FARMER FASHION AND THE POSH BOY AESTHETIC

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ABSTRACT

Found in pubs and workplaces in West London, and in the corner shops and at events in the Cotswolds, a distinct style of menswear has managed to survive the fashion system for centuries. This dissertation questions the countrywear aesthetic's present-day iteration. Beginning with design, the origins of the style's aesthetic codes in historic sportswear and workwear are found in the present-day. Wearers use countrywear as a uniform, to be identified whether in city or country. Different methods of perpetuation have allowed the style to last, most prominent is on TikTok where users communicate the running themes of pastoral, patriotism, and power. The focus on the Sloane Rangers subculture interrogates the style as a symbol of Englishness and wealth. Lastly, consumption is analysed literally, in stores and at events, and theoretically through semiotics – how fashion is "read". A variety of ethnography and design history methodologies question why young people still find a historical style aspirational in this postmodern, globalised world.

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This dissertation is in appreciation for my community back home, particularly of Grace. Without her joining Young Farmers in our teens, my fascination for farmer fashion would never have happened, this is her fault. I want to thank my family for their support and the lovely Cheryl for maintaining enthusiasm even when I could not.

It goes without saying but a big thank you for the knowledge and patience of all the staff on the RCA/V&A course, I have learnt so much from you all.

GLOSSARY

- Englishness and Britishness are often used interchangeably – this is wrong. In this dissertation, I refer to Englishness only as the location of my study is restricted to the Cotswolds and (West) London. Englishness can be defined as qualities that are typically English.
- Polo belts are leather belts with colourful, embroidered, geometric patterns. They are South American in origin and are associated with uniforms worn for polo, as the name suggests, to identify team players by colour. They are an element of casual wear now.
- Quarter zips, a polo neck jumper with a zipper running from the neck to the chest, have recently been labelled as 'the new status symbol for men of a certain position' by *The Guardian*.[1] This style of jumper is popular in the country wear aesthetic for its layering ability and sportswear style.
- Schöffel is a German-British country-sports-wear brand, established in 1904, and are now global. They are leaders of innovative technological outerwear. But, most importantly, the name is shorthand for their most popular product, the fleece gilet. It has become an emblem, and a joke, within farmer fashion and the posh boy aesthetic.
- Sloane Rangers were a group of young people of considerable wealth, one of the most influential members of this subculture was Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997). This group was characterised by their dress, which favoured country wear, and the areas they frequented, West London and the British countryside. Peter York and Ann

[1] Chloe Mac Donnell, 'Quarter-Zipper Becomes the New Status Stymbol for Men of a Certain Position', *The Guardian* (London, 4 March 2023), section Fashion <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2023/mar/04/quarter-zipper-becomes-the-new-status-symbol-for-men-of-a-certain-position> [accessed 6 March 2023].

Barr characterised and popularised the group in their book *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook* in 1982.

- Young Farmers (the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs) is a national, rural-focused, youth organisation. They organise local parties and meets, competitions and workshops, and support young people who live and work in rural areas.

Figure 1. A rack of polo belts in Bredon Hill Country

Figure 2. Rishi Sunak wearing a Quarter Zip

INTRODUCTION

Writing about nostalgia and my home in the Cotswolds is not unusual to me. In a land where daisies flower, hens peck the ground, and vegetables grow, it is easy to associate the pastoral with the past. As a young fashion journalism student writing about what I termed "farmer fashion", I was troubled at perceiving a bias for towns and cities in fashion media: the subcultures, styles, and subtleties of my peers in the countryside are little represented. My journey into academia only confirmed Alison Goodrum and Kevin J. Hunt's (2013) decade-old statement that 'fashion theory, as an emergent discipline, is currently limited by a metro-centric bias'.[1] This dissertation juxtaposes the rose-tinted way of thinking of rural history with the removal of the city bias in fashion theory to critically evaluate the endurance of the countrywear style in contemporary menswear and its insistence to be the symbol of Englishness. With one foot joining the farmers in the Cotswolds, and the other strutting around West London with the designated "posh boys", this study investigates how the countrywear aesthetic is interpreted by different demographics. This dissertation does not attempt to be a comprehensive guide to countrywear for men.

I am investigating two demographics who share the same aesthetic codes, therefore I feel required to give terms in this study that were more generalised; I departed from the typical fashion history approach of dividing by class stratification for terms intended to conjure aesthetic imagery in the reader's mind's eye. My term "farmer fashion" concerns people who live, work, and identify themselves with the land – because not all with pastoral connections openly associate themselves with it. Using "fashion" is a bit careless here because, as we will discover, the dress changes very little over centuries. Although, there is a sense that the

[1] Alison Goodrum and Kevin J. Hunt, 'The Field as Mall: Redressing the Rural-Urban Divide in Fashion Theory through Equestrian Events', *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty*, 4.1 (2013), 17–42 (p.18).

wearers are *choosing* to wear this style for its symbolic and communicative properties, this therefore *is* fashion. I also retained this term as it was how I frequently referred to the style in my past journalistic writing. In contrast, the term "posh boy aesthetic" (which I've stolen from TikTok) relates to young men who *do* have comfortable wealth, though not necessarily pastoral connections; yet they choose to dress in countrywear for its connotations of wealth and power.

At its foundation, this dissertation uses a typically design history approach to analysing its subject matter: how is the style designed, produced, and consumed, and how does this impact greater design, culture, society, and time? I also grapple with fashion theory to classify this style in an academic sense; can the countrywear style be considered an example of an enduring uniform, a reinventing subculture, or a display of anti-fashion? This debate is important because, whichever it may be, the classification inevitably affects how the wearers interact with other wearers and with non-wearers. Lastly, the undercurrent driving this dissertation is an examination of the countrywear style's connotations of the pastoral, of patriotic Englishness, and of power and wealth. This led me to further question the endurance of the countrywear style, how it refuses to change with the times, and what its current popularity can reveal about current culture.

Scattered through the dissertation are reviews of existing academic literature, signposting to the gaps in the field that my research aims to fill. I took this approach because conducting a whole historiography section would have filled the dissertation itself. As you'll find, most existing research on rural working-class dress focuses on object-based workwear. This means that 'engagement with fashion in – and of – the rural has failed to capture the nuances of

contemporary rural fashion in business and practice'.[2] My dissertation sits in an interesting space: not only is there a gap in research of farmer fashion, but there is a generation-defining focus on menswear in academia and in general media upon which I can capitalise. Admittedly, this blind spot in academia does concern mostly white, heterosexual men in power. And I have thought about my positionality and the gender dynamics of a young woman researching menswear, especially researching a typically conservative and traditionally elite group of young men, who likely do not consider art and fashion to be of any importance. Their invisibility in academia relates to hegemonic dynamics of power and exclusion: this is a group which maintains an attitude of "I am not meant to be interrogated". It is in the furthest reaches of fashion research where positions of power can be investigated, and the countrywear style represents power.

My study is limited in its focus on menswear, and there is certainly opportunity to extend the research methodology and thinking to womenswear. I choose menswear mostly out of personal interest but also for the current focus in academia. Additionally, my focus is on the south of England. This decision was most for logistical ease as I live in both the Cotswolds and in London. The project does speak on agency and who gets to wear this style, but I firmly acknowledge the lack of diversity in my research from other identity groups.

Methodology

In its methodology, this dissertation can be split in two: firstly, through my ethnography practice and then through its typical design history approach. Using ethnography was an important element for the research to accurately represent the groups in my work. It is at this point that I want to emphasise my positionality as a researcher with close connections to the

[2] Goodrum and Hunt (2013), p.19.

group of people I am studying. In some ways this is an advantage as I already understand the social clues and unwritten rules and have many people to rely on for conversations. Being well-versed in fashion theory and ethnographic research I understand how to approach the community from a researcher's point of view. It has been essential to me to remain impartial and factual to represent the community accurately, completing the project with a suitable sense of detachment. I did choose an ethnographic methodology to better represent the subtle differences in the demographics of my research that just presenting the material culture could attest to. Using ethnography strengthened my arguments as I was able to talk to wearers, see how they interacted with others and outsiders, and better understand interaction to the countrywear style.

I relied heavily on ethnographic practices as detailed in *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (1995) and *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research* (2012). These guides gave me confidence and instruction to complete observations of events and site visits that greatly influenced my research. But my research also exists in digital space - the flourishing meadows of cottagecore Instagram posts and in the ironic lyrics of posh boy TikToks - therefore I used *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice* (2016) and Andreas Schellewald's (2021) guide for applying digital ethnography to TikTok, specifically.

My ethnography methodology included participant observation at Cheltenham Races, inside pubs and nightclubs, and on the streets of London and Cotswold towns; I made site visits to countrywear stores; and I conducted face-to-face and email interviews with people I met through my research process. The information provided to me through these methods gave insight into the internal decision-making processes and emotions tied to the countrywear style that just analysing the material culture would not have been able to produce. My word

association survey, as detailed in Appendix E and explained further in Chapter Three, also gave me surprising responses (despite its low number of participants) and helped me understand countrywear's position in broader society. In my research I have covered how the aesthetic makes "others" feel (signification to the viewer) but I have not included how it feels to wear the style (signification to the wearer). While I reached out to many people for interviews, I did not receive any responses within the time frame for my dissertation research, this therefore invites further study to rebuke or support my findings, or at least provide interesting juxtaposition to my claims. Furthermore, my attempts to contact the Chelsea Life Jacket brand were unsuccessful and my research would have benefitted from an insider's perspective of the advertising campaigns, design decisions, and team.

My research can be found as likely in seventeenth century manor houses and tenant farmers' wardrobes as on the TikTok algorithm and in pubs in Chelsea, so I was required to use historical evidence to support my arguments. The second half of my methodology takes a design history approach: this entails an object-based and visual-centric methodology using evidence sourced from many different archives, accessed both in-person and online. I used examples of surviving historical garments to illustrate the endurance of the countrywear style over time, though one of the shortfalls of the project is a limited amount of object work. This is because instead of handling objects from the present day, I prioritised TikToks as evidence for their ability to carry other meanings (such as symbolism in the context of trends and communicative forms with outsiders) thus furthering my arguments more efficiently. Crucially, this is a design history dissertation, so while my study is interdisciplinary (incorporating fashion theory, sociology, semiotics, anthropology, fashion history, gender studies, cultural studies, and theories of class), it is *because* of the design history approach that I am able to utilise these different ways of thinking. At its core, this dissertation is

focused on the design of the broader aesthetic, it is a study of the significance of material culture. Because the design of a community is more than just its look.

Structure

As previously mentioned, my dissertation tackles three core ideas: design, production, consumption; pastoral, patriotism, power; and uniform, subculture, anti-fashion. These themes have been divided up into each chapter. Chapter One describes elements of countrywear's design to learn the origin of its aesthetic codes and how they are associated with pastoral themes, this incorporates a discussion of the use of uniform and the uniformity of the style. The production discussed in Chapter Two is misleading as I do not focus on the making of specific garments, but on the processes that have allowed the production and perpetuation of the countrywear aesthetic over centuries. I find that the style is a symbol of Englishness and use the Sloane Rangers as an example to argue that the style is a subculture. Lastly, in Chapter Three I analyse the consumption of the countrywear aesthetic, both literally in stores and theoretically through semiotics of fashion – how clothing is "read". I discover that the style is distinctly and frequently associated with power and wealth, even when worn by working farmers. This leads to a discussion of anti-fashion and the limits this style contents with to be considered such.

This research project inevitably contains some emotional ties, as I exploit my position as being simultaneously within and without; a design history student with acute fashion theory knowledge joining with a countryside dweller whose friends and connections are tied to the land. Still, I learnt more about countrywear through this project than I have in my barely over two decades of living amongst it.

CHAPTER ONE

DESIGNING THE PASTORAL UNIFORM

This chapter's purpose is to identify the style's origins: the design of countrywear as a separate and fully realised aesthetic can be traced to the seventeenth century. Naturally, fashion history accounts skew more upper class due to a higher percentage of surviving records, garments, and accounts from that perspective. But by completing an analysis of farmwear and the practicality of the garments that underline the style, this chapter will attempt to include working-class history to maintain the discussion's balance between the two demographics of my study, the farmer and the posh boy. I aim to uncover how the historically working-class's everyday, practical country clothing has been subverted and used as status symbols by wealthy men throughout history. I am emphasising the way the style is inexplicably linked to the countryside, even when worn by those with no – or strained – connections to it, or by those who reside in cities.

Present-day Countrywear

It's mid-November, a windy day at Cheltenham Racecourse: it's Countryside Day with touring hounds, retired racehorses, and themed exhibits. For Countryside Day, people dress more to a stereotyped theme that makes defining a style easier. There are young men in groups drinking, laughing, and smoking together; everyone is in tweed, everyone is wearing patriotic poppies. In the carpark, groups of men are emerging out of Defenders (Land Rover Defenders, whether a beat-up old version or the newest range, these are an eternally popular car of choice for its countryside connotations) and unzipping dry-cleaning bags to put on tailored jackets, furs, and flat caps. Collars are popped and ties are patterned, my favourite being embroidered with colourful flying pheasants. I situate myself on a bench to study a

group of young men in their twenties at the bar: one wears brown Chelsea boots, navy chinos, a tweed jacket of beige and a darker brown, a brown Schöffel gilet, and a pink tie; another in muddy black Chelsea boots, bright red corduroy trousers, a blue flat cap, green tweed jacket, navy Schöffel, white shirt, and red tie. Key to this look is its general nonchalance and shabbiness, exemplified by a mismatched layering style. The men around me are getting a bit boisterous, anxious for the racing to start. They seem ready to be photographed for the tongue-in-cheek sartorial entries of the *Tweed Diaries* Tumblr (2015-2018) [1] or submitted under the Toff label on the *Look at My Fucking Red Trousers!* blog (2011-2013)[2], proof this style hasn't progressed for at least five years (though maybe more men are styling their hair into mullets).[3]

Countrywear Origins

Looking to the beginning of the countrywear style, Lee Clatworthy's (2009) study of Henry Temple, first Viscount Palmerston's (1676-1757) surviving personal papers proposes the argument that men at court would have had separate wardrobes for town and country.[4] Clatworthy's major findings is that, as a member of the aristocracy (but certainly not an obscenely wealthy one), Henry Temple's purchases would have been quite typical. Similarly, Danae Tankard (2021) researches rural Sussex and focuses on Arthur Ingram, third Viscount Irwin (1666-1702) who chose to have his portrait painted while in the fashion of a country gentleman, see figure 3. Tankard finds that '[wealthier men] are likely to have practiced a kind of sartorial bifurcation, with fashionable city clothes worn whilst in London and more

[1] 'The Tweed Diaries', 2015 <https://tweeddiaries.tumblr.com/> [accessed 3 February 2023].
[2] 'Look at My Fucking Red Trousers!', 2011 <http://lookatmyfuckingredtrousers.blogspot.com/> [accessed 3 February 2023].
[3] Polly Smythe, 'Mullets Have Become the Must-Have Haircut at English Private Schools', *Vice*, 8 September 2020 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/7kpade/mullet-haircut-private-boarding-school-england> [accessed 15 February 2023].
[4] Lee Clatworthy, 'The Quintessential Englishman? Henry Temple's Town and Country Dress', *Costume*, 43.1 (2009), 55–65.

robust, practical clothes worn whilst resident on their country estates'.[5] Therefore, country clothing as a style, has distinction and differentiation from at least this period; we are starting to see an achievable and acknowledged sense of place assigned to style. If fashion is characterised by its constant change, then at the specific time and place of seventeenth century Britain, the countrywear style *can* be considered a fashion: '[newness as a symptom of fashion] gives to fashion of today an individual stamp as opposed to that of yesterday and of to-morrow' and indeed fashion is historically indicative of the upper-classes.[6] Fashion, in seventeenth century Britain, is distinct from the practical labouring dress of the farmers analysed in this chapter, and can be considered under the typically frivolous, innovative, and aesthetic arguments.

Figure 3. Fashionable countrywear in seventeenth-century portraiture. (1700)

[5] Tankard (2021), p.109.
[6] Georg Simmel, 'Fashion', *American Journal of Sociology*, 62.6 (1957), 541–58 (p.543).

Farmer Fashion

Rachel Worth (1999), an academic authority on historical rural working-class dress within the second half of the nineteenth-century, claims that 'one of the problems for the historian studying rural labouring dress is one of discipline: where exactly does the subject "fit"? Unfortunately, dress history has traditionally concerned itself more with fashionable elites and the middle classes than with the working classes'.[7] I therefore begin with a study of farmer fashion, or rather, farmer *dress,* as fashion is generally understood to be 'dress in which the key feature is rapid and continual changing of styles', [8] and as Elizabeth Ewing (1984) writes in her study of everyday dress from 1650-1900, 'one thing that is certain is that ordinary clothes bore little resemblance to what was decreed by fashion'.[9] Farmer fashion is a key influence on the countrywear aesthetic and so a study of its origins in the historical rural working-class highlights the class difference discussed further in Chapter Three. Everyone: landowner, casual local race enjoyer, farmhand, and businessman, can be seen mixing at Cheltenham Racecourse - all in their uniformed tweed and Schöffels.

This chapter first focuses the topic with a short historiography. I found in my research a significant lack of sources and research on the dress of the rural working-class through history. Ewing (1984) explains that this is partly due to the story being difficult to tell, as little evidence remains of the clothes.[10] More recently however, there are academics focusing on this area.[11] Notable is Worth, whose work has focused on: rural working-class dress such as *Clothing and Landscape in Victorian England: Working-class Dress and Rural Life*

[7] Rachel Worth, 'Rural Laboring Dress, 1850-1900: Some Problems of Representation', *Fashion Theory*, 3.3 (1999), 323–42 (326).
[8] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adroned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p.3.
[9] Elizabeth Ewing, *Everyday Dress 1650-1900* (London: B T Batsford, 1984), p.7.
[10] Elizabeth Ewing, *Everyday Dress 1650-1900* (London: B T Batsford, 1984), p.7.
[11] Other non-fiction authors are recently turning their attention to this subject matter such as Rebecca Smith's upcoming book *Rural: The Lives of the Working-Class Countryside* (2023), though the number of references to clothing cannot yet be determined.

(2018); countrywear as presented by Thomas Hardy ('Clothing the Landscape: Change and the Rural Vision in the Work of Thomas Hardy', 2013); and the theoretical and methodological approaches that can be taken to research this clothing successfully ('Rural Laboring Dress, 1850-1900: Some Problems of Representation', 1999). Tankard's work has a broader focus, looking at rural clothing in seventeenth-century England (*Clothing in 17th-Century Provincial England,* 2021) over a spectrum of archives and individuals of different classes (see her 2017 work about country gentlemen and from 2015, a study of attitudes to clothing of the poor). Alison Toplis' extended work on the history of the smock frock (2018 and 2021) details a specific garment for a specific wearer, from its manufacture, retail, usage, cultural significance, and current museum collecting practices. I have not included the smock in my analysis of farmer fashion as the garment is not worn in the present day. Social historian and historian of early-modern Britain, John Styles (2007) focuses on material culture and dress in *Dress of the People.* Covering ordinary people in the city and country of eighteenth-century England, Styles focuses mostly on production (how, where, and by whom, as well as materials) and retailing of clothes for people at neither the top nor the bottom of the social scale. From the 1980s are Ewing's *Everyday Dress 1650-1900* (1984) and Diana de Marly's *Working Dress: A History of Occupational Clothing* (1986) though neither of these have a specifically rural focus. "Everyday" and "ordinary" is another field, the concepts of which I have not specifically used in this dissertation due to the project's constraints, though would provide another interesting lens to analyse the countrywear style.[12] Lastly, I reference George Ewart Evans' 'Dress and the Rural Historian' in *Costume* (1974) because Evans primarily used oral history in his presentation of historical rural working-class dress. He writes:

[12] See Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clark, 'Conceptualising Fashion in Everyday Lives', *Design Issues,* 28.4 (2012), 18-28; Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002); and Jon Lawrence, 'Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c.1930-64', *Cultural and Social History,* 10.2 (2013), 273-299.

> In my experience, the older generations, especially perhaps in the countryside, are greatly interested in dress because each change in fashion represented a milestone in their lives; and in a quiet country town or village, where the pace of life was slow, the minutest detail – especially the behaviour and dress of your neighbours – was registered with surprising accuracy.[13]

All are excellent examples of focused study on specific garments, individual archives, and documentation of occupational dress. But none argue for the symbolism carried in the English countrywear aesthetic and why this is as important now as in the past.

Practicality: A Design Motif

The farmer wears for practicality; the countryside dweller has a collection of clothing that grants him the ability to become inconspicuous to his settings and allows him to complete his tasks with ease. Figure 4 shows three men in a farmyard in Clifford Chambers, just outside Stratford-upon-Avon, in the early 1900s. They appear to have dressed up for the photo: Mr Hancock's (on the right) tailcoat-esque jacket and Mr Crossley's (on the left) layered waistcoat over his club collared shirt look taken from the last century. Although there are signs that highlight their worker status: the nicky-tams, patched trousers, and dirty suits. Nicky-tams are pieces of string tied around the leg, usually just below the knee, to keep the trousers up and stopping them dirtying while working. They came into popularity at the turn of the century and could be used to identify a workman or labourer. Perhaps these men have been photographed while at work, not necessarily dressed-up for the occasion.

[13] George Ewart Evans, 'Dress and the Rural Historian', *Costume*, 8.1 (1974), 38–40 (p.39).

Figure 4. Three men in a farmyard (1900s).

Many countrywear brands capitalise both on the farmer's need for useful clothing and the practical elements required in the sportsman's uniform. Schöffel draw on their heritage as a country-sports-wear brand to appeal to a wider fashion market: their Autumn/Winter 2022 catalogue includes a branded towelling shooting choker to keep your neck dry while outdoors in rainy Britain.[14] This is an excellent example of a brand expanding their product range to encompass all the needed material elements of the countrywear lifestyle.

Of course, there are many different brands I could have referenced in this section, but to avoid sounding like a listicle, and to avoid alienating the reader, I have chosen to focus this section on the universally popular brand, Barbour. I reference here Aileen Ribeiro's (2002) identification of Englishness being reduced to lists, 'perhaps the making for such lists ("listicism"?) is a peculiarly English idiosyncrasy? […] with a bias towards "things

[14] Schöffel, *The Fabric of the Countryside: The Schöffel Autumn Winter Collection 2022.* [Catalogue] p.48.

identified", rather than with the process of identification'.[15] Barbour in the early 1900s were producing warm, water resistant, and breathable coats for those working and participating in sports by the sea (fishermen and sailors, work and play) as this was the location of the business. So in Barbour's varied history, from royal warrants to clothing soldiers, there is a mix of wearers: it is not surprising that practical Barbour jackets are a staple in farmer fashion *and* the posh boy aesthetic.

Thanks to royal and celebrity wearers and a change in marketing in the 1980s to more countryside imagery, Barbour describes itself as a brand which 'remains true to its core values as a family business which espouses the unique values of the British Countryside and brings the qualities of wit, grit and glamour to its beautifully functional clothing'.[16] Barbour plays with practicality and aesthetics through high-fashion collaborations (currently with French luxury fashion brand, Chloé) running alongside its specific Countrywear Collection.[17] This collection includes padded gilets, wax jackets, and long boot socks. This countrywear collection has minimal branding and a focus on fabrics such as lambswool, neoprene, and waxed 100% cotton. Colours are muted and dark, silhouettes allow for movement, and deep pockets cater for an outdoors lifestyle. The price points are relatively low compared to other brands (and there is even a Countrywear Active Collection where thinner, looser cut cotton shirts and padded-elbow quarter-zips can be found) which suggests a farmer rather than aspirational posh boy market.

[15] Aileen Ribeiro in *The Englishness of English Dress,* ed. by Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p.15.
[16] Barbour, *Our History: A History of J Barbour and Sons* <https://www.barbour.com/uk/our-history> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[17] Just to clarify, my focus here is on the Barbour main line, not Barbour International or Barbour Beacon. Another dissertation entirely could focus on the connotations and design of the sub-brands.

Copywriting and imagery on the Barbour website and in their catalogues stress the practicality and wearability of the clothing found in the Countrywear Collection. Though the products' usefulness remains to be seen. In a conversation with my neighbour in the Cotswolds, Sara (who regularly goes hunting, shooting, and beating), I learnt that online shooting forums are mostly recommending brands like Decathlon (French sportswear brand) and when going beating, many men wear unbranded waterproofs.[18] If Barbour is not significantly worn by farmers, then how can the brand claim this aesthetic? This is evidence of the further commodification of the countryside through spectator and fashion driven designs. Despite my conversations with countryside dwellers like Sara, I found that Barbour is still popular within farmer fashion for aesthetic over practical reasons, they are also buying into the fabricated countrywear style to fit in with their surroundings. Because of Barbour's diffusion of lines and high-fashion collaborations, the brand no longer signifies usefulness for countryside workers – even if they all still do all have a few jackets hung up in the boot room.

Uniformed Country Sports

Practicality can be, and has no reason not to be, aesthetically pleasing. This false dichotomy is something that the English have excelled at.[19] Generally, British menswear is closely tied to sports, and in particular, the country sports of the wealthy. Nikolaus Pevsner's *The Englishness of English Art* (1955) is a study of famous English artists and architects, and their typically English theoretical discussions (such as the picturesque). He provides these clichés for English style: 'that the English are innately conservative, in love with tradition and obsessed with a set of classic items derived from the sporting arenas of hunting, shooting,

[18] Refer to Appendix A for further information to support my claims in this paragraph.
[19] As an aside I wanted to remind the reader my specification of Englishness in this dissertation. I am sure the same generalisation can be made for British aesthetics, though my research does not extend to this.

and fishing' yet within this quote he fails to mention who the demographic are that he is referencing, the sport of the wealthy I assume.[20] Thus, the countrywear aesthetic of my study is simultaneously influenced by the practicality of farmer fashion and the uniform of the country sports.

As this section will go on to prove, the uniform for country sports (hunting, shooting, fishing, etc.) is crucial for the community. We begin in the late Victorian period with figure 5, the Norfolk jacket. Much of how we, today, imagine the English country gentleman originates in the clothing of country sports popularised by the Prince of Wales at the time (later Edward VII, 1841-1910). 'Often photographed in outdoor "manly" pursuits, Edward was interested in establishing a visual image for sporting activities and helped to create the notion of British clothes as stylish yet casual'.[21] The Norfolk jacket is 'specifically designed for shooting' featuring box pleats on the front and back for ease of movement and belted at the waist.[22] In 1883, *The Gentleman's Magazine of Fashion* reported that the Norfolk jacket was patronised 'by a class of young gentlemen who belong to what is often called the Upper Crust', thus solidifying its position as an emblem of gentlemen's leisure.[23]

[20] *The Englishness of English Dress*, ed. by Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p.6.
[21] Catherine McDermott, *Made in Britain: Tradition and Style in Contemporary British Fashion* (London: Octopus Publishing, 2002), p.21.
[22] Martin and Koda, p.113.
[23] *The Gentleman's Magazine of Fashion* (1883) in C. W. Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the 19th Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959).

Figure 5. Norfolk Jacket (1800s).

Figures 6 and 7. Alan Paine shooting clothes. / Figure 8. Head Keeper and his four sons.

Figures 6 and 7 show an example of shooting clothes from the British clothing company, Alan Paine. Known for producing iconic cable knit sweaters in the 1920s for the then Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII, 1894-1972), the brand started producing a Country Collection in 2009 to market shooting clothing, accessories, and general sports-inspired knitwear. There are three products shown in these merchandising pictures that I want to focus on (four if you include the matching cap): the coat, breeks, and waistcoat. They are produced in matching Rutland tweed and are described as being 'a firm favourite with gamekeepers and beaters'.[24] This allegory can clearly be seen through figure 8, a photograph of the head keeper and his four sons at Stone Hall, Balcombe from the second half of the twentieth century. They are all dressed in tweed and their jackets have multiple large pockets. They wear wide plus 4s (trousers that are short and baggy to allow for greater movement) and long socks and boots for traipsing around British soil and are layered-up with waistcoats and sweaters to prevent the cold. Fiona Anderson's *Tweed* (2018) delves deeper into the materiality and connotations of tweed that this dissertation sees no need to repeat. She explains how tweed's emergence in the Romantic era[25] communicates the period's 'romantic search for authenticity and idealisation of nature', a narrative which arguably resonates today for the same reasons.[26] Or, as The Shoot App (a social media and shoot planning app) informs its users, tweed was once 'worn out of practicality, now we wear it out of respect. Much of shooting boils down to history and tradition and tweed is a cornerstone of this. To dress in tweed with a shirt and tie is a symbol of respect to the quarry you'll shoot that day'.[27]

[24] Alan Paine, *Rutland Men's Tweed Waterproof Shooting Coat in Lichen – Regular Fit* <https://www.alanpaine.co.uk/products/rutland-mens-tweed-waterproof-shooting-coat-in-lichen-regular-fit> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[25] The Romantic Era is generally understood to be the first half of the nineteenth century, and tweed's origins, Anderson argues, can be traced to approximately 1820.
[26] Fiona Anderson, *Tweed*, 1st Edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic) p.3.
[27] The Shoot App, *The History of Tweed and Fieldsports* <https://www.theshootapp.com/the-history-of-tweed-and-fieldsports/> [accessed 8 March 2023]

To return to the Alan Paine three-piece shooting suit, it has a collective price of £554.85 emphasising the exclusivity and alluding to the quality. These products are made for practicality not fashion, as demonstrated by the cartridge pockets, waterproof fabrics, shoulder pads, and side vents to aid movement. And of course, the gentleman must be dressed appropriately wherever his sport takes him: the West London Shooting School provides a What to Wear section on their website for newcomers.[28] The school was founded in 1901 by Richmond Watson and their current website notes that 'with the sport enjoying unprecedented popularity in Edwardian England, [Watson] identified a need to improve accuracy and style'.[29] The website recommends that today's gentlemen wear brands such as Schöffel, Le Chameau (French wellington boot makers), Harkila (a Swedish hunting brand), and Laksen (a Danish country-sports-wear brand). Lots of tweed or modern performance fabrics are suggested to compliment the smart appearance of flat cap, buttoned shirt, and tie. It is clear that the West London Shooting School understands the importance for newcomers to the sport to fit in at this historic members' club. In her style guide, Nicky Smith (1989) writes that 'although there is pressure to look smart [when shooting], it is definitely not a fashion event and the most important thing is to look "appropriate" and fit in'.[30] The sartorial choices of the men on shoot in the city are exact to those in the countryside, a uniform for the sport despite the location, 'because in uniform he feels safe'.[31] Furthermore, in an informal conversation with the sales assistant in William Evans, London (refer to Chapter Three for information about my store visits), the gentleman-customers are very particular about what

[28] West London Shooting School, *What to Wear: Gentlemen* <https://www.shootingschool.co.uk/gentlemen.html> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[29] West London Shooting School, *Our History* <https://www.shootingschool.co.uk/our-history.html> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[30] Nicky Smith, *The Style of an Englishman and How to Achieve It* (London: Penguin, 1989) p.93.
[31] Ibid, p.10: ' Yet the Englishman has a horror of anything 'outrageous' in either looks or behaviour and an inbuilt fear of appearing ridiculous. For this reason, he tends to stick to 'uniform' […] because in uniform he feels safe'.

they are looking for. She told me that they are very offended if a companion was to arrive to a shoot in jeans.

Figure 9. Countrywear worn in Sloane Square, London

I have chosen to focus this chapter on the uniform of shooting, rather than other prominent country-sports uniforms such as hunting. This is because of its integration out of sportswear and into casualwear. The shooting jacket is more likely to be seen out of its sports context than the smart, tailored hunting coat. As an example, see figure 9: a recent Instagram post by the posh boy aesthetic brand, The Chelsea Life Jacket. The young man on the right wears plus 4s and the young man in the middle wears a typical shooting jacket with large, deep cartridge pockets. These items of clothing are being worn while the men are stood in Sloane Square, London. The shooting uniform is therefore integrated into the uniform of the countrywear aesthetic.

Uniform

The idea of the countrywear style as a uniform can take two routes: the socially and culturally enforced unspoken rules causing similarity in appearance, or the specific dress used for particular activities and/or in particular locations. In either sense, the purpose of a uniform is to be recognisable and the countrywear style can be identified whether found in the city or the country. This is a uniform where, if a man ascribes to this style, he will fit in all over rural Britain in his same socio-economic-cultural group (this is an assumption as my research does not encompass the entirety of the nation). There is little-to-no differentiation between the wearers' choices of garments: a different check of the shirt, or the choice or black or brown leather, for example. One of the primary objectives of this research is to examine why the countrywear style has changed so little over time, and I believe that one explanation that it's become a uniform.

Jennifer Craik's (2003) brief examination of the cultural politics of uniform uses sociologist, Marcel Mauss' (1872-1950) idea of body techniques. This concept describes the practices that are learnt to create a socially conforming, or non-conforming, identity. In terms of the countrywear style, the traditional aesthetic codes and unwritten rules of dress, passed down through generations, are learnt by new adopters of the style to conform with their group. Craik explains, 'wearing a uniform properly – understanding and obeying rules about the uniform-in-practice – turning the garments into communicative statements – is more important than the items of clothing and decoration themselves'.[32] The lack of change of the style over time is further evidence of it being a uniform, strictly regulated by the threatened punishment of non-conformity – that is, embarrassment. Countrywear carries connotations of the wearer's working connection to the land, or having historic wealth tied up in it, therefore

[32] Jennifer Craik, 'The Cultural Politics of the Uniform', *Fashion Theory,* 7.2 (2003), 127-48 (p.128).

an observer may look upon the country-uniformed body and infer such connections. Craik also argues that uniforms are an example of body techniques in their 'acquisition of "not" statements – that is, what to avoid or repress'.[33] The wearer is proclaiming that by wearing this uniform he is dismissing other forms of style.

Menswear design is typically associated with a selection of archetypes, this idea was popularised by Paul Keers in *A Gentleman's Wardrobe* (1987). Keers claimed that 'classic men's clothes were not born from a designer's drawing board, or from the season whim of a couturier. They have come down to us on the backs of practical men, whether sportsmen or soldiers, wealthy or working men'.[34] The standardisation of design into distinct characters was also picked up by Richard Martin and Harold Koda in *Jocks and Nerds* (1989) where the archetypes were again identified and the aesthetics solidified: 'both men and women seek to realise roles and identities, but since men's options in dress would appear to be the more acutely restricted, perhaps selecting a role has assumed more importance for them than it has for women'.[35] The same archetypes have been reiterated through men's fashion books. Jay McCauley Bowstead (2018) finds that these books are 'quite deliberately situated in a specific time and place: [the books'] images unmistakably evoking an Anglocentric world of early-twentieth century masculinity'.[36] The archetypes are therefore perpetuating a specific *type* of design and wearer.

The country gentleman is a typical archetype: an upper-class Englishman at leisure, decked in tweeds and carrying an air of aristocratic romance. Repeated in the list of menswear design

[33] Ibid, p.129.
[34] Paul Keers, *A Gentleman's Wardrobe: Classic Clothes and the Modern Man* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p.8.
[35] Richard Martin and Harold Koda, *Jocks and Nerds: Men's Style in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), p.7.
[36] Jay McCauley Bowstead, *Menswear Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), p.11.

archetypes for decades, the countrywear uniform represents non-change. My research highlights the absurdity of the style's continued popularity amongst young men, especially given its dated connotations.

The Pastoral Theme

The Englishman's pastoral uniform of 'unaffected, unadorned clothing' became the ideal model for Regency menswear.[37] The Georgian era led by George III (reigned from 1760-1820), did not boast a fashionable or exciting court. This disinterest caused wealthy British landowners to spend more time at their country estates and more time wearing practical, country clothing. Gradually, as the style became more popular and filtered through the population, countrywear was the fashion of the era. The fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773), in a letter to his son in 1748, describes how young men of his time 'go in brown frocks, leather breeches, great oaken cudgels in their hands, their hats uncocked, and their hair unpowdered; and imitate grooms, stage-coachmen, and country bumpkins'.[38] It was the gentleman's connection to the countryside that popularised the style.

"Pastoral" implies both the actual land and lifestyle of farming and an idealised version of country life. I argue that the nostalgia surrounding the countrywear aesthetic, the second definition of pastoral, is the reason for its presence in the present-day. This postmodern retromania was predicted by Gilles Lipovetsky in his later work *Hypermodern Times* (2005). Here he argues that our hypermodern society 'celebrat[es] the slightest object from the past, invoking the duties of memory […] hypermodernity is not structed by an absolute present, it is structured by a *paradoxical present,* a present that ceaselessly exhumes and "rediscovers"

[37] Hilary Davidson, *Dress in the Age of Jane Austen* (London: Yale University Press, 2019) p.139.
[38] The Earl of Chesterfield, *Letter LXI* (London, 30 December 1748) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3361/3361-h/3361-h.htm> [accessed 8 March 2023].

the past'.[39] And so there is a nostalgic element at play in the present-day countrywear aesthetic.

This sentiment isn't new in countrywear discourse: even in rural West Surrey in 1904, concerned for the decline of country life and writing a memoir to preserve it, British horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) regretted the smock as being obsolete due to the working population shifting to cheap, modern suits to work in. This can be seen in figure 10 of young men wearing waistcoats (fourth from left to right, and the first young man wears a knitted vest), suit trousers with braces, and the gentleman in the middle appears to be wearing a tie, while haymaking in Hatton, Warwickshire. Affordable, durable, long-lasting suits for work continued into the 1950s as shown by figure 11. While these ready-made, affordable suits offered 'a pretence of fashion', Jekyll scorned the 'sordid, shameful, degraded appearance' these suits gained while worn at work.[40] Looking back to fig.4, this is evident. The farmer's practicality must still include aesthetic value for the nostalgic onlooker.

[39] Gilles Lipovetsky, *Hypermodern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p.57.
[40] Gertrude Jekyll, *Old West Surrey: Some Notes and Memories* (London: Longmans, Green, 1904), p.262-4.

Figure 10. Haymaking (detail) (1900s) /

Figure 11. Worker in suit (1950s)

Figure 12 Suede Farming Breeches (1900s) / Figure 13. Corduroy Farming Breeches (1940s)

Chapter One Conclusion

The Westminster Menswear Archive has some stained farming breeches from the early 1900s, figure 12, and some corduroy farming breeches with conspicuous patches in a different colour from the 1940s, see figure 13. Despite originating decades apart, there is a striking resemblance in the two garments' cut and shape that highlights my argument of there being little change in the countrywear aesthetic over time.

Whether it be for practicality, for aesthetics, or to follow a nostalgic tradition, the countrywear uniform has changed very little over the centuries. It still carries connotations of the rural worker and of the leisure pursuits of the country gentleman.

The design of this farmer fashion and posh boy aesthetic has been constructed through selected design motifs and there is something very distinctive about the countrywear style that screams Englishness. The Quintessential Englishman has been designed over centuries and is firmly rooted in the pastoral. Which, not unlike Englishness, relies on rose-tinted glasses and nostalgic idealism. In the next chapter, the link to Englishness is explored further with an analysis of what methods have contributed to the consistency of the countrywear style.

CHAPTER TWO

PRODUCING A PATRIOTIC SUBCULTURE

Just as the anthropologist Kate Fox (2004) begins her study of English behaviour in the pub, so I begin this chapter. The aim of my participant observation method here is to observe the menswear in The Duke of Wellington just off Sloane Square. It's a cold 6pm on a Thursday in January and all the young working professionals have ended up in the cosy pub after work. With pint in hand, these men are discussing blockchain, the Six Nations (rugby tournament) starting next week, and gossip from the office. To my right, engaged in such a lively discussion that I'm slightly concerned about being covered in spilt beer, a young man wears a rugby shirt with Oxford vs Cambridge Rowing and Hackett (British tailoring brand) logos on the back. Many have paired quietly-branded Polo Ralph Lauren (American fashion designer and eponymous brand, known as the leader of Ivy style and for its lifestyle marketing) quarter zips with the on-trend, streetwear-inspired look of cargo trousers and white sneakers; the more stylistically conservative pub-goers wear the sweaters with tailored trousers and tan Chelsea boots. Though there are more formal offerings: one, surrounded by a group of girls, wears a green tweed waistcoat, and has a red paisley pocket square. I spot two flat caps, one blue and the other green, during my two-hour spot at the bar. The present-day style decisions of the men dwelling in the Sloane Square area are not all that different to how they were forty years ago, I saw three men in wax jackets with corduroy collars that could be pieces of time travel. My decision to begin this chapter in present-day West London will be further explored later in this chapter.

In this chapter, I refer to the production of the aesthetic as a whole as perpetuation as I investigate the methods that makes the style historic and unique. A repeated set of

stereotypes, fashion designers, advertising, popular subcultures, and TikToks have all contributed to producing, styling, and modifying the style through the years. What has enabled the countrywear aesthetic to survive?

I had considered analysing countrywear on TV using examples such as Netflix's *The Crown* (2016), *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), *Clarkson's Farm* (2021), *All Creatures Great and Small* (2020), and *Made in Chelsea* (2011), and at the time of writing this there is even a stereotyped farmer on the popular reality show *Love Island* (2015).[1] In season four of Netflix's *You* (2018) where the American protagonist spends his time with stereotypically countrywear clad English socialites. The continued use of this specific style in mainstream media as a signifier of Englishness and rurality has led to the continuation of its aesthetic codes over time. I am not able to go into further detail here as a full discussion of the implications of costuming in reality and drama TV shows would require a whole separate chapter. In addition, this dissertation has a focus on social media and TikTok as mainstream media rather than film and TV.

A National Style

'A sense of Englishness' is 'essentially rural', David Matless (2016) declares.[2] This dissertation finds that the countrywear style is seen as a symbol for Englishness, or Britishness. In her book *The National Fabric: Fashion, Britishness, Globalisation* (2005), Goodrum interviews Mulberry's marketing director (British brand known for its luxury leather goods) who believes that 'people's perception of Britishness is really Englishness'. Then, Ribeiro (2002) explains that the clichés of English style 'are part of one kind of white

[1] Before his appearance on Love Island, Will was well-known for his TikTok where he documents being a sheep farmer. <https://www.tiktok.com/@farmerwill_> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[2] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 2nd edn. (London: Reaktion Books, 2016) p.45.

Anglo-Saxon Englishness' that dismisses the 'adventurous street style dress, initiated by English subcultures from the 1950s onwards'.[3] Laura Ugolini (2007) similarly identifies the powerful image of the 'English gentleman' in designing British menswear that 'actually exclude[s] the majority of British or indeed English citizens'.[4] Englishness therefore does not just exclude its own histories but amasses to take over its British neighbours'.[5] Therefore a national style can't be defined as it does not describe one nation.

The stretch of English style, and its association of class, pastoral practicality, and cultural freedom has been embodied around the Western world. Ian Buruma's (2006) essay documents Anglomania across Europe and North America since the eighteenth century. He references the *gentlemanismo* in Italy and France from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, where 'men dressed in fine tweeds, club ties, pin-stripe suits, and other accoutrements of classy Englishness'.[6] Similarly, the American Ivy look, popularised by the Duke of Windsor and Ralph Lauren's designs, was 'the best at repackaging British clothing and selling it back to [Americans]'.[7] This style was hugely popular with rebelling Japanese youths following the success of Teruyoshi Hayashida's *Take Ivy* (1965). And now, for today's posh boy TikTok creators, Ralph Lauren signifies Britishness, done better than the British, and sold back to the British. Becoming simultaneously more international and more

[3] Aileen Ribeiro, 'On Englishness in Dress', in *The Englishness of English Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 15–27 (p.24).
[4] Laura Ugolini, *Men and Menswear: Sartorial Consumption in Britain 1880-1939* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007) p.24.
[5] Alison Goodrum, *The National Fabric: Fashion, Britishness, Globalisation* (Oxford: Berg, 2005) <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/encyclopedia?docid=b-9781847880185> [accessed 24 May 2022] p.60.
[6] Ian Buruma, '"Tell a Man by His Clothes"', in *AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion* (New York: Metropolitain Museum of Art, 2006), pp. 16–19 (p.16).
[7] Dylan Jones, 'Ralph Lauren: "I Became the Celebrity. You're Not Coming in to Buy Someone Else"', *GQ*, 14 October 2018 <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/ralph-lauren-interview-2018> [accessed 2 November 2022].

focused on a certain type of Englishness, the style is cliché yet controversial. It symbolises freedom yet excludes.

Following this discussion of Englishness in fashion, I want to steer back to the demographic of my study and contemplate how strange it is that young men are choosing to wear such a nationalised, patriotic, historical style in this globalised world. Simon Featherstone's (2008) study of Englishness in twentieth-century popular culture begins with this question:

> In an era of an intensification of the politics and rhetoric of globalism, internationalism and devolution it might seem rather late to examine the absence of national identity in a country that historically dominated so many others. And yet the English are persistently, if incoherently, interested in "who they are".[8]

But is it really that strange? Since the research beginnings of this dissertation there have been major cultural events that bring the nation into focus: England's (relative) success at the football Euros and men and women's World Cup – sporting events that are socially important in the lives of the majority of young men; monarchy changes with the new King to be crowned shortly after I submit this dissertation; the furiously rebranded Festival of Brexit to promote young artists; and the pandemic causing the nation to look inwards for two years. Not to mention the simultaneous rise of Blokecore with posh boy TikTok: further attention to TikTok and its "-cores" will be discussed later in this chapter, but for reference, blokecore is

[8] Simon Featherstone, *Englishness: Twentieth-Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=420676> [accessed 20 February 2023], p.2.

a British football-inspired fashion trend (I have also seen Richard Hammond -core as a spin off) that has become popular with both British and American young men.[9]

A Symbol for Englishness?

It can be argued that the reason why we still encounter this countrywear aesthetic is precisely *because* it is representative of a generalised rural Englishness. Remember, Britishness has consistently been used as a substitute for Englishness. In his book *Englishness: Twentieth-Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identity* (2008), Featherstone identifies the 'suppressed significance of regional identity in both the establishment and the problematising of Englishness', Englishness does not just have an issue with nationality, but with regionality.[10] For the purposes of this dissertation I relate Englishness in the countrywear style to the pastoral, to patriotism, and to power. To inform this argument, I have relied heavily on Goodrum's work which centres around contemporary fashion (1990s onwards) in terms of British nationality and rural identity. She provides arguments on the impact of globalisation on the British fashion industry and its production, and an exploration of case studies that approach nationality through business strategy in fashion – this business-led approach is unique in my research. Also discussing what constitutes British design, the MET's *AngloMania* (2006) exhibition reduced British style to a succinct batch of stereotypes. The exhibition focused on the designs of 1976 to 2006 as this period features postmodernism, historical referencing, and satirical motifs. Ian Buruma's essay in the exhibition catalogue highlights the postmodern nature of British fashion design:

[9] Rhys Thomas, 'The Rise of "Blokecore", the Football-Inspired Style Trend', *Vice*, 2022 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkpnxb/what-is-blokecore-tiktok-fashion-trend> [accessed 3 February 2023].
[10] Featherstone, p.5. Regional difference in Englishness and Britishness has been investigated in an interesting way in the *Making Mischief: Folk Costume in Britain* exhibition at Compton Verney (2023). If this idea of regionality could be extended to the countrywear aesthetic, it would make for a compelling study of the use and connotations of the style for a larger group of people. Subtleties, differences, nuances may be discovered.

> Now that most of the codes and trappings of class have either collapsed or become increasingly confused, people are free to rummage in the vast national storehouse of costumes to pick and choose what they want. Since the English have always plundered their past, often for their own amusement, Postmodernism is quite suited to England. It is no longer subversive for a working-class boy to dress like an Edwardian fop, for an aristocratic to pose as a working man.[11]

This postmodern and class-informed approach greatly relates to the narrative of the countrywear aesthetic with its historical connotations and ironic tone. Moving on, some fashion history focused period books which specify their Englishness such as those by C. W. Cunnington (*The Art of English Costume,* 1948 and the *Handbook of English Costume in the 19th Century,* 1959) and Alison Settle's *English Fashion* (1948). Both, and Iris Brooke's guide for costumiers, *History of English Costume* (1972), provide very basic, stereotypical accounts of silhouettes, specific garments, and purposes. The style guide *The Style of an Englishman and How to Achieve It* (1989) secures the clichés of Englishness with references to fox hunting, John Bull, and how to style a tweed jacket. John Bull is a political cartoon originating in the satirical print culture of the Georgian period. He represents 'the British people' whereas his predecessor, the female figure of Britannia, symbolised 'the spirit of the nation'.[12] And, of course, there is the wide reaching *The Englishness of English Dress* (2002) where the collection of papers presented at London College of Fashion attempted to pin down the distinctive English "look" through different time periods, classes, and locations. To build upon this work would involve looking at the internet and digital communities' impact on national dress - it is this gap that my research aims to fill.

[11] Buruma, p.17. Note here the confusion and interchangeable use of the terms "British" and "English".
[12] Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Georgian England* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2017), p.143.

By spotlighting *Land of Hip and Glory*, I aim to present a base argument that this chapter will explore. Goodrum's work puts the 'country gent' as centre stage to discuss the symbols of British style: 'As identities are picked and mixed around the globe, the notion of a static and settled national community pedalled by "classic" British labels becomes increasingly problematic to sustain. In consequence, the country gent, as an icon of British style in herringbone and tweed, needs to be interrogated for the multi-cultural nation'.[13] She examines how British clothing brands capitalise off a hegemonic, masculine identity of nationhood, which I explore in this chapter with an investigation of Hackett's advertising campaigns. Goodrum explores how the countryside aesthetic and Britishness is commodified, she argues that 'the national clothing industry, with its fondness for the "country look", is afforded the power of envisioning and embodying the nation. The ideas of national identity that are reproduced and represented through the images of iconic clothing organizations are fundamentally connected to ideas of gender, race and sexuality'.[14] Is countrywear the most accurate way in the present-day to symbolise the nation?

Englishness in Fashion

For this section's discussion I have chosen to focus on Anglomania as used and exported by British fashion designers in the 1990s because of their use of countrywear to make statements about Englishness, and because this style is eventually diffused into the mainstream (in reference to the contested trickle-down theory, the high street does eventually pick up high fashion's trends). This creation and movement of fashion perpetuates the countrywear aesthetic.

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[13] Alison Goodrum, 'Land of Hip and Glory: Fashioning the "Classic" National Body', in *Dressed to Impress: Looking the Part* (Oxford: Berg, 2011), pp. 85–104 <https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/encyclopedia?docid=b-9781847888709> [accessed 26 January 2023] p.86.
[14] Goodrum (2011), p.89.

The aesthetic of English dress and my focus on countrywear, can be reduced to a set of stereotypes, that, in their reoccurrence, have led to a small amount of repeatable design references that have been explored and subverted by different designers. Joe Casely-Hayford (1956-2019) frequently referenced the English countryside in his designs, and even had a collaboration with Barbour. Figure 14 shows photographs of a two-piece jacket ensemble with a quilted jacket with corduroy sleeves set underneath a corduroy sleeveless jacket that featured a throat-tab and deep cartridge pockets. The effect of the ensemble is of the layered styling that in the present-day is emulated with a Schöffel beneath a jacket. Casely-Hayford's reference to this layered style, classic garments, and typical fabrics of countrywear perpetuate the design basics of the countrywear style.[15] Similarly, Vivienne Westwood (1941-2022) drew repeatedly from the traditional aesthetics of British heritage: the two collections featuring the most countrywear references are her A/W 1987 'Harris Tweed' collection was inspired by the Royal Family, and A/W 1988 'Time Machine' collection which examined British culture through different eras. Refer to figure 15, a suit from the Time Machine collection based on the Norfolk jacket and a pair of plus fours, styled with a matching flat cap. The Casely-Hayford and Westwood examples I have included both originate in the 1980s and 90s where there was a surge of Anglomania aided by the fascination around Princess Diana and the popularity of British music acts (such as The Sex Pistols, Blur, and Oasis) in American popular culture.[16] The popularity of the historical countrywear aesthetic enabled designers to explore and subvert the design codes but does mean that Englishness has become standardised, especially with reference to countrywear. *Anglomania* curator, Andrew

[15] Other designs by Casely-Hayford in the 1990s that reference countrywear include a hooded hunting pullover <https://constant-practice.com/products/1990s-joe-casely-hayford-hooded-hunting-pullover-with-split-shoulder-hood-zipper-size-m> and an ensemble in the V&A collection that consists of a brown cotton corduroy jacket, checked brushed cotton shirt, brown wool jumper, and moleskin trousers <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1175883/trousers-casely-hayford-joe/>

[16] Martin Cloonan, 'State of the Nation: "Englishness", Pop, and Politics in the Mid-1990s', *Popular Music and Society*, 21.2 (1997), 47–70 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03007769708591667>.

Bolton (2006) writes :'Englishness, however, despite social, political, and economic developments, continues to suggest singularity and homogeneity. This image, of course, is a pretence, but Englishness, "enduring Englishness'" is maintained by its mythologies, the most powerful being that of timelessness'.[17]

The reuse of stereotypes and aesthetic codes is common by brands who produce the countrywear aesthetic. Brands such as Ralph Lauren or Barbour will have extensive archives to refer to or will frequent places such as the Vintage Showroom in West London for historical design references.[18] Rewaxing services from Barbour and the inherited nature of sourcing clothes perpetuates the aesthetic in a similar way.[19] This circular design and self-referential nature in the production of the aesthetic has led to creativity and innovation, but also to a repetition of design codes and stereotypes that have allowed the countrywear aesthetic to maintain longevity.

[17] Andrew Bolton, *AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion* (New York: Metropolitain Museum of Art, 2006), p.13.
[18] Douglas Gunn and Roy Luckett, *The Vintage Showroom: An Archive of Menswear* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2015).
[19] Barbour, *Repair and Re-Wax* < https://www.barbour.com/uk/repair-rewax> [accessed 16 March 2023].


Figure 14. Joe Casely-Hayford using layering and corduroy.

Figure 15. Time Machine Suit (1988)

The Commodification of the Countryside

Some "classically British" brands have utilised on a connection to the countryside and have capitalised on it. In the first chapter I presented the pastoral in the most realistic terms, in its practicality and working-class focus. This chapter now moves to discuss the pastoral and the contemporary commodification of it - how, in 2023, the countryside can be claimed through selling, buying into, and wearing the countrywear aesthetic. This is not unlike Ralph Lauren's lifestyle marketing where you too can be part of wealthy, old money Americana with branded beach towels and scented candles.[20]

The tailoring brand, Hackett London, has no history producing countrywear. In 1983, Jeremy Hackett opened a store on the King's Road, Chelsea selling second-hand tailored garments. In a recent interview with *How to Spend It* (2022) Hackett recalls how his first store was full of Sloane Rangers (found later in this chapter) 'because they'd rather buy a second-hand Savile Row suit than shop the Next Directory'.[21] Today, Hackett London produces high-quality tailoring and other garments and accessories, not second-hand clothing. For this chapter I have collated four images from Hackett's marketing campaigns within the last twenty years, and I am less interested in Hackett's clothes but in the way they are advertised.[22]

Hackett centres their advertising around sports to such an extent than their 2004 advertising campaign (pictured in figure 17) made Jonny Wilkinson (English former rugby union player

[20] For example, see these bath towels <https://www.ralphlauren.co.uk/en/home/bath/towels-bath-mats/50402> [accessed 26 January 2023] and candles <https://www.ralphlauren.co.uk/en/home/decor/candles-hurricanes/50204> [accessed 27 February 2023]
[21] Aleks Cvetkovic, 'Help! I'm Becoming a Sloane Ranger', *How To Spend It (Financial Times)* (London, 19 April 2022) <https://www.ft.com/content/03d506ab-840b-4268-98a2-80555b2bbb06> [accessed 19 July 2022].
[22] That being said, they do have a 'Hackett Earth' collection which features some check shirts that would not be unfamiliar amongst my current farming community in the Cotswolds: <https://www.hackett.com/gb/hackett-world/hackett-earth/> [accessed 31 January 2023].

and team captain) the face of the brand. Currently another sportsman fronts the brand: Jenson Button, British former Formula One driver and championship winner. In *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal,* Philip Mason (1993) writes of the English gentleman being synonymous with the sportsman: 'a gentleman would captain the cricket team, though it might include better batsmen; hunting was for the well-mounted country gentry, though the farmers could follow and half the countryside would come to the meet'.[23] Unfortunately, this dissertation does not have the scope for a consideration on the active male as discussed in media theory nor for the body in masculinities and gender study, there is certainly room for this work here. The advertisements pictured below include an element of country sports or enjoying the countryside: the models in figure 16 walk dogs away from a large house in the country;[24] Wilkinson is poised to kick a croquet ball through miniature rugby posts, mallet cast aside; the models in figure 18 are perhaps having their photo taken before the polo match, even the horse is posing; another croquet mallet is featured in figure 19, where the model is changing the tyre of a sports car preparing for a drive in the country. To remind the reader, this is a tailoring brand; Hackett uses the connotations of a pastoral lifestyle to solidify their position as a luxury, *British* (with emphasis), menswear brand. Figs. 16 to 19 show that imagery evoked by Hackett's advertising does not change over twenty years. The legacy of the countrywear aesthetic lives on.

[23] Philip Mason, *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal,* 2nd edn. (London: Pimlico, 1993), p.105.
[24] A nice detail included in this advert is the dogs' leads are the same as the polo belts worn frequently in this style, refer to Glossary for more information on the polo belt.

Figure 16. Advertisement from the 2000s.

Figure 17. 2004 Advertising.

Figure 18. 2014 Advertising.

Figure 19. 2020 Advertising.

Returning to *Land of Hip and Glory*, Goodrum uses Burberry (British luxury fashion house made famous for their historic trench coats) as a case study and discusses 'its construction of the British country gent as a recognizable identity achieved through its corporate imagery. Not only is this "Britishness" heavily gendered but it is also class specific in its depiction of members of the nation as monied, wealthy landowners'.[25] This is mimicked entirely by Hackett as the four advertisements show. The focus of Goodrum's chapter is the problematic nature of the country gent as a symbol for Britishness and she believes that 'the country gent, as an icon of British style in herringbone and tweed, needs to be interrogated for the multi-cultural nation'.[26] The Hackett advertisements display this issue, and I will discuss agency and the negative side of the countrywear aesthetic further in Chapter Three.

Sloane Rangers

I began this chapter with a pint in a pub just off Sloane Square on the hunt for modern day Sloane Rangers, and while I did not find them, I certainly found their legacy in clothing, as this chapter will now investigate. "Sloane Rangers" were a group of upper or upper-middle class people living in both the unnamed English countryside and in West or South-West London and were characterised by their style of clothing.[27] The classifying of this group of people was organised by Peter York through his publication *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook* (1982) (*OSRH*). Published by *Harpers & Queen,* the *OSRH* was intended for extra profit through capitalising off the zeitgeist among the *Harpers & Queen* reader demographic, made as general release not limited edition. Mimicking the extremely successful *The Official Preppy Handbook* (1980) published just two years earlier in the United States, the *OSRH*

[25] Goodrum (2011), p.95.
[26] Ibid, p.86.
[27] In *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook* (1982) and repeated in Fowler's *Green Unpleasant Land* (2020) is a sense of a universal, unnamed countryside, the home counties that sustain and entertain the English.

identified and interrogated, in a tongue-in-cheek way, the group of fashionable people living and working around Sloane Square.

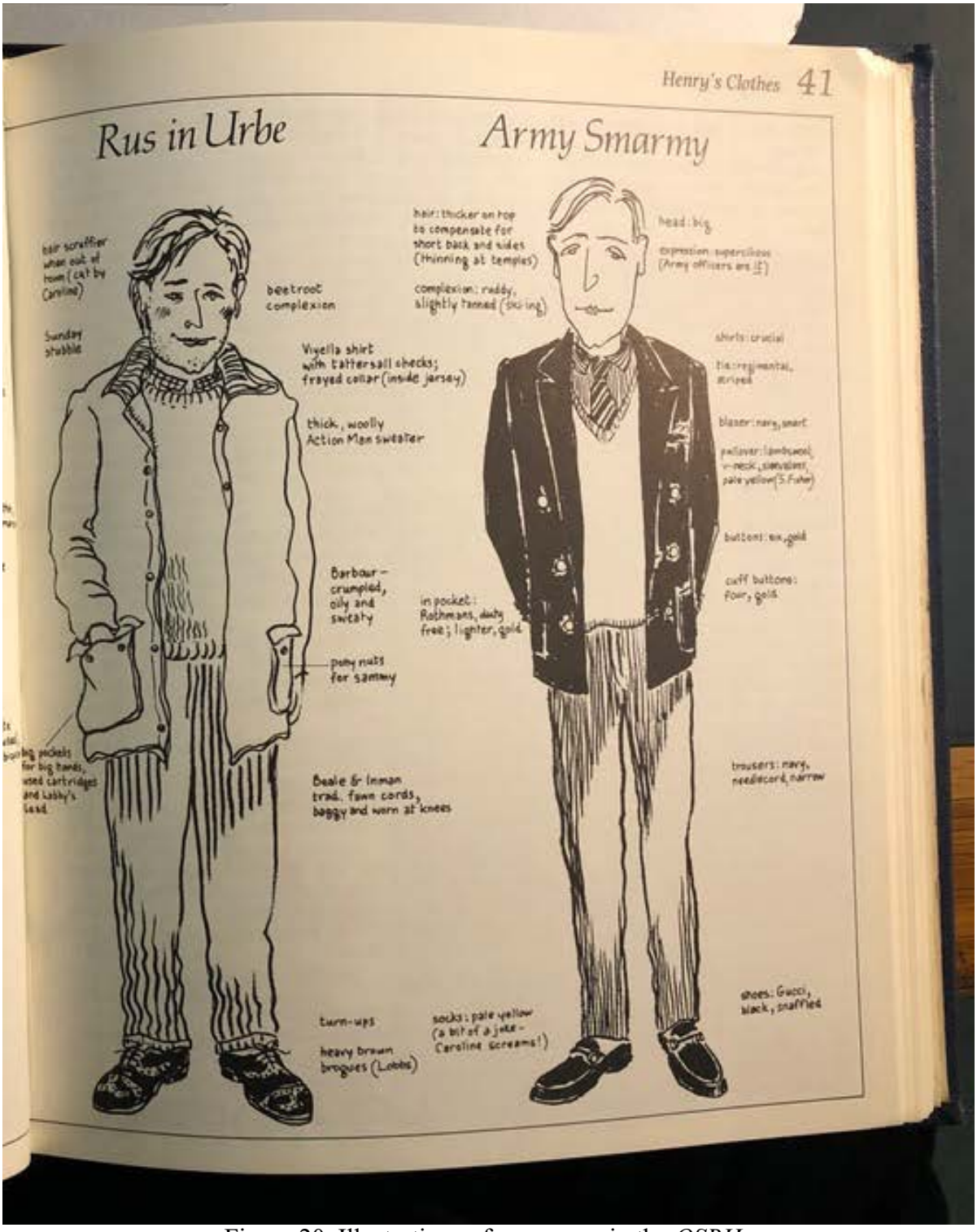

Figure 20. Illustrations of menswear in the *OSRH*.

Figure 20 is an illustration from the *OSRH* describing two archetypes of male Sloane Ranger style; the use of countrywear by Sloane Rangers is described by York as 'rus in urbe', a Latin phrase describing illusion of the countryside within the city, literally 'countryside in city'. To exemplify this, York describes that the male Sloane Rangers 'brings the estate to London with his Barbour'. [28] Furthermore, 'everything is worn until it falls apart […] [he] wears outerwear indoors, countrywear in London'.[29] There is a scruffiness to the style: the illustration in fig.20 highlights 'Sunday stubble', 'Barbour – crumpled, oily and sweaty', and 'frayed collar'. In his book on signifiers of *Status and Culture* (2022), W. David Marx notes that 'while modesty and functionality explain product choices, their presentation as signals should also have an air of *nonchalance'*, that characterises English dress and the old money aesthetic.[30] The casualness and heirloom preference in addition to the historical elements found in the countrywear style (see Chapter One) indicates appreciation for historical value, despite its contested connotations (see Chapter Three). Marx summarises this by stating that the historical value of status symbols 'is derived from positive symbolic associations with the past. Not everything old has historical value'.[31] He is reminding us here that history is constructed, curated, and created, and through the countrywear aesthetic, the Sloane Rangers were playing with history. The nonchalance of countrywear also suggests an inherited cultural capital, a theory that will be examined closer in Chapter Three.

[28] Ann Barr and Peter York, *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook* (London: Ebury Press, 1982), British Library, X.529/51985, p.40.
[29] Ibid.
[30] *The Official Preppy Handbook* quoted in W. David Marx, *Status and Culture* (New York: Viking Press, 2022)., p.106
[31] Marx, p.205.

Figure 21. Prince Charles, now Charles III, wears tweed breeks alongside Princess Diana in the countryside.

The Sloane Ranger subculture contributed to the perpetuation and production of the posh boy aesthetic through their notoriety. The legacy of national interest and pride in Princess Diana (1961-1997), the lead Sloane Ranger, proves this. The 2021 film *Spencer*, starring Kristen Stewart, and the huge popularity of Netflix's *The Crown* (2016-present) which fictionalises Charles (now Charles III, 1948-present) and Diana's story in the latest season. I spoke to the creator of the Instagram account, sloane_rangers_ about the surge of popularity around the subculture:

> a much more formal way of dress is returning, and to me that formality is seeming to reflect the Sloane Ranger style […] I think it's a pretty distinctly British style.[32]

[32] Refer to Appendix B for more information. The Instagram account has 51.7k followers, accurate to 10 March 2023.

The creator referenced Rowing Blazers (popular American Ivy style brand) and Ralph Lauren in his own style.[33] Avery Trufelman's well-researched podcast *Articles of Interest* recently focused an entire series on American Ivy (2022), examining its history and questioning its recent resurgence. In her opinion, the current popularity for this style is as 'a reaction to trends, it seems like people are tired and see these as trendless clothes'.[34] The countrywear aesthetic, as won by the Sloanes, remains aspirational and inspiring for young people today.

Present-day Subculture

In this discussion of the Sloane Ranger, I presented the countrywear aesthetic as a subculture - if subcultures 'must be focused around certain activities, values certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces, etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture'.[35] This idea can be taken further with an investigation of "cottagecore". 2020, the year the world stayed inside, created an explosion of an already growing aesthetic: cottagecore. The Gen Z affinity to suffix ideas, aesthetics, and lifestyles with "-core" is only increasing with popularity, *Fashionista* has published a useful glossary of cores that relate to fashion (see Appendix C),[36] though the cores are not always fashion related (and at the time of writing this, the most popular is "corecore", an absurdist social critique which aims to disconnect from the internet and all its harrowing associations, the pinnacle of cores).[37] Bhoj, Thapa, and Chowdhury's (2022) research on social media subcultures explains that 'amidst individualism, fast fashion, and technology, people are craving the authentic identity for a

[33] Rowing Blazers currently stock the brand Warm & Wonderful who made Diana's iconic sheep jumper.
[34] Avery Trufelman, 'American Ivy, Chapter 1', *Articles of Interest.* [Audio podcast episode] <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5qRZfBYlAcB3MzUvIoTb9y?si=96fddec43c7041d3> [accessed 2 January 2023], (10.38).
[35] Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2006), p.7.
[36] Fashionista, 'A Glossary of "-Core" Aesthetics', *Fashionista*, 2022 <https://fashionista.com/2022/08/core-style-aesthetics-fashion-style-glossary-gen-z> [accessed 26 January 2023].
[37] Ella Glossop, 'Corecore Is the Screaming-Into-Void TikTok Trend We Deserve', *Vice*, 24 January 2023 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxnmeq/corecore-tiktok-trend-explained> [accessed 26 January 2023].

group. Today there are multiple subcultures to relate to for representation. People have started turning to this media trend for comfort, acceptance, and familiarity'.[38] There is a similarity between the cores and the handbooks of the 1980s, guides to live a certain aesthetic lifestyle with recommendations and tips right down to places to go, food to eat, and garments to wear so that you too can live like this! Cottagecore romanticises rural life, reminiscent of Marie-Antoinette's (Queen of France, 1755-1793) idyllic farming hamlet, the trend is not limited to the British countryside.[39] Seeing the, albeit unrealistic, beautiful woodlands, meadows, and farm life on social media integrated within the otherwise bleak newsfeeds of the early pandemic, certainly acted as a form of escapism for many young people. Described as the 'standout aesthetic of 2020' by *Vox*,[40] rural life started infiltrating popular culture: *Vogue* gave recommendations of 'how to invite cottagecore into your beauty kit', bread-making tutorials, foraging tips, and interior design shopping guides created a mass of happy and free lives in a cottage somewhere.[41]

The general bad years of 2020-2022 perhaps propelled a wistfulness for "the olden days" into the mainstream. And a past that feels very white: Instagram accounts such as cottagecoreblackfolks[42] and hillhousevintage[43] aim to bring more inclusivity to the popular style. The overwhelming whiteness found in the imagery of the countrywear style will be discussed further in Chapter Three, where I look at the negative connotations of the aesthetic.

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[38] Rasika Bhoj, Riya Thapa, and Aritrika Roy Chowdhury, 'Effects of Recreation of Subcultures on Social Media on the Subculture, Intersubculture Community and Intra-Subculture Community Individuals', *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture*, 2022, 1–17 <https://doi.org/10.1386/fspc_00147_1> p.4.
[39] See Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine de'Medici to Marie-Antoinette* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011)
[40] Rebecca Jennings, 'Once upon a Time, There Was Cottagecore', *Vox Media*, 2020 <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/8/3/21349640/cottagecore-taylor-swift-folklore-lesbian-clothes-animal-crossing> [accessed 26 January 2023].
[41] Hasina Khatib, 'How to Invite Cottagecore into Your Beauty Kit in 2021', *Vogue*, 19 January 2021 <https://www.vogue.in/beauty/content/cottagecore-beauty-makeup-trend-2021> [accessed 26 January 2023].
[42] Cottagecoreblackfolks <https://www.instagram.com/cottagecoreblackfolks/?hl=en> [accessed 26 January 2023].
[43] Hillhousevintage <https://www.instagram.com/hillhousevintage/?hl=en> [accessed 26 January 2023].

Countrywear, and cottagecore, essentially deals in nostalgia. In the same way, Englishness relies on it for its constant aesthetic reiterations (think of the endless, repetitive listicles). I argue that one of the reasons that the countrywear aesthetic has been sustained and largely unaltered is through the commodification of the countryside, that is, through the heavily curated nostalgia for a rural idyll depicted in fashion. Fashion relies on nostalgia greatly to sell clothes: the consumer is constantly looking for some remembrance of their past, of past emotions, and past aesthetics. Fashion is crucially individual; it exploits our inherently human connections to the material world therefore, a fashion brand or designer may borrow or tap into aesthetic codes that feel familiar to us yet altered just enough to retain fashion's novelty, think back to this chapter's earlier discussion of circular design within the countrywear aesthetic.

Perpetuation Online

The countrywear aesthetic has utilised blogs (such as *The Tweed Diaries, Look at My Fucking Red Trousers!,* and *Admiral Cod*),[44] Instagram accounts (such as schoffelspotted, lechameauspotted, and bestofbritishstyle),[45] and is now popular on TikTok (such as toffwaffle).[46] Countrywear's cross-platform popularity is not unusual, as Suh (2020) writes, 'fashion has been also democratised in the digital space, no longer owned by privileged groups as how high fashion was exclusively accessible for them. Social media platforms opened a way to various kinds of fashion to the public, encouraging anyone to express and

[44] 'The Tweed Diaries' ; 'Look at My Fucking Red Trousers!' ; and 'Admiral Cod', 2007 <https://admiralcod.blogspot.com/> [accessed 1 March 2023]. An additional point of interest: Admiral Cod is short for The Admiral Codrington, a pub in Chelsea that was listed in the *OSRH* as a primary congregation point for Sloane Rangers.
[45] Schoffelspotted <https://www.instagram.com/schoffelspotted/> ; Lechameauspotted <https://www.instagram.com/lechameauspotted/> ; and Bestofbritishstyle <https://www.instagram.com/bestofbritishstyle/> [all accessed 14 March 2023]
[46] Toffwaffle <https://www.tiktok.com/@toffwaffle?lang=en> [accessed 14 March 2023]

share personal fashion in everyday life in public'.[47] The production and perpetuation of the countrywear aesthetic is partly due to its online presence. In terms of space and time however, social media is recognised to be performative (even if my fieldwork ethnography proves otherwise), this is where the satirical aspect comes in.

Firstly, it is important to understand why I have chosen to use TikTok. I use TikTok in conjunction with my participant observation research, this is to produce evidence for the present-day. It is my aim to find the legacy and cultural and social implications of the countrywear aesthetic. TikTok only originated in 2018, and in five short years it has irrevocably impacted the way that young people consume media. Its popularity, and notoriety, is in part due to the pandemic: global digital marketing agency, Tug, reported that since November 2018 figures have increased from 680 million active monthly users to over 1.1 billion in 2021.[48] Reportedly, the platform saw the highest number of app downloads in the first quarter of 2020, with over 315 million downloads worldwide.[49] Trevor Boffone (2022) believes that this dramatic increase in global usage warrants scholarly inquiry because the app will have 'implications for how future digital spaces will shape cultural literacies'.[50]

Boffone's book *TikTok Cultures in the United States* (2022) is the only one of its kind. The little academic work around TikTok tends to focus on the issues of spreading false

[47] Suh, Sungeun, 'Fashion Everydayness as a Cultural Revolution in Social Media Platforms – Focus on Fashion Instagrammers', *Sustainability*, 12.5 (2020), p.4.
[48] Nadine Head, 'The Rise of TikTok During Covid-19', *Tug Agency* (27 July 2021) <https://www.tugagency.com/blog/2021/07/27/the-rise-of-tiktok-during-covid-19/> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[49] Ibid.
[50] Trevor Boffone, *TikTok Cultures in the United States* (London: Routledge, 2022) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=6940537> [accessed 26 January 2023], p.3.

information,[51] body image and eating disorders,[52] and marketing strategies.[53] There is little research published about TikTok in relation to fashion. The book does have a section dedicated to 'TikTok (Sub)Cultures' which includes Katlin Marisol Sweeney-Romero's chapter on the "That Girl" aesthetic.[54] As much as this section is about self-identification with the countrywear aesthetic, it is also about the process of identification within a subculture. Suh's (2020) inclusion of the concept of "everydayness" in fashion and on digital spaces is especially interesting when applied to TikTok, a platform 'where users portray an authentic, unfiltered, and incredibly public view of the reality of their lives'.[55] Bhoj, Thapa, and Chowdhury (2022) agree:

> Social identity theory states that individuals seek to represent themselves or others according to certain social categories and standards. Individuals follow the groups, communities, and other individuals that guarantee positive recognition, thus enhancing their identity through association.[56]

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[51] Examples include Adam M. Ostrovsky and Joshua R. Chen, 'TikTok and Its Role in COVID-19 Information Propagation', *Journal of Adolescent Health,* 67:5 (2020); and Basch, Meleo-Erwin, Fera, et al. 'A global pandemic in the time of viral memes: COVID-19 vaccine misinformation and disinformation on TikTok', *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics,* 17:8 (2021).

[52] Examples include Samantha Pryde, 'TikTok on the clock but the #fitspo don't stop: The impact of TikTok fitspiration videos on women's body image concerns', *Body Image,* 43 (2022), 244-252; Shannon S. C. Herrick, '"This is just how I cope": An inductive thematic analysis of eating disorder recovery content created and shared on TikTok using EDrecovery', *International Journal of Eating Disorders,* 54:4 (2020), 516-526; and Marisa Minadeo and Lizzy Pope, 'Weight-normative messages predominates on TikTok – A qualitative content analysis', *PLOS One,* 17:11 (2022).

[53] Examples include Michael Haenlein, 'Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co.', *California Management Review,* 63:1 (2020), 5-25; Barta, Belanche, Fernández, et al. 'Influencer marketing on TikTok: The effectiveness of humor and followers' hedonic experience', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,* 70 (2023); and Yang Yan and Luoisa Ha, 'Why People Use TikTok (Douyin) and How Their Purchase Intentions are Affected by Social Media Influencers in China: A uses and gratifications and parasocial relationship perspective', *Journal of Interactive Advertising,* 21:3 (2021), 297-305.

[54] Katlin Marisol Sweeney-Romero, 'Wellness TikTok: Morning Routines, Eating Well, and Getting Ready to Be "That Girl"', in *TikTok Cultures in the United States* (London: Routledge, 2022), pp. 108–16 <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=6940537> [accessed 31 January 2023]. A great example of this TikTok trend is Annabelle Hoy (14 July 2022) <https://www.tiktok.com/@annabellehoy/video/7120232341825506566?_r=1&_t=8WC3thXzwCk&is_from_webapp=v1> [accessed 8 March 2023].

[55] Boffone, p.6. This is the same everydayness that I referenced in Chapter One.

[56] Bhoj, Thapa, and Chowdhury, p.2.

Figure 22. Schoffel Gang

This chapter will now investigate how TikTok users produce the countrywear aesthetic through satirical self-identification. The account Riotboys1, named Schöffel Gang, is a TikTok account run by Archie, Kit, and Ziad who describe themselves as 'posh boy parodies' (I will be referring again to Kit in Chapter Three with the Chelsea Life Jacket brand).[57] Figure 22 is a screenshot from one of their videos, posted in January 2020, and is very typical to the content they create. The boys are lip syncing and acting out an edited version of Lizzo's *Boys* but with the lyrics changed to 'I like signet rings, Schöffels, mullets, trust funds, polo, Range Rovers, Daddy's money'.[58] Aside from the "posh" accent used in the voice dubbing, other signifiers of their posh boy status are the private school corridor and dorm

[57] Note the reference to *The Riot Club* the 2014 film based on a fictionalisation of the Bullingdon Club, a private male-only club at Oxford University – notable previous members include Boris Johnson and David Cameron. The historic club has a boisterous and controversial reputation.
[58] The original lyrics are: 'I like big boys, itty bitty boys, Mississipi boys, inner city boys'.

locations of filming, and the smart clothing worn by the three boys. What must be understood is that this is a parody account and therefore we can assume that the clothing worn has been chosen to fit a character type; the Schöffel, signet rings, and loafers. Kit Riley explained in an interview: 'we did loads of post boy parodies, a more hyperextended, a more "posh boy" version of myself, made his name Tarquin as a sort of character […] I've been called Tarquin hundreds of times now, people genuinely think my name's Tarquin'. [59] With 2.1 million views, this video is the epitome for the trend for satirical self-identification through countrywear subculture on TikTok.

Chapter Two Conclusion

This chapter aimed to identify the production of the countrywear aesthetic, the methods that have allowed it to remain relatively unchanged over time. I analysed the way the countrywear style is used in subcultures, from the 1980s' Sloane Rangers to TikTok's communities, and I found that, through the use of nostalgia, the countryside has been used to sell a lifestyle through clothes. Identity, sense of place, and lifestyles can be bought and shared: through the countrywear aesthetic, individuals can create a sense of belonging and heritage.

My discussion of TikTok would benefit from an analysis of how the countrywear aesthetic is advertised on the platform – I regularly come across Fairfax & Favour (British luxury fashion brand) adverts and paid advertisements from content creators on my For You Page. This would give insight to the extent the advertising changes or doesn't change in its symbols and connotations on the platform most used by young people.

[59] Kit Riley in NYNY Podcast, *Interview with Kit Riley, Tarquin Tik Tok and Much More,* online video recording, YouTube, 29 October 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82tDiidsTgQ&list=WL&index=69> [Accessed 2/11/2022], (4:21)

Returning to *Land of Hip and Glory,* the country gent remains the enduring symbol of Englishness, even amongst the satirical, globalised, postmodern Gen Z. The countrywear style's popularity on social media, its appearance in advertising campaigns for tailoring brands, and its use by iconic, influential subcultures (repeated in adaptations and mainstream media) cements it as a national identity. Goodrum's questioning of its appropriateness for this label, national costume, will be discussed in the next chapter with an investigation of agency, and who gets to wear the countrywear style.

CHAPTER THREE

CONSUMING POWER AND ANTIFASHION

Following the structure of my first research question (how has the design, production, and consumption contributed to the legacy of countrywear?) this dissertation now moves to consumption. I consider sites of consumption and ideas of non-consumption, the significance of heirlooms. As this chapter focuses on the theme of power, it evidences more of the posh boy aesthetic than farmer fashion. In choosing this historical style over new trends, wearers show how they hold power to go against the fashion system, this is antifashion. Consumption is not simply about the act of purchasing but can relate to semiotics in dress, so I will be taking a theoretical approach to understand how the style is "read". Woven through my discussion are references to cultural capital, both embodied (learnt) and objectified (materiality).[1] Pierre Bourdieu's (1973) idea of capital relates to exchange, understanding, and status which lends itself well to design studies. In this dissertation, embodied cultural capital is found in the wearers' cultivated taste and recognition of status symbols within their community. Examples of objectified cultural capital in my research may be the old Barbour jacket or specific pub locations. It is generally understood that cultural capital is learnt and ingrained from childhood, something that is taught at home, school, or in society. The themes of my study could be developed by researching how "countrywear capital" is learnt on platforms such as TikTok, or indeed if it can be *genuinely* learnt this way ('want the old money aesthetic? Here's what you'll need').

[1] Pierre Bourdieu, 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction' in Richard Brown, ed, *Knowledge, Education, and Cultural Change* (London: Routledge, 1973) <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781351018142/knowledge-education-cultural-change-richard-brown?refId=9c9c4023-8694-4a43-984d-503e26a0152d&context=ubx> [accessed 13 March 2023] ; and Rob Moore, 'Capital' in Michael Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts,* 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2012).

Going Shopping

To begin, this chapter looks at consumption in its most literal sense. I visited four country stores in the Cotswolds area: Bredon Hill Country, Evesham: Parkinsons, Stratford-upon-Avon; Stow Country Clothing, Stow-on-the-Wold; and Landmark, Broadway. And I visited two country stores in London: William Evans and Farlows, both in Piccadilly. I specifically chose stores that stocked a variety of brands and held products of a similar price point. This allowed for better comparison of products and consumers than just visiting a Barbour store, for example. The aim of visiting countrywear stores was to discover variation or similarity in types of products, visual merchandising, popularity, customers, and location to give a well-rounded picture of how the countrywear aesthetic is consumed, what is available, and who the customers are. Refer to Appendix D for a full report from each store.

Figure 23. Merchandising in Bredon Hill Country.

In Bredon Hill Country, midday on a Tuesday in November (when the adjoining café was far busier than the store) while running my hand over the display of polo belts I overheard a male customer asking the shop assistant for recommendations for hunting wear. In Landmark, I squeezed between racks of waterproofs and tourists carrying large backpacks. A group of men were huddled into the corner of Stow Country Clothing, mumbling and trying on tweed flat caps, and I hit my head on the low beam trying to get into the men's jackets section. The chatty, young shop assistant in Parkinsons helped me decide between patterned silk scarves and fetched a pair of trainers in my size. All four stores stocked expensive products from big name brands such as Dubarry (Irish company known for their boots), Schöffel, and Fairfax and Favour. Though there was variation such as in the more metropolitan Parkinsons, with Vejas (French footwear brand known for its expensive, white sneakers) and Doc Martens (legendary German-British footwear brand) which I am more familiar seeing on the streets of London. The stores highlighted their pastoral associations: allowing dogs in the store, spotlighting typical countrywear products such as wax jackets, and including foliage in the merchandising (see figure 23 for example). This gives the consumer the feeling that they are buying into the countrywear aesthetic; stores cater for locals and tourists alike, stocking practical items alongside giftsets and explicably branded goods. Buying from a specific country store, in the countryside, produces an additional sense of place onto the objects not dissimilar to the way Hackett used the countryside in their advertising as seen in the previous chapter.

Figure 24. Merchandising in Farlows.

Strolling into the gentlemen's countrywear outfitters in Piccadilly doesn't feel any different to the stores in the Cotswolds. If anything, William Evans and Farlows are more sports focused; the former having a gun room (and a store assistant in a Schöffel watching me anxiously) and the latter with a floor dedicated to fishing gear. I was the only "customer" in the London stores at the time of my visit, though it was early afternoon on a Friday. The stores felt less tourist focused: in a casual conversation with the sales assistant at William Evans, I learnt that the clients are mostly local and know exactly what they want for their sportswear. I found it surprising that both stores held their own homonymous brands implying store recognition and prestige amongst the community. If I were to ask wearers of the countrywear style in the Cotswolds if they own any clothes by the stores, would they recognise the brands? The visual merchandising in the London stores were quite different to the casual stocking in the Cotswolds stores: in William Evans, breeks and waterproofs hung

on racks next to a glass case filled with bone, silver, and glass ornaments such as a small silver shooting horn and delicate shot glasses embellished with stag heads. In Farlows, a glass case containing maps of rivers and different fishing tackle, also contained bottles of whiskey in a straw hamper and leather hip flasks. The image of the wealthy English country gent is marketed more in these stores.

In my conversation with my neighbour in the Cotswolds, Hugo, (see Appendix A) he described how it is difficult to buy countrywear online: Asos (online retailer for high street and mid-range brands) stocks what he describes as 'the bad Barbour', the styles and garments that are not part of the uniform of countrywear, a non-genuine aesthetic. As a student, Hugo added that there are no student discounts for the big brands so it is not accessible for different budgets, thus bolstering its posh boy connotations that I discuss later in this chapter. Finally, he added that, in his experience, the city stores don't stock 'the proper country stuff'. Though my London store visits disproved this. My contradiction does highlight the city and country divide, the perceived divide, and the perpetuated idea of difference. This is an example of spatialisation.

Geography as Consumption Motivation

There are two key concepts that greatly influence the countrywear style and they are time and place. Through time, I am investigating what has allowed this aesthetic to last over an extended period. The style's place connotations, Englishness, and locations of my study contribute to a discussion of place and in this section, I narrow down my focus on place to the Cotswolds and West London, rather than general Englishness. I have used Rob Shields' *Places on the Margin* (1991) to investigate how specific concepts have influenced the consumption of the countrywear aesthetic, and consequently how this contributes to

"otherness" and restricted consumption by individuals. Shields investigates the geography of postmodernity and liminal space, his work focuses on cultural geography and how social spaces are understood.

To begin, spatialisation is 'an intellectual shorthand whereby spatial metaphors and place images can convey a complex set of associations without the speaking having to think deeply and to specify exactly what associations or images he or she intends'.[2] In other words, spatialisation is the connotations that are universally held by the greater public for a specific place. For example, Shields uses the North-South divide in Britain to illustrate his idea or suggests how people may choose whether to visit a particular place due to its associations. These place-images 'come about through over-simplification (i.e., reduction to one trait), stereotyping (amplification of one or more traits) and labelling (where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature)'.[3] These place-images are common for the Cotswolds, or the unnamed English countryside that spears frequently in my research. The associations of nostalgia, peacefulness, inherited wealth, and freedom have been utilised in the Cotswolds Tourist Information website and brochures. The website promotes 'quintessentially English villages of honey-coloured stone'[4] and Visit England's Cotswolds page encourages tourists to 'forget about the outside world for a few hours in this perfect spot of Gloucestershire'.[5] And the uniform of the Cotswolds? Look no further than the historic countrywear of the English gent, an over-simplified, stereotyped, label conveyed through clothing.

[2] Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.46.
[3] Ibid, p.47.
[4] Cotswolds.com <https://www.cotswolds.com/> [accessed 8 March 2023].
[5] Visit England, *Places to Visit in the Cotswolds* <https://www.visitengland.com/things-to-do/cotswolds> [accessed 8 March 2023].

In an over analytical, postmodern world, this spatialisation provides universal, social cognitive mapping that can be fixed onto imagery, fashion, culture, and personality. As Shields summarises:

> Culture is both regionalised and […] is an unclear abstraction, a "whisp of nothingness", until actualised in a particular site and situation. Therefore, the spatial – both as sites and as social visions of the world – is a crucial ingredient to any study of culture and social action. Space forms a "*regime of articulation*" of cultural patterns which contrast with temporal "*regimes of succession*".[6]

Farmer Fashion at Events

Farmer fashion can also be purchased at local events such as the Royal Three Counties Show or the Point-to-Point (amateur horse racing over fences). The Royal Three Counties Show is held in the summer in Malvern, featuring events and craft, commercial, and livestock trade for local people. It is organised by the Three Counties Agricultural Society that brings together Hereford, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire and contributes £35 million a year to the local economy.[7] My local Point-to-Point is held around Easter time with the North Cotswold Hunt in Paxford, a village near Chipping Campden. Here, amongst the horse racing and occasional camel racing, alcohol-filled betting locals can also purchase countrywear from trade stands. There's usually lots of polo belts, checked shirts, and deck shoes on offer. Fairs, shows, and events that are connected to, promote, educate, and trade rural life remain hugely popular events for a wide variety of people, locals and tourists alike. The shopping at an event like this has been researched by Goodrum and Hunt (2011) in their visual essay

[6] Shields (1991), p.274.
[7] Agricultural Society Three Counties Show <https://www.threecountiesagriculturalsociety.co.uk/> [accessed 8 March 2023].

'Framing Rural Fashion: Observations from Badminton Horse Trails'. They describe the Badminton Horse Trails, held in the village of Badminton in South Gloucestershire, as a 'temporary "pop-up" shopping village' that is 'as much about retailing as equestrian eventing'.[8] The paper finds that while countrywear is synonymous with the pastoral, patriotism, and power themes in my research, there is a nuanced way of consuming the clothes – 'the shopping village offers a sense of being a fairly postmodern outlet, addressing a "nobrow" concept of consumption' where there is a classlessness to clothing consumption diffused through a similarity of aesthetics.[9] Goodrum and Hunt even reference how 'these items traditionally signal powerful affiliations to (upper) class factions embodied in the sartorial caricatures of the 1980s "Sloane Ranger" […] These signifiers of membership to a social elite and a pseudo-aristocratic, eminently Anglo-British, country-house lifestyle (of huntin', shootin', and fishin') are, in many ways, Badminton's defining subcultural leitmotif'.[10] As a result, while the mode of purchasing and mix of products and pricing may in reality be more representative of a varied consumer, the connotation is always of high class and wealthy status.

A Private Members Club

There is a new way for young men to purchase the posh boy aesthetic: the Chelsea Life Jacket Private Members Club first came under my radar when TikTok's algorithmic For You Page delivered me a promotional video for the brand in December 2021. In the video, young people roamed the streets of Chelsea dressed in tweed and carrying air rifles (stored safely in

[8] Alison Goodrum and Kevin J. Hunt, 'Framing Rural Fashion: Observations from Badminton Horse Trials', *Visual Communication*, 10.3 (2011) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357210382358> [accessed 3 February 2023].
[9] John Seabrook, *Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing + The Marketing of Culture*. (New York: Knopf, 2005).
[10] Goodrum and Hunt (2011), p.305.

their bags and cases).[11] While I have been unable to confirm the team behind the brand, Kit Riley (from the Schöffel Gang TikTok page I featured in Chapter Two) and Archie Campbell, Marquess of Lorne, feature heavily in posts from the beginning.[12] In an interview, Riley explained: 'a Schöffel is a gilet, it's a country brand. […] I learnt about this thing called Schoffel Spotting, it's a big thing and people love it. They call it a Chelsea Life Jacket and I've been lucky enough to have a flat in Chelsea, so I've seen them about and just wanted to fit into the local area around SW3'.[13] The Chelsea Life Jacket is a clothing and accessories brand. Initially, I believed that they marketed themselves as a private members club to increase their associations with exclusivity and the posh boy aesthetic. Although, on 23 February 2023, the brand posted an Instagram story with the caption 'this summer we intend on running a CLJ simulated shoot day'. The story gave an event description, with information on the hospitality and the timetable for the drives.[14] The brand is expanding to in-person events and community building which continues to set it apart from other social-media-based brands, it appears to have ambitions on becoming a private members club.

Customers are informed about the upcoming drop of products through Instagram and TikTok posts and the email newsletter. A new customer would have to direct message the brand's Instagram account to receive the password for the website where they can purchase the rugby shirts, hip flasks, and quarter zips on offer.[15] "Drop" culture in fashion is a marketing

[11] Chelsea Life Jacket (29 December 2022) <https://www.tiktok.com/@thechelsealifejacket/video/7047094312538082565?lang=en> [accessed 8 March 2023]. In the past, TikTok has removed their videos due to showing guns.
[12] You can find a profile on the Marquess of Lorne here: Tatler, *Little Black Book* (2022) <https://www.tatler.com/tatler-little-black-book-eligibles-list-2022> [accessed 8 March 2023]
[13] Kit Riley in *Interview with Famous Tik-Tok Star Kitealehal (Schoffel Gang) - Where We Ask All Things Tik Tok*, dir. by NYNY Podcast, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ba4nJQkRG4o> [accessed 21 September 2022].
[14] A whole dissertation could be written about the "Englishness" of foods. The post promised: 'breakfast, bacon and sausage rolls with teas etc […] elevenses, which includes; delicious handmade canapés, champagne, soft drinks […] a traditional ploughman's […] port, tea, coffee, cakes'.
[15] In the spirit of not contributing to gatekeeping, the current password is CarpeDiem, but we'll keep that between us.

technique (often credited to James Jebbia and his streetwear brand, Supreme) whereby customers are informed of the limited products that are on offer before they're released, this builds hype, focus, and discussion around the brand. The products are released at a specific place and/or time and customers then rush to buy. This type of marketing has been typical for brands targeting young people. Their most popular product is the leather monogrammed hipflask (that I *had* to buy for research purposes and can confirm it's of good quality and meets its purpose well: storing drink and showing off status in the pub). The imagery used in the marketing evokes youthfulness and wealth. Figure 25 shows two screenshots from one of their TikTok marketing videos. This was for an upcoming drop of rugby shirts and shows Riley singing and rapping in the style of his TikTok content while driving a dirty old Land Rover Defender, playing rugby, smoking cigars, pulling pints, and getting into fights at Sloane Square station. The activities in their marketing, the countrywear styled in conjunction with their own products, and the labelling of their brand as a private members club implies that through this way of consuming, young people are buying into exclusivity, class difference, and gatekeeping. The only differences I can find between this way of consuming compared to the physical country stores and the consuming at country-specific events, are that this method is online and positioned for younger people. In theory, consumers can buy into the Chelsea lifestyle without living there and can dress in the style without feeling as though they are mimicking their parents.

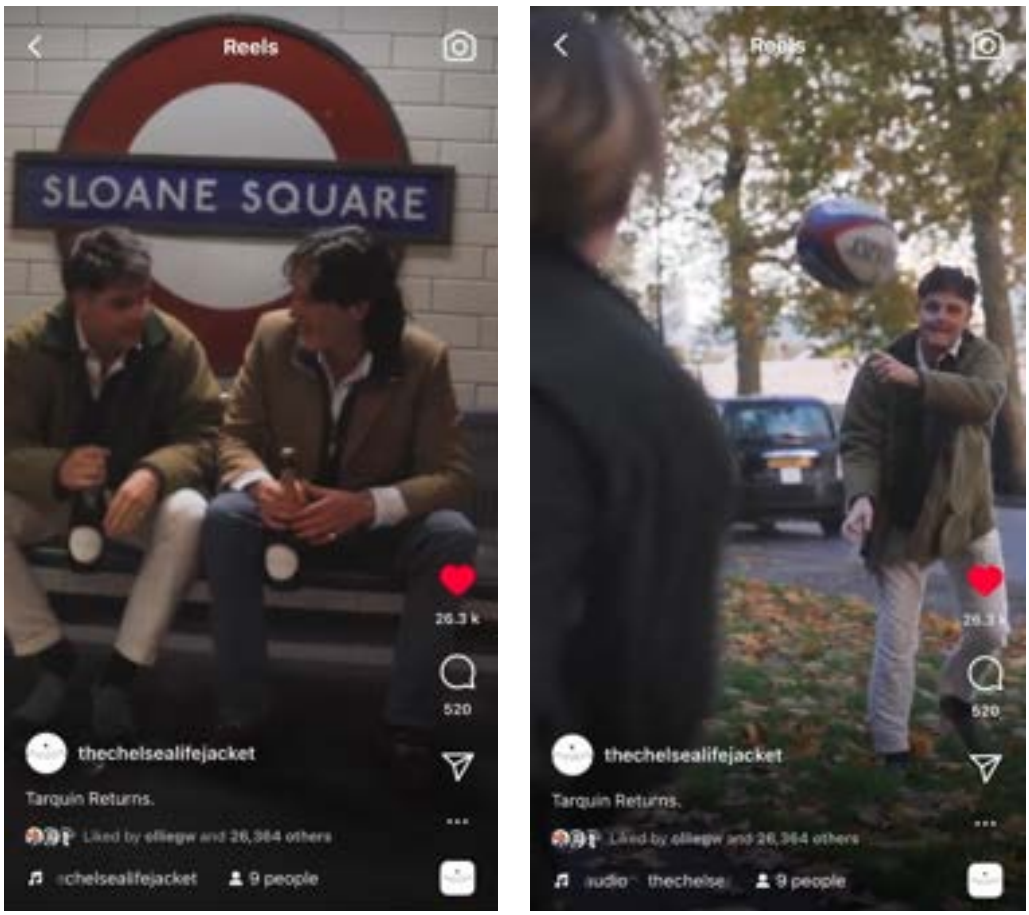

Figure 25. Screenshots from a marketing video by Chelsea Life Jacket

Postmodern Consumption

'Shopping is not merely the acquisition of things: it is the buying of identity; an "aesthetics of self" which establishes one's "social being"'.[16] This section focuses on postmodern consumption as a motivation for buying. I base my analysis of a TikTok on Russel W. Belk's 'Possessions and the Extended Self' (1988) which examines how possessions contribute to a sense of self, not just in consumer behaviour but also in 'our broader existence as human beings'.[17] Particularly interesting in his study is the inclusion of places and experiences alongside objects as part of the creation of self: this dissertation does not have space to explore this, but the connotations of place, lifestyle, or even of activities such as shooting,

[16] Shields (1992), p.15.
[17] Russel W. Belk, 'Possessions and the Extended Self', *Journal of Consumer Research,* 15.2, 1988, 139-168 (p.139).

certainly plays into the acquisition of countrywear. Belk's further work on the 'Extended Self in a Digital World' (2013) is especially relevant for my TikTok discussion, particularly when thought of in tandem with identity curation online.[18] I recognise Judy Attfield's (2000) arguments against consumer theory, which generally does not explore individualism and identity formation, focusing more on objects as forms of social construction. Though, my study does not have the scope to explore how taste and individualism (in conjunction with cultural capital) contributes to the consumption of the countrywear style. I instead use this section to explore the 'prefabricated individualities' that consumers buy into. These 'packaged lifestyles in the form of consumer goods' create group identity as well as a sense of self for the consumer.[19]

Figure 26. Old money Barbour.

[18] For example: Márquez, Israel, et al, 'Teenagers as Curators: Digitally mediated curation of the self on Instagram', *Journal of Youth Studies* (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2053670> [accessed 14 March 2023]
[19] Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p.134.

Figure 26 is a screenshot of a TikTok from the creator m.iles, a twenty-two year old living in London by means of his finance job and trust fund, daddy's money. With 170.4k followers on the social media site,[20] Miles is leading this trend, and his content has been taken without consent by the middle market tabloid newspaper, the *Daily Mail* to illustrate the posh trend on TikTok.[21] His content ranges from London guides, clothing hauls, multiple holidays a year, and comedy videos that usually centre around being posh. In this TikTok, fig. 26, Miles asks 'want to achieve that old money aesthetic? Here's what you'll need'. He lists: a Barbour jacket, a Schöffel, Ralph Lauren caps, and linen shirts (the photo for this has a very conspicuous Polo Ralph Lauren logo).[22] Trawling the comments for discourse that might provide insight into a broader group's opinions on Miles' list, I found that one user, named Sivel, asked for the Barbour jacket model name. Miles replied, 'I honestly have no clue [sad face emoji] it's my dads old one which he's had for yearssssss'. This re-wearing of passed down garments is typical to the countrywear style and has contributed to the aesthetic codes perpetuating across time. This non-consumption has heirloom connotations: inherited wealth, inherited cultural capital, and inherited Barbour jackets. In a following TikTok, labelled as 'part 2', he adds to his listicle of old money with: fleet of gun dogs (spaniels), classic car, collection of Ralph Lauren quarter zips, and a signet ring with your family crest.[23] An

[20] Accurate to 13th January 2023.

[21] Green, Jessica, 'How TikTok made being posh cool again: Teen toffs become social media stars with videos showing off their helicopters, bragging about 'Daddy's money', and flaunting signet rings dubbed 'siggies'' in *MailOnline* (25 August 2021) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-9922623/How-TikTok-posh-cool-Teenage-toffs-social-media-stars.html> [Accessed 18 August 2022]. And see this TikTok created by Miles <https://www.tiktok.com/@m.iles/video/7000811334417779973?is_from_webapp=v1&item_id=7000811334417779973> [Accessed 18 August 2022].

[22] Notice the hip flask in figure 24: the Chelsea Life Jacket brand, discussed in Chapter Three, requires members to buy a monogrammed hip flask for entry into the "club". An interesting parallel of the object, reaping similar connotations.

[23] Miles, *Part 2* (16 September 2022) <https://www.tiktok.com/@m.iles/video/7143981376709168390?lang=en> [accessed 13 March 2023]

arguably much more unattainable list. This analysis shows that in a postmodern world, people can only conceive of themselves through the commodities they surround themselves with.[24]

My Word Association Survey

Fashion is understood to be 'unintentional non-verbal communication'[25] and a 'system of signs', and this dissertation sees no need to reiterate arguments or provide a historiography to confirm this concept.[26] I am using this idea to understand how the countrywear aesthetic is consumed and viewed by observers and am arguing that this style carries symbols of Englishness. By understanding what this style means to observers, I will then be able to construct an argument on agency. Though, unlike Roland Barthes (1990), I am not dismissing the materiality of the countrywear style by focusing on its signs, I hope this is evident from Chapter One. I began with a survey that was shared to my 116 Twitter followers and my 507 Instagram followers, and to my mother's Facebook account – primarily because of her connections in both South London, where she grew up, and in the Cotswolds, and because I am not active on the platform.[27]

My aim was to understand how people "read" the countrywear clothes presented to them, and to what extent it changed based on the different pictures: the first photo is of teenagers at Badminton Horse Trails in the 1980s, to identify if the style has changed since; the second is a promotional photo for a reality TV type show about farming; and the third is of the posh boy TikTok content creator, Miles. Despite only 22 responses there was a lot of variety. Some responses surprised me such as a 75-year-old showing their age by writing 'Hooray

[24] The best example I can give of this is Bret Easton Elis' *American Psycho* (1991) where the narration often devolves into Patrick listing all the objects around him.
[25] Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (London: Heinemann, 1981)
[26] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)
[27] Accurate to 6 February 2023, I did not put the survey on my TikTok account as I do not have a public account with a following, if there was a legitimate way to distribute it on the platform I would have done so too.

Henries' and a 30-year-old student describing Miles, as 'metrosexual'. Hooray Henry was a phrase coined in 1936 that came into slang from the 1960s to refer to 'a young man from a high social class who speaks loudly and behaves in a noticeable way' and eventually was used as a synonym for the Sloane Ranger.[28] The term "metrosexual" was invented in the 1990s by the British journalist Mark Simpson as 'a single young man with a high disposable income, living or working in the city' with a 'narcissistic, consumerist approach' to his appearance.[29] Again, this term is not used very often in the present day, showing how connotations to the style change over time. Please refer to Appendix F for all the survey responses.

Figure 27. The three images from the survey, detailed further in Appendix E.

I included the first photo to understand if people could still identify the countrywear style in the past. I received responses such as 'old-fashioned', '70s', and 'eighties' that confirmed this. Most participants were confused about how to refer to the Sloane Rangers in the picture: 8 participants referred to 'farmer', 'young farmer', or 'working class' in some way – my favourite being a student from Stratford-upon-Avon referring to 'Hartpury College', an institute for further education near Gloucester that specialises in agriculture, and agriculture-

[28] 'Hooray Henry', in *The Cambridge Dictionary* [online] <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hooray-henry> [accessed 8 March 2023].
[29] Erynn Masi de Casanova, Emily E. Wetzel, and Travis D. Speice, 'Looking at the Label: White-Collar Men and the Meanings of "Metrosexual"', *Sexualities*, 19.1–2 (2016), 64–82 (p.64).

adjacent training.[30] However, another 8 mentioned 'posh', 'Tory', or 'wealthy', with a land agent in Shipston-upon-Stour calling them 'land rich'. There was reference to 'masculine' behaviours, country sports like the 'hunt', and two separate participants called them 'rowdy'.

The second photo was to show an image of genuine farmers (while I acknowledge that this was a TV show promotional shoot and so the garments were likely chosen to stereotype the countrywear style, this however doesn't appear to be an issue because a cliché version of farmer fashion would make it more identifiable). What surprised me was a reference to the 'stock market' by an American engineer and the mention of 'Prince Harry' by a student in Stratford-upon-Avon. This study would have improved greatly if there was a greater regional, or international, method for collecting responses. Overall, 13 participants correctly identified them as farmers but 6 considered them as 'private schooled' and 'rich/upper class boys'. There was also two mentions of Schöffels, both from participants based in the Cotswolds.

Lastly, I wanted to understand how people read and understood the countrywear aesthetic when it is worn in the city and find out if the meaning changes. It was no surprise to learn that my participants saw this as the posh boy aesthetic: with 40 out of 63 total responses for this question being related to 'posh', 'rich', and 'business', 'finance', or 'hedge fund'. There were three responses that associated the photo with a tourist: three separate participants used the phrase 'out of place', and an art consultant from London described him as 'countryside wanna be'.

[30] Specialising in the agriculture, animal, equine, sport, and veterinary nursing sectors. Among young people in the Cotswolds, it holds connotations of rowdy, youthful behaviour compared to the Royal Agriculture University that, while offering the same and similar courses, is associated with more "posh" students.

Semiotics and Old Money

My rudimentary experiment found that people were often confused with how to label the countrywear aesthetic and could not always read it correctly. I believe that this is due to a mixed history of the style in relation to class, silhouettes, garments, and fabrics have been simultaneously worn by members of the historically rural working-class dress and their wealthy counterparts. Not to mention the use of the style by the Sloane Rangers. Even in the present day, the same aesthetic codes are being used in farmer fashion and the posh boy aesthetic (pictures two and three in my survey). Fred Davis (2007) wrote on the context-dependency in fashion communication: 'what some combination of clothes or a certain style emphasis "means" will vary tremendously depending upon the identity of the wearer, the place, the company'.[31] This, I believe, is what happens to the countrywear style; the farmer fashion and posh boy aesthetic are entirely dependent on the context they are seen in.

Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) argues that we are judged, and judge others, by what we buy: 'Knowing that "manner" is a symbolic manifestation whose meaning and value depend as much on the perceivers as on the producer, one can see how it is that the manner of using symbolic goods […] constitutes one of the key markers of "class" and also the ideal weapon in strategies of distinction'.[32] This perceived and produced idea of distinction is shown through my survey and the TikToks I analyse; must this distinction be through class? Kate Fox (2004) writes: 'class pervades all aspects of English life and culture, and will therefore permeate all the areas covered in this book'.[33] Often, class-related discussions are clichéd and dated, and I have tried to avoid directly referring to classes by instead using the terms "farmer fashion" and the "posh boy aesthetic" as explained in the Introduction. But to write about

[31] Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p.8.
[32] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, trans. by Richard Nice (Abingdon: Routledge, 1984), p.58.
[33] Kate Fox, *Watching the English* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2004), p.15.

fashion, Englishness, and a style that perpetuates notions of Englishness without mentioning class would be inappropriate. Additionally, in sociology, W. G. Runciman (1970) explains how 'the notion that societies are stratified into three separate "dimensions", of "class", "status", and "power" is thoroughly familiar in the academic literature. But […] only occasionally is it explicitly adopted as the framework for empirical research'.[34] In fashion literature it is used more frequently with empirical intention, especially concerning consumption where historically higher classes had a greater access to more interesting and variety of designs. However, through the results of my survey and the streams of TikToks I have watched for research, it is undeniable that there is coding for 'posh', 'old money', 'Tory', and 'trust fund' that would be inappropriate to ignore.

Figure 28. Farming and posh boy collide.

[34] W. G. Runciman, *Sociology in Its Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.102.

Posted in May 2020, figure 28 is a screenshot from a TikTok created by user jordantkrigby, a farmer from Wales in his mid-twenties. Jordan is also an Instagram influencer with paid adverts from brands such as Fairfax & Favour. His TikTok content ranges from comedy videos to TikTok trends and gym videos. Many of his comedy videos relate to his farming life, including fig. 28. Here, the video is captioned 'You're too clean to be a farmer…' while the background song has the lyrics 'I'm a posh boy'. What makes this TikTok interesting is not only Jordan's use of his Schöffel and Polo Ralph Lauren shirt to indicate that he's a posh boy (when the lyrics start, he unzips the Schöffel to conspicuously reveal the logo on his shirt underneath) but the link between the farmer and the posh boy. He implies that being posh and a farmer are interlinked through the shared connotations of the countryside and its silent rules. Though, looking in the comments (a prime location for discord on TikTok) we find one user named James wo writes, 'Not sure about the hunters chief [sad emoji] #aigle #chams' to which Jordan replies 'Don't, I broke them and had to get the peasant wellies out. Chams will be back this week [raised hand emoji]'. This highlights that there are specific brands to be worn to make up the uniform of the posh boy and farmer style, and without which the wearer cannot qualify to claim this style: in this case, wearing Le Chameau wellies instead of Hunters. His use of the term 'peasant wellies' also highlights supposed class differences attached to the brand.

Power and Antifashion

For their recent exhibition, *Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear* (2022), the Victoria & Albert Museum staged a variety of events to stimulate conversation around the exhibition's themes. One such event was the culmination of five male-identifying poets' collaboration on the theme of masculinity. At this poetry reading, the chair asked the poets what do they enjoy most about menswear right now? One young man replied that you cannot

tell how much money someone earns at first glance, that menswear has become more democratic. It very interesting that the idea of equality in dressing was identified because amongst the streetwear, workwear, or tailoring of the present-day there is still easily identifiable signs of wealth. Even Steve Job's uniformed, supposedly democratic, black turtleneck was Issey Miyake.

While the arguments and examples in Ted Polhemus and Lynn Procter's 1978 book *Fashion and Anti-Fashion* have not all aged well, their comments on anti-fashion amongst the upper class still rings true. They argue that as upper-class fashion typically revolves around heirlooms and good, long lasting quality, it must be 'aggressively' anti-fashion.[35] This is because, to Polhemus and Procter and many other key fashion theorists such as Lipovetsky (1944) and Elizabeth Wilson's (2003) definition with 'the key feature is rapid and continual changing of styles', fashion is the cycle of novelty and change.[36] As Polhemus and Proctor believe:

> On the one hand, many in the so-called world of High Fashion label their static, anti-fashion styles as fashion. It is easy, however to detect these anti-fashion elements within the fashion scene by asking whether these styles change over time. The fashion designer who year after year turns out the same look is simply not a *fashion* designer.[37]

[35] Ted Polhemus and Lynn Procter, *Fashion and Anti-Fashion: An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), p.68.
[36] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adroned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p.3.
[37] Polhemus and Procter, p.26.

Through this argument, the countrywear aesthetic in relation to the posh boy's use of the style, can be seen as anti-fashion, against novelty and the mainstream. In his chapter 'Antifashion: The Vicissitudes of Negation' Fred Davis (1992) gives examples of some antifashion movements such as health and fitness naturalism, feminist protest, and counterculture insult. The basis of his argument is that antifashion is used by groups to rebel against the fashion system and to 'scandalise society's dominant cultural groups'.[38] He believes that 'antifashion often originates within working-class, ethnic, socially deviant, and other more or less disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in society' – can the countrywear aesthetic attest to this?[39]

I have included figure 29, a screenshot from a TikTok posted in August 2022 by conallsraiments. Conall Doyle is similar to m.iles in the content he makes, they even appear in each other's videos from time to time. I have chosen this example for his use of the word 'Tory' to describe his style, his aesthetic. In the majority of other "fit check" videos that I have come across (fit checks are a type of TikTok video where the creator poses and often names the brands and items they are wearing), the phrases 'posh boy' or 'old money' are most frequently used, so Conall's use of 'Tory' is interesting for its rarity. The audio in the background, in a drawling, deep voice, says 'they're posh, so very posh' then the following items are listed in a way not unlike in fig. 24: loafers, chinos, Ralph Lauren shirts, signet rings, waxed jackets, and curtains (referencing the hairstyle). He is insinuating that Tories are posh, and vice versa, and this is what to wear to fit in with them. It is interesting to see the inclusion of the hairstyle here too, which contrasts with the mainstream, working class, *Peaky Blinders* hairstyle that holds enduring popularity since the TV show's first broadcast in

[38] Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rcauk/detail.action?docID=5625866> [accessed 3 February 2023], p. 183.
[39] Davis, p.184.

2013,[40] or the mullet that reached heights since Covid.[41] In a profile in *BelfastLive*, Conall explains that he and a friend had set up a pre-loved clothing store on Instagram which he now continues through his Patreon: 'I said instead of keeping four Barbour coats I don't need and six Burberry coats, I'm going to decide to keep any Ralph Lauren stuff and maybe sell and duplicates I get when I come across them'.[42] He began posting fit checks on TikTok with what he wears to work (law firm) and how he styles clothes, and regularly trades pieces with other sustainability focused, Ralph Lauren loving TikTokers. His content is mostly comedy focused demonstrating "lad" behaviour and often verges on misogynistic, another display of his power.

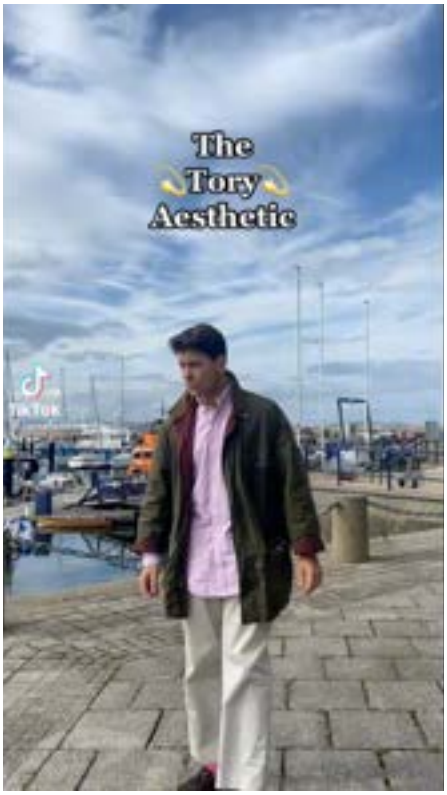

Figure 29. The Tory Aesthetic.

[40] Tommy Shelby's close-cut fade with length on top has been the haircut of choice for young men since 2013, its frequent appearance on today's streets attests to its enduring popularity.
[41] David Child, 'Online Searches for "How to Cut a Mullet" Surge Amid Coronavirus Lockdown', *Evening Standard* (London, 1 May 2020) <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/online-searches-for-how-to-cut-a-mullet-have-increased-during-coronavirus-lockdown-a4429136.html> [accessed 6 March 2023].
[42] Corscadden, Jane, 'The Belfast man going viral on TikTok for his collection of Ralph Lauren clothes' in *BelfastLive* (17 December 2021) < https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/whats-on/be/belfast-man-going-viral-tiktok-22497672> [Accessed 2 November 2022]

These young men on TikTok are openly identifying as 'posh boy' or conforming to the 'Tory aesthetic' and are doing so in a very conspicuous way. Their flaunting of wealth and associated connotations would not be strange on performative platforms such as Instagram, yet feels out of place on TikTok where everyday authenticity is the mode: 'if coolness was about donning a mask, the neomania [obsession with the new] mask is pretending to have no mask at all […] TikTok offers a completely walled-off world where kids can escape the cultural dominance of adults and reveal themselves'.[43]

Earlier in this chapter, I analysed TikToks in terms of their display of postmodern consumption, where consumers purchase to affirm and assign identity. Here, I will now discuss the TikToks as evidence of conspicuous consumption. Thorstein Veblen's (1899) theory of conspicuous consumption has a legacy in fashion studies, with writers constantly comparing modern consumer culture to that of the late nineteenth-century. Yet as it is now a shorthand for a specific mode of consumption, I use it to examine the reasoning behind countrywear consumers. Figs. 27 and 28 invariably highlight consumption regarding wealth and status. Certain brands, like Jordan's wellies, are favoured and dismissed and Conall presents consumption as a method to attain a 'posh' status. The buyers acknowledge that they are consuming to achieve status, this is conspicuous consumption.

The Negative Side of Countrywear

The consumption of the countrywear aesthetic leans heavily on classism, gatekeeping, location-specific connotations, and exclusivity. This leaves a space for a discussion on agency, and who *gets* to wear this style. Fashion studies can use Michel Foucault's (1972) idea that position (through gender, class, sexuality, etc.) is regulated and shaped by cultural

[43] W. David Marx, *Status and Culture* (New York: Viking Press, 2022), p.254.

discourses, therefore impacting choice.[44] Susan B. Kaiser (2012) uses this idea in the context of female body image: where fashion media promotes and encourages dialogue around thinness which the consumer feels they must buy into.[45] Their agency is inhibited by their position, as a woman. I attempt to use this idea in terms of the countrywear aesthetic's relationship with power: those born into a farmer or posh boy position may feel free to dress in the style, whereas those "outside" may feel a loss of agency, they may feel societally unable to dress in countrywear because of their position - just as a woman may feel societally pressured to be thin. The results from my survey have shed light unto how outsiders see into the world of countrywear: the results from my survey, 'sneers', 'private schooled' and 'hedge fund', evoke this.

There are different elements to the conversation of agency, and this dissertation certainly does not have space to fully expand on them. I will give a brief introduction to the arguments that greatly influence the consumption of the countrywear style, literally and in terms of semiotics. Through Corrine Fowler's *Green Unpleasant Land* (2020), agency within the English countryside and English heritage is discussed, particularly in terms of race.

My dissertation is a study of history of design, of historical and present-day fashions, and of digital medias – it is in no way an investigation into the sociology of the English countryside. But the countrywear style holds such distinct connotations to the countryside, through its design, fabrics, and practical elements; to its use as uniforms for country sports; and how it is used in marketing and media to present the typical English country gentleman. The English countryside is a contested subject and Fowler's work brings historical, academic evidence to

[44] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2002)
[45] Susan B. Kaiser, *Fashion and Cultural Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p.21.

explore how race, class, and gender have both created and deconstructed ideas of English pastoral superiority. Most interestingly, she also brings in literary and creative responses to show how the perception of the countryside has been created and challenged through different mediums. No doubt including fashion. She argues that 'modern cities […] are associated with anonymity and social change. The countryside is contrastingly seen as a "storehouse" of tradition, virtue, and permanence, whereas twentieth and twenty-first century cities symbolise immigration and demographic change'.[46] I can certainly present the case that the countrywear aesthetic holds symbols of tradition in its historical influences, as shown in Chapter One, its permeance in the cities and rural areas of England today, and its current popularity with young men highlights this.

By wearing countrywear, young men are referring to historical notions of Englishness, the pastoral, and masculinity. They project old money and inherited capital (both cultural and otherwise) situating themselves in a past that is intwined and popularised in the present. In terms of the zeitgeist, there is much discussion in mainstream media about how national history and heritage is presented and interpreted. This is shown from the toppling of Bristol's Edward Colson statue during the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020,[47] to the growing popularity of the right-wing organisation Restore Trust.[48] How can the countrywear style, which carries these contested meanings of the countryside and of national heritage, continue to be popular – especially with young people?

[46] Corinne Fowler, *Green Unpleasant Land* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2020), p.51.
[47] Gareth Harris, 'New Report Recommends Bristol's Controversial Slaver Statue be Permanently Placed in Museum', *The Art Newspaper* (4 February 2022) <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/02/04/new-report-recommends-bristols-controversial-slaver-statue-be-permanently-placed-in-museum> [accessed 8 March 2023].
[48] Restore Trust <https://www.restoretrust.org.uk/> [accessed 8 March 2023].

How does the countrywear aesthetic's association with discussions on heritage and national history, and its place as a symbol of Englishness affect how it is read by observers? This dissertation does not have the scope to investigate the elements of colonialism, contested histories, and negative patriotism found within the countrywear style. (And the posh boy TikToks are only furthering these negative associations.) But I firmly acknowledge its affiliation with power in every sense, and this is backed up by my survey results and the imagery of wealth and power (and whiteness). But countrywear can be worn ironically, like most uniforms, where parts can be used, reused, and reimagined to subvert how the style is thought of. *Black Ivy: A Revolt in Style* (2021) which documents how black culture used the Ivy style, seen as a symbol of privilege and elitism, is a great example of this and with a similar style. I wanted to shine a light on this process by giving some present-day examples such as London-based music artist, Master Peace. Struggling with the decision to move to London or stay in Surrey,[49] the promotional imagery for his new single *Country Life* featured carrying a hay bale onto the London tube while dressed in typical countrywear and a pair of red tracksuit joggers (referencing the amount of red trousers found in this aesthetic and the urban influences: in the lyrics he asks 'why does society force us to do drill?').[50] Young British designer, from working class origins, SS Daley is inspired by the 'structural nature of British heritage' and garments within the country wear style are littered within his collections.[51] Figure 30 is the Albion Jacket from Sam Nowell's *Am I the it in British?* presentation. This collection, presented in London in September 2022 by Duende Gallery, is based on the traditional imagery of village life and Nowell's own upbringing in a village in the North of England. The Albion Jacket is distinctly based on the Norfolk Jacket. All these

[49] Murray, Robin, 'Master Peace Hits Hard on "Country Life"', *Clash* (20 October 2022) <https://www.clashmusic.com/news/master-peace-hits-hard-on-country-life/> [accessed 14 March 2023]
[50] Master Peace (24 October 2022) <https://www.tiktok.com/@masterpeaceldn/video/7158121049140235526?_t=8adWHQh1fBF&_r=1>[accessed 14 March 2023]
[51] S.S. Daley, *About* <https://www.ssdaley.com/about> [accessed 14 March 2023].

examples show that the countrywear aesthetic can be a great starting point to challenge hierarchies and traditionalism in the UK because of the powerful connotations the style holds.

Figure 30. The Albion Jacket

Chapter Three Conclusion

The countrywear aesthetic essentially conveys wealth and power, even in its farmer fashion iteration. Its popularity and staying power inevitably impacts society in a broader, cultural way: even the semiotics of the style remain unchanged over generations. The connection to land, to *English* land, and to wealth as typically worn by young white men, solidifies their positions of power. This chapter finds that the countrywear aesthetic ensures that the exclusivity and unattainability of this power remains unquestioned through gatekeeping and site-specific modes of consumption. In addition, the wearers are flaunting their power by choosing to wear a style which has altered little through history, their disregard and

purposeful avoidance of the fashion system, aligning themselves with antifashion, only strengthens their position.

Throughout this chapter I have referenced the idea of consuming cultural capital. I conclude by questioning if cultural capital remains a relevant way of thinking in today's society. With a greater access to "culture" through the globalised internet, cultural preferences permeate across class boundaries. The evidence I have presented, primarily through TikToks, shows that the posh boy aesthetic remains a popular aspirational trope and amongst those with a "legitimate" wealth-associated claim to it. Even within the progressive Gen Z, the insistence of referring to class distinctions makes cultural capital relevant: you might learn through watching TikToks that a Barbour jacket is representational of farmer fashion and the posh boy aesthetic, but your father or grandfather may not have one for you to inherit.

CONCLUSION

Chapter One found that the design of the countrywear aesthetic has been selected from elements of history through specific fabrics, aesthetic codes, and styling. This continued connection to history gives it a nostalgic tone and creates a lasting uniform connecting wearers to a specific time and place. In Chapter Two, we saw how the countrywear aesthetic's connotation of power makes it an aspirational image to sell. The Sloane Rangers magnified the power and class associations through their exclusive subculture and media coverage of influential wearers. The country gent remains a symbol of Englishness in Chapter Three where, through gatekeeping, the consumption of the countrywear aesthetic conveys upper-class wealth and power.

By design, the scope of this dissertation has been limited in demographics, locations, evidence, and themes. This was with the aim to provide a focused study of the countrywear style through my three key research questions (design, production, consumption/pastoral, patriotism, power/uniform, subculture, antifashion). However, there are many directions that I could have taken the research in; the furthering of these ideas would expand on my work, perhaps complimenting or disproving my claims. Firstly, this research has focused on the Cotswolds and on London (specifically West London) and so regionality could be investigated further, perhaps through Northern-England's rural identities stereotyped by the flat cap and the materiality of Scottish and Welsh farming communities. Whether or not the fashion remains the same through cities and the countryside of the United Kingdom remains to be seen. To continue this idea, it would be interesting to compare other countries' connotations of their own farmer fashion: does other nation's rural dress hold the same posh boy associations when worn in urban environments? Separating my research from

Englishness would open a discussion of a potential universal sartorial language of the pastoral. My Word Association Survey and much of the secondary sources related the aesthetic to gentlemanly behaviour and the sporting man, the link between the countrywear style and a certain type of masculinity was frequently referenced. Unfortunately, this is not a gender studies paper so further research could build upon this finding – perhaps in a discussion of toxic masculinity linked to class power and typical "laddish" behaviour. Furthermore, this dissertation has not touched on taste: the acquisition and design of taste is quite unique amongst rural and/or privileged communities. It would be interesting to speak to individuals who wear countrywear about their tastes to understand cultural capital through gatekeeping or learning on TikTok.

My research is unique because it is unusual to study a fashion that has not developed through popular, street, or music culture; my research occupies a space to examine styles of clothing outside of the traditional fashion system because in the present-day, the traditional fashion system is obsolete. Fashion journalists have noticed the departure from the twenty-year trend cycle (Hannah Ewes, 2022) and lamented the recycling of fashion history (Thom Waite, 2023). Initially, my research aimed to understand why the style remains popular with young men, considering its historical and often negative associations. And so, I argue that the countrywear style has a new-found popularity in the present-day due to the power of nostalgia in fashion. Gen Z find comfort in a pre-internet age; nostalgic fashion excites the demographic for its realness. Connected to the legacy of the pastoral, countrywear provides community, status, and history for the postmodern generation to play with. The design, production, and consumption of this aesthetic by different generations has made sure it ultimately endures; I believe it will be with us for much longer.

I end this dissertation on a night out in the cold of early January. My friends and I are all dressed up dancing to ABBA in Infernos, Clapham (South-West London). Colloquially known as a posh spot (a fact backed up by their own TikTok account where interviewers ask the partying public 'do you consider yourself posh?') the nightclub is reaping surprising results in my observations: I had not expected to find such explicit signs of countrywear.[1] Under the disco ball and within the laser lights, I find three young men wearing Schöffels and dancing badly. To the smoking area, ironically for the fresh air, where a girl giggles as she takes a green tweed flat cap from a mullet. Amongst his group of friends, the now hatless man blends in with their uniformed checked shirts and assorted coloured trousers. One of my friends is waiting at the bar for another drink so I wait for her by the booths; Conall Doyle himself passes me with a compliment (he is wearing a Polo Ralph Lauren shirt, of course, and one of his male friends wears a fur coat).[2] This affirms I'm in the right place for the demographic of my study, so we return to the dance floor. My friends sing and dance while I watch the Schöffel wearers.

[1] If you don't have the constitution to scroll through their whole account, I'd recommend this TikTok: Infernos (27 October 2022) <https://www.tiktok.com/@infernoslondon/video/7159234264393977094?_r=1&_t=8ac4alS4jEj> [accessed 13 March 2023]

[2] I messaged Conall on Instagram and he confirmed his presence, the exchange was too coincidental to ignore.

APPENDIX A

Notes from my conversation with Sara and her son Hugo, my neighbours in the Cotswolds, November 2022.

- Sara says that the online shooting forums she is a member of are recommending sportswear brands like Decathlon which are more practical.
- She said that, while I would be welcome to join her beating to observe the menswear, the men mostly wear unbranded waterproofs ‘and it’s far too mucky and dirty for you, Molly’.
- Sara noticed that the men around her in these sports are very perceptive of others’ clothing. She gave me an example, that a man would sport another’s new boots and would spark a conversation about the merits of different branded boots and styles for different purposes, ‘sometimes it’s like they care more about clothes than us women!’
- Hugo says that buying the country wear style is difficult. It is not easy to shop online for fit, he says the ‘bad Barbour’ is stocked on Asos, which I’m assuming means a non-genuine aesthetic or a sub-brand. There are no student discounts on the big brands, so it is not very accessible. He says that in his experience, the city stores don’t stock ‘the proper country stuff’.
- When Hugo left the Cotswolds to study in Exeter, he purposefully did not dress in the country style that he had been brought up surrounded by and dressed in ‘because people think you’re a Tory’.
- Sara then showed me her collection of Barbour jackets, labelling each as ‘everyday jacket’, ‘dressy like if I was going to Cheltenham’, or ‘I’d wear this one in London’, ‘this was mine but now my daughter wears it’.

APPENDIX B

Email interview on 6th February 2023 with Oliver, a 21 year-old student from Wiltshire who runs the Instagram account sloane_rangers_ < https://www.instagram.com/sloane_rangers_/>

Please give a brief explanation of your Instagram account and why you started it.

My Instagram account is called @sloane_rangers_, I started it in 2021 after having a much less successful page, centred around vintage photographs. I realised the page wasn't niche enough to grow, and after learning about the Sloane ranger culture in around 2020, and realising it wasn't a very well-known term, I decided to start the Instagram page. My mother's family were English, but moved to Iran in the 1960s, where she grew up, being sent to boarding school on the Isle of Wight at the age of 11. Their family left Iran following the 1979 revolution. After boarding school, she moved to London Victoria in the early 1980s, working in Westminster; she was somewhat of a Sloane Ranger herself. After further learning of Sloane Rangers from buying the handbook, I decided that I had a great interest in the style, and (some of) the attitude. I now hope to grow my Instagram and use it not only as the 'mood board' that it currently is, but to promote a clothing line I have thought of launching, with my mother as the designer.

What do you think the Sloane Ranger represents in today's society?

The Sloane Rangers took a lot of influence from Victorians, which may be why I think Sloane Rangers today may, to many's opinion, be outdated. However, I wouldn't deny that as time goes on, these outdated styles seem to be coming back in. I think the style once represented a holding on to of traditional values, while still trying to differentiate oneself from older generations

Do you think the Sloane Ranger still survives?

I think Sloane Rangers disappeared a little for some time, and therefore are not so well known in today's society by name, but the style is very much still alive! For example, through the wearing of classic brands such as Barbour, which mirrors the 'Rus in Urbe' (from the Sloane ranger handbook) kind of male Sloane, or 'Hooray Henry'. The trend of wearing signet rings is another regularly seen; however, I think without many knowing the reasons for wearing something like this; to display one's coat of arms. In my opinion, a much more formal way of dress is returning, and to me that formality is seeming to reflect the Sloane Ranger style more than many others from the recent past. I believe that you can definitely still see the Sloane Ranger style in the area of London that it was born, but also in various areas of the country. I think it's a pretty distinctly British style; Ralph Lauren, in my opinion (though I like them) are a bit too American to be Sloane Ranger style.

Do you identify with the content you post (sense of style etc)?

I would say I do identify with the content! I was raised in the village of Marlborough, in Wiltshire. In my area of the countryside, the style is often similar to that of the 'Rus in Urbe', which I might say I dress similarly to. However, I do have a personal interest in a lot of more recent styles, such as that of the 90s and 00s; most likely rubbed off from growing up in the generation I did. I also like some more sportswear looks, and smarter looks too - I quite like some things by the American brand 'Rowing Blazers'. I think my personal style can vary.

APPENDIX C

'A Glossary of "-Core" Aesthetics' published by *Fashionista,* August 2022. See the article for expanded definitions: https://fashionista.com/2022/08/core-style-aesthetics-fashion-style-glossary-gen-z

- Angelcore/devilcore: Where the former denotes purity and innocence, the latter suggests evil or sadistic pleasure.
- Balletcore: This ethereal aesthetic comprises leotards, tutus, floaty skirts, wrap sweaters, ballet flats and tea-length dresses.
- Barbiecore: This is a girly, mainstream aesthetic rooted in the lifestyle and wardrobe of the Barbie Mattel doll circa its late '90s-early 2000s heyday.
- Clowncore: It's a quirky, youthful aesthetic defined by face paint, stickers, bright colours, dyed hair, fake freckles, rainbows, balloons, overalls, etc.
- Cottagecore: This aesthetic became ubiquitous on Instagram in the late 2010s, defined by idyllic rural or woodsy settings, shabby-chic interiors, cozy cardigans and prairie dresses.
- Cowboycore/westerncore: Standard cowboy hats and boots, fringe jackets and denim everything.
- Craftcore: Clothing within this sustainability-fueled aesthetic suggests that you either made it yourself or spend much of your time crafting.
- Fairycore: It's a soft, mythology-meets-nature aesthetic featuring elfin details, wings, butterflies, shimmery makeup, long braids, flower crowns, fingerless gloves, corset and puff-sleeve dresses.
- Fetishcore: Rooted in dominatrix gear.

- Goblincore: Sort of an “ugly” counterpart to fairycore.
- Gorpcore: Describes functional outdoor gear styled in cool ways, from brands like Patagonia, Arc’teryx, The North Face and Salomon.
- Gothcore: This is a modernisation of the goth look popularised by middle-school boys in the early 2000s.
- Kidcore/babycore: It’s a nostalgic, regressive aesthetic inspired by early childhood motifs.
- Lovecore: This is an aesthetic where every day is Valentine’s Day.
- Normcore: The uniform-like look is associated with “Seinfeld”, dad sneakers, baseball caps, Birkenstocks, fanny packs and simple wardrobe basics.
- Royalcore: Encompassing all things European royalty, this aesthetic has been fueled by period media like “Marie Antoinette”, “The Crown”, “The Great” and “Bridgerton”.
- Vacationcore: Just dress like you’re traipsing through northern Italy or the South of France without having to deal with flight delays, jet lags or contagious viruses

APPENDIX D

8th November 2022, Bredon Hill Country, Evesham

Standout Brands	Dubarry, Schöffel, Gant, Crew Clothing, Fairfax & Favour, Härkila, Brook Taverner
Types of Products	Jackets and coats (waxed, tweed), quarter-zips, tweed waistcoats, checked and plain shirts, wellington boots, hiking boots, deck shoes, hunting gear
General Notes	Very large sale section, the menswear and womenswear sections are the same size, there's a small amount of homeware goods and gifts
Types of Customers	Mostly older people but it is midday on a Tuesday, no children's products, a male customer is asking the shop assistant for hunting wear recommendations
Location	Out of town, just off a busy road but with lots of parking, has a café and a bar serving food all day, the store looks like a converted barn

13th November 2022, Parkinsons, Stratford-upon-Avon

Standout Brands	Barbour, Le Chameau, Hunter, Veja, Dr Martens, Hicks & Brown, Dubarry, Schöffel
Types of Products	Lots of shoes and accessories (belts, hats, bags, wallets), mostly coats and jackets (probably because it's winter time), cable knits and quarter-zips, plain and patterned shirts
General Notes	Larger womenswear section (most of the store), a wall full of shoes
Types of Customers	Young shop assistants who seem very knowledgeable when I asked about products, a few middle-aged customers in store
Location	In town, not far from Shakespeare's Birthplace so lots of tourist footfall

19th November 2022, Stow Country Clothing, Stow-on-the-Wold

Standout Brands	Le Chameau, Schöffel, Aigle, Barbour, Gant
Types of Products	Men's and womenswear of all types, the womenswear felt more "chic" with silk blouses and cashmere, the menswear included waterproofs and hiking boots as well as jumpers, shirts, etc.
General Notes	Small and cramped and poorly lit, a whole room just for men's coats, jackets, and waistcoats, womenswear on the upper floor, lots of products crammed into small spaces
Types of Customers	Mostly older people, a group of older men were trying on flatcaps in one corner
Location	Small, Cotswold stone building by the main carpark in the centre of town, surrounded by cafés

20th November 2022, Landmark, Broadway

Standout Brands	Brands are split between typical country wear brands, high-performance activity brands (such as Jack Wolfskin and Patagonia), and fashion brands (such as Joules and Crew Clothing)
Types of Products	Coats and jackets (waterproofs, wax, tweed), shirts (relaxed and smart), jumpers, gilets, ties, hats, a variety of shoe styles, lots of different products in the store
General Notes	Very large store stocking a wide variety of products
Types of Customers	The shop is busy, tourists wearing waterproofs and carrying large backpacks, some older women looking through the cashmere
Location	On the main high street, customers of all of the other places (cafés, restaurants, galleries, homeware stores etc) have to walk past it

3rd March 2023, Farlows, London

Standout Brands	Large Patagonia section, Schöffel, Barbour, Farlows own brand, Härkila, Laksen
Types of Products	Schöffel branded t-shirts (I've not seen these anywhere else), a long tweed topcoat (that I've also not seen in the other stores), lots of waterproofs and light layers in pale greens and blues, caps alongside tweed flat caps, polo belts, quarter zips, no shoes
General Notes	Ground floor for fishing, small womenswear department, large men's country wear section
Types of Customers	N/A, I'm the only one in the store
Location	Described on the website as being: 'Just minutes from bustling Piccadilly and a stone's throw from the gentleman's preserve of Jermyn Street'.

3rd March 2023, William Evans, London

Standout Brands	Lots of Alan Paine, William Evans own brand socks and tweed suits, Laksen, Härkila, Musto Land Rover waterproof quilted jackets (a collaboration between Land Rover and Musto, a technical sportswear brand)
Types of Products	Shooting sets with waistcoats and breeks, checked shirts in blues and pinks, hip flasks, leather accessories, canes, polo belts, pet beds and pet towels, cuff links, ties with embroidered pheasants, colourful trousers
General Notes	Menswear as you first enter the store, small womenswear room, downstairs gun room and further menswear (more accessories upstairs, downstairs holds more waterproofs and heavy jackets)
Types of Customers	N/A, I'm the only one in the store
Location	St James's, a minute's walk from the Ritz, surrounded by galleries, a hat shop, a tobacco shop, and fine dining restaurants

APPENDIX E

Word Association Survey

Hi thank you for completing this survey! This is for an MA dissertation project, aiming to understand the signs people read from different fashion styles.

Please look at the photos below and write three key words or phrases that you associate with the person wearing these clothes. This can be anything from their personality, their occupation, their location, descriptions of the clothes, or how you would interact with this person. There are no wrong answers, but please don't be offensive!

1. I consent to the information in this questionnaire being used for the purposes of academic research, on the condition that my personal data is not shared and that my responses remain anonymous.

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Please state your age

3. Please state your occupation

4. Please state where you live (city/town and country, multiple locations accepted)

1. Image One (Credit: Homer Sykes) What words or phrases do you associate with this style or with the wearer?

2. Image Two (Credit: https://www.fwi.co.uk/business/young-farmers-star-in-channel-4-reality-show) What words or phrases do you associate with this style or with the wearer?

3. Image Three (Credit: Schoffelspotted on Instagram) What words or phrases do you associate with this style or with the wearer?

APPENDIX F

Age	Occupation	Location	Image 1	Image 2	Image 3
23	Student	London	Vintage, hipster, old-fashioned	Cowboy	Basic
25	Art Consultant	London	Out door wear, farmers, work gear	Rah boy, wealth, went to university	Wealthy, countryside wanna be
26	Trainee Teacher	Leamington Spa	Posh, young farmers, arseholes	Rupert, rah, Cotswolds	Finance, dull, unfulfilled
23	Horse Trainer	Sydney, Australia	Scallywag, country, working class	Young farmers, practical simple minded	Country posh, upmarket, smart casual
30	Student	London	Posh, masculine countryside	Middle of the road, heterosexual, boring	Metrosexual, fleece, city boy
22	Marketing and community building	Cardiff	Young farmer, rowdy, Tory	Tory, shooting, farmer	Rah where's my baccy, private school, obnoxious
24	Student	London	Post, wealthy, Tory	English, farmer, male	Finance, capitalism, rich
22	Land Agent	Shipston-on-Stour	Country pursuits, wealth, land rich	Farmer, practical, working the land	Trend clothing, smart, second home in the country
20	Student	Stratford-upon-Avon	Young farmers, country, Hartpury College	Prince Harry, Countryfile, sheep dog	Posh, rich, calls parents mummy and daddy
27	Student	London	Basic, pastiche, over the top	Farmer, practical, classic	Preppy, business casual, practical
21	Student and part time bar staff	Lincoln	Northern, eighties, friendly	Posh, farmer, private schooled	Rich, business, posh
55	Optical Assistant	Dorking	Working lads, country clothes, farmers	Farmers, country, hard wearing clothes	London City, autumn, casual
26	Civil Servant	London	Alright, give us a swig, put a hunee on blue	Countryfile, Matt Baker, the country house	Banker wanker on the weekend, City of London money, hedge fund
20	Student	York	Farmer, country, young	Young, farmer, wellies	Rich, money, expensive
57	Company Secretary	Warwickshire	Working/labour class, rough/casual dress, poorer/manual class	Rich/upper class boys, money designed country clothes, private schooled	Out of place for environment/city, country rich style, money/private school/finance
51	Company Director	Rural	Country, hunt, middle class	Farmer, casual, work	City, yob mummies boy
23	Engineer	Austin, USA	Working class, rowdy, lad	Self-important, stock market, sneers	Neutral, probably nice, whatever
67	Retired	Shipston-on-Stour	Flat cap, boozer, hat and scarf	Country folk, springer spaniel, relaxed	Bus, city, iPhone
75	Retired	Country	Upper class, privately educated, Hooray Henries	Country, farmers, wealthy	City boy, middle class, well healed
54	Director	Stratford-upon-Avon	Rural, fun, boys	Schöffel, rural, farmers	Schöffel, city, trying to be country
22	Front End	Cheltenham	70s, Thatcher, 'This is England'	Farmer, tweed, Schöffel	Affluent, Schöffel, out of place
59	Postman	London	Hooray Henry, Toff, party animal	Farmers, outdoors, country	Out of place, country boy, visitor

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