

Knitted textiles, Sportsclothes and the Development of London Wholesale Couture: 1920-1939.

Abstract:

This paper considers the garments produced by two London Ready-to-Wear companies; Rose and Blairman and Matita, during the 1920s and 1930s. It centres on the sportsclothes produced by these two firms and questions why their output was primarily made from knitted textiles. Rose and Blairman and Matita later went on to become leading wholesale couture firms. The focus period of this paper largely represents the pre-history of the wholesale couture sector, the term first used in the mid 1930s. However, this paper establishes why knitted textiles and sportsclothes were central to Rose and Blairman and Matita's output and how these ultimately helped to ensure the early success of the sector.

Keywords:

Wholesale Couture; Sportsclothes; Knitted Textiles; Rose and Blairman; Matita

A 1933 Rose and Blairman advertisement in *Tatler* featured four knitted ensembles—the names of each; “Bridge”, “Golf”, “Racing” and “Shopping”, suggesting the activities they were suited to. “Golf”, the advertisement suggested, was “for the woman who cares about her appearance on the golf course. Light in weight and lacy in texture, it is made in the newest colours blended with brightly contrasted shades. Like all good sweaters it is versatile enough to be worn for any kind of sport”, whilst “Racing” was “knitted in an exaggerated houndstooth check [...] smarter and more comfortable for all sports than any tweed costume [and] equally chic for spring mornings in town” (*Tatler* 8 February 1933: 1). This advertisement illustrates the early 1930s predominance of knitted textiles for sportsclothes and that whilst designed for sports, these clothes were adaptable, casual and suited to the town, country or any kind of sporting activity. Rose and Blairman was a pioneer of such versatile, fashionable knitwear for modern women who lived active lives.

Rose and Blairman were, what was later to be known as, a wholesale couture firm, producing high quality ready-to-wear garments for discerning women internationally. This sector of the industry was at its peak between the mid 1930s and 1960s however some of the firms (like Rose and Blairman) who went on to establish the sector were founded in the 1920s. This paper considers the knitted garments- predominantly sportsclothes- produced by Rose and Blairman and another similar company, Matita. The focus period of this paper, 1920-1939, largely represents the pre-history of the wholesale couture sector, the term first used in the mid 1930s, however here I will make clear how and why knitted textiles were key to their early success. Garments made from knitted textiles were not the sole focus of these companies. As this paper will establish, they produced a wide variety of woven garments too, however, between 1920-1935, the majority of their output was made from knitted textiles.

Unquestionably there are striking similarities between Rose and Blairman and Matita and also their foundation sets them apart from other wholesale couture brands. Both firms were established early in the context of the wholesale couture sector more broadly, with all three founders working as agents before becoming company directors of their own firms. Furthermore, both were initially designing and manufacturing their products not just in London but Paris too. It can also be seen that their output was relatively similar, both began primarily producing sportsclothes in knitted fabrics, before turning towards an output that focused more heavily on tailoring from the mid 1930s onwards. Their output was quite different to other wholesale couture firms that were established in the early 1920s, including Chas. Kuperstein and A&N Brenner, whose output was broader and included more tailored garments, evening and cocktail wear too.

This paper in considering both British sportsclothes and British early twentieth century knitted garments discusses two areas of fashion and textiles history which have been, thus far, underrepresented in academic study. In 2015 Jean Williams argued, in her introduction for a special issue on Fashioning the Sporting Body in the journal *Sport in History*, that, "American sportswear has the most sustained academic literature [...] however, there is now an emerging interest in how British sports clothing developed a wider consumer base, although much work remains to be done" (Williams 2015: 10). Similarly, Fiona Skillen and

Lauren Beatty suggested in 2022 that “the emergence of sports specific clothing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been explored by academics, yet with only a few exceptions, little has been written about the development of sportswear for women in Britain in this period.” Responding to this, here I consider some of the relatively early developments of fashionable British sportsclothes and how these fit amongst wider design narratives of the time.

In 2023 Sandy Black wrote “knitwear’s position in relation to fashion is still an under-researched area, in particular its design and realization [...] The skills and creativity required to design knitwear and execute pattern, structure and complex shaping (often at the same time) have been overlooked and undervalued in histories and scholarship about textiles and fashion (3).” A notable exception is the research carried out by the members of the “Fleece to Fashion” research team at the University of Glasgow. They suggest that their project “investigates the history of the Scottish knitwear sector, following the production cycle from the raw material to the fashioned garment, and interrogating why and how knitting has adapted to and survived modernization to become a distinctive heritage brand in the modern Scottish economy and culture” (Abrams Chapman, Gardner, Moskowitz and Tuckett 2023: 3). The research presented here builds on this work, albeit in a British context.

The interwar period (1919-1939) was, as various scholars have argued (see: Black: 2012, 2023; Blackman: 1988 and Gardner: 2023), vitally important for the knitted outerwear industry, a period of creativity and of considerable advances in technology, particularly around the production of machine-knitted outerwear. In this article both hand and machine knitting are considered as Rose and Blairman and Matita embraced both methods in the 1920s and 1930s- each were seen to have their own fashionable merits, hand knitted garments suggested exclusivity, whilst machine knitted were seen as modern. This is important because, as Vesna Marija Potočić Matković (2010: 124) has highlighted, until very recently (see for example Gardner: 2023) research focused on the history of knitwear has been concerned primarily with hand-knitted and not machine-knitted garments. There are various reasons why this has been the case including the relatively short history of machine-knitted outerwear and that it has historically been viewed as less creative than hand-knitting.

Methodology

This paper largely relies on magazine editorials and advertisements for its source material. It traces the early history of Rose and Blairman and Matita's output through the pages particularly of the trade journal *Drapers' Organiser*, fashion magazines *Tatler* and *Vogue* and local and national newspapers accessible via the British Newspaper Archive. Both companies were prolific advertisers from their foundation and these advertisements and editorials provide rich information about the design, manufacture and customer base of their garments.

I considered here various key fashion publications of the period, *Tatler* and *Harpers' Bazaar* were consulted digitally, whilst I manually searched through all issues of British *Vogue* published between 1920 and 1939 for evidence of the two firms' production. *Drapers' Organiser* has been used particularly extensively, every issue published between 1920 and 1939 was consulted for this research. The journal, established in 1914, is less well-known in terms of trade periodicals than its competitor *Drapers' Record*, however the journal is extremely useful for fashion and textile historians studying the 1920s and 1930s. This is because the journal, unusually for the time, included considerable colour content and, owing to its large size, also published clear black and white images too. In addition to these sources via the British Newspaper archive I also searched local and national newspapers for evidence of the two companies' garments (the search terms used were "Rose and Blairman", "Dorville" and "Matita" during the period 1920-1939).

There are however issues with this research methodology, especially when considering the textiles used for garments- as it can be difficult to identify whether garments are made from knitted or woven textiles from illustrations and photographs. Whilst images in fashion magazines are often relatively clear, those in newspapers are not, their small scale often means details are hard to pick out, and unless accompanied by a rich textual description of the garment, it can be challenging to tell how these garments were made and what they were made from. For example, from images alone it is challenging to tell if garments were made by hand or machine and also whether they were produced using the fully-fashioned

or cut-and-sew method, which was becoming increasingly popular in the period studied here. Fully-fashioning, as Lin Gardner writes involved “simultaneous knitting and shaping of garment pieces—fronts, backs, sleeves—before joining. Once the garment pieces were knitted the seams were joined by linking rather than being stitched together by sewing machine. Linking was a skilled occupation that involved putting every loop or stitch of the garment pieces to be joined over the individual needles of a linking machine before joining them” (Gardner 2023: 11). On the other hand. Cut-and-sew involved creating pattern pieces from knit panels, much in the way you would with woven fabric. This method requires less skill to join together the pattern pieces but does result in lots of waste fabric and can create bulky seams (see Black 2002: 189).

This approach, relying heavily on magazines and newspapers, was necessary for two reasons, firstly because there are no known surviving business records nor archival material relating to either Matita or Rose and Blairman, and secondly owing to a lack of surviving garments. Indeed, very few garments by either firm which pre-date World War Two survive. There are multiple reasons as to why this is the case. Primarily this is a matter of textiles. Almost all wholesale couture garments produced prior to 1945 were made from natural fibres, largely, as this paper will illustrate, wool. Such fibres are particularly susceptible to pests such as moths, meaning they are less likely to survive. Furthermore, the focus by these firms on sportsclothes- practical garments designed to be worn time and again- means it is highly likely that these pieces would have simply been worn until they wore out. Matita and Rose and Blairman both labelled their garments. However, the few surviving examples indicate that these labels are typically quite large and woven, stitched (at times awkwardly) into garment centre seams and necklines. It is conceivable that many were removed simply because they were uncomfortable against the skin.

There is however a notable exception. Extensive research has indicated that there are just two knitted sportswear garments from the 1920s or 1930s by either firm held in a British museum collection. These garments (not catalogued as an ensemble, but it is likely the two garments were purchased together) were produced by Rose and Blairman under their brand name Dorville, and form part of the National Museums Scotland collection. The pieces are a striking off-white wide-legged lightweight fine knitted wool jersey jumpsuit (A.1986.49)

(figure 1) and a complementary sleeveless and backless rib-knitted wool jumper (A.1986.37) (figure 2). Other similar garments were described as “sun-sweaters”. The two pieces have a clear nautical influence, one can visualise these striking garments being well suited to promenading along the coast or relaxing on the deck of a cruise ship. Whilst these garments are a rare survival, studying original advertisements and editorials makes clear that they are very typical of Rose and Blairman’s output- in terms of textile and garment design- in the early to mid 1930s.

Establishing the firms

Wholesale couturiers operated at the very pinnacle of the British ready-to-wear trade. The majority of their garments were copied or adapted from Parisian couture. However, these designs were modified to meet ready-to-wear manufacturing techniques in Britain. They focused on high quality production, using the best fabrics possible and incorporated hand finished details. The garments they produced were high-fashion, representing current modes. These firms were producing relatively expensive- arguably investment- pieces. Despite this, wholesale couture production was typically viewed as good value for money, these were garments with top fashion credentials but were also designed to last. The term wholesale couture is arguably oxymoronic. Many of the early established wholesale couture firms did initially trade as wholesalers- importing garments from overseas. In the 1920s they were largely importing from France and to a limited extent Austria, Switzerland and Germany too. In the 1930s, many of the same companies were importing ready-to-wear clothing from America to sell. They were then selling on these garments to retailers in Britain, or in some instances further afield too. However, by the time the wholesale couture trade was properly established in the mid 1930s these companies were not primarily trading as wholesalers. Rather, they were manufacturers of high-end ready-to-wear clothing.

Both Rose and Blairman and Matita largely targeted their clothes at a middle-class market. This is conveyed through the language used to describe their garments- as “correct”, “right” and ultimately in “good taste” (See: *Drapers’ Organiser* For January 1930: 38; *Tatler* 21 September 1932: F and *Vogue* 17 February 1932: 10-11). As I have argued elsewhere, such advertising pointed to the importance of being dressed appropriately for occasions and

being aware of, yet not victim to, fashion. In their language these advertisements tapped into middle-class fears around respectability and dress codes (Tregenza 2023: 17). The increasing accessibility of mass-produced clothes meant that a broader spectrum of women had access to good quality fashionable clothing, and that middle-class women increasingly had to find new ways to sartorially assert themselves (See: Horwood 2005: 8). Textiles were a key element to creating this distinction, as lower priced ready-to-wear garments were better made than before, yet the difference could be seen in the choice of fabric. Wholesale couture firms often had textiles specially made for them, with exclusive rights to their use- A 1932 Rose and Blairman advertisement for example included a “tailored suit in honeycomb woollen specially woven for Dorville” (*Vogue* 28 September 1932: 25).

Like almost all wholesale couture companies, both Rose and Blairman and Matita were established by figures of Jewish heritage. Matita was founded in Paris, c.1923 with a line of simple jersey separates. This branch of the company, initially run under the brand name ‘Tricots de Luxe Modeles’, operated from 7 Rue Nouvelle in the 9th Arrondissement (whilst this business remained in the same building the road became Rue Cardinal Mercier in 1926). The English translation of this name is Luxury Knitwear Models, pointing to the early focus of the brand. The Parisian brand name was changed to ‘Couture Sports Modeles’ in 1927 (*Drapers’ Organiser* For May 1928: VI). The London branch was established by Max Alfred Adler in 1924 with showrooms at 124 Great Portland Street. Adler was born in Paddington, London in 1894, the son of wine merchants who had emigrated to London from Germany in the 1880s.

Rose and Blairman was established by Harold Woodman Rose (born Harold Wolf Rosenberg in 1896 in Birmingham) and David Blairman (born David Blairmann in 1893 in Liverpool). Both men were of Jewish heritage, Rose’s grandparents had emigrated to England around the 1860s, and his father was a wholesale manufacturing clothier. Blairman’s parents were Polish immigrants, and his father (Jacob) Harris Blairman was a leading antiques dealer. Rose and Blairman was established c.1921 and produced most of its garments under the brand name Dorville. That year, the company first appeared in *Kelly’s Post Office London Commercial and Trades Directory* described as “manufacturer’s agents” operating from 2 Harewood Place, Hanover Square, London (Kelly and Co 1921: 1779). They moved to 106

New Bond Street in 1923 and then to 34,35 and 36 Margaret Street in 1928. As early advertising points to, the company initially began selling imported French goods, before also manufacturing their own, primarily knitted, garments. The Parisian arm of the company, called Dorville, was initially located at 10 Rue de L'Elysee, 8th Arrondissement before moving to 27 Rue Bleue, 9th Arrondissement in 1922 (*Drapers' Organiser*, 21 May 1921: 20).

There is some evidence of Rose and Blairman in the 1921 census and a small number of their early employees can be traced. The transcription of the 1921 census is not perfect and consequently this likely only represents a fraction of the workforce employed by Rose and Blairman. These employees included Dorothy Barnard- a clerk; Albert John Doe- a junior clerk; Bertha Ann Leopold- a showroom sales assistant; Marie Marcella- a dressmaker; Hithy (?) Roterman- a shorthand typist and Philip White- a commercial traveller. It is interesting that these employees described the company they worked for in different ways- from "silk goods manufacturer", to "wholesale clothiers" and "wholesale gown and jersey". This indicates that early on, despite describing themselves as "The Premier Knit-Goods House" (figure 3), the firm were producing a range of garments (*Drapers' Organiser* April 1923: 105).

Generally, very little information can be found about the figures who designed, cut, stitched and knitted wholesale couture garments. This is broadly the case with early-to-mid twentieth century ready-to-wear garment production partially because, as Bethan Bide (2021:178) has argued, couture design and bespoke making has been valued as "more creative than the labour involved in the production of mass-market ready-to-wear." Information regarding who designed and made knitwear is particularly scarce and in the 1930s no formal training for knitwear designers existed. Producing successful knitted garments consequently relied on close collaboration between clothing designers and technical staff, as Gardner (2023: 15) suggests "to ensure good quality handle as well as fit and shape."

It seems likely that both Rose and Blairman and Matita employed designers and workroom hands in London and Paris during the 1920s. A 1925 editorial suggested for example that Rose and Blairman's head designer was based in Paris, and that their model hands in Paris,

were preparing the new collections (*Women's Wear Daily* 9 November 1925: 40). In 1926 an article indicated that Mr N.S. Watkins had left the gown department and that a new designer Madame Cerutti, had been appointed. Furthermore, they had also recruited a new designer in the sportswear department, Gwendoline Jenner, who had previously been a designer for Messrs. Harewood Knitwear (*Drapers' Organiser* March 1926: 79). Of these figures it has only been possible to trace Jenner, who also produced fashion sketches for the London couture house Madame Handley-Seymour. In 1928 Matita published an advertisement that suggested that "Monsieur Manelle, the well known Parisian designer" had taken control of the designing and cutting department for the London house, and alongside this they had considerably increased their staff (*Drapers' Organiser* For May 1928: VI). The employment of a Parisian designer in 1928 is particularly significant, the fact that Matita published an advertisement to announce his employment is striking and unusual, pointing to the pedigree that French design was seen to have at the time.

French vs British design

In the 1920s both Rose and Blairman and Matita proudly promoted the associations they had with their Paris houses, placing the addresses prominently in advertising copy and also implying that new designs were regularly arriving from Paris. Overall in the 1920s advertisements indicated that it was a combination of ideas from the two fashion centres which helped them to create their aesthetic (see: *Drapers' Organiser* September 1928: XI). However, by the early 1930s there was a clear shift in advertising policy for both firms. Their Paris addresses were removed from advertising copy and instead emphasis was placed on the British nature of the clothes they produced- typically suggesting garments were London made in British fabrics. To provide one example, a 1932 Rose and Blairman advertisement suggested;

"Dorville models are British made throughout from the raw material to the finished garment. We are indebted to the cordial co-operation of the leading British mills in producing for us novelty fabrics superior to anything formerly obtained from Foreign sources" (*Vogue* 20 January 1932: 4-5).

This advertisement is interesting in numerous ways. Firstly, it places patriotic emphasis on the British nature of the garments- making clear that their production was British in every way possible. Furthermore, it suggests that these products were superior to imported garments. The 1930s saw a period of economic depression in Great Britain. It seems likely that one of the reasons why wholesale couturiers turned away from selling foreign imported goods related to their costs, foreign garments incurred high import taxes, and therefore were often more expensive than those produced at home. However, the middle-classes, the women whom wholesale couturiers primarily targeted, were the section of British society “least affected by the economic depression of the interwar years” (Horwood 2005: 12). Furthermore, despite this increasing shift to promoting the Britishness of their garments both firms were still importing foreign garments to wholesale. The sun sweater held by NMS, discussed earlier in this paper and likely dating to the mid 1930s, has “foreign” on its label. It is interesting that the sweater does not state its precise country of manufacture, this alludes to the fact that the “foreign” knitted garment- whether from France, Switzerland or perhaps Austria, was desirable to British customers, perhaps more so than garments made in England, despite the shift in advertising policy.

Sportsclothes

The earliest advertisements for Rose and Blairman that have been found date to 1921. In that year the company were regularly advertising in *Draper's Organiser*- largely these early advertisements are not illustrated simply suggesting the products they were selling, for example “knitted robes, cloaks and jumpers” and providing their address (See: *Drapers' Organiser* 13 August 1921: 16). Early advertising taglines tended to focus on the “knitwear”, “knitted goods” or “sportswear” produced by the company. It is unsurprising that both Rose and Blairman and Matita primarily produced knitted garments in the early to mid 1920s- knitted textiles allowed manufacturers a degree of flexibility. For ready-to-wear clothing this was particularly important, as it meant garments could be made up in only a relatively small number of sizes but fit a large range of different women. Furthermore, the fashionable silhouettes of the 1920s were particularly well suited to knitted textiles- the relatively boxy silhouettes, popular for much of the decade, could easily be executed in knitted textiles.

In the 1920s and early 1930s Matita and Rose and Blairman primarily produced what was described as “sportswear”, “sportsclothes” or “sportskits”. Whilst quite different to contemporary sportswear, these garments were designed for women who actively participated in sports, alongside well-dressed spectators. Alison Goodrum (2015: 60) suggests this mode of attire in the 1930s “may be summed up by what is sometimes termed today as ‘smart-casual’. The term ‘sportswear’ encompassed male and female clothing and often referred to versatile separates that could be mixed in a variety of coordinating ways.”

The late Victorian period is typically as Skillen and Beatty (2022) suggest considered to be the “birthplace of modern sport [...] It was during this time that many sports, for both men and women, established governing bodies to draw complex networks of clubs and individuals together, to formalize their rules and regulations and set up regular events.” Whilst specialist sports departments began to emerge in department stores in this period (See Biddle-Perry: 2014 and Skillen and Beatty: 2022) women outside of the upper classes generally still wore modified versions of the fashionable style of the time, rather than garments made specifically for sporting activities (Campbell Warner: 2013). It was only in the interwar period with what Skillen has called a “a “boom in sporting participation amongst women” (Skillen 2012a: 165), that sportswear as a type of fashionable clothing in its own right really became widespread.

The interwar period saw an international ‘vogue’ for sportclothes. In America, as Goodrum (2015: 56) indicates “this was a time, as no other before, when sports, sportswear and fashion overlapped.” There has consequently been fairly extensive academic consideration of American sportsclothes in this period (See: Arnold: 2007, 2008 and 2009; Campbell Warner: 2005, 2006 and 2013, Goodrum 2015 and Martin: 1985). Similarly, in France, as Sandrine Jamain-Samson (2011:1944) suggests “the period between the two world wars saw the transformation of the institutional landscape of sport in France”. This has a direct impact on fashion, this “sportswear revolution” paralleling the new way of dressing that had come to characterise France, produced by designers such as Gabrielle Chanel and Jean Patou.

Across Britain in the 1920s and 1930s women from a variety of backgrounds joined athletic, physical culture and fitness organizations (Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 301). Whilst this period saw an opening up of sports for women across the social classes, it was still primarily middle-class women who participated in most sports (Skillen 2012b). For example, Catherine Horwood writes that tennis was “central to the middle-class social scene, not only as a spectator sport but also as an activity that underpinned acceptance in local society and acted as a catalyst for social interplay” (Horwood 2005: 82). Active participation in sports was central to the creation of the new “modern” more independent woman, Skillen suggests she was not only fashionable but held a “distinct set of values and a particular approach to life” (Skillen 2012a: 169).

Rose and Blairman and Matita advertisements repeatedly indicate the focus on clothing for four activities: tennis, golf, hiking (or walking/rambling) and swimming (or beachwear) (figure 4). One 1926 advertisement for example shows the actress Enid Stamp-Taylor modelling a variety of garments. These relatively simple garments, if shown by themselves, might not be overtly suggestive of the sports they were suited to. However, the advertisement also includes images of tennis, sailing and golf to emphasise their suitability for active sporting participation (*Drapers' Organiser* March 1926: XIII) (figure 5). Skillen, reviewing similar advertisements, has pointed to the fact that the activities typically represented in such advertisements do not portray the true selection of sporting activities that were popular at the time. Netball and hockey, she argues were also both popular yet, as contact sports, do not appear. Consequently, rather than representing women's participation in sport these illustrate what was “deemed uncontroversial enough for advertisers to use.” i.e. those “which did not threaten to undermine traditional notions of femininity” (Skillen 2012b: 760).

The female body in these sportsclothes became particularly important, not least because it was increasingly exposed- Dorville's “beach togs” for example included; fine elastic-knitted wool swimsuits with brassiere fronts and bare backs, lightweight “uncrushable” linen two-piece suits, sunbathing dresses and matching coatees in nautical jersey and bell-bottomed flannel trousers teamed with tightly-fitted wool backless sweaters. Ultimately the desirable body in this period was “slim, toned but not overly muscular” (Skillen 2012: 756). This was a

body that could be created through sport and exercise, rather than necessarily moulded through underpinnings as had previously been the case (although underwear was still an important element of the slim silhouette). However, in the interwar period, whilst keeping fit was “extensively advocated” there was a balance. Competitive sport for women, alongside slimming in the pursuit of fashion, were deemed “controversial because they threatened to subvert femininity and undermine reproductive capacity” (Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2011: 301). Whilst sport offered increasing freedoms for women, it was undeniable that there was still a policing of women’s bodies in terms of what and deemed appropriate (and ultimately viewed as desirable to men).

The choice of textiles made by fashion companies was vital in moulding, encasing and showing off this modern body- for eveningwear in the 1930s clinging bias cut garments, with shoestring straps and exposed backs, executed in slippery silk satins or silk velvet devores were incredibly popular. For daywear, particularly participation in active sports, knitted textiles were advantageous. Their dynamic stretch allowed for ease of movement and also comfort, able to move and stretch as the woman herself did. Fine-knitted wool jerseys for example would cling tightly to the body, in an era before widespread stretch synthetics, allowing the closest fit possible of garments. Woollen knit sweaters were also popular, seen as a “hygienic” option thanks to their “capacity to absorb sweat after practice, or simply to protect the muscles from the cold and so prevent them from stiffening up” (Jamain-Samson 2011: 1952).

Textiles

Whilst British firms had a long history of making garments suited for sporting activities, in the 1920s firms like Rose and Blairman and Matita, increased the fashion content of such pieces, ensuring that they were stylish as well as practical. The rising fashionability of sportsclothes occurred in tandem with that of knitted garments. Cally Blackman has argued that knitwear only entered the world of high fashion during the twentieth century, and it was particularly during the period c. 1908-1939 that it was “transformed from the merely utilitarian or functional object into an important element of fashionable dress” (Blackman 1998: 177). Prior to this, as Gardner (2023: 5) writes, knitted outerwear was “predominantly

worn by children of all classes and adults who worked on the land or sea. Adults who worked outside benefited from the warmth and flexibility that knitted outerwear provided.” It was largely these characteristics of knitted outerwear that made it attractive to those with the income and leisure time to enjoy outdoor sports and pastimes.

Black (2023: 6) points to the interwar years as being particularly important for the fashionability of knitted garments, suggesting that in the early 1920s handknitted Fair Isle jumpers were “highly prized” due to their “unique design and provenance” and that during the 1920s and 30s, colorful new “jazz” pattern jumpers were widely adopted. The fashionability of knitted woollen garments by companies like Rose and Blairman and Matita was repeatedly emphasised in both advertising and editorial copy. Many articles focused on the fact that knitted woollen garments by the 1930s were no longer “clumsy” or “stodgy” and that these garments were easy to wear with “cut, line, design and fit [...] as perfect as the tailor-made garment.” Furthermore, from the early 1920s onwards there was an increased focus on knitted jumpers as fashionable attire for any time of day. With these garments, particularly for afternoon or evening wear, referred to as “sweaters” rather than jumpers (*Daily Mirror* 07 October 1932: 23).

Black (2023: 5) suggests from the “knitwear designer’s viewpoint, sweaters, jackets, cardigans and coats provided a blank surface to be filled with graphic imagery and/or stitch textures interplaying together, with infinite variations and adaptability”. In the 1920s sweaters came in myriad designs and styles, but the longline, and somewhat oversized sweaters of the 1920s particularly were a perfect canvas for big, bold patterns. There are various examples of such interesting high-fashion knitted sweaters, jumpers and cardigans by both Matita and Rose and Blairman in advertisements and editorials. They produced their pieces in a rainbow of bold colours and a broad selection of modern designs representative of the popular artistic movements of the day. For example; colours listed for Dorville sweaters included cerise, powder blue, salad green and gorse with many stripe, geometric, futuristic and trompe l’oeil designs offered. There were also striking sweaters produced using perhaps more unusual yarns and techniques, these included sweaters knitted from a yarn in which ostrich feathers were spun with the wool, giving an unusual texture (*Lancashire Evening Post* 24 August 1933: 8) and delicate sweaters made from hand-

made woollen lace (*The Dundee Courier* 15 December 1932: 8). These sweaters resemble blouses made from woven textiles and are likely Raschel fabric made using a weft-knit technique, as Black writes weft-knitting is “relatively inelastic and does not unravel, so it is suited to lengths of fabric for cut-and-sewn construction (Black 2012: 66).”

As Blackman suggests the creation of such a variety of knitted garments was in part possible thanks to enormous advances that had taken place in the 1920s in textile technology. She writes that “yarns became available in many different materials, textures, mixtures, marls and random-dyed, using new fast dyeing techniques in a wide colour range” (Blackman 1998: 189). It is clear that both Matita and Rose and Blairman were, in tandem with these developments, experimenting with more unusual fibres and blends. For example, in 1927 Matita were using thickly brushed knitted silk- giving a “long-haired furry appearance” as an alternative to angora. Alongside this in 1927, owing to demand from the American market, they were also creating metal-threaded jersey garments including a “gray jersey with fine lines of silver thread running through” (*Women’s Wear Daily* 22 September 1927: 16) and in 1928 garments made from cashmere, wool and silk with metal thread in gold, silver and bronze (*Drapers’ Organiser* For January 1928: xxxvii).

Beyond yarn technology the increasing accessibility of machines for knitting textile garments was also important to the development of more interesting fashion knitwear. Matita were producing a higher proportion of machine knit pieces than Rose and Blairman. In 1927 for example it was suggested that the sweaters in Matita’s autumn collection were “entirely machine made”, and this was despite the fact that few English companies were, as of this date, able to produce on machines at a reasonable price (*Women’s Wear Daily* 22 September 1927: 16) This indicates Matita’s pioneering position in the trade. Furthermore, in 1928 *Drapers’ Organiser* announced that Matita had just installed a “wonderful machine” in their workrooms “capable of knitting jumpers etc., in geometrical designs” (*Drapers’ Organiser* For August 1928: 87).

On the other hand, Rose and Blairman were still, until the mid 1930s, largely hand-knitting their designs. The designs produced by the two companies were unquestionably similar and it is therefore interesting that one focused on machine-knit and the other on hand-knit

garments. A 1929 editorial for example featured a design similar to those machine knitted by Matita, an extremely bold long-line sweater hand-knitted with a trompe l'oeil effect to resemble a double-breasted coat in contrasting colours (*Women's Wear Daily* 22 January 1929: 48). Indeed, hand-knitting was a design feature the company were proudly advertising;

“hand-knit clothes- the most original, the most exclusive expression of Dorville’s decree for Spring. Here the designer’s art is unhampered in ‘material’ consideration for the secret of hand-knit exclusiveness is the delightful fact that it enables the designer to create the fabric as well as the fancy” (*Drapers’ Organiser* For January 1935: 26).

Overall, knitted textiles offered both manufacturers considerable flexibility not just for sportsclothes but more generally too, both using knitted textiles to create a range of garments- particularly sweaters- for a variety of occasions.

The knitted swimsuit

In the late 1920s and early 1930s there was significant development of knitted swimsuits, a garment that both Matita and Rose and Blairman produced. In editorials their names were seen alongside other manufacturers who were a mix of fashion, sportswear, and specialist swimwear manufacturers- companies including Jaeger, Smedley and Martin White. In this period swimsuits became briefer and briefer- exposing backs, and by the 1930s, even midriffs too in the new two-piece suits, for a number of reasons. This was partially a matter of improving technology which allowed for finer, close fitting knit suits (often described as ‘elastic-knit’) and also an increasing desire to show more skin, which was part of an increasing trend towards sun-tanned skin. Prior to the 1920s, as Horwood argues, a suntan had been “a mark of working-class roughness, especially in women” (Horwood 2000: 658). However, by the late 1920s instead a suntan demonstrated that one had the leisure time to be outside. These swimsuits were also designed to show off the slender body, toned through exercise. Bare backs and shoulders featured heavily in not only sportswear, but eveningwear too in the 1930s. It was a logical step that much bathing and beach wear had a

barely there appearance, meaning that the wearer did not have unsightly tan-lines on display whilst dressed in their eveningwear.

Various articles in the early 1930s point to the predominance of American swimwear manufacturers, and that many British swimsuit producers had lost business to suit makers from the United States. Between 1926 and 1930, it was suggested that American manufacturers had “captured” the European and British Empire markets through clever marketing and “by producing a better and more practical product than any British or other competitors”. These swimsuits were largely more expensive than British ones but had improved qualities for swim and sunbathing. However, by 1930 British producers were beginning to compete again. Dorville swimsuits, thanks to the large quantity the firm were able to produce were in 1930 “at least 33 per cent cheaper than American suits even of inferior quality”. These were popular not only on the home market, but even internationally with David Blairman indicating that “in spite of the enormously high tariff” they were selling on the American domestic market (*Women’s Wear Daily* 31 March 1930: 11).

Swimwear manufacture was in the 1930s revolutionised by Lastex- a round rubber thread which could be covered with silk, cotton or other fabrics, offering dynamic stretch to garments, first introduced in 1931. Initially used for underwear, before being used in clothing more broadly from 1932. The first examples of its use in British clothes that have been found date to 1933. Lastex was first manufactured in the United States, but in 1932 the Dunlop-Revere Thread Company Ltd. was formed to manufacture Lastex in the U.K., rather than having to import it (circumventing issues of very high tariffs on American imports). Dunlop-Revere manufactured the round rubber threads in Birmingham, with covering with other fabrics done by Glovers of Nottingham, under licence (*Leicester Evening Mail* 25 November 1932: 7). Lastex was incredibly important to the technological development of swimwear for a number of reasons. Firstly, it offered dynamic stretch, which ensure comfort alongside “a perfection of fit and freedom of movement never before achieved” (Beckford 1933: 5). Furthermore, it offered enhanced performance in water versus knitted wool swimsuits, which were prone to become saggy and heavy when wet. Suits made with lastex were lightweight and durable, able to retain their shape even after getting wet.

The wonder properties of Lastex ensured that manufacturers soon began to experiment with it for garments beyond swimwear and underwear. As early as 1934 Matita were using it in their sportsclothes. Matita recognised the adaptability offered by Lastex, indeed it is unsurprising that firms who largely focused on knitted garments were quick to embrace Lastex. They recognised the freedom of movement it could offer, and that it could enhance their design output. One article appearing in the *Evening Despatch*, featuring a garment by Matita, highlighted the opportunities Lastex offered;

“The suit that would adapt itself to every figure automatically has long been the dream of designers and women, too.[...]. Some very interesting models in exclusive elastic fabrics- elastic linens and tweeds- are being shown. Both frocks and jumper suits are to be seen, and the material is being handled in so skilful a way that it does not shout its elasticity to the world. There is one elastic fabric jumper that gives a hint of what the future may bring forth. This is normally worn with a high neck, at which there is a simply gilt clasp resembling a pumpkin. It may, however, be worn in many other ways, for one only has to undo the clasp, adjust the necklace to the desired shape and secure it there with the clasp. The ‘as you like it’ line seems well within the bounds of probability” (De Maury 1934: 8).

Lastex, whilst increasingly popular for swimsuits particularly, did not spell the end of the traditional knitted wool swimsuit, and many women still chose to wear wool. This was partially because the swimsuit was seen as a luxury, and one that particularly in Britain, would only be worn a few times a year, therefore spending on an expensive suit made from Lastex was often not justifiable. It can however be seen that this was part of a changing time for clothing manufacturers, and increasingly swimwear, made using more innovative materials which clung to the body and offered better properties in water, was produced by specialist manufacturers rather than general fashion manufacturers like Rose and Blairman and Matita.

Changing output- 1932 a case study

In line with this shift in manufacture, from 1930 onwards both Matita and Rose and Blairman's output started to move gently. Whilst knitted garments would remain a focus of both companies output until the outbreak of the Second World War, increasingly both firms were producing a wider range of garments. Whilst both had always produced a limited selection of tailored goods it is striking to see that from 1931 onwards there were far more tailored garments advertised than had been previously. This can be attributed to more confident sizing of garments, and a general shift in design trends.

In the early 1930s both companies advertised heavily across trade journals and fashion magazines. Rose and Blairman's advertisements in the early 1930s, unlike their predecessors, are almost all illustrated rather than photographed. There are two reasons why it seems likely that this decision was made. Firstly, because it meant it was easier to show the striking lines of the garments- particularly in knitwear where in black and white photographs this detail might be challenging to show. Secondly, because it was easier to show a large number of garments in a single advertisement. It is also striking that in the early 1930s these advertisements became increasingly text-heavy, this points in some ways to improving printing and layout technologies- the advertisements having far less of a hand-drawn look to them, particularly the graphic rendering of the text. Such advertisements consequently provide rich and detailed information regarding the textiles used for individual garments.

During 1932 Rose and Blairman placed fourteen advertisements in *Vogue* alone. Taking these advertisements as a sample I have sought to analyse the broad spectrum of garments the company produced and what can be learnt about textiles, knitwear and sportsclothes from them and the shifting design focus taking place. Some of these advertisements provide little detail about the garments within them beyond "knitted sweater", however others provide rich detail for further analysis- for example one coat was describe as being made from, "soft as thistledown monotone tweed garnished with provocative collar of white silk fur"(*Vogue* 1 September 1932: 7). Over the course of 1932 82 garments/ensembles were described in some detail in Rose and Blairman advertisements, which can be broken down to 38 knitted sweaters, jumpers and cardigans, 20 suits (or complete ensembles, including pyjama suits with trousers) 18 dresses and 6 coats or jackets.

Of the 38 sweaters, jumpers and cardigans which appear in these advertisements, fifteen were explicitly described as “hand-knit”- although it is possible a higher proportion were, and just one was described as machine knit. This illustrates that despite improving technology for machine knits, Rose and Blairman were still largely producing hand-knit garments. The fact that so many were advertised as such also indicates that there was still a consumer desire for hand-knits. Only a small number of these advertisements explicitly mention the fibres used; three wool, two knitted linen and one in fine alpaca. It can be assumed that the majority were however made from wool, when one takes into account the broader editorials that year which featured their designs.

In total there were twenty suits included in the advertisements (ranging from basic skirt and jackets to pyjama suits with trousers and complete outfits including scarf and hats). Very few make explicitly clear what fibre they are made from although three are described as ‘tweed’ indicating, in all likelihood they are wool. However, five are described as being made from a linen tweed described in one advertisement as the “new sports fabric”. Linen tweed features heavily in advertisements in 1932, one of the few woven textiles appearing multiple times. Linen, whether knitted or woven, in an era before high performance synthetics, was particularly well suited to sporting activities owing to the inherent properties of the fibre able to wick moisture away from the body and dry quickly. It is made explicit that three suits were made from knitted textiles- one described as knitted corduroy, one described as hand-knitted and another jumper suit made of jersey, however it is possible that more were made from knitted textiles.

The blouses which accompany the suits in advertising copy are particularly interesting- almost all of those included were described as jersey. Jersey, a fine weft-knit fabric than can be made from a range of fibres but in these instances likely wool or cotton, was particularly appropriate for sports. Emile Camuset one of the key early 20th century sportswear producers in France suggested “jersey is the most convenient of them all. It is so popular because of its hygienic and thermal qualities. Its suppleness lends itself well to the making of comfortable and becoming shirts. Sweat does not chill during effort since jersey fits

closely round the body.” As Jamain-Samson (2011: 1951) suggests, “few other fabrics were as capable of expelling perspiration or able to offer the same level of comfort to athletes.”

The majority of dresses featured were tailored wool or linen, woven rather than knitted (there are seven tailored wool frocks, three street or sportswear frocks in tweed and one linen tweed frock included). However, there are some knitted dresses included, with one dress suggested simply as knitted, and two others made from jersey. These advertisements indicate the predominance of dresses suited to what might be called town and country wear - the most formal dress included is a luncheon dress described as having “embroidery anglaise flowers backed with chiffon”. Whilst Rose and Blairman were to later branch out in 1932 there were making almost no garments which were suited to eveningwear.

Overall these advertisements indicate that many of the garments produced by Rose and Blairman in 1932 were associated with specific sports or leisure activities, particularly golf. Yet, whilst the sportclothes focus is still evident in 1932, the descriptions of these garments indicates their adaptability for other occasions- the description of pieces particularly as “streetwear” suggests their suitability for general daywear. It is clear that there was a very prominent focus on the usage of wool for Rose and Blairman’s garments, whether knitted or woven. The only other fibre that features in any way prominently is linen, and this is overridingly for summer garments (although wool still featured heavily in their summer advertisements too). It is however notable that none of these advertisements include swimwear of any kind, despite the fact that advertisements and editorials still indicated this was a key part of their output.

Conclusion

There are no known surviving business records for either company from this period, consequently it means the true success of the firms is hard to gauge. However, both advertising and editorials during the 1920s point to their rapid expansion- this is illustrated through moves to larger, more impressive premises with increased workroom space and repeated suggestions of having to increase capacity to meet demand. As early as 1923 Rose and Blairman suggested that the output of their factories had been “doubled, trebled, and

again doubled”, yet, they were still struggling to keep up with the growing volume of orders they received (*Drapers’ Organiser* April 1923: 105). The sheer volume of advertisements both firms were placing in the leading magazines of the time, particularly *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* in the 1930s, also indicates the continued prosperity of the firms.

As Gardner (2023: 4) has indicated, knitted outerwear’s contribution to the development of the ready-to-wear garment industry has been “largely overlooked.” However, as has been illustrated here, knitted textiles were vitally important to the early development of wholesale couture- the predominance of knitted textiles in the collections of Rose and Blairman and Matita clearly demonstrated.

Rebecca Arnold has suggested that the 1930s was a crucial period in New York’s sportswear evolution (Arnold 2007) and as this article helps to demonstrate, the same was true in London. This was a decade in which companies producing sportswear increasingly developed their own design identity- recognising and promoting that their garments were just as fashionable and typically more affordable, than those made elsewhere in Europe. Both Rose and Blairman and Matita were part of a change that was taking place, and it is striking how prominent the knitted sportsclothes produced by both firms were in the editorial and advertising pages in fashion magazines and trade journals. Furthermore, the contribution of sportsclothes to fashion has wider implications. Skillen and Beatty (2022) suggest, the development of women’s sportsclothes “during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries offers a greater understanding of the challenges women faced in their participation. The types of clothing they chose to wear to play sport [...] had to walk the fine line between what was practical and what was socially acceptable, two things which were often apparently incompatible.”

By the late 1930s whilst knitted sportswear was still part of Matita and Rose and Blairman’s output more specialist manufacturers were emerging producing their own sportsclothes collections and at the same time companies like Rose and Blairman and Matita were diversifying their output beyond sportsclothes. There are two key reasons why this happened; technological developments in textile manufacture, with new novel fibres developed. This saw the emergence of a range of new specialist sportsclothes

manufacturers and it was challenging for fashion manufacturers to compete with these firms, particularly those who were investing heavily in new technology and specialist machinery to create what could be considered performance sportswear. Furthermore, their shift in focus related heavily to their customer base. Still primarily targeted at the middle-class market, the needs of this market segment was changing- particularly as the 1940s progressed more middle-class women were working outside of the home. Wholesale couture firms increasingly sought to clothe these women for their work life too.

Wholesale couture is a sector of the fashion industry that has received little academic attention until very recently (see for example: Bide and Whitmore 2023: 81-91 and Tregenza 2023), however the firms who produced these garments played a vitally important role in clothing middle class women as has been shown here. It is hoped that by shining a light on Rose and Blairman and Matita more surviving examples of the garments they produced, particularly those pieces produced prior to 1945, may re-emerge. In order to fully assess the textiles they used and the creativity associated with their design processes more garments would need to be studied.

To conclude- why were knitted textiles, specifically, important to wholesale couture and this sectors early development? Knitted textiles ultimately allowed the companies flexibility in various ways; they offered flexibility of sizing, which was vital in a period where consistent ready-to-wear sizing was still developing. It also ensured that these clothes were appealing (and fit) a wide range of women ; they offered flexibility in terms of the stretch of the textiles themselves, able to stretch as the wearer herself did, which was particularly important to the woman who played sports and finally they offered flexibility in how they could be worn. These were clothes that fitted the lives of the new modern women who were developing, adaptable for various occasions, wearable on the golf course, on a countryside walk or perhaps even for a shopping excursion. The importance of improving advertising too cannot be underestimated, photographic advertisements in the 1920s came into their own- and knitted garments- particularly those with bold geometric designs, photographed well. Wholesale couture and ultimately garments made from knitted textiles were appropriate for these modern women's lives- able to ensure they were dressed fashionably, but in what was considered good taste.

References

Census Return of England and Wales 1921. The National Archives; Kew, London, England.

No author given

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, 21 May 1921: 20.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, 13 August 1921: 16

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, April 1923: 105.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, March 1926: XIII.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, For January 1928: XXXVII.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, For May 1928: VI.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, September 1928: XI.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, For January 1930: 38.

"Advertisement", *Drapers' Organiser*, For January 1935: 26.

"Advertisement", *Dundee Courier*, 15 December 1932: 8

"Advertisement", *Tatler*, 21 September 1932: F.

"Advertisement", *Tatler*, 8 February 1933: I.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 20 January 1932: 4-5.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 17 February 1932 10-11.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 17 February 1932, 8.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, Vouge, 16 March 1932: 16.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 13 April 1932: 14.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 27 April 1932: 21.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 25 May 1932: 31.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, Vogue, 6 July 1932: 3.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 3 August 1932: 5.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 1 September 1932: 7.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 28 September 1932: 25.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 12 October 1932: 24.

"Advertisement", *Vogue*, 9 November 1932: 22.

"Bright Future Promised for New Rubber Thread", *Leicester Evening Mail*, 25 November 1932: 7.

“Britain is Seen Recovering Lost Bathing Suit Trade”, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 31 March 1930: 11.

“Brushed Silk, Lace and Metal Effects in Knitwear Vary Offerings of London Firm”, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 22 September 1927: 16.

“Feathery Fashions”, *Lancashire Evening Post*, 24 August 1933: 8.

Kelly’s Post Office London Commercial and Trades Directory.1921. London: W. Kelly and Co.

“London Firm Present Sweaters in Novelty Designs”, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 22 January 1929: 48.

“New Season’s Woollies”, *Daily Mirror*, 07 October 1932: 23.

“Rose and Blairman London Sever Connection with Harewood Knitwear Ltd.”, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 9 November 1925: 40.

“Trade News”, *Drapers’ Organiser*, March 1926: 79.

“Trade News”, *Drapers’ Organiser*, For August 1928: 87.

Abrams, L. Chapman, R. Gardner, L. Moskowitz, M. Tuckett, S. 2023. “Introduction: Creativity in Knitted Textiles in Historical Context”, *Textile*, 0(0): 1-7.

Arnold, R. 2007. “Modern Fashions for Modern Women: The Evolution of New York Sportswear in the 1930s”, *Costume*, (41): 111-125.

Arnold, R. 2008. “Movement and Modernity: New York Sportswear, Dance, and Exercise in the 1930s and 1940s”, *Fashion Theory*, 12(3): 341–58.

Arnold, R. 2009. *The American Look: Fashion, Sportswear and the Image of Women in 1930s and 1940s New York*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Beckford, F. “New Ideas in Holiday Wear”, *Daily News (London)*, 13 July 1933: 5.

Biddle-Perry, G. 2014. “The Rise of ‘The World’s Largest Sport and Athletic Outfitter’: A Study of Gamage’s of Holborn, 1878–1913”, *Sport in History*, 34(2): 295-317.

Bide, B. 2021. “Class and Creativity in Fashion Education: A Comparison of the Pedagogies of Making and Design at British Technical Schools and Art and Design Schools, 1870s–1950s.” *International Journal of Fashion Studies*. 8(2): 175-194.

Bide, B and Whitmore, L. 2023. *Fashion City: How Jewish Londoners Shaped Global Style*. London: Philip Wilson Publishers.

Black, S. 2002. *Knitwear in Fashion*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Black, S. 2012. *Knitting: Fashion, Industry, Craft*. London: V&A Publishing.

Black, S. 2023 "A Designer's Perspective on a Creative Era in Knitwear Design: British Fashion Knitwear 1970–1990", *Textile*, 0(0): 1-28.

Blackman, C. 1998. "Handknitting in Britain from 1908-39: The Work of Marjory Tillotson", *Textile History*, 29(2): 177-200.

Campbell Warner, P. 2005. 'The Americanization of Fashion: Sportswear, the Movies and the 1930s', in *Twentieth-Century American Fashion*, eds Linda Welters and Patricia Cunningham. Oxford: Berg.

Campbell Warner, P. 2006. *When the Girls Came Out to Play: The Birth of American Sportswear*. Amherst and Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Campbell Warner, P. 2013. "From Clothing for Sport to Sportswear and the American Style: The Movies Carried the Message, 1912–1940", *Costume*, 47(1): 45-62.

De Maury, J. "Fashions Surprises for Spring", *Evening Despatch*, 15 January 1934: 8

Goodrum, A. 2015. "The Style Stakes: Fashion, Sportswear and Horse Racing in Inter-war America", *Sport in History*, 35(1): 46-80.

Gardner, L. 2023. "From Underwear to Outerwear: The Influence of Machinery on Creativity and Garment Styling in the Scottish Knitwear Industry, 1920s–1970s", *Textile*, 0(0): 1-22.

Horwood, C. 2000. "'Girls Who Arouse Dangerous Passions': Women and Bathing, 1900-39", *Women's History Review*, 9(4): 653-673.

Horwood, C. 2005. *Keeping up Appearances: Fashion and Class Between the Wars*. Stroud: Sutton.

Jamain-Samson, S. 2011. "Sportswear During the Inter-war Years: A Testimony to the Modernisation of French Sport", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28(14): 1944-1967.

Martin, R. 1985, *All-American: A Sportswear Tradition*. New York: Fashion Institute of Technology.

Potočić Matković, V M. 2010. "The Power of Fashion: The Influence of Knitting Design on the Development of Knitting Technology", *Textile*, 8(2): 122-146.

- Skillen, F. 2012a. “‘It’s Possible to Play the Game Marvellously and at the Same Time Look Pretty and be Perfectly Fit’: Sport, Women and Fashion in Inter-war Britain”, *Costume*, 46(2): 165-179.
- Skillen, F. 2012b. “‘Woman and the Sport Fetish’: Modernity, Consumerism and Sports Participation in Inter-War Britain”, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29(5): 750-765.
- Skillen, F and Beatty, L. 2022. “Conventional to Comfortable or Respectable to Practical: The evolution of women’s golf clothing in Britain,1890-1935”, *Costume*, 56(2): 208–230.
- Tregenza, L. 2023. *Wholesale Couture: London and Beyond, 1930-1970*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Williams, J. 2015. “Kit: Fashioning the Sporting Body – Introduction to the Special Edition”, *Sport in History*, 35(1): 1-18.
- Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I. 2011. “The Making of a Modern Female Body: Beauty, Health and Fitness in Interwar Britain”, *Women's History Review*, 20(2): 299-317.

Figure list:

- Figure 1: Rose and Blairman jumpsuit, mid 1930s, National Museums Scotland, A.1986.49.
- Figure 2 Rose and Blairman sun sweater, mid 1930s, National Museums Scotland, A.1986.37
- Figure 3: Rose and Blairman advertisement, *Drapers’ Organiser*, April 1923: 105.
- Figure 4: Rose and Blairman advertisement, *Drapers’ Organiser*, For April 1929: XI.
- Figure 5: Matita advertisement, *Drapers’ Organiser*, March 1926: XIII.