotional, affective engagement with clothing as identity'.[31]

Linthicum's summary of the radical potential of dress-based oral history supports an understanding of fashion, dress and everyday clothing as an embodied social practice - an idea that has been extremely important in the development of fashion theoretical and historical studies. The increasing significance of an idea of dress as a 'situated bodily practice' transformed the ways in which all types of clothing might be theorized and the methods that might be utilized to advance an understanding of this complex dynamic. As Entwistle points out, 'dress in everyday life is always more than a shell, it is an intimate aspect of the experience and presentation of the self and is so closely linked to the identity that these three - dress, the body and the self - are not perceived separately but simultaneously, as a totality' .[32] It is this dynamic and clothing's potential as a vehicle for subjective expression and recall that is missing from much oral historical research and which this current research project seeks to address.

[31] Linthicum, L. (2006), 'Integrative Practice: Oral History, Dress and Disability Studies' in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 19, No.4, 309-318: 316.
[32] Entwistle 2000: 10.

1.3 Literature Review: Understanding the Historical Lower Middle Class

The Rise of the Modern Lower Middle Class

The period between 1840 and 1890 is seen as the pivotal moment in the corporate history of the lower middle class. This period is significant because massive political and social upheavals brought about changes not just to the wider social and political structures of industrial capitalism, but also to the internal structures of competition and hierarchies of status *extant* in the historical lower middle class itself.[1] Edward Thompson argues, 'At this point 'the histories of different trades begin to diverge. The pressure of the unskilled tide, beating against the doors, broke through in different ways and with different degrees of violence'.[2] The conditions of the first half of the nineteenth century created a mass labour market *and* a skilled labour aristocracy brought together through a shared 'consciousness' of the exploitative conditions of industrial capitalism. Both sides of the hierarchical lower-middle-class social equation underwent substantial and long-lasting radical

[1] Mayer, A. J. (1975), 'The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem' in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp 409-436, outlines the development of a recognisable pre-industrial 'transition class' of urban artisans and tradesmen. This intermediary group of independent craftsmen and merchants were 'made' as a result of the economic, social and political structures and conditions of a nascent modernity and the emergence of a modern city, Levels of skill and/or independent market situation were both secured and strengthened through the protective practices of traditional craft organizations and self-governing guilds that protected their commercial interests. This set them apart from other working men and sustained both their economic advantage and their hierarchical social status. The political upheavals of of the 1830s and 1840s present a convenient cut-off point that, historiographically speaking, allow a pre-industrial artisan elite to reach their peak, and provide a useful stepping-off point for privileged discussion of the stratum of white-collar clerical workers who emerged and expanded thereafter. This watershed in popular radicalism provides a buffer against which to explore Marxist accounts of the transformation of 'labour aristocracy' see Stedman Jones, (1983), *The Language of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982*, London: Taylor and Francis. Stedman Jones addresses this point in his discussion of the ambiguities of the term within the 'language' of class that emerged in the early nineteenth century and the linguistic implications this poses for contemporary analysis.

[2] Thompson, E.P. (1963), *The Making of the English Working Class*, London: Penguin Books. Thompson's study remains the classic text on the emergence of modern class relations in Britain. In Thompson's Marxist historical paradigm, different groups of working men in England between 1780 and 1832 - of which many belonging to this intermediary group were arguably a significant part - came to think, act and feel in a new way.

changes: the productive formulation of an industrial working class of skilled and unskilled manual workers established the lower boundaries of the new lower-middle class in relation to the upper frontiers of a capitalist economic and institutional power dominated by a newly wealthy and increasingly 'professional' middle class.

Geoffrey Crossick's work remains the most significant contribution to understanding the various social groupings that came to constitute the lower middle class before the First World War.[3] Their sometimes precarious market situation is the focus of Crossick's discussion of the shifting relationship between a rapidly expanding 'new' lower-middle class and the 'old' petty-bourgeoisie made up of shopkeepers and merchants. This latter group included to some extent a traditional artisan class, sometimes referred to as a 'labour aristocracy', whose fortunes under the new conditions of industrial capitalism in the 1840s are also explored by Crossick.[4] As noted in the introduction, there is an overall lack of critical recognition of the lower middle class as a whole. But, even within the body of literature that does exist, discussion of those involved in mercantile/industrial enterprises remains scant and Crossick and Haupt's detailed examination of the petite bourgeoisie in Europe prior to 1914 remains a notable exception.[5] Their remit does extend to England but as they point out, the fact that, historically, it has been difficult to even establish a comfortable and consistent descriptive term for this class such as the German *mittelstand* or the French *petite bourgeoisie* is perhaps significant.

Arno Mayer's earlier contribution to such debates advanced historical understanding of these independent producers and tradesmen who owned their own homes, shops

[3] Crossick, G. (1977), 'The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion' in G. Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, London: Croom Helm.
[4] Crossick, G. (1978), *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society*, London: Croom Helm. This remains one of the key texts on the transformation of the skilled working class in the early nineteenth century. But it is focused on a small area of London - what Edward Thompson refers to as the 'Athens of the artisan' - and other accounts offer different perspectives on the political and socio-economic dimensions of what Crossick sees as autonomous 'accommodation' to the productive relations and specific local conditions of industrial capitalism.
[5] Crossick, G. and Haupt, H-G. (1995), *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe 1780-1914*, London and New York: Routledge.

and workshops, tools, goods and sometimes their own land and property, and which set them apart from other working men, and sustained both their economic advantage and their hierarchical social status.[6] Levels of skill and/or independent market situation were both secured and strengthened through the protective practices of traditional craft organizations and self-governing guilds that protected their commercial interests and established their position in the social hierarchy. The structuration of this traditional intermediary class was always coloured by a complex and ambiguous schema of social and economic differentiation within various social groupings that constituted the class itself, and dictated their collective situation betwixt and between other social groupings above and below them - classes that were emerging, in Marxist terms, 'in' and 'for' themselves from the late-eighteenth century. As the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, a new, non-landed, wealthy middle class became more powerful and more powerfully ambitious as the political and economic authority of the aristocracy declined. At the same time, the industrial basis of such power and the growth of manufacturing created a displaced and exploited urban labouring class crowded into city slums whose living and working conditions generated a cohesive class identity founded on oppression and conflict.

However, the adverse affects of industrial capitalism were not universally felt. The interests of large-scale capital, the burgeoning of vast bureaucracies, and antagonism between labour and capital, all undermined the independence of many small businesses and workshops and depressed the market situation affecting the livelihood of masters and their skilled workers and apprentices. But in some cases these same conditions stimulated both small craft-based and mercantile enterprise.[7]

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[6] Mayer, A. J. (1975), 'The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem' in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp 409-436. Most within this intermediary group shared roots in various trades, entry to which was limited to the sons of those already working in them or those willing to pay a high apprenticeship premium; and most master artisans considered themselves to be on a par with other masters, shopkeepers and professional men.

[7] There were increased opportunities for workers in these areas to set up independently, made possible by the small scale of many emerging specialist industries and the universal prevalence of sub-contracting, see Hobsbawm 1964. Furthermore, as Crossick points out, the gap between the traditional skilled artisan and the lower strata of the working population in certain geographical and industrial sectors widened; for example, the average earnings of engineers saw progressive and

The British economy between 1848 and 1873 witnessed rapid expansion and exports rose by 229 per cent, on top of the huge percentage rise it had already seen since the beginning of the century; output of iron and steel rose along with the workforce and its productivity turning out goods that were still as yet facing little serious competition from other countries.[8] A traditional petite bourgeoisie sought to capitalize on the twin processes of industrialization and urbanization producing by providing the goods and services to meet the needs and increasing demands of an ever-growing mass market.[9] The retail sector in Britain as a whole expanded rapidly but there was a proliferation of independent family-run shops.[10] The 'old' petite bourgeoisie consisting of small-scale specialist shops and merchants, each offering a limited range of goods and services, was transformed by its integration into a new retail sector consisting of wholesale shops and warehouses, emerging multiple and departmental stores as well as small specialist retail outlets, all now offering a much wider range of goods and services.[11] Vigorous advertising, low prices, uniformity of the appearance of shops and their staff were successfully aimed at skilled working-class and lower-middle-class suburban consumers seeking both reasonable standards of quality, new products and competitive pricing.[12]

The evolution of modern retailing is frequently understood as a move away from small traditional traders offering a narrow range of goods and service. It is certainly true that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a separate commercial circuit of 'ultra-specialized' shops and tradesmen offering a range of limited items for sale and commission.[13] However, taking as an example the apparel and clothing industry it becomes evident that in certain sectors, retail and craft-based specialism

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relatively high incremental improvement, and in the London building trades skilled rates rose more often and sooner by an average of three years than unskilled rates, see Crossick 1978: 16-20.

[8] Hoppen, T.K. (1998), *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[9] In northern towns the ratio of shops per head of population saw a steady and progressive expansion from that of 1 shop to 136 persons in 1801 to that of 1 shop to every 56 by 1881, Hoppen 1998: 48.

[10] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 13.

[11] Mass production and the growth of international trade in food were two great consumer innovations that led to the rapid development of multiple retail chains in Britain, concentrated mainly in food, clothing and footwear, Hoppen 1998: 350.

[12] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 50-51.

[13] Laermans, R. (1993), 'Learning to Consume: Early Department Stores and the Shaping of the Modern Consumer Culture (1860-1914)' in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol.10, No.4: November 1993: 79-103.

did not just disappear but rather took on a new direction in the nineteenth century. Christopher Breward's work draws attention to both the growing diversity of goods on offer to new young male consumers, and their separate retail organization and merchandising; there was, he argues, a profusion of as many different kinds of shops as there were elements within the nineteenth-century male wardrobe which by the 1880s was quite considerable.[14] The wholesale clothing trade that emerged with the advent of the industrial sewing machine meant that large manufacturers began to specialize in supplying specific goods and types of goods to a corresponding variety of outfitters, drapers, hosiers and milliners across the country. All forms of retail environment in a sense became both more and less specialized by offering a greater variety of particular type of goods either in shops offering only such goods or types of goods, or in specialist departments within wholesalers, drapers or department stores.[15] Such shops were very much a response to the effects of new systems of manufacture and the expansion of the wholesale trade alongside developments for example in the fancy goods' trade focussed on fashion rather than just function and utility.[16] Manufacturers also set up new and imposing wholesale warehouses that were seen as one of the marvels of the age.[17] An advertisement from the *Draper's Record* in 1893 shows how one such warehouse (Richard Evans & Co, Trimmings Manufacturer & Importer) organized their goods into different departments - 'fancy haberdashery, gimps, galons and ruches, braids, cords, buttons, fringes, laces' etc. - and how these were accommodated on an industrial scale over a number of floors in a new, vast commercial space.[18]

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[14] Breward, C. (1994), *The Hidden Consumer. Masculinities, fashion and city life 1860-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 101

[15] Breward 1994: 110, 112. For example, the word hosiery came to embrace 'all variety of knitted articles... jerseys, sweaters... waistcoats and cardigan jackets for golfing, cycling, boating', and aside from socks, stockings and men's underwear a specialist hosier or a hosiery department within a larger mixed outlet might be expected to also hold 'men's ties, scarves, handkerchiefs, belts, braces, night caps, shirts, collars, towels, portmanteaus, travelling rugs, bags, straps, studs and links'.

[16] Levitt, S. (1986), *Victorians Unbuttoned. Registered Designs for Clothing, their Makers and Wearers, 1839-1900*, London: Allen & Unwin: 115.

[17] Levitt 1986 *op* cit: 151.

[18] *Draper's Record*, 18 March 1893

Many small shopkeepers saw the department store as the most powerful symbol of all that they hated and as 'unfair competition' but in actuality the proportion of retail sales accounted for by them in 1910 was estimated at no more than 2 to 3 per cent. However, 'The political and cultural impact of a commercial phenomenon is not directly related to its economic weight'.[19] Department stores grew by firstly stressing the diversity of goods on offer and secondly, the fast turn-around of stock and low prices;[20] but they swiftly gained a reputation for being the first to display and stock novelties and new technological or fashionable innovations and this further boosted their appeal and increased sales.[21] This capacity to keep pace with technical/design innovation and fashionable trends was not confined to the larger department stores. Many small specialist retailers equally drew their stock from many of the same forward-looking manufacturers and wholesalers.[22] The more traditional specialized shops and traders individually stocked the same kinds of goods; it was rather the increased range and amount of goods on offer in one place rather than any radical shift in sale and retail methods that made department stores distinctive. Every major city and conurbation in Britain in the nineteenth-century became in effect a series of inter-related specialized manufacturers and wholesalers linked to a growing range of different specialist retailers or specialist departments within retail outlets, to constitute a new heartland of lower-middle-class entrepreneurial spirit.

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[19] Crossick, G. and Jaumain, S. (1999), 'The world of the department store: distribution, culture and social change' in G. Crossick and Jaumain (eds.), *Cathedrals of Consumption: the European Department Store, 1850-1939*, Aldershot and Brookfield, USA: Ashgate: 22.

[20] Miller, B. (1981), *The Bon Marche. Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1929*, London: George Allen & Unwin: 48.

[21] See Davis, D. (1996), *A History of Shopping*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd: 290. For example, Debenhams saw an opportunity to sell a new kind of knitted garment, the 'Jersey' adapted from a one-piece woollen trunk with sleeves. Such a garment would previously have been knitted by hand but with the adaptation of knitting machines that once produced only stockings and gloves these could now be manufactured for a cheaper price on a much larger scale. Debenhams had the capacity to order a highly fashionable item in enormous quantities, which then generated the formation of a further specialist department within the store and a further expansion of business operations as a whole, Corina, M. (1978), *Fine Silks and Oak Counters: Debenhams 1778-1978*, London: Hutchinson Benham: 45.

[22] Breward 1994: 111.

The characteristic features of nineteenth century social transformation - free trade, regional, national and international developments in transport and communication, the growth of government and municipal bureaucracies, schools, prisons, hospitals, a commercialized popular media and leisure industry - produced a whole new occupational strata but also a new customer base across the economic and social spectrum. There was a proliferation of mid-grade technical specialities - telegraphy, nursing, pharmacy, draughtsmanship, light engineering, surveying, accounting and book-keeping, photography, and later typing - as well as a group of minor professional grades (teachers, solicitors and architects) that were all particularly attractive to the 'old' lower-middle class because of the relatively low level of cost, prior educational achievement and length of training needed to secure these posts.[23] By 1891, these occupations comprised 12% of the working population (as a census category) rising to 14.1% by 1911.[24] New opportunities for petit bourgeois retail expansion and development fuelled both commercial success and social aspiration as new career prospects opened up for them and their children as shop assistants, managers, salesmen and, above all, clerks.[25]

An article in the *Draper's Record* describes the opening of Debenham & Frebody's lavishly equipped new premises in the West End opened in 1893 and evidences the huge scale of such a business operation and the opportunities for employment it might offer. The shop was now spread over five floors with a grand entrance hall and various 'rooms' including the 'Silk Room' with floor-to-ceiling shelving that lined the walls and long tables and counters full of boxes illuminated by electric lights (which had been installed in every part of the building).[26] The showroom devoted to the display of costumes and mantles alone was now some 184' long and had a highly decorated ceiling painted to match the panels in the windows and the thick blue carpet [**Fig 1**]. The supply of the building materials, and the shop's

[23] Mayer 1975: 430.,
[24] Pennybacker, Susan D. (1995), *A Vision for London 1889-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 34
[25] See Crossick and Haupt 1995 *op cit* for a detailed study of the European petite bourgeoisie before the First World War.
[26] 'Debenham & Frebody's New Wholesale Warehouses' in *The Drapers Record [Extra Supplement]*, 18 March 1893.

architectural design, construction, fitting and servicing drew on a huge range of crafts and trades, but the shop itself must have provided numerous openings for employment for both men and women of the rising lower middle class.

Figure 1
'Debenham & Frebody's New Wholesale Warehouses',
The Draper's Record, 18 March 1893.

Specialist services grew up to meet the needs of those who could not visit such shops in person that further extended occupational opportunities to the lower middle and skilled working class. Consumer choices were made via illustrated advertisements in a massively expanding popular press and through new forms of retail 'catalogues' that created a burgeoning mail order trade; it was claimed that 250,000 circulars or catalogues could be despatched over a 24-hour period.[27] By

[27] The Royal Mail Parcel Service was introduced in 1883 following the Post Office (Parcels) Act of 1882 which ran at a loss at first but was extremely popular: 20.6 million parcels were carried in the first year and this had more than doubled by the 1890s. Postal orders were introduced by the Post Office in 1881 and this massively extended access to the service to the vast majority of the population who did not possess a chequebook see Coopey, R., O'Connell, S. and Porter, D. (eds.) (2005), *Mail Order Retailing in Britain: A Business and Social History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 14-16.

1913, the General Post Office was delivering around 130 million parcels annually, a significant proportion of these for mail order retailers of one kind or another.[28] In the 1880s, the London department store of Marshall & Snelgrove received around 1,000 letters daily, and their sample department had to install special machinery to cut the sample fabric/patterns to be sent out in response to customer enquiries. Their 'County Rooms' employed upwards of a hundred clerks and accountants, and the Examining Rooms where every garment sold was inspected before despatch, employed 2,000 workers (of which 700 boarded on the premises).[29] New wholesale warehouses were a hive of modern activity, evidenced in 'the distant click of the type-writer in the counting house, the monotonous hum of the doubtless melodious voice of the entering clerk somewhere above, the hurrying messengers to and fro, or the tinkling of a telephone bell...'.[30]

Classification

Gregory Anderson observes, 'of all the lower middle class groups which expanded with the structural shifts in the late-Victorian economy from manufacturing to services, clerks were by far the most numerous and important'.[31] The emergence of a 'modern' lower middle class is predominantly understood in terms of this white-collar stratum. But clearly its rapid and progressive rise was always syncretic with developments and shifts within the wider social groupings that had traditionally constituted the lower middle class who also continued to pursue strategies of inter-generational mobility through education and marriage.[32] The same economic, technological and bureaucratic transformation of life in Britain in the mid-Victorian

[28] Of the 145 million postal orders issued, with an aggregate value of £57 million, the £1 (20 shilling) denomination was the most widely used indicating that these were purchased mainly for the popular mail order business see Coopey, R. and Porter, D. (2003), 'Agency Mail Order in Britain c. 1900-2000: Spare-Time Agents and Their Customers' in J. Benson and L.Ugolini (eds.), *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing*, London: IB Taurus: 226.
[29] Adburgham, A. (1989), *Shops and Shopping, 1800-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 233.
[30] 'Debenham & Frebody's New Wholesale Warehouses' in *The Drapers Record [Extra Supplement]*, 18 March 1893.
[31] Anderson, G. (1977), 'The Social Economy of the Late Victorian Clerk' in G.Crossick (ed.) 1977 *ibid*: 113
[32] For a detailed historical outline of such strategies see Miles 1999 *op cit.*

period changed the nature of the old lower middle class and formed the basis of the new one.[33] Craftsmen, traders and shopkeepers as well as white-collar salaried workers adapted to the new opportunities and problems provided and posed by massive industrial and social change. Comparable groups operated within a context of regional and national economic and social frameworks but also within the highly stratified complex milieu of towns, municipalities, boroughs and parishes. These often much more compact neighbourhoods all produced different and various forms of lower-middle-class social experience and a corresponding highly localized variable shifting class categorization.[34] For example in the 1890s in Bolton, the lower middle classes included 'the best paid clerks, book-keepers, managers, and "the better sort of working folk"; in Salford at about the same time nominal membership was extended to clerks, commercial travellers, printers, joiners, cabinet makers and miners, with Birmingham, Merthyr or Chelsea being different again.[35] Nor did distinctions between skilled and unskilled workers, labouring and mercantile classes that traditionally governed at least popular understandings of social stratification just disappear overnight in the 1840s.[36]

New classed identities emerged that were formed and reformed in response to demands for the franchise, new forms of organized labour, early sociological surveys, statutory and philanthropic welfare reform as well as the expansion of the 'new' stratum of urban industrial works and workers.[37]A dense network of interdependent theories, technologies, and political disputes simultaneously

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[33] Mayer 1975: 421.
[34] Crossick 1977: 14.
[35] Hobsbawm 1964: 274.
[36] In many ways, the differences between social and occupational groups within the upper working and lower middle class, particularly at the boundaries, grew rather than subsided in the nineteenth century in relation to the specific challenges posed by potential economic and social degradation, the particular conditions of their successful resolution, and/or their failure. This point is vividly brought home in social reformer Henry Mayhew's description of the socio-cultural difference between the skilled West End worker and the unskilled East End labourer in mid-Victorian London as a journey that involved an 'intellectual and moral change' that was so great 'that it seems as if we were in a new land and among another race' cited in Hoppen 1998: 65
[37] For a detailed discussion with particular reference to the lower middle class and the complexities of statutory classification and the introduction of the census in Britain see Crossick, G. (1991), 'From gentlemen to the residuum: languages of social description in Victorian Britain' in P. Corfield, (ed.), *Language, History and Class*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

organized new social 'domains' *and* professionalized, bureaucratized apparatuses of inspection, regulation and enforcement that linked occupational classification and moral terminology in a way that only increased and intensified with the development of the census. The concrete spatial organization of new social bodies incorporated comparative assumptions around the differential nature of society and different groupings' place within it in terms of shared socio-economic and cultural perspectives.[38] Attendant upon the imposition and acceptance of such a classificatory framework was the naturalization of new metaphors of abstraction allied to new systems of stratification where 'class' was effectively understood in relation to 'want' and essentially middle-class understandings of what constituted 'poverty'.[39] The economic and political power of the ruling elite and the resulting capitalist and productive relations of modern industrial society created the ideological context of class conflict *and* the foundation of a much more diverse and loosely understood schema of classed identities.[40] Gareth Stedman Jones suggests that a new sense of political and increasingly 'classed' identity emerged in the

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[38] See Poovey, M. (1995), *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. Mary Poovey's highly complex collection of essays explores the making of new social bodies in modernity as links between occupational classification and moral terminology increased and intensified with the development of the census and the implementation of statutory understandings of poverty.

[39] Notably, in the 1880s Charles Booth undertook to survey the conditions of life and labour of the people of London organized into three sections, one of which was 'the problem of poverty'. Survey notebooks contain several thousand interviews with various individuals and information gathered from School Board visitors, However, whilst extremely significant in pioneering advances in welfare and health reform and based on material evidence of poverty or measures of deprivation, such findings were also more fundamentally analysed and interpreted in terms of the inappropriateness of working class *responses* to poverty - financial mismanagement, a lack of self-control, laziness etc. see McKibbin, R (1990), *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations In Britain 1880-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Social surveys such as those undertaken by Charles Booth and Henry Mayhew were hugely influential in bringing about social welfare legislation, for example, the introduction of the old age pension but these were always means-tested so that welfare provision was always inseparable from its explicitly judgmental allocation and investigation. See Bourke, J. (1994), *Working Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity*, London: Routledge.

[40] See Armstrong, W.A. (1972), 'The use of information about occupation', in E.A.Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society: Essays in the use of quantitative methods for the study of social data*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 200-202. Censuses until the later nineteenth century simply asked for 'Rank', 'Profession' or 'Occupation' and job titles were often vague and ambiguous; a 'builder' for example might be recorded as a manual worker when in fact they might own several houses and employ a number of skilled an unskilled employees. Findings were tabulated and published but were a mix of individual occupations and wider industrial groupings with the crucial dividing line between the middle and working class contained somewhere in Class II which contained the largest proportion of the total population.

nineteenth century in relation to specific challenges rather than any one cohesive political ideology but he emphasizes the role that language, or specifically the 'language of class' played in the classification and understanding of cultural and social identities in the nineteenth century. Different power relations were all locked into an 'anterior social reality'.[41] Considered in a linguistic context, 'class' took on a powerful cultural potency in the context of the Industrial Revolution, the threat posed by politically organized class action for reform, and the potential enfranchisement of new social groupings.[42] The lower-middle class had to negotiate the new industrial state that a rising middle class and a new, now working class created, discursively dominated, and contested.

Attempts to impose abstract systems of stratification produced a fragmented social consciousness facilitated by what Crossick refers to as a 'society of linguistic eclecticism'. The language of class consisted of competing and ill-defined terms fundamentally bound up in the shifting metaphor and imagery of the social relations that defined as much as described its concrete description and analysis.[43] In terms of the constitution of the modern lower middle class, [supposed] classificatory certainty was underwritten and given cultural force by consolidating the already very stratified yet highly organized hierarchical nature of an old artisanal and mercantile class. A traditional system of social and cultural gradations based on skill and property was rapidly incorporated into a new set of aspirational goals conducive to the new conditions and occupational parameters of white-collar

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[41] Jones, G.Stedman (1983), *Language of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 8. Stedman Jones approaches class in its linguistic context as a set of different 'languages' and a cluster of culturally signifying practices that share a reference point in the discursive reality of social relations.

[42] David Cannadine argues that the Industrial Revolution and the language of political reform did not eradicate the traditional idiom of hierarchical distinctions, but rather rephrased them in the language of class organized along the traditional and extant principles of rank, deference, power and subordination. The idea of society as elaborately layered dominated mid- to late-Victorian discussion of class relations in an attempt to diffuse the threat posed by politically organized class action that so threatened the *status quo* in the 1830s and 1840s. Debates around the enfranchisement of new social groupings that were the crucial focus of the Second Reform Bill of 1866/67 were fought out by parliament in terms of the need to protect and defend the established political and hierarchical organization of a society - of which many politicians were largely ignorant, Cannadine, D. (1998), *Class in Britain*, London and New Haven: Yale University Press.

[43] Crossick 1991: 169-74.

employment. Boundaries between different groups within the lower middle class - always the subject of constant and frequent incursion - took on a new cultural and classificatory significance according to new meanings culturally produced in the context of the industrial age.

A manual/non-manual divide emerged as the new symbolic and material boundary of middle- and lower-middle classed identity and aspiration; but the parallel statutory structuration of charitable assistance - or more crucially for the lower middle class, its avoidance - was also pivotal in formulating classed subjectivities. Analytical tables of occupational categorization were presented as if based on criteria emanating from the material being classified; but were in fact the constructions of census-makers and philanthropic surveyors for whom occupational title inferred both social and work divisions. As a result, it was increasingly difficult to detach the undertaking of any form of 'manual' work (even by association, for example masters working in their own workshops, or managing and supervising other manual workers) from a corresponding exclusion from a 'professional' non-manual middle class and a cover-all assignment to a progressively 'classificatory' skilled or unskilled manual working class.[44]

There are clear problems inherent in attempting to understand the lower middle class as a collective social grouping merely by reference to characteristics such as occupation, or income. However, Crossick argues that a more cohesive lower middle class identity arguably emerged in relation to two key structural factors that defined their situation within the class system as a whole within British society. The first was an emphatic and self-conscious differentiation from the working class; the second was the acknowledgement of a shared marginal position in relation to the established middle class.[45] Richard Price observes: '[B]oth those above and those below them in the social scale helped to define the status-consciousness of the lower middle classes. It is this position in the vacuum between middle and working

[44] See Goldthorpe, J. (in collaboration with C. Lucas and C. Payne), (1980), *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
[45] Crossick 1977: 12-14.

classes that helps to explain the curious ambiguity that pervaded lower middle class attitudes toward social mobility'.[46]

The external material realities of economic and occupational competition, as well as the symbolic dogma of lower-middle class independence and individual aspiration, in their different ways necessitated greater visible status-identification. Confirmation of implicit understandings of social status and class stratification were therefore actively sought and increasingly signalled by external markers of consumption and expenditure such as dress, housing and leisure. There was a new emphasis placed on the markers of 'success' that explicitly displayed its achievement through means other than occupational status alone - new forms of consumerism, increasing residential segregation, and relative educational achievement.

The Expansion of the Suburban Lower Middle Class: Keeping up with the Joneses and away from the Smiths

Clearly dress was one of the most significant aspects of class identification in the nineteenth-century, and assumed a new psychological and emotional saliency particularly in relation to the specificities of suburban life and culture, and its critique. This concept effectively constitutes the foundation of this thesis and the aims of the research project as a whole to investigate the aspirational possibilities of rational recreational leisure and its clothing and is therefore developed in detail in the following chapters. However, dress was just one - although extremely crucial - element within the construction of a new social *milieu* that was fundamental to the evolution of the modern lower middle class and the ideology of social advance and 'independence' that was its mantra. Maintaining 'respectable' standards of appearance - of one's self and one's family but also one's home became the central tenet of suburban aspiration. Peter Bailey describes this in terms of a desire to 'keep

[46] Price, R.N., ' Society, Status and Jingoism: The Social Roots of Lower Middle Class Patriotism, 1870-1900' in G. Crossick (ed.) 1977: 99.

up with the Joneses and to keep away from the Smiths' and this very accurately reflects the culture of differentiation and division that governs much of lower-middle-class life.[47] By the later nineteenth century a white collar non-manual occupation and the enjoyment of a house in the suburbs had swiftly become the cornerstone of lower-middle-class concepts of economic advance and 'improvement'.[48] Social and residential aspiration and mobility were inextricably linked in the suburban consciousness, 'marked not by any dramatic residential transformation but rather by a slow improvement in the same type of house property'.[49] Shan Bullock's tale of a London clerk observed the necessity of making the best show one could: 'The brass knocker, the bay window, the dining and drawing room, establish the fact ... that already we had in view the great suburban ideal of being superior to the people next door'.[50] The motives for and results of property ownership were clearly both aspirational and segregational.

Urban extension and suburban growth were fuelled by the improving economic and social condition of an expanding lower middle and upper working class. Martin Gaskell examines the ways in which the lower middle class effectively created the modern suburb as they followed a middle-class pattern of housing expansion, which after 1870 saw a rapid and progressive rise. He observes:

> Throughout the country the lower middle classes were finding the means to promote this growth. They were permitted to do so as a result of increased mobility; they were motivated to do so by the increasing congestion of urban centres and the cheaper land and building in the suburbs, and they were encouraged to do so by the social aspirations which associated the idea of the suburb with respectability, a higher status, and an essentially middle class way of life.[51]

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[47] Bailey 1999.
[48] See Gaskell, M. (1977), 'Housing and the Lower Middle Class 1870-1914' in G. Crossick (ed.) 1977 *op cit.*
[49] Gaskell 1977: 161.
[50] Shan F. Bullock (1909), *Robert Thorne, The Story of a London Clerk*, cited by Price, R.N. (1977) 'Society, Status and Jingoism: The Social Roots of Lower Middle Class Patriotism, 1870-1900' in G. Crossick ed. 1977: 98-99.
[51] Gaskell 1977: 162.

Mass suburbia, Gaskell argues, was therefore essentially created by the lower middle class as they moved outwards from cramped, urban streets and tenements into small houses and villas with gardens now connected to Britain's major cities by railways, trams and buses.[52] Until 1901, 'Greater London' grew at a faster rate than England as a whole and new roads and technological improvements made purposeful travel faster, more affordable and more comfortable;[53] between 1901 and 1911 it had increased by a further 10.2 per cent.[54] The expansion of the white-collar clerical sector and the growth of the 'commuter' was clearly a significant factor in the extent and rapidity of growth of the suburbs. However in economic terms white-collar earnings were frequently on a par with, or even sometimes less than those of skilled artisans, independent tradesmen and shopkeepers, and the emergence of a distinctive white-collar salaried stratum in many ways only raised the stakes for petit bourgeoisie social and residential aspiration. Peter Bailey, reflecting on the culture of lower-middle-class social transience and demographic change, observes '[T]his was always a shifting, composite class; thus together with the newly arrived and the nearly arrived there were those who were doing very nicely thank you'.[55] In areas such as Deptford, Greenwich and Woolwich, traditional local social elites of independent small masters and traders began to move out to the adjoining Kentish suburbs.[56] Crossick and Haupt outline three motifs of a petit-bourgeois mentality, 'family, locality and property'. Property was both livelihood and cultural identity for many within this strata and this mix of the domestic and the commercial was one of the fundamental characteristics of petit-bourgeois life before World War I.[57] In the expanding suburbs, new shops were established above which frequently lived their proprietors. As suburban enterprises grew, shopkeepers and their families

[52] This group would previously have been able to afford a carriage but from the 1870s they could certainly afford to travel by new forms of transport that was still beyond the pocket of those further down the social hierarchy. Of London's 2.7 million inhabitants only 50,000 travelled daily to work by means of omnibus, or train, see also Hoppen 1998: 72.
[53] Dennis, R. (2000), 'Modern London' in D.M. Pallister, P. Clark, M.J. Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III, 1840-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 98.
[54] Sutcliffe 1983: 239.
[55] Bailey 1999: 280.
[56] Crossick 1978: 249.
[57] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 204.

moved out of the industrial centre of town they also began to invest in and rent out now empty inner-city slum properties to the unskilled working and labouring class.[58] Dyos and Reeder in their wide-ranging discussion of the relationship between slum and suburb in Victorian London argue that slums were part of a low-wage economy that underpinned middle-class prosperity and commercial success.[59] Within a 15 mile radius of Charing Cross a wide variety of standards of housing type and design presented a model of middle- and lower-middle-class aspiration as gradations in the social hierarchy were expressed topographically.[60] Quite subtle variations existed within and between estates and even streets in particular areas.[61] Dyos' classic study of the Victorian suburb of Camberwell in south east London reveals a broad pattern of housing type distinguished by architectural variations and different design features and embellishments that could indicate the most minute and precise social distinctions. A bay window of at least one storey was *de rigueur*, but porches, coloured glass, ornamental ridge tiles, tessellated front paths, moulded

[58] Crossick and Haupt 1995 outline three motifs of a petit-bourgeois mentality, 'family, locality and property'. Many widows and retired shopkeepers were landlords or *rentiers* usually of urban and local property which constituted the bulk of petit bourgeois investment property. For independent shopkeepers and tradesmen residential housing for rental 'not only in itself seemed secure, it also afforded individual security in the face of possible disaster, whether business decline, illness, or the death of the owner.' (203-204).

[59] Dyos, H.J. and Reeder, D.A. (1982), 'Slums and Suburb' in H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds),*The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul; see also, Dyos, H.J. (1961), *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, Leicester: Leicester University Press.

[60] Hollen Lees, L. (2000) 'Urban Networks' in D.M. Pallister, P. Clark, M.J. Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III, 1840-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 104.

[61] Booth, C. (1891), *Life and Labour of the People in London, Vol. 1, East London*, remains the classic example of how abstract understandings of social relations were given concrete form by being literally and symbolically 'mapped'. Small zones between different areas and sometimes between a few streets were subject to subtle systems of segregation according to housing type. Booth's system of stratification according to location and housing type was not only colour coded, but also subtly shaded to mark sometimes quite small variations in residential and socio-economic status. Areas of London marked gold identified upper and upper-middle-class families who kept three or more servants; that of red, well-to-do families who kept one or two servants; pink marked the intermediary groups who enjoyed what Booth defined as 'working class comfort' but which included skilled workers in regular employment and a large proportion of small tradesmen, shopkeepers, and salaried clerical workers (who did not keep servants); purple marked a mixed area that predominantly comprised workers classed as living in 'standard poverty' (light blue), with elements of the pink groups a little higher up the social ladder and even a few pockets of dark blue - the very poor comprised principally of casual labourers. The area marked black constituted the lowest grade of absolute poverty consisting of criminals and occasional labourers

plaster work, cast iron railings and hedges all operated as part of a highly significant system of respectability and social recognition.[62]

A new emphasis on housing as a measure of respectability and suburban aspiration meant that the domestic environment and its management assumed a new centrality in the lives of the Victorian middle and lower middle class. There was a cult for do-it-yourself in the 1880s and magazines such as *Amateur Work Illustrated* had a large suburban male readership eager to make their own cabinets and small tables.[63] Gardening was enthusiastically pursued as a way of visibly demarcating suburban 'respectability' through neat clipped hedges and ornamental flowerbeds.[64] Horticulture and vegetable growing was extremely popular with the parallel establishment of local horticultural clubs, societies and competitions. Allotments equally saw a rapid growth, for example in by 1871 there were 10,000 allotments in Nottingham.[65] Increasing amounts of time were given to hobbies; *Hobbies* magazine was published from 1895 and included features on a whole range of craft-based hobbies and interests from photography, to fretwork, stamp collecting and carpentry.[66] These types of publications were squarely aimed at the rapidly expanding lower- middle-class market many of whom were avid consumers of new commercial popular culture, its commodities and services that 'were the prime materials that furnished their lives, their homes, and their identities'.[67] There was a thriving publishing sector aimed firmly at the lower middle class market as a whole. The *Daily Mail* was specifically tailored to suit an aspiring suburban readership and was taken along with less news-oriented publications such as *Tit-Bits* and *Answers*.[68]

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[62] Dyos 1961: 178, 187.
[63] Wiseman, E. J. (1976), *Victorian Do It Yourself: Handicrafts and Pastimes of the 1880s*, Newton Abbott: David & Charles.
[64] Dyos 1961: 186-189.
[65] Hoppen 1998: 364.
[66] McKibbin, R (1991) The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations In Britain 1880-1950 see especially Chapter 5.
[67] Bailey 1999: 286.
[68] Crossick 1977: 34.

The ideology of 'the home' as a sanctuary invested the concept of family life with a new cultural significance that consolidated wider ideals of separate spheres of influence across a gendered public/private divide. However, for the lower-middle class such a divide was not necessarily so clear-cut. For all sections of the lower middle class the model of companionate marriage and parenthood was seen as pivotal to social success and any chance of upward mobility. For the petit bourgeoisie stratum especially, long-term commercial viability was traditionally built upon the commitment of the family, and wives and children were an essential part of the business.[69] Marriage was arguably more freely contracted than in other classes as a consequence of greater mobility and the erosion of wider family ties, but this was 'not so much upward social mobility, actual or aspired to, but lateral mobility, social and geographical'.[70] The contribution made by a wife's own capital, her familial contacts and the resources of her own labour was crucial to petit bourgeois family and commercial life; 'women, without being breadwinners in their own right, could fundamentally influence a family unit's economic fate'.[71] Women themselves were frequently proprietors of small boarding houses and lodgings which with the massive growth of the city were needed on a large scale.[72] For the petit bourgeoisie, the ties between family and enterprise were inextricably linked as women and children worked or lived in and above the shop or were involved in the business in some way, 'family and labour were seen as bound together'. This was particularly true for smaller concerns; women were more likely to work or run the shop, many widows took over and the leaving of a business and property to one's wife was a petit bourgeois norm.[73]

George Layard's discussion of living on 'A Hundred-and-fifty a Year' observes the importance of making the right choice of marriage partner for the daughters of the lower-middle class, he observes: 'In her father's house she had learned the domestic

[69] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 94.
[70] Bailey 1999: 280.
[71] Miles 1999: 149.
[72] See Davidoff, L. (1979), 'The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century England' in Sandra Burman (ed.) *Fit Work for Women*, London Croom Helm: 64-97.
[73] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 97.

arts. In her independent life she learned the value of money. And here we must remember that a wife may be the very best investment that a man ever made, or she may be the worst.'[74] Once married, children extended the focus of parental aspiration, but the cost of clothing and educating them to a certain standard sufficient to fulfil such expectations generated additional pressures on an already constrained family purse. Most lower-middle-class households operated on a very tight budget that would have afforded little in the way of full- or even part-time domestic help.[75] This placed a greater burden of responsibility on lower-middle-class women *and* men to maintain their homes and look after their children themselves whilst upholding family respectability and visibly displaying - at least superficially - their pecuniary and social worth.[76] Evidence suggests that the petite bourgeoisie across Europe were reducing family size in the nineteenth century ahead of most other social groups, closely followed by white collar workers and civil servants. In Britain a study in Sheffield in the 1870s revealed a dramatic change in not only the fertility rate of shopkeepers but also the spacing out of births from the early years of marriage.[77] Smaller families and a corresponding rise in life expectancy meant economic betterment on real incomes and patterns of economic expenditure that 'encouraged people to think not merely in terms of *actual*, but also of *desired* living standards'.[78]

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[74] Layard, G. S. (1901), 'A Hundred-and-fifty a Year', *Cornhill Magazine*, May 1901.

[75] Hobsbawm notes how the size of the middle class increased in numbers very substantially from 900,000 in 1851 to 1.4 million in 1871. An interesting factor in Booth's system of class stratification is the role that the employment of domestic staff plays in separating out the middle and upper classes from the lower middle classes. The keeping of one or more servants was a recognisable indicator of status for the middle class or those who aspired to it. But Hobsbawm questions the actual composition of this class in terms of the employment of servants: '... in 1871 there were only about 90,000 female cooks and not many more housemaids, which gives a more precise - though narrow - measure of the real size of the middle class; and as a gauge of the even more affluent, 16,000 private coachmen. Who were the rest of the servant-keepers? Perhaps, it was mainly the aspiring members of the "lower middle class," striving for status and respectability.' See Hobsbawm, E. (1968), *Industry and Empire: The Making of English Society, 1750 to the Present Day*, London and New York: Pantheon Books: 157.

[76] Most small shops and businesses traditionally employed at least one domestic servant, although this was often primarily motivated by the need to free up familial female labour to work in the business rather than the pursuit of status. It nevertheless conferred some sense of social standing, particularly in the more prosperous petit bourgeois households where it functioned to visibly display the non-participation of wives and daughters in commercial activity.

[77] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 199; 101.

[78] Hoppen 1998: 86.

Courtship and marriage were not activities undertaken lightly but calculations of strategic importance. Susan Pennybacker's study of the London County Council records how the dynamic of waiting until one had a viable income and the pursuit of a particular lifestyle just beyond reach fuelled much discussion among single male clerks before the First World War. Postponement of marriage offered the possibility of rising from £150 to £200 to even £1,000 in a lifetime. She argues,

> At the heart of what created the *idea* of the lower middle class - more than the recognition of men of inadequate income and half-realised aspirations for material and cultural betterment - were courtship, marriage and the ultimate recognition of women as participants in a man's life strategies. These formed the core of "lower middle class" ritual and fantasy.[79]

At most levels of lower-middle-class suburban life women's work was considered both respectable and was clearly visible to contemporaries as they served in high street shops or were themselves proprietors. Daughters now increasingly worked as telegraphists, telephone operators as well as teachers and growing numbers of them commuted to work in offices and stores in the city.[80] In 1851 there were a mere nineteen women listed as commercial clerks in England, but over the next twenty years a 'white blouse revolution' took place which brought about a rapid shift in the sexual composition of clerical work.[81] Between 1871 and 1881 the participation rates of women aged between 15 and 24 involved in clerical work saw an absolute increase; after 1881 those of women aged between 20 and 34 increased at the same rate as that of men of the same age.[82] A brief rather than protracted courtship was followed by marriage to an 'equal' and a small, well-planned family. This allowed the payment of a higher rent or a mortgage and a disposable income sufficient to keep up the standards of appearance integral to the maintenance of social status and

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[79] Pennybacker, S.D. (2005), *A Vision for London 1889-1914: Labour, Everyday Life and the LCC Experiment*, London: Routledge: 42.
[80] Copelman 1996.
[81] Anderson, G. (ed.) (1989), *The White Blouse Revolution: Female Office Workers since 1870*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[82] Lewis, J. (1977) 'Women Clerical Workers in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in G. Anderson (ed.) 1989: 32.

even to further its advancement. Arguably no greater evidence exists for the growing numbers and impact of lower-middle-class women in the workplace than Thomas Crosland's renowned misogynistic diatribe on the spread of the class as a whole:

> I make no doubt that you can remember a time when the question of daughters was quite a simple one. Daughters were brought up in the household, their mothers instructed them in the domesticities and the gentilities, wept a tender tear or two when they got married, took a keen interest in possible and actual grandchildren, did their best to keep on good terms with their sons-in-law, and presumably died happy. Nowadays all that is changed, and it is the suburban female who has been the principal agent in changing it. The grand principle of female independence had its rise in Suburbia as surely as Providence made little apples...Shorthand typewriting, the instruction of the small children of the wealthy - nay, even ribbon-measuring in drapers' shops or a position in the third row of a ballet - are greatly to be preferred. Always be independent, dear girls, and then, if a man asks you to marry him, you can inquire with a good heart how much money he has got.[83]

By the early twentieth century there were 212 female doctors, 68,000 nurses, 32,600 teachers and 60,000 women clerical workers in England alone.[84] The mere fact of keeping girls at school to the age 16 to enter white-collar work represented some considerable sacrifice but as a result was also symbolic of social status and a certain standing in the suburban community. Parents desired for their daughters to wed but the majority of labour aristocratic and lower middle class women married in their late twenties and it would have been impossible for them to be supported by their families for virtually a decade after leaving school. They were therefore encouraged to attain occupations that would provide them with skills and an adequate income, as well as long-term security and possibilities for promotion until they did marry, or if they did not marry. In 1898, for example a Parliamentary investigation into the training of women teachers found that promotional opportunities and the availability of pensions weighted heavily on the decision to

[83] Crosland, T. (1905), *The Suburbans*, London: John Long: 55-56.
[84] Williams-Mitchell, C. (1982), *Dressed for the Job, the Story of Occupational Costume*, Poole Dorset: Blandford Press: 101.

allow daughters to enter either the civil service or teaching profession demonstrating, Copelman argues, the same level of aspirational expectations that they invested in their sons was frequently extended to their daughters. She cites a typical lower-middle-class family occupational pattern as being that of a Miss Clarke, one of six children of a Greenwich fireman born in the 1880s and 189-0s: two girls trained to be teachers and one became a shorthand typist, and of the three brothers one worked for the telephone company and another became a solicitor's clerk.[85] Elementary school teaching opened up opportunities for thousands of lower middle class women in London at turn of century - women largely absent from historical record - who were not only a crucial factor in the history of state education in Britain, but also the history of the lower middle class.[86]

James Hammerton identifies two features central to popular critique of the lower middle class: the first, that it was mainly satirical, the second that there was an emphasis on the absurd and pompous figure of the emasculated, hen-pecked suburban male - Charles Pooter the mock hero of the Grosssmiths' *The Diary of a Nobody* published in 1892 being the best known and most enduring example.[87] Hammerton looks at Pooter's characterization as a white collar suburbanite degraded and 'feminized' through the all-pervading influence of their lower-middle-class wives and mothers who were, he argues, the object of the most savage literary attack as the agents of avarice, petty ambition and misguided concepts of material success. Masculinity was increasingly seen as under threat in the late nineteenth century. The emergence of the 'New Woman' demanding greater equality, as well as the progressively social and popular cultural emphasis on domestic arrangements and family life were cumulatively understood as contributing to the fundamental

[85] Copelman 1996: 40.
[86] *Ibid*: 43.
[87] Hammerton, J. (1999), 'The Perils of Mrs Pooter: satire, modernity and motherhood in the lower middle class in England, 1870-1920' in *Women's History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2: 261-276: 262. *Diary of a Nobody* was first published in serial form in *Punch* in the late 1880s but Hammerton also cites the work of novelists such as George Gissing and Thomas Crosland as exemplifying this social satirical genre.

decline of 'manliness' and the degeneration of manly physical attributes.[88] However, Hammerton's work is concerned with examining the significance of equitable gender relations to lower-middle-class life (implicitly the white collar sector) and the increasing understanding of marriage as a partnership that, when successful, assured not just domestic but wider economic advantage. Contemporary satirical attacks are countered by Hammerton's exploration of a much more ambivalent range of contemporary opinions on the problems of suburban domestic life expressed in contributions to numerous correspondence series run by the *Daily Telegraph* in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Issues around motherhood, marriage, celibacy, and working wives and daughters were at the heart of the dilemmas faced by the respectable lower middle class with limited financial circumstances and no domestic help.

Attitudes to lower middle class marriage and motherhood evidenced in the letters page reveal how by the 1880s the necessity of unmarried daughters of the middle and lower middle class to earn their own living was virtually taken for granted. Preparing young women for a white collar career before marriage or as an alternative to marriage was now seen as a parental duty. By the turn of the century debates around the economic difficulties involved in affording to get married and run a home had shifted to include discussion of whether or not wives rather than women should work at all.[89] The nature of domestic organization and consequent changes in family dynamics was central to such discussion, but this was always inseparable from and allied to the wider socio-economic conditions of modern industrial capitalism. The domestic concerns of a now smaller suburban family reliant on more equitable gender relations could therefore be seen as the precursor to the themes that dominate modern familial life in the late twentieth century. Hammerton concludes:

[88] Tosh, J. (1994), 'What Should Historians do With Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain' in *History Workshop Journal*, 38: 180.
[89] Hammerton 1999: 267-268.

> In their enhanced but more flexible identity as mothers, lower middle-class women of the *fin de siècle* needed to find ways to negotiate with newly conscientious fathers in the home and to resist the unfair distortions of satirists. In the process their own understandings of their motherhood took on truly modern dimensions.[90]

Therefore Hammerton argues, women not only occupied a pivotal role in managing household finances and the education of children but also shaped the nature of modern nuclear family life. Furthermore, the importance of lower-middle-class masculinity *and* the satirical critique of suburban clerks and family men had equally by the mid-twentieth century become the norm which defined the modern condition.

[90] *Ibid*: 273.

1.4 Unifying the Lower Middle Class: 'Improvement and Advance'

It is somewhat of an unkind paradox that the very elements that unite the various social groupings in a collective spirit of lower-middle-class enterprise and the shared concerns of suburban life are the very same ones that form the foundation of their widespread critique and parody. The positive ideology of improvement and advance, the comfort of suburban domesticity, the socio-economic relations of lower-middle-class aspiration and the drive of self-improvement by the end of the nineteenth century had become the constituents of a stereotypical negative version of the lower middle class as inward-looking, geographically localized, and socially conservative. Even historians such as Geoffrey Crossick who forcefully argue for and defend an understanding of the historical lower middle class as a distinctive and differentiated social grouping nevertheless promulgate a concept of suburban life, work and leisure, as 'one-dimensional' and purely 'instrumental' being 'based not on community but on interest'.[1]

An absence of collective organization and unified political activism is frequently the grounds upon which the lower middle class are understood as lacking corporate recognition as a distinct social class.[2] Labour historians, particularly Marxist and neo-Marxist perspectives on labour history, situate lower-middle-class political awareness in terms of its absence, their political action in terms of 'collaboration', both jointly consequent on Marx's theorisation of 'false consciousness' and processes of 'embourgeoisement'.[3] Marx and Engels saw small merchants, traders,

[1] Crossick 1977: 28.

[2] See Ossowski, S. (1963), *Class Structure and the Social Consciousness*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 75-79.

[3] For Marx, liberalism in all its various historical manifestations operated as a form of bourgeois ideology to counteract the potentially dangerous threat posed by the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat. Formulated in relation to ownership of the means of production and its exploitation, if one is the embodiment of the socio-economic power of the middle class, then the other is its opposite. In the case of the lower middle class, a movement toward the interests of the former and a deviation from those of the latter can only be explained by and understood as a form of 'false consciousness'. See Sowell, T. (1985), *Marxism: Philosophy and Economics*, London: George Allen & Unwin, particularly Chapter 5 'The Capitalist Economy: 66-78.

shopkeepers and independent craftsmen as a 'transition class tossed about between the hope of entering the ranks of the wealthy class, and the fear of being reduced to the state of proletarians or even paupers'.[4] The relationship between different groups belonging to what might be considered the historical lower middle class is almost unquestionably understood as fraught and essentially contentious, governed as it is by the alienating relations of industrial capitalism articulated in self-conscious acts of differentiation and segregation.[5] Even pre-industrially the political power of this intermediary class is viewed as one dependent on their *contingent* potential for maintaining the status quo rather than a more threatening corporate insurgency. They made up the bulk of the municipal militia and civil guard that defended larger towns and cities from external threat, and repressed internal disturbances from a potentially dangerous disaffected underclass. They also formed their own 'economic militia' as it were, in the form of self-governing guilds preserving and protecting their own commercial interests from these same external forces.[6] The reward for municipal, commercial and political arbitration was economic advantage in the form of preferential mercantile credit, subsidies and contracts, as well as the curtailment of labour and goods from other cities, and the security of privileged and exclusive trade membership. Economic and social security for the artisan class was achieved through assuring that of a ruling patrician class through a system of mutual political expediency.

However, classic Marxist understandings of class relations are difficult to sustain with regard to the modern lower middle class. Their historical constitution cannot be easily understood in terms of the ownership of the means of production and its lack, or presented simplistically as a one-way system of domination and oppression

[4] Friedrich Engels, (1848), *Germany: Revolution and Counter Revolution* cited in Mayer 1975: 416.
[5] More recent Marxist writing, following an Althusserian model, situate the lower middle class in an intermediary position between what they define as a 'capitalist' mode of production (political thought, bourgeois ideology and the social formations arising out of it) that arose out of the dominant 'productive' mode of production and its capitalist relations (exploitation and oppression). Nevertheless, within this socio-economic political framework they are still understood as an *ipso facto* subsidiary of the wider expansion of capitalist hegemonic production although not being directly involved in the productive relations of industrial capitalism see Gray, R.Q., 'Religion, Culture and Social Class in Late Nineteenth and Early Century Edinburgh' in Crossick ed. 1977.
[6] Mayer 1975: 412-415.

of a proletariat whose manual labour is exploited for its surplus value,. A unique feature of the traditional petite bourgeoisie and old artisan class was the fact that the livelihoods and ideological perspective of these groups were derived from the employment and ownership of both their own capital and labour.[7] Even in the 1830s the majority of industrial workers were not unskilled factory operatives but artisans and mechanics employed in small workshops or as journeyman, or working on their own account in their own homes or as small masters employing other skilled workers and apprentices.[8] A fluidity of political belief and behaviour provoked a range of different responses to industrial capitalism according to individual, local and wider regional and national industrial and social circumstances.[9] In the early nineteenth century, working-class radicalism was, Trygve Tholfsen suggests, a very 'broad church'. Mid-Victorian society might be the scene of continual class contest and conflict, but criticism of middle-class propaganda was often accompanied by an affirmation of values which corresponded closely to the rhetoric and ideology of middle-class culture.[10] Chartism was based on a set of assumptions fundamental to the rights of artisan – the rights to property, a preoccupation with land, and the corruptive influence of inherited rather than industrial wealth and which was seen as a much greater obstruction to their own economic and social interests. Both working-class radicalism and middle-class liberalism were channelled into a broad

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[7] Crossick (ed.) 1977: 15.

[8] Thompson 1963: 259.

[9] For example, John Foster's detailed study of the cotton spinning and engineering industries of Oldham between the 1790s and 1860s identifies a powerful labouring aristocracy who came to dominate local government through an alliance with radical elements within the middle classes. This 'collaboration' Foster argues split the labour force through a combination of economic bribery and sustained ideological corruption that essentially dissipated the revolutionary potential of working class action Foster, J. (1974), *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution. Early industrialism in three English towns*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson. However, Geoffrey Crossick offers a divergent reading of this historical process based on the findings of his own comparable study of the artisan elite in mid-Victorian Kentish London. Crossick contends that whatever the consequences of class domination, it was a process of continuous struggle rather than capitulation on the part of the artisan class. Furthermore, Foster's study he argues was hampered by a rigid economic determinism that inferred a 'far too direct relationship between economic and ideological change' and its arguments were therefore ultimately reliant on the simplistic version of the economic and social structures of the mid-Victorian period that such limitations imposed. Crossick 1978: 15. See also Gareth Stedman Jones' discussion of Foster's study and a detailed discussion of the political dimensions surrounding the nature of the labour aristocracy and political activism, Stedman Jones 1983: 37-41.

[10] Tholfsen, T. (1976), *Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England*, London: Croom-Helm.

and unspecified social and political activism - marked in some cases by an absence of class hostility.[11]

Richard Gray argues that both groups of the new lower middle class - small businessmen and salaried workers - occupied a socio-economic position distinctive from the productive relations of capitalist industry. White collar workers might work for wages but their labour was not directly exploited for its surplus value in the Marxist sense. This separated them from the proletariat in the same way as the stratum of small business proprietors were distinguished by both property ownership and the sale of their own and others' labour. These two groups within the lower middle class might be differentially organized in productive terms in relation to each other but both were distinct from the two major classes of capitalist society.[12] Age-old inherited methods and skills could not, and were not, simply transferred to a new situation but rather slowly and sometimes painfully modified. In some industries, particularly textiles, the old 'elite' of domestic craftsmen were displaced rather than destroyed; their old skills were transferred to a new environment so that they maintained a privileged position in relation to other workers but lost their independent circumstances and status The gap between independent artisans and hired wage-labourers was still in some trades seen as wide enough that some were even prepared to shed blood to defend the freedom of the small master manufacturer and craftsman.[13] In other branches of trade such as the metal engineering and manufacturing industries new elite groups arose as old skills were adapted and new ones acquired which reinforced existing boundaries between

[11] Crossick argues, 'the issue was not the poor against the rich or employees against employer, but the people versus the parasticic elite', Crossick 1978: 199. John Vincent's influential work on the formation of the Liberal party similarly shows how the language of compromise and moderation was inflected with wider ideas around respectability and independence that were seen as the prerequisites of democratic citizenship: 'For the nineteenth century man the mark or note of being fully human was to provide for his own family, have his own religion and politics, and call no man master', Vincent, J.R. (1966), *The Formation of the Liberal Party 1857-68*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[12] Gray 1977: 134.

[13] Thompson 1963: 594.

artisan and labourer and created new divisions between a now largely unskilled mass workforce, those with technical skill, and others with a managerial function.[14]

Economically and socially threatened, small artisans and shopkeepers attempted to shore up their vulnerable position through supporting protective trade policies and foregoing the extension of political enfranchisement.[15] The work of Michael Winstanley on shop keeping between 1830 and 1914 demonstrates how the projected stereotype of a committed individualist 'irretrievably welded to a dogmatic, classical, *laissez faire* economic, political and personal philosophy is a false one'. On the other hand he also stresses the need to recognize that historians of working-class radicalism are dealing with (necessarily) pragmatic businessmen and small entrepreneurs rather than philosophers for whom time and money was only of secondary importance. Some radicals were clearly fired by a desire for wider democratic freedom and justice for all - the majority arguably had more pragmatic self-interests at heart.[16] Christopher Hosgood's work challenges the suggestion that the petite bourgeoisie were politically apathetic and the theoretical orthodoxy that shopkeepers occupied a marginal role in the political life of the nation.[17] Hosgood argues, '...just because shopkeepers were not required as political saviours, it does not mean that their political activities should be ignored. Indeed, it is precisely because shopkeepers accepted "mainstream politics" that their own unique political/trade sub-culture developed as it did in the late nineteenth-century'.[18] Whatever their motivation this stratum formed individual trade associations and local civic societies that together formed a network of municipal influence across the country. Shopkeepers might no longer have the traditional means of restricting entry into their trades once enjoyed by the old craft guilds - although some of these still survived in different forms of unionism, nevertheless the technical skill still required in a good number of trades precluded newcomers from easily entering and

[14] Crossick 1978.
[15] Mayer 1975: 416.
[16] Winstanley, M.J. (1983), *The Shopkeeper's World 1830-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 216.
[17] Hosgood, C. (1992), 'A "Brave and Daring Folk"? Shopkeepers and Trade Associational Life in Victorian and Edwardian England' in *Journal of Social History*, No. 26: 285-308.
[18] *Ibid*: 285.

starting up in competition. Trade Associations began to be formed that reaffirmed old skill-based bonds of craft solidarity and established new strategies if not of exclusion then certainly discrimination rooted in a determination to protect not only profits but also the reputation and traditions of various trade skills - no matter how they had been diluted over time.

Long-standing ideals of free trade and democratic independence that were the ideological lodestone of the old artisan class and petit bourgeoisie did not necessarily fit easily into emerging forms of collective socialist action and unionism. But if these acts of selective rather than collective political activism operated to exclude some they also brought others together within and between trades in a new sense of commercial solidarity and changing political expectations. Numerous forms of occupational and trade organizations grew up alongside the development of more formal labour trade unions. Commercial travellers for example, saw themselves as 'Knights of the Road' whose life on the road was characterized by a sense of camaraderie and social relationships established through their business relations with other travellers and shopkeepers. There was a real sense of community fostered in the 'commercial room' that was set aside for their use in hotels and boarding houses.[19] However, the structural position of many white collar workers militated against unionism; they were frequently employed in small-scale operations and widely scattered by workplace and types of industry that meant that skills and knowledge were often highly specific to a particular firm.[20] Large municipal and commercial corporations such as the London County Council did begin to form highly influential staff associations. Radical elements within such organizations comprized a small but significant politicized group as branches of the National Union of Clerks were established to fight for better pay and the removal of

[19] Hosgood, C.:P. (1994), '"The Knights of the Road": Commercial Travellers and the Culture of the Commercial Room in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 37, (Summer 1994): 519-47.
[20] Crossick 1977.

barriers to promotion.[21] Richard Price contends that the contribution of the lower middle class to the early history of the socialist societies 'was in all probability greater than has yet been realized'; before the First World War some white collar unions were more militant that those of many manual workers to evidence the continued significance of older more traditional understandings of lower-middle-class collective action and its moral imperatives.

Negative connotations

For many within the lower middle class however, a unifying belief in the power of self-help was matched by a corresponding disbelief in the value of collective action, particularly trade unionism - although it did vary according to the size and organization of the work place and a range of other cultural conditions indicative of social status. Relations between white collar worker and manual worker were not only understood as explicitly different but had to be *seen* to be different. *Not* belonging to a trade union while at the same time adopting the dress and manners of the bourgeois elite signalled both social and political partisanship. George Bernard Shaw, an estate agent's clerk in the 1870s describes how it would have been unthinkable for him to join a trade union:

> Not only would it have been considered a most ungentlemanly thing to do - almost as outrageous as coming to the office in corduroy trousers, with a belcher handkerchief round my neck - but snobbery apart, it would have been stupid, because I should not have intended to remain a clerk. I should have taken the employers' point of view from the first.[22]

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, there was a growing belief on the part of the expanding stratum of salaried white collar workers in their superior social distinction and this was articulated in self-conscious expressions of separatism. When they were involved with unionism it was often to reinforce divisions in pay

[21] Pennybacker , S. (1999), 'Changing Convictions: London County Council Blackcoated Activism between the Wars' in R. Koshar (ed.), *Splintered Classes: Politics and the Lower Middle Classes in Interwar Europe*: 98.
[22] George Bernard Shaw cited in Crossick (ed.) 1977: 24

and conditions. The need to reassert a differential 'respectability' was the context of for example claims for a 35 shilling minimum wage by the National Union of Clerks in 1909, and which negated socialist ideals of proletarian labour in pursuit of the right to earn enough to appear like a gentleman, to pretend to live like a gentleman, and to have the manners of a gentleman.[23]

Crossick outlines how this took the form of the aggressive rejection of manual work, 'symbolising as it did a whole image of working class characteristics that were unacceptable to this superior stratum - insecurity of employment, lowly origins, dependence on authority, trade unionism, and working class social life...the assertion of a lower- -middle-class superiority that was not just coincidental with non-manual work but actually dependent upon it for status'.[24] This is extremely important in understanding the culture, ideology, action and behaviour of the lower-middle-class at the turn of the century. Richard Price observes: '...both those above and those below them in the social scale helped to define the status-consciousness of the lower middle classes. It is this position in the vacuum between middle and working classes that helps to explain the curious ambiguity that pervaded lower middle class attitudes toward social mobility'.[25]

In the late-nineteenth century, downward mobility in particular posed a real as well as imaginary threat that served to beleaguer the lower middle classes and undermine their sense of security. For those in the lower clerical grades there was increased competition from both a working class benefiting from changes in elementary education and the progressive employment of women in the sector. At a time when inter-generational ambition increasingly came to focus on a white-collar salaried occupation, opportunities for entry to better paid institutions with a clear promotional career ladder and all but the lowest-grade of posts were curtailed by a lack of the educational qualifications and social connections enjoyed by the middle

[23] Price 1977: 107
[24] Crossick 1977: 48-49
[25] Price 1977: 99

and upper middle class.[26] By 1881 the majority of commercial clerks were under twenty-five, constituting a relatively cheap labour market, only made more competitive and crowded by the progressive ranks of lower-middle-class young women seeking employment in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Whilst representing the most numerous and important element in wider structural shifts in the mid-Victorian economy, many clerks and their employers 'stood in the teeth of [this] increasing competition' from foreign imports, a decline in world trade and fall in prices - -although not all experienced this to the same extent.[27] Small retailing was a feature of urbanization in the nineteenth century and the progressive growth of this sector meant that it continued to be an aspirational objective for artisans and tradesmen. However, economic failure was a very real factor as a result of economic instability evidenced in bankruptcy and sales of businesses, and many small shops 'selling a bit of everything' occupied a very marginal position in urban areas.[28] Charles Booth's study found that many a small inheritance, and savings slowly accumulated in some other occupation were dispersed and lost by the rash entering into a 'little business', and many small shops were kept by the wives of men employed elsewhere.[29] The world of petite-bourgeois and lower-middle clerical-class competition was characterized by anxiety where prospects of success were matched if not overtaken by the spectre of failure: bankruptcy, unemployment, dismissal, destitution. Crossick argues,

> It is the totality of what that fall might mean that was so important. It was not falling a rung on some notional occupational hierarchy that was involved, but collapse into the unskilled and casual... The problems faced by lower middle class employees were [thus] partly a result of their market weakness and job specificity, but also a function of the nature of the aspirant ideology that exposed them to frustration and fear.[30]

In the context of the Great Depression of the 1870s, the fears and tensions of unemployment, a lack of opportunity and barriers to occupational advance all came

[26] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 85
[27] Anderson, G. (1977), 'The Social Economy of Late-Victorian Clerks' in G. Crossick (ed.) 1977 *op cit.*
[28] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 85
[29] Booth 1891/1984: 34.
[30] Crossick 1977: 24

together and 'served to bring to fever pitch' the frustration and insecurities of the lower middle class. Jingoism was a consequence of these increased tensions and in essence defensive and protective; the jingo clerks of London 'were in a vulgar sense, merely acting upon their natural economic interest'.[31] Jingoism made the patriotic message particularly attractive for a significant group of workers attempting to come to terms with a new division of labour, new forms of office technology, and new terms of employment that all sought to undermine the culture of 'respectability' that was central to their occupational and social status identification. Jingoism gave them both a sense of belonging allied to an alternative but readily-substitutive coded value system of self-sacrifice, duty and conformity. This only adds to a long-standing view of the culture and ideology of suburban lower middle class life as one grounded in a preoccupation with status consciousness and acts of small-minded bigotry fostered by a 'lack' of political, social or aesthetic 'vision' and a cohesive classed identity. As a result it is difficult to overcome the culture of compromise and the aura of foreshortened horizons that continues to surround even the most positive analyses of lower-middle-class life. The culture of positive transience that is the foundation of lower-middle-class ideals of betterment and advance always possess negative connotations by being seen as misguided 'petty' ambition compounded by an overwhelming emphasis on a concept of stasis and disappointment. This effectively created almost a literary and satirical genre in the later nineteenth century, 'a virtual industry of *fin de siecle* fiction, satire and journalism which mocked the obsessive domesticity, philistine suburbanism and pompous aspirations of feminized males'.[32]

However, more recent revisionist accounts of do take issue with such a perspectives to offer a much more open interpretation of aspiration and suburban domesticity. For example, Martin Gaskell in his outline of the development of the suburban landscape does not directly challenge Crossick's depiction of it as uniformly dull and lacking architectural innovation. He argues that lower-middle-class experiments

[31] Price 1977: 106
[32] Hammerton 1999: 263.

in the creation and organization of new forms of housing schemes represent significant steps in the development and acceptance of new notions of housing layout and planning by the end of the century. Housing for the working class allowed little room for innovation but the larger designs and more expensive rentals in the lower-middle-class range provided leeway for experimentation by a new school of architects such as Philip Webb and his followers. These were the testing ground for the garden city movement before the First World War - designs offering a greater variety of textures and colours, new spatial qualities in layout of roads, groupings of houses, and whole estates that encouraged a sense of identity and set a pattern of community life which became the model for twentieth century planners.[33]

Hammerton's discussion of the pioneering aspects of suburban marriage also situates the advent of a lower middle class female workforce as a presage of modern life - this time in terms of gendered social relations. The lower middle classes were arguably the first to be comfortable with their daughters earning their living and although their employment was subject to various rigorously imposed social constraints these young women were at the forefront of the 'white blouse revolution' that saw the rapid expansion of female clerical and shop workers in the twentieth century. Susan Pennybacker's studies of the London County Council (LCC) provide equally ambiguous understandings of both lower-middle-class social conformity and political activism.[34] Alongside the stereotypical image of suburban conventionality Pennybacker argues there was a 'Bohemian', undomesticated, almost anti-suburban lower middle class 'type'. These mainly single men and women sought consolation in the revolt against the drudgery and monotony of everyday life in the office in the cafes and drinking holes of the West End where 'they discussed socialism in bars where Johnson had once imbibed, bore a faint resemblance to the mid-century swells, and practiced the "new hedonism"...'.[35] This group might represent a small element within the LCC - as do an inspired and vocal minority involved in several forms of political and organizational activism - but

[33] Gaskell 1977: 177-179.
[34] Pennybacker 1999: 97-121.
[35] Pennybacker 1995: 41.

whilst they cannot be seen to challenge a more monolithic understanding of lower-middle-class sub-urbanity, they nevertheless reflect a diversity often denied the social stratum from which the majority of them were recruited.[36] Pennybacker convincingly asserts:

> The mixed imagery obligingly supports the case for a variegated "lower middle class". Certainly the diversity and the heterogeneity of those who may have identified themselves as such wrought havoc on the utility of the category as sociology. A single individual inhabited multiple, fluctuating social identities, or tried to do so... Still, this very contradictory discursive presence of the "lower middle class" gave it a kind of "real" existence and reflected the palpable tensions of the metropolitan environment.[37]

Peter Bailey's various studies also evidence a much wider frame of cultural reference than a prudish, hidebound image of suburban life and leisure might suggest. The lower middle class were at 'the front line of engagement with modernity', through their work, through their lifestyle, and through their overarching need to visibly express this through consumerism, leisure action and behaviour. These Peter Bailey concludes need to be re-inflected in more generous terms. Whether in actuality or in their imagination this was an 'arriviste formation, arriving, or more commonly always en route'. Bailey continues:

> More perhaps than those other classes that have won the gutsy accolade from historians, the lower middle class was indeed deeply implicated in its own "making." Thus "kitsch," which means originally "thrown together," might be reread as "bricolage" or "improvisation." "Imitation" might be redefined as "appropriation" (used approvingly as a tribute to canny workers who claim hegemonic bourgeois schemes for their own). And pretension might be better rendered as performance - even if a bad one.[38]

Aspiration towards upward mobility understood in the transition from manual to non-manual employment in many ways came to define the ideological and structural situation of the modern lower middle class in Britain. However the idea

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[36] Radical elements within the LCC comprised a small but significant politicized group within the Staff Association and formed a branch of the National Union of Clerks to fight for better pay and the removal of barriers to promotion. Pennybacker 1999: 42-95, 98.
[37] Pennybacker 1995: 46.
[38] Bailey 1999: 290.

of a class solely defined by a superficial desire to be part of the traditional bourgeoisie also needs to be seen in terms of a much more complex set of historical circumstances that does impact on an understanding of lower-middle-class leisure. Richard Gray argues that discussion of the lower middle class is frequently misleading because it situates its composition in relation to 'a vaguely defined, upward stretching "middle class" and avoids the problems posed by the diffusion of dominant values in Victorian society.[39] Gray prefers the term 'middle strata' that encompasses the two major occupational groupings, but allows for a more loosely defined heterogeneity of social consciousness that ranges both upwards *and* downwards. He also uses what he describes as 'indicators' rather than definitions based on occupational description: 'an economical alternative to the detailed reconstruction of property holdings, kinship connections and other determinants of class position'.[40]

The term 'artisan' arguably always operates in relation to the corporate expectations within which it makes sense.[41] The conditions of the first half of the nineteenth century created a mass labour market *and* a skilled labour aristocracy brought together through a shared 'consciousness' of the exploitative conditions of industrial capitalism. Traditional apprenticeship safeguards and the status of the skilled artisan declined as large factories supplanted the workshops of small masters and master-craftsmen. [42] But they also held fast in industries where specialist skills were still in demand or where old skills were transferrable to new forms of manufacture and production. However, an increased emphasis on mental and educationally acquired qualifications rather than 'manual' and vocational skills certainly assumed a new cultural potency as the traditional craft values and the political bargaining power these brought were correspondingly de-valued and weakened. This strengthened the superior structural position of the clerical stratum and created a new a focus of

[39] Gray, R.Q. 'Religion, Culture and Social Class in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Edinburgh' in Crossick (ed.) 1977: 134.
[40] Gray 1977: 136.
[41] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 6.
[42] Thompson 1963: 279.

social aspiration for a heterogeneous social grouping already defined by a high rate of occupational instability and a lack of collective identity. The potential of social mobility is a powerfully politically-charged concept - and one which only assumed greater potency in the nineteenth century. But, it is something that the heterogeneous lower-middle classes had always embraced and exploited, and the extent to which such heterogeneity is necessarily divisive or wrought by conflict is therefore open to question. It could be argued that in different ways for all of the social groupings understood to historically comprise the broad lower middle class, older value systems were incorporated into a new 'gospel of getting on' in the late-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. The problem lies not in attempting to find evidence of a specific and distinctive culture of lower-middle-class white collar, or petit bourgeois or 'aristocratic' artisan social aspiration but in aligning such a culture with *either* a working-class *or* a middle-class political consciousness - and the rigid interpretive framework that a monolithic understanding of classed identity and social stratification imposes.

'Old' and 'new' groupings that constituted the traditional and modern lower middle class-*es* had different material interests and social relations, but all had a tangible stake in maintaining their and their children's existing place in the hierarchy but above all in the potential of securing a better one. This in itself might not constitute their classification as a 'class' in the singular, but it evidences a unifying socio-economic umbrella of recognizable features that marks them out as a clearly differentiated social group within such a system. As the daughter of a Tyneside post office worker put it '... we didn't drink and we didn't gamble and we didn't buy on the never-never and we didn't swear. So I suppose that's a kind of class strata in its way too'.[43] The self-conscious separation from what was perceived at any one time in different ways by different groups as a 'lower' stratum of the working population always functioned in relation to a shared recognition of a corresponding marginality from the class 'above', (the established bourgeoisie and traditional professional

[43] McLeod, H. (1977), 'White Collar Values and the Role of Religion' in G. Crossick (ed.) *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870-1914*, London: Croom Helm: 75.

middle class) according to the same terms of reference. The boundaries between them cannot be marked precisely but, Crossick and Haupt argue, such fluidity and ambiguity should not be seen in purely negative terms. The ways in which the petite bourgeoisie for example shaded into other classes and its instabilities and ambiguities 'were not so much a hindrance to defining them but part of the definition'.[44] Sociologists Frank Bechhofer and Brian Elliot argue that the persistence of the historical presence of the lower middle class arguably derives above all from their flexibility and the ability to adapt to the constantly shifting and changing conditions of industrial capitalism. The secret of the survival of the lower middle class is the capacity to adjust, to adapt 'to capitalism in all its phases' - while at the same time maintaining its own distinctive moral values centred around ideas of individualism, thrift, hard work and the centrality of family life.[45]

The political values of a broad lower middle class in the nineteenth century in many ways continued to be defined by a culture of independence and a level of self-organization that set them apart from wider political organization. An emphasis on sobriety was central to lower-middle-class concepts of both business acumen and moral integrity but as a result an understanding of social advance and 'improvement' in its widest sense was always a response to the challenges *and* opportunities imposed by industrial modernity. A mixed labour aristocracy and lower middle class still placed a high value on participation in church, and other voluntary organizations. What is seen as a 'peculiarly British combination of respectability, self-help and independence helped sustain a Paineite radicalism' that still defined the fabric of their daily life as and provided it with some of its most distinctive characteristics'.[46] This signals the need to recognize the ambiguous discursive power of the Victorian Rational Recreation movement and its middle-class liberal reformist agenda, *and* its potential negotiation by an aspirational and historically opportunistic lower-middle-class. Following Peter Bailey's reconfiguration of old

[44] Crossick and Haupt 1995: 8.
[45] Bechhofer, F. and Elliot, B. (1976), 'Persistence and change: the petite bourgeoisie in industrial society', in *European Journal of Sociology*, No. 17: 74-99.
[46] Copelman 1996: 37-38.

concepts of class-based hierarchies of taste and consumption in terms of suburban stylistic invention and reinvention through popular leisure, this thesis seeks to develop a new critical framework within which to interrogate this socio-sartorial dynamic.

2.1 Leisure in Modernity: The Mid-Victorian Rational Recreation Movement

In his discussion of the historical meaning of leisure in western capitalism, Chris Rojek outlines how leisure cannot exist as some clear-cut, identifiable 'thing'.[1] That is because what we understand by the term operates as part of a whole range of complex, shifting and competing cultural processes and practices. The exact nature of 'leisure' in modernity is ambiguous and complex. It is constituted through different forms of different leisure activities and coded behaviour and conventions; it is performed by different leisure actors individually and collectively, at different times, in different ways. The nature of leisure's productivity is nevertheless clear: leisure is the visible expression of a whole network of social relations and systems of symbolic and economic exchange; leisure is itself productive of some commodified 'thing' or 'body' related to the means of its production and the nature of its consumption. Leisure's abstract or concrete meaning is always both constituted and subsumed within a wider cultural context.

The work of Norbert Elias also demonstrates how understandings of such concepts as work or leisure are also historically specific.[2] One of the key objectives of Elias' work was to see human actions and behaviour as not essential or timeless, but as a part of shifting historical development. Evolving systems of social structure, Elias argues, always involve a parallel modification in people's behaviour according to various forms of explicit and implicit moral regulation.[3] Modernity did not somehow invent some indeterminate thing called leisure. Rather, the concept of leisure becomes integral to the mechanisms of industrial capitalism. Max Weber's arguments the influence of the Puritan tradition and its 'work ethic' led him to argue that the body and the self within such a system were 'organized as a machine to

[1] Rojek 1995: 4.6.
[2] Elias, N. (1978), *The Civilizing Process. Vol. 1: The History of Manners*, Oxford: Blackwell; (1982), *The Civilizing Process, Vol. 2: State Formation and Civilization*, Oxford: Blackwell.
[3] Elias 1978: 460.

accumulate value from leisure as well as work and to consume commodities'.[4] Within Karl Marx's oppositional theoretical framework the engine of capitalist production is the exploitation of wage-labourers whose work *and* leisure is commodified and homogenized as part of the 'universal market'; the rationalisation of the working and leisured body can only be understood in terms of the relentless cycle of social, political and economic change and upheaval wrought by the emerging power of the bourgeois class in capitalist society.[5] Yet in this sense, in terms of the human experience of capitalism on individual leisure action and behaviour, Marx and Weber's contrasting analyses together create a unified historical paradigm of leisure as an effect of rapidly expanding processes of commodification and capital exchange because both emphasize the mutually productive nature of an increasingly industrialised, urban, and collectively classed working and leisured body.[6] The concept of leisure in relation to work became integral to the shared temporal and spatial experience of modern life; the leisured body becomes integral to the development of the modern city and the performance of the modern body within it. Within this dynamic are always the implicit power relations that produce and reproduce social bodies in terms of gender, race, class

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[4] Weber, M. (2006 first published 1904, trans. 1930), *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London and New York: Routledge. Max Weber notably argues that a sense of 'work' and 'leisure' as a discrete framework of activities and coded conventions is rooted in the religious reformation that took place in Northern European society from the sixteenth century and the rise of what he terms 'ascetic Protestantism'. Anti-catholic Religious belief was projected on to the everyday world and the actions of individuals within it through a concept of a religious 'calling' that encompassed a moral as well as spiritual obligation to create and maintain wealth and prosperity. The essence or 'spirit' of this form of modern capitalism was a belief that serving the greater glory of God on earth was a burden that could only be shouldered by spending one's life in sober utility, self-control, hard work and the eschewal of luxury, wastefulness, self-absorption and adornment.

[5] Marx, K, and Engels, F. (1968) *Selected Works*, London: Lawrence & Wishart. From a Marxist perspective, leisure is never freely chosen, nor can it ever be considered 'free' time because it is the product of classed power relations: 'pleasure is only a side issue - recreation - something subordinate to production; at the same time it is a calculated and therefore, itself an economical pleasure'. Capitalism produced monotonous and repressive working conditions but also goods, services and entertainment whose increasing consumption both 'alienated' workers from personal fulfillment, and made 'escape' or freedom impossible. Within this revolutionary process the labour force were not slaves - because they acted as free agents in the production and consumption of goods, services, and amusements; they were rather slaves to the process of commodification and desire which eliminated any possibility of escape without, Marx would argue, collective class action.

[6] Rojek 1995: 4. Rojek argues that most people's experiences of leisure are essentially 'messy' and inherently ambiguous. Leisure time is often boring and repetitive and thus seen as neither 'free' nor categorically different from work, but it does not necessarily follow that leisure time then becomes an arena of 'false consciousness': 101-102.

and sexuality as an effect of rapidly expanding processes of commodification and capital exchange.

Resistance, Regulation, Reform: Class, Status and the Nineteenth-Century Rational Recreation Movement

Historians argue that the industrial revolution brought about a temporal disruption of traditional local and domestic patterns of rural and artisan labour, along with the spatial dislocation of old and familiar small rural communities. With the growth of huge industrial conurbations the spiritual authority of the Church became increasingly ineffective and the traditional influences of Squire and Rector were curtailed as the prior collective boundaries of surveillance and sanctions of constraint on workers' amusements were eroded.[7] Leisure was the product of new technology and the emergence of new social groupings within industrial capitalism, but many new forms of activity now took place 'within the unique circumstances of modern leisure, a condition of individual free choice specific to industrial society and a qualitatively new dimension in the experience of the masses'.[8]

Political and intellectual debates arose, driven by middle-class anxieties over social degeneration and political instability.[9] In the early nineteenth century a Methodist revival had become a dominant ideological force in advocating social 'discipline', particularly through the work of Sunday Schools. But the pressures of regulation extended into every aspect of life from the factory and mills and other quasi-official agencies set up for the enforcement of orderly moral conduct.[10] Leisure constituted

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[7] Holt, R. (1989), *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
[8] Bailey 1978: 4.
[9] Angry and influential Chartist leaders in England were threatening violence if their petition to Parliament for the expansion of voting rights, secret ballots and other electoral reforms was rejected Every London 'gentleman' was created a special constable in order to handle the massive demonstration that took place on April 10, see Hall, D.(1994), 'On the making and unmaking of monsters: Christian Socialism, Muscular Christianity, and the Metaphorization of Class Conflict' in D. Hall (ed.) (1994), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[10] Thompson 1963: 441-443. See Chapter 12, 'Leisure and Personal Relations'. Thompson argues that Methodism mediated the work discipline of the Industrial Revolution and describes how

a growing problem, according to some and the solution was 'a play discipline to complement the work discipline that was the principal means of contrast to the harsh offensive of the earlier period of industrialization ... pursued through the reform of popular recreations rather than their repression'.[11] 'Rational' and wholesome physical and intellectual recreational activities, would it was argued, provide a 'safety valve' for the working class mind and body, diverting dangerous energies that might lead to drinking and gambling or just as worrying, radical political activism.[12] The rising middle classes saw themselves as the superintendents of such reform, endowed with a new sense of moral and spiritual leadership through their expanding socio-political power. However, preoccupied by concerns around status and governed by an ethos of Protestantism and the virtues of rationalism, *choice* of appropriate leisure activities was problematic for a class whose attitudes and values were informed by the imperatives of work and a horror of the indolence, prodigality and excess that characterized both aristocratic and working class leisure and popular amusements.[13] As Peter Bailey argues, essentially it was the *abuse* rather than use of leisure time that had imprinted itself on the middle-class consciousness and defined their attitudes to its 'enjoyment'. Recreation was seen as a reward for hard work, but leisure, like money, had to be 'earned' and

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between 1780 and 1830 important changes took place as English working men became 'more disciplined, more subject to the productive tempo of "the clock", more reserved and methodical, less violent and less spontaneous' and traditional sports were displaced by sedentary hobbies. Methodism was one part of a wider transformation as the money economy took over the casual more spontaneous rhythms of rural life and displaced rather than destroyed traditional fairs and the simple gradual loss of commons and 'playgrounds'. Methodism was a key disciplinary force in industrial life but ideas of moral probity and discipline were widely dispersed throughout working communities that was the product of 'neither paternalism nor of Methodism, but in a high degree of conscious working-class endeavour': 457.

[11] Bailey 1978: 5.

[12] For a Marxist reading of the history of working-class leisure relations under capitalism see Clarke, J. and Critcher, C. (1985), *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain*, London: Macmillan. They argue that leisure choice is effectively controlled by economic imperatives and the hegemonic processes of capitalist ideology, pp. 188- 200). The destruction of old local traditions, alongside the imposition of harsh new factory disciplines created conditions of a new sense of class and provincial consciousness. The culture of industrial workers found expression in the celebration of and idealizing of old 'ways of life'. This conscious resistance to new machines, or the tyranny of London, or 'foreign' capital and demands for better working conditions became associated with political Radicalism most notably in the work of William Cobbett, see Thompson 1963: 447-448.

[13] Bailey, P. (1998), *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 17-19.

'spent' wisely.[14] Weber's Protestant Work Ethic found expression in attempts to control the individual and collective 'body' through the dual concept of 'improvement' through scientific rational advance, and 'self-improvement' through temperance, hard work and useful play. Religious conviction, harnessed to the political economy of industrial capitalism, provided the rising middle class with a platform from which to supposedly subdue the potentially dangerous democratic aspirations of the working classes *and* contest the historic socio-economic and cultural dominance of the aristocracy. This dualism is important because it demonstrates how leisure functioned in relation to work as a form of middle-class consciousness that validated the very essence of bourgeois life and culture by serving as an example to other classes both below *and* above them.[15]

The concept of a new, 'muscular Christianity' unified a widespread if complex set of beliefs around the benefits of healthy activity within which the [healthy] body operated as a metaphor centred on issues of class, gender and nationhood.[16] An ideology of 'Christian manliness' was widely disseminated in Victorian popular culture.[17] Grounded in the Victorian male psyche at a time when gender relations were assuming a new political and cultural significance, the body of the manly hero of the mid-Victorian imagination provided an open forum for the negotiation of a new hierarchy of distinction and class difference.[18] This politically-charged concept

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[14] Leisure might be governed by a strict coda of moral and religious imperatives but the Weberian subject was not denied choice, their actions were rather governed by fear of making the 'wrong' choice, Weber 2006: 104.

[15] Mangan, J. A. and Walvin, J. (1987), 'Introduction' in J.A. Mangan and J. Walvin (eds), *Manliness and morality. Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2.

[16] Rosen, D. (1994), 'The volcano and the cathedral: muscular Christianity and the origins of primal manliness' in Hall (ed.) (1994), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 17.

[17] Haley, B. (1978), *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[18] The term 'muscular Christianity' originated in a review of the historian and novelist Charles' Kingsley's work Two Years Ago (1857) written by T.C. Sandars for the influential *Saturday Review*. Kingsley was the most influential and most widely read and known of the movement's protagonists, although 'Muscular Christianity' was a term Kingsley himself repudiated preferring the less secular 'Christian manliness'. Nevertheless in Kingsley's sermons in the 1860s, every mention of the former term produced loud cheers of approval see Hall: 8. For a range of perspectives on Victorian fictional genres and their socio-cultural context see Baker, W. and Womack, K. (eds.) (2002), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing

seemed to offer an antidote to patriarchal insecurity and a threatened middle-class through a distinctive and powerful moral code that was spiritually, physically *and* politically empowering.[19] The notion of a self-divided 'schizophrenic' body united in purpose became a common and useful point of reference in muscular Christian discourse.[20] The internal divisions of the upper and lower body were frequently projected on to the lower-class body in an attempt to control and contain their 'base' instincts for selfish indulgence. But it was a concept that was equally prevalent in bourgeois critiques of an upper class that were considered as dissipated and effeminate as the working class was feckless and idle. Samuel Smiles one of the leading proponents of this moral philosophy railed in his first book entitled *Physical Education* against the 'sham gentility' of a decadent and dissipated upper class. Smiles consistently emphasized the 'gentlemanly' qualities of power rather than refinement, and an independence of spirit evidenced in an unwillingness to be flattered or intimidated by 'counterfeits'. Writing in a sporting journal he advocated the 'wholesomely cultivated mind and body, taught to endure, disciplined to obedience, self-restraint, and the sterner duties of chivalry'; a man's bearing should be the natural expression of his own mind and body and impart 'a cheerful active, confident tone, an upright carriage, and a graceful ease, instead of that lounging, semi-swaggering, confoundedly lackadaisical manner which they [middle-class youth] have adopted in compliment ... to the real swell, and the man of fashion'.[21] This new form of Christian masculinity did not reject, but rather reconciled the antagonism between an old aristocratic model of dandy-hood and a modern bourgeois masculinity.[22]

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[19] Vance, N. (1994), The *Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, New York: Cambridge University Press: 2; Vance argues the term 'Christian manliness' was much more widely used and recognized by the Clergy and other Christian intellectuals like Kingsley because of the emphasis on the Christian rather than the muscular.

[20] Hall 1994: 51.

[21] Smiles, S. (1859), *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and Conduct*, London, Murray, cited in Haley 1978: 207.

[22] Adams, J. E. (1995), *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity*, Cornell: Cornell University Press: 21. Anti-aristocratic feeling had from the start inflected the discourse of muscular Christianity and the multiple perspectives of its coded 'body'. Thomas Carlyle himself savagely attacked dandyism as a grotesque relic of an outworn aristocratic order; the dandy was a self-absorbed, parasitic grotesque against which the self-effacing prophet/hero was evoked as the oppositional exemplar of middle-class devotion to duty and productive labour.

From the mid-nineteenth century, public schools became the breeding ground of the new middle class where the body of the 'manly' hero of the mid-Victorian imagination provided an open forum for the negotiation of a new hierarchy of distinction and class difference. Sports and games became an integral part of the 'house' system and a highly-charged competitive element brought about the widespread employment of professional coaches and games masters that together were instrumental in the creation of a recognized public school ideal 'type' whose sporting prowess was only matched by their moral and ethical qualities. Haley argues that:

> Distinctions of rank became fixed in the very framework of athletic society. By various kinds of exclusion, some subtle, some more obvious, the enlarged "gentleman" class used sport to underline its own identity to demonstrate, as Arnold[23] said, its "class instinct." Therefore, it was unnecessary for the gentleman-hero to discard the insignia of the traditional gentleman - good clothes, coolness, a family name of substance - in favour of those of the "true" gentleman - personal integrity, robustness of will and body; he could combine all these in one grand presence.[24]

Sport took on a new significance in promulgating an ethos of bourgeois masculinity and a cult of 'manly' sporting prowess and clear links were made between the playing fields of public schools like Eton and the battlefields and expanding territories of the British Empire. By the end of the century The doctrine of athleticism and 'fair play' was seen as providing a trained officer class, 'self-confident and loyal but uncritical and unimaginative' imbued by the rules of cricket.[25] This growing cult of athleticism and sporting enthusiasm did not break down the barriers of class but rather, literally and metaphorically, reworked and rewrote the rules of the game(s).

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[23] Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School between 1821 and 1842 who introduced a number of notable educational reforms.
[24] Haley 1978: 19.
[25] McIntosh, P.C. (1952), *Physical Education in England since 1800*, London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd.: 52-68.

Self-Control and Self-Respect

Writing in 1852, John William Donaldson, Headmaster of Bury School and a leading commentator on educational matters argued that 'No one, who is not blind to the signs of the times, can fail to perceive that the future of destinies of this country must depend on the success with which we carry out the great undertaking of educating the whole community'. The mental and moral cultivation of all classes and all ages was needed to save the country from the risk of revolutionary disturbance and the choice between despotism and anarchy faced by many nations on the Continent. The upper classes had to be educated in a way that did not 'deprive rank of its lustre'; the middle classes in preparation for government, in a way that ensured that they were able to 'break down the party-walls of class-prejudices'; the lower classes had to be transformed into a 'responsible and rational being, not a mere tool for doing work' by being instilled with a 'reverence for the law, the habits of self-control and self-respect'.[26] Across a range of political and religious affiliations, middle-class philanthropists, social reformers and political activists sought to re-shape the working classes' appetite for worthless pleasure and idle amusement. Advances and reforms in educational and welfare were viewed as useless unless also directed at leisure. This generated a philosophical and practical shift away from indiscriminate charity towards providing alternative amusements and facilities. The Museums Act of 1845 and the Libraries Act of 1850 were significant pieces of legislation and the building of museums, galleries, libraries, as wells as public bath-houses, parks, gardens, and open spaces became vital to every town and served as markers of both philanthropy and municipal worth.[27] Religiously motivated philanthropic industrialists - usually non-conformist - also sought to improve the working and living conditions of their workforce. Cadbury's model industrial community at Bourneville, for instance, required women workers

[26] Donaldson, D.D., John Williamson (1852) (Headmaster of Bury School) *On Adult Education and Self Improvement. An Address to the Young Men's Institute of Bury St Edmunds on their Second Anniversary, 18th May 1852*, Bury St Edmunds: W Fuller.
[27] Bull, C., Hoose, J and Weed, M. (eds.) (1987), *An Introduction to Leisure Studies*, Harlow: Pearson Education: 10-12.

to learn to swim (for cleanliness). Sports facilities were provided as part of company policy alongside medical and dental care.[28]

The relationship between physical education and idealized concepts of Christian 'service' lay at the core of new attempts at educational and welfare reform. Dr M D Roth was a leading campaigner for the introduction of a scientific regime of physical exercise into schools and emphasized the military and educational benefits: a decrease in mortality rates, the preservation of health and the encouragement of temperance, would increase productivity and military power.[29] However, while the young of the middle classes needed training in leadership, what the working class needed was perceived in terms of not sports and games but military 'drill' or 'rational gymnastics' that would contribute to improvements in physical health and prevent other 'vicious practices'.[30] School Inspectors saw it as the lynchpin of an education system whose aim was to inculcate discipline in the labouring classes and it was soon an established part of voluntary and board school provision in training 'habits of punctuality, cheerful obedience to duty, good manners and language, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act'.[31] The Rational Recreation movement is largely understood in terms of the attempted diffusion of middle-class patriarchal hegemonic attitudes to a recalcitrant working class itself envisaged by as male. However, the rationalisation of the classed female body needs to be addressed within the cultural and moral imperative of the movement particularly in the context of educational and physical educational reform.[32] Dr Roth believed in the benefits

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[28] Holt 1989: 143.

[29] This last advantage proved particularly crucial. In the 1860s, the British army rejected almost half and the navy over three-quarters of its recruits on physical grounds, see McIntosh 1952: 100-163.

[30] School drill when first introduced took a military form with exercises taken from the War Office's Field Exercise Book with instruction being given by British Army drill sergeants paid by the War Office at the rate of sixpence a day and a penny per mile marching money. McIntosh 1952: 129.

[31] Hurt, J.S., 'Drill, discipline and the elementary school ethos' in P. McCann (ed.) (1977), *Popular Education and Socialization in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Methuen: 175-176.

[32] A growing body of work within leisure studies has outlined the crucial impact of Madame Osterberg and the Ling System on physical education for girls in Britain. However it is important to acknowledge that Madame Osterberg saw as her mission the perpetuation of both Ling's system of 'scientific gymnastics' and the healthy reproduction of future generations of middle-class girls and mothers. Osterberg believed that improvement of the racial stock could be best accomplished by women of the middle ranks and saw her inspiration was the training of such women as teachers of 'scientific gymnastics' in girls' publics schools'. 'Madame' and her followers established various fee-

of physical education for both sexes and converted Mrs Alice Westlake, an influential member of the London School Board, to its therapeutic benefits.[33] Drill was seen as a way of disciplining both working-class boys and girls and manuals of teaching emphasized how the 'class at drill should be a mere machine, actuated only by the will, and at the word, of the teacher' with orders being executed unhesitatingly.[34]

The privileged played recreational sports and games as preparation for leadership as 'trained' professionals and mothers; the less- and under-privileged had to be drilled as preparation for submission to their orders. The requirements of these two classes were also seen as different in relation to their future working and leisured life: the continuance of sport and recreation for some and its total absence or controlled and regulated participation for others. The valorisation of middle-class female physical educators as 'emancipators' on the one hand and the tendency to see their pupils in the state elementary sector as a homogenous group brought together through poverty is arguably typical of much feminist leisure historical account and those who are the object of their attention.[35] This is significant to this research because of the development of girls' and boys' physical education in the state sector in the first half of the twentieth century and the mass expansion of 'Keep Fit' in the interwar

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paying independent physical training colleges for women who in turn taught at independent girls' public schools and increasingly from the turn of the century at girls' grammar schools, see Fletcher, S (1984), *Women First: the Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980*, London and Dover, New Hampshire, The Athlone Press; McCrone, Kathleen E (1988) *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914*, London: Routledge: 104; and Hargreaves, J. (1994), *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*, London: Routledge.

[33] Westlake persuaded the Board to create a new position, Superintendent of Physical Education in Girls' Schools and appointed a Miss Concordia Lofving in 1870 and then more famously in 1881, Madame Bergman Osterberg - both were graduates of the Swedish Gymnastic Institute founded by Per Henrik Ling in Stockholm. See in particular McIntosh1952: 52-68 who gives a particularly rigorous account of the trajectory of physical education in England and a detailed critical discussion of competing systems of physical training and exercise, their progenitors, their followers and their effect on educational reform and legislation.

[34] Hurt 1977: 181.

[35] For example, see Kathleen McCrone's discussion of advances in women's physical education and training in relation to wider concepts of female emancipation. McCrone argues that the work of 'pioneers' such as Madame Osterberg should not be considered as somehow independent of the introduction of drill (and later dance) into state-aided elementary schools and efforts to meet the needs of what McCrone refers to as 'large numbers of undisciplined lower-class children in poor facilities', McCrone 1988: 100.

years - both of which in many ways ran certainly parallel and arguably progressively counter to the teachings of Osterberg-Ling. From the late nineteenth-century opposition to military drill gradually gained pace and although it wasn't altogether abandoned within the elementary school system additional exercises were introduced. Teachers in London at the turn of the century for example, on their own initiative, encouraged pupils to play sports and games organizing matches against neighbouring schools and forming clubs for football, cricket and other sports.[36] What is clear is that regimens of and attitudes to working-class physical education and training present a constant and historically consistent link with the rational recreation movement across a long duree. An inter-related social and physical battle waged across much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries between collective regimentation and constraint, and individual expression and freedom on the part of both educators and participants.

Problematizing the Discourse of Rational Recreational Leisure: Middle-Class Ideology, Working-Class Resistance, Lower-Middle-Class Ambiguity

A diverse body of scholarly work with varying degrees of critical rigour has charted the development of modern forms of sports and leisure activities and popular culture from the nineteenth century.[37] Discussion of rational recreational leisure can arguably be discussed around two different perspectives. First, there are those mainly leisure and sports historical overviews, whose primary focus is on the expansion and development of specific leisure activities rather than the ideological implications and political dimensions of the mid-Victorian Rational Recreation Movement; if referenced at all, they serve as an historical context not as a category

[36] Mangan, J.A. and Ndee, H.S. (2003), 'Military Drill - Rather more than Brief and Basic' in J. Mangan (ed.), *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, London: Taylor & Francis.
[37] For an overview of British sporting history see notably Holt, R. (1989), *Sport and the British: A Modern History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press-- (ed.) (1990), *Sport and the Working Class in Modern Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; For a useful overview of sport and its relationship with the wider economy of modernity see Jarvie, G and Maguire, J. (1994), *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*, London: Routledge.

of critical analysis.[38] In contrast, there are those mainly cultural/social historical approaches for whom the nature of specific forms of rational leisure action is of very little relevance. The specificities of leisure are secondary to politically-motivated critical analysis of the relationship between freedom and coercion as an effect of industrial capitalism and the constitution of the modern classed or gendered subject. This latter oppositional reading theorizes leisure as an 'arena for cultural contestation between dominant and subordinate groups' and is particularly concerned with the reconfiguration of working-class life and leisure from the nineteenth century.[39] The destruction of pre-industrial 'sport' and the decline of communal life and ritualized recreations, and suppression of urban working-class culture are interpreted in terms of attempts to control and constrain popular pleasure and entertainment through the imposition of a coercive middle-class reformist agenda.[40] Traditional common-sense understandings of leisure as a neutral 'free' space were 'decentred' by conflicting interpretations of the complexities of leisure's role as a powerful vector of class relations in western capitalism.[41] Different critical perspectives on the nature of modern leisure, their critiques and counter critiques emphasized the culturally-constituted nature of leisure behaviour, time and space and the political dimensions of proscription and pleasure.[42] Leisure was now

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[38] For example Birley, D, (1995), *Land of Sport and Glory: British Sport and British Society, 1887-1910*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. A recent example might be Herlihy, D. V. (2004), *Bicycle: A History*, Yale University Press which is a really thoroughly researched social history of the bicycle and cycling but class, access to and participation in leisure is seen more or less solely in terms of socio-economic constraints on consumer choice.

[39] Clarke and Critcher 1985: 227.

[40] See for example Malcolmson, R. (1973), *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Thompson, E. P. (1967), 'Time, work-discipline and industrial capitalism' in *Past and Present*, No. 38: 56-97; see also Jones, G. Stedman (1974) 'Working-class culture and working class politics in London, 1870-1900; notes on the remaking of a working class' in *Journal of Social History*, No. 7: 460-508.

[41] Rojek 1995 offers a full discussion of this concept and shifting understandings of 'leisure' action and ideology as part of representational and symbolic structures of meaning formulated through postmodern phenomenological and linguistic approaches.

[42] For a detailed discussion of the relation between socialist 'interventionism' and commercial enterprise see Waters, C. (1990), *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture in Britain 1884-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. McKibbin, R. (1998), *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, provides a useful overview of broad issues of class and leisure action and behaviour, aspects of which were also earlier explored in McKibbin, R. (1984), 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?' in *English Historical Review*, 99: 197-237; For a useful collection of different perspectives on WWII see N. Hayes and J. Hill (eds.) (1999), *'Millions Like Us'? British Culture in the Second World War*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

understood as a shared context within which a range of actions and attitudes were allied with wider understandings of the production and reproduction of the modern leisured subject.[43]

The growth of organized sports and sports clubs, and recreational leisure and leisure clubs and associations encompassed a distinctive range of nineteenth-century ideas about education and social status as well as notions of national and social identity. Variously motivated and sometimes conflicting political, religious, social and cultural groupings stressed the virtues of non-commercialised entertainment, rural surroundings and healthy pastimes. Improved transport and a burgeoning popular interest in natural history, science and literature all combined to form an amorphous leisure constituency.[44] The National Sunday League organized Sunday excursions to the coast and hired popular theatres for concerts featuring the most celebrated singers and charging a small admission charge.[45] Increasingly and in ever more numbers men and women went out into the countryside either on foot or by rail fuelled by a desire for physically and morally uplifting alternatives to city life and its temptations or for a new sense of freedom and independence. Programmes of auto didacticism such as those put forward by organizations the National Home Reading Union (NHRU) for example, were easily assimilated into the leisure activities of non-conformist communities and their recreational leisure activities such as Pleasant Sunday Afternoons and rambling clubs.[46] In 1891, the Reverend Arthur Leonard, a Congregationalist minister organized a walking holiday for working men as a rational alternative to the lures of commercial resorts such as Blackpool. This model was adopted by the NHRU who then organized a walking holiday in the Lake District and established a loosely formed association with Rev.

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[43] Jones, S.G. (1986), *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939*, London: Routledge. See also Hill, J (2002) *Sport, Leisure & Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

[44] Snape, R. (2004), 'The Co-operative Holidays Association and the Cultural Formation of Countryside Practice', in *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 23, No.2: 143-158. See also Taylor, H. (1997) *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement*, Keele: Keele University Press.

[45] Willis, F. (1948), *101 Jubilee Road, A Book of London Yesterdays*, London: Phoenix House.

[46] Snape, R. (2002), 'The National Home Reading Union, 1889-1939' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 7, No.1: 86-110.

Leonard and others which became the Co-Operative Holidays Association (CHA).[47] William Booth (founder of the Salvation Army) offered a 'week spent with nature' and holidays at seaside settlements with endless opportunities for educational improvement and good fellowship through collective leisured enjoyment.[48]

The growth in the popularity of rambling in this period reflected a growing belief in the idea of the countryside, and access to it, as a democratic leisure space and a site of personal development and spiritual renewal.[49] Various more serious and strenuous walking and climbing clubs were also formed, predominantly in the North of England, that were 'bastions of amateurism bolstered by club dinners, songs and doggerel'.[50] In the late 1870's there were at least forty cycling clubs in existence catering for a range of interests and by the turn of the century most towns had a club. Bristol for example boasted eight different clubs for different levels of enthusiasm and sporting commitment, including the Cycling Club which had 17 riding and 30 'Club House' members. One member of the Bristol Society of Cyclists exclaimed: 'Nothing is more delightful than, after a week's hard grind in the office ... to don your special garments, mount your glittering wheel, and then away to the green lanes... to the sweet country'.[51] The Bicycle Touring Club (BTC) came into existence to meet the needs of cycle tourists embarking on longer journeys that required an overnight stay and held its first meeting in 1878. The club grew to a membership of almost a thousand by the following year and by 1887 had steadily increased to 22,316.[52] By the early 1900s cycling was a huge craze and membership of the Cyclists Touring Club shot up to nearly 60,000 and more prosperous middle-class enthusiasts began to travel further afield.[53] The nascent British socialist

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[47] Snape 2004.
[48] See Waters 1990:75-82.
[49] Howkins, A. (1986), 'The discovery of Rural England' in R. Colls and P. Dodd (eds.), *Englishness: Politics and Culture*, London: Croom Helm, 62-88.
[50] Lowerson, J. (19983), *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 59.
[51] *ibid*: 118.
[52] Oakley, W. (1977), *Winged Wheel: The History of the First 100 Years of the Cyclists' Touring Club*, Godalming: Cyclists' Touring Club: 4-8.
[53] Holt, R. (1985), 'The Bicycle, the bourgeoisie and the discovery of rural France 1880-1914' in *British Journal of Sport History*, 2.

movement formed the Clarion cycling club and its cultural mix of reform and recreation had as significant effect on the attitudes of working men and women as more overt strategies for political change within the labour movement in the late-nineteenth century.[54] Cycling was arguably a more distinctly pan-class as a participatory recreation than any other late nineteenth-century activity.[55]

Contemporary revisionist accounts of various leisure forms and practices are significant in understanding leisure and leisure participation and behaviour not as a simple trickle-down evolutionary process with power moving from some sort of pre-industrial feudal egalitarianism irrevocably towards a monolithic middle class, but rather as a contested ground occupied and fought for between and *within* different social groupings and classes. The lower-middle-class leisured body however assumes an important pivotal position within this self-evident social dynamic that is worthy of a new critical interrogation. Shifting models of 'respectability' were formulated in relation to new forms of working-class leisure behaviour *and* at the same time responsive to the mores of bourgeois society and their evolutionary impact on leisure and fashionable consumption. The radical potential inherent in leisure's capacity for ambiguous self-determination was supposedly exploited by the middle class who are frequently situated as its largest beneficiaries. It was also resisted, subverted and rejected by the various elements within a broad working class who are seen as the largest if reluctant and recalcitrant recipients of its disciplinary doctrine. However, this thesis argues that this points to the need for a much more complex understanding of the tensions that constantly threaten to overwhelm the very tenuous, because necessarily fluid, foundations upon which the 'authentic' middle- and working-class leisured body was culturally 'constructed'. Mike Huggins has acknowledged how little research there has been into lower-middle-class sporting participation (for many of the reasons outlined in Section 1) and stresses how they were also the backbone of urban and suburban

[54] Prynn, D., (1976), 'The Clarion Clubs, Rambling and the Holiday Associations in Britain since the 1890s' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11: 65-77. For a personal memoir of the links between a political education, activism and recreational leisure see C. Stella Davies, (1963), *North Country Bred: A Working-Class Family Chronicle*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
[55] Lowerson 1983: 116.

sporting and leisured involvement with a diversity of interests and commitment. He argues they were a marginal group 'with all the tensions that entailed between conformity and dissent, pretension and insecurity, caution and confidence, the puritan and the bohemian, prudery and rudery'.[56]

Recreational leisure might be inflected with the language of middle-class 'do-gooders' but to conclude from this that a significant number of the working population either simply swallowed or rejected it wholesale invalidates the notion of individual agency or hegemonic dominance that motivates many such critiques in the first place. Attitudes to rational recreation were arguably riven by class distinctions, but they were also united by wider idealized concepts of patriotic, professional, domestic and familial duty that were central to an upper-working and lower-middle class culture of 'respectability'. The ideology of 'improvement' and Weberian concepts of hard work and temperate leisure, prudence rather than profligacy did not need to be imposed on the lower middle class from above because they were always already a fundamental part of their historical cultural identity. In the same way as the continued importance and transformation of traditional culture of working-class leisure in the face of middle-class pressure for reform has been recognized, then so too a lower-middle class culture based on longstanding tenets of independence and aspiration needs to be understood in terms of the *ambiguities* that the discourse of rational recreation offered in Victorian Britain for both modern class identity and social mobility.

The rhetoric of rational recreation expediently incorporated ideas around socio-economic *and* physiological and psychological well-being into new constitutional and theoretical imperatives. But it also functioned as a strategy for internalising wider anxieties around contemporary society and a growing sense of religious and social uncertainty amongst the middle classes themselves who were facing their

[56] Huggins, M., (2002), 'Introduction' in J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Reformers, Sport, Modernizers: Middle-Class Revolutionaries*, London: Routledge: 24-25.

own crisis of confidence.[57] In his treatise *Self Help*, which sold over 20,000 copies in its first year, Smiles promoted the idea of the 'self-made man', distinguished by a moral and physical 'robustness' that marked him out as a member of a new gentleman class, an 'aristocracy of Character rather than an aristocracy of blood'.[58] Such a concept was indebted to the martyrs of Protestantism for whom the highest form of action was enduring with patience and stoical composure both physical and spiritual torment. However the moral authority of new models of heroism arose by virtue of estrangement from the traditional heroic norms of masculinity evidenced in an ascetic Christian moral discipline.[59] A new concept of a 'muscular Christianity' was the basis of a movement whose defining characteristic was 'an association between physical strength, religious certainty, and the ability to shape and control the world around oneself.'

An evolving recreational landscape was opening up peopled by different leisured bodies across a class-based and ideological divide but the political values of the lower-middle class continued to be defined by a culture of independence and a level of self-organization that set them apart from wider political organization. Crossick's work on the historical development of the modern lower middle class argues that respectability remained 'as much concerned with an individual's sense of respect as with any external recognition of his respectability'. Whilst frequently perceived by those outside of the class as dull and shallow and infrequently realised in any material sense, small acts of suburban self-delusion were representative of a desire for bigger and more fulfilling lives. Social aspiration if not its fulfilment was an effective strategy for living with and negotiating social inequality. [60] In a more fluid and insecure society, the Victorian lower-middle-class continued to draw on a

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[57] See Vance 1985 *op cit.*
[58] Smiles, S. (1859), *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and Conduct*, London: Murray: 416.
[59] Adams 1995: 26-28.
[60] Crossick 1978: 136, cites H. Knell (1861), Chips from the Block: an Essay on Social Science, London. Henry Knell was a Woolwich Arsenal wheelwright, who wrote that 'by attention to the rules of good breeding... The poorest man will be entitled to the character of a gentleman'.

traditional understanding of 'respectability' as an alternative to wealth as a criterion for social judgement.'[61] Nevertheless, Crossick observes:

> With these qualifications in mind, it still remains necessary to insist that for a stratum for whom belief in mobility and achievement was high, status aspirations were always essential to allow the satisfaction of ambitions that genuine social mobility could not afford to many.[62]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a belief in the idea of society as a 'ladder' which could be climbed by dint of hard work or merit became an extremely potent force, politically and socially. In the 1860s, for example, Disraeli passionately believed in what he called the 'territorial constitution' - by which he meant a system of careful age-old social gradations (i.e. inequalities) based on the ordered agricultural hierarchy of pre-industrial England that could be ascended by men of talent (such as himself); Gladstone too outlined a vision of 'inter-dependence' as a class-based, top-to-bottom hierarchical structure of separate 'offices' built according to the 'natural law of humanity'.[63] Both inferred an idea of social promotion and potential advance through a world of infinitely graded ranks that was immediately recognisable in terms of class and social status - but at the same time comfortingly suggested both infinite variations and seamless boundaries within and between them.[64] This demonstrates not a lack of discriminatory systems of privilege, education and wealth, strategies of exclusion or widespread social inequalities but rather that these are always ambiguous sites of contestation and conformity and potential negotiation. As Peter Bailey emphasizes, 'Leisure was one of the major frontiers of social change in the nineteenth century, and like most frontiers it was disputed territory...'.[65]

For the lower middle class, ideas of useful and 'productive' leisure were, perhaps uniquely, always linked to both moral *and* economic imperatives in a way that

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[61] Crossick 1978: 135.
[62] Crossick 1977: 30.
[63] Cannadine,1998: 98.
[64] Crossick 1991: 174.
[65] Bailey 1978: 5.

emphasized the specificities of the local, the concrete and the individual experience of modernity and the real market conditions of small-scale trade and enterprise. Supplementary education and hobbies was a widespread and enduring practice within particularly the artisan class and was the traditional way of passing on craft skills and trade entry and the economic more than the social consequences of this could be highly significant.[66] Income raised from the selling of produce or for example joinery work, petty dealing, teaching or preaching helped to pay for holidays and extras, but there is evidence of such activities leading to career changes particularly by using the income to raise capital to set up in a more lucrative line of work or start up a business.[67] An emphasis on sobriety was central to nineteenth century concepts of petit-bourgeois business acumen. The ideology of white-collar social advance and healthy rational recreational leisure was relatively easily adapted and modified by an expanding modern lower middle class in relation to the challenges *and* opportunities imposed by industrial capitalism. Chris Waters argues that the language of rational recreation failed to keep pace with a rapidly growing commercial leisure industry.[68] It demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of the determination of the working classes to make their own leisure in ways which rejected and resisted assimilation to middle-class notions of useful and active leisure. When social reformers discussed leisure in the middle of the nineteenth century they seldom mentioned business and measured all leisure pursuits in terms of their own concepts of social utility, 'opposing those that encouraged personal dissipation or those that threatened social stability '...It was the activity itself, not the means by which it was provided, that came under attack.'

The ideology of the rational recreation movement came to encompass both a series of middle-class activities designated as worthy, *and* a way of talking about leisure that codified a middle class value system. However, the dialectic between rational recreation and irrational pleasure Water argues, assumed an easy uniformity but one

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[66] See McKibbin, R. (1990), *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[67] Miles 1999: 132.
[68] See Waters 1990 *op cit.*

which actually obscured a diversity of different motives that lay behind the encouragement of some activities and the repudiation of others.[69] For this reason perhaps *more than* other classes, this thesis would argue that rational recreation was ideally suited to the diverse social groupings that collectively made up a broad stratum of the upper working and lower middle class in the late-nineteenth century. The rhetoric of rational recreation required little in the way of ideological coercion because of long-standing links with Protestant pragmatic asceticism and traditional non-conformist ties with temperance and conformed to rather than conflicted with the mantra of 'independence' and 'respectability' that had traditionally sustained it. At the same time their 'enjoyment' of new forms of rational recreational leisure could easily accommodate the commercial opportunities a booming rational recreation movement equally encouraged, un-burdened by the taint of middle-class attitudes to blatant social aspiration, petit-bourgeois commercial success and business acumen.

[69] *Ibid*: 18.

2.2 Theorizing the Development of Rational Recreational Leisure Clothing before the First World War

Section 1 describes how modernity imposed its own temporal and spatial incursions on all classes. Social expectations were transferred beyond the workplace and leisure was a key element in the expression of class-specific modes of behaviour and their fashionable embodiment. Georg Simmel's and Thorstein Veblen's theories of leisure, fashion and dress in the nineteenth century are useful here because they situate the economic exchange of goods and their production and consumption as meaningful *only* in relation to wider systems of social and symbolic exchange.[1] In Simmel's terms, clothing was an act of both uniformity and distinction in the new arena of modern life where a sense of self was increasingly negotiated through the relationship between environment and self-presentation. Sameness and difference were manifested through a repertoire of coded sartorial conventions that reinforced social status but also ambiguously revealed cleavages and solidarities within and between classes in terms of occupation and other social activities.[2] Veblen's work is best known, and most widely utilized for his theories of 'emulation' and his satirical commentary on the gradual and progressive cultural evolution of a new and powerful 'leisure class' in America at the end of the nineteenth century. But the foundation of Veblen's arguments lies in his tracing of how 'old' money and allied aristocratic notions of pecuniary and cultural 'wealth' were transformed through the mechanisms of industrial capitalism and bourgeois social aspiration - 'new' money and new allied understandings of merit and their material and symbolic articulation. An upwardly-mobile urban bourgeoisie asserted their new-found status in the display of ever-more decorative and superfluous household duties and wasted effort

[1] Veblen, T (1899/1994), *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Republished by Mineola NY: Dover Publications; Simmel, G. (1903), 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, tr. And ed. Kurt H. Wolff (1950, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, 409-417), (1905) *Fashion*, London: Fox Duffield & Co.

[2] Simmel 1903: 412; See also Perrot, P. (1981), *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

to visibly communicate, not their professional status or employment, nor an aristocratic life of idleness, but the ability to *afford* a life of idleness.[3]
The limitations of both theorists' ideas around the causal feature of fashion change have been the focus of widespread critique within fashion theoretical and historical writing since the 1980s.[4] One of the aims of sociologist, Diana Crane's study is to 'test' the validity of Simmel's and Veblen's historical models of class-based systems of fashionable emulation, conspicuous consumption and top-to-bottom fashion diffusion. Fashion's 'social agendas', she argues, always speak to and for certain social groups by virtue of their direct and indirect strategies of exclusion and inclusion.[5] According to Crane, Veblen's and Simmel's theories implied that in the nineteenth century, social status barriers expressed through clothing were difficult or impossible to overcome. In contrast, she suggests, costume histories of nineteenth-century dress infer that class differences were eliminated by the contemporaneous standardization of clothing and the opportunities for fashionable choice for all classes opened up by mass manufacture and marketing.[6]

Crane's study assesses the degree to which this latter concept of socio-sartorial democracy disrupts the former theorization of a rigid class-based fashionable hierarchy of taste and consumption. To do so, Crane compares costume historical accounts of clothing behaviour and fashionable change in this period with the findings of some 150 case studies of various types of working-class families carried

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[3] Veblen defined this in terms of the 'non-productive consumption of time' and the private pursuit of individual enquiry, Veblen 1994: 28-29.
[4] See for example, Rouse, E. (1989), *Understanding Fashion*, London: BSP Professional Books who outlines the major problems with such an approach in terms of the diverse reasons that instigate fashion change and in the light of new understandings of sub-culturalfashionable innovation and correlate changes in production. Styles also 'bubble up' from the street and the culture of minority and low-status groups, see Polhems, T. (1994), *Streetstyle*, London: Thames and Hudson. For a critique of Veblen's anti-fashion stance and gendered assumptions around fashion change, see Wilson, E. (1985), *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, London: Virago: 52-53. Both Simmel and Veblen's theories are premised on the idea of fashion as 'emulation', ie a class-based hierarchy of fashionable diffusion. For a critique of emulation see, for example, Rouse, E.(1989), *Understanding Fashion.* London: BSP Professional Books. For a summary of the centrality of such critiques to contemporary fashion studies see Entwistle, J. (2000), *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press: 98-102.
[5] Crane, D. (1993), *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing,* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
[6] *Ibid*: 36

out from the 1860s by French social theorist Frederic Le Play.[7] The interrogation of these contradictory aspects of clothing behaviour and conflicting historical accounts of clothing democratization then forms the basis of an equally oppositional conceptual framework for Crane's exploration of clothing and fashion-consciousness in the twentieth century, either as a form of 'social control', or, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's theories of social and economic 'capital', as a conduit of social mobility.[8] Survey data in the form of 100 interviews with contemporary fashion designers and the staff of various fashion magazines, and the findings from a number of focus groups that looked at women's responses to fashion media images - all conducted by Crane herself - are used to support arguments around the shifting nature of democratic fashionable choice over the past one hundred years. Crane's work emphasizes the significance of clothing as a historical marker of class and social status, but nevertheless concludes that fashionable clothing increasingly represents an elemental link between a much more fluid and autonomous sense of subjective identity and a plurality of social structures in postmodernity.

Crane's exhaustive study, and the huge range of contemporary and historical primary material that she draws upon, offer significant insight into the role of fashion and fashionable dress in the creation of the modern self, and the nature of

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[7] Frederic Le Play was an important figure in the development of French and European social sciences and developed a methodology for the collection of qualitative and quantative data. Le Play's goal was to classify different types of working-class families as they existed in France and elsewhere through case studies which documented and described their social and economic milieu. The nature of individuals' employment was the criteria by which Le Play classified the social stratum the family occupied within the working class. However, his detailed case studies also recorded a great deal of information about the families' expenses and income and made inventories of all family possessions, including clothing over a period of some 60 years. *Ibid*: 30.

[8] See Bourdieu, P. (1984), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; see also ---- (1993), *The Field of Cultural Production*, Ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press. Bourdieu's vision of society is one of competition and contention where individuals operate in relation to different 'fields' of experience and overlapping mental and social structures – what Bourdieu defines as 'habitus'. Habitus disposes and predisposes individuals and groups of individuals to act in certain ways according to certain understandings of the world around them. This systemic structure of dispositions and social spaces are in turn, Boudieu argues, endowed with different forms of 'capital': social, economic and cultural that can be measured in material and financial terms and equated with the resources accruing of membership of a particular class or group. Bourdieu's sociology of cultural practices is ultimately concerned with how society classifies and orders these different forms of capital and their generative habitus through a hierarchical system of tacit value judgements, in Bourdieu's terms 'distinction'.

the shifting possibilities it provides for both conformity and subversion. However, her findings especially in relation to clothing behaviour from the late nineteenth-century to the period just after the Second World War (the approximate parameters of this thesis), are principally based on sometimes contradictory costume-historical sources and the clear limitations of nineteenth-century sociological categorization. Crane's study is premised on the need to acknowledge the crucial importance of clothing and dress in the *negotiation* of classed and gendered identities. But such identities prior to the twentieth century are already rigidly prescribed by a lack of interrogation of the assumptions that underpin Le Play's nineteenth-century schema of hierarchical clothing, ie the *possession*, or not, of specific items of clothing organized according to already-fixed categories of socio-sartorial stratification. Le Play's data, as rich and valuable an historical source as it is, cannot be read as a literal reflection of *actual* class relations. This is only exacerbated in Crane's study by an over-reliance on costume-historical accounts of fashionable dress. Many of these do offer very detailed descriptions of historical clothing, but by the nature of their often encyclopaedic function must make generalizations that elide sometimes highly nuanced gradations of continuous fashion change and complex processes of class-based diffusion in modernity.[9]

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[9] For example, Byrdem P, (1979), *The Male Image: Men's Fashion in Britain, 1300*-1970, London: Batsford; Gorsline, D. (1952), *What People Wore: A Visual History of Dress from Ancient Times to Twentieth Century America*, New York: Bonanza Books; Tarrant, N. (1994), *The Development of Costume*, London: Routledge.
Crane cites studies by French costume historian Madeleine Delpierre, for example (1990), *Le Costume: De la Restoration a la Belle Epoque*, Paris: Flammarian, whose groundbreaking approach to dress collection and display after the Second World War generated what Lou Taylor argues are 'some of the most informative dress/textile history catalogues ever produced' because of their extremely successful fusion of rigorous object-based research and garments set in their material culture context. Delpierre's work first at Le Musee du Costume de la Ville de Paris which she joined in 1947 and later the *Musee de la Mode et du Costume* at the *Palais Galliera* placed a new emphasis on researching the social historical contexts of the displayed garments' manufacture and consumption. This in turn effected the collection policy which was extended to include high-end ready-to-wear, civil uniforms, textiles, accessories and ephemera. See Taylor, L. (2002), *The Study of Dress History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 163-164. However, Crane's utilization of Delpierre tends to be confined to short quotations such as top hats 'covered almost all heads' or middle-class men 'never went out without a cane', 1990: 27; 60 and used in conjunction with similar reductive observations such as corsets were 'an essential element of feminine clothing among the rich', Guiral, P. (1976), *La Vie quotidienne en France a l/age d/or du capitalisme, 1852-1879*, Paris: Hachette: 177.

The adoption of this singular dress-based disciplinary approach, and a failure to address the limitations associated with its methodology, have been debated within fashion theoretical and historical studies over the past thirty or so years.[10] With varying degrees of academic rigour, many studies typically illustrated the progressive emergence of a modern fashion system through a series of idealized sartorial models.[11] The complexities of industrial capitalism and the construction of diverse new social identities were thus largely translated in such histories in terms of a simplistic repertoire of oppositional classed and gendered stereotypes and supposedly detailed depictions of social life across the centuries, but one ultimately realised in terms of bourgeois consumption and social mores.[12] The historical function of clothing as a marker of occupational status is clearly a crucial one, but its capacity to metonymically represent social hierarchies of class and gender has meant that men's and women's hats, or a colour-coded range of coats and collars have become a visual and textual shorthand for complex historical models of social stratification. The continued frequency of such descriptors as codified images of class, and the historical consistency of their conceptual currency masks the fact that

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[10] For a discussion of the need for multi-disciplinarity and an example of this in practice see Palmer, A. (1997), 'New Directions: Fashion History Studies and Research in North America and England' in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Vol. 1, No.3: 297-312. For an in-depth debate about different dress-based disciplinary perspectives on critical approaches see Styles, J. (1998), 'Dress in History: Reflections on a Contested Terrain' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 2, No. 4: 383-390. This special methodology issue was devoted to debating the difficulties and tensions that exist between fashion, dress, costume and textile historical modes of scholarship. Of note are also contributions from Lou Taylor ,(1998), 'Doing the Laundry: A Reassessment of Object-Based Dress History': 337-338 who acknowledges the historical shortcomings of object-based research but also robustly defends its continued significance to fashion history ; Chris Breward (1998), 'Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress':303-331, summarizes the critical antecedents to a new cultural historical approach to fashion and emphasizes the importance of a new multi-disciplinary critical rigour.

[11] For much of the twentieth century, dress historical study was dominated by men whose intellectual perspectives were '... locked into the conservative ideologies of art history' that were essentially misogynistic and anti-fashion. See Wilson, E. (1985), *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, London: Virago: 48.The collection and display of costume and clothing in Britain's museums was similarly virtually under exclusively male control until after the Second World War so that a focus on the masculine preserves of court and state rather than fashion and fashionable change were paramount, See Taylor, L. (2004), *Establishing Dress History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 46.

[12] There are a huge amount of illustrated costume and dress. The following 'classical' studies might serve as exemplars: Langley Moore, D. (1949), *The Woman in Fashion*, London, Batsford; Cunnington, C. W. and P. (1952), *Handbook of Costume in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Faber; Waugh, N. (1954), *Corsets and Crinolines*, London: Batsford; Cunnington, P. (1974), *Costume of Household Servants from the Middle Ages to 1900*, London: Adam and Charles Black.

they are rooted in actual social relations and inequalities and the anachronisms of British political history.[13] It would be erroneous to see costume and dress historical accounts of social life in the nineteenth century as somehow unique in their reductive representation of various social groupings in this way. Their use of a triadic system of class relations based on occupational practice (or indeed its absence) in fact quite accurately reflects the mix of stereotypical understandings and visual coding inherent in legislative, institutional and political systems of stratification based on occupation that dominate discussion of class in Britain across disciplines prior to the 1970s.[14] Nor is gender bias and empirical partiality confined to dress and dress historical studies.[15]

In the new urban spaces, clothes were increasingly an important way of signalling classed and gendered status. Nevertheless, as Christopher Breward argues, the critical limitations of costume histories frequently fail to take account of the wide spectrum of sartorial choices progressively allowed both male and female consumers in this period.[16] The principal problem with a study such as Diana

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[13] British history writing from the mid-nineteenth century has been extremely hostile to politically-charged theoretical perspectives on class conflict in relation to industrial capitalsm, see Jones, G. Stedman (1972), Based on a narrow range of empirical data predominantly male historians presented a postivist accounts of the great and the good, see Burke 1991. The past was transformed into a progressive account of the rise of Church, State, Nation and Empire was consistently narrated through a series of events directly related to the present and remained a dominant feature until well into the twentieth century, see Jenkins, K. (1995), *What is History?: From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White*, London: Routledge.

[14] See Marwick, A. (1980: 60-70), *Class: Image and Reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1930*, London: Fontana Collins for an account of bias in relation to the development of the Census in Britain and the creation of a new statutory language of class that both radically impinged on the scope of welfare legislation and its provision. Furthermore, as Ross McKibbin points out, the assessment of poverty was often based on the middle-class judgements on working-class clothing expenditure and dress and deportment, see McKibbin, R. (1990), *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain 1880-1950*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 45, 165-180.

[15] For example, Sociology as a discipline has been notably described as 'sexist to a man' and the analytical scope of its enquiry prejudiced by being dictated by a middle-class, white, patriarchal model of the family, see Edgell, S. (1993), *Class*, London: Routledge: 85.

[16] Breward, C. (1999), *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 25. A critique of the work of J.C. Flugel, (1947, first published 1930), *The Psychology of Clothes*, London: Hogarth Press, is at the heart of Breward's study of fashionable masculine consumption before the First World War. A Flugellian reading of masculinity based on his theory of 'The Great Masculine Renunciation' Breward argues supposes an easy relationship between physical inhibitions in the psyche of middle-class men and austere clothing habits with little examination of actual processes and practices of consumption, production and representation.

Crane's therefore, lies in her foreshortening of the boundaries of working-class fashionable and stylistic autonomy.[17] Difficulties arise not in deducing that rural and urban working men and women were more likely to wear particular items of work clothing (smocks, aprons, wooden shoes, waistcoats, caps and berets, uniforms, and overalls) during the working week. Rather, it is in the failure to problematize Le Play's data as a fixed comparative differential to the blanket fashionable agency implicit in costume historical accounts of the middle- and upper-middle class at work and at leisure. For example, Crane notes that Le Play's empirical data reveals a gradual but substantial increase in working-class men's possession of lounge coats, overcoats and suits consisting of jacket, waistcoat and trousers to wear on Sunday (and presumably for 'leisure'and recreation). However, the fact those workers appeared *not* to favour what Crane - following Le Play and selective costume histories - identifies as *fashionable* 'middle-class clothing' (frock-coats and tailcoats, canes, gloves and top hats) is *ipso facto* interpreted as evidence that they not only deemed such clothing 'inappropriate', but that this rendered them outside the circuit of fashionable consumption. This assumption more significantly, then leads Crane to conclude that clothing democratization and fashionable diffusion was evidenced in only a very 'limited sense' in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[18] The possibility of understanding working-class fashionability on its own terms outside the norms of bourgeois conventions of taste and deportment are not discussed – a deficiency only further reinforced by Crane's seeing nineteenth-century clothing *per se*, for example the wearing of particular hats, as 'closed texts' capable of conveying only *singular fixed meanings* (my emphasis).[19]

A conceptual straitjacket of theoretical 'either/ors' and a rigid framework of inherently subjective sartorial and social categorization obscures the extent to which working-class clothing choice might also be capable of ambiguous and multiple

[17] Crane *op cit*: 76-94.
[18] *Ibid*: 60-64
[19] *Ibid*: 242. In her conclusion Crane separates clothing behaviour in terms of historically 'open' or 'closed' texts although confusingly asserts that 'the same items of clothing may be used in different ways with different meanings in different social groups': 243.

meanings - a concept which Crane posits solely as the condition of postmodern fashionable subjectivity. A range of temporal and analytical polarizations result in contradictory and ambiguous assertions on Crane's part that at one and the same time confirm and critique the supposed oppositional perspectives that are being 'tested'. The following might serve as an example of Crane's frequent tautology:

> Since men represented their families in public space, men's hats, rather than women's, were used to indicate the status of the family. Women's head coverings during this period were more varied and more individualized than men's ... Women's hats exemplified conspicuous consumption instead of relaying coded signals referring to social rank'.[20]

It is not the purpose of this thesis to scrutinise further what Lou Taylor describes as the causes and symptoms of the 'great divide' between curatorial and 'academic' approaches to the study of fashion and fashionable clothing. As Taylor points out, there have been great strides within costume and dress historical approaches over recent years.[21] Efforts have been made to incorporate traditional object-based methodologies into a more critical analytical framework by situating clothes in a cultural historical context and using a range of diverse visual and textual sources, and inter-disciplinary approaches.[22] However, a lack of reference to contemporary critical fashion historical analyses does weaken Crane's arguments around clothing democratization and the historical expansion of working-class fashionable agency this implies.[23] For example, Christopher Breward's study of men's fashionable

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[20] *Ibid*: 83.

[21] Taylor, L. (2002), *The Study of Dress History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Lou Taylor points out that the work of women curators such as Anne Buck, Doris Langley Moor in Britain and Madeleine Delpierre and Henriette Vanier in France in breaking down institutional hostilities towards fashion and fashionable dress is immense and extremely influential in extending the scope and cultural status of dress collections in museums, *op cit*: 313).

[22] Although published after Crane's study Susan Vincent's examination of dress in the early modern period, (2003), is exemplary of a contemporary critical approach. Very much located in a traditional costume historical approach Vincent uses a wide range of sources to explore the multiple meanings that operate through dress and adornment She moves away from understanding dress as an index of social standing to one that acknowledges garments as nuanced objects that are vital ingredients in the 'making and managing of the social self', 2003: 3; 79.

[23] A useful supplement to such a discussion and a way of overcoming the limitations of a single dress-historical approach would have been the more discursive questioning of the nature of social identity in relation to the development of the modern fashion system provided by Wilson, E. (1985), *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, London: Virago; E. Wilson and L. Taylor (1989),

consumption before the First World War established a new 'sartorial lexicon' of stylistic innovation and fashionable masculinity. It describes how the lounge suit or a combination of lounge jacket and variously patterned trousers came to dominate men's fashions from the 1870s. Stylistic and technological innovation allowed a flexibility of cut, cloth and design that, he argues, was the cornerstone of an emerging mass market, and revolutionized accessibility to style change for all but the poorest classes.[24] Working men's rejection of frock coats and top hats as suitable leisure attire might, as Crane concludes, be seen as evidence that such clothing was considered by working men as an inappropriate expression of their social identity. However, Breward's in-depth analysis and new critical focus on trade journals and the popular media indicate that such styles were also increasingly seen as old-fashioned and out-of-date by an escalating body of working-class consumers, certainly in Britain. Breward's critical account of a growing fashionable consciousness on the part of the working urban population - and rapidly expanding opportunities to exercise it - conflict with the more limited theoretical, material *and* symbolic sartorial horizons put forward by Crane.[25] More crucially, within such a critical-analytical framework the possession of lounge suits rather than frock coats by working-class men might be seen not, as Crane suggests, as evidence of a *lack* of sartorial democracy, but rather *its very foundation.*

Fashion's ambiguities and transformative potential for all classes is to some extent acknowledged in Crane's arguments about nineteenth-century women's potential fashioned 'resistance' to gender norms through their adoption of 'alternative' forms of clothing.[26] In this, and a gradual emphasis on gender rather than class as a

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Through the Looking Glass A History of Dress from 1860 to the Present Day, London: BBC Books; and Breward, C. (1995), *The Culture of Fashion*: Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[24] Breward 1999 *op cit.* See in particular Chapter 2, 'Unpacking the wardrobe: the grammar of male clothing'.

[25] Alternative readings of some of Le Play's data might also support this argument. For example, the Parisian working-class anarchist who stopped wearing a frock coat and an overcoat on the grounds that, in his own words, 'it was pretentious', and so adopted a lounge suit, Crane *op cit*: 58.

[26] Chapter 4, 'Women's Clothing Behavior as Nonverbal Resistance: Symbolic Boundaries, Alternative Dress and Public Space'. See also Crane, D. (1999), 'Clothing Behavior as Non-Verbal Resistance: Marginal Women and Alternative Dress in the Nineteenth Century' in *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 2: 242-268.

category of analysis, Crane's work can be seen as part of a wider shift in focus within contemporary fashion history and theory and across the academy, towards the idea of a more stylistically diverse, individualistic and less conformist fashion system. Theories around subcultural working-class stylistic expression after the Second World War support her in-depth discussion of postmodern plurality in fashionable consumption and clothing behaviour.[27] New understandings of fashion and dress as a pivotal vehicle of subjective identification, including Crane's, are premised on a theoretical paradigm in which 'High' fashion is no longer the visible preserve of social elites necessarily in the possession of wealth and power.[28] Fashion and dress, Entwistle argues, continue to mark divisions between different social groups and their societal significance, but in a way which 'challenges traditional notions of status tied to class...'; clogs and cloth caps are obvious clichés but, 'they do illustrate, at least symbolically, the associations between dress and class identities that once existed but have become obsolete'.[29] From this postmodern intellectual perspective, the language of class and the rigid classed identities it once defined and described is therefore seen as no longer relevant to a concept of contemporary society as a continuous gradation of individuals, and groups of individuals, organized around identifiable but diverse patterns of consumption. Class is just *one* historical variant of a social identity that could be theorised as a self-conscious 'reflexively organized endeavour' sustained through a multiplicity of

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[27] What came to be termed 'Subcultural Theory' grew out of a new critical synergy between class and clothing in the work of the Birmingham Centre for Culture and Communication Studies (BCCCS) in Britain in the 1970s. The theory argued that working-class youth and sub-cultures could, through leisure and consumption, 'resist' the oppressive conventions of both the wider institutions of bourgeois culture and a working-class parent culture through a system of stylistic 'appropriation'. Objects – taste, fashionable clothing, music, public spaces - that were once the privileged domain of the middle and upper class could be brought together through a fashionable 'bricolage' of such objects and the '... reorganization by the subject of elements in the objective world which would otherwise determine and constrict him'. See Hall, S. and Jefferson, H. (eds.) (1976), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Sub-Cultures in Post-War Britain*, London: Hutchinson: 93-94.

[28] Concepts of working class subversion and 'resistance' that emerged through the work of the BCCCS and wider shifts in British cultural and social historiography in the 1970s radically impacted on the emerging disciplines of contemporary fashion and leisure studies and understandings of fashion and leisure history. Structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives on fashion and taste, as well as more abstract politics of consumption became a way of critically engaging with social status without recourse to previous definitions of class, issues of class consciousness and historically-contentious ideological schisms.

[29] Entwistle 2000: 134.

subjective choices and cultural 'narratives'.[30] Correlate changes in production and retail incorporated the tastes and concerns of much wider social groupings who if once defined by a rigid class-based demographic were now organized through a more fluid typology based on 'lifestyle'. Fashions rather than any one fashion functioned as 'the bonds that link individuals in a mutual act of conformity to social conventions' and reinforce identification on the basis of attitudes and behaviour as much as socioeconomic criteria.

Long-standing theories of 'emulation' as explanations of fashion and class-based relations in modernity became unsustainable as new understandings of fashion and fashion change radically challenged class-based systems of fashion diffusion and style innovation. However, from the luxury of a contemporary vantage point it is arguably all too easy to align the limitations of a perceived once-clear-cut equation between dress and a fixed classed identity and the concept that class as a category of analysis is, if not entirely redundant, then certainly of little significance. It is not that class has ceased to exist. Rather it has declined as a category of analysis because it is assumed that such descriptors no longer exert an ideological influence on, for example, what we wear. As a result, contemporary fashion studies unquestioningly reference 'the' working, middle or upper class and offer up these collective social grouping as a self-obvious nominal adjunct to cover-all descriptions of style, education, occupation, leisure activities, taste or ideology. At one and the same time this serves to indicate a belief that class still exists, yet reinforces a modern understanding of its disappearance.

Leisure and social historian Peter Bailey, writing in the 1990s draws implicitly on cultural historical theories of subcultural style and identity.[31] For Bailey, all social identities are culturally constituted through a process of open-ended mimesis, conformity and subversion, but he asserts that the cultural aesthetic of the lower

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[30] Giddens, A. (1991a), *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press 5-15. See also ---- (1991b), *Modernity and Self Identity*, Cambridge: Polity Press: 149-152.

[31] Bailey, P. (1999), 'White Collars, Gray Lives? The Lower Middle Class Revisited' in *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3, Special Issue: 'Masculinity and the Lower Middle Class': 273-290.

middle class, whether actual or imaginary, needs to be reinflected in more generous terms. Baileys work is a celebration of the suburban and unspectacular, and provides an unflinching critique of British historiography's exclusionary strategies of condescension towards such social groupings. Theories of subcultural style and identity are incorporated into a conceptual analytical framework where all identities are 'self made' – a term that has particular resonance for the focus of this thesis on lower-middle-class social aspiration. Bailey observes:

> This was an arriviste formation, arriving, or more commonly always en route ... More perhaps than those other classes that have won the gutsy accolade from historians, the lower middle class was indeed deeply implicated in its own "making." Thus "kitsch," which means originally " thrown together," might be reread as "bricolage" or "improvisation." "Imitation" might be redefined as "appropriation" (used approvingly as a tribute to canny workers who claim hegemonic bourgeois schemes for their own). And pretension might be better rendered as performance - even if a bad one.[32]

Leisure is central to Bailey's various historical studies of the lower middle class, because of the role it plays in social life and classed identification but also, significantly, the opportunities leisure and popular culture allow for self-conscious self-invention and re-invention. This was a social grouping who, Bailey argues, were at the front line of engagement with modernity in the workplace and in the domestic environment. Their evolving distinctive lifestyle and suburban social milieu bears witness to the overarching need of this class to visibly express social aspiration through fashionable consumerism and participation in new forms of leisure activities. Bailey's work therefore raises the key issues at the heart of this thesis: the ambiguous inter-relationship between lower-middle-class work and leisure; rational recreational leisure's historical function in processes of status differentiation and class identification from the late-nineteenth century; the ideological transformation of individual aspiration and collective concepts of self-improvement through leisure action and behaviour; and crucially, their embodiment in self-conscious acts of self-fashioning and adornment.

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[32] Bailey 1999: 287.

Popular Recreational Leisure and the Classed Implications of its Fashionable Embodiment

Bailey's examination of the transformation of popular leisure in the nineteenth century, argues that social, political and economic changes brought about shifts not only in the cultural life, but in the consciousness of its participants.[33] His work is therefore concerned with asking complex questions about how people imparted significance and meaning to their engagement in evolving forms of leisure and entertainment and their rituals, and its material expression in new forms of artefact. If class remained a powerful determinant in shaping leisure choice, then Bailey argues, 'the search for an appropriate style was also perceived in other terms, as the oppositions and ambiguities of class stratification gave way to finer definitions of individual status within and against the more amorphous mass groupings of the modern world.'[34] From the mid-nineteenth century, new forms of display and the acquisition of cultural and consumer 'knowledge' progressively marked out differences between classes and gradations of social status through the tastes and social mores of an emergent politically and culturally powerful bourgeoisie. However this thesis would argue that this was always inseparable from the equally crucial moral imperative to symbolically reference the utilitarian industry that created such wealth in the first place and its Protestant work ethical imperative. When situated within the context of an emerging Rational Recreation Movement the self-conscious fashioning of an ambiguous concept of *working leisure* assumed a new ideological significance for a rising middle class, and more importantly to this research, an aspirational lower middle-class. The development of new forms of *leisure-specific* clothing for both men and women shaped the ambiguous negotiation of a nineteenth-century gendered *and* classed divide and, literally, allowed the fabrication of new classed and gendered identities.

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[33] Bailey, P. (1983), 'Ally Sloper's Half Holiday: Comic Art in the 1880s' in *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 16: 16.
[34] Bailey 1983: 4-5.

Fast expanding leisure practices and allied forms of consumption were products of a capitalist economy; they functioned as a crucial part of its mechanisms and circulatory symbolic systems of display and desire. The black business suit of the stockbroker, the industrialist or the lowly clerk, might differ in cut, cloth and quality but its adoption always reflected the interior cerebral rather than manual nature of their work.[35] This was sometimes achieved at a greater financial cost for some then the financial reward for such work would logically allow.[36] However, in its symbolic assertion of earned rather than inherited wealth, hard work and thrift rather than hedonistic profligacy and idleness, the suit differentiated its wearer from both upper and lower classes alike. As the nineteenth century progressed and the need to maintain the boundaries of class only gained further social potency, the working clothing of the lower-middle and manual classes also became more uniform and more immediately recognisable. The petit bourgeoisie and artisan classes adopted different types of clothing that were much more specifically linked to particular trades. Overalls were required for manual workers from about the 1870's designed to meet new legislative requirements. In factories and heavy industries men wore heavy-duty overalls or coats, and in various shops and trade premises stock coats and aprons of different colours were worn by shop assistants, butchers, bakers and chemists.[37] The use of uniforms and company livery expanded, particularly in the new industries of transport and communication. Those working for new public and private corporations and utilities such as the Fire and Police Service, the Water Board, the Post Office, say, or on the Railways, all wore brightly coloured and often ornate braided uniforms based on military uniforms to indicate ranks and gradations of employees.[38] There was also an expansion in the use of much more clearly-defined uniforms for domestic servants which were ever-more fancy and decorative and often antiquarian in costume with breeches, coloured

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[35] Perrot *ibid*; 46

[36] For a first-hand contemporary account of the difficulties involved in lower-grade clerical workers maintaining a family and suburban standards of deportment and dress on as little as £80 p.a., see Orchard, B.J. (1871), *The Clerks of Liverpool*, Liverpool: L.J. Collinson.

[37] De Marly, D. (1986), *Working dress: a history of occupational clothing*, London: Batsford

[38] Crane, D (2000), *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press: 91.

tailcoats and even powdered wigs to differentiate between master and servant and according to an expanding hierarchy of duties within the servant classes.[39]

The previous Section describes how leisure, as much as work, increasingly operated as part of a whole discourse of competing and contentious ideas around the nature of 'healthy', 'moral' citizenship. 'Hard' work and leisure *and* their fashionable embodiment *together* came to define for the middle classes what it was to *be* 'middle class' and to stake out the parameters of their new political, economic social, cultural and geographical 'territory'. However, this was an emerging social group with little in the way of a historical leisure heritage and allied culture of consumption upon which to draw in the same way as their aristocratic, and to some extent rural labouring class, neighbours did.[40] This lack haunted a middle-class search for legitimacy because it revealed a fundamental difference: 'the bourgeois essence did not precede its existence'.[41] Although describing the symbolic expediency of the evolving middle-class business suit and its functional sporting antecedents, Phillipe Perrot's interpretive framework for understanding the 'fashioning' of the bourgeoisie, can equally be applied to the parallel development of appropriate forms of bourgeois leisure clothing. Perrot argues:

> Articles of clothing that originally fulfilled a real function in war, hunting, or work [have] degenerated into pure signification... The bourgeois clothing code, now legally free from sumptuary regulation, established itself as legitimate by hiding behind practical alibis and moral or aesthetic pretexts, as if to exculpate itself of the charge of gratuitousness.[42]

According to the Victorian rationale of a middle-class Protestant work ethic the most appropriate forms of leisure came to be seen as those that provided the

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[39] Cunnington, P.E. (1974), *Costume of household servants: from the Middle Ages to 1900*, London: A.C. Black

[40] For a discussion of the Victorian leisure 'revolution' see Lowerson, J. and Myerscough, J. (1977), *Time to Spare in Victorian England*, Hassocks, Sussex:The Harvester Press.. Lowerson and Myerscough emphasize that historians should be wary of drawing too sharp or facile a contrast between 'traditional' and 'modern' attitudes to work and leisure and argue that these need to be seen not in terms of a straight discontinuity with the past but a gradual transformation.

[41] Perrot 1981: 83.

[42] Perrot 1981: 9; 10.

greatest contrast with a man's work; by extension the most appropriate forms of leisure clothing were those that followed the same antithetical principle. Essential 'functionality' in work *and* leisure provided the bourgeoisie with a 'practical alibi' because leisure now provided the 'other' to work and the workplace - and by extension its clothing - within the productive relations of modern industrial capitalism. The middle class by necessity formulated a new system of status symbols and strategies of sartorial exclusion within a revised coded leisure hierarchy. Stiffness and formality in occupational clothing was replaced with a perceived looseness and informality in the development of new forms of appropriate and appropriately classed leisure clothing. Diane Crane's descriptions of working-class clothing demonstrate how cheap ready-made fustian (a heavy linen or linen mix), heavy cottons like corduroy, moleskin or 'beaver teen' in colours ranging from white buff and yellow to brown and blue now characterized the working man's wardrobe that included hardwearing, warm knitted Guernsey jumpers, cardigans that didn't show the dirt and for the rural classes an unbleached drill jacket called a "sloppy".[43] As Crane notes, all these forms of modern labourer's 'work wear' operated in direct contrast to the tailored contemporary fashionable style of the clerical and professional classes and an upper class social elite. But what is interesting to note and what this thesis seeks to emphasize is the importance of such an ensemble to the evolving *leisure* dress of the *middle* and more specifically the lower middle class. From the mid-nineteenth century, closely-tailored city suits and frock coats, subject to the vagaries of fashion, and the need for constant vigilance in terms of shabbiness and wear, were replaced at home or on holiday or for leisure with woollen reefer and lounge jackets of a boxier looser design, or pleated Norfolk jackets that all allowed greater freedom of movement, and required infrequent replacement and little maintenance.[44] Tailcoats, 'sharp' collars, tightly-fitted waistcoats, neck-ties and pins, shiny shoes and hard hats contrasted with the wearing of loose, 'rough', 'homespun' tweed jackets with leather

[43] Crane 2000 *op cit.* See also Levitt, S. (1991), 'Cheap Mass-Produced Men's Clothing in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *Textile History*, No.2: 179-193: 180.
[44] Breward 1999: 49-51; 164-165.

elbow patches, knickerbockers rather than trousers (and later shorts), soft flannel shirts and collars, soft hats and caps, and old 'trusty' walking boots.

Leisured bourgeois masculinity valorized the notion, if not the reality of actual 'old clothes', to symbolize freedom and their enjoyment of the countryside but also to clearly distinguish themselves from the working and labouring classes for whom such clothing was representative not of leisure and relaxation, but it's very opposite. Old, ill-fitting and heavily patched clothes were worn by working-class men and women to work in the dirty and dangerous spaces of large-scale Victorian industry; loose-fitting, drab and functional coats and overalls announced workers' manual status; the uniforms of domestic staff and those working in new industries equally made clear their position in the social hierarchy. Unsurprisingly, the characteristic feature of much working-class leisure clothing, as for their middle-class counterparts, was about expressing contrast from the working week: display, colour, visibility, ornamentation, fashionability, and the enjoyment of non-manual or physical exertion. The 'respectable' working classes wore their 'Sunday best' to embody their experience of the differential psychic and physical spaces of modernity. Sunday was regarded as a day for enjoyment and pleasure and on Saturday night they 'washed and laid out their best non-working clothes, prepared tea or coffee instead of gruel for breakfast and made a point of having a good lunch, looked forward to an afternoon tea, and invariably went out for a walk on Sunday evenings'.[45] Fancy suits and waistcoats were worn to the races and on days out, and contemporary social commentators warned against the wearing of coats cut on the lines of the 'coster's Bank Holiday coat' with velvet trimmings.[46]

The development of the lounge jacket and the expanding fashionable and novelty trade by the Scottish woollen industry together made possible the wearing of tweed by an expanding range of consumers. However its incorporation into an emblematic uniform of 'Rational' recreational leisure participation made visible an ideological

[45] (Parliamentary Papers 1842,XVI,*Children's Employment inMines*, I, 83 cited in Wigley, J. (1980, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 83
[46] *Fashion*, 'On Velvet', July 1904, cited in Shannon *ibid* 2006: 14

partisanship that extended to every aspect of middle-class life and the moral imperatives that were the mainstay of this new social order. By the last decades of the nineteenth century the adoption of a tweed suit comprised of a 'Norfolk' jacket matched with various kinds of knickerbockers or breeches in drab colours and subdued checks, as much as the black business suit functioned as the symbolic assertion of Protestant thrift and hard work. Most Scottish tweed was produced for London-based cloth merchants and made up by bespoke London tailors and by the last decades of the nineteenth century, tweed suits accounted for almost 50% of the high end tailoring trade, made not just for rural sporting wear but for fashionable informal urban attire.[47] The cloth offered an almost unlimited range of options and pattern and colour variations devised to meet the needs of an old and new sporting elite shooting, fishing, and deerstalking across the British Isles and for an increasing number of international elite consumers seeking distinction and novelty in an informal fashionable urban style when in town.[48] Tweed also underwent a process of 'feminisation' in the development of lighter-weight cloth and new 'feminine' designs and colour-ways. Traditional colour-ways and checks were adapted to women's differing needs by the use of deep and rich 'feminine' colours - numerous shades of red, deep yellow-ochre, olive and myrtle green, or oatmeal - and the use of elaborate novelty finishes - astrakhan and boucle trimmings, gold and silver thread - tied in to the shifts and changes of the Paris season.[49] Hundreds of different 'masculine' patterns were also adopted in women's designs, again in response to both social and sporting 'seasons', and fashionable change.[50]

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[47] This argument is based on a detailed analysis of the sales ledgers between 1861 and 1900 of *Henry Poole and Co of Savile Row* who catered for an upper-class clientele, see Anderson, F. (2000), 'Fashioning the Gentleman. A Study of *Henry Poole And Co.,* Savile Row Tailors, 1861-1900' in *Fashion Theory*, Volume 4, Issue 4: 405-426.

[48] Anderson, F. (2005), 'Spinning the Ephemeral with the Sublime: Modernity and Landscape in Men's Fashion Textiles 1860-1900' in *Fashion Theory*, Volume 9, Issue 3, pp.283-304: 286-287.

[49] See Taylor, L. (1999), 'Cloth and Gender: An Investigation into the Gender-specific Use of Woollen Cloth in the Tailored Dress of British Women in the 1865-1885 Period', in A. de la Haye and E. Wilson (eds.), *Defining Dress:* Manchester: Manchester University Press: 38-43.

[50] The wearing of tweed costumes for walking and other rural pursuits is also examined in Taylor's detailed object analysis of examples from the wardrobe of wealthy women enjoying the 'autumn playground' provided by Scottish Estates during the shooting season,Taylor, L. (2007), 'To attract the attention of fish as little as possible': An Object-Led Discussion of Three Garments, for Country Wear for Women, Made of Scottish Woollen Cloth, Dating from 1883-1908' in *Textile History*, Vol 38. No. 1: 92-105. See also Anderson, F. (2006) 'This Sporting Cloth: Tweed, Gender and Fashion

The middle classes dismissed the excesses of innumerable occasion-specific, tailor-made clothes favoured by the upper class.[51] It is the very non-specificity of the tweed suit, Anderson contends, that made it extremely popular with a broad urban middle class.[52] A photograph by Arthur Weston of James Keir Hardie arriving at the House of Commons to take his seat in 1892 shows Hardie in District-checked trousers, a dark jacket and waistcoat with a soft flannel shirt with collar and matching tie. Levitt argues, 'His home-spun looking outfit thus conveyed the message "I am your equal, a thinking man" to the middle class, whilst being identifiably socialist. It incorporated elements of working-class clothing, yet it was not working class.'[53] The appropriation in cut and cloth of what was essentially an aristocratic sporting suit referenced the outfit's social cachet, whilst exploiting its practical sporting credentials, thus emphasizing its *multi-purpose* adaptability. The fabric's ambiguous facility for distinction and discretion, visibility and invisibility made tweed particularly suitable for its appropriation by a new lower-middle-class consumer.

Just as modernity did not invent 'leisure', nor did it simply invent leisure clothing. Its forms and fabrics were rather inextricably bound up in the massive complex of technological innovation and social change to which it was both a response and a stimulus. For *all* classes, therefore, the same oppositional principles were operational in formulating appropriate forms of leisure clothing that functioned materially and symbolically to signal the temporal and spatial separation of work and leisure, and differences between and *within* different social groupings related to shifting value systems allied to occupational and social status. For an emerging middle and lower middle class, new forms of leisure-specific clothing did not just function to distinguish 'leisure' as a discrete and separate activity enjoyed and experienced in terms of discrete times and spaces. Rather, leisure and its clothing

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1860-1900' in *Textile History*, 37 (2): 166-186 for an interpretation of the gendered nature of tweed cloth.

[51] Shannon 2006.

[52] Anderson 2005: 290.

[53] Levitt 1993: 34.

functioned within an oppositional paradigm to symbolize professional and fiscal responsibility *and* its 'escape' through the expression of individual freedom from the psychic and physical constraints this imposed. However, this was always formulated in relation to different social groupings above and below them on the social scale that equally experienced and sartorially embodied their different relationships to work and leisure in different ways. No one class was somehow immune from the temporal and spatial incursions that defined leisure and its enjoyment in modernity.[54] Concerns about Dukes and costermongers wearing coats of the same cut were prevalent but these often revealed both anxiety about the blurring of class distinctions and an inherent snobbery that asserted that distinctions would always be revealed.[55] For an aspiring lower middle class, access to and participation in new forms of recreational leisure activities *and* its fashionable embodiment represented a way of negotiating the social and sartorial ambiguities of class-based systems of stratification while at the same time opening up the potential to express their own position within such a hierarchy in their own way.

On the face of it, the development of new forms and varieties of leisure clothing offered all classes relative to income much greater freedom of expression and greater latitude in clothing choice and design. However, when seen in relation to the working and non-working classed and gendered 'other' against which leisure clothing was frequently formulated, such choice was in many ways always already

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[54] For example, the fashion historian James Laver in an introduction to a mid-twentieth century guide to 'correct' riding dress argues that as breeches and jackets were incorporated into everyday business wear for men, aristocratic sporting and equestrian clothing became 'fixed' as it had reached its final form and the extent of its development, Laver, J. 'Introduction' in S.P. Barney (1953), *Clothes and the Horse: A Guide to Correct Dress for all Riding Occasions*, London: Vinton & Camp Ltd: 21-22. Work and leisure in the mid-nineteenth century became more symbolically and materially *fashion-able*, aristocrat sporting clothing became more rigid and rigidly exercised in new written and unwritten sartorial codes on for example the hunting field where scarlet coats and individual hunt colours separated hunt members from visitors, see Birley 1993: 232-234. New forms of rural sports clothing - shooting jackets, knickerbockers and breeches, coats, overcoats and capes were developed to meet the needs of a new sporting elite and a new sporting landscape that was developing, particularly in the Scottish Highlands, see Huggins, M. (2004), *The Victorians and Sport*, New York: Continuum. However, the point should also be made that upper-class sporting attire for cricket for example underwent considerable change after the 1870s, see Kerr, D.R., (1973), 'The Costume of the Cricketer' (A paper read at Lord's on 22 April 1972) in *Costume*, No.7: 50-54.

[55] Shannon, B. (2002), *The cut of His Coat: Men, Dress and Consumer Culture in Britain, 1980-1914*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press: 150-151.

both operational and proscriptive. Aristocratic sport, or middle-class rational recreation, or working-class vulgar amusement all operated as class-based variables within an inter-related social and ideological 'landscape' of modern leisure that in turn established the sartorial co-ordinates of their enjoyment and the culture of comparison that sustained it. New coded rituals of deportment and participation and their material embodiment progressively became key elements in the spectacular expression of class-specific modes of behaviour - consistent with both Simmel's and Veblen's model of new patterns of consumption. As discussed previously in relation to Diana Crane's work, these theorists have been (rightly) critiqued for their rigid imposition of a cyclical system of emulation and trickle-down diffusion from the middle to the working classes, and gendered assumptions about the nature of feminine fashionable consumption as the causal factor for fashion change. Simmel's and Veblen's models were certainly exclusionary and prejudicial, and limited in their understanding of the complex and diverse generative forces of fashionable consumption, style innovation and diffusion. However, as a postmodern fashion theoretical understanding of bottom-up aesthetic diffusion attests, the problem in critical analytical terms is arguably more one of application than mechanical process. The frequent conflation of the two within contemporary critiques obscures the fact that Simmel's and Veblen's theories were essentially grounded in the ambiguities and contradictions of social relations in the context of modern city life. Implicit in their understanding of processes of 'distinction' and 'emulation' is always the acknowledgement of the *transformative* potential of fashionable clothing, the problems posed to old hierarchies of aristocratic taste by new forms of leisure and consumption, and thus the historical significance of clothing choice as a class-based strategy of conformity and subversion.

For both theorists, the social reality of modernity always entailed both an ambiguous striving for social order and organization, and an engagement with the transitory and the new. Veblen used the concept of modern leisure as a way of tracing the emergence of a new social grouping because it served as his exemplar of a middle-class need to spectacularly display at a symbolic as well as material level

the essential 'utility' of bourgeois taste and conspicuous consumption: for example the introduction of programmes of animal breeding, 'rustic' additions to parks and gardens, and clearly the 'hard work' of consumption itself. Veblen's perspective was one informed by a Victorian rational reformist agenda and demonstrates how rational recreational leisure and its clothing should not be seen as somehow outside of fashionable consumption but integral to it, particularly in relation to the embodiment of new social structures of class and gender. What this thesis seeks to do is to now extend this interpretive framework to the leisure activities, ideology and clothing of the suburban lower middle class – a social group previously analytically constrained by polarized leisure and fashion historical accounts of bourgeois coercion on the one hand and post-World War Two working-class resistance on the other.

Christopher Breward argues that discussion of the middle class in Britain is frequently approached in terms of a loose framework of particular occupations and property ownership that loses sight of the inherent indeterminacy that identified people as belonging to this group in the first place. Clothing, and its role in articulating particular public personae were pivotal elements of cultural production that were much less fixed and far more subjective than for example property ownership or employment. Moreover, they always provided the possibility of movement from *or* acquiescence with prevailing stereotypes. [56] At the interstices of competing versions and visions of suburban modernity a broad swathe of working people can be seen as representative of an alternative popular, leisure constituency. As Section 2.1 demonstrates, for a range of disparate and divergent motivating factors a significant number of upper-working- and lower-middle-class men *and* women in the late nineteenth century began to participate in new forms of rational recreational leisure activities. In the following Sections, 2.3 and 2.4, this thesis seeks to critically address the fashion-historical significance and previous academic neglect of the ways in which *their* understanding of leisured modernity was equally

[56] Breward 1999: 77.

embodied in new forms of fashionable leisure consumption, and their distinctive and different adaption and appropriation of new forms of leisure clothing.

2.3. From Norfolk to Norwood: The Development of Popular Ready- and Tailor-made Rational Recreational Leisure Clothing

The tweed or woollen Norfolk jacket was a design that was swiftly adapted to the material and social needs of new forms of suburban leisure activities. Worn with knickerbockers, socks and matching caps, it was the vital element in an ensemble that progressively functioned to embody a rationale of 'healthy', hard-working citizenship conceptualized in relation to a shifting social and geographical landscape of modernity. The jacket's particular combination of tailoring innovation and uniformity of design, gave it 'characteristics peculiarly its own', The provision of more generous pleats, pockets and pocket flaps, extra buttons on the belt etc, like the infinite variety of pattern- and colour-ways of woollen cloth from which it was cut, all allowed some variation in tailoring to suit the requirements of individual wearers in terms of their body shape and the needs of their different sporting activities. It 'afforded greater scope for the introduction of novelties in both style and fitting qualities than any other garment in general wear...'[1]

Originally designed to accommodate the portal requirements of an upper-class sporting elite engaged in a day's shooting or stalking across the moors, the Norfolk's numerous large pockets proved equally useful for those whose days were spent 'awheel' or participating in semi-rural life in the new vogue for 'camping'. W.D.F. Vincent (notable for his vast number of 'Practical Guides' to pattern cutting and tailoring) observed: 'It matters not whether it is intended for fishing, walking, cycling, or equestrienne purposes; it is arranged in the same way'.[2] Vincent offers a useful description of a typical Norfolk jacket **[Fig. 2]**:

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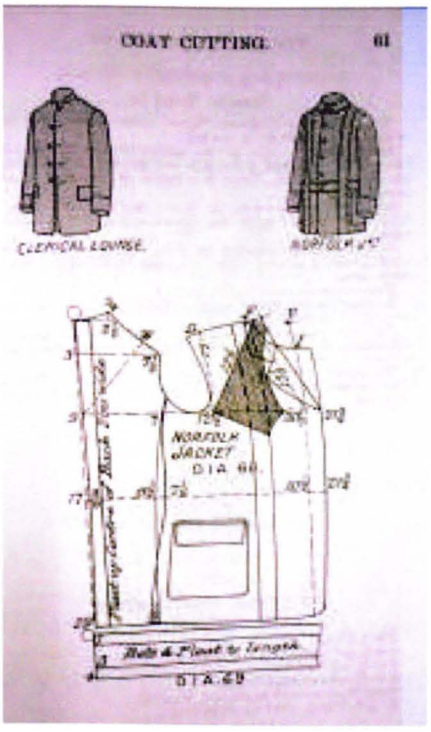
[1] Thornton, J.P. (1911), *The International System of Garment Cutting, including coats, trousers, breeches and vests, with diagrams and full instructions for dealing with all forms of disproportion*, London: Thornton Institute: 99.

[2] Vincent, W.D.F. (1904), *The cutters' practical guide to cutting, making, and fitting, lounges, reefers, Norfolk, sporting & patrol jackets: with special instruction on the treatment of disproportionate figures*, London: John Williamson: 29.Vincent 1904: 30.



Cut easy-fitting in chest, waist and hips. Usually, but not always finished with pleats either formed in the garment or laid on. Invariably made with a belt round the waist.... with a yoke back and front. Usually has large patch-pockets at hips and vertical pocket under a pleat at breast. The neck is generally finished with a neat collar and turn, but sometimes it is finished with a Prussian or Panteen collar, and made to fasten up to the throat.

Fig. 2
'Coat Cutting', W.D.F. Vincent (1904)

Fig. 3
'The Best Type of Coat', T.H. Holding (1908), *The Campers Handbook*

T.H. Holding, founder of the Cyclists Touring Club and a prominent figure in the tailoring trade contended that 'a man can do anything in such a garment'. As to the design of the 'best kind of coat' **[Fig. 3]**, he suggested:

> The pockets for such a coat should be, two across the hips. There should be one outside breast pocket for the handkerchief... there should be an inside coat pocket on the right side of breast with a flap, for letters, etc. There should be a pocket inside the skirt on the left, ten inches deep, ten inches across top, and at least twelve inches wide at the bottom, so that it may hold chops, groceries, or a rabbit if you poach. On the cycle, I can carry my "Campo" milk tin full inside this for a mile or two when off to a lonely Camping place.[3]

Urban/suburban leisure activities were not organized around seasons in the same way as the rural pursuits of the aristocratic sporting calendar. Nevertheless, the design and fabrication of appropriate recreational leisure clothing was equally symbolically and materially influenced by environmental, seasonal, fashionable *and* social change. Rather than the bracken and heathers of the mountains and grouse moors, it was now the shades of the highways and byways of middle-class recreational leisure and tourism that coloured tweed's designs.[4] For cycling, the length and terrain of the planned trip could influence the choice of clothing in terms of appropriate cloth and colouring in relation to the environment. A cycling enthusiast advised:

> For touring purposes, I think nothing more suitable than worsted cords of a light fawn colour and of good quality. The colour is as near approach to that of mud or dust, so that after a long ride the cyclist does not betray so openly the effects of travel and bad roads. For short rides, or when the clothes have to perform their ornamental function, a good tweed of any desired colour may be used.[5]

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[3] Holding, T. H. (1908), *The Camper's Handbook*, London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co.: 215.

[4] The up-market Cyclists' Touring Club for example adopted special 'West-of-England tweed'. The design was agreed upon by a 'panel of experts'. Members who wanted the greatest wear were advised to have the sit braided, not on the outside which would be conspicuous, but on the inside down the seams and across the breast and buttonholes, Hoffman, W. (1887) *Tips for Tricyclists* cited in Woodford 1977: 137

[5] W.F.R. (1908), 'The Ethics of Cycling Dress' in *Men's Wear*, March 21 1908: 473.

Holding similarly advised the largely upper-middle and middle-class pioneers of camping thus:

> [T]he clothes a man selects for Camping should be the colour of an ordinary high road. Grey is unserviceable and soon gets a dirty look, besides it looks half clerical. Dark greys are very unsuitable, alike on the score of appearance and service. A man in a black suit never looks the camper, and the man in a blue suit looks better in a boat... As to the pattern of the material, something slightly lively. Coarse checks are not in good taste at any time, but small, neat checks always look well, and are serviceable if the colour is well selected on the lines laid down.[6]

Popular trade guides to tailoring and patented 'systems' of tailoring played a vital part in disseminating permutations in style and fashionable and popular taste. The mix of practical instructions, detailed patterns and cutting directions as well as highly detailed and attractive illustrations, allowed very subtle differences in cut and style to be made visible to both consumer and trade alike; choice of fabric and style was a process of complex negotiation between client and craftsman.[7] As the 'natural' landscape of leisure shifted from the rural to the [sub-]urban in the second half of the nineteenth century, tweed cloth incorporated a gradual transition from the large areas of broad colour initially favoured by the sporting and fashionable upper-class consumer to softer colour effects and smaller and more muted patterns.[8] By the1890s this trend towards softer colouring gave way to 'a distinct lessening of colour altogether'.[9] 'Quietness' was a term that gained much currency at this time and was regularly used to describe various colour-ways and designs worn by a suburban middle class that contrasted implicitly with the 'loudness' of others - the

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[6] Holding 1908: 222.

[7] Breward, C. (1999), *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 40-41.

[8] The anonymous author of one style guide at the turn of the century acknowledged that the 'loudness 'of coloured checks might be off putting at first; but the rough and ready nature of the fabric and its patterning lent tweed its appeal, added to which was the advantage that 'each pattern is distinctive from the rest'.'The Major', (1900), *Clothes and the Man: Hints on the Wearing and Caring of Clothes*, London: Grand Richards: 19.

[9] Gulvin, C. (1973), *The Tweedmakers: A History of the Scottish Fancy Woollen Industry, 1600-1914*, Newton Abbott: David & Charles: 76.

'flashy' fashionable checked cloths and novelty fabrics worn by an upper class sporting elite shooting fishing or 'around town', and the cheap, brightly-coloured check cloths of ready-made suits now understood as characteristically worn by the lower class 'gents' and later 'mashers' and 'swells' on a jaunt.[10]

By 1901, the specialist magazine *Cycling* is in a reflective mood looking back on the development of the 'sport', but, significantly the editor argues 'Nothing is more striking to those who have cycled for many years than the absolute change of opinion that has taken place in regard to our dress awheel.' It is worth quoting at some length because the piece offers a fascinating insight into how suburban cyclists themselves understood the evolution of cycling dress in the last decades of the nineteenth century:

> When the club man of the eighties turned out in all his war paint, he was a wondrous being to behold. There was the jockey cap aforementioned, a braided jacket of military cut, tight breeches, gauntlets, and possible a cord with a whistle attached, stockings and shoes - sometimes boots. Such a garb was justly calculated to proclaim the cyclist of that day.
> While, however, the club man had an official uniform, the unattached rider's dress was often the means of helping the "hupper suckles" to clinch their remarks anent the "cads on castors." The fact is one thought anything was good enough for cycling in. Jackets that had seen their best days in ordinary day wear were pressed into service, and how many, we wonder, cut down their old trousers for riding breeches? These, and by-and-bye the now rather despised sweater, did not give the rider a particularly smart appearance. But

[10] 'Noisy' colour combinations were associated with 'flashy' middle-class sporting types who Aileen Ribeiro describes as 'certainly *not* gentlemen', see Ribeiro, A. (1986), *Dress and Morality*, London: Batsford: 125. The term 'Gent' and his style and choice of leisure pursuits such as dancing, billiards, and the theatre, or day trips to Ramsgate is famously associated with Albert Smith's *The Natural History of the Gent* who describes these in detail paying particular attention to the costume they adopted for particular habitats, for example the 'Lowther Arcade': '... hats with narrow brims, coats with large buttons, staring shawls, and trowsers of the most prominent style - very *loud* patterns, as a friend appropriately called them.' Smith, A. (1847), *The Natural History of the Gent*, London: David Bogue: 42. For a full discussion of the ways in which class distinctions were discursively circulated through the institutions of modern commodity culture and the promulgation of a variety of competing and conflicting masculine fashionable 'types' see Shannon 2006: 140-145. Shannon suggests that the term 'masher' originated in the USA but by 1882 was in common currency in Britain. Lower-middle class mashers were known as 'swells and gents' and originated mainly from the expanding number of single, young men of the 'respectable' class of clerks, apprentices and tailors who lived, worked and 'played' in the modern city.

> gradually it became to be realised that a special costume for cycling was requisite.
> Nowadays club man and unattached are, generally speaking, well dressed in a comfortable lounge or Norfolk jacket, loose knickers, with collar and tie. The great change in the attire of the average cyclist was bourne upon us at Whitsun, when we made comparisons with some previous Whitsuns and the men we met then and now. This change is just what might have been expected with the altered conditions of cycling as we enjoy it today. Nowadays we realise that a neat cycling costume is *de rigueur*...[11]

In the earlier nineteenth century, primarily upper-class men certainly had initially taken their sartorial cue from the military and equestrian tradition and a flamboyant cavalry influence is evident in early cycling attire.[12] They wore double-breasted, close-fitting patrol jackets, with a straight waistcoat and breeches or knickerbockers.[13] In France the bourgeois cyclist was called *le cavalier cycliste* (rather than *le cavalier equestrien*), his upright riding position was seen as akin to that of an equestrian rider, with pedals being rhetorically substituted for stirrups, the handlebars for reins and the machine itself often referred to in terms of a bestial analogy as a 'horse of steel' with a 'skin of nickel and enamel' or 'whinnying' when overworked.[14] Equestrian terminology was also frequently used in the fashionable discourse of English specialist journals and fashion magazines where the bicycle was referred to as a 'steed' and discussions of aristocratic female participation and their clothing linked with the codes and conventions of English equestrianism.[15] It is

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[11] 'Impressions' in *Cycling*, 22 June 1901

[12] Newton, S.M. (1974), *Health, Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th Century*, London: John Murray Ltd.

[13] *Tailor and Cutter* 1878 cited in P. Cunnington and A. Mansfield (eds.)(1969), *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries*, London: A.C. Black: 232.

[14] Thompson, C.S., (2002), 'Bicycling, Class, and the Politics of Leisure in Belle Époque France' in R. Kosher, *Histories of Leisure*, Oxford and New York: Berg: 134.

[15] The cut and design of upper-class equestrian, military and country coats, breeches and costumes had always been subject to both personal taste and constant stylistic change, particularly with regard to the tightness of fit. For example, in the 1860s a vogue for slim-fitting basque jackets for ladies' riding habits needed very close tailoring to give enough strength to the garment as well as the required degree of body moulding, see Housden, P.J. (2001), *Riding Out in Style: A Visual Guide to Women's Equestrian Dress, Side-saddles and Accessories*, Exeter: Penmarran Publishing. See also Campbell, C. (1993), 'Understanding Traditional and Modern Patterns of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century England: A Character-action Approach' in J. Brewer and R. Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods*, New York: Routledge. Tailors drew on a long experience of making up both men's and women's riding habits and the demands of etiquette and the heavy-weight nature of most forms of sporting cloth and its working required very specific skills see Arnold. J.

perhaps unsurprising then that members of the first suburban cycling clubs were also at first dressed and organized like troops and followed hunting and cavalry etiquette.

The Polytechnic Cycling Club (PCC) in Westminster, established in 1882 initially adopted a blue serge uniform of military design. A photograph from around this time **[Fig. 4]** shows a stop for tea (or Bovril or Cadbury's Chocolate as the signage seems to suggest) on an early club road race; the man sitting on the step seems to be wearing such a uniform with braid visible on the sleeves and collar of his military-style tunic that is teamed with matching narrow breeches and stockings. The badges of Stockton Amateur Bicycle Club displayed the 'ranks' of its members, and on club 'runs' the Captain rode at the front, followed by other members in order of seniority, accompanied by a club bugler who blasted out various orders to mount, dismount etc (with fines imposed for disobedience).[16]

Fig. 4
Road Race, Polytechnic Cycling Club c. 1883/4

(1990), 'Dashing Amazons: the development of women's riding dress, c.1500-1900' in A. de la Haye and E.Wilson (eds.), *Defining dress: Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 10-30.

[16] Stockton-on-Tees Local History Group, http://www.stocktonwheelers.org.uk, accessed 8 August 2008.

The hierarchy of the Catford Cycling Club (CCC) was similarly regulated and organized on military lines and when first formed club members adopted a military-inspired uniform. When on a 'run' the ranks had to follow the lead of their Captain, who had full command of his 'troops' as it were and signalled his orders, this time by the blowing of a whistle. A CCC membership booklet made it clear: no one was '... allowed to pass him without permission, except when ascending or descending hills'.[17] In one of the earliest photographs in the CCC Archive dating from the 1880s a group of young men pose by their bicycles all wearing narrow cut breeches, stockings, braided jackets and cricket or 'jockey' caps against the backdrop of their newly built cycle track (one of the first racing tracks in London) **[Fig. 5]**.

Fig. 5
Club Photo, Catford Cycling Club c. 1886

However, a photograph titled 'First Club Run to Farningham' (in N.W. Kent) shows a more informal group of young members of the CCC wearing clothing representative of the type of mix and match of 'jackets that have seen better days' and ill-cut breeches, sweaters and collarless shirts and cricket caps referred to in the opening paragraph **[Fig. 6]**. The wearing of these clothes rather than being seen as merely a transitional stage towards the adoption of the tweed Norfolk and

[17] This stricture parallels that of the rigid etiquette of not breaking out 'from the ranks' or overtaking the 'Master' on the hunting field.

knickerbockers, marks the gradual and progressive formulation of a complex of sartorial codes that began to visibly differentiate between various types of sporting and social club activities performed in different types of venues and locations.

Fig. 6
Catford Cycling Club, 'First Club Run to Farningham', 1886

The popularity of suburban cycle racing in the late-nineteenth century at tracks such as the one at Catford, or the nearby Herne Hill Velodrome cannot be over-estimated and was repeated in various large cities across Britain, particularly in the Midlands. One contemporary commentator described the watching crowd at Herne Hill as 'black with humanity' and the winning cyclist as one 'so small and thin that we wonder how he is able to hold out... on his tiny frame there is not an ounce of superfluous flesh. What flesh there is, is as hard as nails.'[18] Both the PCC and the CCC were at the forefront of competitive road and time trial racing and from the outset this was a significant part of both clubs' social and sporting culture (particularly after the Olympic Games of 1908 and 1912 when members of the PCC and Catford and various other Polytechnic sporting clubs formed a large part of

[18] Duncan Lucas, C. (1908), 'Cycling London' in George R. Sims (ed.), *Living London*, Vol.III, London, Paris & New York: Cassell & Company Limited.

Britain's representatives). Numerous images within the archives of both clubs bear witness to the athletic form of these young men with bodies as 'hard as nails' wearing what must have been highly innovative new forms of lightweight woollen and possibly silk vests and breeches in club colours that had been developed alongside the tweed suits of what was now emerging as the 'leisured look' **[Figs. 7 - 10]**.[19] This is an overlooked aspect of critical importance to the history of sport and leisure in Britain that needs to be addressed, but is beyond the remit of this research. Nevertheless, it is important here to briefly acknowledge how differentially fashioned and fabricated 'sporting' and 'leisured' bodies and their spectacular display begin to take on a differentially classed but equally powerfully charged cultural potency.

Fig. 7
Sims (ed.) *Living London*, 1903

[19] Catford Cycling Club (1887), *Rules and Fixtures*. The rule book of the Catford Cycling Club describes the uniform of the CTC (Catford Touring Club) the racing arm of the club -as consisting of 'racing colours of cardinal and black' in vest and breeches of either stockinet (6s 6d) or a cheaper cotton version (1s 6d) that could both be obtained at the Bon Marche in Brixton. Numerous images from both the PCC and the CCC archives are of track racing cyclists wearing woollen shorts/short breeches with lightweight vests and jackets in club colours usually taken at various tracks (Catford, Paddington, Herne Hill) that all drew huge crowds in the years before the First World War.

Fig. 8
Cycle Racing Suits' *Gamages General Catalogue 1913*

Fig. 9
'High Ordinarys', CCC Road Race c. 1887

Fig. 10

Pacemakers and 'Quint', PCC at Herne Hill Velodrome c. 1905

Fig. 11

"Jimmie" Blair, *Monthly Record*, January 1893

For road rather than track racing dark, boxy 'dust jackets' were worn with knitted knickers and stockings and often a club cricket cap - and the look is reproduced in a portrait of "Jimmie" Blair the Catford Road Champion **[Fig. 11]** by the outstanding advertising and journalistic artist George Moore who notably captured the spirit of bicycle racing in the 1890s.[20] It is interesting to note the parallel development of diverging forms of cycling participation in fin-de-siècle France where social meaning and the potential of the bicycle were equally intimately linked to '... class identities, class relationships, the rise of mass leisure, and a new consumer culture of plentiful and relatively inexpensive goods symbolized by the bicycle'.[21] Christopher Thompson situates the expansion of popular cycling in the three decades before the First World War in a political context where some saw cycling as a new form of democracy that would bring the nation together and others saw it as a threat to the social order as large numbers of young working-class men began to form cycling clubs and appropriate what was seen as an essentially bourgeois leisure pursuit. There was a growing discourse of social distinction that contrasted the elegant ideal of a cycling gentleman articulated in an upright position when cycling that was akin to that of an aristocratic equestrian, to that of the uncouth working-class rider bent over in the inclined position like a jockey. The French medical profession, for example, inveighed against the dangerous medical *and* social implications of such a position in their perceived role as defenders not only of the French race but of the very social fabric of modern France. As in Britain most participants were drawn from the petty bourgeois, artisan and lower grade clerical and administrative class, and Thompson focuses on the figure of the *velocipedard*, the champion cycle racer who more than any other figure was representative of the upwardly mobile worker who increasingly challenged the status quo. However, the popularity and huge popular appeal of cycle road racing in France that was established at this time *and* an understanding of the petite bourgeoisie as an

[20] For a detailed discussion of the differences between emerging forms of cycle racing and its class and socio-political dimensions see J.A. Mangan (ed.) 2002: 103-110. George Moore's portrayals were not always well –received because it was argued they conveyed a negative impression of the sport, i.e. they often emphasized a competitive element that went against the grain of those who sought to maintain the aura of 'gentlemen amateurs', particularly in road racing.
[21] Thompson 2002: 134.

important socio-economic grouping continues to hold a particular place in French and European culture that is different from that of England.[22] Nevertheless, there are a number of points of congruence that, if they were manifested in different ways in terms of the organization of cycling and its clothing, also indicate clear connections that can be made in terms of the new social and leisure dynamic that the bicycle facilitated.[23] As in France, cycling became part of the wider transformation of 'sport' in Britain and was increasingly organized and regulated around the idea of professionals and amateurs and embodied in the adoption of different forms of clothing that reflected diverging and conflicting commercial and non-commercial sponsorship, patronage and partisanship.[24] This clearly impacted on the way in which cycling for pleasure/leisure or sport or both in Britain was gradually splitting along, albeit more ambiguously than in France, class lines *within* the lower middle class in a way that became progressively more marked in the twentieth century.[25] Before the First World War in Britain various forms of cycling remained a system of inter-related processes of implicit and explicit regulation exemplified in, for example, the separate licensing of amateur and professional cycling competitors for an emerging range of different events. Progressively, numerous images demonstrate the evolution of this gradual parting of the waves as it were and the gradual move towards the wearing of different forms of clothing: tweed jackets and knickerbockers for 'leisure' and recreational cycling, club kits or lighter cotton dust jackets and woollen and stockinet suits worn for various forms of competitive

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[22] This is a significant part of Crossick's arguments around the historical account of the British 'labour aristocracy' and its lack of academic interest, see Crossick 1977 *The Lower Middle Class.*. This is also the motivating force of Crossick and Haupt's *op cit* detailed discussion of the European lower middle class and the social-political dimensions of their economic and ideological role in urban and national political life.

[23] Thompson 2002: 142.

[24] This is usefully outlined by Claire Simpson in her exploration of the context within which women's professional cycling developed, see Simpson, C. (2006), 'A Social History of Women and Cycling in Late-Nineteenth Century New Zealand' in D. Horton, P. Rosen and P. Cox (eds) *Cycling and Society*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

[25] Thompson 2002: 135 offers a comparable account of developments in France where top cyclists dubbed the 'giants of the road' became national heroes and drew huge crowds to newly constructed velodromes and along road race itineraries. These men were promoted in a rapidly growing sports press, and celebrated in posters, postcards, novels and songs. They could also earn large price money, for example the former chimney sweep who won the *Tour de France* in 1903 earned prize money equivalent to five years' earnings, not including the lucrative sponsorship contracts that followed his win.

cycling on road and track. In 1886 the regulations of membership of the Catford Cycling Club stipulated the wearing of the club uniform on club runs consisting of 'a grey jacket and breeches, black stockings and black cricket cap, with club badge', exemplified in a photo-portrait of the founder of the club A. J. Wilson atop his Mohawk 'Front Driver' Speed Cycle [**Figs. 12, 13**].[26]

Fig. 12 CCC, 'Feeding Station Catford 200 Mile Run' c. 1890s

Fig. 13 A.J. Wilson, President, Catford Cycling Club, 1886

[26] Catford Cycling Club (1885), *Rules and Fixtures*.

By 1895, albeit for an official club photograph, the cut and design of the tweed suits being worn by the majority of men were very much in line with this, most are clearly of the Norfolk design, thick knitted hose are worn some showing patterned tops, and the tweed flat rather than cricket cap now predominates **[Fig. 14]**.

Fig. 14 Annual Photograph, Catford Cycling Club 1895

The Polytechnic Cycling Club witnesses a similar transformation. According to a report on the activities of the club in January 1885 the dark serge military-style uniform was 'discarded in favour of one of a neat grey, and the club ribbon altered to the popular blue and red'.[27] As with the Catford Club, dress is clearly an extremely important part of the PCC, by March 1885 a notice announces: 'A. Clark, 42, Albany Street, N.W., has been appointed the "Club Tailor". All members requiring suits are requested to see him at once, as he has already eight suits on hand; price 38s'.[28] In April, every member of the club was exhorted to 'make the Polytechnic C.C. notorious for their big musters, smart appearance, and everything that pertains to the reputation of the Club... the uniform (grey jacket and breeches,

[27] *Home Tidings*, 3 January 1885: 44.
[28] *Home Tidings*, 21 March 1885: 191.

with straw hat, or black cricket cap) is one of the neatest in London)'[29]. A club run in the early 1890s seems to indicate that this appeal was taken to heart and most members now uniformly wear Norfolk jackets, knickerbockers, hose, and caps [**Fig. 15**].

Fig. 15

Polytechnic Cycling Club Run early 1890s,

Knickerbockers and breeches gained popularity particularly amongst 'the energetic portion of the English-speaking race' according to W D F Vincent at the time of the 'Transvaal War'.[30] A journalist writing on all matters pertaining to cycling noted that: 'Men's cycling suits needed to be tailored to be practical not to look good when on the ground but when on a bicycle. They therefore had to allow 'lots of room in the knickers for leg action … baggy knees are a virtue', the symptoms of a badly cut

[29] *Home Tidings*, 4 April 1885: 65.

[30] Vincent, W.D.F. (1890), *The Cutters' Practical Guide To The Cutting and Making Of All Kinds Of Trousers, Breeches & Knickers*, 8th Edition, London: John Williamson: 81. The Transvaal War is more commonly known as The Boer War, 1899-1902.

suit being 'a mark round your leg, denoting the place where the band has been pressing on it'. Writing with equal authority his colleague Sidney Tayler similarly advises cyclists to leave the last button or two unfastened, to avoid the risk of varicose veins.[31] For men's further comfort in more intimate regions, 'A square of thick flannel sewn in the knickers will help to eliminate saddle soreness, and it is useful for riders who perspire freely to have flannel inserted at all points where an absorbent material seems necessary'.[32] Breeches should also preferably be double-seated on the inside 'to throw off the point of the saddle' and be braced up to be 'fairly tight at the fork'; when pulled down to their extreme length the top button should be in such a position that if fastened should enclose the calf just below its lowest circumference.[33]

The question of which type of knee-breeches or knickerbockers to wear was a vexed one and closely linked to the individual physiology of the wearer: those with fuller calves were advised to opt for wider, fuller knickerbockers and those less well-endowed for close-fitting knee-breeches.[34] The calves themselves and their display were also of some importance to the male pioneers of modern leisure, particularly those within the bicycling fraternity. Some male cyclists, 'lacking in the calf department' wore leather leggings 'blocked in one piece' but this was seen by "WFR" as 'idiotic' because it was restrictive to the action of the calf muscle, although the riders who wore them were 'usually those whose calf muscles require very little room to work in'. However, he adds a word of consolation to those like himself with calves 'strongly reminiscent of the second part of Pharaoh's first dream':

> Let not your soul be filled with shame nor your stockings with padding. Assure your friends that you were not responsible for your architecture, and that, however difficult it may be to cultivate better calves, the cultivation of better manners is comparatively easy and eminently commendable.[35]

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[31] Tayler, S.J., (1908), 'Cycling Dress' in *Men's Wear*, March 21 1908 p.472.
[32] Taylor 1908.
[33] W.F.R., (1908), 'The Ethics of Cycling Dress' in *Men's Wear*, 21 March 1908 p.473.
[34] Woodforde, J. (1977), *The Story of the Bicycle*, London: RKP: 137
[35] *Men's Wear*, 21 March 1908: 473.

Within a few short years, the figure of the young male cyclist in a tweed knickerbocker suit and matching flat cap had become ubiquitous, But if it is clear how swift the transition from military and equestrian-inspired jackets and narrow breeches to the Norfolk and knickerbocker combination was, images and other forms of documentary evidence also suggests the very formative nature of sports and leisure clothing in the nineteenth century.

The spatial context of outdoor recreational leisure promoted sartorial display in a way that both maintained social distinctions but also allowed a fluidity of interpretation and social aspiration that could be both problematic and potentially liberating. Some clubs such as the Polytechnic Rambling Club had no specific clothing codes other than the wearing of the Club Badge, a silver boot, and club colours and one image shows a group of young men and women on a 'nutting' trip to Dorking in Surrey in the early 1890s **[Fig. 16]**.[36] The young men wear tweed jackets of a Norfolk-type teamed with knickers, a matching tweed cricket cap, thick socks and walking boots; the young women are clearly corseted and wear a version of a highly fashionable 'tailor made' walking costume that by this time was being widely disseminated with the development of both the bespoke and ready-to-wear trade and the development of more practical outdoor clothing.[37] The design of women's looser, boxier jackets made in practical woollen fabrics was very much stimulated by the growth of the leisure market but as with men's leisure clothing the influence was initially militaristic and equestrian.[38] One of the girls wears a fitted short jacket with 'leg of mutton sleeves' that had seen a revival through their re-introduction into ladies' tailored riding habits at this time.[39]

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[36] Membership of the Polytechnic Rambling Club at this time did not extend to the Polytechnic's female students (and did not do so until the 1950s) but women were invited along on various special occasions such as Easter and Christmas.

[37] Arnold, J. (1973), *A Handbook of Costume,* London: Macmillan.

[38] In New York in the 1860s women were wearing the 'Fifth Avenue Walking Dress', a design based on the hunting jacket Wilson, E. (1985), *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, p34. See also Arnold 1973 *op cit.*

[39] Housden 2007: 24.

Fig. 16
Polytechnic Rambling Club, 'Dorking, Easter 1893'

In 1900, *Home Tidings* the Polytechnic's Sisters' Institute reported that it was proposing to form its own ladies' cycling club: 'All members interested in cycling' were invited to attend a meeting to establish a ladies cycling club[40]. The following month Miss Hogg (the daughter of the Polytechnic's founder Quintin Hogg's) was elected President, a Miss L. Schmidt was appointed Captain, and it was noted, an invitation was accepted from the Cavendish Cycling Club to join them on their opening run of the season to Pinner.[41] A later report in *Home Tidings* details the Saturday ride out with the Cavendish Club, taking tea at the temperance tavern and being included when the annual club photo taken. The photograph shows a less regimented, less uniform, more egalitarian group of men and women than the all-male PCC all wearing a variety of what was now constituted popular recreational leisure clothing. However, the contemporary viewer is struck by the similarities rather than the differences between male and female participants [**Fig. 17**]. Boaters predominate with both sexes - as do various forms of short boxy jackets, soft collars

[40] *Home Tidings*, 21 February 1900.
[41] *Home Tidings*, 21 March 1900.

and ties, the men team lounges and 'reefers' with trousers or knickerbockers, the women have adapted and co-ordinated similar jackets with skirts in varying cut and weight of the same or co-ordinating fabric.

Fig. 17
Polytechnic Sisters' Institute Cycling Club with the (men's) Cavendish Cycling Club, Annual photograph outside the Temperance Tavern in Pinner, 1901

Dress in all its subtle variations was one of the most important visual signals of class and social status in the new arena of modern life where a sense of self was increasingly negotiated through the relationship between environment and self-presentation. Christopher Breward's work on fashionable masculine consumption argues that in the 1870s and 1880s there was little dramatic stylistic change in men's tailoring, rather a perceptible progression towards a leaner, longer, silhouette. It was, he suggests, a case of small conservative steps being taken by a cautious tailoring trade, negotiating rather than instigating shifts in production and consumption brought about by innovations in retail and marketing and the inventiveness of the wholesale houses and ready-made sector.[42] This analysis of a

[42] Breward 1999: 32.

dynamic stylistic interchange and the progressive nature of trends in fashionable consumption might usefully be applied to the evolutionary but rapidly expanding market for both activity-specific and non-specific recreational leisure wear and a clothing trade responding to meet the needs of new suburban male *and* female consumers. Technological innovation and social change came together - not in the invention of mainstream fashionable consumption, but in the creation of affordable and accessible stylistic change. It is this, Breward argues, that marked a turning point in the modern marketing and manufacture. But it also represents a watershed in the design and diffusion of fashionable and activity-specific popular working and recreational leisure clothing for a significant proportion of the working population.

2.4 The Commodification of the Popular Leisured Body

Negotiating Conformity and Change

Costume historian Winifred Aldrich, identifies four basic elements that serve as the foundation of a modern mass clothing industry: the use of stable units of measurement; the dissemination of system-based cutting processes; established methods of pattern grading based on body measurements; and technological development such as the invention of the industrial band knife, overlocking sewing and buttonholing machines.[1] These all provided the conditions under which a ready-to-wear clothing trade could flourish and expand. In the menswear market, a system of 'made to measure' tailoring developed which effectively meant customers being individually measured but their garments being made on a production line elsewhere - a process that produced a reasonably high quality product with the added status of being 'made to measure' at an affordable price. These sorts of establishments had a bespoke department with a gallery, showrooms, fitting rooms and waiting halls, while mail-order customers could fill in self-measurement charts. Various types of boxier, and thus easier-fitting, coats and ready-made woollen garments made of cheap commercially produced tweed cloth were the most widely advertised and registered for copyright at this time.[2] The growth of the men's clothing trade owed as much to wholesale warehousemen with expanded storage facilities, commercial travellers and distribution networks as it did to retail tailors.[3] The catalogues of firms such as E. Moses and Sons in the mid-nineteenth century show how virtually a whole wardrobe of affordable clothes of differing quality was on offer to suit different budgets ranging from work clothes, to riding habits, to mourning dress, to shooting jackets, and lounging and morning coats 'well adapted

[1] Aldrich, W. (2003), 'The Impact of Fashion on the Cutting Practices for the Woman's Tailored Jacket 1800-1927, in *Textile History*, 34(2), 134-170.
[2] Levitt, S. (1991), 'Cheap Mass-Produced Men's Clothing in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *textile History*, No.2: Autumn, pp.179-193: 183.
[3] *Ibid*: 188.

for business, walking or riding'.[4] However, the development of the women's ready-made clothing industry lagged behind that for men, retarded by a lack of a standardized system of sizing and a reliance on traditional dressmaking skills that adapted styles according to the body that was wearing them rather than the other way round.[5] Beverley Lemire has evidenced how women's ready-to-wear clothing was available in the 1830s, but the mass manufacture of women's 'tailor-made' clothing did not really begin to be exploited until the 1870s.[6] By the late-nineteenth century lighter weight woollen cloth and 'tweed', mass-manufactured in Northern England, was used for women's informal daywear - dresses and tailored costumes for morning and informal social occasions, for sporting and leisure clothing and progressively for middle-class women following occupations like teaching and clerical work.[7] Only a small proportion of the overall market for women's clothing was ready-made before the First World War.[8] However that proportion is of some importance to this research because of its close relationship with developments in popular leisure clothing and the constituency of lower-middle-class women who might be wearing tailor made costumes for both work and recreation.

The expansion of the women's ready- and tailor-made clothing trade was reliant on the development of the means of consistently drafting, constructing and delivering made-to-measure garments in bulk **[Fig. 18]**. Ebenezer Butterick a Massachusetts' tailor created the first mass produced paper patterns and the modern dress-pattern industry using innovative promotional techniques to market both paper patterns and new forms of popular consumerism. Butterick transformed one of its fashion catalogues *The Delineator* into a best-selling monthly women's general interest magazine and used it to advertise both paper patterns and a whole range of home

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[4] *Ibid*: 189.
[5] Worth, R. (2005), *Fashion for the People: A History of Clothing at Marks & Spencer*, Oxford: Berg: 26-27.
[6] Lemire, B. (1991), *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660-1800*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 179. See also Ewing, E. (1974), *History of Twentieth Century Fashion*, London: B.T. Batsford Ltd.
[7] Anderson 2006: 172-173.
[8] Worth 2005: 28.

dress-making equipment.[9] Standardized sizing and systems of measurement guaranteed the customer a reliable, if not always perfect, fit. But although illustrations often showed jackets and coats that were fashionably contoured to the body, the ready-to-wear tailored garments supplied were in fact much easier fitting. This is of some significance in that, Aldrich argues, changes in how patterns were 'shaped' in terms of standardized sizing, graded and cut in the second half of the nineteenth century brought about changes in the 'shape' of fashionable clothing.[10]

Fig. 18

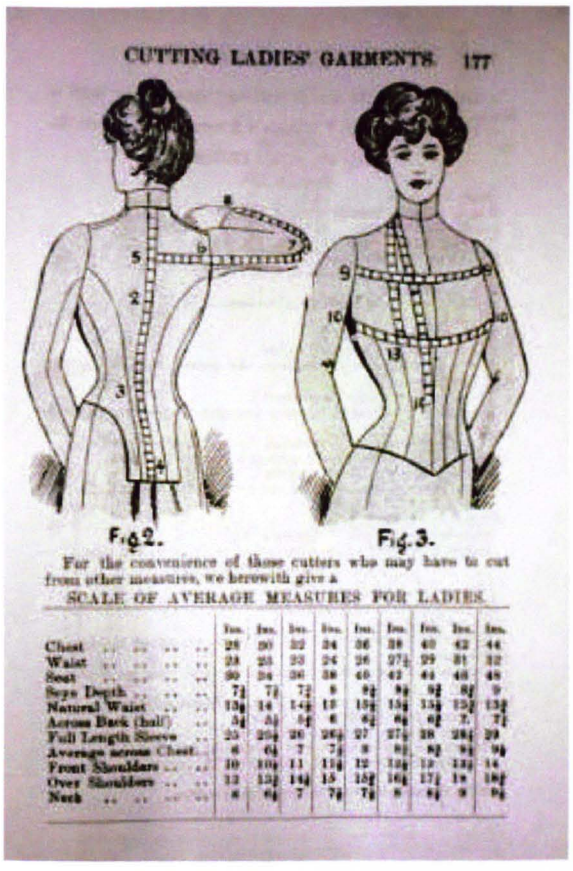
Advertisement for The French Bust Co., *Drapers Record*, 18 March 1893

[9] Walsh, M. (1979), 'The Democratization of Fashion: The Emergence of the Women's Dress Pattern Industry' in *Journal of American History*, Vol. 66, No.2: 299-313.
[10] Aldrich 2003: 159.

The swift growth of popularity of the men's 'lounge suit' in the previous half-century and the parallel expansion of the ready-to-wear trade in menswear had both responded to and created fashionable demand for looser, boxier styles of jackets and more streamlined trousers made in one fabric. Closely fitted, shorter jackets that emphasized the waist, and tighter trousers - usually matching but sometimes of a different pattern - made with lighter fabrics such as worsteds, could be teamed with a whole range of accessories to offer a more informal versatility and a variety of ensembles suitable for a number of social occasions. These styles were very much influenced by the growth of the leisure market and the need for practical, functional clothing that allowed a degree of freedom of movement - but they also offered a new democracy in men's dress [11]

In women's wear, interaction between advances in pattern drafting and grading and stylistic change allowed manufacturers to produce and promote cheaper, yet still reasonable quality, ready-made tailored garments that became hugely popular with large numbers of women. [12] Tight-fitting complicated styles and heavy cloth had previously demanded a high level of tailoring skill that was beyond the capability of small dressmakers. The spread of the domestic sewing machine in conjunction with equally significant innovations in the nature of pattern-making and their dissemination in both shops and the popular press, like their menswear counterparts, emerged alongside the trend towards accessorization and the growing influence of leisure. The development of the simplified and less ornate tailor-made costume, and the increasing popularity of the skirt (divided or otherwise)-jacket-and blouse combination - like the lounge suit - could easily accommodate a diversity of individual body shapes and a broad spectrum of sizes **[Figs. 19, 20, 21]**. This was extremely important in creating new forms of clothing for women's everyday wear - particularly for lower-middle class women who were increasingly working in spaces alongside their clerical and white-collar brethren.

[11] Breward 1999: 33, 39, 40.
[12] Aldrich 2003.



CUTTING LADIES' GARMENTS. 177

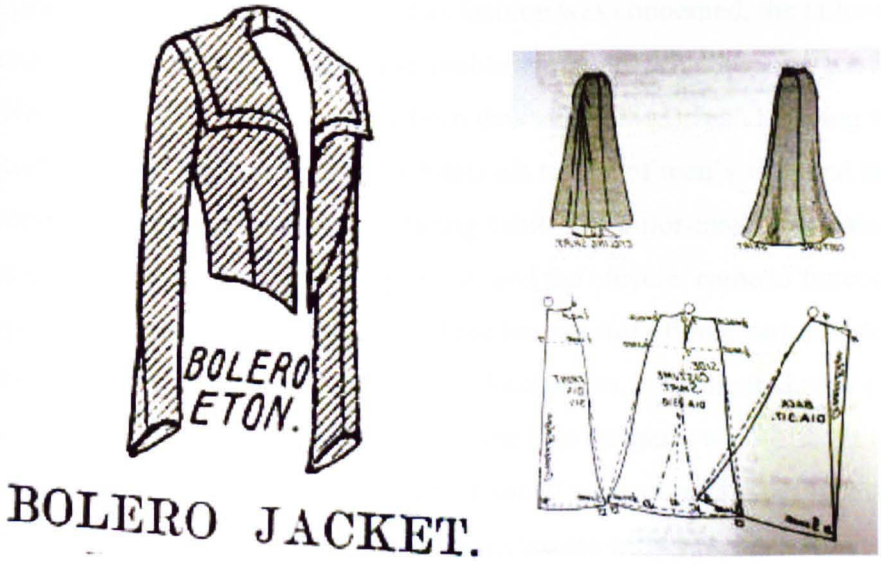
Fig. 2. Fig. 3.

For the convenience of those cutters who may have to cut from other measures, we herewith give a

SCALE OF AVERAGE MEASURES FOR LADIES.

	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.	Ins.
Chest	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Waist	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39
Seat	30	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
Seye Depth	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	9
Natural Waist	13	14	14	15	15	15	15	15	15
Across Back (half)	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	7	7
Full Length Sleeve	23	25	26	26	27	27	28	28	29
Average across Chest	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	9	9
Front Shoulders	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14
Over Shoulders	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	18	18
Neck	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	9	9

Fig. 19 'Scale of Average Measuresfor Ladies', Vincent (1903)



Figs. 20, 21

'Bolero Eton' Jacket and tailored walking skirt from Vincent (1903

Elizabeth Ewing argues that as far as fashion was concerned, the tailor-made costume was the first outward and visible symbol of what became known as the 'New Woman'. Believed to have been devised by the British tailoring firm of Redfern it was made from similar materials to that of men's suits and its early versions were reminiscent of the riding habit. The tailor-made was seen as modern, progressive and forward-looking and it, and the bicycle, came to function as twin symbols of female emancipation.[13] If the lounge suit offered sartorial democracy to their menfolk, 'masculine' tailored tweed costumes, co-ordinated with blouses, sometimes a waistcoat, ties and 'masculine hats' in many ways offered lower-middle-class women equal potential for social and sartorial experimentation.[14] Political and charitable work and sporting/leisure activities were all on the agenda of an expanding section of the female population who adopted skirts and high-

[13] Ewing 1974: 18
[14] Ribeiro, A. (1986), *Dress and Morality*, London: Batsford: 142-43.

necked blouses, and teamed them with reefers, or frock coats and 'Robin Hood' hats **[Fig. 22].**[15]

Diana Crane argues that such clothing can be interpreted as a set of signs that contributed a symbolic statement concerning women's status as embodied in fashionable clothing, and a form of 'non-verbal resistance' to the dominant patriarchal culture. Crane situates women's wearing of men's ties, hats, and what she describes as 'suit jackets', especially by unmarried women who were now beginning to work outside of the home as an 'alternative style' that can be distinguished from that advocated by more radical dress reformers. However, in contrast to this thesis, Crane contextualizes the adoption of masculine forms of dress as a modification of upper- and middle-class clothing norms that took place in 'marginalized settings' such as holiday resorts, women's schools and colleges, and women's sporting and leisure venues. Nevertheless Crane herself points out the frequent appearance of such clothing in photographs of the period problematizes the virtual invisibility of such clothing in fashion historical accounts of the period. Crane also organizes women's consumption of these new forms of clothing for a range of social activities as either 'alternative' (but not radical), or conformist to fashionable norms, ie restrictive in cut and excessive in the use of fabric and ornament.

This situating of mainstream female consumers' appropriation of masculine styles as 'marginal' and 'alternative' to popular fashionable consumption is what this thesis seeks to challenge. The popularity of such styles and the continuous cross-class fashionable diffusion of particular items such as ribbon ties, boaters from the late nineteenth century that Crane describes indicates the need to see such clothing in much more ambiguous terms and women's *adaptation* or 'feminization' rather than mere adoption of selective items from men's wardrobes as a more complex

[15] 'Robin Hood' hats were very fashionable in the 1890s, Charles Harper in *The Revolted Woman* (1894) describes them as a 'confection' that was not pretty and links their wearing with rational dress, cited in Cunnington and Mansfield 1969: 242. However, their use in the Cravenette advertisement [Fig. 22] some two years' earlier than Harper's reference shows again how hats were a way of bridging the gap between conformity and subversion for mainstream consumers.

classed *and* gendered processed. It is important to emphasize that, as the previous Sections demonstrate, fashion historically, these were items of clothing that themselves had undergone considerable change in terms of masculine classed consumption. This suggests not ideological and sartorial conflict, but a progressive and gradual process of fashionable and subjective negotiation and sartorial democratization for both genders.

As Crane suggests, the major advantage offered by new forms of leisure and occupational clothing to mainstream female consumers clothing was an 'alternative' middle ground, and ambiguity, not confrontation. However, this thesis evidences how such clothing and its wearing was in no way a marginal pursuit outside of mainstream taste and activities or in any way at odds with popular fashionability at the fin de siecle. Practical, functional clothing that could be mixed and matched became the implicit 'uniform' of 'typewriters' (the workers not the machines) and suburban recreationalists; like the Norfolk and knickerbockers of their male colleagues, friends and relations, various ensembles put together by female consumers themselves ambiguously offered practical 'uniformity' and fostered a sense of aesthetic 'distinction'. Department store catalogues such as those issued by the Army and Navy or Gamages contain a number of pages simply devoted to silk blouses that at first look virtually identical.[16] But a sense of agency and individuality, not uniformity is created as each is personalized by being given a particular name - either a woman's Christian name, a particular place such as Brighton, Argyll or Braunston, or other less immediately recognizable descriptive styles such as 'the Darylston' or 'the Ogilvie' . Blouses such as the 'Sybil', 'Diana' or 'Constance', 'Doris', 'Millicent' or 'Carrie' etc. must have been as redolent with meaning as the Paulines, and Maureens, the Traceys and Michelles or Emilys, Lucys and Charlottes were to mainstream female consumers of the 1950s and 1960s or 1990s **[Fig. 23]**.

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[16] *Gamages General Catalogue 1913*. See also Adburgham, A. (1969), *Yesterday's Shopping: The Army and Navy Stores Catalogue 1907*, Newton Abbott and London: David and Charles Ltd; Langbridge, R.H. (ed.) (1975), *Edwardian Shopping: A Selection from the Army & Navy Stores Catalogues 1898-1913*, Newton Abbott and London: David and Charles Ltd.

Fig. 23
'Women's Blouses', *Gamages General Catalogue 1913*

The Edwardian 'blouse' was a way of softening the perceived masculine effect of the tailor-made and in its infinite variety was one of the most notable and characteristic items introduced into the female wardrobe before the First World War.[17] The flexibility of this very 'modern' look and its associations with leisure as an 'affordable' luxury ensured that it was highly popular with mainstream consumers who exploited the opportunities it provided for affordable stylistic change, individual expression. A variety of 'look's could be worn for a comparable range of different activities. Textile historian Anne Kershen notes:

[17] Ewing 1974: 21.

> Those more inclined to leisurely pursuits donned the "tailormade" costume for shopping trips to the growing number of department stores, or to take tea in the new ABC shops. Navy blue tweed and serge jackets and skirts were far more suited to rent collecting in the East End and lecturing on the virtues of socialism and female suffrage than were the frills and flounces of the drawing rooms of Maida Vale and Mayfair.[18]

For members of the PCC, the adoption of a tweed Norfolk and knickerbockers combination marked its wearer out as a 'particular kind of chap':

> The Bicycle Club have paraded tonight
> Some sprightly young fellows we see;
> Neat, not gaudy, their costume so bright,
> A credit I'm sure you'll agree
> Oh! Think of the smashes, I'm sure it appeals
> To the hearts of all friends of the mashers on wheels...[19]

For women, the tailor-made's multi-functionality equally created the potential to signal a new 'modern' identity and a particular kind of young, suburban femininity.[20] The idea of fashionable flexibility is emphasized in an advertisement for a skirt adjuster from 1900 that also offers a very good illustration of the ambiguous popular 'rationality' that made such styles so wearable. The rather graphic illustration of the divided skirt in action (with the wheel actually passing between the model's legs) also demonstrates how social propriety was something both acknowledged and negotiated through an acceptable compromise between invisibility and visibility. The very fact of women being able to wear skirts, boaters, blouses and ties to go to work or to ride a bike was to already to spectacularly display one's modernity and understand the boundaries of such spectacle **[Fig. 24]**. The mass manufacture of tweed suits and tailor-made costumes represented a major

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[18] Kershen, Anne J. (1997), 'Morris Cohen and the Origins of the Women's Wholesale Clothing Industry in the East End' in *Textile History*, Special Issue on the History of the Ready-Made Clothing Industry, Volume 28 Number 1, (Spring): 39-40.

[19] Extract from 'Our Club Song' by J.J. Duff (performed as part of New Year's entertainment) in *Home Tidings*, 3 January 1885: 44.

[20] Max Beerbohm the satirical essayist suggested that women's 'seizure of the bicycle and the typewriter' were two important elements in the movement towards practical dress, cited in Ribeiro 1986: 142.

shift in consumer habits for both lower-middle-class men and women - their flexibility literally and metaphorically providing them with 'room to manoeuvre'.

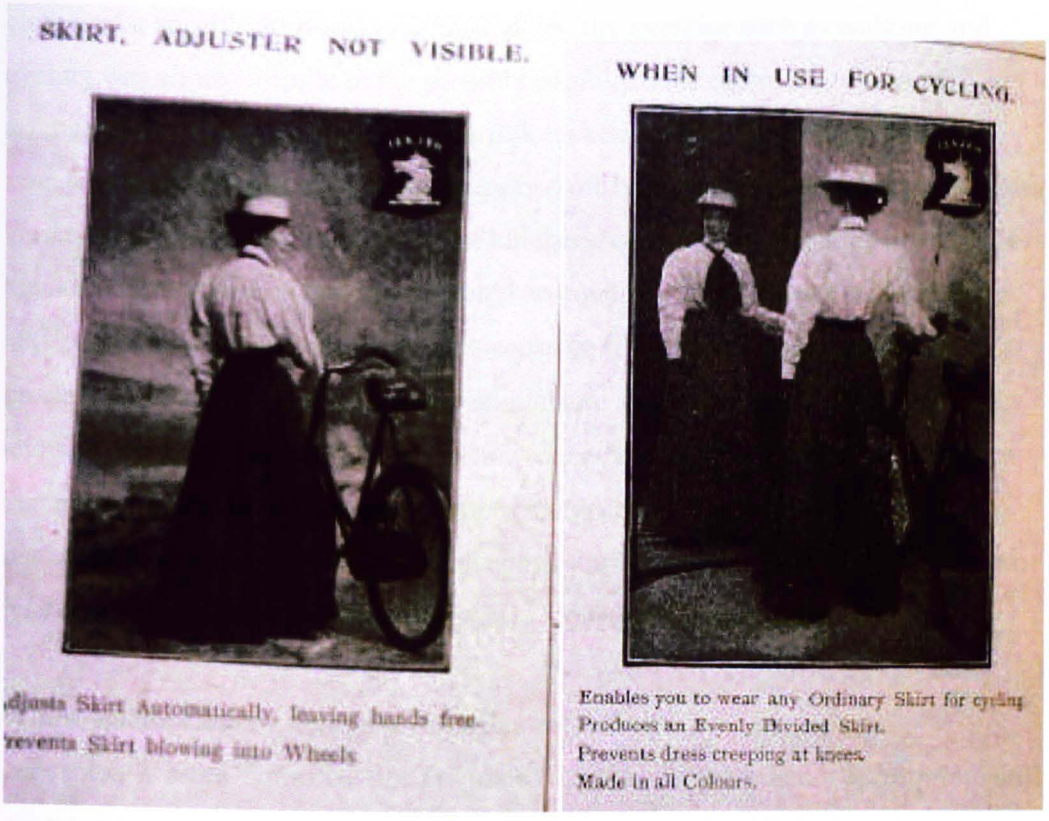


Fig. 24
Advertisement for Skirt Adjuster, *Drapers Record*, 20 January 1900

Access to, and the enjoyment of, both recreational leisure and leisure clothing represented at an ideological and material level, a new form of 'freedom' for the lower middle class from the restrictions convention placed on physical and social movement. New forms of leisure clothing might have represented freedom *from* work and the immediate coded hierarchies of the masculine workplace or the constraints of domestic feminine conformity, but for many lower-middle-class women it also represented freedom *to* work. It is not without reason that the massive expansion of women clerical workers is termed the 'white blouse

revolution'.[21]Over a period of about five years male suburban cycling clubs had switched from military-inspired uniforms to the uniformity of tweed Norfolk's and knickers. Within a very short time-span the choice of suitable recreational leisure clothing for specific forms of rational and healthy exercise such as walking and cycling was almost infinite in the possible combinations offered by various arrangements of Norfolk and semi-Norfolk jackets, worn with flannel shirts, or sweaters, various types of matching caps or 'soft felts'; these might be teamed with a variety of different cuts and designs of knickers, or knickerbockers, or breeches, or knickerbocker breeches that incorporated an equally diverse choice of fastenings and 'connectors'; these were worn with socks or stockings or hose, gaiters, puttees or spats, and various types of activity and leisure specific boots and shoes. Within another five years, their suburban sisters were now 'awheel' and wearing different versions of practical, shorter skirts, inter-changeable blouses, boleros, collars, neckties, jackets, hats and boots. If the constraints of gender were great these in no way should be seen as somehow of greater consequence than those of class.

Whilst leisure clothing certainly was often more functional, and at least conceptually more 'informal', the etiquette of what or what was not appropriate still operated according to the same culturally coded parameters of nineteenth-century polite society. The wearing of tweed suits, collars and ties, and boaters should not be confused with *actual* social change but rather be seen as a demonstration of the ways in which the symbolic and the material collide in the gradual and progressive *negotiation* of such change of at an individual and collective everyday level. Hats, caps and collars and new forms of skirts, and skirt fastenings might on the 'surface' be seen as 'mere' fashionable 'fads' but their pivotal place in the evolution of popular leisure clothing suggests that these are fashions and fads with the potential to embody complex and deeper meanings around class and gender in the late nineteenth century.

[21] Anderson 1988.

A Bicycle Made for Two: The Socio-economic Dynamics of Lower-Middle-Class Rational Recreational Leisure

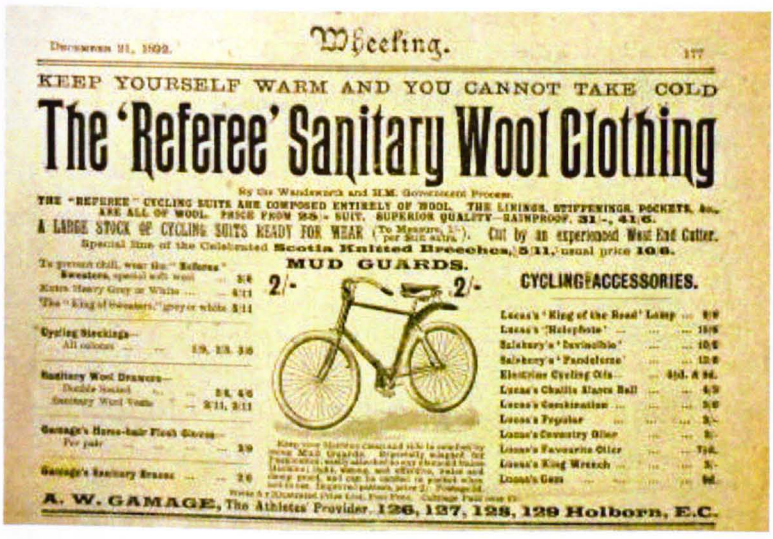
The potential of co-ordinating and incorporating a range of different items of clothing, foot and headwear rather than the adoption of a complete ensemble stimulated a desire for stylistic change and for fashionable rather than purely functional clothing that both producers and consumers sought to exploit. Accessorization and an expanding choice of ready-made elements of dress can be seen as key because it allowed more consumers a greater variety of choice and faster, affordable and so now attainable stylistic change. A. A. Thompson of the *Clarion* press who wrote as "Dangle" observed:

> The man of the day is the Cyclist. The press, the public, the pulpit, the faculty, all discuss him. They discuss his health, his feet, his shoes, his speed, his cap, his knickers, his handle-bars, his axle, his ball-bearings, his tyres, his rims, and everything that is his, down unto his shirt. He is the man of *Fin de* Cycle - I mean Siecle. He is the King of the Road.[22]

By the late-nineteenth century, the range of minutiae of for example, masculine attire, was both extensive and elaborate and extended to every part of the body and its temporal and spatial location in an equally infinite range of social and geographical locations. High quality men's ready-made shirts appeared from the 1840s and a huge number of catalogues were produced that demonstrate the enormous variations available in, for example, shirt, collar and cuff combinations. One from 1903 held at Platt Hall in Manchester advertised 97 basic types of linen collars with variants on each, 34 loose shirt wristbands, and 46 styles of braces, and for example 18 varieties of fancy flannel shirt.[23] Equally revealing is the comprehensive range of clothing included as part of an extensive list of other items of equipment, food and drink needed even for a short (3-4 day) camping trip in 1888 to the Surrey countryside by the members of the Catford Cycling Club: 'White

[22] 'King of the Road', October 1897, *Clarion* cited in D. Rubinstein, (1977) 'Cycling in the 1890s' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 21, No.1: 47-71.
[23] Levitt 1991: 188.

Trousers, Sweater, Blazer, 3 Caps, Bowler, 2 Coats, 1 Great Coat, 2 Pr.Trousers, Bathing Drawers, Racing Shoes, Racing Knickers, Vest, Running Shoes, Straw Hat, 3 Shirts, 4 Collars, 4 H.chiefs, 2 prs.Cuffs, and a Waterproof...'[24] As specialist clothing developed for leisure and specific sporting and leisure activities then so did specialist footwear and a host of other accessories. Early advertisements for dedicated sporting and leisure retailers like London's Gamages provide a useful demonstration of some of the range of goods progressively on offer to the suburban middle- and lower-middle-class consumer **[Figs. 25, 26]**.[25] One such example offers five different variations of 'The "Referee" Speed Cycling Shoes' all 'Worn by the Fastest Men in the World'. Made of various types of skin (calf, horse, even kangaroo), their streamlined lightweight design and hooked or cut-away T-bar buckle fastenings [fig. 2.1.20].[26]



Figs. 25, 26,
Advertisements for Gamages: *Wheeling* 21 December 1902;
Catalogue for *Stanley Show* (1894), *The Eighteenth Annual Exhibition held at the Royal Agricultural Hall Islington*

[24] 'Camp List for 1888', Catford Cycling Club Archive.
[25] *Wheeling*, 21 December 1892. Gamages was swiftly becoming a leading retailer of sporting goods particularly for the urban and suburban middle and lower middle class.
[26] Stanley Show Catalogue (1894), *The Eighteenth Annual Exhibition held at the Royal Agricultural Hall Islington* courtesy of the Catford Cycling Club.

If the requirements of what to wear on the bottom half was potentially more of a social and moral minefield for women in the nineteenth century, then it was clearly not necessarily entirely straight forward for men. It should be noted briefly that men's wearing of trousers was also the object of some debate on the grounds of health and scientific rationality. Dr Jaeger, for example was far more concerned with men's than women's dress which he considered a lesser evil. Jaeger believed that 'modern' trousers drained men of their physical energy and caused them to have 'sparrow-like legs and protruding stomachs'.[27] Trade advertisements evidence how different kinds of legwear with various innovations in design and patented 'systems' of construction for example 'The Lyric' **[Fig. 27]** with a seamless seat or 'The Spencer' with adjustable laced fastenings were allied to different forms of sporting and leisure activity in a panorama of consumer preference.

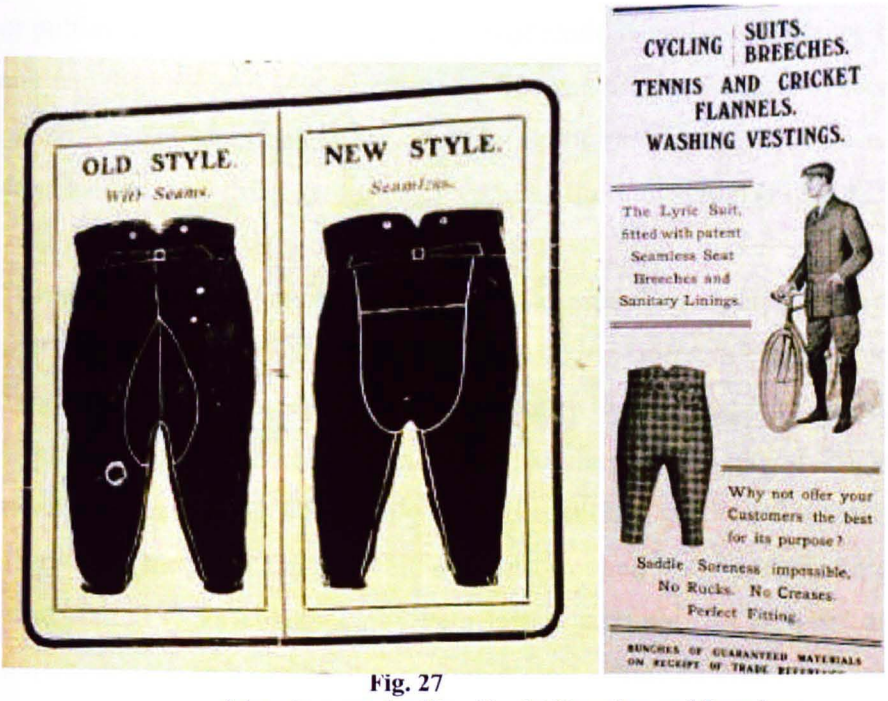


Fig. 27
Advertisement detailing 'Lyric' Breeches and Seamless Knickers, *Drapers Record* 15 March 1902; 20 April 1907

[27]Dr G Jaeger cited in Newton 1974: 137.

T.H. Holding usefully distinguishes between knickerbockers and knickerbocker breeches, the former being cut wider at the knee with a bigger fold-over the maximum being four inches (hence the term 'plus fours) in line with Army Regulations. There were a number of variations of form as Vincent's tailoring guide visibly demonstrates **[Fig. 28]**.[28] However, stylistic options for lower-legwear did not stop there because of the range of alternative 'continuations' available, i.e. the transitional arrangement needed to negotiate the gap between knickerbocker and lower leg. For the cycle camper, T.H. Holding advised his readers: 'The best knee adaptation I have ever worn is my simple "Puttie" knee-band, which may be anything from 11/2 to 41/2 inches in depth, and as it can be adjusted "on" to any degree of tightness or looseness, it will fit over or under the stocking'.[29] 'Devon' knee bands were particularly popular in the 1880s and 90s, and were adopted by some women cyclists even though the material selected for these was viewed as of 'the most masculine pattern'.[30] For a number of outdoor activities, men wore puttees, or putties, which were essentially a strip of cloth, would round the leg from the ankle to the knee. An advertisement for 'Hand-Knit Hose' shows different patternways of sock-top and their suitability for various activities but equally demonstrates two different forms of 'continuations' in action **[Fig. 29]**.[31]

The point of contact between the end of knickerbockers at the knee and the shodding of the foot with cycling shoe or walking boot was clearly crucially important. Even the briefest of glances through the contemporary trade and popular press shows advertisements and advice on all manner of boots, shoes, socks, stockings, spats, and a whole range of calf coverings and various means of negotiating the jointed gaps where one item stopped and the other started. Thick, hand knitted socks and stockings were seen as advisable for all types of outdoor activity and the remit of healthy rationality in clothing extended to socks, stockings,

[28] Holding 1908: 216. See also Great Britain. Army, (1909-1913), *Clothing Regulations Parts I, II and III. Amendments.*
[29] Holding 1908: 216.
[30] Vincent 1890: 122.
[31] *Men's Wear*, 21 Mar 1908: 473.

boots and shoes **[Fig. 30]** .[32] Colour and pattern were still subject to fashionable trends and the object of some discussion in the cycling press, 'Whether there be any ornamentation at the top depends on the whim of the wearer, though what earthly use or heavenly beauty there can be in it is problematic'. [33] Jaeger produced a large assortment of socks to be worn with knickerbockers with 'handsome silk-embroidered tops'.[34] At the height of the Boer War a range of fashionable 'knicker hose' was produced in various patterns with the 'names of interest in South Africa ... "Kimberley", "Colenso", "Mafekin", "Buller"...' [35]

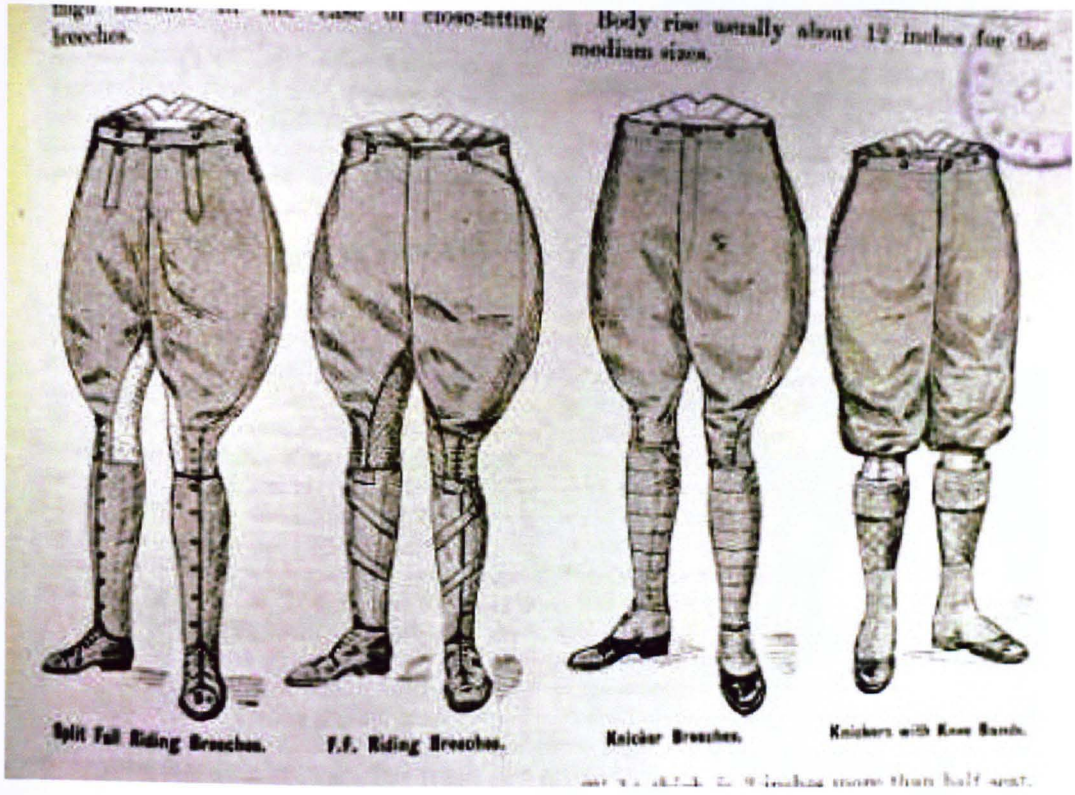


Fig. 28
'Breeches', Vincent (1890), *Cutters' practical guide...*

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[32] There was a show of suitable hand-knitted stockings and socks exhibited by the Donegal Industrial Committee at the International Health Exhibition of 1884 as evidence of the employment 'given to the Donegal peasants', 'Warde & Locke (1884), *Warde & Locke's Guide to the Health Exhibition.* Amongst these was a novelty advocated by those who believed in healthy dress, 'socks and stockings hand-knitted in wool and made like gloves so that each toe was covered separately', Newton 1974: 95.

[33] "W.F.R.", 'Ethics of Cycling Dress' in *Men's Wear*, March 21 1908 p.473.

[34] *Men's Wear*, 7 March 1900: 692.

[35] *Ibid*: 642. These names all refer to battles in the Boer War.

Fig. 29
Advertisement for Hand Knit Hose, *Drapers Record*, 1 Dec. 1894

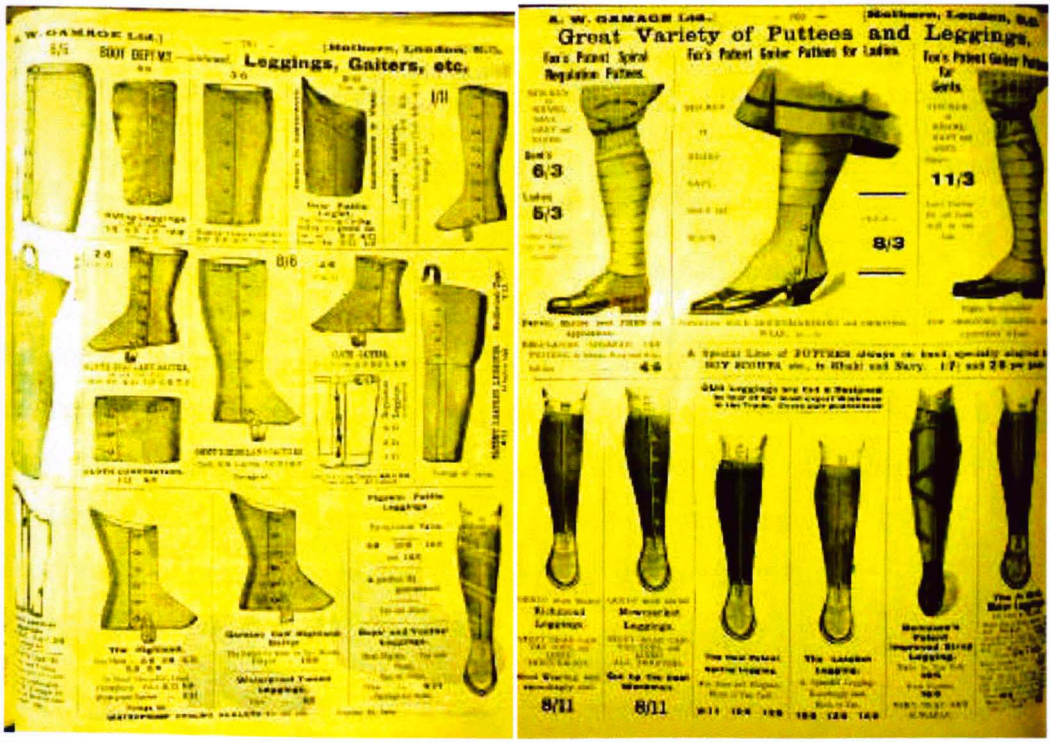

Fig. 30
Leggings and Gaiters, *Gamages General Catalogue 1913*

If the productive relations of industrial capitalism had brought about the evolutionary temporal and spatial organization of modern work and leisure, then by the turn of the twentieth century every part of the now working and leisured body was now broken up, regulated and commodified into separate 'commensurate' working and leisured 'parts' of a body itself similarly temporally and spatially, physically and psychologically organized. It was thus, a very measured and quantifiable body that was now being produced and consumed.

Various tailors 'logs' were developed alongside patented pattern cutting and tailoring systems that priced the making of different kinds of clothes according to style, cloth and skill **[Fig. 31]**. Thornton's 'International System of Garment System' in its visual and textual rhetoric is typical of a whole discursive system of pattern cutting and fashionable promotion based on the extensive tabulation of every part, or section of the body and the subdivision of these parts. For example, in trouser cutting, Thornton asserts, the 'fork' or point of bifurcation in the human form is essentially immeasurable because there is no 'point' of separation. He argues:

> We must think of a quantity not a point. This quantity is part of the thigh circumference, that portion which forms the juncture of the lower limb with the trunk of the body. Quantity is one-third of thigh circumference, equal to its diameter. The thigh is at this part of it nearly circular, and the juncture. In the normal figure this one-third *plus* necessary ease and allowance of the inter-space of the limbs, comes to seven-and-a-half inches.[36]

Purportedly combining the traditional 'art of mensuration' with this quasi-mathematical language bodies and parts of bodies and their careful and painstaking proportional calculation are 'mapped' in pages of vast diagrammatic charts and in the landscape of modern leisure portrayed in the highly romantic full-page illustrations of men and women cycling, fishing, shooting, walking that accompanied them **[Fig. 32]**.

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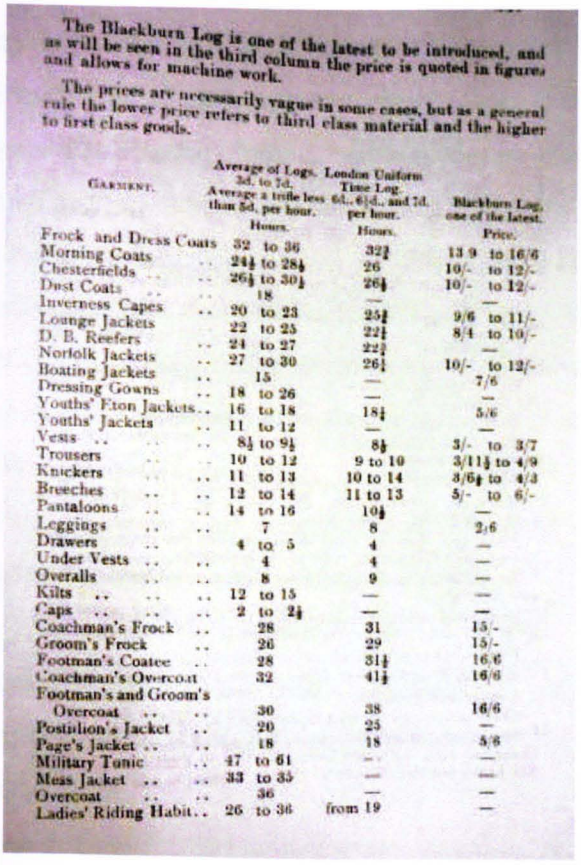
[36] Thornton, J.P. (1911), *The International System of Garment Cutting, including coats, trousers, breeches and vests, with diagrams and full instructions for dealing with all forms of disproportion*, London: Thornton Institute: 99.



The Blackburn Log is one of the latest to be introduced, and as will be seen in the third column the price is quoted in figures and allows for machine work.

The prices are necessarily vague in some cases, but as a general rule the lower price refers to third class material and the higher to first class goods.

Garment.	Average of Logs. 3d. to 7d. Average a trifle less than 5d. per hour. Hours.	London Uniform Time Log. 6d., 6½d., and 7d. per hour. Hours.	Blackburn Log, one of the latest. Price.
Frock and Dress Coats	32 to 36	32½	13 9 to 16/6
Morning Coats ..	24½ to 28½	26	10/- to 12/-
Chesterfields	26½ to 30½	26½	10/- to 12/-
Dust Coats	18	—	—
Inverness Capes ..	20 to 23	25½	9/6 to 11/-
Lounge Jackets	22 to 25	22½	8/4 to 10/-
D. B. Reefers ..	24 to 27	22½	—
Norfolk Jackets ..	27 to 30	26½	10/- to 12/-
Boating Jackets ..	15	—	7/6
Dressing Gowns ..	18 to 26	—	—
Youths' Eton Jackets..	16 to 18	18½	5/6
Youths' Jackets ..	11 to 12	—	—
Vests	8½ to 9½	8½	3/- to 3/7
Trousers	10 to 12	9 to 10	3/11½ to 4/9
Knickers	11 to 13	10 to 14	3/6½ to 4/3
Breeches	12 to 14	11 to 13	5/- to 6/-
Pantaloons	14 to 16	10½	—
Leggings	7	8	2/6
Drawers ..	4 to 5	4	—
Under Vests	4	4	—
Overalls	8	9	—
Kilts	12 to 15	—	—
Caps	2 to 2½	—	—
Coachman's Frock ..	28	31	15/-
Groom's Frock ..	26	29	15/-
Footman's Coatee ..	28	31½	16/6
Coachman's Overcoat	32	41½	16/6
Footman's and Groom's Overcoat	30	38	16/6
Postilion's Jacket ..	20	25	—
Page's Jacket	18	18	5/6
Military Tunic ..	47 to 61	—	—
Mess Jacket	33 to 35	—	—
Overcoat	36	—	—
Ladies' Riding Habit..	26 to 36	from 19	—

Fig. 31
Example of Tailor's Log, Vincent (1903), *Systems of Cutting ...*[1]

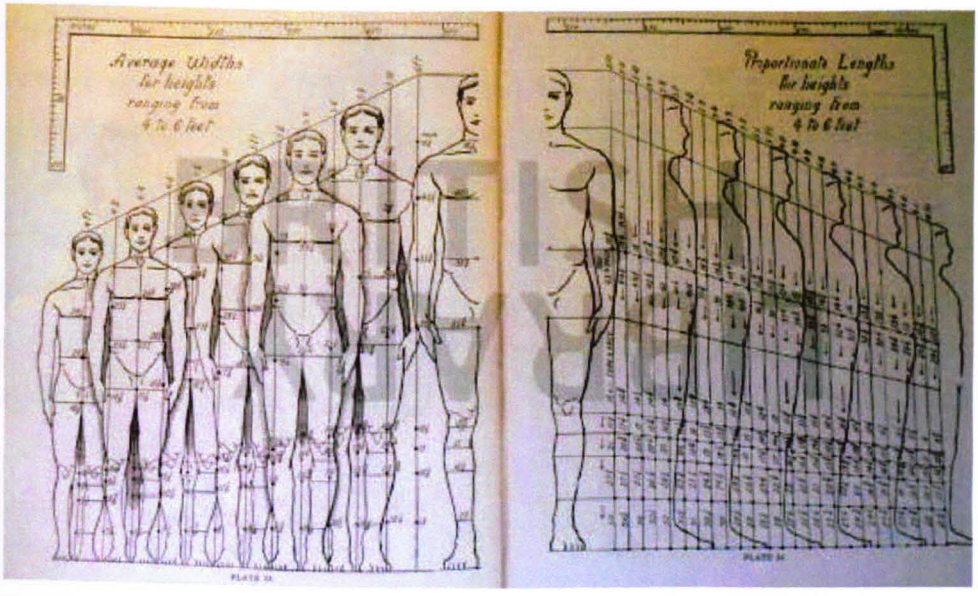


Fig. 32
Thornton's System of Scientific Measurement, Thornton (1911)

Every part of this modern body, separately and in its entirety, was now catered for by a vast range of manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers who all sought to meet its material needs for clothing and accessories appropriate to a range of social, cultural and physical environments and a now de- and com-partmentalized lifestyle. The Public Record Office bears witness to the literally hundreds of thousands of registered designs that were submitted after the Design Copyright Act was passed in 1839. Sarah Levitt's examination of registered designs for clothing before 1900 notes how the sporting mania that gripped late Victorian society not only gave rise to a new generation of clothes for sporting needs, but also supplied a completely new and rich source of decorative motives, which were used to embellish garments, jewellery, and every conceivable novelty.[37]

Eccentric inventors, individual entrepreneurs, and large and small commercial enterprises all registered designs for woven fabric trimmings, accessories, new types of fabric, fastenings, and buttons, as well as new forms of cutting systems and pattern designs for all kinds of garments covering every item of Victorian dress and fashionable novelty for every possible occasion. Many of these were linked to the clothing trade which was quick to take advantage of the protection now offered virtually any kind of innovation in design from the superficial to the groundbreaking.[38] Leisure and the upsurge of interest in sports and recreation provided a particularly fruitful avenue of sartorial innovation. Registered designs offered goods that incorporated a mix of scientific and medical advance to save the modern man or woman time and money; but the official sanction of patents and registration lent specially-designed garments and accessories an added cachet that made them particularly appealing.[39] Registered designs for ladies' riding habits,

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[37] Levitt, S. (1986), *Victorians Unbuttoned. Registered Designs for Clothing, their Makers and Wearers, 1839-1900*, London: George Allen & Unwin; 204. A range of novelty cravat pins and a silver plated watch chain with attached trinkets from the 1860s and 70s illustrate the idea of a huge diversity of stylistic options now available to urban consumers to accessorise waistcoats, fancy stocks and cravats, coats and jackets. See also Ehrman, E. 'Clothing a World City: 1830-60' in C. Breward, E. Ehrman and C. Evans (2005), *The London Look: Fashion from Street to Catwalk*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press: 36.

[38] Levitt 1986.

[39] *Ibid* 193-214.

Alpine boots, tennis jackets and shoes decorated with balls and rackets, belts decorated with a buckle in the form of a bicycle are just some of the examples held at the Public Record Office.[40] The development of the bicycle and its massive and widespread impact on Victorian society brought with it a whole tranche of designs around the machine itself and those that sought to meet the growing need for specialist clothing and accessories appropriate to participation in cycling either as competitive sport with various branches of specialism, or as a popular and fashionable leisure activity - or both. For example, the firm of Corah's of Leicester registered an 'Ornamental design' for a jersey bicycle suit in 1883 named after Fred Wood the first world champion aimed at the growing band of competitive racing and club cyclists.[41] The needs of women cyclists were catered for by new designs for pleated and kilted tricycling skirts, breeches and various forms of skirt guards as well as a complete outfit such as the tricycling dress registered by William James Harvey in 1884 with a carefully pleated front, buttoned collar and military-inspired decorative touches.[42]

The expansion of all forms of leisure activity created an extra impetus to an already growing market and this did not go unnoticed in the drapery trade. A feature in the *Draper's Record* of 1896 conscious of growing competition within the clothing trade notes the popularity of cycling amongst 'the younger members of the fair sex' and the possibilities this opened up for the draper:

> Already an organ of the tailors has commenced to urge its readers to make a strong bid for the trade, which will otherwise fall to those omnivorous drapers. Our own view is that so much of the trade as pertains to the special costumes required must fall naturally to the draper if he will only stretch out his hand and pluck the fruit.[43]

Those in the tailoring trade were equally urged to extend their repertoire to include breeches, an advertisement for one of the popular guides exhorted: 'There's Money

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[40] *Ibid*: 193-201.
[41] *Ibid*: 201.
[42] *Ibid*: 203-205.
[43] 'The Lady Cyclist and the Trade: A Proposal for the Formation of Ladies' Cycling Accessory Departments' in *Draper's Record*, 25 April 1896,

in it'.[44] But this raises a particular point and one of some significance to this research. The now commodified leisured body was one aimed at and consumed by an expanding lower-middle class but it was *always also* one that was produced, sold and promoted by many of its constituents.

[44] Advertisement for Volume II of the UKA, 'How to Cut and Make Knickers, Breeches and Leggings', *Men's Wear*, 25 November 1905.

2.5 All Play and No Work: The Socio-Economic Dynamic of Lower-Middle-Class Rational Recreational Leisure

A turn-of-the-century author's purple prose offers a contemporary 'birds eye view' of the centrality of cycling to the modern city and notes how the viewer was 'confronted with as many types of bicycles as we are with types of humanity...[1] And the essay goes on to describe their infinite variation in some detail from the 'pale and drawn' middle-aged clerk with an ailing wife and six children, to the bronzed young carpenter. It continues:

> Turn where we will in this vast London there is some kind of cycle in sight... A corps of military cyclists flashes by: a telegraph messenger on his bright red machine is pursued by a butcher's apprentice anxious to cuff him. The maiden who alarms us with her bell is, judging from the parcel of books which she is carrying, a schoolmistress. If she had no bicycle, train fares would exhaust a large portion of her salary. The two over there - the young man with the billycock hat poised on the left side of his head and the little lady with nut-brown hair - who have just saluted each other meet at this spot every morning, weather permitting. The former is an hosier's assistant, the latter a cashier in a tea-shop...*En route* to Holborn we encounter seven tradesmen's tricycles, each one in charge of a boy. The weight of these contrivances is considerable, yet little legs propel them from morn till night... The overworked clerk, the shop boy, the tired seamstress, the daring housemaid, out for an hour without leave, the little governess - dozens of them are taking the air on all sorts and conditions of bicycles. London smells fresh and clean to-night, and it is good to be out.[2]

Fig. 3 'For Business Purposes', Duncan Lucas (1908), 'Cycling London'

[1] Duncan Lucas, C. (1908), 'Cycling London' in George R. Sims (ed.), *Living London*, Vol. III, London, Paris & New York: Cassell & Company Limited.
[2] *Ibid.*

The police force, the post and telegraph offices and the railways - traditional targets of - lower middle class occupational ambition - all used bicycles from the late-nineteenth century. The commonly accepted figure of cyclists in the 1890s is assessed as around 1.5 million; many of these took suburbanites to work but they also became a vital part of small businesses, delivering goods and advertising their small shops at the same time.[3] A number of key events had taken place in the late 1880s that changed the nature of popular cycling.[4] Most significant of these was the development of the 'safety bicycle' that was fitted with pneumatic tyres and built around a single 'diamond' frame with a cross bar that could be dropped to accommodate female riders and their clothing.[5] This machine was essentially the modern bicycle: it was light, comfortable over most terrain, it had a chain-driven rear wheel that was the same size as the front wheel and it progressively incorporated sophisticated brakes, gears and other accessories.[6] Its eventual mass production made it more affordable to a much wider consumer population - many of whom by the later decades of the nineteenth century belonged to cycling clubs that emerged all over Britain.[7] The technological development of modern bicycling was not just the result of an engineering breakthrough (a technological 'eureka' moment), but equally determined by consumers and potential consumers putting pressure on makers and manufacturers to innovate and adapt new designs and incorporate technical advances in new ways that were more suited to *their* needs.[8] There was also a thriving second-hand market and some bicycle manufacturers and shops allowed machines to be paid for in instalments.[9]

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[3] Rubinstein, D. (1977), 'Cycling in the 1890s' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 21, No.1: 51.
[4] *Ibid*: 47.
[5] Oddy, N. (2007), 'The Flaneur on Wheels' in P. Rosen, P. Cox, D. and D. Horton (eds.), *Cycling and Society*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
[6] Rubinstein 1977: 48.
[7] The cost of bicycles before the turn of the century was relatively high and the best bicycles could cost £30 or more. But there were cheaper alternatives costing around £10 although these were deplored by the specialist journals who advocated high quality machines for their longevity. See Bijker, W.E. (1995), *Of Bicycles, Bakelites and Bulbs: Toward a Theory of Sociotechnological Change*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
[8] Bijker 1995.
[9] Rubinstein 1977: 56. Alice Foley recollects buying a second hand bicycle at the turn of the century for as twenty-five shillings Foley, A. (1973), *A Bolton Childhood*, Manchester: Manchester University Extra-Mural Department: 72.

For an aspiring lower middle class, however, cycling increasingly offered the potential not only to indulge their own leisure interests but also to capitalise on those of their neighbours. The 'bicycle boom' of the late 1880s offered numerous commercial and entrepreneurial opportunities for small business enterprises producing or retailing a whole range of goods and services to meet the needs of an expanding suburban consumer-base. Cycle racing was hugely popular and apart from the financial benefits of competitive riding itself, the sport's considerable commercial organization and promotion were predominantly in the hands of lower-middle-class entrepreneurs and racers. Champion cyclists drawn largely from an artisan class became local and sometimes national heroes celebrated in posters, postcards, novels and songs; they drew huge crowds to newly constructed velodromes and road races which were heavily promoted in a rapidly growing sporting press. Racers could also earn considerable sums in prize money; for example, a former chimney sweep who won the *Tour de France* in 1903 earned the equivalent to five years' earnings in three weeks, not including the lucrative sponsorship contracts that followed his win. While only top racers earned a fortune, many working-class youths were successful enough to go on to use their winnings to invest in their own cycling shops or cafes. Thompson argues, that these new "workers of the pedal" (*ouvriers de la pedale*) were the first '... to turn their physical capital (strength and endurance) into socioeconomic success (fame and fortune), thereby challenging the bourgeois social hierarchy which was founded on intellectual and social capital (education and relations)."[10]

While Thompson's study is concerned with urban France, clear comparisons can be made with parallel developments in Britain. In cities like Birmingham and Coventry, those who belonged to a traditional artisanal lower-middle class were also frequently involved in various forms of cycle racing. Many more possessed high levels of light engineering and mechanical skills and either worked in the cycle industry or set up bicycle shops and small workshops to build, and repair them. The new Raleigh bicycle factor in Nottingham built in 1896 covered a seven and one half acre site; the BSA plant in Birmingham in 1897 occupied ten acres and employed about one thousand skilled

[10] Thompson 2002: 135, 136.

workers; and the cycling industry was mainly responsible for the creation of a large and efficient machine tool industry. The 1901 census shows that the number of cycle makers in Britain had increased by some 173% in ten years from 11,524 in 1891 to 31,466. In 1896 three hundred and twelve cycle companies were formed in Nottingham alone and at the turn of the century there were still at least twenty-two cycle shops on Holborn Viaduct which was the centre of the London trade.[11] Daily and weekly local and national newspapers and women's magazines all had cycling correspondents and there was an expanding market in popular specialist magazines aimed at the middle and lower-middle class consumer such as *Cycling* which sold over 41,000 copies a week at the height of its popularity in 1896.[12] Guidebooks, practical guides, handbooks and maps were just part of this whole myriad of leisure merchandise that was produced for an expanding mass consumer market with increasing access to new kinds of leisure and more money to spend. But such publications offered various 'spaces' for different kinds of display, including the commercial and professional. Popular journalism and the tightly unionized printing trade were key occupational targets for the lower middle class, but the promotional pages of their employers' publications also demonstrated a huge diversity of opportunity for individual enterprise and employment. A discussion of the cycling boom in London at the turn of the century asked:

> How many dealers in cycles there are in London? It is impossible to say, but if we estimate the capital that is Invested in the cycle and cycling in the Metropolis, without reckoning the annual expenditure on repairs &c. at eight million pounds sterling we shall probably not be wide of the mark. The industry affords employment to thousands; every neighbourhood has outfitters who reap an abundant harvest; while the numerous papers devoted to the wheel circulate throughout the length and breadth of the land.[13]

Drapers' shops, tailors, hosiers, and wholesalers that were a key factor in petty bourgeois commercial expansion and enterprise all had a stake in the booming popularity of more affordable leisure and the promotion, manufacture, and retailing of its enjoyment, its clothing, and its accessories. Hosiery shops occupied a prestigious location on suburban

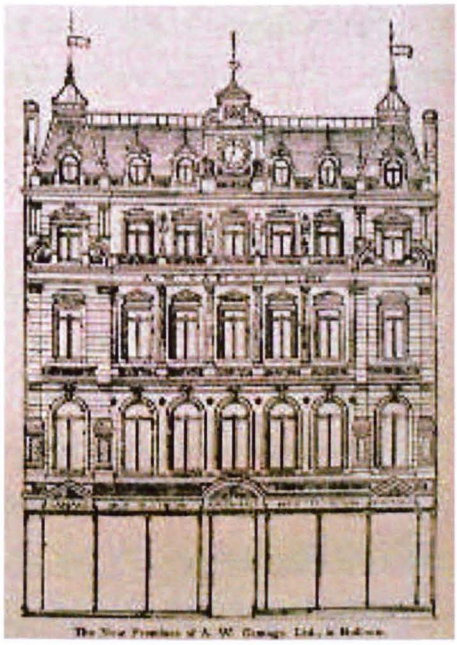
[11] Rubinstein 1977: 51.
[12] *Ibid*: 51.
[13] Duncan Lucas 1908.

high streets and 'these emporia of ready-made articles pushed masculine attire out from the obscurity of second-floor cutters' workrooms or the back cabinets of draper's sops and into the plate glass glare of late nineteenth-century public culture.'[14] Such shops stocked socks and stockings and more intimate items of underwear, as well as ties, scarves, handkerchiefs, collars and all manner of sartorial accoutrements that rivalled the feminine spaces of the draper's store. With a fairly rapid turnover of stock and a concentration on display there was an emphasis on the surface appearance of modern masculinity that mirrored wider constructions of modernity and the rhetoric surrounding the physical and sartorial fashioning of a healthy and hygienic male body.[15]

The London firm of Gamages (A.W. Gamage of Holborn) was not the first specialist retailer in sporting and leisure goods in London - John Lilywhite opened his first shop in Haymarket in 1863 and swiftly became *the* place to shop for mainly upper-class fashionable elites.[16] But by the end of the century, sport was no longer just for a privileged minority and Gamages, perhaps uniquely, directly targeted the middle- and lower-middle-class suburban market. The firm was the official supplier of uniforms and other equipment to the Boy Scouts and sports clubs and associations all over London and the Home Counties, and was an official supplier to the British Olympic teams. In its day the store was the most prominent and well known 'athletics' provider in London and enjoyed a particular place in the suburban customers' affections. The rapid growth of Gamages is significant because it is typical of the way shops, shop-keeping and shopkeepers were at the heart of the transformation of the modern city and the fashioning of modern bodies within it.[17] Individual entrepreneurs, like Walter Gamage, started out as small drapers or haberdashers or as their apprentices and then expanded

[14] Breward 1999: 109.
[15] *Ibid*: 111.
[16] John Lillywhite opened his shop following the success of a stand he took at the International Health Exhibition in 1862 where he showed articles connected with cricket (all the Lilywhites were famous cricketers) and then requiring more space, the firm moved to Piccadilly, see Adburgham 1979: 157-189.
[17] For example, in 1870 John Barker opened a double-fronted general draper's shop employing around a dozen assistants. But by gradually acquiring adjacent shops and extending his business to millinery, dressmaking, fancy goods, furniture and groceries he had, by 1893 amassed twenty-eight shops incorporating forty-two different departments served by over a thousand employees see Crossick, G. and Jaumain, S. (1999), 'The world of the department store: distribution, culture and social change' in G. Crossick and S. Jaumain (eds.), *Cathedrals of Consumption: the European Department Store, 1850-1939*, Aldershot and Brookfield, USA: Ashgate: 22.

their original line of business or stock, and in turn their premises.[18] But Gamages is of interest because its continual and rapid expansion in the last decades of the nineteenth century bears specific witness to the parallel massive and continuous expansion of popular leisure in the late nineteenth and twentieth century and more particularly its opening up to a new kind of mass consumer. Following an extensive building programme adding further showrooms, offices, store and stock rooms, stables, goods and delivery yards in 1898 *The Draper's Record* reported, 'No more striking proof of the magnitude of this business could be afforded than is provided by this building, which, it is easy to see ... will be one of the most magnificent trade emporiums of the Metropolis. The height of the shop windows on the ground floor is enormous, and a most effective display is thus rendered possible **[Fig. 34]**.[19]



[18] This was usually through the purchase of an adjoining shop or the building of new adjacent premises to accommodate a greater volume of trade - a process that was repeated to gradually accumulate a large block of business within a particular area, Chaney, D. (1983), 'The Department Store as Cultural Form' in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol.1, No.43: 22-31. Records of Gamages numerous leases and licenses acquiring, expanding, renovating, altering and rebuilding the property and adjacent properties in Holborn (now High Holborn) are held at the Archive of Art and Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum.
[19] 'Enterprising Athletic Outfitters' in *Draper's Record*, 10 September 1898.

By 1904, Gamages was now described as 'the world's largest sport and athletic outfitters' an article entitled 'Tall Oaks from Little Acorns Grow' (a motto that A.W. Gamage had hung over his very first shop)in the *Daily Mail* provides a detailed account of Gamages' rapid expansion:

> Marvellous indeed has been the Growth of the Vast Establishment under the Direction of A.W.GAMAGE...it extends up Leather Lane and back to other streets and alleys without thinking of the Stables and "Feeding" Store Houses which are scattered about in places befitting their presence. The most astonishing thing of the many enlargements which, from time to time, have been made imperative by the increasing business, is the fact that at about the time extensions became necessary, neighbouring leases were expiring, so making the changes inexpensive ones in that direction.[20]

With continued acquisitions, alterations and improvements, by 1905 Gamages now included the adjacent site 'to their old palatial pile in Holborn'; the new extension was formally opened with the ' pomp and splendour which such an auspicious event in the outfitting trade deserves' **[Fig. 35]**. The ground floor - about 40 foot in height and equipped with electric light - was devoted to electro-plate goods, heavy leather goods, bags, pharmaceuticals, and a boot store where boots could be made to special order direct from hide within a few hours.[21] More site plans and licenses evidence how progressive expansion necessitated not just the development of the shop itself and new technological innovations, but a whole range of administrative, storage and distributive facilities to support the demand this generated. The building of a Parcels Office, a large Goods Platform, and a Covered Goods Yard as well access to these from the road for ease of loading and unloading were necessary not just to service the requirements of the shop but Gamages delivery and mail order trade which like most other department stores had become an extremely lucrative and important part of retail operations.

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[20] 'Tall Oaks from Little Acorns Grow', *Daily Mail*, 12 July 1904.
[21] Report on the refurbishment and recent extension of Gamages of Holborn, *Men's Wear*, 25 November 1905: 339.

Fig. 35
'A Birds-Eye View', Gamages, *Men's Wear*, 25 November 1905: 339

Calling his store 'The Peoples' Popular Emporium', Gamages gained the reputation of offering everything the progressively home-centred, suburban lower-middle-classes and their children might desire for their leisure activities from the functional to the extremely frivolous - but always at a price they could afford. There was an enormous variety of goods and cheap 'novelties' on offer in the market-place atmosphere of the 'maze' of different rooms, floors and departments that were all part of the rambling four and a half acres of the first floor 'Grand Bazaar'.[22] The bazaar-like quality of the to shop was further emphasized by its geographical location in the commercial/clerical heart of the city (rather in the more fashionable areas of the West End) at the intersection of Holborn and Leather Lane once the site of a medieval street market and where a market still operates today. The excitement of the bazaar and the lure of a bargain was clearly a selling point when coupled with innovations in exhibition and display that Gamages incorporated into the interior of the shop which must have been an extremely lively place for weary or bored clerical workers to visit in their lunch hour **[Fig. 36]**.[23]

[22] This term is used virtually without exception in descriptions of the inside of the shop in the press.
[23] An emphasis on staging goods in extravagant or exciting displays gained momentum with the increasing cultural prominence of the great expositions/exhibitions in the second half of the nineteenth century and the desired audience for such events was Gamages primary customer base - lower middle and artisan classes who visited in large numbers. The Great Exhibition was held in 1851 and spread first in Europe then to North America, until an international event was being held somewhere in the world on an average of every two years. In Britain their scope was seen as much philanthropic and educational as commercial and economic, and their aim as educating the visiting crowds in art science, and manufacture

'Musical and histrionic entertainments' were given daily, there was an American soda fountain and large displays and tableaux, for example 'A well-designed working model of a stag hunt, and one illustrating the outdoor pleasures of the four seasons' that Gamages' promotional rhetoric assured would 'interest the thousands who will doubtless patronise the establishment this Christmastide'.[24]

Fig. 36 Gamages of Holborn, 1907, (Getty Images)

All these factors combined to undermine any possible perception of the store as either specialised or exclusive. But this, it could be argued, was not in any way detrimental to the firm's popular appeal, rather the reverse.[25] Other department stores have been romanticised as lavish, luxurious palaces of consumption that seduced a newly emerging predominantly female clientele.[26] Gamages comes across more as much as a place of entertainment as a shop, almost akin to the music hall (but not the theatre) whose appeal was to a predominantly young male and a growing band of young female office and

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through the display of collections of selected examples and specimens. Greenhalgh, P. (1988), *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[24] *Men's Wear*, 25 November 1905: 339.

[25] Greenhalgh 1988: 9.

[26] See Bowlby, R. (1985), *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola*, New York: Methuen; Nava, M. (1996), 'Modernity's Disavowal: Women, the City and the Department Store' in M. Nava and A. O'Shea, *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity*, London: Routledge.

shop workers wishing to be amused and seeking a novel interlude in a dull and dreary working day. Gamages of Holborn did not have the social cachet of Lilywhites of Piccadilly who established and then retained a middle/upper-middle class sense of distinction; but arguably this was an extremely important aspect of Gamages popular appeal. The store's promotional rhetoric emphasized the amount and variety of stock held, and their low prices to create an atmosphere of accessibility that was crucial to the marketing of modern leisure and sports activities to consumers possibly lacking in confidence and experience. Reflecting on the 'ethics of cycling dress' an anonymous contributor W.F.R wrote:

> When a person becomes transformed from an ordinary citizen to an enthusiastic cyclist, the question of clothing assumes a different aspect. Ignoring the Scriptural admonition, he begins to grow solicitous as to wherewith he shall be clothed. He recognizes, as every sensible cyclist must do, that whatever merits or demerits may appertain to the ordinary civilian dress, its unsuitability for cycling is axiomatically certain.[27]

The 'People's Emporium' directed their attention to servicing the needs of these new consumers enjoying, or aspiring to take part in, new forms of sporting and recreational activities and who sought to differentially express and visibly display their new-found economic, social and athletic status. Perhaps uniquely the rise of Gamages demonstrates the ways in which a vast range of new forms of specific goods and services, particularly fashionable clothing was now aimed *specifically* at the lower-middle-class suburban consumer. Gamages' popularity witnesses how these were retailed and promoted through new forms of face to face *and* distance shopping that informed and responded to new perceptions of urban/suburban modernity.

[27] "W.F.R.", 'The Ethics of Cycling Dress', *Men's Wear*, 21March 1908 p.473.

2.6 Marketing 'Rational' Leisure

Fashionable 'Subversion'

The previous Section has demonstrated how advances in mass manufacturing processes and technological innovation in fabric design and production created the potential for many low-to-middle income working people to now aspire to owning a range of clothing, footwear and accessories *specifically* for various activities and *just* for leisure. However, aspirational desire arguably always operates in relation to the social and cultural expectations within which it makes sense. In the late-nineteenth century, even something as simple as owning a pair of boots could be seen as an aspirational goal in itself because it was evidence at the very minimum of a regular income. A lady philanthropist in 1907 noted:

> One reason why so many of the poor women go about with skirts which drag about in the mud is that they do not want to display what they have on their feet by holding their skirts up. A working-girl said on one occasion that she thought the mark of a "real lady" was that she wore a short skirt and neat boots, this last representing to the working girl almost the unattainable.[1]

The wearing of shorter, fashionable skirts *and* a pair of walking boots in certain contexts clearly functioned as a visible indicator of social and economic status. In *The Camper's Handbook* Messrs. Crick & Co advertise 'The Week-End Boot' for country walking - but even the term 'week end' is implicitly loaded with particular socio-political import because it only gained currency, and more importantly actual meaning, alongside the changes in working hours and conditions that preceded its popular usage and enjoyment. This concept is usefully illustrated by an extract from one of the founder members of the Polytechnic Rambling Club, William Davis writing in 1934 of the early days of the club and using an early photograph from the late 1880s **[Fig. 37]**.

[1] Lady Bell, *At the Works: A Study of a Manufacturing Town* (Edward Arnold, 1907) cited p 64 in Royston Pike, E., (1972), *Human Documents of the Lloyd George Era*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Fig. 37 Polytechnic Rambling Club, c. 1886

Davis' recollections signal both the ambiguous coda of etiquette and sartorial conventions that marked out the classed working and leisured body. He recalled:

> 'We used to meet at Regent Street at 2.30 on Saturday afternoon, and then make our way to the appropriate terminus. This will explain to you the reason for the dress in my photos. The fellows were obliged to come direct from offices as there was no leaving at 12 o'clock in those days, and hence they all turned up in their hard hats and stiff collars! I remember on one occasion on a trip to Epping Forest when there was a "topper" present. Personally, I always favoured a soft hat, and was a pioneer of the soft felt amongst the ramblers. There were others who came in cloth cricket caps, and some favoured the deerstalker's hat - a contraption with a double peak and ear-flaps. The "no hat brigade" or such things as shorts were unthought-of of in those days.'[2]

Wearing your bowler and collar on a ramble visibly demonstrated a man's white-collar clerical credentials but on the other hand it made very clear its wearer's position in the social hierarchy. One might be 'free' to enjoy the ramble, but the nature of one's leisure time as temporally and spatially organized in relation to the

[2] Cited in Polytechnic Rambling Club (2003), *The Polytechnic Rambling Club 1885 to 2002: Walking Through the Years*, Windsor: The Short Run Book Club: 21. Davis' reference to the 'no hat brigade' was of some contemporary significance in the 1930s when young, fashionable men after the war began to no longer wear hats in certain social situations in much the same that Davis himself had worn the 'soft felt', i.e. as a symbol of liberalism and the questioning of the patriarchal formality of an older generation. The vogue for 'no hats' was arguably started by the then Prince of Wales, and later Edward VIII who was seen as a style leader until his abdication in 1937.

working week and the Saturday half holiday was also very visibly on display as a quote from the Earl of Onslow writing on cycling dress in a popular sporting journal makes clear:

> For a man, knickerbockers and stockings are certainly neater than the trouser doubled over and kept in place by a clip. The latter seems only suitable for men who have to pursue the ordinary avocations of life without an opportunity for change of costume after bicycling.[3]

Yet Walter Davis' understanding of himself as a sartorial innovator within the PCR and as the 'pioneer' of the soft felt, as well as references to the disparate range of headgear worn by his young rambling compatriots, all suggest the ways in which leisure created at least the potential for 'rules' to be broken. The wearing of sometimes bizarre, unusual, or 'shapeless' hats enjoyed a vogue first in upper-class sporting milieus.[4] But a photograph of the CCC on a camping trip in the late 1880s and a comparative contemporary illustration from an account by T.H. Holding's camping trip to Ireland suggests that the practice seems to have spread to outdoor recreational leisure activities such as rambling and camping to symbol licence if not licentiousness **[Figs. 38, 39]**.

Although one can only speculate as to the possible political implications of such stylistic subversion, in the late-nineteenth century the wearing of hats for men or women was clearly never just an empty stylistic gesture. It is wrong to infer too much from such 'fashions', but arguably the concept of 'ordinary citizens' and mainstream consumers being able to 'play' with styles and conventions offer further evidence of an evolving popular leisured 'fashionability' - in itself politically and culturally significant. Straying from the norm even mildly is suggestive at least of

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[3] The West End on Wheels' by the Earl of Onslow in *The Badminton Magazine, August – December 1895 Vol. 1*: 126

[4] J.A. Mangan links the cult of athleticism in English public schools in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the rituals of a pecking order based on the dominance of a new 'athletocracy'. These rituals were incorporated into various sporting activities on and off the field of play, For example cricketers at Stoneyhurst College took to wearing 'colours' in the 1890s and there was a fashion for cricketers to wear white blazers trimmed with blue. But such rituals frequently found spectacular form in the wearing of caps and more bizarre forms of headgear such as the fez, see Mangan, J. (1981), *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 171. Mangan offers further evidence of parallel developments at Uppingham School where sportsmen wore blue silk sashes and velvet caps and carried hunting crops which were handed to the 'Pollies' who used them to keep order during matches, Wilkinson, R. (1964), 'Education by Symbol' in *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*, p.45 cited by Mangan .

the desire to question if not disrupt the established codes and conventions of patriarchal authority that clothing represented. The wearing of the flat tweed cap for example became as much a marker of respectable 'leisure' as the 'bowler' was for work but was very much understood in terms of offering a 'new democracy' that access to outdoor leisure and the 'freedom' of the road only further strengthened.

Fig. 38 CCC, Southern Counties Camp, 1886

Fig. 39
'A Pedestrian Trio' from T.H. Holding (1908), *The Camper's Handbook*

Subversion in relation to gender has become inextricably linked with rational recreational leisure clothing because it was integral to diverse expressions of the need for aesthetic and 'rational' dress reform motivated by a range of scientific, philanthropic, political, philosophical and fashionable perspectives that all assumed some contemporary magnitude. Within fashion historical studies, therefore, much attention has been focussed on the Women's Rational Dress Movement and women's wearing of bifurcated garments in relation to wider battles for emancipation and suffrage.[5] However, detailed analysis is not included here, because others' have done so with some rigour and the majority of dress reformers were independently wealthy upper and upper-middle-class women outside of the focus of this research.[6] Based on contemporary evidence of the greater number of 'educated' women from the 'leisure class' who wrote in to popular women's journals on the subject of dress reform, Patricia Cunningham argues that it is therefore 'apparent... that the adoption of artistic and correct dress was advanced and adopted by upper- and middle-class women ... who were involved with women's clubs and organizations'; furthermore that it was these women who embraced 'new fads for sports'. 'Rationals' and even their more fashion-conscious adaptations were considered both subversive and unattractive by many mainstream consumers, but they also often involved large quantities of heavyweight cloth being made up into complex designs involving complicated patterns of goring, pleating kilting and fastening that necessitated high quality, and hence expensive, bespoke tailoring skills.[7]

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[5] Lady Harberton founder of the Rational Dress Society, leading figures in the women's suffrage movement, and women involved in other forms of political activism were all portrayed as active cyclists and Lady Harberton was President of the Cycle Touring Club founded by T.H. Holding.

[6] See in particular Cunningham, P.A. (2003), *Politics, Health and Art: Reforming Women's Fashion 1850-1920*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press. See also Newton 1974. Founded by Lady Harberton, in 1882, the object of the Rational Dress Society was to:'[P]romote the adoption, according to individual taste and convenience, the style of dress based upon considerations of health, comfort, and beauty, and to deprecate constant changes of fashion that cannot be recommended on any of these grounds, *Rational Dress Gazette* April 1888, London: Hatchards. However, this was not the first incidence of calls for women's dress reform which actually dated back to various different but overlapping social groupings that made up the Utopian movement in America from the 1820s, as well as the more famous efforts of Mrs Amelia Bloomer in 1850, see Luck, K. (1992), 'Trouble in Eden, Trouble with Eve: Women, Trousers and Utopian Socialism in Nineteenth Century America', in J. Ash and E. Wilson (eds.), *Chic Thrills: A Fashion Reader*, London: Pandora.

[7] Mrs Ada Ballin goes to some length to describe how 'delightful' a new But even these 'lighter' costumes designed for 'freedom' of movement still consisted of ankle length garments that used up to a yard of material in each leg that were worn with lined knickerbockers underneath, Levitt 1993: 31. One prominent suffragist recalled in her memoirs "It is an unpleasant experience to be hurled on to stone setts and find that one's skirt has been so tightly wound round the pedal that one cannot get up enough to unwind it', Helena Swanwick (1935), *I Have Been Young*, London: Gollancz, cited in Rubinstein 1977 .

Even allowing for issues of conformity and the political dimensions of suffrage, cost alone precluded all but the wealthy and/or the radically committed from owning and wearing such garments.[8] In this sense such clothing cannot be considered as a significant element within the mainstream fashion system.[9] However, as Kate Luck argues, it is important to acknowledge how the dress reform movement *and* its widespread contemporary critique in the press and popular culture provided a a *focus* for a much wider and more far-reaching discourse around women's and girl's physiological development, female sexuality and the educational, political and property rights of a 'New Woman'.[10] By the turn of the century, the New Woman in tailored skirt and blouse became the iconic figure of young or progressive femininity reproduced in posters, postcards and on the stage.[11] However this popular dynamic signals the need to address a much more ambiguous interpretive framework through which to explore how the image, if not the reality, of a 'New Woman' astride a bicycle became the focus of abstract and concrete, political and popular ideas around 'modern' femininity that might be extended to *all* classes. This is not in any way to trivialize the popular or the imaginary or see it as somehow secondary to 'real' political activism. Rather, the reverse. It is the diffusion and dissemination of such images and the rhetoric of rational recreation within the trajectory of popular mainstream leisure and leisure clothing, not solely women's wearing of rationals and issues of bifurcation *per se* that this thesis seeks to both prioritize and interrogate.

The most extreme women supporters of the Rational Dress movement were depicted in satirical portraits in magazines such as *Punch* wearing 'mannish' suits and hats such as boaters and tweed caps that supposedly blurred the boundaries of gender and more importantly the visible identification of such figures *as* female **[Fig. 40]**

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[8] Women cyclists wearing rationals encountered much opposition in the press and it would seem on the street. There were reports of workmen who attempted to pull one young lady offer her bike by pulling at her skirt and of women riding through working-class districts being yelled and jeered at by children and women shrieking with laughter, groaning and hissing and making lewd remarks. One lady member wrote in the *Clarion* that dangerous for women to ride alone through some districts 'Few would believe how insulting and coarse the British public could be unless they had ridden through a populated district with a lady dressed in Rationals. And the poorer the district, the more incensed do the people appear.' *Clarion*, 7 September 1895, p. 287. The *Rational Dress Gazette* noted that the editor was struck by a meat cleaver 1899 July p 37-38.

[9] See Wilson and Taylor 1989: 56-58.

[10] Luck 1992.

[11] See Ewing 1974: 20-22.

Fig. 40 *Punch* 1895, 'Is this the way to Wareham'

Women's wearing of boaters or Walter Davis' the PCR revolutionary pioneer of the 'soft felt', however, provide a useful way of understanding how radical ideals might be diffused but also accommodated in more appropriate and acceptable forms of fashionable as well as reforming designs that might be worn by men and women of *all* classes. Boaters, tams or velvet and tweed toques in many ways represented the feminine version of the masculine tweed cap in that they offered both a sense of 'freedom' from the excessive ornamentation of large hats and heavyweight trimmings, and the comfort of conformity in allowing the hair to continue to be pinned up and dressed when out walking. [12] It is perhaps worth noting that the motto of the Manchester Physical Health and Culture Society was 'Less Hat More Hair'.[13]

Describing her experience of a CHA holiday, a young female letter-writer to *Comradeship*, the journal of the CHA, recalls her impressions of her fellow companions:

> I think I can best describe it by the name of Bohemia for all its inhabitants lived the life of the free. All the ladies pinned up their skirts, wore stout-soled boots, carried sticks, went without headgear or wore men's caps. One woman (I hardly like to call her a lady) wore men's leather leggings, but then she was a suffragette. The men are fairly prim, contenting themselves by wearing soft

[12] Holding 1908: 227.
[13] Levitt 1993: 31.

> collars and going about very often without coats or waistcoats... a more heterodox wild crew I never saw.[14]

But it is important to remember how such a subversive 'Bohemian' look *because* of its notoriety and its links with an upper-middle and upper-class social elite in itself - or rather a version of it - was both highly fashionable and aspirational for some suburban consumers.[15] The majority of women might not choose to wear 'Rationals' but that is not to say that they were somehow unaware of its subversive *and* therefore fashionable possibilities, or beyond understanding it in terms of a stylistic *cachet* discursively produced and consumed through popular culture. As Sarah Levitt argues, dress reform was a cause on which ordinary people could 'hang' a wide range of dissatisfactions.[16] More importantly, nor were the suburban mainstream excluded altogether from wearing some form of 'rational' clothing. A letter to the Draper's Record gives an insight into how for example Dr. Jaeger's more extreme specialist approach might be translated into a more populist one:

> With the exception of a Jaeger-sect of very moderate dimensions, [however] the clothes-wearing section of the human race remains generally of much the same opinion as before the German medico tried to teach us that clothes of any vegetable fibre are almost positively poisonous. People do not believe at all in the special poison-harbouring nature of cotton or linen, but they do, of course prefer wool fabrics - when they can afford these. Experience, without help from abstract hygienic science, is convincing enough as to the superiority of wool wear wherever climatic conditions are variable.[17]

The gendered ambiguity of women's popular adoption of hats previously worn solely by men is arguably therefore equally open to question in terms of its subversive possibilities. In the late-nineteenth century the Tam's 'wild' Celtic connotations and the 'looseness' inherent in its lack of structure implicitly suggested a whole chain of signification around female sexuality and the political dimensions

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[14] Letter from CHA Archive (1909) cited in Snape, R. (2004), 'The Co-operative Holidays Association and the Cultural Formation of Countryside Practice', in *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2: 143-158: 153.

[15] West End hatter Fred Willis described the 'genuine bohemian' as the type 'who took great pains with the carelessness of their dress. At this time the Austrian velour hat was making a tentative appearance ... and the bohemian took to it with avidity ... Worn with a flowing bow tie and a corduroy coat it gave the wearer unquestioned right of entry into the Cafe Royal or Rule's.', Willis 1948: 43.

[16] Levitt 1993: 29.

[17] 'Wool vs. Cotton Khaki', *Drapers Record*, 10 February 1900.

of wearing 'shapeless', ie 'masculine', clothes. Writing in the *Badminton Magazine*, one Lady Jenue argues:

> What can be more hideous than a collection of women ... of various sizes, shapes, and weights, in the drab knickerbockers suits surmounted by the drab Tam o' Shanter hat?... Women clothed like men, and "unashamed," with their figures well bent over their machines, perspiring at every pore, their hair flowing in the breeze (for your new woman bicyclist, like all ardent women, does nothing by halves) present as ugly and as ridiculous picture as one can imagine.[18]

The adoption of what were seen as 'progressive' and modern forms of both male and female clothing - hats, shoes, or even underwear - can be seen as potent symbols as much as material evidence of a desire for social change. Radical attempts at change were a useful stimulus to the mainstream clothing manufacturing and retailing trade who began to offer various cheaper alternatives. Terms, such as Rational' and the more populist 'Sanitary', if not the scientific and political philosophies from which they arose, entered into common currency as the woollen industry as a whole capitalised on a new consumer demand for such clothing including from those on a much more restricted budget.[19] The wearing of new forms of clothing and undergarments that did not greatly alter the outward appearance offered a significant number of both men *and* women the opportunity to 'reform from within'.[20] Slim-line woollen 'combinations' might be 'rational' but because they were lightweight, warm and comfortable and now affordable they quickly caught on with mainstream consumers. In 1893, arguably very few of manufacturer W.F. Lucas' target market would have actually gone to Oxford - or any other university, or even been educated beyond the age of 16 **[Fig 41]**. 'Ordinary' consumers were much more willing to 'try out' a whole range of woollen undergarments, sweaters, vests, and socks that allowed them to equally engage, even at a superficial level, with new and relatively 'dangerous' ideas.[21]

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[18] Lady Jenue, (1895) 'Cycling for Women' in *Badminton Magazine Vol. 1 August – December 1895*: 412
[19] Levitt 1993 .
[20] Cunningham 2002: 75.
[21] Levitt 1993: 30

Fig. 41 *Drapers Record*, 8 March 1897

Patricia Cunningham's detailed examination of women's dress reform argues that by the end of the nineteenth century, 'it was no longer enough to *look* modern by adopting the latest fashion; many women now wanted to *be* modern.'[22] Arguably for most mainstream consumers the two were not mutually exclusive but rather always inter-dependent. A *Punch* cartoon from 1895 offers a highly pertinent illustration of such ambiguity in the conversation between two young women [**Fig. 42**].

[22] Cunningham 2003: 2.

Fig. 42
Gertrude: *My dear Jessie, what on earth is that Bicycle suit for?*
Jessie: *Why to wear of course!*
Gertrude: *But you haven't got a Bicycle*
Jessie: *No, But I've got a Sewing Machine!*

However, an advertisement for a company manufacturing bicycles and sewing machines offers a useful comparative understanding of this social and commercial dynamic **[Fig. 43]**.

Fig. 43 *Drapers Record* 25 April 1896

The ability for mainstream consumers to mix and match and adapt new designs, fabrics and fashions within an existing wardrobe allowed the potential for experimentation *at every level* - in relation to pocket, political views, participation in particular forms of recreational activities, a desire for what was now highly *fashionable* leisure activities and clothing, and the prevailing climate of popular aesthetic and moral codes and conventions. By incorporating the rhetoric if not the ideals of rational recreation through the wearing of certain forms of clothing to ride bicycles or to work as a typist might not to a contemporary eye seem particularly revolutionary or radical, but arguably these too should also be seen as evidence of social and educational reform and social 'improvement' and 'advance' in its widest sense.

Little critical focus has been given to everyday work wear, especially women's business dress, perhaps because of the lowly status accorded clerical workers in general and women clerical workers in particular.[23] However, in the context of aspiration it is worth noting here an extract from a study of working women from 1911 detailing 'How a London Typist Spent Her Wages' that offers a much more cohesive argument for the potential of pragmatism rather than extremism when making links between dress and wider social change. The ownership not of one pair of boots but three types of footwear (total expenditure of 15s. 11d - just under 80 pence), the ability to have a (small) independently earned income, to work and enjoy a *paid holiday* (in itself notable) can all be seen as representative of significant advances in modern working life and culture. The idea of compromise and negotiation offers a much more accurate reflection of the gradual and progressive development of women's recreational leisure clothing - and a framework that is equally applicable to the growing number of cyclists and ramblers of both genders and all classes. Extreme forms of 'rational' or aesthetic clothing were clearly not going to be widely popular with an expanding, highly conservative suburban middle

[23] Most fashion historical studies focus on rationals. Some however, in relation to the wearing of 'trousers' cite the clothing worn by young women working in the mines as pit brow girls brought to attention through the photographs of Arthur Mumby in the 1860s, see Ribeiro 1986: 132, also Wilson and Taylor 1989: 18. Neither of these examples can be seen as exemplary of mainstream fashionable trends and the latter is in no way exemplary of female work wear. For a detailed critical discussion of Mumby's photography in relation to gender see Pollock, G. (1994), 'Feminism/Foucault - Surveillance/Sexuality' in N. Bryson, M.A. Holly, K.P.F. Moxey (eds.), *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, Middleton CT: Wesleyan University Press.

and lower-middle-class leisure market but many young women now owned or could aspire to owning a bicycle and a sewing machine. This research would argue that rather than being prioritized over the parallel expansion of the mass leisure and clothing market in terms of political activism and reform *both* should be seen as equally important *inter-related* responses and stimuli to the evolution of modern leisure clothing for all.

2.7 Selling Suburban Aspiration

The 'Wheels of Chance'

Since the mid- to late nineteenth century, a complex system of stylistic change and inter-change was instrumental and integral to an equally complex shifting psychic and physical suburban landscape of modern work *and* popular leisure. This has primarily been understood in terms of the lower middle class 'aping' their middle-class 'betters' and denying their working-class equals - perhaps because they posed the greatest threat of incursion to the traditional middle class. Concerns about 'good taste' or more particularly its lack articulated in the furnishing of domestic interiors, cultural interests and appropriate forms of dress and behaviour were linked to the 'pernicious' spread of the suburbs and allied notions of lower-middle-class social aspiration. Thomas Crosland's vituperative condemnation of the aspiring suburban lower middle class is, although extreme, characteristic of the tone of such attacks and suggestive of the widespread anxieties that fuelled them:

> Life for this class of gentry is a plain matter of getting on, and continually getting on. To live at all, it is necessary to take incessant toll from other people - pettifogging toll if you will, but steady and progressive. And as it is all done for the perfectly honourable, legitimate and tender purpose of rendering the lots of Mrs. Subub and her dear chicks snug, comfortable, and independent, and impervious to the shocks of the world, I, Subub, shark, sweater, grabber, and pilferer though I may be, am still a good and comely man.[1]

Crosland's language is steeped in the rhetoric of social-Darwinism that pervaded much contemporary debate in the last decades of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2] He speaks of 'the suburban' in terms of a kind of evolving, but

[1] Crosland, T.H. (1905), *The Suburbans*, London: John Long: 47.

[2] *ibid:* 14. Crosland's introduction observes: 'Of ancestry the suburban has uncommonly little to say. He is sensible that his family may be reckoned as new as his house. Long descent is not his vaunt', Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* was first published in 1859 and used the idea of life as a 'struggle for existence' as a metaphor for explaining why and how some species survived and flourished while others declined and became extinct. However, he definition of 'Social Darwinism' is both complex and disputatious and its indeterminacies provided a rich source for different rhetorical uses and interpretations in various ideological contexts for an in-depth exposition of these different and conflicting accounts and the 'janiform' quality of Social Darwinist discourse see Hawkins, M. (1997) *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945. Nature as Model and Nature as Threat*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The term is used here in its popular, and

undesirable new species adapting to their habitat in chapters entitled for example, 'Their Origin', 'Their Country', or 'Their Young'. In one devoted to describing the 'suburban male' Crosland derides both the economic and social wherewithal of this human specimen to buy decent clothes and his pathetic attempts to maintain the poor replicas that his income allowed:

> Look at the unscrupulous respectability of him. Regard his well-brushed silk hat, his frock-coat with the pins in the edge of the lapel (they are always there) and the short sleeves, the trousers that are forever about to have a fringe on them, the cuffs with paper protectors and a pocket-handkerchief stuffed up one of them, the "gamp" and its valuable case, the cheap ring, the boisterous watch-chain, the dainty side-whiskers, and the blue shaven jowl... If it were a case of neglect or scorn of appearances, the male suburban might conceivably be pardoned. But there is something in the preposterous air of the man which convinces you at sight that, so far from being a scorner of appearances, he is a zealous, assiduous, and never-flagging worshipper of them. ...He is of the opinion that he "pays for dressing," and his soul within him is glad. When that frock-coat shall grow shabby, he will have it bound with braid, though he would not take the pins out of the edge of the lapel for a fortune. When that hat waxes dirty and greasy, he will have it blocked and retrimmed; and when it gets past ironing and retrimming, he will buy something in a bottle wherewithal to rub and furbish it up.

But even if he had the money Crosland knew his garments would be vulgar while at the same time believing that a man should be judged by his clothes and that appearances must be kept up at all costs. He continues:

> Here is the fallacy, and it is a suburban fallacy. No man above the degree of a fool ever took thought to put it into practice till suburbs began to be built. The sumptuary laws of Clapham, Balham, Ealing, Herne Hill, and Highgate - particularly Highgate - have decreed that the man who does not wear a silk hat and a frock-coat is hard up, damned, and no gentleman. To be told that he is no gentleman breaks the male suburban's heart. So that he sticks to his extraordinary clothing like grim death, and, taking him on the whole, may be reckoned severer in such matters than Mayfair itself.[3]

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straight forward understanding in the context of a Victorian patriarchal culture and value system that enlisted Darwinian terms such as 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest' to reinforce racial and gender stereotypes and distinctive and hierarchical biological, physical and intellectual difference. This is sense in which it is used in J.A. Mangan's discussion of the English public school system and how a teleological vision of racial superiority was nurtured by influential and overlapping groups of writers, educationalists in Britain, Europe and North America see Mangan, J. 'Social Darwinism and upper-class education in late Victorian and Edwardian England' in J.A. Mangan and J. Walvin (eds.) (1991), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

[3] Crosland 1905.

The Press and popular culture and a range of social commentators all lampooned a lower-middle-class obsession with status- consciousness and 'respectability' and reinforced a now-familiar stereotype of narrow-minded suburban predictability. The visible expression of economic indicators of suburban success, and the display of social status through consumerism, certainly increasingly constrained the lives of the suburb's main protagonists. The cost of 'keeping up appearances' in the face of increased competition and declining career options therefore assumed a new priority and was a matter of some widespread debate and discussion in the press and popular culture. [4] Cyclical trade depressions and constant technological and manufacturing innovations had a significant impact on small shopkeepers, especially those at the very margins.[5][6] Downward mobility was a real as well as imaginary threat that served to particularly beleaguer the clerical lower middle classes and undermine their sense of security.[7] This did not alter the social prestige of white-collar employment; it rather made its constituents question the pecuniary and material means by which they had to sustain such status differentials. Benjamin Orchard notably wrote an account of the problems faced by poorly paid clerks struggling even to maintain the bare essentials of suburban pride, based on a series of letters on the subject published in the *Liverpool Echo*.[8]

The culture of desirable transience that was the foundation of lower-middle-class ideals of betterment and advance possessed negative connotations by being seen as misguided 'petty' ambition characterized by stasis and disappointment. Incompetent, ineffectual husbands such as Charles Pooter, the archetypal hero in the Grossmith brothers' *Diary of a Nobody*, and their money-grasping wives and daughters with exaggerated ambitions effectively created almost an entire literary and satirical genre

[4] See Crossick 1977 for a detailed discussion of changing market situation of clerical workers.
[5] See Crossick and Haupt 1995.
[6] Greg Anderson (1977) (1988) provides a detailed account of the rise of the female white-collar worker and an in-depth exploration of the impact of lowering income differentials and increasing barriers to career advance on social stratification and class identity.
[7] For those in the lower clerical grades there was increased competition from both a working class benefiting from changes in elementary education and the progressive employment of women in the sector, see Price 1977.
[8] Orchard, B. J. (1871), *The Clerks of Liverpool*, Liverpool: L.J. Collinson. See Breward 1999: 82-84 for a discussion of Orchard's sympathetic outline of the problems faced by clerkdom in attempting to keep up appearances but also the appearance of status differentials.

in the later nineteenth century.[9] The work of Lynne Hapgood examines the huge proliferation of different kinds of academic and popular writing and social commentary whose engagement with the suburbs as a 'new kind of social terrain' she argues created a new kind of cultural consciousness about its progeny, the 'new suburbanites'.[10] The last decades of the nineteenth century marked the dawning awareness of the sudden changes that were taking place on the semi-rural margins of London. Anxieties were centred on a perception of the 'loss' of an English countryside inextricably tied in to wider notions of traditional English society and 'the suburbs became an arena for a many layered class war, with boundaries blurring and nuances of class definition rapidly increasing as the middle classes fractured'.[11] Opinion was galvanized in opposing the threat posed by the continued spread of speculative building which became synonymous with the actions of a shifting suburban demographic.

A moral literary and visual aesthetic countered the intelligence and good taste of the middle class with the silly, misguided illusions of 'pretenders' such as Charles and Carrie Pooter whose suburban lifestyle and deluded visions of grandeur were typical of those who had 'mutated' from the 'suburban melting pot' of the artisan blue-collar class and the lower echelons of the salaried clerical class. However, the fictional representation of this new suburban type, Lynne Hapgood argues, masked a more complex dynamic because it functioned to effectively diffuse the class and territorial conflict from which it arose. The inability of the Pooters and others like them to successfully play the economic market - what Hapgood describes as 'the keynote of middle-class power' - only served to reinforce the superior status of the traditional middle class and their distance, geographically and culturally from the mean proportions of the new speculative housing crammed in to less desirable, less leafy locations that was the lot of their rivals.[12] Essentially motivated by a misguided

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[9] Crosland's hatred of the female lower middle class in *The Suburbans* is particularly marked; his phrase 'money makes the mare go' serving as representative of the focus of his attack on suburbia as a whole and the aggressive and the misogynistic tone that drives much of the diatribe.
[10] Hapgood, L. (2000), ' "The New Suburbanites" and Contested Class Identities in the London Suburbs, 1880-1900' in R. Webster (2000), *Expanding Suburbia: Reviewing Suburban Narratives*, New York and Oxford: Berghan Books.
[11] *Ibid*: 35.
[12] *Ibid*: 37-38.

desire for a way of life that its aspiring devotees could in fact never achieve she suggests:

> The reassuring message was that the most private and cherished thoughts of the suburbanites were not dreams of the class struggle envisaged by Socialism and labour politics, but dreams of acceptance into the middle classes - their only desire, not revolution but endless imitation.[13]

Despite a barrage of contemporary consternation and contempt, the arrival of these new migrants essentially redefined what it was to be middle class by successfully instigating a process of evolutionary social assimilation – although this was apparently not as a result of any direct action on the part of the 'new suburbanites' themselves. Within Hapgood's schema of late-Victorian class relations the aspirational working and lower middle class lack any sense of agency other than the capacity for flight from what she defines as the alternative: the 'appalling' conditions of inner-city poverty. It is according to Hapgood, rather the ability of the traditional middle-class to accommodate and adapt to the inevitable absorption of these 'social climbers' into their midst that needs to be recognized. The rhetoric of a chattering-class literati typified by writers such as Crossman and Masterman exposed the misguided nature of lower-middle-class ambition that was equally lampooned in the more benign well-intentioned fictional accounts of Wells and the Grossmiths. However, this also 'created a strangely absurd verbal territory for suburban immigrants to inhabit' that Hapgood suggests was profitably exploited by middle-class speculative builders, planners, and architects. This was the means by which the established middle-class 'aristocracy' of the suburbs became the essential protagonists of 'successful' suburban expansion. Disavowing, on the one hand, the radical collective political activism that their supposed previous life in the slums necessitated yet, on the other, lacking the business acumen and social intelligence of their middle-class neighbours, the incomers are conceptualized as mere 'dupes'. They were condemned by their belief in an illusion of a semi-rural idyll because it is one actually realized only through delusion and imitation. For Hapgood their desire for 'improvement' is satisfied not through the fulfilment of their own vision of success, but through their wholehearted endorsement of the highly profitable middle-class version of what this should look like: a shoddy 'gerry-built' house in a less than

[13] *Ibid*: 39.

desirable geographical location that 'encoded their inferiority' in the utopian language of the new suburbanites' own second-rate version of domestic bliss.[14]

While purportedly offering a diversity of perspectives on the late Victorian suburbs, Hapgood's well-intentioned reassessment of suburban growth effectively subscribes to the dominant narrative of middle-class paternalism that her analysis purportedly seeks to expose. Part of the problem lies in the continued inability for historical interpretations of class relations in a British social context to see the social aspiration of a broad swathe of working people in terms other than deprivation and oppression, and the means of their possible contestation as equally polarized between left-wing political activism and right-wing collusion. Hapgood notes that the missing voices in her discussion are the suburbanites themselves who 'like the working classes in the slums in the 1880s remained profoundly silent'. Apparently 'co-opted into capitalism' they are condemned to the conformity of mundane, regular work in order to pay 'crippling' mortgages and sustain the shackles of respectability they are not the invisible poor but rather inarticulate dupes who swallowed wholesale a rhetoric of property ownership that rendered them politically powerless and culturally impotent. However, this thesis would argue that just who was appropriating and who assimilating is very much open to question. This social grouping might not belong to the middle class but nor *ipso facto* can their experiences be necessarily understood as grounded in the culture of the Victorian slum. Contrary to middle-class opinion, being working class and living in economic or social 'poverty' is not one and the same thing. Furthermore, evidence would in fact suggest that it was this intermediary and aspiring social grouping more than any other that were the 'architects' (using the term in its broadest sense) of suburban growth - speculative builders, small traders, merchants, and an army of low-grade municipal administrators.

Popular and intellectual critique of a supposedly deluded 'suburban imagination' generated a widespread stereotype of kitsch embourgeoisement, a more empathetic. Nevertheless distinctive popular cultural counter-rhetoric of both the limitations *and* infinite potential of social aspiration also emerged in the novels of H.G. Wells and Arnold Bennett. Wells in particular used rational recreational leisure activities, particularly cycling, as a way of exploring the complexities of lower-middle-class

[14] *Ibid*: 44-47

life and the checks and balances inherent in concepts of 'improvement. The eponymous *Kipps* (subtitled *The Story of a Simple Soul*) sees ownership of a bicycle and a cycling suit as a matter of some ambition, and it is through his chance meeting with the exuberantly confident but incompetent cyclist Mr. Chitterlow on his bicycle that Arthur Kipps finds out about his inheritance.[15] In *The History of Mr Polly*, the failed entrepreneur makes his escape on a bicycle - via a fake suicide - pedalling out beyond the confines of his failing haberdasher's shop and the constraints of commercial and marital responsibility.

Wells' short novella, *The Wheels of Chance* provides a particularly vivid portrait of mock-heroic aspiration realized through both recreational leisure and its clothing.[16] It is worth quoting at length Wells' description of the hero, Hoopdriver, for the ways in which the young clerk's lack of physical presence is seen as representative of his social status and his attempts at 'improvement' through cycling of an overwhelming desire to overcome such disadvantages. Hoopdriver's features 'were all small, but none ill-shaped' and, 'if you had noticed anything about him, it would have been chiefly to notice how little he was noticeable...He was of pallid complexion, hair of a kind of dirty fairness, greyish eyes, and a skimpy, immature moustache under his peaked indeterminate nose.'[17] However, Wells utilizes this indeterminacy as the prelude to Hoopdriver's desire to achieve something better by his decision to take up cycling, go on holiday and acquire the clothing and equipment necessary to realize these ambitions. The very act of choosing to participate in particular forms of suburban leisure is cast in a heroic light in such novels and demonstrates how a popular discourse of rational recreation linked physical exercise with class-based character development and 'improvement'. In the context of the attention paid to the 'dressing' of men's calves in the nineteenth century noted above, significantly all find expression in Hoopdriver's lower leg, 'the thing of the greatest moment to this story'. A range of much more ambiguous interpretations of an expanding social milieu of

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[15] Wells, H.G. (1961, originally published 1900), *Kipps*, London: Fontana Collins. Chitterlow is described as 'a figure with a slight anterior plumpness, progressing buoyantly on knickerbockered legs, with quite enormous calves, legs that, contrasting with Kipps' own narrow practice were even exuberantly turned out at the knees and toes. A cycling cap was worn very much on one side... The muscular cheeks of this personae and a certain generosity of chin he possessed were blue shaven, and he had no moustache. His carriage was spacious and confident; his gestures ... were irresistibly suggestive of ownership ... and took possession of the road...' 1900: 60-61.

[16] Wells, H. G. (1896), *The Wheels of Chance - A Bicycling Idyll*, London: Macmillan & Co.

[17] Wells 1896: 2.

competing identities counters any simplistic admonitions of a slavish adherence to bourgeois norms and values on the part of new mainstream consumers. However, it is misleading to see any of these as somehow either typical, or entirely free from or constrained by the power relations of class and gender and wider socio-economic conditions that clearly impacted on clothing and leisure choice. Rather, it is that vulgar excess, social and economic upwards mobility, solid bourgeois and prosperous petit bourgeois respectability, as well as the poverty of 'shabby gentility', *all* in different ways described and defined the sartorial co-ordinates of the suburban lower-middle-class in the late-nineteenth century and the culture of comparison that sustained it.[18]

As Section I has made clear, straitened circumstances were not experienced to the same extent by all within this white-collar sector, nor the lower-middle-class as a whole, and there is a fundamental contradiction inherent in satirical attacks on the dogged determination of the 'shabby genteel', the socially insecure such as Wells' Arthur Kipps, as well as the flashy extravagances of young urban swells, prosperous costermongers, publicans and other types of sporting chancers collectively known as 'mashers'.[19] The very ubiquity of these conflicting masculine sartorial 'types' suggests a much more ambivalent understanding of lower-middle-class aspirational 'success' and 'failure' than that discursively circulated according to a codified middle class sense of self based on the security of an exclusivity that was increasingly under threat.

It is clearly important to reappraise such descriptions in the light of contemporary and more complex understandings of mainstream fashionable consumption that suggest that the expansion and development of mass leisure and popular culture alongside that of the mass ready-to-wear clothing industry offered much more transformative and sometimes subversive possibilities. The comic figure of Ally Sloper who featured in the weekly comic paper *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, for example provided a catalogue of errors that 'marked the common man *as* incorrigibly common and made the cultural lines of class exclusivity seem still secure against

[18] See Breward 1999.

[19] Wells 1900: 39-40, describes Kipps' costume as a 'tremendous mash'. Having painfully risen up the drapers' apprentice hierarchy Kipps went to a tailor and replaced his short coat with a morning coat with tails and purchased 'three stand-up collars to replace his former turndown ones. They were nearly three inches high... and they made his neck quite sore, and left a red mark under his ears...'.

democracy but his repertoire of social gaffes and his obvious unashamed enjoyment of life undermined any easy assumptions being made about questions of agency.[20] Christopher Breward observes,

> Only by acknowledging the fluid manner of their operation is it possible to arrive at a clearer view of the varied meanings attached to men's clothing, its complex systems of stylistic change and finely tuned gradations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[21]

Breward does not directly situate such fluidity in relation to the lower-middle-class consumer *per se* but discursively interprets a sartorial universe of competing social groupings - one of which was the stereotypical figure of 'the clerk' that has come to epitomise them.[22] Brent Shannon similarly explores the challenges to social status worked out through clothing that were inherent to an emerging modern commodity culture and the stereotypes employed within 'competing fictions of class identity and relationships that served to reveal the subjectivity of class'.[23] The opportunities for spectacular display allowed in the new spaces of the modern city such as the music hall created the potential to both confound and confirm contemporary anxieties about dress and attitudes to popular leisure and enjoyment.

Fashionable clothing and its promotional rhetoric extolled the attractions of a new type of bachelorhood in which social aspiration and new understandings of 'professionalism' were central. But these were just elements in a widespread characterisation of the life and lifestyle of a particular kind of cosmopolitan single man popularised in novels, comic 'cuts', music hall songs and song sheets, and a host of daily and weekly newspapers featuring coverage and commentary of the consumer habits and pastimes of this group.[24] 'The bachelor' was seen as presenting a considerable commercial opportunity to expand a highly profitable niche market for the kinds of 'luxuries' that allegedly posed such a problem for those attempting to get

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[20] Bailey 1983, see also J. Traies (1986), 'Jones and the Working Girl: Class Marginality in Music-Hall Song' in J. S. Bratton (ed.), *Music Hall: Performance and Style*, Milton Keynes Open University Press.

[21] Breward 1999: 59.

[22] This references Deshler Welch's 1896 *The Bachelor and the Chafing Dish* that Breward 1999: 175-178, argues is representative of the genre, but he also cites Duncan Schwann (1910) *Book of a Bachelor*.

[23] Shannon 2006: 143-144

[24] See Breward 1999, particularly Chapter 3, 'Each man to his station: clothing, stereotypes and the patterns of class' for a detailed discussion.

by or get married on 'a hundred and fifty pounds a year' and less - tobacco, alcohol, membership of clubs, dances and visits to the theatre, as well as fashionable clothing 'to be seen in'.[25] Seen in juxtaposition with the figure of the 'New Woman' discussed in Section 2.4, the widespread dissemination of these leisured 'types' can be seen as figureheads of a particular kind of urban modernity and a fashionable 'smartness' that was central to contemporary constructions of modern femininity and masculinity. More particularly, this raises questions about how this cultural circuit of consumer desire realised through rational recreational leisure clothing was discursively circulated to lower middle class consumers of both genders and *their* 'performance' of sub-urban modernity.[26]

On his left shin there were two large bruises, one a leaden yellow graduating here and there into purple, and another obviously of more recent date, of a blotchy red – tumid and threatening... even in a shop assistant does the warmth of manhood assert itself, and drive him against all the conditions of his calling, against the counsels of prudence and the restrictions of his means, to seek the wholesome delights of exertion and danger and pain.

Fig. 44 H.G. Wells (1896), *The Wheels of Chance*: 9.

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[25] Breward 1999: 175.:

[26] *Ibid*: 173. Breward argues that the figure of the male *flaneur* was central to ideas of a metropolitan culture at the heart of which was a host of masculine pleasures. The concept of the fashionable modern bachelor 'was utilised by retailer and consumer as a prop upon which products and attitudes could be hung'. Greg Norcliffe similarly uses the figure of *flaneur* to describe the bicycle boom of the late-nineteenth century and situate both riders and machines as a 'vehicle' of urban modernity, see Norcliffe, G. (2005), *The Ride to Modernity: The Bicycle in Canada, 1869-1900,* Toronto: Toronto University Press.

The introduction of multiple retailing opportunities all offered under one roof, David Chaney argues would have been impossible without the means of effective communication between store and consumer beyond direct face to face contact and sometimes over long distances.[27] Department stores had to compete in a modern media market place where a whole range of commercial enterprises offered cheap, ready-made goods to a new mass audience. A major mail order trade was built up through the distribution of extensive, illustrated catalogues through which bourgeois culture was disseminated as an extremely desirable way of life that the aspirational white-collar worker could imitate and access through the purchase of for example a Bon Marche tablecloth, coat, or a Gamages tennis racket.[28] *Gamages General Catalogue* of 1913 promoted its remit as providing 'All requisites for Sports, Games, Recreations, Cycling; Motor Accessories, Clothing, Hosiery, Photography, Horticulture, Fancy Goods Etc. Etc.'**[Fig. 45]**.

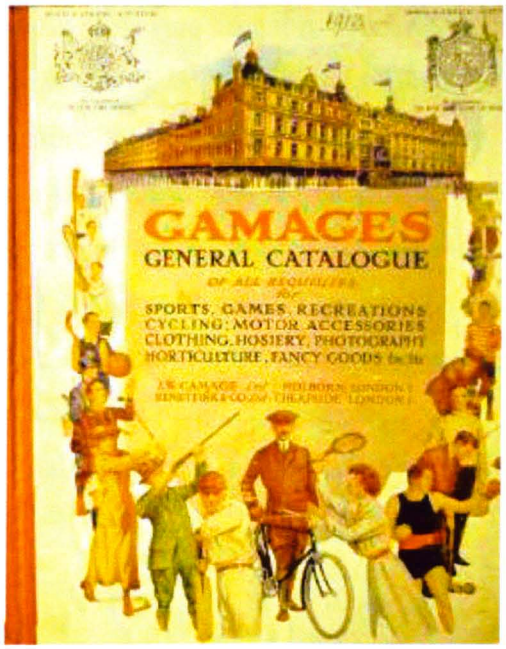

Fig. 45
Front Cover, *Gamages General Catalogue 1913*

Beneath the now-familiar trademark image of the store representations of various sporting men and women form a wreath-like semi-circle with the iconic suburban male cyclist in Norfolk jacket, knickerbockers and cap holding centre stage **[Fig.45]**. But there was an obvious aspirational element in many of the goods on offer. For

[27] Chaney 1983: 23.
[28] Miller 1981: 184-185.

example, almost 59 different kinds of bicycles for adults and children were offered alongside the Gamages' explorer's table and mosquito curtaining, as well as equipment and clothes for the early motorist such as fur lined overboots, goggles, fur coats, and stoves for the 'motor house'.[29] Catalogues such as that of Gamages, and other specialist publications produced by retailers and wholesalers evolved into a sophisticated form of trade that extended the concept of 'selling everything under one roof' - but clear distinctions in pricing and selling techniques arguably emerged in relation to the perceived different social groupings they were selling to.[30] By the late-nineteenth century a whole 'typology' of 'fashioned' and fashionable suburban recreational leisured bodies had emerged and were discursively formulated and disseminated in the press and popular culture, not least in the visual and textual rhetoric of the trade and specialist press - which is clearly of some significance to this research.

Leisure clothing and accessories were arguably promoted in a way that *specifically* targeted suburban lower-middle-class consumers and addressed the diversity of different and disparate leisure enthusiasts *within* the suburban lower middle class to create a particular trope of popular rational recreational discourse and a parallel repertoire of sartorial and social aspiration. This is most visibly demonstrated in the frequent employment of a comparative vista of leisure choice in tailoring guides that were a particularly prevalent conduit for disseminating popular 'tasteful' consumption;[31] here the suburban cyclist is often pictured as just one example in a whole gamut of recreational enjoyment ranging from walking, to fishing, to hunting and shooting **[Fig. 46]**.

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[29] Adburgham 1979: 162.

[30] Sarah Cheang examines the way in which China and 'the Oriental' was sold to a suburban female consumer through a survey of the catalogues of Whiteleys of Westbourne Grove in west London, and Liberty & Co. and Debenham & Frebodys whose shops were situated in the West End of London. Cheang compares the lay out and rhetoric of the different stores' listing of the same goods and demonstrates the differences in merchandising that emerge between the prestigious West End stores aimed at an up-market clientele and the more "immediately grasped" form of retailing of the West London store of Whiteleys which Cheang argues was aimed at a middle- and lower-middle-class market. see Cheang, S. (2007), 'Selling China: Class, Gender and Orientalism at the Department Store' in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 20: 1-16.

[31] Breward 1999.

Fig. 46 'Norfolk and Sporting Jackets' in W.D.F. Vincent (1904)

Richard Gruneau's conceptual framework situates leisure, sports and games as crucial constitutive factors in shaping the way individuals make sense of themselves, of others, and of the world around them.[32] Gruneau argues that sport and leisure are concrete social practices that do not just emerge 'naturally' out of social interaction, nor merely reflect 'received' states of consciousness. They are activities that people produce in different forms in different ways out of the everyday experience and social life and through which, as human agents they 'produce, reproduce, and produce anew the conditions of their own existence'. Thus, he concludes:

> Although the meanings, metaphoric qualities and symbolic representations associated with the practice of play, games and sports vary, are openly textured, and imperfectly shared, they are nonetheless connected in an indissoluble, constitutive way to the raw experiences of material history.[33]

One of Thornton's guides offers a particularly spectacular evocation of how various combinations of tweed jackets, knickers, breeches, socks, spats and particularly accessories such as caps, sticks, canes and other forms of sporting equipment might

[32] Gruneau, R. (1983 Revd. edn. 1999), *Class, Sports and Social Development*, Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press. Gruneau very much draws on the work of British cultural historian Raymond Williams and a Marxist paradigm of hegemony or rather cultural forms and practices of human socialization that are incorporated into a set of hegemonic processes; see in particular Williams, R. (1977), *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[33] Gruneau 1983/1999: 31

be mixed and matched by the suburban consumer. Of especial note is how the hunting crop is seemingly interchangeable with a bicycle pump seemingly incurring no loss of status and depicted through the same archetypal 'aristocratic' pose **[Figs. 47. 48]**.

Figs. 48, 49 Thornton (1911) *International System of Garment Cutting*

By the turn of the century, popular representations of upper-class gentlemen, muscular Christian recreationalists, urban 'mashers', aristocratic fashionable ladies, and young female suburban scorchers were all part of a system of desire and display in which such stereotypical images were circulated, reproduced and transformed through a complex dynamic interchange between clothing producers and retailers and consumers. In the context of the emergence of and mass popular recreational leisure in the nineteenth century, these sartorial images can be seen as shifting signifiers of new 'modern' subjectivities transformed through new methods of

manufacture and promotion. As Breward argues, the recognition of the relationship between stereotype and reality by consumers implied 'a more robust playing off of contradictory images, role models, aspirations and boundaries took place through processes of self-presentation than the stricter parameters of more didactic texts allow. Thus, sartorial images become not so much static representations of an unchanging social hierarchy but a contested site where various identities and subjectivities can be played out in terms of gender and class.'[34]

Within the promotional rhetoric of popular rational recreational clothing the figure of young male suburban cyclist in tweed suit and knickerbockers created a popular 'athletocracy' to match that of their 'betters' on the playing fields of Eton **[Fig. 49]**.

Fig. 49 *Men's Wear, 20 April 1907*

[34] Breward 1999: 59

This was equally extended, perhaps uniquely, to their sisters similarly enjoying new opportunities for both work and leisure in tailor-mades, 'revolutionary' blouses, ties and boaters representative of a corresponding popular 'rationality' **[Fig. 50]**. The visual and textual rhetoric of trade guides and catalogues, advertisements, and a diverse range of popular cultural forms all promoted and exploited these representative types through a culture of inclusiveness that suggests the specific targeting of a suburban lower middle class for whom relative opportunities for both work and leisure were arguably expanding and more fully realised for both genders **[Fig. 51]**. Young women's bicycling has often been cited as 'sounding the death knell of the chaperone' in polite society. Whilst this may or may not be true, and again like the wearing or not wearing of 'rationals' is neither evidence one way or another of either new understandings of female sexuality nor indeed sexual licence, what is evident is how the idea was again swiftly incorporated into popular culture and the promotional rhetoric of the trade in a way perhaps uniquely referent of the lower middle class.

Fig. 50 *The Outfitter*, 29 September 1906

Fig. 51 Vincent (1900), *Systems of Cutting All Kinds of Tailor-Made Garments*

Fig. 52 Advertisement in *The Monthly Record*, April 1905

Not only were their sons and daughters now working in the same organizations, attending evening classes and other vocational courses in the same institutions and belonging to the same clubs and societies, they were also a class for whom companionate marriage was not just a romantic ideal but the very foundation of socio- economic improvement and advance **[Figs. 52, 53]**. Arguably no other section of the clothing trade, nor pictures in fashion plates showing other forms of fashionable clothing in the late nineteenth century, depicted men and women together in quite the same way.

Fig. 53

'He has an ailing wife...' C. Duncan Lucas 1903 *Cycling London*