"It's not for the sake of a ribboned coat"[1]:

A History of British School Uniform

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[1] Henry John Newbolt, *Admirals All, and Other Verses* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1898), 21.

Abstract

Despite a good deal of work on the history of education, uniforms and children's clothes as separate fields of research, the development of school uniform is an area that has received little meaningful academic attention to date. School uniform is a visibly prominent reflection of, not only, institutional values, but also of wider views and an indicator of cultural change. This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to recreate the five hundred year history of British school uniform using archival, commercial and autobiographical sources to discuss trends in design, adoption and change across a wide range of educational institutions. In doing so the importance of social factors and constructs on the education system and school appearances have become apparent, most notable amongst these are class and gender, but also nationalism and religion. This broad approach enables a wider spectrum of influences and processes to be analysed and their impact seen over a longer time period, allowing connections to be made that might, otherwise, have been missed through close focus. The resulting wide temporal framework can also act as a basis in which future research may be situated.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, in my own words and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified. It has not been submitted for another degree at the University of York or any other institution.

Be Keen!

Take lessons from the colonies
Be patriotic, keen;
Uphold your school with might and main
As they uphold the Queen.

Shake off your bonds, unloose your chains,
Ye hopes of future glory!
By sloth your fathers never won
Their deeds of deathless glory

Support your school, its games, its work,
Its institutions too;
Disloyalty erase, for he
Serves all who dares be true

Rise up like men from slumber deep
And let your school be queen
For Wilberforce and Dolman cry:
"Be keen, my sons, be keen!"[2]

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[2] "Be Keen!," *Pocklingtonian* vol. VIII, no. 2, Michaelmas Term (Second Half), 1899.

Introduction

."To my knowledge, there exists no definitive history of the school uniform. However…the common symbol of the uniformed school lad or lass is firmly etched in our minds as one of the English school system, structured as it is by more rigidly defined ideologies about class and position." [3]

The image of the school boy or girl in blazer, shirt and tie is a widely identifiable and understood symbol of education that originated in Britain, evolving over the course of a five hundred year period. School uniforms are still more widely worn in Britain than in most other countries and have become a symbol of Britishness to many in both a national and international context. These garments have also developed nuanced meanings that have changed with social, temporal, educational and geographic distribution. This work investigates how the current situation developed, studying British school uniform from its origins in sixteenth century charity schools through to the modern day with consideration made for the implementation, development and spread of school uniform and school uniform styles. It is not enough, however, to simply establish a timeline of uniform evolution. Interpreting the motivation behind these changes and their subsequent significance and impact is vital to understanding the processes of development. Consequently alterations will be situated within a historical and contextual framework and the reasons for these adoptions and transmissions will be reviewed, with a particular emphasis on reoccurring themes within the education system as well as wider social and fashionable change. At its very essence this is a work of social and educational history viewed through the tangible dimension of the school garment.

The styles of clothing worn by an individual reflect and communicate identity and uniforms fulfil this same role in a more clearly defined manner, recording place in society and relation to other individuals and institutions as well as demonstrating status and operating, even today, as a significant method of gender differentiation. It is not surprising then, that school uniforms figure largely in people's recollections of their schooldays, evoking memories from the itchiness of woollen skirts to the smell of wet blazers and the colour of house ties. These uniforms engendered in their wearer a range of, often strong, feelings, from pride to

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[3] David L. Brunsma, *The School Uniform Movement and What it Tells us About American Education; A Symbolic Crusade* (Lanham: Scarecrow Education, 2004), 3-4.

dismay but all of which shared the common theme of communicating a devised group identity, often at odds with the identity of the individual.

The type of identity projected, in this way, by an establishment relates closely to the design of the uniform worn, whether this is imposed upon children by those in power or develops internally as part of a school's culture and ethos. This thesis argues that whilst uniforms met many important practical requirements, uniform design itself is tied to the existing and idealised identities of the school population, most notably gender and class but also notions of religion and nationalism. Other factors such as resource shortages, fashion and the input of teaching staff can be seen to play an important role in a more localised temporal or geographical area. Reinforcement of these idealised identities through clothing control and the imitation and emulation of the identity of other institutions were the most important driving factors in uniform adoption and diffusion, although some uniforms consciously rebelled against such identities.

The history of school uniform is closely aligned with the history of educational institutions and that of childhood in Britain and it is, therefore, worth a brief digression into these two areas (other forms of education such as governesses and apprenticeships will not be discussed here). The first schools were founded in the wake of Christianity coming to Britain, schools were closely associated with religious centres and some taught singing and an elementary education to provide choristers, whilst others, taught predominantly Latin to provide new clergy for the growing church. These latter establishments became known as grammar schools and they sought the brightest recruits and these were often drawn from the working classes, examples include St Peters, York (625) and King's School, Canterbury (598). During the middle ages these schools grew in conjunction with the growth in power and importance of the Christian church and new ones were founded including famous names such as Winchester (1384) and Eton (1440). Their function also changed, whilst they maintained some free places, they introduced fees for the majority of pupils and as such they started to educate an increasingly wealthy and upper class school population.[4]

The dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, in some regards, separated the church from these schools and many did not survive the process, although they were replaced by new or re-founded institutions during the following century. These retained the name of

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[4] J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597-1977* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 22-24.

grammar school and many were started by liveried companies including Oundle (founded in 1556 by the Worshipful Company of Grocers) and the more obviously named Merchant Taylors' School (1561).[5] These schools continued to focus on teaching the classics, and little else well into the nineteenth century. Privately owned schools also opened, although many of these were short-lived and their intake was diverse.[6] It is from the relationship between these privately owned schools and the grammar schools that the term public school emerged. This sought to separate the grammar schools from institutions of a lesser status by distinguishing between privately-owned establishments and those which were incorporated under statute at law – the public schools and this expression rapidly became associated with elite education.

From the sixteenth century, charity schools, which endeavoured to educate and house the very poorest members of society, began to be founded and the first of these is widely acknowledged to be Christ's Hospital (1552).[7] Other such schools followed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably through the work of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK).[8] Later, in the early nineteenth century, the provision of free or cheap education to the working classes was continued by voluntary schools. These schools often had a religious affiliation and were promoted through societies including the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, the Catholic Poor School Committee and the British and Foreign Schools Society; these institutions were later awarded governmental assistance.[9]

Although girls' schools existed prior to the nineteenth century they were not common and rarely had an academic focus. This began to change in the mid-nineteenth century with the opening of several institutions, including Queen's College (1848), The North London Collegiate School for Girls (1850) and Cheltenham Ladies' College (1853) which promoted a more rigorous education for women. These were, essentially, the first public schools for girls and their numbers grew steadily into the twentieth century.[10] Such changes in girls'

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[5] Richard Aldrich, *An Introduction to the History of Education* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 64-65.

[6] J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 32.

[7] John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

[8] M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement; A Study in Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (London: Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1964), 4

[9] G. Baron, *Society, Schools and Progress in England* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968), 47.

[10] J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred – Girls' Education in English* History (London: Menthuen, 1965), 174-176.

education paralleled a similar increase in schooling available to the working classes and this was the result of a number of pieces of relevant legislation. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 acted to ensure that there was adequate, cheap elementary education of all children. School Boards were opened in places where there was insufficient institutions (of a voluntary type) to fulfil the requirement, and the boards founded and operated non-denominational schools. Whilst board schools could compel pupils to attend, they rarely did and consequently the Elementary Education Act of 1880 made school attendance compulsory, although this was not necessarily provided free of charge until 1891 when a further act ensured that this was the case. [11]

The confusing and piecemeal nature of this system was further complicated by the foundation of a range of secondary schools aimed at the middle classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, although some of these were re-founded grammar schools, others were new establishments which often took the name of County or High School.[12] Attempts to streamline the education system began in the 1920s but were not widely implemented until the Norwood Report of 1943. This suggested the universal use of the Eleven Plus, an exam, taken at the age of eleven, to judge academic attainment and consequently stream pupils into three kinds of schools, grammar, modern and technical, each of which had a different academic and practical focus.[13]

The system was overhauled again in the 1960s and many counties abolished the Eleven Plus, although some places retained their grammar schools and the associated entrance exam. The tripartite system was replaced with one type of education for all abilities in one school – the comprehensive, a concept that had been trialled in various places since the 1940s.[14] The public schools, along with some other non-state operated institutions remained outside of both of these systems and these latter establishments became known as independent or private schools.

 Childhood is, in itself, a social construct and the history of childhood is an extremely contentious area and has been since the publication of Aries seminal text on the subject in

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[11] Frank Smith, *A History of Elementary Education 1760-1902* (London: University of London Press, 1931), 287.

[12] W. Musgrave, *Society and Education in England Since 1800* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 39.

[13] David Rubinstein & Brian Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School 1926-1966*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 8.

[14] Rubinstein & Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School*, 1.

the 1960s.[15] There is still significant disagreement about the historical treatment and status of children, although the majority of modern texts allow that there was a change in the emotional responses demonstrated in relation to the state of childhood in the eighteenth century.[16] In the sixteenth and much of the seventeenth century it was believed that parents were the "instruments to convey the stain and pollution of sin to the poor Infant" through birth and that measures must be taken to correct this innate sin in the young.[17] The late seventeenth and eighteenth century saw a gradual transition from this concept of original sin in children to the view that if a child was raised and educated correctly in a suitably benevolent environment, their natural virtue would overcome any inclination for evil. This move was aided by works such as Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, which was first published in 1693 and advocated a wider curriculum in schools and a more compassionate approach to child rearing.[18]

These new ideas took hold with the middle and upper classes during the mid to late eighteenth century. As parents became increasingly focused on the specific needs of childhood, children became valued as representatives of the family whole. Parents began to "look upon their children as vehicles of social emulation; hence they began to project their own social attitudes as the moral imperatives of childhood".[19] With sufficient funds children could be educated to fulfil the aspirations of their parents and social mobility consequently increased for these families. Many of these ideas, however, were not initially extended to the working classes. Middle and upper class benefactors, whilst holding aspirations for their own children, were not content to see those of a lower rank become socially mobile as their

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[15] Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood; A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). This publication generated a number of strongly-worded critiques, see for instance Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[16] For example Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood, Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Alysa Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor: Welfare in Eighteenth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*.

[17] Richard Allestree, *The Practice of Christian Graces, or, The Whole Duty of Man Laid Down in a Plaine and Familiar Way for the Use of All, but Especially the Meanest Reader* (London: Printed by D. Maxwell for T. Garthwait, 1658), 295.

[18] See also Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile: or, On Education,* trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

[19] J. H. Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past & Present* no. 67 (1975), 71.

own social movement was dependent on the maintenance of the established order beneath them.[20]

The concept of childhood continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century moving beyond mere naturalism to a determined and proactive maintenance of innocence, resulting in what Hugh Cunningham has called an overall "shift from the inchoate adult: 1600 to 1750 to the natural child: 1750 to 1830 to the innocent child: 1830 to 1900".[21] A Victorian upbringing became a sentimentalised experience that, ideally, was entirely separated from the adult world, a period of protection and dependence in which children were shielded from the responsibilities and behaviours of later life. This had an impact on the treatment of children in upper and middle class households although nurseries and schoolrooms continued to be rigidly structured. Working class children, particularly those fulfilling roles in industrialised, urban centres, were also affected, although to a lesser extent. For instance a number of pieces of legislation in the nineteenth century removed young children from employment and entered them into the schoolroom.[22]

Each of the chapters in this thesis (except the final one) is structured around an examination of the foundation and development of one of these forms of school establishment and these are roughly categorised along date and class lines. This account includes a review of the wider social issues affecting schools of this type. The adoption and development of school uniform is then applied to this contextual framework and the resulting causes, impacts and dialogues analysed using relevant research and discussion drawn from the fields of fashion, art and educational history and cultural studies. The five chapters cover a very broad temporal span and this approach has been chosen due to the lack of existing research in the field. The thesis seeks to create a structure within which future research can be situated as well as allowing an examination of the effects of social adjustments on school uniform over the long-term, demonstrating the importance of school uniform as an indicator of social and historical change.

Whilst there is a body of academic research available on school uniforms and clothing, much of it focuses on the psychology of uniform or involves contemporary research and debate on its uses, application, advantages and disadvantages, especially in countries where

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[20] Levene, *The Childhood of the Poor,* 3-4.

[21] Hugh Cunningham, "Histories of Childhood," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (1998), 1200.

[22] Harry Hendrick, "Constructions and Reconstructions of British Childhood: An Interpretative Study, 1800 to the Present," in *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood,* ed. Allison James & Alan Prout (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 38-41.

it is less widely worn or introduction is more recent such as New Zealand, Australia and America.[23] There is also a significant amount of material generated by recent issues of schooling and multiculturalism, notably the banning of the hijab in French schools.[24] These areas aside, however, there is a paucity of writing on historical uniform design, particularly with regards to school uniform in Britain and this can be seen in a lack of dedicated texts, but also in its omission from educational histories.[25] In relation to the history and context of school uniform the publications fall into three broad categories; antiquarian, non-academic and those of partial relevance.

The earliest of the antiquarian works available are from the late eighteenth century. An increased thirst for knowledge, technology and exploration in conjunction with rapid advancements in the printing press made the publication of historical and contemporary surveys of societies and cultures both practically possible and commercially viable. In the preface to William Pyne's *The Costume of Great Britain*, first published in 1808, the publisher asserts that:

> As civilization and mental improvement advance in any country, a laudable curiosity is awakened to inquire into and become acquainted with, the appearance, manners, and opinions of other nations…The Publisher of this Work having at great labour and expence produced a series of Costumes, illustrative of the Manners, Habits and Decorations of several highly interesting Foreign Countries…thought that the utility and interest of the whole might be considerably augmented by contrasting them with similar representations, taken from his own country.[26]

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[23]See, for example: D. Meadmore & C. Symes, "Keeping up Appearances: Uniform for School Diversity?," *British Journal of Educational Studies* no. 45 (1997), 174-186; Ann Bodine, "School Uniforms and Discourses on Childhood," *Childhood* 10, no.1 (2003), 43-64 and Jennifer Starr, "School Violence and Its Effect on the Constitutionality of Public School Uniform Policies," *Journal of Law & Education* no.29 (2000), 113-118.

[24] John R. Bowen, *Why the French don't like Headscarves: Islam, the State and Public Space* (Princetown and Oxford: Princetown University Press, 2007); Dianne Gereluk, *Symbolic Clothing in Schools. What Should be Worn and Why* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008); Dominic McGoldrick, *Human Rights and Religion: The Islamic Headscarf Debate in Europe* (Oxford and Portland: Hart Publishing, 2006) and John Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007) amongst others.

[25] It is worth noting that some work has been done regarding the history of Argentinian school uniform, for which Ines Dussel is entirely responsible, see Ines Dussel, "When Appearances are Not Deceptive: A Comparative History of School Uniforms in Argentina and the United States (Nineteenth–Twentieth Centuries)," *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 41, no. 1-2 (2005), 179-195.

[26] William H. Pyne, *British Costumes* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1989), [i]-[ii].

Other publications with a similarly home focus followed, such as the three volume *Microcosm of London* (1808-10), which illustrated and described various attractions and buildings within London at the time.[27] These works recording contemporary life, although few in number, are valuable primary sources, whether, in the case of Pyne as an illustrated record of clothing outside the bounds of high fashion or more specifically in *Microcosm* which contains images and information relating to London schools. It must be noted, however, that when presenting the working classes, the words and images in these books may have been sanitised for publication. In a similar, but less useful vein, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the production of a small handful of accounts of historical dress within Britain. The majority of these contain fanciful illustrations and sought to ridicule or romanticise the past in place of factual accuracy. Writing in *The History of British Costume* in 1834 James Robinson Planche fails to distinguish between satirical and actual representations of eighteenth-century wigs and asserts that "In 1778 and 1783 we still meet with varieties of this fashion, which certainly is not exceeded in absurdity and ugliness by the horned and heart-shaped headdresses of the fifteenth century".[28]

Until the 1880s the focus remained purely on historical record-keeping for general interest rather than conservation and it was not until the turn of the century that ancient and architectural landmarks were offered any form of protection. An interest in preserving the past consequently followed and with it a new slew of publications focused on the preservation of historical sites, events, skills and artefacts. This was almost certainly bolstered by the natural desire to look backwards and seek stability in the past, in times of rapid social and technological change. One of the most useful volumes to come out of this period is that of the Rev Wallace Clare, whose book, *The Historic Dress of the English Schoolboy* published in 1939 sought to collect together for the first time a record of the styles of dress in a number of prominent public schools.[29] Whilst the images offer a snapshot of traditional uniforms in the late 1930s, the accompanying text contains some errors. Also of interest is

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[27] Rudolph Ackermann, *The Microcosm of London* (London: R. Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1808-10).

[28] James Robinson Planche, *History of British Costume* (London: Charles Knight, 1834), 323. For other similar examples see S.R. Meyrick & C.H. Smith, *Costume of the Original Inhabitants of the British Isles* (London: Printed by J. Kay, 1815) and Joseph Strutt*, A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England, from the Establishment of the Saxons in Britain to the Present Time*, *Vol. I* (London: Printed by J. Nichols, 1796).

[29] Wallace Clare, *The Historic Dress of the English Schoolboy* (London: The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Customs, 1939).

The Heritage of Dress, first published in 1907, which contains a chapter on school uniform, but is most relevant for its comments regarding the contemporary situation, notably the recent adoption of uniforms in girls' schools.[30]

The non-academic field is both large and diverse including the ubiquitous school history. Published at some suitable anniversary, this is generally desperately dry to read, imperfectly organised and deeply variable in quality, although they can be a valuable source of primary texts and references.[31] There are, of course, exceptions to this, *Eton Portrait*, first published in 1937 captures, in stirring prose, the rose-tinted day to day experiences of an Eton schoolboy in the 1920s and 30s. It is also beautifully illustrated with photographs by the New Vision artist Moholy-Nagy, whilst Christopher Tyerman's *A History of Harrow School* is both insightful and informative.[32]

Autobiographical works and collections of school day memories also abound, prime examples are Arthur Marshall's *Whimpering in the Rhododendrons* (1983) which contains numerous reflections on prep school life including school uniform. The more focused *Blazer, Badges and Boaters: A Pictorial History of School Uniform* (1990) contains some solid historical research but also a significant number of unreferenced stories and pieces of anecdotal evidence and it is organised in a counter-intuitive fashion.[33] These works tend to be nostalgic and often humorous in tone with little by way of critical analysis, or even indexes and references. Also in this category are the coffee table tomes which place artistic appearance above content, a particularly beautiful and glossy new entry into this area is Jack Carlson's *Rowing Blazers* (2014). This features contemporary portraits of rowers in their traditional blazers by the preppy fashion photographer and designer F.E Castleberry, each photograph is accompanied by a brief description or story.[34]

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[30] Wilfred Mark Webb, *The Heritage of Dress; Being Notes on the History and Evolution of Clothes* (London: The Times Book Club, 1912).

[31] See, for instance W.H.D Rouse, *A History of Rugby School* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1909) or O.F. Christie, *A History of Clifton College 1860-1934* (Bristol: J.W Arrowsmith Ltd, 1935).

[32] Bernard Fergusson, *Eton Portrait* (London: John Miles Ltd, 1937); Christopher Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School 1324-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[33] Arthur Marshall, *Whimpering in the Rhododendrons; The Splendours and Miseries of the English Prep School* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983); Alexander Davidson, *Blazer, Badges and Boaters; A Pictorial History of School Uniform* (Hordean: Scope Books, 1990).

[34] Jack Carlson, *Rowing Blazers* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014).

Unfortunately in lieu of other texts on school uniform some of these works are referenced as gospel, particularly by those from outside the country – writing in *The School Uniform Movement and What it Tells us about American Education* Brunsma notes that "The most outstanding history of the school uniform in England is Davidson and Rae's *Blazers, Badges and Boaters: A Pictorial History of School Uniform*…I rely heavily on this book to relay this phase of the history."[35] This reliance on imperfect texts allows errors to be repeated and propagated through numerous sources and some of these, such as the clerical origins of Christ's Hospital uniform and the relation of the appearance of Eton to the death George III are addressed and corrected within this thesis.

Some of the works of partial relevance also contain some mistakes. For instance, in *Uniforms Exposed; From Conformity to Transgression*, Jennifer Craik, devotes a chapter to school uniform. In an otherwise interesting book, this chapter contains a number of errors from misplaced dates to more overarching concepts, for instance, Craik states early in the chapter that school uniforms are "based on military dress" and that the first English school uniforms were "military-influenced", then later that Christ's Hospital uniforms were "derived from clerical dress".[36] Both of these statements are not only a matter for debate (as discussed in chapter one), but also contradictory as Christ's Hospital was, as far as evidence exists, the first British institution to implement school uniform. Many of these inaccuracies appear to be attributable to one of Craik's major sources for the chapter, a website called 'Historical Boys' Clothing' [sic].[37]

More informative works include those on educational and sporting history, notably J. A. Mangan who has written prolifically on public schools, the games ethic and Imperialism and Josephine Kamm who has published numerous books on the history of girls' education and similar topics including the women's suffrage movement.[38] These were excellent for contextual background, although some publications in this field tend to be date and legislative orientated, which although useful, provides little in the way of social background.

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[35] Brunsma, *The School Uniform Movement*, 5.

[36] Jennifer Craik, *Uniforms Exposed; From Conformity to Transgression* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 53-59.

[37] Wagner, "Schools and Education," Historical Boys' Clothing, accessed December 10, 2014, http://histclo.com/schun/schun.html

[38] For instance J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School; The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (London: The Falmer Press, 1986) and J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred – Girls' Education in English History* (London: Menthuen, 1965).

Additionally, a number of well-researched, key texts exist, none of which have a direct focus on school uniform, but all offer a unique insight into the subject in some manner. Amongst these Gathorne-Hardy's *The Public School Phenomenon*, the work of Cunnington and Lucas on charity dress, Ewing and Rose on children's clothing, Hargreaves-Mawdsley on academic dress and Cunnington and Mansfield, and Warner on sporting wear stand out.[39]

A number of texts on historical clothing and fashion were consulted to provide background on changing shapes and dress norms, these included works by James Laver, Phillis Cunnington, John Styles, John Peacock, Valerie Cumming, Amy de la Haye and Joan Nunn. Each of these authors provided a unique resource from the broad chronological overviews of Laver, Nunn and Peacock to more focused works such as John Styles' *The Dress of the People; Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*.[40] In a similar vein the significant body of work on fashion theory, particularly in relation to identity creation and the diffusion of styles was useful. Despite a lack of individual choice in uniform design, ideas of construction and communication of group and self identity through clothing are often equally as applicable to uniformed situations as to fashion and these concepts have been drawn upon throughout the thesis.[41]

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[39] Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597-1977* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977); Phillis Cunnington & Catherine Lucas, *Charity Costumes of Children. Scholars, Almsfolk, Pensioners* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1978); Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children's Costume* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1977); Clare Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in late Victorian England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academical Dress in Europe until the end of the Eighteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978); Phillis Cunnington & Alan Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports & Outdoor Recreation* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1978); Patricia Campbell Warner, *When the Girls Came Out to Play; The Birth of American Sportswear* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Patricia Campbell Warner, "The Gym Slip: The Origins of the English Schoolgirl Tunic," *Dress* 22, no.1 (1995), 45-58.

[40] James Laver, *Costume & Fashion: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); John Styles, *The Dress of the People; Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2010); John Peacock, *The Chronicle of Western Costume: From the Ancient World to the Late Twentieth Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003); Valerie Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History* (London: Batsford, 2004); Valerie Mendes & Amy de la Haye, *20th Century Fashion* (London: Thames & Hudson,1999); Joan Nunn, *Fashion in Costume 1200-2000* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000); Stephanie Davies, *Costume Language; a Dictionary of Dress Terms* (Malvern: Cressrelles Publishing Company, 1994).

[41] Useful texts include: Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture and Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); Amy de la Haye & Elizabeth Wilson, *Defining Dress; Dress as Object, Meaning and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms; Communication Through Clothing* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986); Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (Feltham: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1983) and Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas; Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago and

The transfer of fashions in consumable goods between classes and sexes parallels the imitation of uniform designs between schools of differing status and gender. Here, too, the existing canon of work can help provide suitable models for this movement. There are a range of texts that discuss specific examples of this transfer process, most relevant, are those on the nineteenth century emulation of the upper classes by the middle classes and female imitation of male clothing in the same period.[42] Works that tackle fashion transmission from a wider perspective are, however, less prevalent. Most useful amongst these is Crane's overview paper in which she assesses broader trends in fashion diffusion from a longitudinal perspective, allowing more generalised patterns to be discussed alongside those found within this work.[43]

Use has also been made of research investigating the uniform and dress of other comparable groups such as the military, workhouse inmates and suffragettes. The associations between such groups and school uniform are stronger in certain contexts than others. For instance many parallels can be drawn between the clothing provided in workhouses and almshouses and charity school uniforms.[44] Military uniforms exerted the strongest influence on the public schools as many pupils would eventually enter the armed forces and the concepts of masculinity reinforced in the military had their foundations in the ethos promoted at the public schools. The creation of school cadet forces in the mid-nineteenth century furthered this connection bringing both uniform and militarised

London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[42] See, for instance: Phillipe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 85-86, 180; Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914,* ed. Geoffrey Crossick (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 46; Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161-162; Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 68; Gayle V. Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power: A Nineteenth-Century Dress Reform in the United States* (Kent, Ohio & London: The Kent State University Press, 2001); Diana Crane, "Clothing Behaviour as Non-Verbal Resistance: Marginal Women and Alternative Dress in the Nineteenth Century," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 2 (1999), 241-268.

[43] Diana Crane, "Diffusion Models and Fashion: A Reassessment," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 566, no. 1 (1996), 13-24; see also: Deniz Atik & A. Fuat Fırat, "Fashion Creation and Diffusion: The Institution of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing Management* 29, no. 7-8 (2013), 838.

[44] Steve Hindle, "Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750," *Cultural and Social History* 1, no 1. (2004), 6-35.

activities into daily school life.[45] On the other hand Katrina Rolley's and Kaplin and Stowell's discussions of the use of clothing to convey femininity in relation to the suffrage movement relates closely to the tight policing of dress and morality in early girls' schools.[46] These studies, alongside the large body of literature on the key themes of the thesis - gender, class and youth have helped to situate school uniform within a broader secondary context of social and cultural change.[47]

Due to the scantiness of directly relevant secondary literature, the majority of information used in the thesis is drawn from primary sources. This opens up a huge amount of material for potential consultation but also has its problems. In the words of Susan Vincent:

> Typically, commentary about clothing is dispersed widely through a range of records whose main subject is almost always something other than dress. Thus sources…are littered with brief mentions of apparel. Very few, however, offer sustained commentary.[48]

This is particularly true with regards to the earliest phase of school uniform development in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when information, as a matter of necessity rather than choice, has been drawn from numerous and diverse sources. In later centuries the archives of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge who were heavily influential in

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[45] See, for example: Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle; From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[46] Katrina Rolley, "Fashion, Femininity and the Fight for the Vote," *Art History* 13, no. 1 (1990), 47-71; Joel H. Kaplan & Sheila Stowell, *Theatre & Fashion; Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[47] Amongst others: Elena Maria Buszek, *Pin-up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2006); J.N Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London & Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982); Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer; Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity; England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Rupert H Wilkinson, "The Gentleman Ideal and the Maintenance of a Political Elite: Two Case Studies: Confucian Education in the Tang, Sung, Ming and Ching Dynasties; and the Late Victorian Public Schools (1870-1914)," *Sociology of Education* 37, no. 1 (1963), 9-26; David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People; Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London: The Woburn Press, 1995); Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth 1875-1945* (London: Pimlico, 2008).

[48] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 6.

the spread of charity schools have proved invaluable, notably their suggested clothing lists and the collated reports on individual schools.

From the Victorian period onwards, school archives (and umbrella organisations such as the Girls' Day School Trust) offer the most complete body of evidence available, with many establishments retaining their archives on site. Whilst older and larger schools such as Eton, Harrow and The North London Collegiate School employ archivists and have well catalogued and accessible archives, accessing the material held at many schools brings its own unique set of challenges which have naturally shaped my research. Due to increased security in schools reaching the correct person to speak to is often problematic, all enquiries are routed through a member of administrative staff and explaining the research and obtaining contact details to someone more suitable is often the first hurdle. When someone is reached it can be anyone from a librarian or history teacher to an organiser of the Old Boys or Girls Association, their knowledge bases are often eclectic and physical archives may not exist. Some of these people have been wonderfully knowledgeable and helpful whilst other contact was less fruitful.

A significant number of schools were contacted for each chapter, but for the reasons outlined above only a limited selection in each instance had available and relevant material and a means through which it could be accessed. Girls' schools were, on the whole, better at responding positively to enquiries than boys' schools and this means that the examples cited in later chapters are weighted slightly towards female education. This phenomena is a strange one and it is perhaps due to continued attempts by female educational establishments to garner positive publicity or conversely, the dismissal of clothing as an area of non-importance by some boys' schools. Regardless of the motivations this imbalance highlights the gender differentials which constitute a large part of the discussion in this thesis. Archive use was also generally confined to institutions still in operation as the records of many closed schools have subsequently been lost unless held within a central archive. This is particularly relevant with regards to Grammar schools which survived in certain limited areas of the UK due to localised governmental decisions (maintenance of the Eleven Plus), notably Trafford, Kent, Surrey, Essex and Devon. This means that research into such schools has focused on these geographical locations.

The items held vary hugely from institution to institution but typically comprise photographs, uniform lists, accounts and letters. These offer an administrative insight into

uniform implementation from rules and regulations to the logistics of provision and sale as well as the physical appearance of uniform items. Archives are often lacking, however, in information outside the purely practical. This includes the thoughts and opinions of pupils and teachers regarding uniform and the reasons for initial uniform implementation. Direct testimonies from children are particularly few and far between and this is a recurring feature within the field of childhood studies.[49] This can be remedied, to some extent, through the consultation of autobiographies, personal recollections, diaries and school magazine contributions, although these passing comments are often hard to locate and, if they are to offer a valuable contribution, need to be situated clearly within the wider context. The commercial side of uniform production is also a fruitful source in the late nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, with the records and advertisements of uniform suppliers and retailers such as B. Hyam, Chas. Baker and Marks & Spencer proving relevant.

It is, however, worth noting a couple of issues with regards to reading and utilising these primary resources. Whilst photographs are extremely useful, images are often formal, showing representations of the ideal dress of children rather than an actual record of appearances. As Burke Ribeiro de Castro note in relation to specially posed photographs:

> The school photograph positions and frames the body of the schoolchild, sometimes alone and sometimes in relation to others. This is at once a technical, artistic, professional and cultural process. There is evident ritual, regularity and recurrence in the process of production and, once made, the photograph takes on a powerful role in representing identity, awarding status and reassuring the viewer of order and customariness.[50]

Distinguishing between carefully posed images and more naturalistic ones is not always easy, the latter offering a greater insight into actual clothing practices versus the idealised ones portrayed in the former instance. These problems can be mediated by the association of photographs with oral or written histories of the event depicted, although this is not always possible as many photographs exist, isolated from context, in school archives and

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[49] Paula Fass, "Is There a Story in the History of Childhood?" in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula Fass (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 7.

[50] Catherine Burke & Helena Ribeiro de Castro, "The School Photograph: Portraiture and the Art of Assembling the Body of the Schoolchild," *History of Education* 36, no. 2 (2007), 214.

collections.[51] Much of this thesis, however, concentrates on the creation of idealised appearances, consequently the portrayal of these in school photographs is congruent with the overall themes of the work. Providing the divergence between actual and ideal is not too great the use of photographs as a source of information on uniform design remains appropriate to this context. There is, however, considerable scope for further work on the modification of school uniforms and to what extent school uniform regulations were contested by pupils and parents.

Also relevant is the fact that terminology for various items of school uniform appears to have developed differently in different locations, with some schools adopting location specific words. Consequently it is not always easy to identify in written accounts exactly what item is being referred to. For instance the term 'djibbah' is used variously to describe the original flared and sleeved tunic of Roedean school, a sleeveless straight tunic and a sleeveless pleated tunic (or gymslip) depending on school and location and this is discussed further in chapter three. To ease confusion, the words will be applied consistently throughout the thesis and the definitions used can be found in the appendix. Where any possible confusion exists over the use of a term in original documentation this is also noted.

Whilst this is a work on dress history, it is not in its strictest sense fashion history – the history of uniform and the history of fashion are two distinct but related histories in which influences pass in both directions, but in one the creation of (and rebellion against) group identities is critical and in the other, personal identities are more dominant.[52] It also encompasses cultural themes and to a lesser extent consumption and production. The diverse nature of the subject means that it cannot be mastered through one single approach and it seems counter-intuitive to pigeonhole it unnecessarily. Consequently the overall methodology is consciously cross-disciplinary utilising elements from a number of approaches. This follows in the footsteps of historians such as Breward (*The Culture of Fashion)*, Roche (*The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime*) and Vincent

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[51] Stephanie Spencer, "A Uniform Identity: Schoolgirl Snapshots and the Spoken Visual," *History of Education* 36, no. 2 (2007), 227-228.

[52] Ann Margaret Brach "Identity and Intersubjectivity," in *Identities through Fashion: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Ana Marta Gonzalez & Laura Bovone (London: Berg, 2012), 51-54; Kelly Tepper Tian, William O. Bearden & Gary L. Hunter, "Consumers' Need for Uniqueness: Scale, Development and Validation," *Journal of Consumer Research* 28, no. 1 (2001), 50-66; Jon Swain, "The Right Stuff: Fashioning an Identity Through Clothing in a Junior School," *Gender and Education* 14, no. 1 (2002), 53-69.

(*Dressing the Elite; Clothes in Early Modern England*) who have considered the social history of clothing from multiple standpoints engaging with current and historical commentaries from a range of spheres.[53]

Overall, this study aims to provide an overview of the adoption and spread of school uniform and the cultural and social factors and constructs that affected both its implementation and appearance. It is not intended to be a close analysis of individual schools or garments, unless they are particularly influential. This thesis, however, is not 'anti-artefact', it simply does not ascribe to the Lou Taylor school of thought in which all social clothing histories must be buttressed with original fabrics and garments, regardless of a discernable link between them and the research, to hold any intellectual weight.[54] This in no way belittles the excellent work of Naomi Tarrant, Janet Arnold, Elizabeth Ewing, Phillis Cunnington *et al* who have focused in many of their publications on object-based garment research, it is simply not the focus here. This is predominantly because surviving examples of school uniform are few in number. The research produced by these academics provides the scholarship for many of the assertions made in this study and their work is referenced throughout. The personal and psychological effects of school uniform and an investigation into the global spread of British uniform practices are also outside the scope of this thesis except when they impact directly on the historical narrative or argument.

The question of why this subject has been so neglected is a complex one and can, in part, be attributed to the lack of interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of dress history in general. It is still a relatively new discipline, it has only been fully accepted into the academic canon in the last couple of decades and the field continues to develop theoretical and practical approaches at a rapid pace.[55] School uniform is clearly a subject to which this new breed of analytically rigorous dress history is yet to be applied and its broad temporal span

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[53] Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion; A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing; Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite; Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

[54] Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 76-77.

[55] John Styles, "Dress in History: Reflections of a Contested Terrain," *Fashion Theory* 2, no. 4 (1998), 383-390; Christopher Breward, "Review: The Politics of Fashion: The Politics of Fashion Studies," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42 no. 4 (2007), 673-675; Jonathan Faiers, "Dress Thinking: Disciplines and Indisciplinarity," in *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas & Annebella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 15-17.

and cross-disciplinary nature, along with the lack of original garments noted above (school uniforms tended to be worn out completely or passed onto siblings) may have discouraged others. Additionally the public view of school uniform has been influenced by the modern tendency to associate school uniforms with dressing up, drinking and in the case of girls' school uniforms, titillation. The volume of non-academic written texts attached to the area, such as the school history and nostalgic review noted above may also work to create a false sense of a body of work on the subject.

The majority of the emphasis of the study will be on England, although examples in Scotland and Wales will be used when relevant. Chapters are arranged so that each concentrates on a significant phase in the development of school uniform and this is generally associated with a type of educational establishment and arranged in a broadly chronological fashion. Whilst there is some temporal overlap, each chapter contains its own unique themes and debates centred on the institutions discussed. The first chapter considers the earliest regulation of clothing in schools with a major focus on the supply of uniform garments in charitable institutions of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century. These early establishments provided a rudimentary education for poor and orphaned children and the clothing they bestowed ensured attendees were clean and decent. I argue that these garments also sought to denote the low status of the children and to inculcate humility, outwardly demonstrating the position in society that had been assigned to them. This process was reinforced through traditions of public display in which charity children took part in processions, services and public viewings. These enabled those of higher status to reinforce their own position in society by relating it to others of lower rank as well as bolstering individual status through the demonstration of charitable giving. Chapter one does not connect as closely as some of the subsequent chapters in that the direct influence of charity school uniform is not discernable in later institutional clothing. It is not, however, a historical side note, the charity schools laid the foundations for the very British tradition of school uniform and many of the themes from this chapter, most notably the visible designation of status through clothing are repeated throughout the thesis.

At the opposite end of the social spectrum, the second chapter concentrates on the conversion of elite public schools in the nineteenth century from anarchic and poorly regulated establishments to the games-obsessed and hierarchical institutions so romantically portrayed in schoolboy literature. These schools began to define and teach what it was to be 'manly' through the public school ethos and in doing so controlled access to elite

professions, particularly colonial careers, which sought men who had been educated in this manner. It is posited in the chapter that in an attempt to prevent non-elite members of the burgeoning middle classes gaining entry to these careers and the increased status that a public school education offered, traditional public schools developed complicated exclusion processes from invented traditions to specific slang and unique attire, which alienated outsiders and demonstrated institutional affiliation and loyalty in both appearance and action. With many members of the middling classes consequently debarred from these schools, numerous institutions opened which closely imitated the public school ethos, organisation and appearance but which allowed admittance to a wider range of pupils. Uniform was initially adopted to create and reinforce elite institutional identity, but as it was emulated, it also worked to remove these distinctions and allow the middle classes access to similar experiences and prospects, an outcome firmly at odds with the original intentions.

Girls' public schools also came to prominence during the nineteenth century and the third chapter explores the huge upheaval in gender roles that occurred during this period. These changes were provoked and promoted by female education, and clothing was utilised in the campaign for educational acceptance and, later, equality between the genders. Schoolgirls' were initially encouraged to dress in a feminine and socially correct fashion as a considerable portion of the debate against girls' schooling centred on a loss of femininity and by encouraging such clothing practices these arguments could be dismissed. The impracticalities of sport in corseted attire, however, saw the introduction of sports uniforms in many institutions. Later as girls' education became more widely accepted, establishments began to imitate the dress and organisation of boys' public schools in an attempt to assert their comparable academic ability and achievement. These masculine inspired uniforms became a symbol of emancipation in both a practical way, in that they allowed freedom of movement but also as an emblem of similar educational attainment.

The fourth chapter focuses on the education of the middle and working classes, charting the imitation of public school uniform by the new County and Grammar schools, which offered secondary education to the middle classes. In a parallel to the imitation occurring within the public school system itself this was a clear attempt to mirror the status of the upper-class schools. It is in this period that schooling became compulsory and uniform uptake, albeit in a pared down form also occurred at the schools which opened to fulfil the demand that this created for working class education. The implementation of uniform at this level was not without problems, particularly regarding cost. By the Second World War,

however, school uniform was an expected and understood part of the educational process. Whilst the design of uniform changed little through its nationwide adoption, the meanings that it was imbued with, did. In this chapter I argue that uniform moved from a distinguisher of class status, highlighting upper class pupils and establishments to a class leveller, disguising class background and allowing some integration of the classes through secondary education.

The final chapter is divided into two parts, part one considers the effects of twentieth and twenty-first century social change on school uniform from the fabric shortages of the Second World War through the introduction of comprehensive education in the 1960s to the increasing demands of multiculturalism in the present day. The second half of the chapter reverses the flow of ideas discussed elsewhere in the thesis - the effects of social change on uniform - by considering the effect of school uniform on popular culture and social norms, focusing particularly on the appearance of school uniform as a fancy dress costume and the use of school uniform as a media trope. Through the course of these chapters the thesis aims to fulfil a dual function of creating the first factual account of school uniform development in Britain and to offer an analysis of the social and institutional contexts in which this occurred.

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Chapter One
The Charity Schools 1552-1900

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'Twas on a holy Thursday, their innocent faces clean,
The children walking two and two in red and blue and green:
Grey-headed beadles walked before, with wands as white as snow,
Till into the high dome of Paul's they like Thames waters flow.[56]

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Charity schools were an early feature in the development of the modern British education system.[57] The first schools were founded in the sixteenth century and they became increasingly prevalent throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, seeking to provide free education for orphans and other impoverished members of society. The compulsory clothing provided, for pupils, by these charity schools constitutes the first widespread example of the use of school uniform. During this first chapter I will argue that charity school uniforms were initially adopted out of practicality – clothing needed to be provided for pupils who could not provide for themselves and the mass production of identical garments was cost-effective. The designs and colours chosen, however, ensured that these uniforms were also a symbol of the pupils' class and gender. The outcomes of this were twofold in that it emphasised the low social position of the wearer to both themselves and others whilst also enabling benefactors of the school to demonstrate their status in relation to the children. This status differential between wearer and spectator and wearer and benefactor was further reinforced through public viewing of the children in processions, open mealtimes, church services and at public festivities.

The above extract from Blake's 1789 *Holy Thursday* in *Songs of Innocence* vividly captures the picturesque spectacle of uniformed charity school children *en masse* and gives us an idea of the sheer number of them within London at this time. The event is Ascension Day, the date of the annual London charity school church service, a tradition first mentioned in 1703, but taking place in St Paul's from 1782. This period was the heyday of the charity schools, even though they already had a formidable history, some schools having been in existence for nearly two hundred and fifty years. In the full text of *Holy Thursday* Blake praises the beauty

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[56] William Blake, "Holy Thursday (Songs of Innocence)," in *The Complete Writings of William Blake,* ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 121-122.

[57] Neil J. Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 313.

of the innocent children in a way typical of the sanitised portrayals of charity schools in literature and illustrations from the late eighteenth century. The immediate impact of the verses suggests a sentimental witness using Biblical language to praise the treatment and behaviour of the children. It is only on closer examination that the details of the language hint at unsettling aspects in the image Blake has created and suggest that the poem may be a subtle critique of the treatment of poor children; the orderly nature of the procession and the wands or rods of the Beadles imply regimentation and harsh discipline. The last line of the poem, "Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door" may be interpreted as a plea for genuine feeling for the plight of these children and not just the provision of life's essentials. This becomes more obvious when the poem is read in conjunction with its companion piece in *Songs of Experience* which refers to the institutions as the "cold usurous hand". It rails against the self righteous complacency of a society in which "Babes are reduced to misery", but in which a spectacle, such as the procession to St Paul's is lauded as not only charitable, but beautiful.[58] In these two poems Blake captures the dichotomy between the outwardly successful and widely promoted work of the charity schools in raising and instructing poor and orphaned children and the internal structure of the institutions which resulted in subjugation, rigidity, reinforcement of class boundaries and religious and moral inculcation.

This disjunction between charity in its Biblical and Christian sense of loving kindness and charity as a self-serving and self-congratulatory gesture is exemplified by the clothing procedures adopted by the first charity schools - practices which were still in operation at the time of Blake's poems. Whilst the schools supplied much needed clothing to the children, the garments chosen allowed those in authority to outwardly manifest their own social values, particularly the promotion of discipline and gender and class divisions, and imprint these upon the pupils. It is in these practices that the first school uniforms, of a variety that we would recognise, originated. It is, therefore, important within the history of school uniform to chart the narrative of the charity schools, and to link this history with the later evolution of uniform practices and the wide-ranging role of clothing in the creation and dissemination of a particular and predetermined image.

Sources on charity schools in the sixteenth and seventeenth century are few and consequently information has been drawn from a wide range of places, but most notably

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[58] Blake, "Holy Thursday (Songs of Experience)," in *The Complete Writings of William Blake,* 211-212.

from the archives of Christ's Hospital and those of other individual schools. Later evidence has been taken from the archives of The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) which encouraged the setting up and maintenance of charity schools from its foundation at the turn of the eighteenth century. Early images of charity school children are particularly unusual. Although representations of children may be found in prints and portraits and on tombs, these images tend to be almost exclusively of upper class children and very rarely of charity pupils; original garments are even scarcer.[59] As a result the majority of early information about charitable institutions and their uniforms, both factual and contextual, must be drawn from written descriptions, which brings its own limitations, notably, in this instance, the modern interpretation of clothing-based language. From the end of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth century it became fashionable for charity schools to adorn their buildings with statues of the children they were educating, these provide a rare and valuable record of the children's appearance. Many, however, were copied one from another or cast in the same moulds, surviving examples may also have been altered, damaged or subsequently repainted, so they must be treated with care as historical sources.[60] In the nineteenth century changing attitudes to childhood in conjunction with the invention of technologies such as the camera led to a surge in images of charity children and these have been utilised where possible. The definition of a charity school has been left purposely wide, encompassing any institution that provided free schooling, predominantly for members of the working classes, allowing the use of the greatest amount of historical material. The chapter will be structured in a broadly chronological fashion, but will conclude with a thematic discussion of charity school children as spectacle.

Early School Clothing

Whilst the charity schools represent the first instances of the complete regulation of school clothing, there are earlier examples of the provision of garments in educational situations. The invention of school uniform, therefore, needs be set within the wider historical and social continuum of organised education, a history which can be traced back to the sixth century. When Augustine was sent from Rome to the Kingdom of Kent he brought with him the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the first seeds of structured

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[59] Ninya Mikhaila & Jane Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor; Reconstructing Sixteenth Century Dress* (London: Batsford, 2006), 7.

[60] Gregory Holyoake, "Survivors of the First Free Schools; London's Charity Children Statues," *Country Life,* Nov 13, 1980, 1787.

education. As the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon pagans spread new religious centres were founded, initially at Canterbury but later at York, Rochester and London. Closely linked teaching institutions were also set up in conjunction with the monasteries and cathedrals which were built at these sites. These were intended to provide bright and educated recruits for the growing church, with the majority of pupils drawn from the poorer classes. The language of the church was Latin and this needed to be taught to pupils, consequently the schools became known as grammar schools. For all but the select few at these schools and those of noble birth who were educated in the houses of other noblemen, nothing but a scant education was available, usually provided by a local priest or in the form of an apprenticeship.[61]

During the subsequent centuries this general pattern was retained with the grammar schools growing in size and influence. Many more were founded, most famously Westminster (1179), Winchester (1384) and Eton (1440). These preserved their religious affiliations, but their modes of operation began to alter; recruitment of poor scholars became less important for the maintenance of the Church and more of a charitable obligation with fees being introduced for better-off pupils.[62] Founders' interests began to play a part and these were often diverse, ranging from a focus on a specific element of the curriculum to educating their own kin. Schooling on a smaller scale also emerged with an increasing number of reading and writing schools appearing during the fifteenth century. These provided both stand-alone teaching of skills and also an elementary education for those entering the grammar schools.[63]

There are examples of grammar schools providing pupils with gowns from the earliest available records; the 1307- 1308 accounts for Westminster School record that "Cloth bought for the Master and boys with the shearing of the same – 50s. and for fur for the master – 22d".[64] Similarly, the school statutes of Winchester from 1400 state that all scholars of the college were to be provided annually with enough cloth to "enable one ankle-length gown with a hood to be made from it in a decent fashion".[65]

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[61] Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 22-25.

[62] Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1995), 118.

[63] Richard Aldrich, *An Introduction to the History of Education* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 64-65.

[64] Accounts, 1307-1308, quoted in Lawrence Tanner, *Westminster School* (London: Country Life Ltd, 1951), 2.

[65] Statutes, 1440, Winchester College Archives.

A drawing of circa 1460 of Winchester School at chapel gives an idea of the nature of these gowns, showing the boys in high-necked, long-sleeved tunics with surplices over the top (fig. 1). Gowns of this nature were worn over shirts and other linen undergarments and resemble ordinary boy's wear of the time which consisted of ankle or knee-length, loose and unbelted gowns fastened at the front or shoulder. The long length of the gowns also reflects religious dress of the period as clergy wore longer, more modest versions of adult attire, which tended to be shorter than the gowns of boys. The surplices were only added for services.[66] Over time such garments transformed into the gowns worn by academics today, which preserve some of the length and style but became open at the front and developed more decorative sleeves from the late fifteenth century onwards.[67]

Fig. 1: Thomas Chaundler, *Winchester College*, c.1460.[68]

Christ's Hospital

Sixteenth-century Britain was an arena of massive social change resulting from religious, economic and political upheaval which had a profound impact on the education system along with many other facets of daily life. High inflation fed by imports of precious metals

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[66] Phillis Cunnington & Anne Buck, *Children's Costume in England 1300-1900* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1978), 23-26.

[67] W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *A History of Academical Dress in Europe until the end of the Eighteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 4-5.

[68] Thomas Chaundler, *Winchester College*, c.1460, drawing, New College, Oxford, from A.F. Leach, *The Schools of Medieval England* (London: Methuen & Co, Ltd, 1915), ii.

from the New World peaked in the middle of the century and in conjunction with sudden population growth and a consequent lack of employment resulted in an increase in poverty and vagrancy.[69] The prevailing view held by the middle and upper classes at this time was that such hardship predominantly sprang from laziness and ignorance.[70] Indicative of this belief is Thomas Starkey who, writing in 1532, contended, in his work of political theory *A Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset,* that the poor were entirely responsible for their own condition. In this work he stated that: "the multitude of beggars…argueth no poverty, but rather much idleness and ill policy – for it is their own cause and negligence" and this opinion is representative of literature on the subject at this time.[71]

The scale of poverty, however, along with potential motives of charitable assistance and state control, ensured that some governmental action was seen as a necessity.[72] The 1530s, therefore, saw the introduction of a number of poor laws which outlined suitable punishments for those vagrants considered idle. The laws also ensured that local parishes provided for those unable to work, notably widows, children and the disabled who were not viewed as having agency over their position and were consequently designated as 'deserving poor' in opposition to the majority of those suffering hardship, the undeserving.[73] In addition to the punishments and state-sponsored assistance the long-term solution to poverty was increasingly seen as education. Through carefully managed religious and practical instruction, it was supposed that the children of the poor could be instilled with a more suitable work ethic than their parents and go on to fulfil useful roles in society. It was in the context of this movement that the initial charity schools were founded.[74]

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[69] Aldrich, *History of Education*, 67-68.

[70] Tom Nichols, *The Art of Poverty: Irony and Ideal in Sixteenth-Century Beggar Imagery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 57-58.

[71] Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1948), 89. For similar seventeenth century rhetoric see Sir Joshua Childs and J. Bellars quoted in Dorothy Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Social and Administrative History from 1662-1782* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 25.

[72] For a more in-depth discussion of governmental motives for involvement see Paul Slack, *The English Poor Law 1531-1782* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[73] Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York: Longman, 1993), 118.

[74] John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 182; Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century*, 25; Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 192-193.

Christ's Hospital, which opened in 1552, was the first of such schools and remains to this day one of the most widely recognised. It was founded as part of a scheme promoted by Edward VI under the recommendation of Bishop Ridley. This took the form of the establishment or re-modelling of five London hospitals between 1544 and 1557 – St Bartholomew's, St Thomas's, Bridewell, Bedlam and Christ's. These were intended to maintain the sick, old, infirm, orphaned and mentally unstable, each with their own specialism: in the case of Christ's this was the education and maintenance of orphans. The hospitals were maintained by public subscription and local donation and the concept behind them was taken from poor relief institutions on the continent, but was unique in England at this time.[75] As the first of its kind, Christ's Hospital became an innovator which was widely imitated across the country and, as such, was hugely influential in that it laid down the ethos and dress that subsequent charity schools adopted.

The uniform at Christ's Hospital fulfilled a range of functions, the most evident of which was the provision of clothing for the pupils; foundlings who were lodged and wholly maintained by the institution. For the general public clothes cost a significant proportion of an annual salary and decisions about what items to make or purchase were lasting, as clothes were accumulated gradually and often repaired, re-made and reused.[76] Lack of clothing, therefore, was a considerable problem amongst the poor and many of the children were too deprived to afford suitable attire.[77] Placing the children in a simple uniform ensured that they presented a decent appearance and had the advantages of economy as bulk produced items were cheaper to purchase.[78]

Accounts books from the foundation period of Christ's Hospital show an initial payment for uniforms around the time of the first admissions in November 1552, when the costs of shoes, canvas, kersey (an inferior grade of carded wool), caps, cotton, knitted hose and tailors were paid.[79] It is worth noting that 'cotton' refers to a woollen cloth on which the

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[75] Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*, 119-120; Carol Kazmierczak Manzione, *Christ's Hospital of London, 1552-1598: "A Passing Deed of Pity"* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), 25-29.

[76] Mikhaila & Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor,* 11.

[77] Sarah Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity or An Address to Ladies Adapted to the Present State of Charitable Institutions in England* (London: J. Johnson & F & C. Rivington, 1801), 315.

[78] Ann Rosalind Jones & Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18-21.

[79] Treasurers' Account Book, 1552-1558, Financial Records, Christ's Hospital Collection, London Metropolitan Archives.

nap has been 'cottoned' or raised, rather than a fabric derived from the natural fibres of the cotton plant as is its contemporary usage.[80] At foundation Christ's Hospital's uniform for boys consisted of an ankle-length, girdled coat of russet fabric and a cap. The coat had fastenings to the waist and was open from there to the ankle, with stockings and a shirt worn beneath. The corresponding girls' uniform was composed of a cotton dress, also in russet, along with an apron and white coif and hat.[81]

Fig 2: *Brass of Roger Kyndon*, 1471[82]

It has been suggested by a number of authors including Craik, Richmond and Brunsma that the design of the boys' uniform was modelled on a religious cassock.[83] This link, however, has been contested in other literature including works by Cunnington & Lucus and Mansfield who make a compelling argument that the style of the uniform simply reflected the general styles of working class wear during the period.[84] Children's clothing at this time took the form of a smaller and simpler version of adult attire; children's uniforms must, therefore, be considered within the field of adult clothing habits. Both Christ's Hospital male and female designs closely mirrored standard working clothes of the period and this can be seen by examining church brasses of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. As with any source, brasses have their limitations – subjects are predominantly wealthy and male figures

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[80] Cecil Willet Cunnington, Phillis Cunnington & Charles Beard, *A Dictionary of English Costume* (London: A & C Black Ltd, 1976), 251.

[81] Elizabeth Ewing, *Women in Uniform through the Centuries* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1975), 22.

[82] *Roger Kyngdon*, 1471, brass, St Hugo, Quethiock, from Lack, Struchfield & Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Cornwall*, 98.

[83] Jennifer Craik, *Uniforms Exposed: From Conformity to Transgression* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 59; Vivienne Richmond, *Clothing the Poor in Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 243; David L. Brunsma, *The School Uniform Movement and What it Tells us About American Education; A Symbolic Crusade* (Lanham: Scarecrow Education, 2004), 5.

[84] Phillis Cunnington & Catherine Lucas, *Charity Costumes of Children, Scholars, Almsfolk, Pensioners* (Adam & Charles Black, London, 1978), 26; Alan Mansfield, "Dress of the English Schoolchild," *Costume* 8, no.1 (1974), 56.

in civilian clothing are relatively rare as men were often portrayed in armour. Nonetheless significant similarities can be seen between the design of the Christ's Hospital attire for boys and the basic garments worn by civilian men in brass images including those at All Saints, Thwaite in Norfolk; St Nicholas, Fowey; St Hugo, Quethiock (fig. 2) and St Gluvias, St Gluvias in Cornwall and St Mary Tower, Ipswich.[85]

The children of Christ's Hospital are described in the year of opening by John Stow in his *Survey of London*, originally published in 1598:

> On Christmas day in the afternoone, while the Lord Mayor and Aldermen rode to Powles, and children of Christ's Hospitall stood, from saint Lawrence lane end in Cheape, towards Powles, all in one livery of russet cotton, 340 in number. And at Easter next, they were in blew at the spittle, and so have continued ever since.[86]

As Stow noted, both girls' and boys' uniforms maintained their style but the colour was changed to blue less than six months after opening. The outlay for new fabric is recorded in the accounts for March and April 1553.[87] The new uniforms had clearly been issued by the beginning of April 1553, when their appearance was recorded by Henry Machyn, the clothier and diarist:

> The third day of April went unto St. Mary Spital unto the sermon all the masters and rulers and schoolmasters and mistresses and all the children, both men and women children, all in blue coats and wenches in blue frocks and with escutcheons embroidered on their sleeves with the arms of London and red capes. And so two and two together. And every man in his place and office. And so at the scaffold was made of timber and covered with canvas and sets one above another, for all the children sit one above another like steps. And after through London.[88]

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[85] Jerome Bertram, *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1996), 44; William Lack, Martin Struchfield & Philip Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Cornwall* (London: Monumental Brass Society, 1997), 42, 98 & 118; John Page-Phillips, *Macklin's Monumental Brasses* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1970), 60.

[86] John Stow, *A Survey of London* (London: Printed by John Windet, 1603), 119.

[87] Treasurers' Account Book, 1552-1558, Christ's Hospital Collection.

[88] Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn; Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1849), 33.

The reason for this change in colour remains unclear and neither contemporary nor modern sources offer a satisfactory explanation. Considerable meaning could be ascribed to the modification; in the middle ages blue was the colour of the true lover and the faithful servant and also stood for religious faith and devotion.[89] It is a possible, then, that the change was a symbolic one, but it is more likely to have come at the specific request of a benefactor or resulted from practical concerns, in that blue was more economically viable. Sober colours such as brown, grey and dark blues and greens were generally worn by the working classes, partly because they did not show dirt easily and partly because they were cheap to produce.[90] Blue from woad was one of the most cost-effective dyes available and was very widespread particularly in the context of lower class and servants clothing.[91] In a survey of clothing bequeathed in wills from the Tudor period, it was a popular choice (along with tawny and black) and far more prevalent than russet.[92] It is probable that the monetary saving made by switching from russet to blue clothing was not inconsiderable when the number of children to provide for was taken into account. The changeover would not, however, have been phased (new pupils dressed in blue, whilst existing russet clothing was worn out) due to the public duties the children were expected to undertake (as discussed later in the chapter) for which a neat and unified appearance was essential. Regardless of the reason blue, with its association of low status and servitude, was a choice that reflected and propagated the charity school rhetoric of humility.
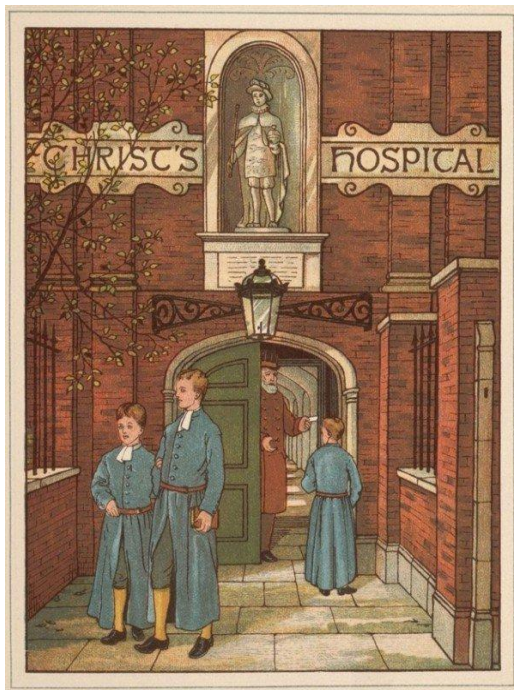
Fig. 3: Thomas Crane & Ellen E. Houghton, *Christ's Hospital,* 1883 [93]

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[89] Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (Feltham: Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1983), 198.

[90] Beverly Lemire, "Second-hand Beaux and 'Red-armed Belles': Conflict and the Creation of Fashions in England, c. 1660–1800," *Continuity and Change* 15, no.3 (2000), 395.

[91] Maria Hayward, "Dressed in Blue: The Impact of Woad on English Clothing c. 1350-1670," *Costume* 49, no. 2 (2015), 174-176.

[92] Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel; Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 100-101.

[93] Thomas Crane & Ellen E. Houghton, *Christ's Hospital,* 1883, illustration, from Felix Leigh, *London Town* (Belfast: Marcus Ward & Co.,1883), 37. A Victorian image of the Christ's Hospital uniform showing the original design of coat, stockings and girdle, but including the later additions of britches and collar tabs

The other items of note with regards to colour are the stockings or hose worn by both sexes, which were knitted wool and although generic in style, were dyed yellow. Whilst a true yellow was attainable through common dye plants such as dyer's weld (with the use of the correct mordants), it was not hugely common in working-class wear.[94] A bright yellow could also be achieved through the application of the more expensive saffron, a dye which was alleged to keep away vermin and lice.[95] Christ's Hospital owned sizeable parcels of land around Hertfordshire, and children too young to be accepted into the school were put out to nurse in this area. At various points throughout the seventeenth century branches of the school existed in Hertford, Hoddesdon and Ware. Saffron was grown in many villages in North East Essex and South Cambridgeshire as well as in the neighbouring counties of Suffolk and Hertfordshire and land belonging to Christ's was less than ten miles away from known saffron producing areas.[96] It is, therefore, possible that some of the land owned by Christ's Hospital in this region was used for growing saffron, providing the colouring agent at a cost below market price and, this in conjunction with its supposed rodent repelling properties, could account for the choice of dye.

The fact that the uniforms of Christ's Hospital were simple in design, manufactured with cheap fabrics and dyes and with little form of ornamentation, signalled to both the pupil and the observer the status of the wearer. The uniforms were intended not only to "indicate the appropriate social position of the child" but to instil "the desired attitudes in the wearer".[97] Humility was considered an important characteristic to promote amongst the poor and both the appearance of the uniforms and the curriculum served to reinforce pupils' station in life, in a system that was intended to socially regulate children.[98]

Pupils were prepared for subordination in their future lives and the uniforms reflected this, reinforcing the child's position in society in a public fashion, functioning as a visible reminder of their lowly status.[99] This message was reinforced by the addition of

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[94] Lemire, "Second-hand Beaux and 'Red-armed Belles'," 395.

[95] Jones & Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing,* 59-85.

[96] John S. Lee, *Cambridge and Its Economics Region, 1450-1560* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2005), 108.

[97] Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms; Communication Through Clothing* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 16.

[98] Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, 20.

[99] David Wardle, *The Rise of the Schooled Society; the History of Formal Schooling in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 75-77.

escutcheons, which served to identify the origin of the clothing and mark the children as belonging to an institution specifically intended for the poor. Badging of the parish poor was an occasional practice in the sixteenth century, with insignia issued as a testament to the deserving status of the wearer. The decision to badge school children can undoubtedly find its origins in these customs. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, the symbolism of badges for the poor had begun to shift from a stamp of approval to one of stigma. This process culminated in a 1697 statute which made it compulsory for those receiving handouts to wear badges denoting their status as reliant on the parish.[100] This change to humiliating symbol of dependency is at odds with the developmental arc of the school badge which was to become an element of symbolic importance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when it represented, to many, affiliation, community and pride in belonging.

The emphasis on modesty and ease of social identification continues as an overriding theme throughout much of the history of the charity schools. Isaac Watts, the notable hymn writer and theologian writing in 1728 declared that:

> The clothes which are bestowed on them once in a year or two, are of the coarsest kind, and of the plainest form, and thus they are sufficiently distinguished from children of better rank…there is no ground for charity children to grow vain and proud of their raiment, when it is but a sort of livery, that publically declares those who wear it, to be educated by charity.[101]

In 1796 it was recorded that the children of the Charity School of St Pancras continued to be instructed in "true humility and obedience to their superiors, and such necessary qualifications as make them of benefit to the community and honest and useful servant".[102] These quotes demonstrate the ingrained nature of the social hierarchy and chart an ongoing preoccupation with class-appropriate dress and this was further amplified by the increasing emphasis placed on dress, taste and consumption in the eighteenth century.

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[100] Steve Hindle, "Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750," *Cultural and Social History* 1, no.1 (2004), 8.

[101] Isaac Watts, *The Works of The Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D. in Nine Volumes, vol. VI* (Leeds: Printed by Edward Baines, 1813), 33.

[102] Charity School of St. Pancras, *A Brief Account of the Charity school of St. Pancras, for Instructing, Cloathing, Qualifying for Useful Servants, and Putting out to Service, the Female Children of the Industrious Poor* (London: S. Low, 1796), 4.

Prior to the sixteenth century access to fabric and clothing was limited by cost, availability and, in some instances, legislation and, therefore, dress was an important signifier of status for an individual, providing a unique index to rank, income, age and occupation. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, however, an expansion in national and international commerce and manufacturing made clothing increasingly affordable and, therefore, accessible to new consumers and this trend continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[103] This transformed "the cultural sphere into an arena of class aspirations…to those who wished to uphold aristocratic privilege, commercial wealth threatened to unsettle the established orders of taste and criticism".[104]

As the denotation of class through clothing moved from simple visual markers to increasing subtle distinctions, a situation was created where it was possible for servants, prostitutes and other members of the working classes with a certain level of disposable income to pass as ladies through their emulation of the dress and bearing of those of higher rank. Writing in 1725, Daniel Defoe passionately recounted several incidents of female servants being mistaken for the ladies they served, and suggested that "our charity children are distinguish'd by their dress, why then may not our women servants? …were her dress but suitable to her condition, it would teach her humility, and put her in mind of her duty."[105] Most charity school children were sent into service and whilst it was not possible to regulate adults in the way Defoe suggested unless they were attached to an institution, the children destined for their roles in the future could be taught appropriate dress habits and deference to their superiors, thereby attempting to prevent future problems of this kind. Although outwardly the uniforms were a symbol of charitable giving, they also signalled the dependency of the children, and served as a tool to teach and enforce their social position.[106]

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[103] Lemire, "Second-hand Beaux and 'Red-armed Belles'," 395; Carlo Marco Belfanti & Fabio Giusberti, "Clothing and Social Inequality in Early Modern Europe: Introductory Remarks," *Continuity and Change*, 15, no.3 (2000), 361.

[104] Robert Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3-4.

[105] Daniel Defoe, *Every-body's Business, is No-Body's Business: or, Private Abuses, Publick Grievances: Exemplified in the Pride, Insolence, and Exorbitant Wages of our Women-Servants, Footmen, &c. With a Proposal for Amendment of the Same* (London: sold by T. Warner; A Dodd; and E. Nutt, 1725), 16.

[106] John Styles, *The Dress of the People; Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 272-274.

Changes to the established order were viewed with concern by those in authority and believed to lead to wider social breakdown and loss of morality. Thus the powerful and elite continued to seek, where possible, the maintenance of class and patriarchal structures despite challenges such as the growth of the consumer market and to "create an obedient and subservient working class".[107] Through the enforced appearance of charity children those of higher rank, particularly middle class men, could also define their role in society by way of their distinction from and authority over the poor.[108]

Whilst Defoe is predominantly occupied with the transgression of class boundaries, he reserves the majority of his criticism on this front for women and this fits into a wider view of female morality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Male and female reputations were perceived differently, although these perceptions altered over time, particularly during the eighteenth century.[109] In line with religious standards there was a wide and enduring belief that women, and particularly lower class women, were more likely to demonstrate a lack of self-control by contravening social and sexual codes.[110] In addition the greater importance placed on female chastity (chastity and good reputation went hand in hand) and a double standard of morality between men and women ensured that any indiscretions were viewed more harshly in women than in their male counterparts.[111] It was, therefore, believed that when lower class women dressed like the upper classes, they would further transgress class boundaries by associating with upper class men, as well as the possibility of resorting to prostitution in order to continue to fund extravagant purchases.[112] Consequently the importance of self-discipline and purity along with more general gender

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[107] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 335; Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 304-306; Peter Lake & Michael Questier, *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), 77.

[108] Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 78-80.

[109] Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999), 2.

[110] "The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, no. 6 (1996), 207-208.

[111] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 199.

[112] Chloe Smith, "Callico Madams: Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31, no.2 (2007), 43.

differences were consciously reinforced in educational settings.[113] Whilst both sexes were expected to be tidy, clean and class-appropriate in their uniforms, this gender disparity is reflected in a greater emphasis placed on the modesty of dress for charity girls.

Although the concept of female modesty in dress is prevalent throughout both the rhetoric of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that of the charity schools, as shown by the examples above, precisely how this translated into clothing design is harder to pinpoint and sources which directly link these two concepts in the realm of the charity school have not been forthcoming. Some idea, however, may be gleaned from Juan Luis Vives' book, *The Education of a Christian Woman.* First published in 1524, this work was intended to assist with the education of Mary I and it promoted a range of forward-thinking ideas concerning the education of women and their intellectual equality with men. Despite this, the book maintained a traditional approach to modesty, stating that: "Christian modesty…should be such that it should emanate from the soul to the external garb".[114] It then goes on to recommend how such modesty should be demonstrated through appearances:

> Her dress will not be resplendent, neither will it be squalid. She will not be an object of admiration, nor one of repugnance…my ideal young woman will not paint her face, but clean it, she will not smear it with soap, but wash it with water. She will not bleach her hair in the sun or dye it to change its colour, but at the same time she will not leave it unkempt or bristling with dandruff…She will look in the mirror not to preen and adorn herself painstakingly but to make sure nothing in her face and on her head appears ridiculous or repulsive, which she cannot see without looking in the mirror. Then she will groom herself in such a way that there is nothing in her countenance that would defile her chastity and modesty.[115]

Despite concerning himself with women of high status, Vives' excerpt also closely reflects the charity school ethos of clothing, in that items should be simple, neat and clean. It consequently shows that although modesty was considered a more prominent issue with regards to the working classes, the promotion of standards of behaviour and dress was not

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[113] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race; Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 25-26; Deborah Simonton, "Schooling the Poor: Gender and Class in Eighteenth Century England," *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000), 187-188.

[114] Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual,* ed. & trans. Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 106.

[115] Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, 107-108.

only confined to the lower echelons of society. The interpretation of such advice would, however, have been different in different contexts with certain fabrics and fashions deemed suitably modest for the elite, but not so for the working classes. The piece also reiterates the link between chastity and modesty.

Other Charity Schools

Early reports from Christ's Hospital deemed the school a success and other, similar schools followed. On the surface the function of these schools was to continue the work of alleviating and controlling pauperism. Organised education, however, also reflects and propagates ideas and values current in society or within the organising body "thus throughout history, children and others have been initiated into the developing, prevailing, or outmoded, intellectual, moral, religious and social ideas of their society or group".[116] The sixteenth century saw the rise of the Anglican church, which, despite two major challenges - the restoration of Roman Catholicism during the reign of Mary Tudor (1553-8) and the later rise in Puritanism during the Civil War and the Interregnum (1640-1660), grew hugely in power, taking over from Catholicism as the dominant religion.[117] Charity schools were seen as a way of disseminating the new Anglican faith and ideas associated with the Reformation were propagated through the emerging charity school system.

The split with Rome and the growth of the Anglican church also played a part in raising funds for the new schools. Under Edward VI chantries (money to cover expenses for masses and prayers, usually said for the soul of the founder of the endowment) were banned. Consequently the rich needed to find other ways to ensure their place in heaven.[118] Thus donations to charitable endeavours increased in popularity and the charity schools were a particularly common choice as the children could take on a similar function to that of the chantries in that they could sing in praise of their benefactors.

Many of the early charity schools were founded by those involved with Christ's Hospital or by benefactors who had directly witnessed it in action. Founded in 1590, Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol was modelled directly on Christ's at the request of Bristol merchant John Carr, who left provision for the founding and running of the school in his will of 1586. Carr

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[116] Aldrich, *History of Education*, 22.

[117] Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56.

[118] Howard Colvin, "The Origin of Chantries," *Journal of Medieval History* 26, no. 2 (2000), 164.

became interested in Christ's Hospital on his visits to London and stipulated that the new school should be "in such order, manner and form, and with such foundation, ordinance, laws and government as the Hospital of Christ Church nigh S. Bartholomew's in London is founded, ordered and governed in every respect".[119] The uniform was a direct copy of that of Christ's Hospital and remains extremely similar today. The link between the two schools was consciously monitored and maintained in line with Carr's will and when adaptations were made to Christ's Hospital uniform they were studiously copied at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital. Bands at the collar were added in the seventeenth century in direct imitation of alterations to the uniform at Christ's Hospital, and in 1843 the governors of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital resolved that buckles should be used on shoes because they had been preserved at Christ's, despite having disappeared from general usage fifty years previously.[120]

Chetham's Hospital, Manchester (founded 1656) and Reading Blue Coat School (founded 1660) followed a similar pattern. Chetham's Hospital was set up based on instructions in Humphrey Chetham's will of 1651 and although traditional uniform was abandoned in 1875, the school had previously copied the uniform of Christ's Hospital in line with details in Chetham's will.[121] Reading Blue Coat School was founded from an endowment from Richard Aldworth, a former benefactor and governor of Christ's Hospital. He specified that the school should be a replica of Christ's Hospital, including stipulating that its uniform should be emulated.

Through this imitation of Christ's Hospital uniform, the 'bluecoat' became synonymous with charity schools and they became known generically as 'bluecoat schools'. Schools founded from the late seventeenth century onwards were less commonly modelled directly on Christ's Hospital, but the majority nonetheless chose to use the blue coat as a standard uniform, although the cut was altered to be more in keeping with current styles. Westminster Blue Coat School (1688), for example, wore blue coats, but shorter in length, just covering the knee and with buttons nearly to the hem, a design which reflected a more

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[119] The Will of John Carr, 1586, quoted in Walter Sampson, *History of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol* (Bristol: John Wright & Sons Ltd, 1910), 13.

[120] Sampson, *History of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital,* 76.

[121] Clare Hartwell, *The History and Architecture of Chetham's School and Library* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 61.

contemporary cut in comparison to the longer coats worn at Christ's.[122] The Guide to Records at the Guildhall Archive in London suggests that around sixty schools were modelled directly or partly on Christ's Hospital.[123] Through my limited research I have only been able to conclusively establish direct links with five, but Christ's Hospital influence was clearly wider than this.[124]

As charity schools became an established part of the education system through the twin desires of controlling pauperism and spreading Protestantism and the increased popularity of charitable giving (discussed in greater detail later in the chapter) a greater variety began to emerge in the uniform design. Schools, however, tended to retain the basic premises of economy, modesty and imitation of working-class style. From the late seventeenth century a number of grey coat charity schools were opened, including the Grey Coat Hospital, Westminster; St Anne's, Soho (both founded 1699) and Hamlet of Ratcliff School, Stepney (1710).[125] Grey clothing was even cheaper to produce than blue coats as items could be manufactured from undyed wool. Occasionally a school opened which did not follow either pattern but chose a different colour of coat instead. This could be at the discretion of a founder or to distinguish children from other local establishments, St Margaret's Hospital, Westminster, also known as the Green Coat School (1624) was one such establishment. Whilst children attending this school did indeed wear green coats, allegedly because schools with other coat colours already existed in the vicinity, in other instances the notion of an alternative colour in fact only accounted for the trim, facings, hat and stockings of the uniform, with the coat itself remaining blue.[126] This was certainly the case at the Orange School in Northampton (or Driden Free Charity School, 1709) and demonstrates how engrained the bluecoat ethos had become.[127]

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[122] Wallace Clare, *The Historic Dress of the English Schoolboy* (London: The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Customs, 1939), 22.

[123] *Information Leaflet Number 29: Records of Christ's Hospital and Bluecoat Schools at Guildhall Library* (London: London Metropolitan Archives, 2013), 2.

[124] These include Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol; Chetham's Hospital, Manchester and Reading Blue Coat School as recorded in the text, in addition to Bablake's, Coventry and Colston's, Bristol.

[125] Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes,* 145-154.

[126] Clare, *Dress of the English Schoolboy,* 35.

[127] John Driden stated in his will of 1707 that pupils should wear "A blue coat faced with orange colour, with brass buttons, a knit cap and a pair of stockings of orange colour". This outfit was worn until the school closed in 1921 Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes,* 92-96.

By the end of the seventeenth century, a considerable number of charity schools were in operation, but these were sporadic in their distribution. From this point onwards charity schools proliferated through the exertions of The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which was established in 1699. Very much in line with previous attitudes, the founders of the SPCK saw charity schools as a method of providing religious and social discipline, helping to mediate the problems of irreligion and Catholicism, as well as poverty through Protestant ethics.[128] They also continued to reinforce class boundaries as children were taught "things as are most suitable to their condition".[129] Whilst not directly founding institutions, the SPCK provided encouragement and a blueprint for their members and other interested parties to set up schools. Initially these were concentrated around London, but by the early eighteenth century schools were being established further afield. Each school was an independent entity, governed by trustees and funded by subscribers. Most operated as day schools as opposed to the full board and lodging offered by Christ's Hospital and other similar institutions. These establishments followed the principles and directions set out by the SPCK and reported back to it regularly.[130] The reports were collated and published on a yearly basis, along with updated guidelines.

The SPCK advocated uniform for the children for several reasons, these included following the example of older foundations; the necessity of making children from very poor homes decent in appearance and the preservation of discipline outside of school hours.[131] This last point was particularly relevant as many of the institutions insisted that "The Children shall wear their Caps, Bands, Cloaths, and other Marks of Distinction, every Day; whereby the Trustees and Benefactors may know them, and see what their behaviour is abroad".[132]

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[128] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 65-66; M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement; A Study in Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (London: Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1964), 4.

[129] *The Methods Used for Erecting Charity-Schools, With the Rules and Orders by Which they are Governed. A Particular Account of the London Charity-Schools: With a List of Those Erected Elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland* (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, 1716), 4.

[130] W.K. Lowther Clarke, *The History of S.P.C.K.* (London: S.P.C.K, 1959), 23-25. It should be noted that there is a significant dearth of more recent texts on this aspect of the SPCK's history.

[131] Lowther Clarke, *The History of S.P.C.K.*, 46.

[132] *An Account of Charity-Schools Lately Erected in England, Wales, and Ireland: With the Benefactions Thereto; and of the Methods Whereby They Were Set Up, and are Governed. Also, a Proposal for Enlarging their Number, and Adding Some Work to the Childrens Learning, Thereby to Render their Education More Useful to the Publick.* (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, 1706), 21.

Unlike boarding institutions, day schools could not directly control the moral and social sphere of the children out of teaching hours, particularly with regards to regulating the influence of parents and relatives who might hold political and religious views at odds with the teaching in the school. In these circumstances, marking the pupils in their personal and domestic arenas served as a reminder of the principles of the school and extended the rules and regulations outside the physical limits of the institution. It also made children readily identifiable and thereby acted as a deterrent to unsuitable conduct in the local area, reinforcing discipline and behavioural standards.

The SPCK reports included a suggested list of clothing to be provided by new schools and a breakdown of the expected costs (at London prices) to purchase it. In 1706 the following items were recommended:

> Boys -
> 1 Yard and half quarter of Grey-Yorkshire broad Cloth 6 Quarters wide…makes a Coat
> 1 Black Knit Cap, with Tuft and String
> 1 Band
> 1 Shirt
> 1 Pair of Woollen Stockings
> 1 Pair of Shoes
> 1 Pair of Buckles
>
> Girls -
> 3 Yards of blue long Ells, about Yard wide…makes a Gown and Petticoat
> A Coif and Band
> A Shift
> 1 Pair of Woollen Stockings
> 1 Pair of Shoes
> 1 Pair of Buckles[133]

By 1709 "A Wastcoat of the same Cloth" (as the coat) and "A pair of Breeches of Cloth or Leather lined" had been added to the list for boys and "A pair of Leather Bodice and Stomacher" for girls.[134] By 1715 "1 pair of Knit or Wash-Leather Gloves" had also been

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[133] *An Account of Charity-Schools,* 1706, 5.

[134] *An Account of Charity-Schools Lately Erected in England, Wales, and Ireland: With the Benefactions Thereto; and of the Methods Whereby They Were Set Up, and are Governed. Also, a Proposal for Enlarging their Number, and Adding Some*

included for both sexes along with "A White, Blue, or Checquer'd Apron" for girls.[135] Charity statues contemporary to this period suggest that the coat mentioned fell to the knee and was single breasted and collarless and that the girls' gowns were full length and full-skirted in line with early to mid-eighteenth century styles (fig. 4). These clothing lists resulted in a strong degree of uniformity in the appearance of the SPCK schools as most followed the Society's recommendations in conjunction with the general clothing shapes of the period.

Fig. 4: *Charity Statues, St Mary Rotherhithe*, 1742[136]

Whilst this uniform was contemporary in appearance in comparison to the older institutions, when evaluated alongside other clothing, it seems more representative of what the working classes and rural communities wore and was certainly not at the forefront of

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Work to the Childrens Learning, Thereby to Render their Education More Useful to the Publick. (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, 1709), 50.

[135] *The Methods Used for Erecting Charity-Schools, With the Rules and Orders by Which they are Governed. A Particular Account of the London Charity-Schools: With a List of Those Erected Elsewhere in Great Britain & Ireland* (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, 1715), 32.

[136] *Charity Statues, St Mary Rotherhithe*, 1742, painted metal [lead?], St Mary Rotherhithe Free School, personal photograph. The knit cap with tuft can be noted in the boy's left hand. The girl wears a coif with a goffered frill and a square-cut collar typical of the period. The yellow stockings are also of note, demonstrating the lasting influence of Christ's Hospital.

fashion.[137] It is hard to ascertain this exactly as the descriptions given are not detailed, but there are a number of indicators. Coifs, a closely fitting under-cap that curved over the ears, although still in circulation, were mostly worn by children and old women by this time.[138] In addition, buckles first appeared half a century earlier as recorded by Pepys in his 1660 diary: "This day I began to put on buckles to my shoes, which I had bought yesterday of Mr Wotton".[139] Whilst still widely worn, by the early eighteenth century they had begun to filter downwards through the class system. The SPCK continued to be very prominent in the field of charity schools until the mid-1720s, when its overseas missionary work and publishing business began to redirect focus and resources. Even so it continued an involvement with the charity school sector for many further years.[140]

From the 1720s onwards there was a greater emphasis placed on working schools; it was no longer enough to educate children, they had to be conditioned to work, and contribute to their own keep. This move may be linked with an intensified interest in the promotion of national wealth through the organisation and discipline of the labour force, but also with a need for the schools to generate revenue in an increasingly competitive environment.[141] With large numbers of charity schools now in operation, available subscribers were fewer in number and maintenance of income was vital to survival. Work carried out by the children not only served to teach basic skills as well as inuring them to repetitive jobs, but it could also be used to raise funds for the school.

This labour varied from establishment to establishment and often included spinning, sewing, knitting or other similar tasks. A report from the Bicester Charity School in 1725 is indicative of the evolution in views taking place:

> A gentleman in this Neighbourhood, who subscribes very largely to the School, declared
> that unless the children were employ'd in some Sort of Work to accustom them to Labour,

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[137] Lowther Clarke, *The History of S.P.C.K.*, 47.

[138] Stephanie Davies, *Costume Language; a Dictionary of Dress Terms* (Malvern: Cressrelles Publishing Company, 1994), 33.

[139] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys; Volume I, 1660,* ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 26.

[140] Jones, *The Charity School Movement, 24.*

[141] Dorothy Marshall, *Eighteenth Century England: 1714-1784* (London: Routledge, 2014), 8-10.

he would withdraw his subscription…it was agreed the children should be employ'd in spinning Jersey.[142]

These opinions are echoed elsewhere over the following decades. One of the trustees from the Ladies' Charity School at Bristol in 1756 wrote in a very similar vein that:

When youth, idleness and poverty meet together, they have become fatal temptations to many unhappy creatures, who, if they had been taught good principles, and, at the same time, brought up to a habit of industry…might have been virtuous and happy within themselves, and useful members of society.[143]

This additional work could also involve the children contributing to the manufacture of their own uniforms. Often this was a money-saving tactic as well as an educational process and whilst more complicated items continued to be sewn by tailors, garments such as shirts, aprons and tippets were manufactured by girls' schools in large numbers. Historically, clothing represented a significant part of the costs for charity schools; the 66l 4d "Paid to Mr. Allen the Mercer for new Cloathing 54. Boys, and the new Boys"[144] at the Oxford Charity School being in excess of any other figure disbursed in the year 1712 and outlay for clothing continued to make up a major proportion of the budget in subsequent years. In many cases in-house production could mediate these costs as well as publically demonstrating and displaying the pupils' skills. By the nineteenth century this ethos had started to subside and greater importance began to be placed on academic lessons and on the quality and breadth of the education provided in line with new ideas on the treatment of children.

The nineteenth century saw an increase in the speed of diffusion of fashions through increasingly affordable and available print media. Images of new items and silhouettes were

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[142] "Report from Bicester Charity School: Oxfordshire, June 19 1725," in *An Account of Several Workhouses for Employing and Maintaining the Poor; Setting Forth The Rules by Which they are Governed, Their Great Usefulness to the Publick, And in Particular To the Parishes Where They are Erected. As Also of Several Charity Schools For Promoting Work, and Labour* (London: Printed and Sold by Joseph Downing, 1732), 158.

[143] *The State of the Ladies Charity-School, Lately Set Up in Baldwin-Street, in the City of Bristol, for Teaching Poor Girls to Read and Spin; Together with Rules and Methods of Proceeding* (Bristol: Printed by S.Farley, 1756), 2.

[144] *An Account of the Charity School in Oxford (Maintain'd by the Voluntary Subscriptions of the Vice-Chancellor, Heads of Houses, and other Members of the University) for Four Years: vis. From Michaelmas 1711 to Michaelmas 1715.* ([Oxford?], 1715).

consequently available more quickly and cheaply to those outside of the fashionable world. Although this is a simplistic overview of these changes and the overall picture was more complex, in a general sense this resulted in a shorter time-lag between the advent of fashions and their uptake by the working classes.[145] This was reflected in new, and to some extent existing, charity schools, particularly in the clothing of girls. Although such items as hoops, crinolines and other fashionable extravagances were avoided and clothing remained unadorned, in many institutions the waistline rose in accordance with the vogue for empire waists in the 1820s. In the same manner trousers started to appear for charity boys from the early nineteenth century, and by the 1850s some charity school boys started to be clothed in short waistcoats and square-cut tail coats. These replaced the sloping shape of coat fronts in previous years and mirrored the changes in men's dress in general.[146]

Traditional Appearances

Despite new schools of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century adopting a more contemporary cut to the uniforms provided, early institutions tended to retain their original design. The main garments were rarely altered in appearance, although minor changes might be made to certain elements. This was the case at Christ's Hospital, where the style, shape and colour of the coat remain essentially unchanged today. The addition of neck bands in place of soft turn-down shirt collars stemmed from the seventeenth century and breeches were introduced from 1736 onwards, initially for sickly children but later for everyone. The petticoats, a sleeveless, full-skirted garment which was worn for extra warmth, were dyed yellow from the early 1600s. These feature in John Strype's 1720 description in his *Survey of London*:

> Their Habit being now a long Coat of Blue warm Cloth, close to the Arms and the Body, hanging loose to their Heels, girt about their Waste, with a red Leather Girdle buckled; a loose Petticoat underneath of Yellow Cloth, a round thrum Cap tyed with a red Band, Yellow Stockings, and Black Low heeled Shoes, their Hair cut close, their Locks short.[147]

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[145] Kay Boardman, "'A Material Girl in a Material World': the Fashionable Female Body in Victorian Women's Magazines," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 3, no.1 (1998), 93; Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 36-40. For a more in-depth discussion of fashion diffusion see Diana Crane, "Diffusion Models and Fashion: A Reassessment," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 566, no. 1 (1996), 13-24.

[146] Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, 122-129.

[147] John Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (1720), I. xxvi. 175.

These undergarments were discontinued altogether in the nineteenth century along with the caps. There are references to the overall dress being outmoded from the nineteenth century onwards, but there does not appear to have been a serious attempt to change it.

As Cunnington and Lucas eloquently express this process of maintenance and adaptation, "Each costume is seldom fossilized as a whole. In its present state it is more like a collection of fossils from successive strata, since its different parts may represent old fashions not all of the same date."[148] Essentially, schools preserved their uniform for many years after it had gone out of fashion, sometimes adding to them or discontinuing specific items but retaining the overall look and feel of the original appearance. This phenomenon of perpetuating the dress of a specific time period can be charted throughout fashion history, having occurred in other professional and social arenas, for example the effects can be seen today in legal and clerical clothing and men's evening attire.[149]

A few later foundations continued to slavishly imitate Christ's Hospital and its now archaic appearance. One of these was Colston's in Bristol, which was opened in 1708 by a Governor of Christ's. The only difference between the new uniforms and that of Christ's Hospital was that the coat linings and stockings were scarlet instead of yellow.[150] By the eighteenth century Christ's Hospital had begun to attain a status exceeding the average charity school. Remembering his time at Christ's Hospital in the 1790s the poet and essayist Leigh Hunt stated that:

> Christ's Hospital is a nursery of tradesmen, of merchants, of naval officers, of scholars; it has produced some of the greatest ornaments of their time; and the feeling among the boys themselves is, that it is a medium between the patrician pretension of such schools as Eton and Westminster, and the plebeian submission of the charity schools.[151]

It is possible that this continued imitation, therefore, was not merely dogged adherence to tradition but aspirational in that it looked to Christ's Hospital as an example of the high academic, and to some extent, elevated social standards that a charity school might achieve.

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[148] Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, 32.

[149] James Laver, *Modesty in Dress* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 54-62.

[150] Clare, *Dress of the English Schoolboy,* 19.

[151] Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt* (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), 56.

Although the fact that the dress, which "was of the coarsest and quaintest kind" was now "respected out of doors" seems at odds with the original intention of its designers, but demonstrates the way in which the meaning of dress can be reinterpreted. [152] The initial social significance of the uniform was no longer relevant in the later time period and it had become anachronistic in appearance. With the earlier meaning of humility lost, the connotations of the garment subsequently improved through the increased status of the wearers and the connotations of tradition that it has gained; the clothing "began to acquire virtues of distinction and esprit de corps in place of its original utility". [153]

This proactive maintenance of anachronism can be seen on a more widespread basis through the pervasive adoption of bands as part of charity school uniform. These were white collars which fastened around the neck with a narrow band and had two rectangular tabs hanging down at the front. They originated from Puritan square-cut collars of the 1640s which became fashionable during the Interregnum. Their use in the charity schools probably originated in Christ's Hospital around this period but later became popularised by the SPCK, where they were suggested attire for both boys and girls. They continued to be widely worn throughout the nineteenth century, and along with the tam-'o-shanter style flat cap with a tuft on top (a style which also originated at Christ's) became a symbol of the charity school child. Later they were considered so representative that even when a school did not provide full clothing for the children, they usually provided cap and bands. [154]

This retention and promotion of tradition can be viewed in a number of ways and remains a recurring theme in the British education system. Such practices were not outside social and class norms as it had long been conventional for servants to be gifted the discarded clothes of their masters, representing a time-lag between the way in which they were dressed and current fashions. This practice was perpetuated, to some extent, in the seventeenth century when uniforms began to be provided for servants. Initially those in uniform were the most visible servants, males such as footmen and personal servants in large houses and these were often dressed in the styles of previous years. [155] This also served to visibly distinguish between employer and servant and reinforce the status differences between the two. This

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[152] Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt*, 60.

[153] Mansfield, "Dress of the English Schoolchild," 56.

[154] Cunnington & Lucas, *Charity Costumes*, 125.

[155] Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender, 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (London: Routledge, 2014), 56-58; Laver, *Modesty in Dress,* 78-81.

practice, however, was gendered and female servants continued to wear their own clothes, dressing more fashionably, although this changed in the nineteenth century when they were, increasingly, provided with uniforms.[156] Benefactors could consider dressing charity children in the same terms as giving livery to their servants and therefore similar rules applied. Parallels may also be drawn between the use of bands and ecclesiastical dress and therefore tie in with the religious underpinnings of many of the schools and the SPCK itself. Alternatively, the maintenance of outmoded clothing can be viewed as a disciplinary tactic which paralleled the intentions of the sumptuary laws of previous centuries by reinforcing the differences between classes and consequently maintaining social divisions through the restriction of particular dress styles and fabrics amongst lower social classes.[157]

From the mid-nineteenth century many charity schools discontinued the provision of board, free meals and clothing. Although some schools, particularly the established institutions, continued to provide uniforms for all; at the London School of Industry in 1837 girls were "provided with stuff gowns, aprons, bonnets, tippets, cloaks, shoes, &c. at the discretion of the Treasurer; also with an extra warm garment, when needed".[158] Others started to provide nothing beyond the standard cap or bands or clothed only a proportion of the school. In 1825 Rotherhithe Charity Schools clothed 48 out of 150 boys and 25 out of 50 girls with "the vacancies for Clothing to be filled up from the senior Children in the Charity Schools, provided they have been punctual in attendance, and have a good character".[159] This shifting emphasis may be attributed to increasingly tight budgets, but also improved conditions for the poor in general. This was certainly the view taken by The Taunton Commission whose report, published in 1867 stated that:

> In a considerable number of the schools…and in some Grammar schools a portion, often a
> large portion of the income is expended in clothing or apprenticing the scholars It appears

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[156] Diane Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 90-92

[157] Daphne Meadmore & Colin Symes, "Of Uniform Appearance: a Symbol of School Discipline and Governmentality," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 17, no. 2 (1996), 212.

[158] *School of Industry for the Instruction of the Female Children of the Industrious Poor* (London: Printed by R. Newton, 1837), 6.

[159] Rules for Government of the Rotherhithe Charity & Amicable Society Schools, 1825, SPCK Archives, Cambridge University Library, 5.

to be certain that the great majority at least of the scholars who receive these benefits are not in real want of them.[160]

In some schools that did retain their uniforms dress was relaxed and many items updated in keeping with more modern ideas about education and child rearing, such as allowing children greater freedom of movement and expression. By the mid-twentieth century most traditional uniforms had been abolished altogether or were retained only for ceremonial purposes, Christ's Hospital remaining a notable exception. Typical of this trend is Liverpool Blue Coat School which discontinued its traditional uniform in 1948, although the garments are still worn by a selection of pupils at the annual Founders' Day.

Viewing Charity Children

It is regularly recorded that charity school children made a pleasing spectacle in large numbers and their involvement in many formal and ceremonial occasions is documented. From very early in their existence there are records of them marching in funeral processions and attending church services, Henry Machyn noted the presence of Christ's Hospital children at a funeral in 1553, less than a year after the Hospital opened:

> The same day, which was the twenty-second day of March, was buried Mr. John Heath, painter, dwelling in Fenchurch Street. And there went before him a hundred children of Grey Friars, boys and girls, two and two together, and he gave them shirts and smocks and girdles and handkerchiefs. And after they had wine and figs and good ale.[161]

In this instance the children were given presents in the form of clothing for their attendance. This was a valuable commodity and this mutually beneficial exchange explains why it became common practice for charity school children to take part in funerals. The children's presence increased the spectacle of the procession and consequently the visible status of the individual. The benefactors correspondingly provided for the institution in their will, whilst also creating an opportunity for the children to be viewed by the public and thereby for the school to raise awareness of their work. The fact that later institutions also adopted similar practices of participating in funeral processions and church going activities

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[160] *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. I Report of the Commissioners* (London: Printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1868), 214.

[161] Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, 33.

reinforces the idea that they were not simply a remnant of older charitable and religious customs, but indicates the usefulness of such rituals in raising funds and sourcing new subscribers.[162] In 1623 (the earliest complete records available) Christ's Hospital children attended over 50 funerals during the course of the year in numbers ranging between 60 and 120. This custom seems to have tailed off by the latter quarter of the seventeenth century; only 11 funerals were attended in 1675 and 4 in 1706[163] as other forms of viewing became more prevalent. Children subsequently took part in other public events for similar reasons, and as the schools proliferated the children became an increasingly prominent part of state ceremonies, particularly in London.

As processions became less frequent, the tradition of viewing charity children took a different form, with mealtimes and chapel services thrown open to benefactors and in some instances even the ticketed public. As recorded in 1809 in *The Microcosm of London,* at Christ's Hospital "public suppers commence the first Sunday after Christmas, and end on Easter Sunday: the time of supping is from six o' clock till half past seven", a similar display could be witnessed by attending Sunday lunch at the Foundling Hospital.[164] The simple and uniform appearance of the children at these events was invariably couched in glowing terms and their behaviour and demeanour praised. Writing in 1723 Bernard Mandeville forcibly set out to condemn charity schools but succinctly sums up a general fascination with public viewing of the children:

> There is something Analogous to this in the Sight of Charity Children; there is a natural Beauty in Uniformity which most People delight in. It is diverting to the Eye to see Children well match'd, either Boys or Girls, march two and two in good order; and to have them all whole and tight in the same Clothes and Trimming must add to the comeliness of the sight.[165]

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[162] Sarah Lloyd, "Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002), 26.

[163] Record of Attendance at Funerals by Pupils of the School as Mourners, Giving the Name, Status and Occupation of Each Individual to be Buried, and Details of the Arrangements for the Funeral Service, Number of Pupils Requested to Attend and Amount of Money Given or Promised, 1622-1754, Children, Christ's Hospital Collection, London Metropolitan Archives.

[164] W. H. Pyne, *The Microcosm of London or, London in Miniature; Volume I (London: Methuen, 1904),* 77.

[165] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or Private Vices, Publick Benefits, Vol. 1*(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1732), 188.

The pupils were seen as charming in their own right, but they were also presented to the public looking and behaving in a way that society felt they should. Their appearance and actions represented humility, modesty and godliness, all of which reinforced the differences of rank, background and prospects between the viewer and the child. As Sarah Lloyd argues, the "formalized patterns of display produced the categories and boundaries through which men and women, rich and poor, were to know themselves in relation to peers and others for fleeting moments or sustained periods".[166]

The way in which the children represented these differences encouraged the viewers to remember their position of privilege and the charitable and religious obligations that this entailed. When these responsibilities were fulfilled the recompense was tangible in that the outcome of the charity could be viewed in the public arena and pride taken in the spectacle that the viewer, as a benefactor, had helped to create. This is articulated by the writer and naturalist Thomas Pennant in 1790:

> The procession of these, and the children of Christ's Hospital on Easter Monday and Tuesday, to St. Bride's church, affords to the humane the most pleasing spectacle, as it excites the reflection of the multitudes thus rescued from want, profligacy, and perdition.[167]

This pride could be flaunted publically if benefactors were acknowledged through a visible token of their generosity on the uniform itself, and for some patrons this was a requirement of their bequest. This acknowledgement ranged from embroidered initials or insignia to markings, silver buttons, belt buckles and other such accessories bearing a benefactor's name. A benefactor's requirement to be recognised in this way, however, sometimes caused a conflict between plain dress and the more flamboyant elements of self-glorification.

This desire for public recognition might be as simple as flaunting wealth or good deeds within a society that from the eighteenth century deemed charitable giving fashionable. It can, however, also be linked with the medieval traditions of livery, a concept that survived into the eighteenth century, albeit in a diminished form. Landowners attached men to their service for the purpose of fulfilling estate duties as well as creating and maintaining units of power and these individuals wore the insignia of the landowner in a public display of their

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[166] Lloyd, "Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners," 26.

[167] Thomas Pennant, *Of London* (London: Printed for Robt. Faulder, 1790), 204.

affiliation.[168] The display of the benefactor's insignia on the clothing of the children could therefore be a remnant of this tradition in that the pupils' uniforms were an advertisement to the piety and good works of their benefactors and demonstrated a connection between the two.[169]

A continued appreciation of the viewing of charity pupils, in conjunction with the nineteenth century aesthetic appreciation of children and childhood, ensured that charity children began to appear in portraits, novels and even music hall songs in significant numbers.[170] More often than not they are represented as wholesome, blameless and goodly creatures, with many of the images bordering on both the winsome and the saccharine. Prominent among artists of this genre is Kate Greenaway who rose to fame as a children's illustrator in the 1880s and 90s, and who regularly sketched charity school children. Such representations almost certainly relate to the changes taking place in the social and cultural understanding of childhood in this period. These alterations in attitudes to children stimulated a greater interest, and in some instances, almost an obsession, with the trappings of childhood, which manifested itself specifically in areas such as the development of books

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[168] Jones & Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 5.

[169] Aldrich, *History of Education*, 70.

[170] J. Harroway, *The Charity School, A Comic Duet* (London: T. Purday, c.1835).

As the final verse runs:

Girl: A truce to care, this is the day

They give the milk and buns away

Boy: And in their kindness each one knows

They gave to us these brand new clothes.

Girl: With music, flags, and banners gay

We'll in procession march away,

Boy: But now to school with speed let's on,

Before the milk and buns are gone

I'm so happy

Girl: So am I

Both: To be good children then we'll try,

With joy to shout shall be our rule,

Success to every charity school

and games which were aimed directly at children, which also created a new outlet for such images.[171]

Moreover, the charity schoolchild became a literary trope, although whether this was as a charming innocent or oppressed minor depended on the author and the role of the child in the story. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* detailed both the harsh living conditions and the uniform of Lowood School in 1847:

> They were uniformly dressed in brown stuff frocks of quaint fashion…made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of Holland tied in front of their frocks and destined to serve the purpose of a work-bag: all too wearing woollen stockings and country-made shoes fastened with brass buckles. [172]

Whilst Charles Dickens' description of the Charitable Grinders in *Dombey & Son* in 1848 is more humorous and wryly benevolent:

> 'The dress, Richards, is a nice, warm, blue baize tailed coat and cap, turned up with orange coloured binding; red worsted stockings; and very strong leather small-clothes. One might wear the articles one's self,' said Mrs Chick, with enthusiasm, 'and be grateful'. [173]

These detailed descriptions observed in association with others, such as in Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), suggest that by this point the image of the charity school child was so inextricably bound up with their uniforms that to find a place in the cultural understanding of readers, the uniform needed to be described for the social context of the child to be apparent.

For several centuries charity schools played a large part in the education of the lower classes. Although many were rendered obsolete by the advent of compulsory education and the later switch to the comprehensive system, some retain the key aspects of their founders' intentions and appearance to this day. It is through these that we can garner an insight into

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[171] Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're a Brick Angela! A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* (London:Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1976), 127-130; John Rowe Townsend, *Written for Children: An Outline of English Children's Literature* (London: Garnet Miller, London, 1965), 124.

[172] Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 44-47.

[173] Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Boston: Bradbury and Guild, 1848), 44.

the importance that uniform played in the organisation and running of these schools and the creation of the identities of the children that were projected onto society. Many people today recognise Christ's Hospital pupils by their uniforms alone or maintain an understanding of their traditions and ethos, in a modern cultural context, through their appearance. This is an understanding that has changed in line with contemporary thinking on children's education and development although this is very different now, to that at the date of foundation, but nonetheless remains synonymous with the uniform.

Whilst charity uniforms are not directly related to the development of school clothing in different educational contexts their background is not a historical footnote. Themes such as the maintenance of class boundaries, religion, conceptions of childhood and anachronism in clothing are also apparent throughout the history of education and particularly that of school uniform. As Leigh Hunt wrote of the Christ's Hospital uniform:

> It was the ordinary dress of children in humble life during the reign of the Tudors…[but] we used to flatter ourselves that it was taken from the monks; and there went a monstrous tradition, that at one period it consisted of blue velvet with silver buttons. It was said, also, that during the blissful era of blue velvet, we had roast mutton for supper; but that the small-clothes not being then in existence, and the mutton suppers too luxurious, the eatables were given up for the ineffables.[174]

The children not only imagined huge quantities of delectable food, they also aspired to a uniform of much higher status than that which they actually wore. In doing so they blurred the class boundaries that the adult world aimed to construct. As the next chapters will explore, these elements of status, emulation and distinction can be seen to feature prominently in the development of uniform in the public schools.

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[174] Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt*, 60.

Chapter Two
The Public Schools 1800 – 1939

The rich man in his castle,

The poor man at his gate,

God made them high and lowly,

And ordered their estate.[175]

The public schools of the Victorian and Edwardian period represent a very important stage in British school uniform development in that they created a uniform model that was widely imitated throughout the education system. This chapter will explore the multifaceted factors at work in these institutions at this period and investigate how these promoted and affected school uniform implementation and development. In general, the initial adoption of uniform can be attributed to practical considerations, particularly on the sports field. The subsequent widespread implementation of uniforms, however, demonstrates a clear correlation with the development of complex ideological practices associated with the schooling process in such institutions. These practices centred in the establishment of a new, national definition of what a public school was, how it operated and what it sought to achieve – the public school ethos.[176] This definition included an emphasis on sport, manliness, morality and the maintenance of established class hierarchies.[177] I will argue that the development of the public school ethos had a large impact on the way in which uniform was adopted in these schools (and its later imitation in other institutions) and that the influence of class was a particularly intricate factor in this process.

Writing in the 1840s, Cecil Alexander represented very traditional views of class in her famous children's hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful* quoted at the head of the chapter. In the established social order that she depicts, individuals were assigned a position in the class system by birth. Society was changing, however, the mid-nineteenth century was a period of large-scale wealth creation due to the development of new trades and industries and increased male access to the professions through training and education. This was

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[175] Cecil Alexander, *Hymns for Little Children,* (London: Joseph Masters, 1852), 27.

[176] S. J. Curtis & M. E. A. Boultwood, *An Introductory History of English Education Since 1800* (Foxton: University Tutorial Press, 1966), 80-85.

[177] David Wardle, *The Rise of the Schooled Society; the History of Formal Schooling in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 34-35.

responsible for a swift and significant growth in the size of the middle classes. These new businessmen and professionals defined themselves by a rigid and gender-specific moral code borrowed from Anglican religious principles in which the home was central and ideas of masculinity and femininity were closely tied to roles and responsibilities.[178] This middle class was not a unified mass, however, but contained many gradations of wealth; from the rich business elite through to lower-middle class shopkeepers and clerks. This chapter is predominantly concerned with the upper-middle classes and the 'middling sort'; business and factory owners, physicians, lawyers and others of similar status who could afford to maintain a large house and multiple servants.[179] These men demanded increased access to status and political leverage through their money and one of the most accessible routes to social mobility was through education.[180]

Throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, many grammar schools came and went, but the few that stayed the distance gained social prominence. These schools switched to charging significant fees for teaching and boarding and consequently the demographics of their student population changed. Poorer students were financially excluded, except via a few bursaries and pupils were, increasingly, drawn from wealthier, upper-class backgrounds. These became the early public schools and the education of choice for the sons of gentry and gentlemen and it was to these schools; notably Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Charterhouse , Shrewsbury and Westminster that the new upper-middle classes sought admission and were, on the whole, given access.[181]

Although there were exceptions, conditions at these schools in the early nineteenth century were generally unpleasant and often brutal, particularly with regards to corporal punishment; beatings were frequent and this climate of aggression and violence passed down to the regularly unsupervised boys who replicated it amongst themselves.[182] Around

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[178] Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002), xv-xviii; John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007),11-12; Eric J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain, 1783-1870* (London: Routledge, 2001), 347-348.

[179] Tosh, *A Man's Place*, 12-13.

[180] J.A.Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School; The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Idealogy* (London: The Falmer Press, 1986), 128-129; Sally Power, Tony Edwards, Geoff Whitty & Valerie Wigfall, *Education and the Middle Classes* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), 7.

[181] J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597-1977* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 26-28.

[182] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 67.

the middle of the century conditions started to improve and the public school ethos began to emerge and develop. This ethos is difficult to articulate precisely but involved a strong emphasis on sport and the importance of games in teaching moral lessons of teamwork, leadership, and the management of physical discomfort. This tied in closely with the Victorian construction of manliness which was characterised by the traits of courage, fortitude and decency, along with ideals of patriotic and military duty. [183] The ethos is also associated with an increasingly structured school environment with the organisation of the institution into sub-units such as houses, societies and teams and these elements will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby from 1828-1841 is often credited with initiating these changes. Arnold's work was publicised through Stanley's fawning biography and the novel *Tom Brown's School Days*, a fictionalised account of public school life based on Rugby during Arnold's headmastership. Although Arnold is acknowledged to have been an influence in many respects, these two works have served to inflate the impact that Arnold actually had on the system as a whole.[184]

In reality this change in the *modus operandi* of the public schools may be attributed as much to behavioural, structural and moral reforms taking place in society rather than to the work of Thomas Arnold and his followers. It may also be viewed as the development of class exclusion processes which prevented the lower echelons of the middle classes from accessing a public school education. Having gained entry to the advantages that a public school education brought, the upper middle classes were reluctant to extend the privilege to others. Public schooling, therefore, became a method of policing the established class system through limitation of access. Schools were selective in their intake and the 'correct' methods of thought and behaviour could be reinforced in pupils, a process in which uniform and clothing, along with other aspects of the public school ethos played an important role. Public schools consequently became the places in which gentlemen were made, initiating boys of the upper and middling classes into manhood and preparing them for the future.[185] Those without such an education could not partake in the careers and activities reserved for these elite groups, particularly jobs in the rapidly growing British Empire.

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[183] John Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England," *Transaction of the Royal Historical Society* 6, no. 12 (2002), 455.

[184] T.W. Bamford*, The Rise of the Public Schools; A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (London: Nelson, 1967), 51-53.

[185] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain,* 112.

Focus will be placed, primarily, on the seven schools designated under the Public Schools Act of 1868 – Charterhouse, Eton, Rugby, Harrow, Shrewsbury, Westminster and Winchester, drawing on materials from their archives along with information from the Pocklington School archives (a grammar school, founded in 1514 which later assumed the status of public school). Transcripts of the Clarendon Commission (1861-1864) provide an especially rich resource. The Commission was convened to investigate the finances and management of the same seven schools in addition to two day schools (St Paul's and Merchant Taylors') and the records supply a number of discussions on school clothing. Public schools of a later foundation will also be discussed, notably Wellington College (1859). Additional source material has been drawn from newspaper advertisements and letter pages, which shed light on the commercial imitation of uniform and its widespread usage. Much of the chapter focuses explicitly on the attire of older boys as their use of uniform was more consistent over the period. In contrast, the education of the under 13s (and, with it, their relationship to uniform) went through some major changes. Younger boys were initially educated in the public schools which took pupils from around 7 to 20. In the second half of the nineteenth century the education of the under 13s was transferred to separate educational establishments in line with new ideas of childhood for younger boys in which they were protected from the rigours and dangers of public school life until later. These establishments mainly took the form of prep schools which often adopted the manners and dress of their older compatriots.

The first part of the chapter will consider the role of sport in uniform adoption, because this demonstrates the earliest adoption of regulated clothing within public schools. The rest of the chapter is arranged into general themes, which are ordered roughly chronologically. These include the influence of the public school ethos and class on the initial adoption of uniform; some specific influences on the design of uniforms; the increased regulation of clothing and its role in identity creation along with the widespread imitation of public school uniforms. The chapter will close with a case study of Harrow which brings these themes together, illustrating them in a specific context and demonstrating their complex interplay.

Sport and the Introduction of Uniform Clothing
Prior to the nineteenth century there was little regulation of what public school pupils wore. For example at Rugby in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the boys were

documented as wearing the normal dress of the upper classes, an array of; coloured waistcoats; jackets of cloth or kerseymere; breeches made of doeskin, washleather, cloth or nanking, worn with worsted or silk stockings and half-boots, ankle-boot, or buckled shoes. All activities, including sport, were carried out in these outfits, the only concession made being the removal of coat and hat.[186]

Games were always played at the public schools, but prior to the nineteenth century they were organised by the boys themselves; masters usually took little notice, often viewing them with detachment and sometimes distrust.[187] From the mid-nineteenth century this outlook began to change as team games were promoted as a means of improving school discipline and as an outlet for the less academically gifted pupils.[188] Gradually sport ceased to be merely a channel for the mediation of indiscipline, but started to be encouraged for other reasons. Games began to be considered as character forming, administering a moral education through sport and teaching boys to lead and obey.[189]

This growth in frequent and organised games sessions meant that everyday garments were no longer suitable for sport. They failed to provide the freedom required for vigorous exercise and expensive clothing was ruined by mud and sweat. At first older clothes were worn for the sports field, but these too were found unsatisfactory.[190] As team games became increasingly regulated, the ability to identify teams from one another was also required for both players and spectators. This practical element was particularly important in fast moving sports and explains why uniforms were initially adopted for large team games and fast-paced activities. *Routledge's Handbook of Football* published in 1867 recommends placing teams in differing clothing, as this prevented:

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[186] W.H.D Rouse, *A History of Rugby School* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1909), 158.

[187] Writing in 1621, John Brinsley in his text *Ludus Literarius; or the Grammar Schoole* demonstrates an early suspicion of sport: 'Very great care is to be had in the moderating of their recreation. For schools, generally, do not take more hindrance by any one thing, than by over-often leave to play. Experience teaches, that this draws their minds utterly away from their books'

[188] Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School,* 10.

[189] Patrick F. McDevitt*, May the Best Man Win; Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10; J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism; Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Middlesex: Viking, 1986), 18.

[190] Phillis Cunnington & Alan Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation; From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 49-50.

Confusion and wild attempts to run after and wrest the ball from your neighbour. I have often seen this done, and heard the invariable apology – "I beg your pardon, I thought you were on the opposite side"[191]

Sporting strips of this kind were not a completely novel idea, in horse racing the Newmarket Agreement made in 1762 assigned specifically coloured silks to each owner or stud and all jockeys were required to ride in the correct colours. This allowed ease of identification during a race, particularly at the finish line. In a similar vein, members of the Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.) wore sky blue coats from the late eighteenth century, although this was more akin to bearing the insignia of an exclusive gentleman's club than a response to the exertions of sporting activity as the jackets were only worn off the field to demonstrate allegiance and were discarded before playing.[192]

A rudimentary football uniform including white trousers and black gaiters worn with coloured jerseys and caps (usually a pill-box, skull cap or knitted brewer's cap) was adopted at Harrow from the late 1830s and from around 1840 onwards Winchester denoted affiliation by placing competing school teams in different coloured striped jerseys – red and white on one side and blue and white on the other.[193] Uniforms also began to emerge on the river, at the first Oxford and Cambridge boat race in 1829 the Oxford team wore dark blue striped jerseys, canvas trousers and black straw hats whilst Cambridge were attired in white shirts and pink sashes.[194] Many of the garments adopted were modifications of upper-class casual and country styles of the period with the exception of the ubiquitous jersey which probably originated in the clothing of fisherman and other outdoor workers and was embraced for its sheer practicality.[195]

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[191] *Routledge's Handbook of Football,* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1867).

[192] Cunnington & Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation*, 15.

[193] Cunnington & Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation*, 49.

[194] Cunnington & Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation*, 289.

[195] Rae Compton, *The Complete Book of Traditional Knitting* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2010), 55-56.
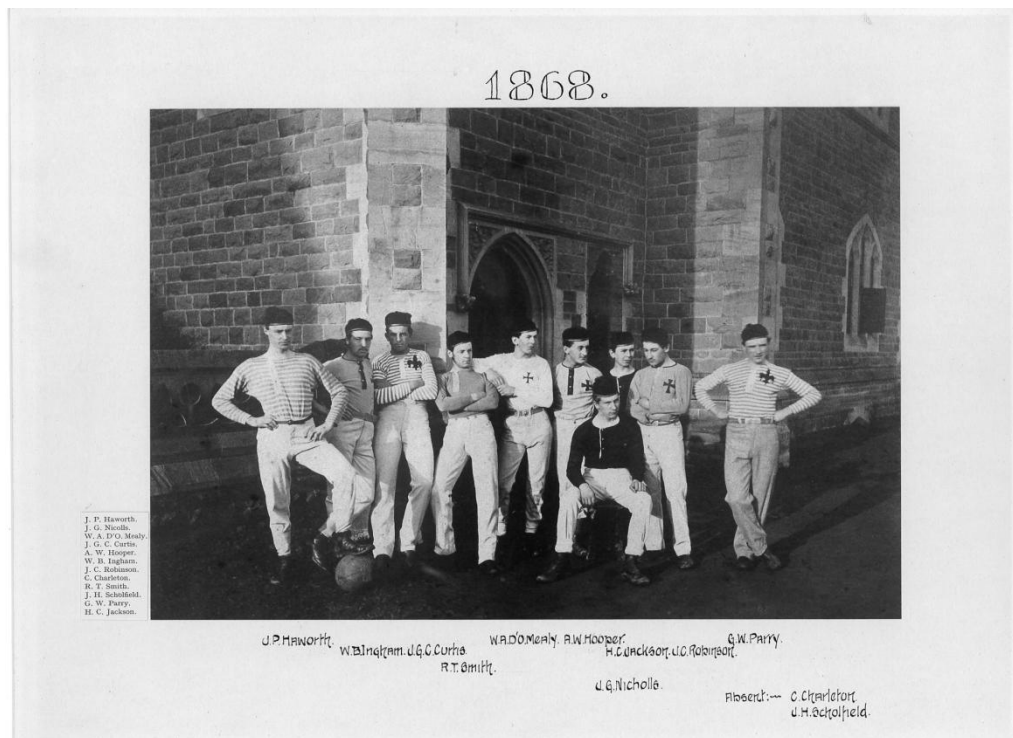
Fig. 1: *Malvern Football Team*, 1868 [196]

These new sporting garments were often brightly patterned and coloured, In *Recollections of Rugby*, written in 1848 'An Old Rugbeian' recounts how:

> Considerable improvement has taken place within the last few years, in the appearance of a match, not only from the great increase in the number of boys, but also in the use of a peculiar dress, consisting of velvet caps and jerseys. The latter are of various colours and patterns, and wrought with many curious devices.[197]

Historian Mark Girouard suggests that these 'curious devices' – stripes, quarters, stars, crosses and fleur-de-lys were heavily influenced by heraldic iconography and that they can be viewed as a manifestation of the popular Medieval revivalism of the period. It is consequently easy to suggest that the use of such imagery might reflect the gentlemanly-like qualities that sport was supposed to represent and this can lead to drawing parallels between the Victorian passion for chivalry and the concepts of fair play.[198] I can find little evidence, however, to support a direct link between the two and it is more probable that although

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[196] *Malvern Football Team*, 1868, black and white photograph, Malvern College Archives

[197] An Old Rugbeian (R.H. Hutton), *Recollections of Rugby* (London: Hamilton and Adams, 1848), 131.

[198] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 240.

these patterns and symbols were culturally prevalent at the time they were, more importantly, simple to identify and reproduce. After an initial period of exuberance where clashing colours and designs were randomly adopted by players, decoration became gradually streamlined and certain colours or patterns began to be consistently associated with certain sports, schools, clubs or houses. Wearing specific colours was an easy and distinctive way of showing allegiance and this process of codification can be seen as a reflection of the increasing affiliation of boys with school and house which occurs during this period.
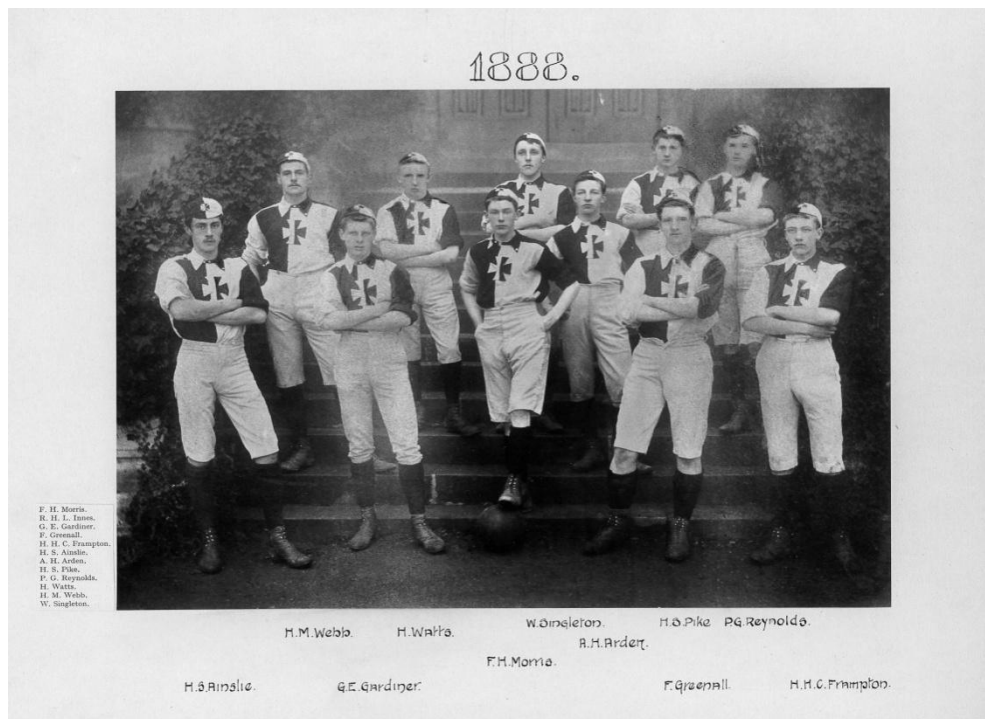
1888.

F. H. Morris.
R. H. L. Innes.
G. E. Gardiner.
F. Greenall.
H. H. C. Frampton.
H. S. Ainslie.
A. H. Arden.
H. S. Pike.
P. G. Reynolds.
H. Watts.
H. M. Webb.
W. Singleton.

H.M.Webb.   H.Watts.   W.Singleton.   H.S.Pike   P.G.Reynolds.

A.H.Arden.

F.H.Morris.

H.S.Ainslie.   G.E.Gardiner.   F.Greenall.   H.H.C.Frampton.

Fig. 2: *Malvern Football Team*, 1888 [199]

This development may be noted between figs. 1 and 2, both images of the Malvern football team from 1868 and 1888 respectively. The first image shows evidence of designated sports clothing, with all players attired in a similar style, but in a wide variety of colours and bearing assorted fleur-de-lys and cross symbols on their shirts, although their caps appear to be of a uniform dark colour and appearance. The later image shows that in the space of twenty years a clearly regulated football uniform of white shorts, dark socks and team shirt has been introduced, the caps have also become more detailed in line with the wider aesthetic.

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[199] *Malvern Football Team*, 1888, black and white photograph, Malvern College Archives

As games became an increasingly important part of the curriculum sports clothing continued to develop in formality and specificity. By the end of the nineteenth century teams wore uniform outfits which were different for each sport and included whites for tennis and cricket and the adoption of striped blazers for many activities.[200] Being adept at sport also began to be viewed as the embodiment of the new Victorian notions of masculinity. An emphasis on muscular Christianity was particularly important as an increasing stress on the connection between religious certainty and physical strength meant that the ability to do the right thing (as dictated by a pervasive Christian morality) was demonstrated by toughness and excellence at games.[201]

Boys strove to appear athletic and to do well at games and prefects were chosen based on how closely they resembled this athletic and behavioural ideal. The most physically able, often known as 'bloods', assumed official and unofficial positions of responsibility and wielded a significant amount of power within the school. Boys consequently sought visible markers of their athletic prowess and prestige both on and off the sports field and clothing was the easiest method of communication. Initially pupils were awarded the privilege of flannels, which allowed preferred boys to play games in flannel trousers instead of ducks (a type of canvas trousers). Later players were rewarded with specifically patterned caps, jerseys, ties, decorated blazers or other privileges such as the right to wear knickerbockers or studs. For instance, at Charterhouse cricket caps for excellence in school or house games were awarded from 1849, and football caps from 1861.[202]

By the end of the nineteenth century this system of sporting rewards had become normalised to such an extent that Sir Henry Newbolt could reference it within his stirring, saccharine and oft-quoted poem *Vitai Lampada* within any further explanation.

> There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
> Ten to make and the match to win—
> A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
> An hour to play and the last man in.

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[200] Richard Holt, "The Amateur Body and the Middle-class Man: Work, Health and Style in Victorian Britain," *Sport in History,* 26, no. 3 (2006), 365.

[201] Hugh Cunningham, *The Invention of Childhood* (London: BBC Book, 2006), 144; Donald E. Hall, *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 7-8.

[202] A.H. Tod, *Charterhouse* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1901), 99-101.

And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,

Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,

But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote

"Play up! play up! and play the game!"[203]

This demonstrates how engrained the sporting culture and its associated clothing had become. When the poem was published in 1897 the 'ribboned coat' was clearly a widely understood cultural reference and this establishes how recognisable the signifiers of sporting attainment were to those both inside and outside the public school system. The demonstration of allegiance through sporting clothing and the demarcation of hierarchy through the signifiers of sporting prowess are part of a much wider trend of both group and personal identity creation in the public schools and in many ways sporting clothing acts as a precursor of later trends in this area.

Creation of the Public School Ethos

With the growth in the middle classes and their subsequent demands for greater access to the upper echelons of society, public schools became increasingly concerned with class and ensuring that they excluded non-elite influences. In discussing his time at Harrow c.1912 Henry Vigne stated that the aim of the school "was turning out quite a good standard of not too hide-bound people with decent manners and so on…I think they were always very aware of class which was a very real thing in those days"[204] Class was thus a key concern and public schools sought to separate themselves from other educational establishments of a lesser status.[205]

These exclusion processes took a number of forms, both practical and social. In the former category the lower middle classes could be financially excluded through high fees and the costs of clothing and equipment. Schools were often in rural locations which necessitated complicated transport arrangements and the need for boys to board at the school which further contributed to the expense. Additionally entry level requirements included a familiarity with classical subjects and this meant that boys were expected to have been suitably taught. The education that pupils then received was specifically tailored to the

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[203] Henry John Newbolt, *Admirals All, and Other Verses* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1898), 21.

[204] Henry Vigne "Henry Vigne," in *Edwardian Childhoods*, ed. Thea Thompson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 162.

[205] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 228.

future requirements of the upper and middling class and contained little in the way of the skills needed for trade, such as accountancy. On the social front, exclusion was implemented through the creation and maintenance of a clear distinction between pupils and non-pupils through dress, school practices and everyday norms. The latter two forms of distinction are closely tied to the public school ethos, the development of which can be viewed as a combination of methods for the communication of appropriate ideals and complex ritualistic behaviour which was hard to imitate by those outside of the system. New rituals and expected behaviours were created and later justified as 'traditional' even within a short period of being introduced. Such a designation also served to emphasise the history of an institution placing it in a category of veneration and historical maturity.

From the 1860s a large number of public schoolboys (around 30% of the total intake at Harrow and Rugby and more from other schools) went on to public service positions in the military and civil service, filling leadership roles throughout the Empire.[206] Consequently public schools offered a curriculum that provided the necessary knowledge for civil service examinations and military experience through volunteer corps.[207] Robustness was also considered vital for imperial command in the far-flung reaches of the Victorian Empire and the rise of organised games mirrors the growth of the public schools as the training grounds for colonial service. Senior government staff members valued manliness over academic excellence and more often than not colonial recruits were good sportsmen.[208] As H.C Jackson records in his memoirs of his time in the Sudan Service, joining in 1907, he was one of:

> Eight young men [who] boarded the crowded Desert Express on its long journey from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum…we eight included in our number a former Rugby football captain of Oxford and Scotland, an ex-captain of the Cambridge University cricket team, a member of the Oxford University soccer XI, a rowing trials man, a member of Oxford and Middlesex county cricket teams, and a Somerset county Rugby footballer. It was this emphasis on physical fitness which gave rise to the aphorism that the Sudan was a country of Blacks and Browns administered by Blues.[209]

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[206] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 447.

[207] Hartmut Berghoff, "Public Schools and the Decline of the British Economy, 1870-1914," *Past & Present* no. 129 (1990), 148-149.

[208] Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon & London, 2004), 226.

[209] H.C. Jackson, *Sudan Days and Ways* (London: Macmillan, 1954), 15.

This emphasis on physical achievement in colonial employment in turn affected the operation of the Empire. As J.A. Mangan notes: "The outcome of Waterloo would certainly have been the same without the existence of the Eton wall-game: the nature of the Empire would scarcely have been the same without the public school games ethic"[210]

Thus public school (often followed by attendance at Oxford or Cambridge) became the main method by which to access such careers. This limitation of access extended beyond the schooling process itself and into the world of work. Not only were non-public school attendees restricted in their choice of careers as a public school education was a prerequisite for some roles, public school networks were also retained in later years. Men who had attended public school were more likely to be trusted, promoted and develop relationships with influential figures who had attended the same or similar institutions to themselves. [211]

The adoption of uniform can be seen as the most obvious way of differentiating between types of school, physically distinguishing public school pupils from non-attendees, although the development of structural differences such as houses, along with slang, complicated hierarchical codes, special celebrations and other unique actions were equally exclusive. These changes served to create distinct communities with their own rules and social norms and reinforced a more subtle differentiation; a mental distinction on both sides of 'them and us'. This worked to "foster a corporate sense of superiority of elites – particularly when these had to be recruited from those that did not already possess it by birth or ascription", notably the upper-middle classes.[212] The development of the public school ethos and the subsequent reinforcement of class boundaries was a gradual one and one that can be demonstrated through the move from internal dress divisions to the creation of an increasingly unified and select appearance.

In most schools, the greatest excesses of fashion were initially prohibited – gaudy ties, decorative waistcoats and fancy socks were banned and then stricter dress codes were introduced later. The Clarendon Report, published in 1864, was the culmination of a Royal Commission investigation into the nine public schools in England in the wake of

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[210] J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism*, 19.

[211] John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2005), 197.

[212] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10.

complaints regarding the management of Eton. This marks an early, but key period in both the growth of the public school ethos and the initial stages in the control of school clothing and as such the Report gives a unique overview of this process in a selection of schools. It is also a rich resource on the subject of contemporary concerns and anxieties regarding the role of garments in the concealment or differentiation of class and status identity.

The report consisted of questionnaires concerning the administration and structure of each school, followed by a series of interviews with masters and current and former pupils. Of the nine schools surveyed there are direct or indirect references to dress in five, of these Harrow will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. This lack of consistency may be explained by the remarks of Lord Clarendon in an interview with G.F Harris, an assistant master at Harrow:

> There is another point, of perhaps no great importance, and yet I believe it is thought so by some of the boys, which is their dress[213]

This indicates that although school clothing was beginning to be discussed and regulated at this date it had not yet become a widely-understood symbol of the public schools and this was to follow later.

Dress, as with all aspects covered by the report, is dealt with most completely at Eton, being the institution which originally sparked the investigation. It is regularly asserted that Eton was the first public school to implement uniform in 1820, adopting its famous jackets in mourning for George III.[214] This is clearly not the case as an interview with the headmaster Rev Balston in 1862 records little in the way of regulated clothing:

> 3613. (Lord Clarendon.) One more question, which bears in some degree upon other schools, namely with regard to the dress. The boys do not wear any particular dress at Eton ?—No, with the exception that they are obliged to wear a white neckcloth.

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[213] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein; with an Appendix and Evidence, Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2.* (London: Printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1864), 203.

[214] See for instance: Tony Cooper, *Head on the Block* (Beauchamp: Matador, 2012), 122 or Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *World Clothing and Fashion: An Encyclopaedia of History, Culture and Social Influence* (London: Routledge, 2015), 233.

3614. Is the colour of their clothes much restricted?—We would not let them wear for instance a yellow coat or any other colour very much out of the way.

3615. If they do not adopt anything very extravagant either with respect to colour or cut you allow them to follow their own taste with respect to the choice of their clothes ?—Yes.

3616. (Lord Lyttelton.) They must wear the common round hat ?—Yes.

3617. (Lord Devon.) How far down in the school does the wearing of the white neckcloth go?—It does not extend to those who wear turn down collars.

3618. Do many of the boys wear stick ups ?—Yes, and they must then wear a white tie.[215]

Thus, with the exception of 'the common round hat' (a top hat) and a white neckcloth, boys were allowed to dress much as they chose and similar situations are apparent at Westminster and Rugby where there is no formal regulation of clothing but certain items are prohibited.[216] As the sons of wealthy families, pupils' garments are likely to have been fashionable in style and cut. This clothing, however, was not allowed to be too outlandish in appearance and this prevention of ostentatious display and encouragement of conservative dress was the forerunner of uniform in many establishments and marks the early stages in the regulation of clothing.

In addition to these rules Collegers at Eton, pupils who were supported by the school in line with the terms of the original foundation, were provided with a gown which had to be worn throughout the school day. This marked them out from the Oppidans, full fee-paying pupils who did not wear such a garment. The Report contains a significant debate about the nature of the divide between Oppidans and Collegers and whether this was reinforced by these differences in dress. The Hon. C.G. Lyttelton, a former Eton pupil sums up these views in his answers to the commission:

> To what do you attribute the distinction [between the collegers and oppidans] disappearing in the upper part of the school as compared with that which existed in the lower part of it ?— I believe the collegers themselves ascribed it in great measure to the fact of their wearing the gown. When a boy first comes to the school and sees a lot of other boys

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215 *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein; with an Appendix and Evidence*, *Vol. III. Evidence Part 1.* (London: Printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1864), 116.

216 *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools*, *Vol. III. Evidence Part 1,* 367-375; *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools*, *Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2,* 252.

walking about in a peculiar dress, he naturally regards them as a separate class. He learns to get out of that as he gets older, but it is a long time before the impression vanishes entirely.[217]

Similar distinctions were found at Charterhouse, where Foundation scholars, those provided for by the school, were given a black suit of contemporary cut and a gown, this process was explained by Rev. Elwyn, Headmaster of Charterhouse:

> 234. I see he is provided with clothes ; what amount, and what sort of clothes are they ? — It is a plain black suit; black trousers, and black jacket.
>
> 235. In an antique fashion ? — No, a perfectly modern dress. That change was made many years ago. They used to wear knee breeches, and that kind of clothing, but there is nothing now to mark them from other boys, except that they are dressed quite in black. A boy is permitted to wear a black waistcoat, but it is not required
>
> 236. Is he supplied with a school gown ? — Yes.
>
> 237. Which he is bound to wear in the school ? — Yes ; and at dinner, and at prayers in the house and in chapel. [218]

Thus, in both schools, financially supported pupils were marked as different, or in the words of The Hon. C.G. Lyttelton, of "a separate class", through the dress they were compelled to wear, separating them both sartorially and socially from their higher status peers. These distinctions were rooted in tradition, often being based on provisions in the foundation documents or the original statutes. As class consciousness became more focused on excluding outsiders, however, these internal dress divisions were, in most cases, abolished and replaced with uniforms which presented the school as a coherent whole. The fact that such internal dress distinctions are questioned in the Report is indicative of changing attitudes in this period.

From this point forward the adoption of uniform took several routes, varying from school to school. The most common method was via a gradual process of increasingly strict dress codes. For instance, at Radley College the implementation of uniform took place between

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[217] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools*, *Vol. III. Evidence Part 1,* 273.

[218] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools*, *Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2*, 11.

the 1860s and 1897 when it was finally codified in its entirety.[219] In other schools uniform was imposed from above over a relatively short period of time and this is often seen in newer establishments. In a few interesting cases uniform was introduced through boy-led innovation, a process which represented pupils actively partaking in the formation of the schools unique appearance and exclusions processes. This is the case at both Harrow and Eton.

Whilst correlating with the rise of the public school ethos, this move towards uniformity can also be viewed as a reflection of changing attitudes to male dress. In the mid-nineteenth century masculine dress was seen as an important way of conveying status and socially correct behaviour but too greater focus on dress and fashion was not initially aligned with the culture of overt and physical masculinity that was developing in the public schools. Later in the century male consumption became more prolific and the mass market fashion of the department stores broadened the scope of acceptable masculinity with regards to concerns of dress. This moved the processes of choosing, purchasing and wearing clothes from a pursuit that could be considered effeminate in the mid-nineteenth century to one that might be enjoyed by men, albeit in different spaces and on different terms to women. Despite this, the relationship between masculinity and consumption remained a complex area.[220] The growing acceptability of male consumption, however, helped to create a suitable social environment for the increasing interest paid to clothing in the public schools.[221]

Uniform Design

Public schools sought to create a uniform appearance that fell within the narrow limits of social and sartorial acceptability, but discernibly differentiated the school from other institutions both of the same social standing and those of a different class. Despite the creation of forums such as the Headmasters' Conference (formed in 1869) and an increase in the number of inter-school sporting fixtures which provided greater opportunities for the informal exchange of ideas, schools remained fiercely protective of their autonomy and this

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[219] A.K. Boyd, *The History of Radley College 1847-1947* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), 253.

[220] Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 176.

[221] Brent Shannon, "Re-fashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity, and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860-1914," *Victorian Studies* 46, no. 4 (2004), 597-598.

makes broad generalisations difficult. This was particularly true with regards to areas of internal management such as curriculum and uniforms.[222]

During the early to mid-nineteenth century there was a sobering of male attire; colours became darker, textures more limited and decoration increasingly subtle. Simplicity rather than flamboyance became stylish and this steadily developed into a general distaste for significant singularity in appearance.[223] This is not to say that masculine fashion was not important and increasingly prominent male consumers demonstrated their individuality through distinctive items, but overall changes to the fashionable silhouette were more gradual and the palette of colours used more conservative than in women's dress. For the upper and middle classes neat, well-cut simplicity began to define masculinity. School uniforms reflected this, with pupils most commonly dressed in black, navy and dark green in conservatively cut and fashionable styles and with little in the way of visible decoration. Particularly prominent were versions of the top hat and tails model (seen at Eton) as these reflected normal youth dress practices when they were adopted. Such styles were also practical for pupils as dark colours did not show dirt easily and fancy trimmings were easy to damage and hard to launder in quantity.

This conservatism operated alongside an increasing informality in clothing. As the precursor to day uniforms sporting clothing naturally influenced uniform design. School sporting clothing was adapted from upper class casual styles and as menswear became gradually less formal in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these styles were adopted for a greater range for situations. Consequently an item that had previously only been correct wear on the river became acceptable attire in other locations, including schools. In fact, such garments often became suitable for children prior to being generally acknowledged as conventional adult wear, as children were usually granted a greater degree of freedom from formal constraints.[224]

This is particularly true of the blazer which started as rowing and cricket wear but became standard uniform for many schools from the Edwardian period. This was influenced by

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[222] Alicia C. Percival, *The Origins of the Headmasters' Conference* (London: John Murray, 1969), 1-3.

[223] David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity; England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 177-178.

[224] Brent Shannon, *The Cut of his Coat: Men, Dress and Consumer Culture in Britain 1860-1914* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 187-188.

Stowe School, which opened in 1923 and sought to compete academically with the established public schools, but move away from archaic systems and practices. Stowe rejected the black jacket, waistcoat, stiff collar and top hat/straw boater model and instead placed boys in grey flannel suits during the week and blue serge suits on Sundays. The success of this approach caused other institutions to move to blazers and jackets, creating the shirt, blazer and tie model that we know today.[225]

Another example of this process in action is the adoption of shorts for younger boys, predominantly from the interwar period of the twentieth century onwards. Shorts first appeared in athletics in the 1860s and passed into children's clothing in the 1870s, but were not widely worn until later.[226] Their use in school uniform can be attributed to some extent to the scouting movement who popularised the garment. Aimed at the middle and working classes Baden Powell's scouts, founded in 1907, promoted the public school values of masculinity, Empire and militarism to a wider audience and as such the uniforms became imbued with similar values.[227] It was a simple step, therefore, to transfer the garment into the public and prep school environment for younger boys (shorts were not generally adopted by adults until the 1930s).

These two factors, traditional simplicity in conjunction with sporting informality acted to create complicated sartorial codes for every occupation and situation in which certain degrees of casual clothing were allowed depending on the specific context. These were promoted as correct, particularly amongst the upper and upper-middle classes. They were often ignored by the lower middle classes, however, who did not wear sporting clothing in the prescribed manner, leading to accusations of flamboyance and a condemnation of sartorial transgressions.[228] Public schools keen to maintain their upper class image followed the 'correct' styles of dress to the letter with each type of activity or sport requiring a different and unique outfit of clothing (fig. 3). This situation is reflected by Arthur Ponsonby the British politician and writer in his social commentary *The Decline of Aristocracy*

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[225] Alice Guppy, *Children's Clothes 1939-1970; The Advent of Fashion,* (Poole: Blandford Press, 1978), 58.

[226] Cunnington & Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation,* 54-55, 318; Ewing, *History of Children's Costume*, 90.

[227] Tammy M. Proctor, "On my Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 92, no. 2 (2002),* 13-14.

[228] Shannon, *The Cut of his Coat,* 187-189.

in which he argues that boys attending public school "must be fitted out with suits appropriate for each occupation, designed and cut on an approved pattern".[229]

School Costumes today
Monitor, Sunday dress ; Monitor and   Harrow Football XI ; Cricket XI ;
Member of the " Phil " ; School dress   Rugby Football XI

Fig. 3: *Harrow Uniforms*, 1948[230]

The Volunteer Movement of 1859 established local volunteer rifle and artillery forces to assist in the event of an invasion threat; these were the forerunners of the modern Territorial Army. Whilst foreign military campaigns were a normality, having a military presence in the community was, in some areas, novel. Their impact was felt in a variety of ways including an increased interest in, and awareness of, their operational activities and this was reflected in clothing through fashions for military detailing and styles. For example Zouave jackets and bodices became fashionable in 1859 in imitation of the oriental-style jackets worn by the Zouaves, a light infantry regiment of the French army and these retained their popularity for some decades, passing into children's wear.[231] In the 1850s

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[229] Arthur Ponsonby, *The Decline of Aristocracy* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1912),191.

[230] *School Costumes Today*, 1948, black and white photograph from E.D. Laborde, *Harrow School Yesterday and Today* (London: Winchester Publications Limited, 1948), 211.

[231] Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 228.

military frogging and braiding became a popular decoration, particularly on women's gowns and this reappeared as 'Hussar' decoration in the 1880s[232]

In the wake of the Volunteer Movement cadet corps were founded at many schools reflecting this public interest and allowing pupils to gain relevant training prior to taking up military careers. Eton was one of the first schools to establish such a corps in 1860. Specific uniforms along military lines were created, in this instance grey tunics with pale blue facings, but at other schools different adaptations of military dress were worn.[233] This participation in cadet corps allowed the normalisation of military activities and styling from an early age and ensured that the military aesthetic and the meanings it conveyed was understood within the public school system.

A direct military influence can be seen in the design of some school uniforms around this period. The most prominent of these is Wellington College. The impetus for Wellington originated with Prince Albert, who sought to create a school for orphaned sons of military personnel and his ideas were heavily influential throughout the foundation process. Opening in 1859, the school was part military academy on German lines and part public school, and the uniform, which had been designed with input by Prince Albert himself, had strong military overtones. It consisted of a dark green jacket with brass buttons, plaid trousers and a postman's cap emblazoned with red piping and a gilt crown, an outfit that appears to have been partly based on the dress of Scottish regiments.[234] As the son of the first headmaster of Wellington, E.F. Benson was uniquely placed to describe these uniforms in his childhood memoirs *As We Were; A Victorian Peep Show*:

> The boys first wore a uniform approved and partly designed by the Prince Consort, and it remarkably resembled that of the porters and ticket-collectors of the South Eastern railway on which Wellington College was situated. This gave rise to little confusions.[235]

This, perhaps, suggests more about Prince Albert's unfamiliarity with the uniforms of railway service personnel than anything else but does also indicate the use of military styles in everyday life. It also demonstrates the variable interpretations of clothing depending on

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[232] Waugh, *The Cut of Women's Clothes,* 147

[233] Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College*, 474-475

[234] David Newsome, *A History of Wellington College, 1859-1959.* (London: John Murray, 1959), 58-64.

[235] E.F. Benson, *As We Were; A Victorian Peep Show* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1930), 4.

the viewer and circumstance; whereas the pupils *en masse* projected a military, upper-class appearance, away from the public school the individual boys could be mistaken for lower-class working men. This shows the necessity of context in image creation and projection and the complexities of the demonstration of status through clothing in this period.

Between February and June 1860 *The Standard* ran a series of classified advertisements by Samuel Brothers advertising:

> SCHOOL UNIFORMS in increasing demand…for the military training of youth as everywhere practiced on the Continent. Tunic Uniform, with kepi or navy cap and belt, 38s. to 50s.; Jacket Uniform with navy cap and belt, 30s.-40s. – Sole Designers and Makers, SAMUEL BROTHERS, 29 Ludgate-hill, E.C.[236]

They also listed "patterns and directions for self measurement…Boy's School Uniform (*en militaire*)".[237] Similar Samuel Brothers advertisements were featured in other London papers such as *The Era* and *Daily News* during the same year.[238] Wellington College was a new concept in British education and it seems probable, given the timing, that Samuel Brother was directly influenced by the Volunteer movement and the newly designed uniforms at Wellington. Two years later, in 1862 Samuel Brothers published an advertising map of London and this too featured listings for military style "cadet or school uniforms" consisting of "jacket, vest, trousers and cap".[239] This suggests that the military influence, although comparatively brief, was widespread in its appeal.

It is likely that this militarisation had an impact on school dress in other public schools as well and this can be seen in military detailing – coloured piping, insignia and some styles of hat. For instance when uniform was first adopted by Marlborough in the 1850s parts, notably the cap, were relieved with red piping.[240] The decorative, brightly coloured military uniforms of the Victorian era were closely associated with overt displays of manliness and this appropriation of military design can be seen as a reflection of the comparable cultures

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[236] "Classified Advertisement – School Uniform," *Standard,* February 04, 1860.

[237] "Classified Advertisement – Send for Patterns and Directions," *Standard*, February 04, 1860.

[238] "Classified Advertisement – Sydenham School Uniforms," *Daily News*, October 15, 1860.

[239] *Samuel Brothers New Map of London* (London: Samuel Brothers, May 1862)

[240] *Mr Gray's Singing X*, 1885, black and white photograph, Marlborough College Archives; Dr Rogers, Marlborough College, personal correspondence, October 09, 2012.

of masculinity within the commissioned ranks of the armed forces and in the public schools.[241] The use of uniform in a military context and in schools is similar in many other ways, including the disciplinary functions that it fulfilled and the strong identification with corps, units and houses which developed through uniform differences.[242] Parallels can also be drawn between the systems of hierarchy and sporting honours developing in public schools at this time and the notion of insignia in use by the armed forces. Denotation of rank through braid, buttons and ties were all common in the military and similar symbols of prowess and authority were adopted by the majority of public schools for sporting achievement (as discussed earlier) and to indicate prefects, head boys and other positions of schoolboy power. Newbolt's 'ribboned' coat may even be a reflection of the ribbons worn on military uniform to signify that the wearer has been awarded medals in recognition of particular acts of bravery.

Collective Identity

Once uniforms had become established, they were increasingly regulated and obedience to strict dress codes were carefully policed by staff, but also more prominently by pupils and this will be illustrated later in the chapter in relation to Harrow. Closed groups tend to promote conformity and the tight-knit environment of the public school was no exception, singularity was frowned upon, new boys found the pressure to conform overwhelming and these pressures were extended to the newly codified uniforms.[243] Writing in *Some People* about his time at Marlborough around 1900, Harold Nicolson describes this attitude in a conversation between himself and Marstock, a blood and hugely respected member of the school community:

> "Oh why, *oh why* will you persist in being different to other people? I give you up; you simply refuse to be the same." He paused and looked at me with real perplexity in those open eyes. "*I think you must be mad,*" he concluded solemnly. I went to my room determined…I must pull myself together: it was only a question of being careful: if one was terribly careful one could succeed in being exactly the same. My whole energy during the terms that followed was concentrated on achieving uniformity. [244]

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[241] Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 41-43.

[242] Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle; From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 67.

[243] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 112-114.

[244] Harold Nicolson, *Some People* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1947), 35.

Thus both the public school ethos and uniforms became self-sustaining, transmitting values and reinforcing the group mentality which they had played a part in creating, as historian Rupert Wilkinson notes:

> Public School etiquette focused on the school community and its sub-unit, the House. Both systems, therefore, confronted the individual with a community small and immediate enough to appear as a vivid entity. And in each case, the community dwarfed the individual against an awe- inspiring array of historical tradition. Public School etiquette…constantly invoked "School tradition" to demand group-directed behaviour.[245]

Despite some of these traditions being very recently implemented, the result of this was an increased emphasis on collective identity and uniforms became an outward fulfilment of both practical and ideological functions within the public schools. Uniforms served to reinforce the collective identity of the school, becoming a vital "way to foster school filiation and loyalty, to nurture *espirit de corps*".[246] As Christopher Tyerman writes in his modern history of Harrow School:

> The tension between the individual and the group, inevitable in schools, was decisively resolved in favour of the latter. Boys were increasingly expected to see themselves not so much in a personal, moral relationship with peers and God but as active participants in a collective enterprise - team, house, form, school - through which and only through which, standards and values were expressed[247]

Dedicated affiliation to house and school became part of the public school boy ideal of behaviour, and notions of attachment and belonging were reinforced through appearance, ethos and the interactions between junior and senior pupils. This affiliation became so engrained that it remained strong even many years later as reflected in the creation and sustained popularity of Old Boy networks.[248] Uniforms, therefore, not only physically

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[245] Rupert H Wilkinson, "The Gentleman Ideal and the Maintenance of a Political Elite: Two Case Studies: Confucian Education in the Tang, Sung, Ming and Ching Dynasties; and the Late Victorian Public Schools (1870-1914)", *Sociology of Education*, 37, no. 1 (1963): 15.

[246] J. Synott & C. Symes, "The Genealogy of the School: an iconography of badges and mottoes," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 16, no. 2 (1995), 141.

[247] Tyerman, A History of Harrow School, 335.

[248] Vivian Ogilvie, *The English Public School* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1957), 182.

distinguished the pupils from others, but reinforced group identity and consequently helped to cement institutional values, mentally distinguishing them as well. Boys were subsumed into the collective whole, subsequently adopting its beliefs, and uniforms represented an outward manifestation of the acceptance of these values.

This development became increasingly extreme and by the early twentieth century personal preference had been essentially eliminated.[249] Returning once again to Ponsonby, writing in 1912, who notes the process of adoption of uniform and uniformity:

> Compare a photograph of a group of school boys to-day with one of only forty or fifty years ago. The comparison is instructive. In the latter boys will be seen lounging about in different attitudes with a curious variety of costumes…each one individual and distinct. The group today consists of two or three rows of boys beautifully turned out with immaculate, perfectly fitting clothing… They stand and sit so that the line of the peaks of their caps, of their folded arms, of their bare knees is mathematically level. And even their faces! You can hardly tell one from another.[250]

Collective identity and the importance of the public school ethos began to take precedence and individual identity was considered secondary. Public schools strove to create a model product who adhered to the public school ideal in all ways. This is summed up by A.C. Benson in his collection of essays on public school life, *The Upton Letters* as "well- groomed, well-mannered, rational, manly boys, all taking the same view of things, all doing the same things".[251] As Benson notes, part of this ideal focused on appearance, to be a gentleman one must present a clean and wholesome exterior which conformed to social codes.

This idealised image was further propagated through the growing body of schoolboy literature from *Tom Brown's Schooldays,* to later publications such as the *Boy's Own Paper, Marvel* and *The Boy's Friend.* Schoolboy characters were identified by their appearance and followed a well rehearsed set of norms:

> A promising sort of fellow to choose for a friend – strong athletic, broad shoulders, with his head well planted on them, honest brown eyes, crisp curly hair, a well-formed nose, a

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[249] Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms; Communication Through Clothing* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986), 2.

[250] Ponsonby, *The Decline of Aristocracy*, 207.

[251] Arthur Christopher Benson, *The Upton Letters* (London: Smith Elder and Company, 1906), 48.

characteristic mouth, and a fine open forehead; altogether an open-hearted, good-looking promising specimen of boyhood[252]

Thus protagonists were handsome, well-dressed and athletic, whilst their adversaries were deficient in at least one of these areas.[253] As these stereotypes proliferated, greater emphasis was placed on being able to judge a character by looks and dress alone. This view was replicated in the wider social sphere in which clothes were viewed as outward projections of internal belief and moral worth.[254]. Consequently the external appearance of schoolboys became increasingly important and it became widely believed that there was a connection between correct appearance and correct behaviour.

Paradoxically collective identity was also reinforced by a degree of carefully controlled divergence in uniform. Items such as house ties, sports colours and badges for prefects all served to emphasise the notion of belonging to a community and being part of its hierarchy. When status was demonstrated by a difference in dress it was very easy for other members of the community to see when an individual was promoted or demoted.[255] Restrictions also allowed a system of privileges to be implemented in which the removal of a rule became a reward for good behaviour, progression within the school or sporting accomplishment, providing a further channel of control. Writing in 1929 but reflecting on his time at Charterhouse in the early 1900s Robert Graves sums up these differences:

> The social code of Charterhouse rested on a strict caste system; the caste marks, or post-te's, being slight distinctions in dress. A new boy had no privileges at all; a boy in his second term might wear a knitted tie instead of a plain one; a boy in his second year might wear coloured socks; the third year gave most of the main privileges – turned down collars, coloured handkerchiefs, a coat with a long roll, and so on…but peculiar distinctions were reserved for the bloods. These included light-grey flannel trousers, butterfly collars, jackets slit up the back and the right of walking arm-in-arm.[256]

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[252] B. Heldmann, *Boxall School; A Tale of Schoolboy Life* (London: Nisbet & Co., 1929), 11.

[253] Jack Cox, *Take a Cold Tub, Sir! The Story of the Boy's Own Paper* (Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1982), 40-42.

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

[255] A. Davidson, *Blazers, Badges and Boaters, a Pictorial History of School Uniform* (Hants: Scope Books, 1990), 21.

[256] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), 43.

These physical demonstrations of hierarchy were often developed by the boys themselves, and became increasingly elaborate towards the end of the nineteenth century. The higher up you were, the more freedom of dress which was allowed, with 'bloods' the most highly privileged of all.[257]

Whilst this hierarchy was understood and, at the very least, tolerated, this is not to say that it was always respected, particularly by less physically able pupils. The school magazine of Pocklington School, *The Pocklingtonian*, notes in 1899 that:

> A new house-blazer was instituted last term. Certain members fancied themselves hugely until invidious references were made to the colours, and an unkind parallel drawn between them and the hue of the gabardine usually worn by the ordinary purveyor of meat.[258]

Interestingly status is, once again, invoked; the writer mocks the superior attitude of those adept at sport, rendering their symbols of authority and prowess, in this instance the house blazer, humorous through comparison with a lower class working garment. This is a clever reversal of the class insecurities which preceded the adoption of uniform in the first place, but also relates to the confusions noted between the uniform of Wellington College and railway ticket collectors. Whilst uniforms in the context of public schools were about the demonstration of status, in their other uses in prisons, workhouses and menial jobs, as well as the charity schools of the previous chapter, they presented an image of subservience. The messages conveyed by uniforms were, therefore, nuanced with regards to class and garments had the potential for misinterpretation, both purposeful and satirical, as here, or unintentional as in the case of Wellington.

Emulation

As methods of exclusion developed at the established institutions, new schools opened which emulated these processes, consequently allowing families who could not access the higher status schools to give their sons a similar education. This can explain the widespread proliferation of middle-class boarding schools in the second half of the nineteenth century, creating an increasingly competitive educational marketplace and allowing some of these new institutions to gain prestige and status, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm:

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[257] Holt, *Sport and the British*, 81.

[258] "School Notes," *Pocklingtonian* vol. VIII, no. 2, Michaelmas Term (Second Half), 1899, 7.

The tendency of the aspiring to imitate the institutions of the arrived made it desirable to draw a line between the genuine…elites and those equals who were less equal than the rest. The reason for this was not purely snobbish. A growing national elite also required the construction of genuinely effective networks of interaction.[259]

Despite the creation of the divisions discussed above, the numbers of acknowledged public schools increased towards the end of the nineteenth century as more schools developed a serious claim to the status, examples include Marlborough (1843), Lancing (1848), Hurstpierpoint (1849) and Haileybury (1862). The importance placed on the process of public schooling for the creation of gentlemen, a practice originally intended to exclude non-elites, ultimately allowed greater mobility to the middle classes through these new schools. The pervasion of the public school ethos to some extent replaced the importance of family background with that of institutional affiliation in the assigning of class; the substitution of the school badge for the family crest, in essence reversing the intentions of the more established schools.[260]

That uniform played an important role in designation of status is indicated by a widespread interest in it and emulation both within the school system and in a more general sense in children's fashion. This fits into a wider picture of class emulation, with the Victorian and Edwardian middle classes imitating the dress, as well as the home furnishings and personal items, of the upper classes. Easy imitation was assisted by the rise of the ready-made clothing industry and other mass production techniques, which enabled the creation and purchase of cheaper copies of upper-class styles.[261] This allowed members of the middle class to dress, at least, superficially in the same manner as those of higher rank. Goods and clothing, therefore, both denoted and disguised status, operating as visible markers of class culture. Initially items differentiated the upper classes and then, once imitated, disguised the disparity between classes except to a knowledgeable observer who could determine tell-tale differences in quality and appearance. Referencing the work of Douglas and Isherwood in her book *Middle Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century,* Linda Young states that:

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[259] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, 295.

[260] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 100-102.

[261] Phillipe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 85-86 & 180.

> The consumption of goods, which at face value may seem a private or idiosyncratic choice, is seen on the scale of society as a force for social cohesion, a group-controlled pressure to conform to certain values and behaviours…consumption is about power: the power to reinforce group associations, to include and exclude group relationships, to assert dominance and inculcate subordination[262]

The rhetoric employed here in the discussion of consumer choice and social imitation, closely mirrors that associated with school uniforms and their role in creating and maintaining group identity and clear parallels may be drawn between the two.

Thus some public schools of a later foundation date implemented a rigid uniform code from the first - new schools were keen to present themselves in the same class and model as established institutions and consequently borrowed the appearances of prestige from their older contemporaries, sometimes imitating uniforms directly. As more schools opened, these new establishments were increasingly in competition with each other to win pupils. This resulted in greater scrutiny from parents as they choose where to educate their sons. Schools that could present the most correct public school image were more likely to attract pupils and increase their income and social standing.[263]

The status of public schools also meant that to resemble a public schoolboy, despite not attending such an institution, became to be seen as a mark of rank and new fashions of the mid-nineteenth century for boys were imitative of the normal wear of public school pupils, a process which is exemplified by the widespread adoption of the Eton jacket. The style of short, square, single breasted jacket or 'bumfreezer' that eventually became synonymous with the lower years at Eton developed in the 1780s. The garment initially became fashionable for young boys worn with trousers buttoned over the top, an outfit popularly known as the skeleton suit. Older boys (those over the age of around seven) wore the same style of jacket separated from the trousers. This jacket could either be cut straight across the waist or shaped to a point at the back, known as a hussar jacket. From the 1820s belted tunics replaced the skeleton suit, but the short jacket was retained for school age boys.[264]

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[262] Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 161.

[263] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon,* 100-102.

[264] Phillis Cunnington & Anne Buck, *Children's Costume in England 1300-1900* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1978), 172-178.

In the late 1840s J. Nicholls owner of a Regent Street department Store, followed on from his previous success with the fashionable paletot coat, by producing and advertising a new design, the Eton jacket. This was a short square jacket, of a style very similar to the earlier skeleton suit design. At this date the style was by no means uniform wear at Eton (as evinced by Balston's comments in 1862), although the shape was widely worn by Eton schoolboys, it being the "lowest common denominator of a gentleman's dress in the London of the Period".[265] Nor was the style in any way exclusive to Eton, but was normal dress for upper class boys of school age. One must assume, therefore, that J. Nicholls chose to use the aristocratic reputation and widespread recognition of Eton to increase sales by allowing families to buy into the social prestige of the institution.

This line of argument can be corroborated by examining the method and type of advertising for the garment. Advertisements emphasise the quality, fabric and appearance of the jacket (as well as the reasonable price). This is demonstrated in the *Manchester Times* of August 1850:

> A Novelty in Boys' Jackets – H.R. FREEBORN begs respectfully to announce that he has just received a THIRD SUPPLY of the above novel and useful article, the production of Messrs Nicoll, patentees of the celebrated Paletot. They are called for distinction the ETON JACKET, and are made of their beautiful Llama Cloth. They are very durable, exceedingly graceful in appearance, and the prices are very moderate – 21 Exchange Arcade, and 91, Market-Street, opposite Spring Gardens.[266]

The dual meaning of the term distinction is noteworthy indicating the necessity of distinguishing the design from other similar styles, whilst also carrying connotations of the garment being of higher class than the competition. The Eton jacket quickly entered the popular lexicon and the style was widely adopted by those that could afford it. The continued presence of advertisements throughout the 1850s testify to the garment's popularity, with the style still listed as one of the "leading styles for the winter"[267] in an advertisement of 1859, ten years after the design was first produced. Whilst this may be hyperbole on the part of the advertiser, it does point to an enduring popularity.

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[265] J.D. R McConnell, *Eton – How it Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 162.

[266] "Advertisement - A Novelty in Boys' Jackets," *Manchester Times,* August 03, 1850.

[267] "Advertisement," *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, December 15, 1859.

In the early 1860s, manufacturers trying to build on the success of the Eton jacket also produced the Rugby and Harrow Jackets. Such styles are listed in an 1860 advertisement for B. Hyam, a manufacturers associated with outlets shops in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Dublin:

> HYAM'S RUGBY, HARROW & ETON JACKET SUITS. Three Entire New Styles, becoming in design, serviceable for school or dress wear, and admirably adapted for Young Gentlemen.[268]

This was clearly a similar, although less successful, attempt to use the name of public schools to sell clothing as neither Rugby or Harrow had a formal school uniform in place at this stage. This is, once again, confirmed by the Clarendon Report, in this instance in a conclusive interview with the headmaster of Rugby, Rev. Temple:

> 347. (Lord Clarendon.) Do the foundationers wear any particular dress ? — None whatever.
> 348. At no time ? — At no time.[269]

Fig. 4: *Chas Baker & Co.'s School Outfits*, 1887[270]

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[268] "Advertisement - B. Hyam and the Spring, 1860," *Liverpool Mercury*, March 6, 1860.

[269] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools*, *Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2*, 252.

Eton jackets (and to some extent Rugby suits) continued to be widely worn for the next thirty to forty years as demonstrated by fig. 4, a 1887 advertisement for Chas Baker & Co, a company who sought to provide good quality, yet affordable clothing. The Eton jacket became best wear for the children of families that could afford it and even spread abroad, making a particular impact in America. The Eton jacket was generally worn with a stiff, wide turn-down collar which became known as an Eton collar. These items were considerably less expensive than the jackets and consequently, filtered downwards through the class system becoming a marker of respectability amongst lower middle class families who could not afford the whole ensemble.[271]

The enduring appeal of the Eton jacket can be garnered from an article in *The Leeds Mercury,* also of 1887 which continues to recommend the jacket and collar combination for schoolboys and indicates that the respectable nature of the outfit had not become eroded over time:

> There are tens of thousands of people who will pin their faith to that neat and 'dressy' combination, the Eton jacket, and the broad, white, uncreased and uncrumpled 'turn-down' collar so widely affected, if not so deeply beloved, by youthful snipers at the educational spring, and who will make solemn affirmation to the effect that nothing half so becoming in the way of apparel, or one-tenth so well adapted for all the purposes of its designation has ever existed, or is ever likely to exist…The costume has many recommendations, not the least of these being that it is anything but cosmopolitan. It is distinctively national, eminently English, and unquestionably respectable; and how refreshingly suggestive of sweet simplicity and boyish faith; how like unto some modernised, humanised, and well-dressed, as well as animate, edition of the Raphael Cherub is the jacketed and collared schoolboy of our age and country![272]

Whilst it is hard to imagine anything less like a Raphael Cherub than a small boy in an Eton jacket, this rapturous and sustained popularity demonstrates the power of status and is a reflection of the successful projection of such status by the established public schools. The emphasis on Englishness is also instructive, demonstrating that the sales techniques related to the Eton jacket had kept pace with changes in the public school ethos, associating

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[270] *Chas Baker & Co.'s School Outfits*, 1887, advertisement from *Illustrated London News*, December, 1887.

[271] Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children's Costume* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1977), 114-116.

[272] "An Essay on Collars," *Leeds Mercury*, November 12, 1887.

Empire and British superiority with both school and garment and reflecting wider notions of patriotism. This association between school uniform and Empire was reinforced by the use of school uniform in colonial situations. Colonial recruits from the public schools founded educational establishments in the countries that they worked in modelling them closely on the system they knew best, that of the British public school. This also served to imprint colonial ideology and rhetoric onto pupils, promoting concepts of Empire and maintaining existing power structures.[273] Consequently colonial countries had school uniforms introduced alongside other facets of public school life. Their visible presence in a family and community setting ensured that school uniforms became a prominent symbol of the colonising power and of the Empire as a whole, directly linking them with Britain and notions of Britishness.

The interest in the appearance of the public schools continued well into the twentieth century amongst all classes. Black Cat Cigarettes produced a number of sets of cigarette cards relating to the public schools, most notably a 1929 series of 50 cards which featured public school emblems displayed on appropriately coloured school caps (fig. 5.) and the *Boy's Own Paper* printed a series of images of sports colours from famous schools and clubs between the 1880s and 1920s. Imitation is said to be the sincerest form of flattery and in these instances dissemination and emulation popularised and reinforced the image of the established public schools as bastions of the upper classes, allowing aspiring families to buy into this image.
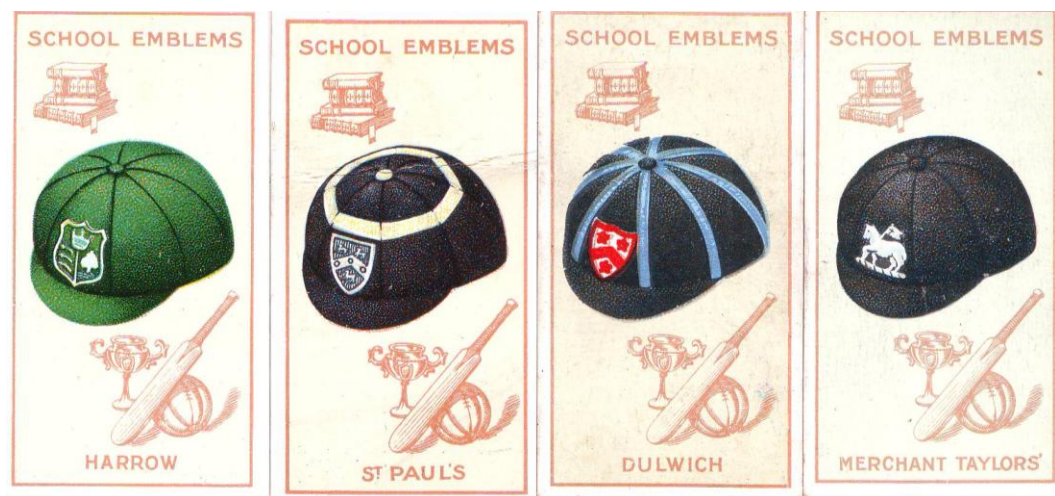

Fig 5: *Black Cat Cigarette Cards – School Emblems,* 1929[274]

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[273] Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann & Christopher B. Steiner, *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 451-452.

[274] *Black Cat Cigarette Cards – School Emblems,* 1929, printed card, nos. 2,3,4 &7, personal collection.

Harrow – A Case Study

The chapter, so far, has attempted to present an overview of the complex elements initiating and affecting school uniform adoption and appearance in the public schools, elements such as sports, class, Empire, militarisation and hierarchy. The interplay of these themes, however, is, perhaps, best demonstrated through an individual case study and consequently a review of the process of uniform implementation at Harrow and the subsequent debates and arguments that it sparked will be considered more closely.

At Harrow in the mid-eighteenth century it was recorded that many boys dressed very scruffily, although there was peer pressure to have new items of clothing for certain special occasions and senior boys generally maintained a better appearance. This is evinced by the fifteen year-old Sheridan who wrote to his guardian in 1766 to ask for a new suit, due to the fact that, "I have lately got into the 5 form, which is the head form of the school, I am under necessity of appearing like the other 5 form boys".[275] This indicates that maintenance of hierarchical status through clothing and the necessity of conformity were already factors in the school experience and these themes became much more prominent in the following century.

The school was still without a dress code in 1828 as recorded by senior pupil Lionel Montmorency in his reminiscences 'Scenes at a Public School; First day at Harrow' in the first issue of *The Harrovian*. In this article he recalls "exquisites in green surtouts and silver buttons" and "little V , with his hands in his pockets, and a dusky red handkerchief round his neck".[276] These descriptions indicate a flamboyance of dress that is at odds with later ideals of conservatism and conformity.

In the following thirty years pupils adopted a uniform dress of round jackets in the lower years and tailcoats in the fifth and sixth form. Whilst the styles and colour of these garments were dictated by the masters, their usage and delineation of status within the school grew entirely from fashion and peer pressure amongst the pupils themselves. Initially the garments were a reflection of men's fashionable dress but as tailcoats were consigned to evening wear, no longer being worn in the daytime, their continued use created an anachronistic appearance that was at odds with standard day wear.

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[275] Quoted in Christopher Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School 1324-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 122.

[276] "Scenes at a Public School; First day at Harrow," *Harrovian* vol. i, no. 1, March, 1828, 10-13.

By the time of the Clarendon Report these customs were viewed as an understood and established part of the schooling process. In the words of the headmaster, Rev. H.M Butler, the wearing of tailcoats:

> Is due, whatever may be its merits, to a very long tradition. The rule is, that when a boy enters the fifth form, having up to that time worn jackets, for the rest of his time at the school he wears tail coats, and no other but tail coats are worn by the boys in the fifth and sixth forms.[277]

The idea that the practices of a mere quarter of a century can be attributed to 'a very long tradition' is, perhaps, symptomatic of the Victorian fondness for the creation and rapid adoption of traditions. This invention of 'traditional' appearances and celebrations as part of the public school ethos can be paralleled with other invented traditions of the same period, notably those associated with royalty. Mass involvement in these new events or practices cemented their importance and created a conscious sense of history and routine. Mass participation in these practices was paramount for them to survive and the endurance of school uniform to the present day can be attributed to its widespread adoption and usage.[278]

At this stage dress practices continued to be policed by the boys themselves as explained thoroughly by G.F Harris, Classical Assistant Master:

> 993. The tail coat which they are obliged to wear when they get into the fifth and sixth forms ; is that a matter, in your opinion, of great necessity ? — It is a matter of their own arrangement. I do not think we interfere in the slightest degree, with it. We do not require them to wear tail coats at all. It is a question of jackets or tail coats.
> 994. (Lord Lyttelton.) Would the master prevent the wearing of any other ? — The adoption of a tail coat at a certain period of the school is a matter of usage among themselves.
> 995. (Lord Clarendon.') It is a proof of their status in the school ? — Yes.
> 996. (Lord Lyttelton.) Might a fifth form boy wear a round jacket if he liked ? — A parent once tried the experiment. He was very anxious that his son, who was a little boy, should

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[277] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2*, 194.

[278] Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* Hobsbawm & Ranger, 5.

not wear a long coat, and he applied to the Head Master, who said he was at liberty to wear a jacket. The boy wore a jacket for two days, but during all that time he was made so unhappy by his schoolfellows laughing at him that he begged his father to allow him to wear a coat. At that time it was said that it was not at all a school regulation depending on the masters, but on the boys themselves. What we do is to restrict them from wearing all sorts of colours and any cut of coat, except the old dress coat.

997. (Lord Clarendon.) A boy below the fifth form would not be allowed to wear a tail coat, would he? — Only by the leave of the head of the school. …With regard to dress, the real point is whether or no, what are now so very common, morning coats, should be worn instead of dress coats. Some 20 years ago nobody would have thought it a great hardship to have to wear a dress coat in the morning. At present a boy is obliged to have a double outfit; he is obliged to have a morning coat which he wears at home, and which he does not wear out in one vacation, and outgrows before a second, and to have a dress coat to wear at school. The dress coat is the real grievance on the part of the parent. I do not think the boys feel it themselves; some may. Those I have spoken to I think would rather maintain the present state of things.

1001. And wear the sort of coats that are now worn? — I believe they would.

1002. Should you consider that there would be any great objection to changing that form of dress if there was a general wish on the part of the boys for it? — I do not know. It is rather looked upon now in the light of the cap and gown of the university. It is rather distinctive; it enables you to distinguish a boy, and so far it may be an advantage.[279]

In this interview Harris admits that the authorities control the type and colour of the coats worn, restricting pupils to dark colours and the style to the dress (or tail) coat and this demonstrates a stage on the way to full regulation of dress. The demarcation of hierarchy through appearance, however, was controlled and monitored by the pupils themselves with extreme peer consequences for those transgressing the unwritten rules. The development, instigated by the boys, of a recognised hierarchical structure that is encoded in clothing and the extreme pressures to conform reflects earlier discussions. Another issue raised is parental concerns associated with the outmoded style of the uniform and this demonstrates some of the frictions between practicality, tradition, cost and prestige that must have existed in periods of garment regulation. The discussion also indicates the increasing informality of day wear as tailcoats were ousted as normal wear by morning coats.

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[279] *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, Vol. IV. Evidence Part 2*, 203.

Harris finishes by articulating ideas regarding the distinctive nature of the uniform and its consequent usefulness in identifying pupils. This reflects similar statements made regarding charity uniforms in the previous chapter. Many schools became increasingly visible to the public in the late nineteenth century as urbanisation meant that towns grew up near previously isolated institutions. Schoolboys consequently became more in evidence in these communities as they took part in leisure pursuits and accessed local amenities. Distinguishing boys by their unique clothing became relevant to discourage disciplinary infractions and to allow identification if problems arose.

Over the next twenty years the uniform was further codified, with the addition of straw hat and uniform trousers, responsibility for the dress also passed to the school authorities in its entirety, as indicated by correspondence in *The Morning Post* of 1886:

> THE DRESS OF HARROW SCHOOLBOYS
>
> Sir – Will you, through the medium of your paper, enlist the support of the public in trying to persuade the authorities to alter the present senseless and incongruous dress of Harrow Schoolboys more resembling that of Christy Minstrels than anything else, consisting as it does, of tweed trousers, and evening tailcoat of black cloth, white shirt, and white sailor straw hat? It is in every respect unsuitable, as it is hideous to look at, and the boys obliged to wear it are keenly alive to the ridiculous appearance they present. Surely the new headmaster might inaugurate his reign by effecting a striking improvement in the prescribed costume – I remain &c. INFELIX PUER [280]

The self styled 'unfortunate boy' calls for the new headmaster to intervene on the issue of dress, citing a range of problems including the unsuitability of the garments and the strange appearance presented by those wearing them. His comparison of Harrow schoolboys to Christy Minstrels, an American black face group founded in the 1840s is particularly interesting. Through this description he conjures a very un-British image of the uniforms, at odds with the overt Imperialism of the public schools and more general nationalist sentiments of the day. His intention is clear, in attempting to highlight the similarities between the uniform and foreign, lower class garments Infelix Puer seeks to discredit the style and highlight its unsuitability for a school in which class and national superiority are important concerns. This is in direct opposition to the earlier quote concerning Eton jackets in which they are commended as "eminently English".

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[280] *"Correspondence - The Dress of Harrow Schoolboys," Morning Post,* December 03, 1886.

The correspondent, however, had misjudged his audience and the printed responses indicate both the increased importance attached to tradition in this period and the already ingrained nature of uniform in the public school ethos. Respondents passionately defended the uniform, citing it as a "time-honoured institution" and "one for which I see no good reason for changing" as well as reinforcing difference between Harrow pupils and the original correspondent:

> I may confidently assert that during the whole time I was there (nearly six years) I never heard a genuine Harrow boy complain of the dress he was obliged to wear.[281]

The emphasis on the word 'genuine' questions Infelix Puer's credentials as a public schoolboy, indicating that had he been the genuine article he would understand the importance of the clothing in question, demonstrating the successful role that uniform played in inculcating norms.

The notions of the importance of tradition are aired again in a more moderate version of the same debate in an 1889 edition of *The Harrovian*:

> One thing should certainly be borne in mind in a place like Harrow. Unless there are overwhelming reasons to the contrary, we ought to be conservative of everything which is *old* and *distinctive*. Cricket in the yard, squash, and the Contio, are instances of the kind ; and another is undoubtedly the Dress Coat. Let us begin then by assuming that if any changes were made in the School Dress the tail-coat at any rate should be retained. It is a genuine and venerable relic of the past.[282]

The distinctive nature of the Harrow uniform is praised and recommended for conservation and this demonstrates an evolution in the concept of public school uniform, tradition had been invoked. In the space of less than sixty years the uniform had become "a genuine and venerable relic of the past" and in doing so demonstrating the established nature of the institution. This use of tradition separated the established public schools from the newer imitations and consequently helped to maintain the difference that had been constructed, although it also allowed their younger rivals to create false notions of status and age.

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[281] "Correspondence," *Morning Post,* December 07, 1886.

[282] "School Dress," *Harrovian*, vol. ii, no. 6, July 04, 1889.

Uniforms had transformed from a factor in the process of differentiation to an outward representation of the beliefs of an institution and, as such, the specific clothing of individual schools became imbued with these same values for the wearer.

Throughout this chapter the intricate linkage between the public school ethos and school uniform has become evident, with each reactive to the other. For example the increase in the importance of organised games in the schooling process meant that proper sports clothing and the creation of team strips became a practical necessity. On the other hand the significance of collective identity and allegiance to school and house was both reflected in uniform practices and reinforced by them. Uniform also visibly expressed facets of the public school ethos, projecting a socially appropriate image of class, masculinity and morality. In this manner uniform was used as a tool to reinforce class boundaries, distinguishing public schools from other less elite establishments as well as promoting internal cohesion which further excluded those outside the system. This operated in direct contrast to the charity schools of the previous chapter and the use of uniform in other less socially prestigious locations complicates this relationship. This meant that whilst those with experience and understanding of the public school system had an awareness of the nuances of public school uniform, to others the intended class-related messages might be less intelligible.

Later in the nineteenth century an established, and sometimes anachronistic, school uniform also became a symbol of tradition communicating the venerable history of the oldest institutions and further emphasising the difference between the older schools and new foundations who aspired to the title of public school. Public school uniforms consequently became a status symbol to the middle classes and were widely imitated in both fashion and other educational establishments. This eventually resulted in some of these schools being elevated to the same rank as the more elite schools. In this way school uniforms were a victim of their own success, their visibility and prominence made them easily imitable and they eventually became widespread throughout a range of educational institutions, initially middle class boys' schools, but later girls' public schools and grammar schools, but also to the middle classes at large. In opposition to its original intentions, school uniform became a tool through which the middle classes could display a similar appearance to the elite and this increased prevalence was paralleled with a change in meaning as school uniforms moved from a marker of status to merely a sign of respectability (as discussed in later chapters).

Chapter Three
Public Schools for Girls 1850-1939

O pedants of these later days, who go on undiscerning,

To overload a woman's brain and cram our girls with learning,

You'll make a woman half a man, the souls of parents vexing,

To find that all the gentle sex this process is unsexing.

Leave one or two nice girls before the sex your system smothers,

Or what on earth will poor men do for sweethearts, wives, and mothers?[283]

The establishment of the first public schools for girls in the mid-nineteenth century heralded a new era in female schooling amongst the upper and middle classes. For the first time girls could receive an academic education, studying similar subjects to boys and potentially allowing them access to the universities and professions. Opponents of women's emancipation and education, however, questioned women's mental and physical capacity for academic work as it came into conflict with the constrained and prescriptive Victorian notions of ideal womanhood. Outward appearances and school dress, therefore, played a prominent role in the image projected by these new institutions and in the period discussed the dress of pupils moved from a position closely aligned with the contemporary feminine ideal to an appearance and identity directly at odds with it, reflecting a wider cultural shift in the way women's education was perceived. The problematic relationship between femininity, female education and academic attainment forms the basis for this chapter and underpins both early dress behaviours and later uniform design.

Clothing practices were examined at a number of the early public schools for girls including St Margaret's School for Girls (1846), North London Collegiate School for Girls (1850), Cheltenham Ladies College (1854), St Leonards (1877), Roedean (1885), Wycombe Abbey (1896) and Downe House (1907). These schools were not only of early foundation but

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[283] Final verse from "The Woman of the Future," *Punch*, May 10, 1884.

The penultimate verse runs:

The Woman of The Future may be very learned-looking,

But dare we ask if she'll know aught of housekeeping or cooking;

She'll read far more, and that is well, than empty-headed beauties,

But has she studied with it all a woman's chiefest duties?

We wot she'll ne'er acknowledge, till her heated brain grows cooler

That Woman, not the Irishman, should be' the true home-ruler.

prominent in the field of female education in that many became models for later institutions. The wide geographical spread of these schools (from St Leonards in St Andrews, Scotland to Roedean in Brighton) allows for certain local differences and regional patterns to be taken into account. The processes of uniform adoption in early girls' schools proved easier to trace and qualify than in boys' public schools as the numbers of girls' institutions and qualified teachers remained low until the second decade of the twentieth century allowing consideration to be made of a significant proportion of the establishments and senior staff in existence at this time. The girls' schools of the nineteenth century were also less established than their male counterparts and consequently less fiercely autonomous. This allowed for a greater exchange of ideas between institutions creating a primarily supportive, rather than competitive, environment in the field of women's education.

The chapter will be split into three main sections, the first of which will cover the early history of girls' public schools, discussing the social and educational environment of the mid-nineteenth century, particularly in relation to the feminine ideal. The development of female sports clothing will then be considered along with its impact on uniform. The final part of the chapter will discuss the increasing regulation of girls' uniform and its move away from the feminine ideal, particularly investigating the impact of boys' public schools on this process.

Early Girls' Schools and the Feminine Ideal

Prior to the Victorian period there was very little organised provision for the education of girls and academically educated women remained an exception. This situation was the norm until the mid-nineteenth century, when well publicised reforms in the large public boys' school caught the attention of the general population and led to greater public scrutiny of the education system as a whole.[284] This may have hastened progress in the girls' sector and it was certainly around this period that changes began. One of the first steps in the move for improvement was the foundation of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution in 1843 whose work included developing the education of governesses through public lectures and certification.[285]

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[284] John Roach, *A History of Secondary Education in England 1800-1870,* (London: Longman, 1986), 152-158.

[285] Kathryn Hughes, *The Victorian Governess* (London: Hambledon & London, 2001), 181.

This project highlighted the poor basic schooling of many governesses and as a response the first public girls' school, Queen's College in Harley Street, London opened in 1848. This was set up with aid and assistance from the professors at King's College and taught courses in a range of subjects not always available to women including Latin, maths, science and modern languages. This was essentially a secondary school, but struggling with the low educational level of new starters the institute soon set up a feeder classes as well.[286] Among early Queen's students were pioneers of women's education Frances Buss and Dorothea Beale.[287]

Writing in 1850 *The Quarterly Review* praised the quality of teaching at Queen's College, noting that:

> For the last two or three years, then, of a young lady's school room life, attendance at some of the classes of Queen's College may be most beneficial. It is superfluous to observe that, if her curiosity and intellectual ambition have really been stirred, she may expect to find in such an institution teaching far superior to that obtainable elsewhere.[288]

The periodical then moves on to clarify that whilst women might be "employed in the improvement of their minds" that this was merely to allow them to be "what God intended them to be, help meets for man" and this rhetoric was borrowed directly from Queen's College literature.[289] The contrast between the positive report of the teaching and the sanction on its purpose is indicative of the complexities rife within early women's education, both within such establishments and in a wider context. Women's education was seen by many as being fundamentally different from men's and only relevant in so much as it provided better wives, mothers or governesses.[290] The function, scope and appropriateness of female education is a reoccurring theme and, in fact, *The Quarterly Review* is decidedly moderate in tone given the controversial nature of the subject, as discussed later in the chapter.

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[286] J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred – Girls' Education in English* History (London: Menthuen, 1965), 174-176.

[287] Roach, *A History of Secondary Education in England*, 6.

[288] "Queen's College – London," in *The Quarterly Review* (London: John Murray, 1850), 366.

[289] "Queen's College – London," in *The Quarterly Review,* 367

[290] Ellen Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1999), 117.

Further public girls' schools followed Queen's College including The North London Collegiate School for Girls in 1850 and Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1853. These early experiments in women's education brought together a number of like-minded individuals, who also began to wage a political and social campaign focused on extending girls' educational rights by allowing entry to universities and public examinations. These proponents believed that to be able to compete with men, women had to be allowed to sit the same exams and work from the same curriculum, realising that without access to all levels of education it was unlikely that women would be able to enter the professions, teach others, or prove their wider capabilities, particularly to vote. Education was consequently seen as the basis for future change.[291] The fight was prolonged, but eventually successful. In 1865 Cambridge allowed girls to sit their exams, Edinburgh and Durham followed suit a couple of years later and finally Oxford in 1870. The first admissions of female undergraduates, came soon after, although in most universities the degrees that these early pioneers obtained were not fully recognised until much later.[292]

The Victorian construct of femininity was both pervasive and prescriptive; in essence a set of strict social and behavioural rules to which all middle and upper class girls were expected to conform. These, in effect, consigned women to a predominantly home-focused and child-bearing role and were, in some cases, so prohibitive that the fight for equality was a slow process.[293] By publically expressing opinions or taking part in political or work activities women stepped outside of what was deemed acceptable for the female sex and were censured as 'unladylike' or socially inferior.[294] Adherence to the feminine ideal was vehemently policed by high-ranking men and women alike.[295] Public contraventions of the

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[291] Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women; Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago Press, 1985), 122.

[292] J. Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597-1977* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 234-238.

[293] Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 2.

[294] S. Barbara Kanner, "The Women of England in a Century of Social Change, 1815-1914: A Select Bibliography," in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age,* ed. Martha Vicinus (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 191.

[295] Queen Victoria, for instance, trembled with righteous indignation when she stated that: "I am most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Women's Rights,' with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feelings and propriety…Were woman to 'unsex' themselves by claiming equality with men, they would become the most hateful, heathen and disgusting of beings and would surely perish without male protection". Letter from

social code of feminine behaviour could be widely publicised through print media and consequently allegations of lacking femininity had the potential to have a serious impact on any campaign. Thus a Catch 22 situation arose in which women who fought for change instantly failed to correspond to expected behavioural standards and, therefore, must clearly demonstrate their femininity by conforming in all other ways in order to be taken seriously by dominant groups.

As a result of these circumstances the introduction of academic schooling for women was complex– many of those fighting for equality strove for girls to be allowed to learn the same subjects as their brothers and demonstrate this knowledge by taking the same exams. Emily Davies, founding member of Girton and pioneer of women's education, for instance was firm in her belief that girls should be admitted to the same local examinations as boys, rather than taking a specially created exam, stating that:

> My strongest objection to a separate scheme is that the girls' Certificates would not, - in the present state of opinion, - *could not*, have the same value. Even if the Examiners really made the standard quite as high, the public would not believe it….[a lady] has no way of proving her relative competency.[296]

Opponents, however, questioned women's mental and physical capacity for academic work as it came into conflict with the same constrained notions of ideal womanhood and it was suggested that concentrated study would produce a generation of unfeminine girls who were not capable of fulfilling their designated roles as wives and mothers.[297] Writing in 1874, Dr. Henry Maudsley articulated these views in *Popular Science Monthly*:

> It cannot certainly be a true education which operates in any degree to unsex her; for sex is fundamental…Consequently, it does not seem impossible that, if the attempt [to educate] be seriously and persistently made, the result may be a monstrosity—something which having ceased to be woman is yet not man[298]

Queen Victoria to Sir Theodore Martin, 1870, quoted in Val Horsler, *All for Love: Seven Centuries of Illicit Liaison* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 104.

[296] Letter, Emily Davies to Robert Potts, January 09, 1864 in *Emily Davies Collected Letters 1861-1875*, ed. Jerome McGann & Herbert Tucker (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 89.

[297] J.N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 11.

[298] Henry Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and Education," *Popular Science Monthly,* June, 1874.

These views were further propagated and reinforced through the popular press, for instance the periodical, *John Bull* asserted in 1852, that academic study:

> .. is not female education. By female education we understand such an education as shall fit women most effectively to fill the position in society which PROVIDENCE has assigned to them. That position is essentially the domestic circle and the true education for them, therefore, is an education that shall qualify them to fulfil, in the most efficient manner, the duties of domestic life. [299]

Consequently the educational pioneers had to work to counteract claims that their campaign for equality in schooling was eroding both their own femininity and that of the pupils they were educating whilst also demonstrating that women were capable of the same academic scholarship as men. The problem of this double conformity required them to attempt to modify the feminine ideal rather than remove it completely. [300]

Fashion and clothing played a large role in the display and propagation of the feminine ideal. Female clothes reinforced the idea of women as passive objects; fashionable apparel was costly, highly decorative and made ease of movement difficult. Thus women's dress operated as a physical reflection of the restrictive social norms and a symbol of economic dependence on men. Consequently the fashionable ideal and the feminine ideal were heavily intertwined concepts which worked together to reinforce one another. The fashionable ideal represented the accepted external appearance of the feminine ideal and through adopting a fashionable appearance the values associated with the feminine ideal were reinforced.[301]

To prove critics wrong and demonstrate that academic education and femininity were compatible, early girls' schools and educators, therefore, chose to present a carefully constructed image of the feminine ideal, at least in appearance. This was an active process and one that generated its own anxieties. Returning to Emily Davies who, writing in the

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[299] "Female Education," *John Bull*, January 31, 1852, 73.

[300] Sara Delamont, "The Contradictions in Ladies' Education," in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman; Her Cultural and Physical World*, ed. Sara Delamont & Lorna Duffin (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 140; Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal,* (London & Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982), 107.

[301] Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas; Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 100-101.

aftermath of a public meeting on female admission to local examinations, aired her concerns on the subject:

> I want to know whether any of the ladies struck you as strongminded looking. We were afraid Miss Craig wd. have ruined us by her recklessness by inviting anybody that liked to come. She insisted that they had a right to have 'Mission stamped on their brows', if they liked, but I don't think she did any serious mischief. Miss Garrett was sitting very near you, looking exactly like one of the girls whose instinct it is to do what you tell them.[302]

Thus Davies viewed it as important to the success of the cause to present a non-threatening appearance, conforming to notions of correct behaviour and dress. She choose not to contravene normal social practices, instead seeking to challenge the status quo in some areas and not others, limiting public censure.

In early schools, similar beliefs resulted in an enforcement of tight restrictions on pupils regarding the presentation of a 'ladylike' image and a conscious effort by the institution to communicate their high standards of behaviour and appearance to the outside world.[303] Pupils were expected to conform to accepted societal standards of dress and photographs from the mid to late-nineteenth century show girls attired in fashionable styles. An 1880s image of a house group from Cheltenham Ladies' College is indicative (fig. 1). Twenty two girls are pictured, many of whom appear to have been playing tennis, as a number of rackets are visible. Of these girls the outfits of four are not identifiable, of the remaining eighteen, eight are visibly tightly corseted and there are multiple examples of decorative detailing, most notably the heavily trimmed hats worn by five of the girls. This photograph represents a normal picture of middle and upper class girls of this period and there appears to have been few allowances made for either the educational environment or the sports session that is suggested by the presence of the rackets.

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[302] Letter, Emily Davies to Henry Tomkinson, May 09, 1864 in *Emily Davies Collected Letters 1861-1875*, ed. McGann & Tucker, 118.

[303] Dyhouse, *Girls Growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, 59.

Fig. 1: *Cheltenham Ladies' College House Group*, 1880s[304]

Normal social practices such as wearing gloves and hats were also rigorously enforced, particularly when girls were in public spaces. This was an active and ongoing process remembered by former pupils at St Margaret's during the 1890s:

> [pupils] were expected to dress with 'a sense of propriety'…the Misses Duncan used to make spot checks on deportment and behaviour at the end of the school day. One of the ladies started at the top of Union Street, the other at the foot of the street, and they walked towards each other, checking that the girls of St Margaret's were wearing gloves, had their coats buttoned and were behaving in a seemly manner.[305]

Thus the Misses Duncan monitored both clothing practices and behaviour in order to retain the outward appearances of feminine respectability.

When clothing requests were issued it was usually in regards to specific issues and in line with normal dress practices. For instance At North London Collegiate School, Headmistress Frances Buss wrote to parents in the 1870s with instructions regarding homework and punctuality, but also requesting that girls "should be provided with thick-soled and warm boots, as the passages are covered with oil-cloth, and the rooms are not

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[304] *Cheltenham Ladies' College House Group*, 1880s, black and white photograph, Cheltenham Ladies' College Archives

[305] Ethel Davidson, *History of St Margaret's* (Unpublished Document, 2005), 8.

carpeted."[306] Inappropriate footwear might be linked to colds and chills and one of the concerns regarding female education was that it could cause illness in pupils, girls needed to remain healthy both to pursue their studies and to dispute this view. Practical issues, did, therefore, play a limited role and these become more prevalent in the case of games clothing, discussed later in the chapter.

In a similar vein, it should be emphasised that whilst norms of feminine dressing were reinforced, frippery was also frowned upon and overtly fussy clothing was discouraged. This indicates that whilst gender and femininity were overriding concerns, it was possible to go too far and excessively trimmed or flamboyant clothing indicated to external viewers that the wearer was overly concerned with fashion and consequently lacking in the wider understanding and ability necessary to complete her education.[307]

These ideas were also closely associated with those of class. Whilst the early public girls' schools did not cater to the working classes their intake varied between institutions. The North London Collegiate School initially catered to the daughters of the lower-middle classes including clerks and tradesmen, whilst Cheltenham Ladies' College consciously excluded such membership, drawing pupils from the children of gentlemen and the gentry. A breakdown of pupils at Cheltenham in 1865 shows that 27% were daughters of private gentlemen, 28% of army and navy officers, 20% of clergymen, 18% of civil servants, doctors and lawyers and just 7% bankers and merchants.[308]

Maintaining a class appropriate image at Cheltenham would have consequently been important to attracting the right clientele, in the same manner as the elite boys' public schools, and this might explain the strong emphasis placed on clothing at the institution. This is indicated by headmistress Lillian Faithful who introduced uniform to the school in 1907 stating that:

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[306] Homework, 1870s, box B1, History of the School 1850-1895, NLCS Archives.

[307] Christine Bayles Kortsch, *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women's Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 20-21.

[308] Jordan, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain,* 119-120.

> One of the advantages of a school uniform is that it keeps a girl from too much thought about her dress […] the existence of a school uniform makes it impossible for parents to dress their children in a grotesque fashion.[309]

Whilst clearly deploring vanity, her use of grotesque in this context is more open to interpretation. It may simply refer to impractical, heavy and restrictive clothing, but it is also possible that it encompasses issues concerning visible distinctions of status. Class markers, particularly over-decorated, showy garments favoured by some members of the aspiring middle classes might have been a problem. As well as the emphasis on practicality, the implementation of uniforms or dress codes helped to remove individual and, perhaps, inappropriate symbols of class.

Sportswear and Uniform

This dichotomy between the requirements for practicality in school clothing and a continued preservation of the fashionable and feminine ideal can be seen in the adoption of sportswear in girls' schools. As in boys' schools the regulation of sporting dress preceded the implementation of general uniforms. The reason for this was two-fold, practicality of dress was more important in sporting activities than daywear as long skirts and corsets restricted movement and prevented the health benefits of sport being realised. Additionally such activities initially took place in private environments where the girls were fiercely protected from public view and less feminine attire was unlikely to excite comment or stricture. In boys' schools, however, the emphasis remained more firmly on the practical whereas in girls' schools sporting dress still had to satisfy the demands of a feminine appearance.[310]

The first specially designed and widely worn sports clothing for women (with the exception of riding habits and, perhaps, bathing costumes) can be traced back to Dr. Dio Lewis' seminal 1862 book *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children*. Although American, this book enjoyed international popularity and the proposed gymnastic regime was adopted throughout America and Europe, including in many early British girls' schools.[311] Miss Buss headmistress of the North London Collegiate School praised the system in her submission

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[309] Grant *et al.*, *St Leonards School*, 102.

[310] Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children's Costume* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1977), 119.

[311] Roberta J. Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character': 1830-1900," in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan & James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 7.

to the 1864 Taunton Commission Report and detailed that the girls spent at least twenty minutes engaged in the activity 4-5 times a week.[312]

Lewis also recommended suitable clothing for women undertaking his exercises, which he described as follows:

> [the dress] is made very loose about the waist and shoulders, worn without hoops, but with a thin skirt as near the color of the dress as possible, and only stiff enough to keep the outside skirt from hanging closely to the legs[313]

The full-skirted design of this garment with a clearly defined waist (fig. 2) echoes contemporary fashions and the shorter length of the dress worn with a bifurcated undergarment reflected both the bloomer and bathing dress of the 1850s and 60s.[314] This suggests that the appearance, although new in this context, formed part of a fashionable understanding that was already present and allowed the outfit to be accepted more readily, particularly when produced in stylish colours and fabrics.
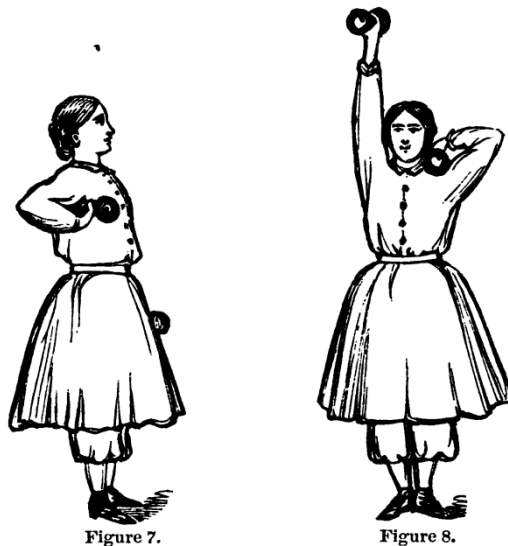
Fig. 2: Dio Lewis, *Figures from The New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children*, 1862[315]

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[312] Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females; Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 64.

[313] Dio Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1862), 17.

[314] Patricia Campbell Warner, *When the Girls Came Out to Play; The Birth of American Sportswear,* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 174.

[315] Dio Lewis, *Figures from The New Gymnastics for Men and Women*, 1862, illustration, from Lewis, *The New Gymnastics for Men, Women and Children,* 71.

Outfits of this style began to be adopted for private gymnasium and sporting wear although proponents continued to stress the feminine nature of the garment as in this excerpt from an 1867 edition of *The Queen* in an article regarding the newly opened Liverpool Gymnasium, the dress was:

> Of all colours, scarlet, mauve, violet, white and Rob Roy tartan, the long tunic and Turkish trousers, confined a little above the ankle, a sash around the waist sometimes giving occasion for a display of a little finery in the shape of gold fringe, & c., and thin boots comprise the eminently graceful, and, be it added, not in the least unfeminine costume.[316]

The author goes on to emphasise that femininity can exist along-side both the outfit and the sport itself as it had been suggested "by several estimable persons" that:

> Gymnastic studies are identical with "fastness", are apt to make young ladies at all inclined to be rapid, more so, and while they develop chest and muscles, encourage other developments more masculine than becoming. We have not, as far as our experience goes, seen anything either in dress or work to confirm this. The former, we repeat, is eminently graceful and becoming; the latter need call for no display of any masculine or rollicking proclivities, supposing for one moment that our fairest and dearest possess them.[317]

This illustrates an additional concern with which girls' schools had to contend; the conflict between sport and the feminine ideal.

Games were played from the outset in many of the girls' public schools, but at first these tended to be sedate and uncompetitive. Soon, however, physical exercise attained a greater emphasis due to the increasing fashion for it in boys' schools and in society as a whole. Consequently lacrosse, hockey and cricket were being played at a significant proportion of girls' schools by the turn of the century.[318] Here too femininity was called into question - detractors feared for the suitability of competitive games for girls, particularly with regards to health and social reasons and these arguments showed a great deal of similarity with those against female education. Concerns were raised that delicate girls would suffer from the rigours of organised sport and that vigorous exercise could harm their reproductive

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[316] "Physical Education and the Liverpool Gymnasium," *Queen, The Lady's Newspaper,* January 05, 1867, 5.

[317] "Physical Education and the Liverpool Gymnasium," *Queen*, 5.

[318] Derek Birley, *Playing the Game. Sport and British Society 1910-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 41.

capacities.[319] Additionally, competitive sport was strongly associated with the boy's public school ethos and energetic activity had become a way in which masculinity was defined. Resolving issues of practicality versus femininity became vital in allowing sporting activity to continue whilst pacifying opponents and demonstrating that femininity and sporting freedoms could co-exist in the same manner as femininity and educational freedom.[320] McCrone explains this process in her book *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women*:

> The gradual acceptance of girls' school sport as compatible with femininity resulted from protracted negotiations and compromises that reconciled the apparent conflict between games and appropriate female behaviour…the upshot was that the sporting schoolgirl like her college sister, simultaneously accommodated to and challenged traditional bourgeois mores.[321]

This process of negotiation can clearly be seen in the implementation of school sporting dress. The first recorded appearance of designated sports clothing for girls in a school environment occurred at St Leonards. Founded in 1877 in St Andrews, St Leonards was the first girls' school to be structured along similar lines to a boys' public school, replicating both the house system and the rhetoric of organised games that had gained popularity in the public schools by this time. St Leonards was itself used as a model for subsequent girls' schools including Roedean and Wycombe Abbey, as discussed later in the chapter.

The first headmistress of St Leonards, Louisa Lumsden was an early advocate of dress reform, particularly for exercise. Writing in her autobiography many years later, Lumsden noted that:

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[319] Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1900* (London: Routledge, 2012), 94.

[320] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British; A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 117 ; Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, 72; Patrick F. McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win; Sport Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 3.

[321] Kathleen E. McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women 1870-1914* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 91-92.

> Dress may seem a trifling thing, but even from childish days it had worried me. I wanted to be free to run, jump and climb trees, and when later crinolines came into fashion I, of course, detested them.[322]

With this quest for freedom in mind, Lumsden designed and implemented a gymnastics uniform from the beginning. This outfit bore a significant resemblance to the Dio Lewis design, consisting of a blue knee-length belted tunic worn with knickerbockers or trousers (fig. 3). The design was allegedly adapted from one worn at a Belgian school, probably Chateau de Koekelberg which Lumsden attended for two years as a teenager.[323] In the ten years since *The Queen* article this style had gained some form of social acceptability in a, predominantly private, sporting context and this tempered the pioneering nature of the decision to implement it as a uniform. Initially the uniform allowed a good deal of variety - the length of trousers worn, shade of blue, and trim were all open to personal preference, although the pattern was soon standardised across the school. Although originally designed only for gymnasium wear, the uniform began to be widely worn in other locations, particularly the playground as it allowed a greater ease of movement and was more comfortable than the current fashions. Its discontinuity with ordinary dress, however, prevented it being worn outside the high-walled precincts of the school.[324]

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[322] Louisa Innes Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves; Memories of a Long Life* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1933), 29.

[323] Lumsden, *Yellow Leaves*, 16-23.

[324] *St Leonards School, 1877-1927*, ed. Julia M. Grant, Katherine H. McCutcheon & Ethel F. Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 99-101.

Fig. 3: *St Leonards House Lacrosse Team*, 1890[325]

Following in the footsteps of St Leonards, outfits of a similar design were adopted at other schools. As discussed earlier Miss Buss, founder of the North London Collegiate School, was a proponent of physical training, but she also worked for clothing reform.[326] Her friend Annie Ridley recorded in her biography that:

> Suitable clothing was also a matter of careful consideration. Miss Buss would have liked a school-uniform, which she would have made graceful as well as rational ; but, except in the gymnasium, she never attained this desire, and had to content herself with at school advising, and… compelling, the most needful reforms.[327]

The maintenance of a graceful appearance emphasises the importance of appearing feminine and the tone of the excerpt hints at the careful path that girls' schools had to tread to combine innovation and social acceptance. The fact that Miss Buss never achieved full school uniform is also instructive as this would have been too controversial in the period in

[325] *St Leonards House Lacrosse Team*, 1890, black and white photograph, St Leonards Archives

[326] Hargreaves, *Sporting Females; Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports*, 64.

[327] Annie E Ridley, *Frances Mary Buss and Her Work for Education* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1896), 183.

question. The gymnasium costume of Buss' era developed during the 1880s and 1890s and mirrored current fashions in shape, but with the removal of corsets and a shortening at the hem. This outfit variously consisted of "short, loose dresses, in colour dark blue, trimmed with light blue" as recorded by the *Girls' Own Paper* in 1882 and later, a full skirt worn with a white blouse and coloured sash. [328] These outfits do not, however, seem to have been compulsory across the school.[329] This changed in 1899 when an obligatory games uniform was introduced. In the January 'Prefects and Monitors Minutes' it is noted that the headmistress:

> Mrs Bryant expressed her satisfaction at the introduction of the gymnasium dress and explained that a few girls leaving at Easter had been allowed to be exempt from wearing it[330]

This outfit is described a few years later in 1912 in a letter to parents as:

> A navy-blue serge costume…It consists of a blouse, knickerbockers, skirt; navy-blue hair ribbons and waist belt (two-inch petersham, with plain steel hooks), sky-blue Windsor scarf, black stockings, black shoes without heels. The skirt reaching only to the knee should be slightly gored, and buttoned onto the waistbelt of the blouse.[331]

Photographs confirm that this was the design of the 1899 uniform and the description and images closely resemble the St Leonards style in cut and colour.

In a more general context other clothing designs were adopted for different kinds of sport for instance female rowers on the Thames are recorded in 1889 as wearing:

> …a jersey that gives their arms full play. In colour it is white, blue, red or pink, but the skirt is generally dark blue southern serge or some washing material and the costume is completed by a sailor hat and a loose fronted jacket to wear when cooling down after a long pull in the sun. [332]

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[328] "The North London Collegiate School for Girls," *Girls' Own Paper,* May, 1882, 494.

[329] Ewing, *History of Children's Costume*, 121.

[330] Prefects and Monitors Minutes, vol 1, 255, January 23, 1899, box A2, History of the School 1941-1950, NLCS Archives.

[331] Letter to Parents, 1912, box A2, History of the School 1941-1950, NLCS Archives.

[332] "Thames Rowing Girls," *Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, June 01, 1889, 2.

This same nautical theme is seen at Roedean who, in the 1890s, introduced a blue and white sailor blouse and above-the-ankle navy skirt for gymnasium wear.[333] In comparison to the St Leonards model, this ensemble was less forward-thinking and more reflective of current modes, offering an appearance between fashionable and athletic dress, a compromise also seen in the sporting wear of American colleges of the period.[334] This greater reticence in sartorial issues can perhaps be explained by the varying educational views of the headmistresses and the comparatively isolated location of St Leonards, which allowed less public intrusion and consequently greater privacy for experimentation

The sailor blouses link in with nautical influences seen in children's' clothing - a vogue that became popular from the mid-1860s, possibly linked to increasing access to the British seaside.[335] This look remained widely prevalent in various guises until the end of the century and its enduring popularity can be tied to the mass consumption of military, imperial and patriotic themes in literature, educational texts and other aspects of visual culture. This worked in conjunction with changing holiday practices, particularly an increase in the popularity of the seaside as destination, which demanded a new form of practical leisure clothing.[336] Towards the end of the century the sailor suit also entered girls' fashions and in doing so many of the overt military overtones became diluted and, instead, assumed connotations of fashionable leisure. The suit usually took the form of a sailor blouse, pleated blue skirt, double breasted short reefer jacket and sometimes a boater and the new games uniform at Roedean closely followed this pattern.[337] The uniform consequently presented a fashionable and socially normal recreational appearance whilst providing greater freedom of movement in the loose cut blouses of the style. It might also be argued that the sailor suit's origins in children's clothing placed it within a context of intellectual inferiority and domesticity, consequently making it less threatening and, therefore, softening the appearance of the sporting woman.

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[333] Dorothy E. De Zouche, *Roedean School, 1885-1955* (Brighton: Dolphin Press, 1955), 37.

[334] Patricia Campbell Warner, *When the Girls Came Out to Play; The Birth of American Sportswear,* 5.

[335] Clare Rose, "Continuity and Change in Edwardian Children's Clothing," *Textile History* 42, no. 2 (2011), 147.

[336] Clare Rose, "The Meanings of the Late Victorian Sailor Suit," *Journal for Maritime Research* 11, no. 1 (2009), 29.

[337] P. Cunningham & A. Buck, *Children's' Costume in England From the Fourteenth to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (London: A. & C. Black Ltd, 1965), 73-74.

Views on female sport were gradually changing, however, as the number of sports that girls were allowed to take part in and the places that they were allowed to play them diversified. By 1913 attitudes to girls' games had changed sufficiently for C.E. Thomas to advise girls in his sports manual *Athletic Training for Girls,* that:

> The lessons learned on the playing fields in the matter of self control, the sinking of the individual for the sake of the team, and the other good qualities brought about by a hard-fought match, can be as lastingly beneficial to a schoolgirl as to her brother.[338]

This increase in sporting freedom over the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is embodied by the invention of the gymslip. An item which became one of the most ubiquitous and widely worn pieces of girls' school uniform. A sleeveless tunic with a box pleated, knee-length skirt attached to a square yoke, the gymslip was revolutionary in that the weight of the garment hung from the shoulders and the cut did not constrict the figure in any way, although it was often tied loosely around the waist with a braid belt. It was an invention emanating from the Hampstead Gymnasium, an institution founded by Madame Bergman-Osterberg in 1885 to train sports teachers for girls' schools in a range of disciplines including swimming, gymnastics, tennis and fives. Attendees at the Gymnasium originally wore a version of the Dio Lewis gymnastic suit but by the early 1890s Osterberg felt that this outfit was too cumbersome for the expanded range of sports on offer. The gymslip was designed in 1892 by one of Osterberg's students, Miss Tait and it was implemented as uniform soon after.[339] The gymslip spread to other institutions as the teachers who had been trained by Osterberg took up teaching posts and introduced the garment to their new schools for sporting activities. As the only sources of trained female sports teachers, Osterberg's students were widely employed and consequently the spread of the gymslip was both rapid and national and over the following twenty years it replaced the Dio Lewis suit as the sporting garment of choice in most schools.[340]

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[338] C.E. Thomas, *Athletic Training for Girls* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd, 1913), 12.

[339] Phillis Cunnington & Alan Mansfield, *English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation; From the 16th to the 19th Centuries* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 45.

[340] Anne Bloomfield, "Martina Bergman-Osterberg (1849-1915): Creating a Professional Role for Women in Physical Training," *History of Education* 34, no. 5 (2005), 530.

Although sports uniforms evolved throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, school uniforms outside of the gymnasium were not generally introduced until the early twentieth century. As girls' public schools became a more established concept and some of the fears regarding female education proved unfounded, headmistresses began to have the security to experiment educationally within certain limits. One of the most pressing concerns was practicality of day dress and uniform was consequently high on the agenda. These moves were assisted by wider reforms in the fields of dress and women's rights. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth an increasing liberty and practicality of girls' dress was established. This was brought about through a combination of the Rational Dress Movement and the increasing emancipation of women, eventually leading to universal suffrage.[341] Founded in London in 1881, The Rational Dress Society made it its mission to draw attention to restrictive corseting and campaign for greater mobility in dress particularly for children and young people. This was reflected in mainstream fashion by a move towards more practical and tailored women's wear with less restrictive undergarments and later by rising hemlines.[342]

Day Uniforms

Full school uniform was introduced in one of two ways and both of these were gradual processes indicating the still tentative approach favoured for visibly new ideas in girls' education. Pupils were either encouraged to wear their sports uniform during other lessons and this was increasingly policed until it was officially adopted as a day uniform. Alternatively schools began to introduce dress codes or simple uniforms which became progressively stricter with more and more specifically regulated items. The former situation can be noted at the North London Collegiate School. In December 1899, less than a year after the introduction of gymnasium wear, the headmistress Mrs Bryant recommended "wearing the gymnasium dress all morning" during lessons. [343] This suggestion is also reflected in the 1907 book, *The Heritage of Dress*, which discusses girls' school wear, stating that:

> The introduction of exercises in the gymnasium has necessitated the adoption of a drilling
> dress in very many cases, but there are schools were such a costume is generally worn at all

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[341] Sophia A. Van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), 136-181.

[342] J. Laver, *Costume & Fashion, a Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 200.

[343] Prefects and Monitors Minutes, vol 1, 259, December 15 1899, box A2, History of the School 1941-1950, NLCS Archives.

times, and others where it forms the working dress, while long skirts are put on when no active exertion is expected.[344]

The adoption of gymnastic wear in the classroom is symptomatic of the acceptance of both girls sport and sporting wear in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although women continued to be expected to dress in line with dominant fashions on the street, less public spaces such as schools, resorts and private sports clubs became locations in which some blurring of the sartorial boundaries was tolerated.[345] The increased practicality that this change in attitude offered was, however, still moderated by concerns of propriety. This is indicated through the addition of longer skirts over gymnasium wear in some situations which created an appearance more in line with normal dress expectations. For instance in the same 1912 letter to parents, referenced earlier, the North London Collegiate School clarified that "A longer skirt may be worn over the gymnasium dress, except during drill".[346] This ensured that girls travelling to and from school, particularly in populous areas such as London maintained correct appearances and avoided censure in public.

The process of adoption of sportswear as daywear is also evident at the many schools that adopted the gymslip as day uniform. Over the following decades the garment continued to gain in popularity and by the 1920s it was extremely widely worn. Whilst the style of the gymslip changed very little over the period from its invention until the Second World War, the colours, fabrics and way it was worn did vary. At first the gymslip was black or navy, but it later appeared in many colours. For practical purposes, these were usually darker in hue, although a decadent scarlet version, with a velvet yoke is noted by *The Heritage of Dress* at Croft School in 1907:

> It consists of a tunic without sleeves, of red material with a velvet yoke, and shoulder straps. As a finishing touch there is a girdle tied loosely in a bow. It is not placed around the waist proper, but drops towards the left knee as did the sword-belts which the knights in olden times wore over their armour. A white silk blouse shows above the yoke round the neck and has full sleeves. The knickerbockers in this case are made of red knitted stockinette

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[344] Wilfred Mark Webb, *The Heritage of Dress; Being Notes on the History and Evolution of Clothes* (London: The Times Book Club, 1912), 126-127.

[345] Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas*, 100-101.

[346] Letter to Parents, 1912, NLCS Archives.

instead of cloth. The costume is a modification of that used in Physical Training Colleges, where the tunic, however, does not reach to the knee.[347]

Fig 4: *Schoolgirl in Gymslip*, 1929[348]

The girdle is of note and, although, in this instance it is worn loosely below the waist, in general it can be seen to follow the current waistline. Photographs from the 1920s, for instance, show a narrow belt worn very low around the hips in imitation of the fashionable silhouette (fig. 4). The undergarments, too, follow fashion and dress norms. Initially gymslips were worn with a high-necked blouse beneath, this then became a softer, round-necked garment and, as discussed later in the chapter, masculine-styled shirts and ties were introduced to many schools in the twentieth century.

Underwear was also a concern, starting school in 1927 Lorna Arnold writes:

> My daily outfit consisted of woollen 'combs' and a 'peter pan bodice' with home-made navy-blue knickers and either a blouse or woollen jumper. Over the knickers and blouse went a box-pleated gymslip and a cardigan.[349]

The woollen "combs" are combinations, close fitting vest and drawers worn next to the skin and the "peter pan bodice" appears to be version of the liberty bodice. The knickers are a feature of the outfit which were worn from the early days through to the 1950s. These items, designed to go over normal female undergarments, were initially almost bloomer-shaped in style and later became smaller and less cumbersome. They were often made in the same fabric as the gymslip itself. The intention of these garments was to preserve the

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[347] Webb, *The Heritage of Dress*, 127-128.

[348] *Schoolgirl in Gymslip*, 1929, black and white photograph, TWGGS Archives.

[349] Lorna Arnold, *My Short Century; Memoirs of an Accidental Nuclear Historian* (Palo Alto: Cumnor Hill Books, 2012), 30.

modesty of the girls, preventing the accidental display of underwear. This was particularly important in girls' schools as modesty and respectability went hand in hand. In middle class households reputation rested on the chastity of daughters and such garments also served, in much the same manner as the shapeless gymslip, to conceal any dangerous notions of sexuality. This concept is articulated more thoroughly by Sara Burstall in her memoirs of her time as headmistress of Manchester High School in the early twentieth century:

> The improvement of the Manchester tramway system also helped us much, enabling girls to travel more pleasantly and safely; especially as they had the protection of the school colour on the school hat.[350]

Burstall suggests that school uniform, in visibly demonstrating the age and allegiance of the girls, protected them from unwanted adult attention, particularly that of men, a situation that has been reversed in more recent times.

St Leonards, Roedean and Cheltenham Ladies College took the alternative route, slowly codifying daywear into uniform. In 1887, Miss Dove, then headmistress of St Leonards, is said to have introduced school boaters, a first step in uniformity, in the aftermath of a picnic in which her sensibilities were offended by the patchy appearance presented by the school. School cloaks were added soon after to protect the girls from the worst excesses of the Scottish winter. The design was copied from a travel souvenir, a peasant cloak from the Pas de Calais brought home from France by Mrs Aitken, a lady local to the school. As an item of clothing it became a widely imitated fashionable accessory amongst her friends and acquaintances. These included Miss Dove, who introduced the cloak to the school as uniform wear in dark blue, lined with the house colour.[351]

These early uniforms tended to offer quite a lot of personal choice and closely follow the fashionable silhouette of the day. Around the turn of the century Wycombe Abbey listed 'Regulation Garments provided only by the House Mistress" as "A Hat, Cap, Cloak, Skirt, Gymnastic Suit, Muffler, Belt and Playground, Gymnastic and School Shoes".[352] The hat was a boater and the cloak lined in house colours. It is easy to draw parallels between these
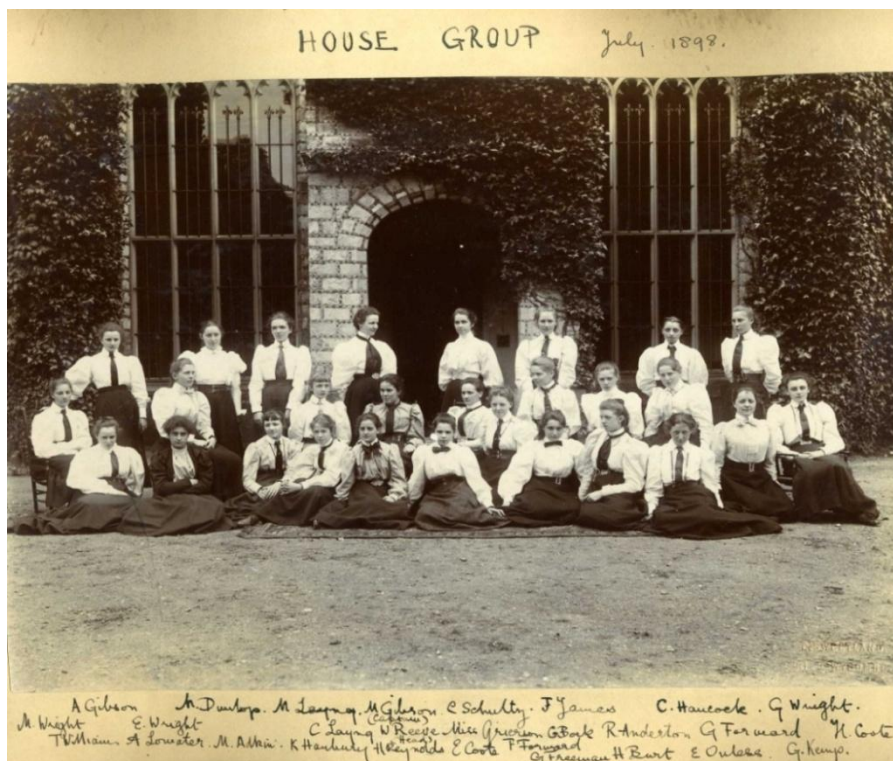
[350] Sara A. Burstall, *Retrospect and Prospect: Sixty Years of Women's Education* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1933), 153.

[351] Grant *et al.*, *St Leonards School*, 102.

[352] Uniform list for Wycombe Abbey School, 190?, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

items and the early uniform garments at St Leonards and this is because there is a direct link between the two, with Frances Dove, former headmistress of St Leonards resigning her position to found Wycombe Abbey and the influence of her previous school can clearly be seen in the uniform list.[353] The many other items required by a Wycombe Abbey schoolgirl included "1 Best Dress", "4 Blouses", "1 Warm Evening Dress for every day" and "1 Jacket", however, were left to the discretion of pupils and parents providing they were clean, neat and suitable.[354]

A photograph from around this period (fig. 5) shows the girls sporting flared, floor-length uniform skirts with narrow waists and an array of different blouses with high necklines and 'leg of mutton sleeves', the neckwear is also varied. The image created closely resembles an alternative style of dress of the period, known as the 'Gibson Girl', a look which retained the fashionable silhouette but was tailored and masculine in appearance. It was named after the American cartoonist Charles Dana Gibson who famously drew young ladies, often in educational settings, attired in it. A similar image to this must have been presented by Cheltenham Ladies' College, as by 1912 the uniform consisted of a full length navy serge skirt (linen for summer wear) worn with a choice of blouses and a house tie.[355]

Fig. 5: *Wycombe Abbey House Group*, 1898[356]

[353] Elsie Bowerman, *Stands There a School: Memories of Dame Frances Dove, D.B.E., Founder of Wycombe Abbey School* (Chiltern: Wycombe Abbey School, 1966), 30-31.

[354] Uniform list for Wycombe Abbey School, 190?, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

[355] R. Roberts, *History of Uniform at CLC* (Unpublished Document, 2008), 1.

[356] *Wycombe Abbey House Group*, 1898, black and white photograph, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

The contrast between this image of Wycombe Abbey and that of Cheltenham Ladies' College less than twenty years earlier is striking and demonstrates the increasing acceptance of female education. This, in conjunction with wider dress reform, allowed a less consciously feminine style of dress. The image also situates girls' clothing within a wider field of masculine imitation. In the second half of the nineteenth century women began to adopt items of male attire, particularly ties, hats, shirts and tailored jackets. For instance the Eton jacket, symbolic of school-age boys became incorporated into fashionable women's dress from the late 1880s in much the same manner as the sailor suit. In newspaper advertisements between 1880 and 1900, the term 'Eton jacket' becomes more clearly associated with female fashion and women's periodicals than suppliers of boys' clothing and is applied to a wide range of open-fronted jackets:

> The Loose-fronted Eton Jacket - Not the short shape, but the one that comes well below the waist, is still a great favourite, and I am not surprised, for it is both pretty and comfortable, a very rare combination[357]

The greater degree of comfort noted in the advertisement might be one of the reasons for the adoption of such masculine items. These tailored outfits were also more practical and in the case of working women operated as a signal of independence.

Additionally such appropriation can be viewed as a non-verbal claim to sexual equality and an assault on masculine authority. This was particularly pertinent in the field of girls' schooling. It was felt strongly by many of the promoters of female education that for girls' public schools to be considered academically equal to their male counterparts they should appear comparable. In this vein Frances Dove writing to prospective parents in 1896 confidently stated that the education at Wycombe Abbey would be "as complete on all its sides as that given to boys at the great public schools".[358]

Thus girls' schools strove to emulate boys' public schools closely and this dictum gathered support towards the end of the nineteenth century and set in motion a widespread imitation, not only of the curriculum, but of many facets of boys' public school life from the ethos to discipline and the house system.[359] As a result many elements of girls' schooling were gradually formalised to bring them in line with boys' schools and this is particularly evident in the field of clothing - imitating the dress of the boys' public schools was a very

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[357] "The World of Women, Marguerite," *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, October 8, 1892, 234.

[358] Quoted in Bowerman, *Stands There a School: Memories of Dame Frances Dove*, 79.

[359] Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon*, 248-250.

visible method of symbolising the similarity between the two. Items such as ties and masculine styled shirts became girls' uniform wear, with house ties often being one of the first fully regulated pieces of uniform.

This imitation, however, occurred within limits, the appropriation of garments in schools was from the top half of the body only and these were initially mixed with elements of more fashionable dress to ensure that femininity was not entirely compromised.[360] Trousers were not adopted as there was still too greater controversy attached to women wearing them. It was asserted that trousers and bloomers would lead to immodesty and immorality in the female sex, a significant concern when the purity of girls was paramount to social position.[361] Trousers were seen as a prominent symbol of masculine authority. Their appropriation, therefore, represented a loss of power and status for the patriarchy and greater demands for equality of the sexes.[362] This reflects some of the fears associated with female schooling and as such schoolgirls wearing trousers would not just seen as mildly subversive but as a direct attempt to usurp the dominant male culture. Bifurcated garments were consequently avoided by educationalists still wary of causing outrage.

A few schools initially rejected these moves towards masculine styling but did embrace ideas of dress reform and these decisions reflect the less militant educational views of the headmistress and other senior staff members. At Roedean the first uniform was implemented in 1906. The design consisted of a dress known as a djibbah, which was a closely fitted, but uncorseted garment with a round neckline and a slightly flared skirt that fell just below the knee, but allowed greater ease of movement than current fashions. It was supposedly inspired by the garments worn by Dervish warriors in Somalia, an item which would have had a social prominence at the time due to the skirmishes between British and Ethiopian powers, and the Dervish state.[363] The term djibbah is now used to describe a long, collarless coat worn by Muslim men. A surviving Dervish djibbah held at the Queen's Royal Lancers and Nottinghamshire Yeomany museum shows striking similarities with the

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[360] Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (Brinkworth: Claridge Press, 1994), 52-53; Diana Crane, "Clothing Behaviour as Non-Verbal Resistance: Marginal Women and Alternative Dress in the Nineteenth Century," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 2 (1999), 243-247.

[361] Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 68.

[362] Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas*, 122; Gayle V. Fischer, *Pantaloons and Power: A Nineteenth-Century Dress Reform in the United States*, (Kent, Ohio & London: The Kent State University Press, 2001), 99.

[363] De Zouche, *Roedean School, 1885-1955* , 73.

design of the Roedean uniform, suggesting that such a garment, or something similar, had, indeed, been seen by the designer.

The djibbah had entered the popular lexicon a few years previously as evinced by a 1902 article in the Chicago Tribune which claimed that "The djibbah has captured London society". The piece goes on to describe a design which closely resembles the Roedean djibbah except that it was longer.[364] The style was adopted by creative and reform circles but appears not to have had a large impact on fashionable dress, although notable wearers included Mrs Stephen Crane and Mrs J.M. Barrie. Its unusual appearance and focused uptake meant that it became a literary trope applied to the wealthy, eccentric and artistic.[365] Its adoption in the school environment was, therefore, rooted in an existing fashionable and feminine aesthetic but it also reflects more *avant-garde* elements of reform clothing.

During the day a short sleeved navy djibbah with a cream yoke was worn with a cream blouse beneath; this was also worn for games. During the afternoon and evening the girls changed into a silk or velvet djibbah, depending on the time of year, which was worn slightly longer. These could be any colour and were customised with embroidery on the yoke, the designs for which could be chosen from a pattern book at the school outfitters, Forma, or they could be designed by the girls' themselves; usual themes included birds,

trees, and flowers (fig. 6). These designs might be seen to reinforce the feminine aspects of the garments, whilst also mirroring the contemporary art nouveau movement.

Fig. 6: *Roedean afternoon djbbahs,* early 1900s[366]

These early uniforms and regulation garments were spread through staff movement. The number of female teachers and educationalists working in the girls' public school sector was still relatively small in the early twentieth century and many teachers were former pupils of

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[364] "The Djibbah has Captured London Society," *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1902.

[365] James Gregory, "Vegetable Fictions in the Kingdom of Roast Beef: Representing the Vegetarian in Victorian Literature," in *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century: Narratives of Consumption, 1700-1900*, ed. Tamara S. Wagner & Narin Hassan (Lanham:, Lexington Books, 2007), 23.

[366] *Roedean afternoon djbbahs,* early 1900s, colour photograph of original garments, Roedean School Archives

girls' public schools. The small nature of the teaching population and the fact that most teaching staff had attended similar institutions created a somewhat insular community and the experiences of clothing regulation as a pupil or young member of staff seems to have heavily impacted on the uniform practices implemented later. As staff moved from one school to another, often ultimately founding their own, they took ideas, and sometimes even specific garment designs with them and this can be seen through specific instances of garment diffusion.

This process has already been noted between St Leonards and Wycombe Abbey and with regards to the gymslip, but can also clearly be seen with the spread of the djibbah. Ex-staff and former pupils of Roedean implemented djibbahs at other schools including Downe House in Kent, where the founding headmistress, Olive Willis was a former pupil and teacher at Roedean. She implemented green wool djibbahs upon opening in 1907 (fig. 7). Djibbahs were also introduced at other public girls' schools including Coombe Hill School and Cheltenham Ladies College which made the change to them in 1926.[367]

Fig. 7: *Downe House: Full School Photograph*, 1909[368]

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[367] Webb, *The Heritage of Dress*, 126; Roberts, *History of Uniform at CLC*, 1-2.

[368] *Downe House Full School Photograph*, 1909, black and white photograph, Downe House Archives. It is also worth noting the teacher in shirt and tie

Whilst djibbahs and gymslips were originally of very different design, as time progressed, the two concepts seem to have merged to some extent and by the interwar period the two words appear in some geographical locations as interchangeable, usually to describe an item of the same or similar design to gymslip. For instance photographs of Sherborne Girls' School from 1915 - 1918 show girls wearing velvet yoked gymslips but these are consistently referred to as djibbahs in school literature.[369] Hybrid garments also developed, at Bridlington High School a tunic called a djibbah was uniform between the wars. This was the same shape as a gymslip, but without a yoke or defined pleats and was worn with shirt and tie beneath. The garment also retained elements of the Roedean djibbah in that there was floral embroidery across the chest area.[370] An early twentieth century prospectus for the school shows the girls in traditional gymslips so this outfit must have been adopted at a later date.[371]

Codification and Uniformity

Once uniforms were established the drive to imitate the strict uniform standards in boys' public schools became ever more prevalent and self-sustaining and this can be charted through increasingly regulated uniform lists. This is particularly apparent after the First World War when the female emancipation that the conflict brought intensified the striving of many of the large public girls' schools to run like male institutions. This process can be illustrated through the changing uniform demands placed on pupils and their families at Wycombe Abbey. In 1922 the list of regulation attire, provided in a specific pattern and fabric by the school, remains the same as in the 1900s, but the colour of everyday skirts, coats and blouses is dictated as dark blue and white respectively.[372] Only three years later, however, in October 1925:

> The special regulation garments provided at the School are Hat, Cloak, Gymnastic Suit
> (Tunic, Knickers with Linings), Over-blouses, dark blue Cardigan, Shoes (gymnastic and
> playground), overall, ties, dark blue Mackintosh and Mackintosh Cap. Tan stockings can

[369] *Sherborne Girls' Tennis Group*, 1915, black and white photograph & *Sherborne Girls' House Group*, Summer 1918, black and white photograph, Sherborne Girls' School Archives

[370] *Photograph of the Tennis Team*, 1927, black and white photograph Photographs of Games and Gymnastics, Bridlington Old Girls Association Records, Bridlington High School for Girls Old Girls' Association Records, The Treasure House, Beverley.

[371] School Prospectuses, Miscellaneous School Records, Bridlington High School Deposited 11 Dec 2007, Bridlington High School for Girls Old Girls' Association Records, The Treasure House, Beverley.

[372] Uniform list for Wycombe Abbey School, 1922, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

also be supplied if required. Girls must also have galoshes, which may be obtained at school.[373]

By December 1932, further additions to this list include a blazer, sweater and scarf. The instructions for the unregulated uniform have also become much more detailed with the description for the coat evolving from "1 long, dark blue coat" in 1922 to "1 long, navy blue coat, plain, without fur or other trimming" in 1932.[374] In the same way many other schools made the gradual move to expansive and carefully controlled and monitored uniform lists, with uniforms predominantly taking the format of a gymslip or a skirt and shirt with blazer and tie.

This drive for conformity and equality was successful, at least in terms of appearance and this can be noted in a move from discussing boys and girls school uniforms in separate terms to an assumption of innate similarity between the two. This is demonstrated in the *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette* in 1929:

> To the mothers of children at boarding schools the times when it is necessary to renew the school outfits come round very quickly. What a business it is! The visits to the drapers and outfitters, shoemakers and dress makers, take up hours of time, and then is everything is not of absolutely regulation pattern and all their belongings are not exactly like that of everyone else, the children are not satisfied. Some boys are more particular than girls about the absolute rightness of their things…Most schools state clearly what the requirements of every child are, and they give patterns of the school uniform or state where it may be obtained. Where there is no regulation uniform a mother will be quite safe in choosing for her children clothes that are absolutely simple and practical. Nothing elaborate or dressy is liked by the modern schoolgirl.[375]

Not only are boys and girls referenced in the same terms in the article but an emphasis is placed on the complex process of acquiring the many items needed and the necessity of them being in line with the exacting requirements of the school. It also indicates the importance, for the children themselves, of having the correct articles as, in the same manner as boys' schools, conformity was reinforced through peer interaction and exclusion.

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[373] Uniform list for Wycombe Abbey School, 1925, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

[374] Uniform lists for Wycombe Abbey School 1922 & 1932, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

[375] "Woman's Realm," *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette*, April 29, 1929, 5.

The final sentence is noteworthy in that simple clothes have come to define female youth and the driving force for this is attributed to the personal taste of the schoolgirl. This demonstrates an absorption of the values of the girls' public schools directly into the upper and middle class concept of girlhood.

This increase in formality and conformity ensured that by the 1920s girls' public schooling had become discontinuous with gender norms still prevalent in society. Despite huge moves forward in female education, emancipation and employment the expected role fulfilled by women still included marriage, homemaking and economic dependence on men. This meant that girls had a very distinct delineation between youth and adulthood and during these two phases of their life very different behaviours were expected of them.[376] In general girls were to be girls (or boys) at school, playing games, learning academic subjects and conforming to masculine public school stereotypes and women afterwards with many still expected to focus on marriage and children. The concept of a period of adolescence following childhood was consequently invoked (although it first appeared as an idea in the nineteenth century) and this allowed the boundary for the adoption of adulthood to be extended to the school leaving age.[377] This change in attitudes is illustrated in a problem page from 1933:

> *I am fifteen and my heart is broken*
> Fiddlesticks! Stuff and nonsense! At fifteen one's heart is still green…At your age, you ought to be thinking about your House, winning the hockey match, or the conjugation of the verb to be, or whether you will be chosen to be the Queen of Fairies or the wall in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when it is acted on Prize-Giving Day, with your father and mother sitting in the second row from the front, bursting with pride in their daughter.
> Do give up all that nonsense and be a sensible girl. Anyhow I'm surprised at you being so dowdy and old-fashioned as to have 'a love affair', as you call it, at your age. [378]

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[376] Penny Tinkler, "Women and Popular Literature," in *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction,* ed. Jane Purvis (London: Routledge, 2006), 124-125; Ellen M. Holtzman, "The Pursuit of Married Love: Women's Attitudes toward Sexuality and Marriage in Great Britain, 1918-1939," 16, no. 2 (1982), 42.

[377] Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 35-39; Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 74-75.

[378] "Women's Magazine", 1933, quoted in Tanith Carey, *Never Kiss a Man in a Canoe: Words of Wisdom from the Golden Age of Agony Aunts* (London: Boxtree, 2009), 8.

Not only are considerations of love deemed inappropriate for a fifteen year old, but public school norms are cited as a preferable alternative, notably playing hockey and affiliation to house.

Inter-war school uniforms, too, played a role in this discontinuity between youth and adult life, creating an appearance for girls that was androgynous, incorporating elements of both traditional masculine and feminine dress. This appearance operated as a statement of educational equality and status at school but in projecting this image, the dress of schoolgirls had gradually become at odds with the feminine ideal. This is articulated by Judith Okely reflecting on her own schooldays:

> As female flesh and curves, we were concealed by uniform. Take the traditional gym slip - a barrel shape with deep pleats designed to hide breasts, waist, hips and buttocks, giving freedom of movement without contour.[379]

This created a dichotomy between girls' uniform as a declaration of academic parity and freedom and its creation of an identity at conflict with the gender roles still dictated in wider society. As Vera Brittain noted recalling her pre-First World War schooldays:

> In spite of the undaunted persistence with which both the Principals upheld their own progressive ideals of public service, almost every girl left school with only two ambitions – to return at the first possible moment to impress her school-fellows with the glory of a grown-up *toilette* and to get engaged before everybody else.[380]

This marked a new era in the sustained and problematic relationship between female education, school clothing and the feminine ideal. Upon leaving school a very different appearance, one in line with ideas of fashion and contemporary notions of femininity, had to be adopted to ensure marriageability.

The gradual acceptance of female education along with wider social changes which eventually led to suffrage and the first serious steps in gender equality paved the way, first for more practical female sports attire, and later, for the implementation of school

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[379] Judith Okely, "Privileged, Schooled and Finished: Boarding Education for Girls," in *Defining Females, The Nature of Women in Society,* ed. Shirley Ardener (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 113.

[380] Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (London: Virago, 1988), 33-34.

uniforms. These changes went hand in hand with an increasingly prominent clothes reform movement and a greater acceptability of women's sport in society and these elements, working in conjunction, served to broaden the image of the feminine ideal and allowed a greater scope and freedom in dress.

In the early stages of women's education the need to conform to traditional feminine roles in dress and action was vital in gaining this acceptance in a climate where academic female schooling was viewed, at best, with distrust and at worst with a conviction that it would topple organised society. Consequently fashion and femininity were paramount and presenting a correct feminine appearance helped to allay fears that education would turn women into men, 'unsexing' them and preventing them from carrying out their designated roles in society.

Parallels can be drawn between these early efforts to control external appearances and reinforce femininity and those of suffragettes. As with education the actions of suffragettes challenged the dominant definitions of what women were and what they were capable of, consequently dress was important in the public image the suffrage movement presented.[381] Predominantly suffragettes choose to dress conventionally in unconventional circumstances, demonstrating that women did not need to become like men to be worthy of the vote and emphasising femininity through clothing even whilst involved in what were considered to be unfeminine acts.[382] This was particularly important as suffragettes, in the same manner as female educationalist, did not see themselves as purely oppositional, instead fighting for an equal position within the current social, political and educational system.[383] As in schools frivolousness was also discouraged to refute accusations of a lack of female intelligence and practical capability. This created a fine balancing act between acceptable femininity and the perception of feminine silliness and flightiness.

Where the two situations differ, however, is the ability of leaders or teachers to exert control and authority. In a public school, dress could be actively monitored and girls who contravened normal dress practices could be reprimanded as indicated by the Misses Duncan and Lillian Faithful. On the other hand suffragette leaders could only make

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[381] Katrina Rolley, "Fashion, Femininity and the Fight for the Vote," *Art History* 13, no. 1 (1990), 51-52.

[382] Vicinus, *Independent Women*, 263-264.

[383] Joel H. Kaplan & Sheila Stowell, *Theatre & Fashion; Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 159.

recommendations, rather than directly control the dress of their members. As a solution to this problem the NUWSS adopted a suffrage uniform in 1914 of a dark green coat and skirt, white blouse, red tie and green felt hat. This was cheap, serviceable and in suffrage colours but also followed the fashionable silhouette of the period, allowing suffragettes to appear both businesslike and still retain their femininity.[384]

As it became apparent that female education did not cause either medical problems or a drop in the marriage rate it became a less controversial subject. This removed the pressure to appear overtly feminine and new influences such as practicality and the emulation of boy's uniforms became increasingly important in the appearance of schoolgirls. Practical modifications were first made in conjunction with sports clothing as greater freedom of movement was required when exercising and sports took place in private environments away from public comment and censure. Later these sports garments were introduced as uniform in many girls' schools, alternatively daywear was gradually codified into a uniform. These practices show some similarity to the processes of adoption of school uniform in boys' public schools, notably the patterns of increasing regulation and conformity and the timescales in question. Significant differences, however, must be noted between the reasons for implementation and the ideologies represented by the uniforms and this is reflected in an early disparity of style and design between the sexes. Many of these differences can be attributed to contemporary anxieties surrounding the preservation of femininity and morality, concerns that had little relevance in established male institutions.

These similarities were intensified, however, in the twentieth century as girls' public schools began to imitate the uniform, behaviour and structure of established boys' schools in a visible demonstration of academic equality. This meant that girls' uniforms started to occupy an arena separate from the confines of normal fashionable appearance, a combination of masculine and feminine that was difficult to reconcile with socially acceptable appearances outside of the school environment. Although comfort and freedom of movement had improved greatly since the fashionable and feminine females of the early public schools, existing and new designated gender roles and stereotypes continued to impact on girls' clothing and affect uniform design and this can be seen well into the post-war period.

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[384] Kaplan & Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 180.

Chapter Four
Education for All (1860-1939)

"It is only within comparatively modern times that the importance of providing elementary instruction for all classes of the population has been recognized… even upon those who were destined to pass their lives in the humblest social positions"[385]

Whilst elite schooling underwent a transformation during the nineteenth century (as discussed in chapters two and three) the biggest changes were reserved for the education of the lower middle and working classes. These alterations were characterised by increasing state intervention in schooling through reports, legislation, enlarged educational provision and centralised enforcement and inspection and this eventually resulted in free, compulsory schooling for all children. The tone of patronising benevolence achieved, above, by the *Royal Commission on the State of Popular Education in England* (The Newcastle Report) which investigated elementary education provision) in 1861 is an early example of this process in action. This is indicative of the attitude of moral and social superiority adopted by those in power. The movement for working class education, in conjunction with demand from the middle classes for increased access to secondary education, created thousands of new schools and these offered new localities and motivations for the adoption of school uniform.

School uniform was eventually adopted in the vast majority of these new schools and this chapter explores this process of adoption. The meanings that uniform was imbued with and its reasons for adoption can be found to have changed significantly during the period in question. School uniform shifted from a symbol of upper class distinction to a representation of new ideals of egalitarianism in which school uniform disguised, rather than highlighted class background; a move from class divider to class leveller. This chapter will investigate these changing meanings and in doing so reveal the uneasy relationship between class, poverty and clothing which influenced the complex role of school uniform in the emergent state schooling system.

The high class status of the public schools meant that they were viewed and respected by many members of contemporary society as the leaders in educational best practice. One of the novel and very visible changes in 'best practice' in these institutions over the second half

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[385] *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England, vol I* (London: Printed by George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1861), 15.

of the nineteenth century was the adoption of school uniform and it was, therefore, not unnatural for other schools to follow suit. Such processes of imitation have already been noted within the smaller public schools catering to the middling classes (chapter two) and a similar replication of uniform will be shown to extend throughout lower middle class secondary education.

In contrast, school uniform was introduced much later to institutions offering education to the working classes. In opening schools to large numbers of children unused to formal education, problems such as attendance, cleanliness and discipline initially took priority and had to be mediated before issues such as clothing could be tackled. The poorer nature of pupils also meant that many families struggled to dress their children respectably, let alone afford a uniform. Despite a number of early campaigns to encourage schools to provide clothing for pupils, these factors worked to ensure that school uniforms, with the exception of token identifiers such as caps and hat bands, were not introduced until the inter-war period and even then were initially on a voluntary basis. The uneven uptake of uniform that this caused generated visible divisions within schools and produced pressure to conform from both teachers and peers. This disunity was resolved by making school uniform compulsory and on the eve of the Second World War, school uniform had percolated downwards through the class system to become accepted wear for schoolchildren across Britain. Most schools followed a traditional pattern of uniform design and this standardisation of appearance helped to disguise class boundaries both internally and between institutions.

The focus of the previous two chapters has been on the education of the upper and middling classes and on the prominent institutions, whether ancient or pioneering, which fulfilled this role. The distinction between these establishments and those discussed in this chapter will be made based on the division between boarding and day schools, with the emphasis here on day-only institutions, although the examples used will be a combination of fee-paying and free depending on the context. In relation to secondary schools focus will be placed on schools started or re-founded (through amalgamation or restructuring) between 1870 and 1914. The reason for this is twofold; this time frame incorporates the period of prime uniform adoption in secondary schools whilst also excluding endowed schools of earlier foundation.[386] These often have formidable histories and can be tied in with the charity school ethos of clothing provision. Consequently this can sometimes

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[386] A school supported either partially or totally through an endowment, these were usually grammar schools of early foundation. They were regulated by the Endowed Schools Act of 1869.

confuse the issue of later uniform regulation, particularly relating to the fulfilment of arcane statutes. It is not surprising that a greater number of new girls' schools were founded within this time period than boys' schools, as secondary schooling provision for girls was limited in nature during the majority of the nineteenth century and this period is characterised by rapid growth in the number of girls' schools to fulfil an increasing demand. As a result of this escalation in numbers there is a bias towards girls' schools in the examples examined in the chapter.

The Girls' Day School Trust archives (held at the Institute of Education) offer a rich primary resource for this period. The Trust was founded in 1872 and established 21 schools between its foundation and 1895. Although it sought to provide female secondary education for all classes, due to the level of fees charged, these schools had a primarily middle class intake. In addition, this chapter also draws on a range of archives still held by their original schools including Dartford County School (now Dartford Grammar School for Girls, founded 1904), Tunbridge Wells County School for Girls (now Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School, founded 1905), Sutton Grammar School (founded 1901) and Burton Grammar School (amalgamated 1884).

With regards to elementary education focus will be placed on state operated institutions, particularly board schools, as opposed to voluntary schools. Voluntary schools were usually faith-based and received governmental maintenance assistance but were not fully funded.[387] Board schools comprise a larger and more clearly defined group of schools in terms of age of attendance (usually 5-13) and county-wide spread. Board school archives proved more difficult to access than those associated with secondary education, as much information has been lost and the items that have survived do so in local record offices and tend to pertain to land, buildings and school inspection reports (which rarely comment on the appearance of pupils) rather than concerning the day to day operation of the school. This lack of pertinent documentation has necessitated a focus being placed on autobiographies, newspapers and photographs by way of original source material.

In previous chapters some of the schools discussed have covered the full age span of education with the charity schools, particularly, taking children young (usually from seven, or below) and educating them through to leaving age. Here, however, a distinction needs to be made between elementary and secondary education, although the age of transfer between

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[387] For more information see for instance John Lawson & Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

the two remained variable in different locations. When analysing uniform in working-class schools, the emphasis must necessarily be initially placed on elementary education as free secondary education did not become widely available until much later.

The chapter will be split into three sections, the first will discuss uniform adoption in middle-class secondary schools. The second part will focus on the later codification of uniform in working-class elementary schools and the unique problems, disagreements and dissatisfaction that this caused. It will also discuss the discrepancies between schools in wealthier areas and those in the poorest locations and chart the relationship between the adoption of uniform and the financial and social background of pupils. The final section will discuss the increase in accessibility of secondary education to those who could not ordinarily afford the fees through scholarship schemes. It will concentrate on the distinctions in dress between fee-paying and scholarship pupils that this created, the way in which uniform both concealed and highlighted these differences and the financial burden that uniform placed on poorer families.

Prior to the 1860s schools were unregulated by the government and anyone could found a school, or teach. Under pressure from a number of quarters, the government called for a series of studies to be carried out to ascertain the exact position of the English education system. Most relevant to this chapter were the Newcastle Report (1861) and the Taunton Report (1868) each of which had a significant effect on the way in which state education developed.

The *Royal Commission on the State of Popular Education in England* (1861), under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle was tasked with investigating the general state of elementary instruction in England and to report what, if any, measures were required to provide affordable elementary education for all children.[388] Whilst ascertaining that a significant proportion of poorer children already attended some form of school, the report highlighted the inconsistent nature of this schooling in terms of quality, attendance, location, gender and religion and made a series of recommendations which were passed into legislation, most notably as The Elementary Education Act (1870).[389] This Act recommended schooling for both sexes until the age of twelve. In areas where school provision was insufficient, school boards were established to open and run board schools

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[388] Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People; A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 241-242.

[389] Frank Smith, *A History of Elementary Education 1760-1902* (London: University of London Press, 1931), 287.

creating the necessary extra school places. This had the effect of creating a piecemeal system of existing voluntary schools and the new board schools.[390] Schools were responsible for monitoring and implementing their own attendance policies and schools fees had to be paid by pupils, except in cases of proven poverty. Although these fees were usually very low, their existence coupled with variable enforcement of attendance ensured that although many previously unschooled children entered education for the first time, some children still failed to access schooling.[391] These loopholes were closed in the Elementary Education Act of 1880, which made school attendance compulsory, and that of 1891, which made elementary education free.

The Taunton Commission (1868) on the other hand focused on what can broadly be termed secondary education, in essence all institutions which fell between the nine public schools surveyed by the Clarendon Commission (discussed in chapter two) and elementary education for the working classes which had been the reserve of the Newcastle Commission. The Taunton Commission concluded that there were three grades of parents. The 'first' grade parents were those who wished their children to receive schooling up to and beyond the age of 18, and who had "no wish to displace the classics from their present position in the forefront of English education".[392] These 'first' grade parents represent the attitudes of those associated with the large public schools, and such an education was intended to allow pupil to access class-appropriate careers and move within the upper echelons of society. These institutions have been discussed in the preceding two chapters. The 'second' grade of parents, wished their children to be educated to the age of 16 and were thought to seek a curriculum which was more varied. They were alleged to believe that 'though classics may be excellent, yet mathematics, modern languages, chemistry and the rudiments of physical science are essential" for the professional and business roles that these students were likely to occupy in later life.[393] The 'third grade' encompassed the parents of all other students and the requirements for such children were thought to be merely "very good reading, very good writing, very good arithmetic".[394]

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[390] W.A. Holdsworth, *The Education Act 1870 Popularly Explained Together with the Various Orders in Council Issued by the Education Department* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1870), 12.

[391] Smith, *A History of Elementary Education,* 288.

[392] *Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. I Report of the Commissioners,* (London: Printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1868), 16.

[393] *Schools Inquiry Commission,* 19

[394] *Schools Inquiry Commission,* 20

The Taunton Report itself acknowledged that "it is obvious that these distinctions correspond roughly, but by no means exactly, to the gradations of society. Those who can afford to pay more for their children's education will also as a general rule continue that education for a longer time".[395] These two reports consequently both reinforced and maintained the class based structure of the existing English education system, a situation that persisted well into the twentieth century. In doing so they reflected the views of contemporary society, as David Cannadine writes:

> For good or ill, with enthusiasm or regret, most Victorians believed that theirs was a viable hierarchical society, that individual identities based on superiority and subordination were a better guide than collective identities based on conflict or accommodation.[396]

These continued class divisions between schools are at the very essence of this chapter and the trends in the type and adoption of school uniform in different institutions can similarly be divided on class lines.

Middle Class Secondary Education

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of growth and change within the secondary education system, new schools, particularly girls' schools were founded and institutions moved location, amalgamated, expanded and modified their curriculums. Whilst the newly opened public schools met the needs at the upper levels of the middle classes, the expanding middle and lower portions continued to lack appropriate channels for education. The remodelled grammar schools and new county and high schools fulfilled this requirement, catering to the second 'grade' of parents defined by the Taunton Commission.[397] These schools maintained the academic emphasis of the public schools but expanded the subjects taught to include some that pertained more closely to professional working life such as accountancy, geography and modern languages. [398] Whilst not competing directly with the public schools, these establishments operated in a manner more closely aligned to them than to state elementary schooling. Consequently many aspects of

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[395] *Schools Inquiry Commission*, 16

[396] David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 108.

[397] Colin Brock, "Social and Spatial Disparity in the History of School Provision in England from the 1750s to the 1950s," in *An Introduction to the Study of Education*, ed. David Matheson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 142; P. W. Musgrave, *Society and Education in England Since 1800* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 39.

[398] Anne Digby and Peter Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 11-12.

public school life were borrowed and modified for this new environment and school uniform was no exception. Uniforms served as a way of demonstrating and publically defining the status of these institutions, separating them from lower-class schools and in this manner attracting potential pupils who sought both the assurance of middle class respectability and the potential for aspiration that they offered. This fits into a wider context of class imitation, with the lower-middle classes particularly anxious to achieve and retain a superior lifestyle, emulating the culture and morals, as well as appearances of the bourgeoisie.[399]

The 1908 prospectus for Tunbridge Wells County School for Girls included a short note on uniform, stating that: "Pupils must wear the School hat band, and provide themselves with slippers, drill costume and rubber soled shoes".[400] By 1914 this had been expanded to assert that: "Pupils are expected to wear a plain straw hat, with the School hat band, and to provide themselves with indoor shoes, drill costume, rubber soled shoes, and a second pair of stockings".[401] The mention of uniform in the prospectus demonstrates its role in advertising the school, whilst also reinforcing the expectations of those attending. In addition the choice of drill costume, or gymslip, and straw boater mirrors the wear of the girls' public schools. The addition of a 'second pair of stockings' in the 1914 edition is noteworthy in that it reinforces the respectable nature of the institution. Girls were expected to own and, in instances of damage or dirtiness, change into this second pair, preventing pupils attending school in holed or soiled clothing, clearly delineating the school from institutions where such wear may be acceptable.

The approaches by which schools implemented such uniforms closely followed the patterns laid down by the public schools. Regulated games wear often preceded general uniform and in many cases, these sports clothes were subsequently adopted as day uniform. In other instances there was a gradual increase in daywear standardisation into the twentieth century until outfits were codified in full, and strictly policed. The Girls' Day School Trust offers a range of examples of this first route whilst Burton Grammar School illustrates the second.

Member schools of the Girls' Day School Trust were operated independently and as such drew up their own rules and regulations, meaning that each school adopted uniform at a

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[399] Geoffrey Crossick, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain: A Discussion" in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914,* ed. Geoffrey Crossick, (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 46.

[400] Prospectus (1908), The County School for Girls, Tunbridge Wells, TWGGS Archive.

[401] Prospectus (1914), The County School for Girls, Tunbridge Wells, TWGGS Archive.

different time. In 1923 the Trust celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of its first school and consequently a number of resources survive from this period including a photograph album containing images taken in the same year at nine of the Trust schools. A review of the images in this album allows the practices of uniform implementation to be considered across a range of locations (although these are mostly confined to the South of England) at this date and any trends discerned. It should be noted that it is likely that at least some of these photographs were staged for the album and thus uniform may have been more carefully controlled than was normal practice in an establishment. This aside, the images still allow a representation of uniform aspiration even if they do not entirely reflect day to day norms.

Photographs from Clapham (1900), Croydon (1874) and Portsmouth High Schools (1882), show closely regulated uniforms with all girls pictured in matching gymslips and blouses.[402] This is also the case at Brighton and Hove High School (1876), which recorded in the same year that the school dress was a green tunic, which is to be worn with:

> (b) green girdle
>
> (c) green knickers of the same colour as the tunic
>
> (d) Tussore blouse to be made with round collar and long sleeves with looses cuffs[403]
>
> (e) black stockings

The above dress, being compulsory for Gymnastics is worn generally throughout the School.[404]

At Kensington (1873), Putney (1893) and Streatham Hill (1887) the gymslips are uniform, but disparity in leg wear (stockings, long socks), blouses (collar style and colour) and neckwear may be noted in the images, suggesting that some items were regulated, but not others. Only two of the schools featured in the album had not yet adopted a day uniform by 1923 and whilst many of the girls in the South Hampstead (1876) and Sheffield (1878)

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[402] Commemorative Album, 1923, GDS Archives (GDS/26/1/2), Institute of Education, University of London.

[403] A type of wild silk, variable in weight, quality and expense depending on its source and method of weaving. Some types were washable.

[404] Brighton and Hove High School Dress Regulations and Directions, box Brighton and Hove High School, GDS Archives (GDS/12/4/5), Institute of Education, University of London.

images wear gymslips, others can be seen wearing sweaters, skirts and djibbah style dresses.[405]

All these schools demonstrate the adoption of gymslips to a greater or lesser extent and as indicated by Brighton and Hove this usually occurred through the initial codification of games wear which was then worn throughout the day. It is hard, however, to find any clear correlations, such as the wealth of attendees or proximity to influential institutions, with the differing levels of uniform enforcement expressed within the schools of the Girls' Day School Trust at this juncture. It, therefore, must be assumed that within the context of the Girls' Day School Trust more localised pressures such as the views of the headmistress or influence from parents or the pupils were at play in this period. This would mirror the situation in girls' public schools, discussed in chapter three, in which the influence and views of headmistresses and senior staff were hugely influential in the process of uniform adoption.

On the other hand at Burton Grammar School items of daywear were regulated prior to a full uniform being introduced. Pupils remembered that at the turn of the century:

> There was no school uniform except for the school cap, which was a pork-pie, or pill-box shape, with a postage stamp badge showing the school crest sewn on the side, and worn on the back of the head.[406]

This state of affairs continued until the First World War, with former student H.J.Wain stating that:

> There was no attempt at uniformity in dress. The only distinguishing mark of a Burton Grammar School boy was his cap, which was marked with alternate bands of red and blue, each band one inch in width. These caps were conspicuous at a distance, and any boy infringing a rule was careful to take off his cap before doing so![407]

Uniform was introduced in the aftermath of the First World War and by the 1930s:

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[405] Commemorative Album, 1923, GDS Archives (GDS/26/1/2)

[406] W.A.Balfry (1897-1901), Memories of Burton Grammar School, Burton Grammar School Archive.

[407] H.J.Wain (1907-1911), Memories of Burton Grammar School, Burton Grammar School Archive.

Uniform, which was strictly enforced, was either blue blazer, grey flannels, white or grey shirt with blue & red school tie, and blue cap with a broad red band at the back or a grey suit. These had to be purchased at either Tarvers or Ellis & Sons.[408]

This is very much in line with uniform styles and processes of adoption at boys' public schools of the period. Thus, unsurprisingly new girls' schools seem to have followed the example set by public girls' schools and the same was true of boys' schools and their public counterparts. Overall from the schools surveyed in the chapter it appears, as in the public schools, that girls' schools were more likely to follow the route of games wear as uniform and boys' schools the gradual codification of daywear, although this is obviously drawing conclusions from a small sample of a much larger whole.[409]

These divergent approaches, however, follow a certain degree of logic in that they can be attributed to the significant gender differences in children's clothing of the period. The corseted and full-length nature of girls' clothing in the Edwardian period was considerably more restrictive than the average set of boys' clothes.[410] Whilst both sexes developed specially designed items for the sports field, boys could change back into their normal clothes after games and still retain a degree of freedom that was not available to girls. One of the primary roles that girls' uniform sought to fulfil was to allow increased freedom of movement and this was hard to obtain by adapting normal daywear. Boys' uniforms, on the other hand, without such pressures, tended to develop from the ordinary suits that were already widely worn by schoolboys.

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[408] Ted Warren (1936-42), Memories of Burton Grammar School, Burton Grammar School Archive.

[409] In fact all the schools surveyed in this chapter conform to this gender distinction

[410] Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children's Costume* (London: Batsford, 1977), 129-131.

Fig. 1: *The Playground at the County School for Girls, Tunbridge Wells*, 1913 [411]

In these examples the First World War and interwar period appears to be the key phase in uniform adoption and this is corroborated by other sources. Photographs from Tunbridge Wells County School from 1913 show the drill slips mentioned in the prospectus being worn by pupils (fig. 1) and this was made compulsory throughout the day in the early 1920s, when the uniform was further formalised by the addition of a blazer.[412] At Dartford County School there was similarly no uniform except for games in the early years and a photograph from 1908 shows girls in sports uniforms of the Dio Lewis design.[413] Photographs of younger pupils in day wear from the same date, show the majority of girls wearing either their games tunic or a gymslip and blouse, with a variety of neckwear including, wide frilled collars, ties and bow ties. By 1914 the games garment had been redesigned as a green serge gymslip and this was made compulsory school uniform in the same year.[414]

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[411] *The Playground at the County School for Girls, Tunbridge Wells,* 1913, black and white photograph, TWGGS Archive.

[412] *Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School 1905-2005* (Tunbridge Wells: Published by TWGSS, 2005), 63.

[413] Dawn Catten & Jean Dyke*, 100 Years On; Dartford County School; 1904 to 2004* (Dartford: Privately Published, 2004), 6.

[414] Catten & Dyke, *100 Years On; Dartford County School; 1904 to 2004*, 5.

Uniform adoption was not always a smooth process, however, as Sara Burstall, headmistress of Manchester High School in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century discovered, writing in 1933, she noted that:

> In 1902 we made an attempt to introduce the minimum of school uniform and were met at once with a host of difficulties. Some mothers said that the school colour did not suit the girls' complexion, and others objected as they thought the uniform hat the badge of a charity-school, and a social degradation…we had to go very slowly at first and it was a very long time before the uniform gymnastic tunic, so popular to-day, became possible with us.[415]

The early date of these attempts explains the problems faced to some extent, as girls' school uniform was yet to enter the popular understanding. Predictably, notions of femininty came into play, but interestingly, ideas about uniform presenting the wrong class image are also raised and this reflects discussions in chapter two regarding the mixed-messages of school uniform depending on context.

By 1929, however, the column Women's Realm in the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* was confident in stating that:

> Most boarding schools and many day schools, have now a school uniform, and in many cases a mother finds it more economical for her schoolgirl daughter to wear her school coat and hat on many holiday occasions.[416]

This suggests that, not only, was school uniform becoming the norm, but that coats and hats were also widely regulated and that day schools were taking their lead in such matters from the boarding schools. The discussion of economy is also interesting and the wearing of school uniform outside the educational environment became increasingly prevalent as uniform moved down the class spectrum. It seems safe to assume that middle class children had fewer clothes than their upper class counterparts and so uniform items were probably subsumed into normal wardrobes to save unnecessary expense.

As noted with adoption practices, these timeframes also bear a great deal of similarity to those in girls' public schools. The later dates of foundation of the high schools and county

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[415] Sara A. Burstall, *Retrospect and Prospect: Sixty Years of Women's Education* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1933), 154.

[416] "Woman's Realm," *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette*, January 07, 1929, 7.

schools ensured that the pioneering, yet tentative period in winning acceptance for girls' education, whilst not having passed entirely, had, at the least, ameliorated conditions. This allowed these new schools to adopt uniforms from the outset or within years of opening in keeping with the changes in the public schools, rather than undergoing the initial period of reinforcement of femininity, domesticity and morality through fashionable and gender-correct dress.

These examples also make it apparent that there is an overriding trend amongst these schools for the adoption of gymslips as a standard design of uniform and even when such garments were not compulsory, they were widely worn by girls, for instance in the 1923 images of South Hampstead and Sheffield High Schools.[417] This is indicative of the pervasive role that the gymslip had assumed within society as the correct mode of dress for schoolgirls. This must, in part, be attributed to the high profile work of Madame Osterberg, in conjunction with factors such as its practicality and changes in the fashionable physique.[418] The fashions of the 1920s moved away from the mature and statuesque contours of the Edwardian period to a new young, slender and toned physical ideal. Clothes were designed to highlight youth and to enable older women to look younger.[419] The gymslip mirrored the straight dresses and boyish styles of the period and both emphasised youth and became symbolic of it, popularising the garment and adding to its public appeal.

Girls' themselves also appear to have played a role in uniform adoption, particularly within the field of middle class education. This influence is suggested within a series of letters in the *Hull Daily Mail* in 1921. These letters focused on the introduction of additional pieces of uniform at Newlands High School (including a blazer and hat) which extended the uniform requirements beyond the tunic and blouse which were already standard wear. When the new items were branded expensive and unnecessary by one correspondent, the school responded in a published letter to the paper, arguing that:

> The school blazer and panama hat have been designed in answer to repeated requests from
> the representative of the girls who sit on joint committees with the headmistress and

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[417] See also Patricia Campbell Warner, "The Gymslip: The Origins of the English Schoolgirl Tunic," *Dress* 22, no. 1 (1995), 45-46.

[418] Paul Atkinson, "Fitness, Feminism and Schooling," in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman; Her Cultural and Physical World*, ed. Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 120.

[419] Susan J. Vincent, *The Anatomy of Fashion; Dressing the Body from the Renaissance to Today* (Oxford: Berg, 2009), 166.

members of the staff. The headmistress has not definitely stated that either of these extravagant articles of dress is in the least degree compulsory.[420]

Similar references may be found in the *Manchester Guardian* of 1934 which notes that the French berets worn at Brownhills School, Tunstall "originated from a suggestion made by the girls themselves"[421] and in the *The Times* (1939) which indicates that although the public school garments of Roedean and Wycombe Abbey were established and immovable, other "school-heads of today are not above taking the advice not only of the parents but of the girls themselves".[422]

Whilst these references are limited, they point at a wider trend of involvement from pupils, particularly girls, in their own school appearances. Conversely I have been unable to find any similar references to girl-led involvement in uniform matters at the public schools, although this does not mean that they don't exist. The agency of these girls in the design of their school uniform is also an area which does not appear to have been explored at all in current literature. Why then, does it seem that middle class girls were more active than their upper class counterparts in such arenas?

As suggested by *The Times* perhaps notions of tradition were beginning to be associated with girls' public school uniforms making them less open to change than the clothing of middle class schools. Aspiration may also play a part, the associations that exist today between uniform and 'good schools' were already growing prevalent and uniform was beginning to be viewed as an indicator of the respectability and academic ambition of an institution. This is articulated by Florence Atherton, who left elementary school in 1912 to find work:

> I noticed there was some kind of distinction between the girls who went to a high school and those that had to go out working for a living. I've always wanted to go to a nice school and wear uniform. It's strange that isn't it?[423]

Florence clearly associated a 'nice school' with one that wore uniform and for girls that were destined for lives other than those of moneyed leisure, respectability was vitally

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[420] "Editorial," *Hull Daily Mail*, May 06, 1921, 3.

[421] "French Berets for Schoolgirls," *Manchester Guardian*, April, 12, 1934, 6.

[422] "Back to School," *Times*, Monday, September 11, 1939, 6.

[423] Florence Atherton, "Florence Atherton," in *Edwardian Childhoods*, ed. Thea Thompson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 109.

important, perhaps even more so than for the wealthy. Consequently girls were eager for their school to be categorised thusly. For those girls intending to enter newly accessible careers, stricter and more tailored uniforms also spoke of academic attainment on a level with the public schools, regardless of gender.

The desire for school uniform amongst middle-class girls can also be set in the context of the rise in schoolgirl literature. Initially developing as a genre in the 1850s, schoolgirl stories were popularised through periodicals such as the *Girls' Own Paper* and cheaper weekly papers from the Amalgamated Press including *Girls' Friend* (1899-1931) and *Girls' Reader* (1908-1915).[424] Despite these different publications being targeted variously at the middle and lower classes, the stories were predominantly set in expensive and selective boarding schools, which offered either aspiration or an escape fantasy depending on the readership.[425] The genre was brought to wider attention by Angela Brazil who published her first novel *The Fortunes of Philippa* in 1906. Brazil broke with tradition and wrote from the viewpoint of the schoolgirl for the first time, replicating the language and limiting the moral overtones but retaining the exclusive settings. She was hugely popular in her lifetime, publishing a further forty seven full length novels and numerous short stories as well as inspiring later authors, including Dorita Fairlie Bruce, creator of Dimsie, Elinor Brent-Dyer (The Chalet School series) and Elsie J. Oxenham (The Abbey School books).[426] The interwar years were the heyday of the girls' school story with 900 new books being published between 1921 and 1940 and a proliferation in magazines and papers, many dedicated entirely to girls' school stories including *School Friend* (1919-1929), *Schoolgirls' Own* (1921-1936) and *Schoolgirls' Weekly* (1922-1939). [427]

The schools featured in these stories were 'good' schools where girls were happy, fair play was prioritised and excellent results were achieved at games and work. In the majority of such books the girls were also shown in both the text and images wearing uniform and this helped to cement the link between uniforms and high quality schooling for many readers,

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[424] Mary Cadogan & Patricia Craig, *You're a Brick Angela! A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1976), 127-130.

[425] Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 93-95.

[426] Gillian Freeman, *The Schoolgirl Ethic. The Life and Work of Angela Brazil,* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 25.

[427] Rosemary Auchmuty, "The School Story from Brazil to Bunty," in *School Stories from Bunter to Buckeridge. Papers from a Children's Literature Conference held at Roehampton Institute, London in 1998,* ed. Nicholas Tucker (Lichfield: Pied Piper Publishing, 1998), 42.

very few of which would have had first-hand experience of such schools.[428] Characters were also identified through their dress and the individuals which stepped outside the sartorial boundaries of uniformity and conformity were invariably foreign, morally unsound or both (this is also noted in chapter two in relation to boys' school stories).

Bessie Bunter is one such example of moral and sartorial non conformity. Bessie was the fictional sister to Billy Bunter, a central character in the Greyfriars School stories published in the weekly story paper *The Magnet* between 1908 and 1940. These tales sometimes featured a nearby girls' school Cliff House and it was in this context that Bessie first appeared. In 1919, in an attempt to replicate the success of *The Magnet,* a new magazine aimed specifically at girls was brought out, *The School Friend,* and this featured stories set at Cliff House in which Bessie was a reoccurring feature. Bessie was given very similar characteristics to her brother in that she was greedy, told lies and cheated.[429] She is portrayed in the cover image of the issue (fig. 2) as an overweight figure dressed gaudily and inappropriately for her school surroundings next to two of her more conventional peers. Thus smart, neat school uniforms were not only associated with good schools but with good girls, the heroines of the literature so greedily devoured by so many school-age girls.
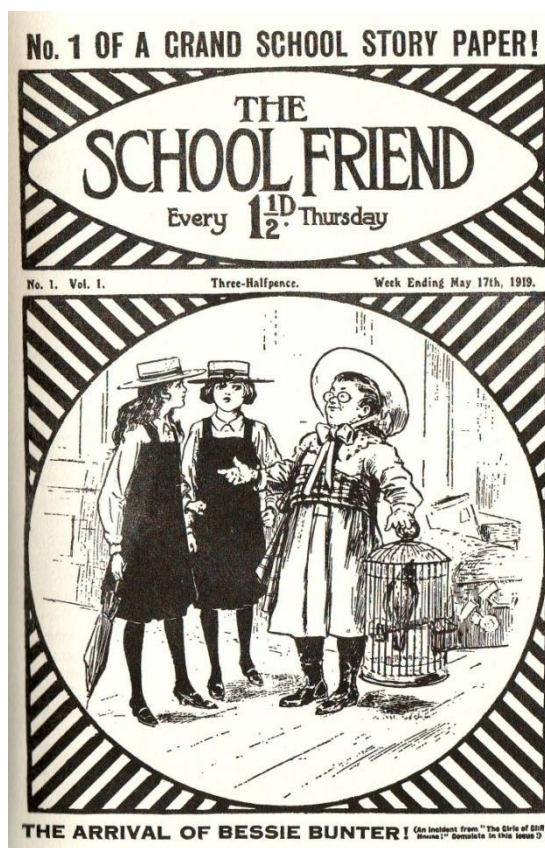
Fig 2: *The Arrival of Bessie Bunter*, 1919[430]

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[428] Although uniforms appear in all the school series mentioned above as well as in the works of later authors such as Enid Blyton, there are a few exceptions. Books reflected the current situation at girls' public schools and so early stories reinforced feminine dress in the same manner as the schools and this can be seen in some of the work of L. T. Meade.

[429] Mary Cadogan, *Chin up, Chest Out Jemima: A Celebration of the Schoolgirls' Story* (Haslemere: Bonnington Books, 1989), 12-14.

[430] *The Arrival of Bessie Bunter,* 1919, illustration from *SchoolFriend*, May 17, 1919, 1.

These publications also propagated new ideas of adolescent femininity that emerged from the turn of the twentieth century. During the Victorian period puberty formed the boundary between childhood and adult life; at which juncture girls were expected to give up energetic physical activity, wear long skirts and corsets, tie their hair up and conform to the strict rules and boundaries of adult femininity. These ideas were initially transmitted through the early female education system, but later came into conflict with educational ideas associated with exercise, freedom of movement and academic achievement.[431] Schoolgirls were consequently granted an extended period of youth which did not conform to either the rules of childhood or adulthood, but during which some of the freedoms of childhood could be retained and adult femininity was, instead, adopted on leaving school.[432]

This idea of a separate period of adolescence was reinforced by the emergence of the first widespread and distinctive youth cultures, which David Fowler argues appeared in the interwar period and were associated with young wage earners and their unique leisure activities organised around cinemas, dance halls and jazz music.[433] Whilst these adolescents originated from a different class to the majority of schoolgirls in education beyond the age of twelve, parallels may be drawn between the two and both indicate an acceptance and growth of youth cultures which were discontinuous from adult and childhood patterns of expectation. This increased emphasis on youth had a consequent impact on adult culture in which a youthful appearance became fashionable. This can be noted in the stylish pre-pubescent body shape of the 1920s and the growing emphasis of youth in health and beauty advertising and products. The post-war impacts of this change in emphasis will be discussed in chapter five.

Elementary Education for the Working Classes

As a result of the 1870 and 1880 Education Acts which made the education of all children (the 'third' grade) until the age of twelve compulsory, hundreds of board schools were founded and large groups of children from the most deprived areas of society entered school for the first time.[434] These brought with them a unique set of problems related to

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[431] Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 101-106.

[432] These ideas are discussed in greater detail in chapter three

[433] David Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage-Earners in Interwar Britain* (London: The Woburn Press, 1995), 105.

[434] John Roach, *A History of Secondary Education in England 1800-1870* (London: Longman, 1986), 303.

their poverty from ragged and unsuitable clothing to lack of attendance due to family requirements for wage-earning and household management.[435] This necessarily placed a focus on addressing these problems prior to implementing uniform. As compulsory schooling became increasingly normalised, however, school uniforms were introduced, initially on a voluntary basis and these were later made a requirement, usually in the interwar years.

In the mid-nineteenth century it was the norm for board schools to charge minimal fees to the pupils (up to 9d per child per week).[436] It was understood that these would be waived in instances of extreme poverty, although school authorities were often suspicious of such claims, as displayed by The Newcastle Commission in 1861:

> It appears from our evidence that though poverty may be at times alleged as a cause of absolute non attendance it is more commonly an excuse than a justification inasmuch as many parents of the very poorest class send their children to school…[however] the managers of schools are not so strict in enforcing the payment of the full fee to allow a child often to be excluded from school by the poverty of its parents[437]

The level of these fees were not set and schools were entitled to fix their charges as they saw fit and these tended to reflect the comparative prosperity of their location. As a result costs varied by area and from school to school creating a system where schools reinforced the local social structure, with those charging higher fees attracting a greater number of the respectable working classes than those with low fees and a higher percentage of free places tending to operate in areas of significant poverty. In locations where the catchment areas of two board schools overlapped one often came to be viewed as more respectable than the other through the distinction of higher fees and, in some instances, selective intake. [438]

This difference between the rough and respectable working classes has been widely discussed in other histories and has generated a significant amount of debate on the exact definition of the two, along with the origins and development of such polarisations. Whilst each class has many gradations of status, the designation of respectability operated as a definite cultural boundary within the working classes, difference was seen between families

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[435] Elizabeth Roberts, "The Family" in *The Working Class in England 1875-1914*, ed. John Benson (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 22.

[436] Clare Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in Late-Victorian England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 26.

[437] *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England*, 178.

[438] W. E. Marsden, *Educating the Respectable; A Study of Fleet Road Board School, Hampstead, 1879-1902* (London: The Woburn Press, 1991), 34-35.

who endeavoured to maintain order, cleanliness and self-discipline and those that did not, although this was not necessarily related to occupation or income.[439] Respectability was more than this, however, it encompassed a rejection of illegal and immoral activities, a suppression of sexuality and an emphasis on the qualities of punctuality and obedience, qualities which were deemed appropriate by the middle and upper classes.[440] Respectability, as in all classes, was projected through external appearance, although the rhetoric of appropriate dress varied between them. The upper classes were expected to appear stylish and tasteful, whilst the clothes of the lower classes should be economical, durable and practical and where, necessary, carefully patched or mended.[441]

Although board schools will be discussed in general terms, it is important to note that such differences also existed within the system and that schools with a higher 'respectable' intake were more likely to adopt elements of uniform clothing, whilst those with a higher proportion of 'rough' children were increasingly likely to focus their attention on problems such as cleanliness, ragged or lack of clothing and attendance which were less prevalent in the respectable schools due to the social and personal virtues associated with, and reinforced by, respectability. This disparity in schools, once established, was difficult to eliminate and, although improved by the abolition of fees in 1891 many institutions retained these associations, whether positive or negative, well into the twentieth century, replicating the class division found in the wider education system.

Many of the early board school children came from families with no prior experience of education either in terms of literacy or the behaviour expected in such an environment. Their attendance created social and disciplinary problems, but also highlighted, for the first time, the serious scale of childhood poverty, lack of clothing and ill health.[442] An idea of the task faced by teachers can be garnered from a lecture given by the school inspector William Jolly in 1876 on *Physical Education in Common Schools* in which he condemned the prevalent habits amongst schoolgirls of*:*

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[439] See for instance Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People; Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 151-157; Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 2-3; P. E. Razzell, & R. W. Wainwright, *The Victorian Working Class: Selections from the "Morning Cronicle"* (London: Routledge, 2013), xxxiii-xxxiv.

[440] Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place; An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 5.

[441] Karen Sayer, "'A Sufficiency of Clothing': Dress and Domesticity in Victorian Britain," *Textile History* 33, no. 1, (2002), 112.

[442] Pamela Horn, *The Victorian and Edwardian Schoolchild* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1989), 25.

…wiping the hands on the dress…cleaning the boots on the dress, wiping the pen by sprinkling the ink on the floor, sucking it, drawing it through the hair, rubbing it on the dress.[443]

With such issues requiring attention, teachers were left to impose whatever standards of dress and hygiene they thought achievable and appropriate.[444] Without the financial aid to improve clothing directly those in authority tended to confine their efforts to encouraging personal cleanliness. This is reflected in the advice given by The Liverpool School Board in 1879, who recommended that teachers should, "set an example of neatness in your own dress and person and *insist on the children having clean hands and faces*" and this may be viewed as the very early stages in the regulation of the appearance of board school pupils.[445]

In some areas, localised campaigns arose for the introduction of state funded uniform to such schools, as demonstrated by correspondence in the *Essex County Chronicle* in 1910:

> To the Editor
> …It is a well-known fact that in these parts children have to go long distances to school, and, in the winter, often arrive with their clothes and boots dripping wet. It would be a great advantage if arrangements could be made so that on these occasions children could change their clothes at school, and have them dried before they return home, wearing a school uniform during the day. No doubt this would involve expense, but the health and well-being of the children should be the first consideration
> Edward G Maxted, Chair of the Dunmow and District Socialist Society[446]

The following year a similar plea was made in *The Cornishman* as part of an article discussing schooling and motherhood amongst the working classes:

> Attached to every school there should be ample provision of hot and cold baths…and at least one bath a week should be compulsory for every child. A simple, sensible school uniform should be compulsory. That for the girls and younger children, at any rate, should be made, washed and mended by the elder girls as part of their domestic training[447]

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[443] Quoted in Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People*, 337.

[444] Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in Late-Victorian England*, 25-26.

[445] *Suggestions of the Liverpool School Board to the Managers of Public Elementary Schools* (London: W. Isbister, 1879), 15.

[446] "The Care of the Children," *Essex County Chronicle*, August 12, 1910, 7.

[447] "One and All," *Cornishman*, May 18, 1911, 4.

Although these suggestions do not appear to have been implemented they did help to raise attention to the continuing issues of unsatisfactory clothing for children in poorer areas. They also indicate the already prevalent and understood nature of the concept of school uniform within British society demonstrating how widespread it had become in a relatively short period of time.

Despite education being compulsory for both sexes, nineteenth-century curricula differed significantly for girls and boys, reflecting and reinforcing normal gender roles.[448] Thus girls were trained in domestic duties and one of the things teachers could do to assist the situation was to teach the sewing skills that allowed clothes to be mended and maintained and to encourage these practices. Annie Wilson who attended St Mary's Board School in 1901 from the age of three remembered in her early years at school that:

> Good manners were most important. And to be truthful in all things. And tidy in your person. And if ever you got a tear in your clothes she'd say, 'It's high time you learned to sew, you see'. They sort of instilled a personal pride in you.[449]

In making children aware of their personal appearance, it was argued that Board Schools had a significant refining effect on the school population. In a series of essays entitled *Studies of Boy Life in our Cities*, the social theorist Edward Urwick suggested that:

> Collars and ties are almost as common as rags were a few years ago; the bare-footed ragamuffin of popular imagination figures still as the frontispiece to well-meaning philanthropic appeals, but is no longer a common object of the streets…the civilising influence of the Board school has made him the exception instead of the rule.[450]

This is clearly hyperbole as other contemporary accounts suggest that clothing remained a significant issue. Florence Atherton, who attended Board School from 1903 clearly felt the distinction between herself as respectable working class and poorer pupils, stating that she had "seen some of the boys who've come with one shoe and one clog on. And they've had their trousers torn"[451] Rhetoric aside, however, it is fairly logical to suppose that repetitively

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[448] Meg Gomersall, *Working-Class Girls in Nineteenth-Century England; Life, Work and Schooling* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), 137.

[449] Annie Wilson, "Annie Wilson," in *Edwardian Childhoods*, ed. Thea Thompson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 92.

[450] E.J. Urwick, *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities* (London:J.M. Dent, 1904), xi.

[451] Atherton in *Edwardian Childhoods*, 109.

and insistently teaching children the importance of appearing clean and neat had an impact on personal and dress practices within the financial constraints that existed.

This assumption is supported by discernible improvements in the health and hygiene of children over the second half of the nineteenth century and this was attributed by contemporary commentators, in part at least, to the work of schools. Writing in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* in 1897, the educational hygiene campaigner Dr. James Kerr asserted that, "The influence of the home appears great, the direct effect of the school on national health is small, but its indirect effect through the home is very great". He then went on to caution, however, that when home influence and training "are opposed to the schooling, the latter is almost wasted energy".[452] This suggests that although schools could encourage improvement they could only bring about change within the financial and social restrictions that already existed.

In the inter-war period certain elements of uniform began to be introduced. This indicates a need to identify pupils with an institution in order to police their behaviour and reflects the increasing normality of school uniform across classes and genders. In general terms headwear often came first with caps for boys and hat bands for girls introduced. Hats were a normal part of dress and almost universally worn. Recalling her late nineteenth century childhood in Cambridge, Gwen Raverat stated that:

> Males and females alike, we had always to wear something on our heads out of doors. Even for children playing in the garden this was absolutely necessary. According to the weather we were told that we should catch a cold or get sunstroke if we went out bareheaded. But the real reason was that it was proper - that the hat was an essential part of the dress.[453]

Hats were, therefore, an indicator of basic propriety. As Oliver Wendell Holmes observed in 1858, "The hat is the *ultimum moriens* of respectability"; essentially it was both a mark of decency and the last remnant of respectability when all other things had ceased to be so.[454]

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[452] James Kerr, "School Hygiene, in its Mental, Moral, and Physical Aspects," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 60, no. 3 (1897), 620.

[453] Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece: A Cambridge Childhood* (Bath: Clear Press Ltd, 2003), 259-260.

[454] Oliver Wendall Holmes, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (Boston: Phillips Sampson & Company, 1859), 206.

In practical terms they were also cheap to produce and purchase, easily identifiable if manufactured in a striking design, and long-lasting as pupils were unlikely to outgrow them.

Beyond hats there was a greater initial emphasis on promoting girls' uniform than boys, although both were eventually adopted and these followed the gymslip and suit patterns laid down at the public, county and grammar schools. Gym slips were advocated as the most serviceable garment for school wear and girls were encouraged to wear them throughout the day with a washable blouse.[455] This differential in uniform application may be attributed to a number of factors but is likely to originate with the greater variety of clothes worn by girls, in conjunction with the established view that females were more prone to vanity and unnecessary considerations of dress. The narrower definitions of socially correct boys' wear, on the other hand, allowed less opportunity and desire for deviation from the norm. Throughout the Victorian period vanity and idleness were viewed as uniquely feminine vices and subversive of the feminine ideals of economy and self-sacrifice. A love of finery was regularly linked to prostitution and girls were inculcated to view extravagance of dress as both foolish and morally dangerous.[456] Early arguments against female education suggested that it would encourage unnecessary and unfeminine pride in pupils. As a response girls' schools consciously condemned vanity, a pattern which continued into the twentieth century.[457]

The adoption of uniform was initially optional, but schools encouraged pupils to conform to the new regulations through commendation of those that did. This caused problems for families who were struggling financially and could not afford to purchase the required items. A 1934 article in *The Hull Daily Mail* articulated these issues:

> It is becoming a nightmare to poor mothers who are doing their best to keep the children neat and clean, only to have them come home in tears because some other child, possibly with a father in good and regular work, has been brought out in front of the class in regulation white blouse and navy tunic as an example, the others being told that they should all come to the school like that! If it is necessary let the school authorities provide them…There is absolutely no money today for new clothes…we have to remake old

[455] Alice Guppy, *Children's Clothes 1939-1970; The Advent of Fashion* (Poole: Blandford Press, 1978), 28.

[456] Mariana Valverde, "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse," *Victorian Studies* 32, no. 2 (1989), 178.

[457] Gorham, *The Victorian Girl,* 54-55.

clothes; the older girls have to have things given them by others. It is a cruel injustice that they should be shown up in front of a whole school, as it is not their fault.[458]

By attempting to create external uniformity, institutions initially generated internal divisions instead, with pupils from better off families embracing the new uniforms, but those from poorer backgrounds unable to do so. This served to highlight the disparities in family income amongst the pupils and created tensions in which students were excluded by their peers based on their appearance. This period of change eventually passed with new starters being bought a uniform upon their entry into school. Particularly in the case of gymslips, this was often expected to last for the whole period of schooling and would be initially bought large in order to do so.[459]

Mixed Classes in Secondary Education

The Education Act of 1907 established a system of scholarships and free places to allow academically able children who might not be able to afford the fees, access to secondary education.[460] This meant that some children from poorer backgrounds gained admittance to the predominantly middle class secondary schools. In many cases this resulted in class conflict particularly with respect to the visible differences in clothing and appearance between the two. The introduction of uniform, however, helped to eliminate this visual disparity, lessening clothing-based stigma, and allowing children of different classes to associate on an academic footing.

Annie Wilson gained a free place at Huntingdon Street School in 1908 at the age of 10. It was a school for "children of business people mostly…boys and girls of better class people".[461] Here she found her treatment by other pupils to be based on her background and much of this centred on differences in clothing and clothing practices:

> Before I went to Huntingdon Street school I can remember our children in my class we were made to make a dress or whatever we got on last so very long, we weren't allowed to come to the table without a white pinafore on…Mother wouldn't let me go to Huntingdon

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[458] "School Clothes Which Make Mothers Worry," *Hull Daily Mail*, June 15, 1934, 8.

[459] Guppy, *Children's Clothes 1939-1970*, 28.

[460] Musgrave, *Society and Education in England Since 1800*, 87

[461] Wilson in *Edwardian Childhoods*, 93.

Street without a pinafore. And I can hear the gasp when I walked in with this. It was quite a nice pinafore. It was white. And the teacher said to me 'You could have hung your pinafore up in the cloakroom, Annie.' I said, 'But Mother wouldn't let me – I'd soil my dress perhaps, you see.' She said, 'Well it's the rules here we don't have you in here with a pinafore.' A lot of snobbishness there was…Quite a few of the girls who were comfortable, had good positions and got lovely clothes and that kind of thing and – they'd sort of pull aside, they wouldn't pass you on the stairs if they could help it. And they used to look at us as if we were tramps in the street.[462]

Annie was singled out by both the teacher and other pupils for conforming to the working class practice of wearing an apron to cover her clothes. Pinafores made from light, easily washable fabric became popular in the early-1800s and were widely worn throughout the century by young children of a range of classes.[463] They were also worn by older children in contexts where shabby clothes needed to be disguised or laundering heavy clothing such as full skirts was difficult. The pinafore protected such clothing from dirt and wear and tear, enabling them to be worn for longer without washing. Although they protected garments, white pinafores also showed dirt and stains clearly and this created a further division within pinafore wearers with those of limited means wearing dark or patterned pinafores which showed wear less obviously. [464]

The practice of pinafore wearing continued into the inter-war period and this can be seen in a 1922 image of an elementary school group from a working class area of Manchester in which the vast majority of girls are dressed in pinafores over their clothes (fig. 3). Despite the standard nature of this custom within Annie's normal social environs and at her previous school, within the middle class context of secondary education, where children had more than one outfit and greater access to servants, laundresses or better laundry facilities, this was deemed socially incorrect and she was chastised for her behaviour.

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[462] Wilson in *Edwardian Childhoods*, 93.

[463] Phillis Cunnington & Anne Buck, *Children's Costume in England 1300-1900* (London: A and C Black Limited, 1978), 166-167.

[464] Clare Rose "Continuity and Change in Edwardian Children's Clothing," *Textile History* 42, no. 2 (2011),152-153.

Fig. 3: *St Williams RC Girls' School*, 1922[465]

Similar clothing and class divisions were observed at boys' secondary schools as H.J.Wain a pupil at Burton Grammar school between 1907-1911 noted:

> At the Grammar School there was a distinction between "scholarship boys" and those whose parents paid for their education. As a rule the former came from poorer homes and were not so well-dressed, but the masters made no discrimination, and the majority of fee-paying boys were tolerant, though there were a few little snobs.[466]

In instances such as these the introduction of uniform served to disguise social background and remove the visible distinctions in class which differences in clothing had created.

Although acting as a social leveller in some respects, uniforms caused other problems to families who had limited income. Whilst the school places remained free, uniform was an extra which had to be provided by the family and this acted as a deterrent to further education for many, particular prior to the First World War.[467] Advertising in 1920, Maynard's Girls' School give an insight into its costs:

> Maynard Girls' School, Exeter
> The Governors are prepared to offer a certain number of FREE places in the School, on the result of a competitive examination…The parents of any successful candidate…will be

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[465] *St Williams RC Girls' School*, 1922, black and white photograph, Personal Collection.

[466] H.J.Wain (1907-1911), Memories of Burton Grammar School, Burton Grammar School Archive.

[467] Roberts in *The Working Class in England*, 22.

obliged to provide the text books required, approximate cost per year £2 and the school uniform for which the initial outlay would be about £3.[468]

£3 was a very significant sum of money for poorer families to find, comparable to the costs of private school uniforms today, and this outlay could be prohibitive to many. Some uniforms could be purchased second-hand or made at home to save money, but the variation between a shop supplied and homemade gymslip was often discernable to the trained eye, particularly if official patterns were not followed to the letter. This could, despite the adoption of a uniform, continue to mark scholarship children as different.[469] Thus a dichotomy was created in which uniform predominantly acted to disguise status, but it could also reveal class through subtle markers, even more so than in general wear as difference stands out more prominently against uniformity. Within the context of the majority of secondary schools, however, uniforms became a method by which social class was disguised rather than advertised and through which the identification of pupils to their institution rather than to their position in the class structure could be promoted.

The educative policy and legislation of the 1920s reflected new research in teaching and learning, notably theories surrounding genetic levels of intelligence. These suggested that children were born with a pre-determined level of attainment that they could reach and that this was higher for some than for others. Consequently the 1926 report *The Education of the Adolescent* (The Hadow Report) recommended that pupils should go to secondary school at eleven, but that this genetic difference should be catered for through a system of streaming between separate schools each catering to a differing level of ability.[470] These ideas were implemented variously, depending on location, relative motivation and funding, with the existing school infrastructure often being adapted to fit the new scheme and therefore many areas saw a disparity of facilities between schools.[471] This system was streamlined in the Norwood Report of 1943, which suggested the implementation of the Eleven Plus, an exam to judge aptitude and aid with the streaming process and placed schools into three distinct kinds; grammar, modern and technical which were to be non fee-paying and have

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[468] "Advertisement and Notices," *Western Times*, October 13, 1920, 1.

[469] Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918* (London: Routledge, 2002), 208.

[470] Musgrave, *Society and Education in England Since 1800*, 96

[471] David Rubinstein & Brian Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School 1926-1966*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 15-32.

equivalent amenities, but each cater for a different level of attainment. Schooling was also made compulsory until the age of fourteen in 1921.[472]

In this new educative and, in some areas increasingly accessible, secondary environment uniforms became a badge of honour, indentifying lower class wearers as academically successful. Roy Hattersley who won a scholarship to Sheffield City Grammar School in the early 1940s recalled that:

> Thanks to caps and scarves the difference between 'passing' and 'failing' was visible to every neighbour. Green, maroon and navy blazers were the raiment of success. Second-hand jackets handed down from elder brothers and sweaters hastily knitted by grandma were the apparel of defeat. The lucky parents regarded the weeks of outfitting as a period of public rejoicing. They announced the dates of their visits to the recommended outfitters as if they were events in the social calendar. Close relatives were invited to attend the scene of the actual purchase as if it were a wedding or christening…Aunt Annie accompanied my mother to Cole Brothers and paid for a blazer with crumpled old pound notes.[473]

Thus many less well-off families began to view entry into academic secondary education as offering the potential for professional and social advancement, to them school uniform came to symbolise this prospect. Outfitting successful children correctly became a family event in which members contributed to lessen the direct financial burden on the parents and the child was exhibited in their new uniform, representing their achievement to the local community.

From a purely visual perspective, few alterations in the styles of school uniform are discernable during the period discussed. Designs were initially borrowed from the public schools and although uniform requirements were naturally streamlined and, often, not as closely regulated as they moved downwards through the class system, the overall appearance of the schoolboy or girl changed very little as increasing numbers of schools adopted gymslips and blouses or blazers and caps. The meanings that such uniform projected, however, changed rapidly and varied by type of school and the wealth of the local community.

In the initial stages a clear correlation between class, income, class aspirations and the uptake of school uniform is apparent. Middle class secondary schools adopted uniforms in

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[472] Rubinstein and Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School,* 8.

[473] Roy Hattersley, *A Yorkshire Boyhood* (London: Abacus, 2003), 143.

imitation of the public schools and as a sign of respectability to separate them from lower class education. As uniforms became more prevalent, however, they became gradually accepted as a national norm for school children and they were introduced increasingly widely, a fact that caused financial concerns for many less-well off families. Despite this "by the end of the 1930s the average British schoolgirl's outfit was so well-know it was almost a national dress".[474]

As lower class children began to gain to access to secondary education through scholarships and free places, uniforms started to fulfil a new role. They moved from class delineator, excluding those who could not afford the secondary school fees to a method of disguising social background, in which the school identity was placed above the class circumstances of the individual. To these scholarship pupils, uniform also became a symbol of their academic success, representing the opportunities it allowed for social and professional advancement. Thus in the space of fifty years school uniform moved from a symbol of class, accessible only to the wealthy to an egalitarian and widely observed British custom which represented the potential, if not the widespread practice, for schooling to allow access to class mobility.

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[474] Guppy, *Children's Clothes 1939-1970*, 28.

Chapter Five
1939-Present: Fashion and Fancy Dress

Whack it up, girls! Bung the ball
Thro' Life's goalposts at the call.
Who can stay the Island Blood?
Rub their bustles in the mud!
Gallant hearts and bulldog pans,
Floreat St. Trinian's![475]

This chapter is split into two distinct, but temporally related, sections. The first part examines the changes to school uniform during the Second World War and throughout the rest of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. In this section I will argue that by 1939 school uniform was a universally understood symbol of the British educational system and had become a method by which social background could be disguised rather than highlighted (as discussed in chapter four). Thus whilst school uniform was relaxed during the War as a consequence of practical concerns, it was retained where possible from a strong desire to carry on as normal and the sense of national identity that that school garments had become imbued with, particularly important in a period of conflict when such an identity was at risk. Consequently the impacts of rationing and fabric shortages were limited and school uniform survived the War in its traditional form. In the post-war period relaxation of dress codes and teaching styles along with new fabric technologies and an increasingly vocal youth population led to a parallel relaxation of uniform policies and this continued until the 1990s when a backlash started to emerge. As uniforms become increasingly strict once more, new pressures have surfaced, most notably the increased influence of religious and cultural beliefs on dress practices and this has resulted in both debate and legislation. In the previous four chapters I have considered the effects of the social sphere and fashion on school uniform. The second part of this chapter will examine the reverse - the effects of school uniform on fashion and social norms and the increasing role of school uniform in social events and popular culture. This is primarily a twentieth century phenomena and the effect of publication of the St Trinian's cartoons, in conjunction with greater societal freedoms will be posited as the main driving force in this trend.

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[475] D.B. Wyndham, "St Trinian's Soccer Song," quoted in *The St Trinian's Story,* ed. Kaye Webb (Harmonsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963), 50.

Whilst the archives of some individual schools (including Wycombe Abbey, Roedean and Cheltenham Ladies College) were included in the research for this chapter, much of the information has been drawn from other sources - circulars from the Board of Trade, governmental reports, newspapers and publications aimed at the mass market. These are, not only, more prolific and accessible in this period, but give a better overall picture. In previous chapters a focus has been placed on particular types of schooling, this chapter, however, seeks to discuss uniform across all schools from public to state schooling. This perspective will allow a discussion of wider trends and these are most effectively gleaned from the media and other publically accessible sources.

Second World War

By late 1940 the majority of British wool was being redirected for use in army uniforms, imports of raw materials had dwindled and skilled workers and factories had been requisitioned for war work resulting in the prospect of civilian clothing shortages. This initiated government intervention along three lines - rationing, austerity and utility.[476] On June 1st 1941 clothing and footwear rationing was introduced by the British Board of Trade. This limited the number of clothing items that could be purchased by an individual including children through issued clothing coupons. Coupon allowances were gradually reduced throughout the war although children were granted extra to allow for growth. These controls were further extended with a series of austerity directives which effectively restricted the amount of fabric, decoration and trimmings used in the manufacture of all civilian clothes, saving cloth and labour time. This was followed, in 1942, by the introduction of the Utility Clothing Scheme, and the now iconic CC41 label, which provided good quality, reasonably priced and fashionable clothes that adhered to all clothing limitations.[477]

At the most basic level these policies meant that any new school uniform produced had to conform to the austerity regulations, therefore extra pleats, buttons and superfluous pockets were removed. It also necessitated some simplification of uniform clothing lists as children were not issued with sufficient ration coupons to purchase all the required items for entry

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[476] Jonathan Walford, *Forties Fashion: From Siren Suits to the New Look* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 38-39.

[477] Peter McNeil, "'Put Your Best Face Forward': The Impact of the Second World War on British Dress," *Journal of Design History* 6, no.1 (1993), 284-5.

into schools. The colour and design of overcoats and other coupon-heavy garments were relaxed and some accessories were removed. Cheltenham Ladies' College deemed hats unnecessary for everyday wear in 1942 and they became reserved only for church and special occasions. Due to lack of silk supplies and a focus on creating nylon for parachutes and other military items rather than for the domestic market, stockings were not available to the majority of people. Socks became a widespread and socially permissible alternative for girls and young women and their adoption is seen in some schools. For instance images of the North London Collegiate School being evacuated to Luton in 1939 show the traditional uniforms worn with either stockings or white socks (fig 1).

Fig. 1: *North London Collegiate School Evacuation to Luton*, 1939[478]

Many institutions, particularly public and private schools, however, clung tenaciously to their main uniform garments, Eton and Christ's Hospital being two prominent examples, although this can also be seen in other school contexts.[479] A 1944 photograph of Aysgarth School below (fig. 2) shows that, with the exception of a slight discrepancy in the colour of the jackets, a fully uniform appearance has been retained throughout the war. A similar picture is provided by correspondence between the headmistress and parents at North London Collegiate School. In a letter accompanying uniform lists in the early 1940s, parents were informed that:

[478] Evacuation to Luton, 1939, black and white photograph, box C1, History of the School 1915-1939, NLCS Archives

[479] Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children's Costume* (B.T. Batsford, London, 1977), 153.

This list of school uniform is a comprehensive one, containing all the items which were found necessary or desirable before the war; nearly all of these are still obtainable, but I am well aware of the difficulties arising from clothes' rationing and the need for economy, and shall naturally be sympathetic to them, and I am sure that parents will do all that is possible. The items which are most important are marked with a cross.[480]

Thus whilst some, small concessions were allowable, uniformity was to be conserved if at all possible. In 1941 parents were again reminded that this was the case and that: "The regular wear for girls on all occasions, except for games or gymnastics, is the school tunic with a long sleeved blouse, or the summer dress".[481]

Towards the end of the war, in 1945 summer hats proved too difficult to purchase and were made optional. This was explained in another letter to parents:

After careful consideration, in view of the shortage of summer hats, I have decided that, as an experiment, for the rest of this term the wearing of a school hat should be optional, provided that every girl wears the school badge on her way to and from school…I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all the parents for the way in which they have co-operated in the matter of school dress so far as coupons permit. I am most anxious that we should maintain our high standard in the matter of school dress, and I know you will help me in this just as you have done in the past.[482]

A 1942 uniform list from Wycombe Abbey again echoes this trend. The supplementary list of "items considered to be essential" still contains a colossal 31 pieces of clothing and footwear including a cloak, tunic and knickers, blazer (although a "cardigan not bought at school may be substituted") and seven pairs of shoes and boots.[483] This determination to carry on as usual during the conflict can be partly attributed to school uniforms being a prominent symbol of normality in a period of turmoil. It also demonstrates how closely uniform had become aligned with the identity and operation of such institutions – the requirement by the North London Collegiate School that the badge should continue to be worn to and from school is instructive. Uniform was associated, too, with notions of Britishness and these links were discussed in chapter two. Few other European countries had any form of school uniform tradition, making the British appearance unique within the

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[480] Letter, E.G. Harold to parents, 1940s, box B3, I. M. Drummond, NLCS Archives

[481] Letter, E.G. Harold to parents, April, 1941, box C1, 1930s and 1940s, NLCS Archives

[482] Letter, Kitty Anderson to parents, June 20, 1945, box: A2, History of the School 1941-1950, NLCS Archives.

[483] Uniform list for Wycombe Abbey School, January, 1942, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

context of the conflict. In addition educational structures and traditions had been transferred to colonial countries throughout the Victorian and Edwardian era and in most locations these were retained, linking the British school uniform model with communal notions of Empire. In a period when national identity was under threat, school uniform consequently assumed a wider symbolism of defiance and public pride.

Fig. 2: *Aysgarth School*, 1944[484]

School uniforms were, not only, historically less common in Continental Europe but when in existence, carried cultural meanings which were strongly class-based, more akin to the status distinctions seen in Victorian schooling rather than the more egalitarian meanings that had become associated with twentieth century British school uniform.[485] Uniformed youth organisations, however, were common and often prominently associated with state-sponsored movements, particularly in countries promoting Fascist ideologies. Whilst the Nazis banned the nearest thing to German school uniform – *Schülermützen,* or school hats on class grounds they were very keen to promote uniforms for the Hitler Youth and these uniforms, along with those of the Italian Balilla and Avanguardisti, were used as a tool to control and indoctrinate young members and alienate those that did not conform to an ideal physical appearance. These organisations were clearly delineated from educative

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[484] *Aysgarth School*, 1944, black and white photograph, Personal Collection.

[485] See chapter four for a more in-depth discussion of this process.

establishments and in some areas there was direct antagonism between the two.[486] In using uniform in this manner, the clothes and overall appearance of these organisations assumed heavy political associations. Whilst parallels can be drawn between the ritual, pageantry and the emphasis on manly qualities associated with these uniforms and British public school uniform along with their dual and contradictory message of sameness and hierarchy, Fascist youth uniforms were seen in Britain as an oppressive symptom of the regimes that created and imposed them.[487] In direct contrast British school uniforms were viewed as a sign of freedom and a representation of the core national values that were being fought for – stability, equality and education.

Retaining school identity through uniform was particularly important when a school was evacuated, especially if it was billeted on or amalgamated with another school and uniform acted as a clear distinguishing factor in these cases. School uniform suppliers were also keen to retain uniform wear, arguing that it would be false economy to abolish uniforms and that existing supplies and specially dyed fabric would then be wasted. Instead they encouraged schools to run down the stocks of school uniforms and fabric until completely exhausted.[488]

The sustained ubiquity of school uniform is reflected in the 1941 publication *Sew and Save* which offered a range of advice to the housewife struggling to clothe her family:

> Simplicity should be the keynote for the schoolgirl. The most important item in her wardrobe is, of course, her school uniform, usually a gym-slip and blouse. It is also usually the most expensive, while being at the same time indispensable. If, for the sake of economy, you decide to make it yourself, remember there are certain very definite rules which must be followed if the child's schooldays are not to be made miserable by wearing incorrect or ill-fitting uniform.[489]

Thus uniforms continued to be worn at a significant proportion of schools and uniform wear was considered the norm rather than the exception particularly in schools with lengthy uniform traditions. The extract also hints at the maintenance of strict rules concerning the garments themselves and this, too, is a survival from pre-war formality in such schools.

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[486] H,W.Koch, *The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-45* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1975), 169.

[487] Perry Wilson, "The Nation in Uniform? Fascist Italy, 1919-1943," *Past and Present* 221, no.1. (2013), 240-241.

[488] Alice Guppy, *Children's Clothes 1939-1970: The Advent of Fashion* (Poole: Blandford Press, 1978), 272-273.

[489] Joanna Chase, *Sew and Save* (Glasgow: Literary Press Ltd, 1941), 82.

This attitude, however, was viewed as non-cooperation by the Board of Trade and this can be noted through a series of circulars sent to schools, the first in November 1941, five and a half months after rationing was introduced:

> In Circulars 1556, 1556A and 1556B details were announced of arrangements for supplying clothing and footwear to meet the special needs of schools and growing children. These arrangements were made on the assumption that the schools for their part would co-operate in withdrawing or reducing to a minimum any requirements hitherto imposed on pupils for special outfits distinctive of the particular school. The Board are glad to say that most schools have readily co-operated in this way, but it has been brought to their notice that in certain cases school regulations still require garments of a distinctive type or pattern to be worn, and that, in consequence, parents are finding difficulty in meeting their children's needs out of the coupon limits allowed. The Board hope that all Local Education Authorities and Responsible Bodies will take steps without delay to see that such regulations are rescinded and that all reasonable discretion is allowed to parents in the matter of providing clothes for children at schools of all types. [490]

This was followed by a similar reprimand in the summer of 1942:

> In view of the approaching close of the School Year the Board desire to remind Local Education and School Authorities of the need for reducing to a minimum school clothing requirements, particularly for pupils entering school in autumn. Attention was called to this matter in Administrative Memorandum No. 332 dated 21st November 1941, and the Board have evidence that most schools have already taken appropriate steps to reduce clothing requirements. But complaints from parents continue to reach the Board of Trade and it is accordingly thought desirable to draw attention once again to the urgent need for eliminating all unnecessary demands on clothing coupons. Although most schools have now ceased to prescribe special uniforms it is found that the practice among pupils of wearing clothes of uniform cloth and colour still persists and parents are reluctant to allow their children to appear exceptional. Other directions in which a reduction might be made are in the variety of Sports and Games costumes and in the initial stocks of underwear and linen recommended for pupils entering boarding schools.[491]

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[490] Administrative Memorandum: Special Outfits for School Pupils, November 21, 1941, Board of Education, War and Peace, Union for Women Teachers Archives (UWT/D/20/8 2/2), Institute of Education, University of London.

[491] Administrative Memorandum: Clothing Outfits for School Pupils, July 17, 1942, Board of Education, War and Peace, Union for Women Teachers Archives(UWT/D/20/8 2/2), Institute of Education, University of London.

Although somewhat softer in tone, this second missive highlights the importance of peer pressure and school ethos in the continuation of norms of uniform dress. Even when regulations were officially removed, children continued to adhere to dress codes, suggesting that the pre-war techniques employed to engender conformity and identity in schools were both lasting and effective.

With increasing pressure on both coupons and fabric supply, schools had to seek out new methods of provision of uniform. Many turned to utilising second-hand uniform on either a purchase or exchange basis, a trade that was allowed to occur without the involvement of coupons. This was a widespread response to the problems encountered and was run by either the school or the uniform outfitters. This process mirrors that of the more generalised children's clothing exchanges that were set up in many towns and cities. In 1941 the *Tamworth Herald* recorded that at Tamworth Girls' High School in Staffordshire:

> A minor wartime difficulty (which parents might call a major difficulty) is the provision of School uniform. When clothes rationing came into force we opened a second-hand uniform depot…I beg parents (and Old Girls) to collaborate with us by sending us any wearable items of school uniform and by not hesitating to enquire whether we have in stock what their daughters need.[492]

Whilst at Lancaster Girls' Grammar School, not only were second hand garments traded but uniform tunics were cut off and made into skirts for girls.[493] This second-hand trade in uniform created a dichotomy at higher end schools between the lower class connotations of second-hand clothing and the ideal of keeping up appearances; the latter triumphed due to the extreme circumstances. Despite the best attempts of schools, however, there were some unavoidable casualties due to the increasing restrictions although these were generally less dramatic than anticipated. For instance at Roedean the djibbah became too costly and complicated to produce and was replaced with an ordinary gymslip.[494]

Post War

Rationing continued in the immediate post-war period and it was some years before fabric and clothing supplies were fully restored. Clothes rationing was finally abolished in 1949, but schools were keen to return to normal as soon as possible, reintroducing any items of

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[492]"Tamworth Girls' High School," *Tamworth Herald,* November 01, 1941, 3.

[493] Pat Harrison, *Lancaster Girls' Grammar School: The First Century, Continuity and Change* (Lancaster: Published by LGGS, 2006), 80.

[494] Dorothy E. De Zouche, *Roedean School, 1885-1955* (Brighton: Dolphin Press, 1955), 76.

uniform that had been relaxed during the conflict. *The Tamworth Herald* reported in 1948 that
at Tamworth Grammar School:

> This year there had been reintroduced the rule that all boys of the school must wear school
> uniform – cap, blazer, tie and grey flannel trousers – and the effect on the appearance of
> the school had been most encouraging. The importance of a school uniform could not be
> stressed too much. It gave a feeling of belonging to the school, which if allowed to grow
> became in later years civic pride and social responsibility.[495]

This draws a clear correlation between the development of school identity and that of local
and national citizenship, qualities deemed particularly important in the patriotic and
nationalist immediate post-war environment. Some of the more informal elements
introduced during the war were retained, however, in instances where practicality
outweighed tradition, notably the change from stockings to socks for younger girls, but
these examples are limited.

The Second World War had an impact across all levels of society, altering social norms as
well as disseminating new technologies and ideas and this had a particular impact on the
young and consequently affected the process and practices of schooling.[496] The biggest
trend to affect schools in the twenty year period after the war was greater informality in
institutional practices (which was intensified by the move, in many places, to comprehensive
schools in 1965), in fashion and in the treatment of youth.[497] Most prominent amongst
these was a greater emphasis on youth in commercial, social and democratic fields.[498] This
increased interest in the young encouraged teenagers to develop their own sense of identity
and new cultures emerged associated with shared passions and ideas. British youth cultures
such as Beatniks and Teddy Boys developed in the late 1940s and each of these had their
own unique and closely peer-regulated appearance within the culture and parallels can be

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[495] "Grammar School Head Appeals to Parents," *Tamworth Herald*, November 27, 1948, 3.

[496] Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict* (London:
Routledge, 2013), 1; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597-1977* (London: Hodder and
Stoughton, 1977), 369-392.

[497] David Rubinstein & Brian Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School 1926-1966*, (London: Routledge &
Kegan Paul, 1969), 1; Joan Nunn, *Fashion in Costume 1200-2000,* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000), 207.

[498] Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth 1875-1945* (London: Pimlico, 2008), 465.

drawn between this and the earlier pupil-led policing and codification of school uniforms within the public schools.[499]

Developments in technology were also important and post-war economic expansion resulted in the invention and introduction of a large number of synthetic fabrics. Although nylon first entered the market in 1939, it was not widely available outside America until the mid-1940s. The popularity of nylon in stockings paved the way for other synthetic fibres such as orlon, dacron, acrylic, polyester, triacetate and spandex to be introduced. These made clothes easier to care for as items retained heat-set pleats after washing, could be drip-dried and required little ironing. Products made from these fabrics became immensely fashionable, notably for children's wear where practicality and ease of laundering was particularly important. They also reflected ideas of science and technological innovation which was popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[500] This is seen in a change of materials away from traditional wool, cotton and knits to new synthetic school uniforms which were cheaper, lighter to wear, easier to manage and held their shape better. By the 1950s Wycombe Abbey, for example, was suggesting nylon stockings as an alternative to lisle and later uniforms incorporated synthetic blends into shirts, skirts and sweaters.[501] Tights generally replaced stockings in the 1960s and became popular with schoolgirls for their convenience and comfort.[502]

These factors operated in conjunction with a lessening in overtly national sentiment and the dissolution of the Empire during the mid-century period. Thus uniform, whilst still an engrained part of the British schooling system, ceased to represent the ideals of patriotism that it had during the years of war and those immediately after.[503] These elements consequently worked together to shape school uniforms along more practical, fashionable and casual lines. At Cheltenham Ladies' College summer dresses were redesigned in the early 1950s to reflect the New Look, the fashionable style of the post-war period.[504]

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[499] Valerie Mendes & Amy de la Haye, *20th Century Fashion* (London: Thames & Hudson,1999), 152-153.

[500] Susannah Handley, *Nylon: The Manmade Fashion Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 7-9.

[501] Uniform List, 1950s, Wycombe Abbey School Archive.

[502] Jane Schneider, "In and Out of Polyester: Desire, Disdain and Global Fibre Competitions," *Anthropology Today* 10, no.5 (1994), 3-4.

[503] David McCrone, "Unmasking Britannia: The Rise and Fall of British National Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 4 (1997),597.

[504] R. Roberts, *History of Uniform at CLC* (Unpublished Document, 2008), 2. The New Look was created in 1947 by Dior and consisted of dresses and separates with strongly defined waists and extravagantly full skirts.

The adoption of such styles was not, however universal and some schools rejected the new shapes, amongst these was the Henrietta Barnett School in London and this was reported in the *London News Chronicle* of 1948:

Middlesex County Council announced yesterday that it would not ban the "New Look" in all schools. But it supports the decision of Miss E. Leach, headmistress of the Henrietta Barnett School, Golders Green, who banned the "New Look" because she think it encourages pupils to become "glamour girls".[505]

This rejection of the New Look reflects notions of morality that were still pervasive in girls' education - the belief that girls were easily corruptible and had to be monitored and protected. In preventing pupils from dressing fashionably, even glamorously, they were maintaining an ideal concept of innocent girlhood, divorced from external factors.

Fig. 3: *Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School Sixth Form Pupils*, c.1960[506]

Gymslips were another casualty of reforms, replaced with blouses and skirts, although a straight pinafore style was often retained for younger girls and in some schools jackets and ties were abolished. A 1950s uniform list from Kesteven and Grantham Girls' School indicates that fifth and sixth form pupils can adopt a "tailored navy blue skirt" in place of the traditional gym tunic and fig. 3 shows sixth form pupils in these around 1960.[507] Some schools took this informality even further and, under increasing pressure from older

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These, whilst initially generating some backlash with regards to fabric shortages, continued in popularity throughout much of the 1950s and defined the look of the decade. For more information see: James Laver, *Costume & Fashion: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 256-257.

[505] "New Look," *News Chronicle*, November 19, 1948.

[506] *Kesteven & Grantham Girls' School Sixth Formers,* c.1960, black and white photograph , Kesteven & Grantham Girls' School Archives

[507] Uniform List, 1950s (B/16/6), Kevesten and Grantham Girls' School Archives.

teenagers for freedom of expression, relaxed rules completely for sixth form pupils, retaining only a basic dress code.

This relaxation of uniform was most noticeable in state comprehensives where informality of dress went hand in hand with a newly casual relationship between teacher and pupil and an increased focus on child-centred teaching practices.[508] For the previous century the elite schools had led the way in dress practices and others had followed, now this trend was reversed with the state schools becoming the force for change. This reflects wider social changes in which the upper classes were ousted from their role as fashion leaders and were replaced by celebrities, a position which could be achieved through hard work, luck or talent as opposed to birthright.[509]

These adjustments were then gradually adopted by more traditional establishments and modified and moderated for their new environment. The new informality, however, failed to permeate through the whole system and schools with the most established and anachronistic uniforms made few or no changes. In these institutions a certain historic design of uniform had become so much a part of the schools identity that to change them would cause consternation from pupils and the public alike and could risk alienating former boys and girls. This is couched in cynical terms by Christopher Tyerman, historian of Harrow School:

> For all the rapidly changing curriculum, appearance and structure of the school, the requirements of the school finance demand obeisance to the past…[innovations could only be introduced] either with the trappings of tradition intact…or as a sign that the modern school was striving to maintain Harrow's position of excellence that it had inherited from the past.[510]

This maintenance of the tradition was, and continues to be, particularly true of former charity schools such as Christ's Hospital and the oldest and most elite public schools.

The trend towards informality continued throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s, fuelled by teachers trained in the liberal atmosphere of the 1960s, but by the 1990s it was beginning to turn full circle. Uniform had always had an association with ideas of order and control. Schools of the nineteenth and twentieth century, however, whilst acknowledging this aspect

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[508] Rubinstein & Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School*, 1-2.

[509] Frank Furedi, "Celebrity Culture," *Society* 47 no. 6 (2010),493.

[510] Christopher Tyerman, *A History of Harrow School 1324-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 439.

were more concerned, with its ability to reinforce institutional identity and reflect the personal qualities and social and academic status of the wearer as discussed in chapter two.

With the abolition of corporal punishment in state schools in 1987 and a rise in disciplinary problems, teachers felt that they were struggling to retain authority and control in the classroom.[511] School uniform began to be lauded as a quick-fix method of solving these infractions.[512] There was, however, little evidence to support a link between positive behaviour and school uniform and this is still an area that would benefit from a wide-ranging, in-depth study.[513] Despite the lack of data the idea was taken up with vigour and uniforms were reintroduced and formalised in line with the traditional British aesthetic. There was, however, some resistance to these new policies from both pupils and parents. The development of individual identity was viewed as an increasingly important part of growing up and it was argued that uniforms stifled this.[514] Additionally cost was cited mirroring the complaints of the 1920s and 1930s and this point of conflict continues today.[515]

Originating in the youth cultures of the 1950s, adolescents were also keener to associate themselves with peer groupings and interests rather than institutions. Schools consequently had to convince a more cynically aware and media-informed public of the merits of uniform and its supposed disciplinary functions were not an easy sell to younger generations. To achieve this certain schools appear to have utilised these altered notions of identity in clothing and promoted school uniform through items for shared interests, activities and year groups – the awarding of garments such as ties for non-sporting achievements as well as the more traditional colours, leaver's hoodies club and sweatshirts, along with a renaissance of the 'college style' scarf . There appears to have been a significant growth in

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[511] Neville Harris, "The Legislative Response to Indiscipline in Schools in England and Wales," *Education and the Law* 14, no.1-2 (2002), 57.

[512] Sarah Womack, "Pattern Wants 'Compulsory School Uniforms'," *Press Association,* November 27, 1993; "The Uniform Outlook," *Glasgow Herald,* June 05, 1997, 16; Vincent Moss, "Hague in Uniform Fury," *News of the World*, July 02, 2000.

[513] Keith King, "Should School Uniforms be Mandated in Elementary Schools," *Journal of School Health* 68, no. 1 (2009), 33-37; Ann Bodine, "School Uniforms and Discourses on Childhood," *Childhood* 10, no.1 (2003), 43-63.

[514] For a recent take see: Suzanne Moore, "We're Told that **School Uniforms** are About Preparing our Kids for the 'Real World'. Do We Want a World of Dull Conformists?," *Guardian*, August 30, 2012, 5.

[515] See for instance "School Uniform Rip Off," *Daily Mirror*, September 14, 2006, 23; Toby Helm & Eleanor Busby, "Families 'Break the Bank' to Pay for **School Uniform," *Observer,* September 04, 2011.**

popularity of these items, at least in anecdotal terms.[516] This trend has been paralleled on the high street with the production of garments which imitated these symbols of affiliation but for invented institutions. The most notable example of this is Jack Wills, although this adds a class dimension to the discussion, referencing, as it does, the attire of public schools and prestigious universities. [517] Instances can also be found at outlets such as Topshop and Next, amongst others. These practices could be considered a new form of alignment with institutions and events, both real and invented, and as such are yet to receive any thorough academic coverage. Additionally schools appealed to parents through the mantra of equality. School uniform was advocated for its ability to disguise social and cultural background and set all pupils on a level playing field. Although this idea was discussed in relation to the grammar schools in chapter four, it is still the most regularly cited reason in the argument for uniforms today.[518]

Issues of equality have also been one of the biggest factors in shaping the design of school uniforms in today's increasingly multi-cultural society. Whether it is allowing girls to adopt trousers or catering to the prescribed garments of certain religious beliefs. At multi-cultural schools such as Icknield High School, Luton garments such as turbans and headscarves are encoded alongside more traditional pieces of uniform.[519] Whilst many of these items are now commonplace, the niqab, the full face covering that is part of the practices of some Muslims, remains a controversial subject and it has been banned by a number of schools and widely debated in the press and online.[520] The Department for Children, Schools and Families has subsequently issued guidelines on school uniform allowing schools discretion in setting their own policies, but encouraging inclusion. They also discourage full face

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[516] Pocklington School, for example, has introduced both drama colours and leavers' hoodies in the last 15 years.

[517] Daniel Smith, "The Gent-rification of English Masculinities: Class, Race and Nation in Contemporary Consumption," *Social Identities* 20, no.4-5 (2014), 399.

[518] A recent example is: Martin Fricker, "Primary School in Deprived Area Praised for Setting Aside £10k to Clothe its Pupils," *Mirror,* May 21, 2015.

[519] "Uniform Requirements: Current, September 2014-July 2018," Icknield High School, 2014, accessed January 15, 2016. http://www.icknield.beds.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/uniform2014.pdf

[520] See, for instance: Tony Parsons, "School **Niqab** Ban isn't Racist...Just Common Sense," *Sun*, September 28, 2014, 15; "Veiled Insult; The Right Response to the **Niqab** is Not to Ban it, it is to Allow Liberal Values to Triumph," *Times*, September 15, 2013.

coverage and restrictive garments on the grounds of security, promoting communication and learning and seeking to avoid community pressure.[521]

This debate has remained relatively moderate within Britain but issues of school dress have caused greater controversy elsewhere. In 2004 France passed legislation that banned all prominent symbols of religious faith from schools. Whilst this encompassed turbans, skull caps and crucifixes, the most publicised item to be banned was the hijab. In doing so the French government sought to remove religion from state schooling and promote political secularism, a concept which is very important to notions of Frenchness.[522] The decision reflected concerns about the integration and assimilation of foreign nationals into French society and their roles as French citizens. [523] It also indicated contemporary fears of difference, particularly of the Muslim faith; fears which had been heightened by high-profile extremist actions and attacks. Conversely wearers viewed the hijab as an extremely important symbol of identity both in terms of religious affiliation and cultural background and argued that stigmatism of the headscarf by the state has led to a wider wave of intolerance regarding it in the public sphere.[524] The subsequent global debate indicated how politicised the hijab had become as a piece of clothing and it came to symbolise the disconnect between secularism and religious tolerance.

The trend towards formalisation of uniform is still continuing to date, with 99% of British state schools now requiring some form of uniform and the percentage requiring a blazer increasing from 26% in 2007 to 35% in 2015 across both secondary and primary education (with the majority of blazers worn in secondary schools), a trend led in the state-sector by academies.[525] The alleged positives of uniform have become engrained in the public consciousness through their widespread propagation within the education system, educational aides and other media including children's books. Ladybird's *Mad About Costume and Fashion* (recommended for four years+) states that: "Uniforms, such as the sort children

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[521] Dianne Gereluk, *Symbolic Clothing in Schools. What Should be Worn and Why* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 1.

[522] John R. Bowen, *Why the French don't like Headscarves: Islam, the State and Public Space*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 12-13.

[523] Bronwyn Winter, *Hijab & The Republic: Uncovering the French Headscarf Debate* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 3-5; John Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil,* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), 166-168.

[524] Dominic McGoldrick, *Human Rights and Religion: The Islamic Headscarf Debate in Europe* (Oxford and Portland: Hart Publishing, 2006), 101.

[525] Elizabeth Davies, *Cost of School Uniform 2015* (Department for Education, 2015), 8.

wear to school, can be easily identified and show that the people wearing them are part of a group".[526] This is indicative of the current thinking on uniform which seeks to foster a group mentality and disguise the background and status of individual pupils. This is in direct opposition to the uniforms of the Victorian and Edwardian period which, whilst also promoting institutional affiliation sought to highlight the wealth, status or academic ability of the pupils wearing them.

Dressing up

In 1879 the *Isle of Wight Observer* reported on The Ryde School of Art Calico Fancy Dress Ball, "One of the most successful and fashionable balls which have taken place for some time in Ryde".[527] In the report they meticulously listed the costumes worn by prominent figures in attendance. In amongst a fine selection of national stereotypes, historical figures and botanical representations featured, "Major OUCHTERLONY – *School Boy* – Eton jacket, broad white collar, white trousers, and cap of 50 years ago with peak".[528] This is an early reference to a trend that was to become a national phenomenon in the twentieth century, that of adults dressing up in school uniform.

From the early nineteenth century an interest in historicism flourished, perhaps rooted in a need to seek stability in a period of transition and change at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. It was fed by new historical publications in conjunction with fictional works such as those of Sir Walter Scott. This desire to study and recreate the past found an outlet in costume balls, which although related to earlier masquerades and the pleasure gardens of the eighteenth century took on a new respectability in this period.[529] These initially focused on historical clothing, but later came to encompass other, increasingly extravagant and creative forms of fancy dress.[530] Major Ouchterlony appears to have been ahead of his time; in neither of the books published in the early 1880s with lists of ideas for fancy dress costumes, Marie Schild's *Character Suitable for Fancy Costume Balls* and Ardern Holt's *Fancy*

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[526] Deborah Murrell, *Mad About Costume and Fashion*, (London: Ladybird Books Ltd, 2009), 7.

[527] "Report on Ryde School of Art Calico Fancy Dress Ball," *Isle of Wight Observer*, April 26, 1879, 4.

[528] "Report on Ryde School of Art Calico Fancy Dress Ball," *Isle of Wight Observer*, 4.

[529] Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England , 1730-1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 3.

[530] Alicia Finkel, "*Le Bal Costumé*: History and Spectacle in the Court of Queen Victoria," *Dress* 10, no. 1 (1984), 64.

Dresses Described, or What to Wear at Fancy Balls, is mention made of school uniform as a possible outfit.[531]

Holt's tome produced for the department store Debenham and Freebody was extremely popular and ran to numerous editions and school uniform makes its first appearance in the later, enlarged edition of 1887. This incorporates a suggestion of "Charity girls" in which Foundling dress and the outfits of St Botolph's School and Bristol Red Maids, amongst others, are recommended and detailed descriptions of the wear of the school are included.[532] The 1896 edition goes even further adding to the list "Aldgate School (Costume of)" and Dame School Dunce, a costume for women which is listed as follows:

> A sugar-loaf cap marked "Dunce" held in one hand, birch rod in the other. Black silk gown covered with white letters. A white apron with the multiplication table. A white muslin fichu, white elbow sleeves, "C-a-t" on one, "D-o-g" on the other. Mob cap.[533]

Whilst the Aldgate and Charity school entries make an attempt at historical realism the description above forgoes this in favour of the creation of a humorous stereotype. This demonstrates the direction in which concepts of fancy dress were moving, particularly those of school uniform, from the recreation of historical costume to comically identifiable caricatures. This trend continued into the twentieth century with fancy dress becoming more daring, amusing and creative and increasingly based on popular culture.[534] This was a precursor to the vogue for generalised and modified school uniform as fancy dress which became hugely prevalent in the late twentieth century and continues today. Adults dressing up as school children, therefore, is not a new concept, but its widespread popularity and normality in increasing numbers of social contexts can be traced back to the early 1950s.

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[531] Marie Schild, *Character Suitable for Fancy Costume Balls* (Lond..& c, 1881); Ardern Holt, *Fancy Dresses Described, or What to Wear at Fancy Balls* (London: Debenham and Freebody, 1880).

[532] Ardern Holt, *Fancy Dresses Described, or What to Wear at Fancy Balls* (London: Debenham and Freebody, 1887), 51.

[533] Ardern Holt, *Fancy Dresses Described, or What to Wear at Fancy Balls* (London: Debenham and Freebody, 1896), 4; Holt, *Fancy Dresses Described,* 63

[534] Anthea Jarvis & Patricia Raine, *Fancy Dress* (Aylesbury: Shire Publications Ltd, 1984), 23.

I will argue that the fashion for school uniform as fancy dress was initially promoted by the huge popularity of the St Trinian's books and films but then became increasingly self-sustaining for a number of reasons both practical and psychological. The first St Trinian's cartoon was published in 1941, the second not until 1946. This five year hiatus was due to artist Ronald Searle's involvement in the Second World War including his capture and internment at the hands of the Japanese. Many of the St Trinian's images were sketched during this time and their increasingly dark tone may be attributed to the artist's surroundings and treatment. Individual images continued to be published sporadically between 1947 and 1952, but it was the first book, *Hurrah for St Trinian's* produced in 1948 that really began to draw attention to the fictional school.

'*I can only conjecture that the crack about Dresden china referred to you*'

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Fig. 4: *Illustration from 'The Terror of St Trinian's',* 1952[535]

More books followed (fig. 4) and these were made into a series of films starting with the *Belles of St Trinians'* in 1954, which ranked as the third highest grossing film in the UK that year.[536] St Trinian's swiftly became a widespread and accepted addition to English cultural understanding, to the extent that when *The Times* glibly referred to 'Trinianisms', they were confident that their conservative readership would know and understand the term.[537] St Trinian's was not the first silver screen presentation of uncontrolled schoolchildren, The Tilly Films were unusual in their presentation of wild girlhood in the 1910s and can be seen as a forerunner to St Trinian's in many ways.[538] In a more contemporary domain, *The Happiest Days of Your Life*, originally a play by John Dighton was released as a film in 1950.

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[535] Ronald Searle, *St Trinian's Cartoon*, 1952, illustration, from Timothy Shy & Ronald Searle, *The Terror of St Trinian's or Angela's Prince Charming* (London: Max Parrish, 1952), 37.

[536] "Success of British Film (Arts and Entertainment)," *Times*, December 30, 1954, 3.

[537] Kaye Webb, "Once Upon a Time," in *The St Trinian's Story*, ed. Webb, 9.

[538] Ian Wojik-Andrews, *Children's Films: History, Ideology, Pedagogy, Theory* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 63.

Telling the story of the chaos that ensues when a girls' school is accidently billeted on a boys' school during the war it was produced by the same team as the later St Trinian's films, Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat. Nor was it the first girls' school story parody, Arthur Marshall had been writing these for much of the preceding decade. Why then, did St Trinian's, in particular, become so popular?

Timing must play a huge role, the publications and films coincided with a growing social and sexual liberation of young woman, themes that are reflected and amplified in St Trinian's, placing it at the vanguard of women's liberation movements. The books and films promoted the link between education and opportunities for advancement, both within a school context and within society at large and they posited non-traditionally feminine behaviour and appearances as a source of accomplishment and collective identity.[539] Thus women, particularly those of younger generations, viewed St Trinian's as the removal of female constraint which was still apparent in some areas of society, something to be celebrated rather than eradicated. Girls, on the other hand, found new role models which didn't conform to the wholesome and unrealistic protagonists of girls' school stories. In the words of writer and critic Siriol Hugh-Jones:

> Searle made it all right to be plain, shapeless and unhandy at dainty needlework. You could still batter the world into submission with a blunt instrument. Before Searle, the school heroine was the curly-haired Captain of Games who looked clean through you with those straight, fearless grey eyes before which a fib shrivelled and died of shame. Shame is a word unknown in St Trinian's....Searle became a prophet of liberty and new self-respect.[540]

Searle's cartoons were essentially on the side of the female sex, St Trinian's schoolgirls found ways to achieve victory over any limitation.

Searle also made a mockery of fears associated with girls' education from lesbianism to a lack of morality and femininity, many of which, although outdated, still persisted in certain circles. His teachers were lesbians, the pupils drank, smoked and committed acts of violence whilst older girls were sexually aware, dressing provocatively and manipulating men for their own ends and this aspect comes to particular prominence in some of the films. Whilst this final element almost certainly held a direct appeal for some viewers, in one way it can be seen as a sly criticism of the 1950s vogue for pin ups, inverting the submissive and domestic

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[539] Lesley Speed, "Reading, Writing and Unruliness: Female Education in the St Trinian's Films," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 5, no.2 (2002), 236-237.

[540] Siriol Hugh-Jones, "A Short Ramble Round the Old Prison House," in *The St Trinian's Story*, ed. Webb, 23.

way that women were often portrayed in the genre and once again underscoring the importance of female freedom.[541] In another it can be viewed as a direct and hugely successful appeal to the British sense of humour which had a long history of laughing at the risqué and enjoyed the ridicule of institutions and stereotypes at the heart of the national consciousness, in this instance the female education system, organised games and school uniform along with outdated notions of youth and femininity.[542]

This promotion, reflection and mockery is demonstrated by the St Trinian's Soccer Song at the head of the chapter. In a clear parody of the works of Newbolt and his ilk the rhyme invokes traditional Victorian boys' school imagery and gleefully subverts it. Warlike "Island Blood" becomes applicable to girls' football instead of the battle field, a traditionally male pursuit and "bulldog pans" conjures up a less than ladylike image of the faces of the girls, but one that makes up for a lack of femininity by being undeniably British. Floreat St Trinian's is a sly reference to the motto of Eton – Floreat Etona, setting St Trinian's even more firmly in the domain of the public school. The reference to bustles is also an allusion to outdated ideas of girls' education in that such items were outmoded and constrictive daily wear from fifty years previously.

St Trinian's permeated all levels of society and became a new national joke. From this position it was not unnatural for St Trinian's schoolgirls to become a widespread choice for any fancy dress situation. Returning to Hugh-Jones, she states that:

> St Trinian's in their hey-day- figured in every hospital beano, scouts' gang-show, carnival, fancy-dress parade and college rag, here and abroad....part of the charm being that almost anyone, from a midget Wolf Cub to a brawny Captain of Rugger, can fashion a do-it-yourself schoolgirl disguise, and those who fancy merrymaking in teams...can find a ready-made spirit of togetherness in the notion of St Trinian's on the spree.[543]

This excerpt raises a number of interesting points and issues. Its wording echoes one of the most fiercely advocated positives of school uniform, suggesting that even in its fancy dress form school uniform promoted a spirit of unity. Parallels can be drawn between this and the pro-uniform rhetoric of nineteenth and early twentieth century schools and

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[541] Maria Elena Buszek, *Pin-up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality, Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press: 2006), 235

[542] Siriol Hugh-Jones, "A Short Ramble Round the Old Prison House," in *The St Trinian's Story*, ed. Webb, 21-22.

[543] Hugh-Jones, "A Short Ramble Round the Old Prison House," in *The St Trinian's Story*, ed. Webb, 32.

educationalists. It is also possible to discern a resemblance between the spread of the British uniform model through the Empire and the adoption of the St Trinian's uniform abroad. Hugh-Jones goes on to note the practicality of the outfit in that it was easy and cheap to recreate and so had an appeal for time and cash-strapped individuals.

Finally Hugh-Jones characterises two individuals who might be seen dressed as a St Trinian's schoolgirl, the "Wolf Cub" and the "brawny Captain of Rugger", at the time of writing in the early 1960s cubs were only open to boys and rugby was not a well established female sport, meaning that both of these characters were likely to have been male and, in fact, the St Trinians aesthetic was taken up more enthusiastically by men than women. Men dressing as women was not a new concept and had been a source of comedy on the stage and later in films for a considerable time. Humour was derived from men being both obviously masculine and awkwardly out of place in their female attire.[544] Gymslips accentuated the male body, exposing hairy legs and heels and skirts were uniquely feminine items which were difficult to manage for the unaccustomed wearer, fulfilling both these comedic requirements. Consequently the humour of the cartoons was ideally suited to cross-dressing and the adoption of gymslips and boaters by men was very much in line with the subversion already rife in Searle's images. In many ways, however, this switching of genders diluted the original message of the work indicating that the girls were more closely identified with men and masculine traits than the creation of a new definition of femininity.

The popularity of St Trinian's was also felt beyond fancy dress, the impact of the schoolgirl appearance can be seen within mainstream fashion. Boaters, tunics, shifts, Alice bands and black stockings all featured in the collections of the late 1940s and 50s. That this was related, in some manner, to St Trinian's can be seen by the use of St Trinian's illustrations themselves on a range of couture dresses indicating that they were an understood point of reference in the world of high fashion.[545] This adult uptake of juvenile styles served to popularise St Trinian's further and bought the concept to an even wider audience. It also made wearing school uniform related, or inspired, items increasingly socially acceptable, a trend that is still apparent today. A February 2015 article on *The Telegraph* website asserts that "School uniform's in for grown-ups this summer…the catwalk goes classroom". The

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[544] Corinne Holt Sawyer, "Men in Skirts and Women in Trousers, from Achilles to Victoria Grant: One Explanation of a Comedic Paradox," *Journal of Popular Culture* 21 no. 2 (1987), 8.

[545] Hugh-Jones, "A Short Ramble Round the Old Prison House" in *The St Trinian's Story*, ed. Webb, 32.

piece then documents the fashion team as they incorporate items of real school uniform into their daily wardrobes.[546]

Through a combination of the sexual availability of St Trinian's sixth formers, adult adaption of school uniform items in fashion and an increasing sexual liberation, particularly amongst the young, school uniform in itself began to develop sexual connotations in certain parts of society. This was spurred on by the publication of Lolita in 1958 (and the subsequent 1962 film) which showed a pre-adolescent girl as a willing participant in her own sexual exploitation and this fits into a wider picture of the sexualisation of children, particularly girls.[547] The naughty schoolgirl became a trope of erotic fiction and school uniform customised to expose rather than conceal took on an important role in pornography (and other media), functioning as an easily understood shorthand for adolescence, representing girls who were just adult enough to be available but still young enough to be non-threatening.[548]

This usage of school uniform was reinforced by the selective importation of images from Japan in the 1990s and 2000s, where the use of school uniforms as a symbol of both youth and deviance occurred in a greater degree. During the 1970s the Japanese school and military uniform became an important outfit for underground and avant-garde circles. It was initially adopted by male youth culture, particularly members of motorcycle gangs, in a customised format as a symbol of rebellion. During the following decades, images and reports of drop-out schoolboys were replaced with those of sexualised schoolgirls, with the media featuring male-orientated stories of actual schoolgirl deviance such as compensated dating.[549] This attention coincided with rapidly changing gender identities within Japanese society, notably a disconnect between increasing numbers of ambitious and educated young women seeking professional jobs and the more traditional gender roles expected by older generations. This focus on young women resulted in a greater representation of them in the public domain, particularly the use of morally wholesome schoolgirls in television and print

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546 Ellie Pithers, Alice Newbold, Bibby Sowray, Sophie Warburton & Katy Young, "School Uniform's in for Grown-ups this Summer," *Telegraph,* February 11, 2015, accessed July 09, 2015
http://fashion.telegraph.co.uk/article/TMG11403925/School-uniform-trend-for-grown-ups.html

547 Debra Merskin, "Reviving Lolita: A Media Literacy Examination of Sexual Portrayals of Girls in Fashion Advertising," *American Behavioural Scientist* 48, no.1 (2004),119.

548 Gail Dines "Grooming Our Girls: Hypersexualization of the Culture as Child Sexual Abuse," in *Exploiting Childhood: How Fast Food, Material Obsession and Porn Culture are Creating New Forms of Child Abuse,* ed. Jim Wild (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013),122.

549 Sharon Kinsella, *Schoolgirls, Money and Rebellion in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2014), 13.

advertising which provided an easy stereotype for subversion.[550] As a result a sexually-orientated subculture based around schoolgirls and school uniform began to develop

Greater attention was focused on this by the introduction of 'designer uniforms' in many of Tokyo's private high schools from the mid-1980s onwards. This was as part of an attempt by schools to seem more appealing and thereby maintain numbers of pupils in a period of demographic decline in the school-age population. The image of the aberrant Japanese schoolgirl has become ubiquitous across the world through a range of visual media, especially in manga and anime.[551] A fascination with uniformed schoolgirls is now so widespread that they have been adopted in a sanitised version by the government to promote Japanese youth culture and carefully chosen images have been projected internationally in an official capacity. This move from wholesomeness to deviancy and then back to social acceptability is an intriguing process.

Although the traditional St Trinian's schoolgirl is still a recognisable figure today - a Google search for "St Trinian's fancy dress" returns tens of thousands of results for gymslips and boaters, school uniform as fancy dress was subject to a renaissance and image overhaul in the 1990s. A number of media releases took place within the space of a couple of years that re-popularised school garments and placed them, once again, at the forefront of the national consciousness. In 1996 the film *The Craft* was released, the story revolved around four girls at a school in Los Angeles and the poster featured the girls in heavily adapted school uniforms representing the dark and rebellious nature of the drama. This opened the way for a new trend in heavily modified contemporary uniforms.

Two years later in 1998 Britney Spears had a global hit with her first release …*Baby One More Time.* The song reached number one in every country it charted in and sold over 10 million copies. The associated music video shows Spears in a customised school uniform with short skirt and tied-up shirt dancing provocatively around a school. Whilst this was not the first musician to appear in school uniform (Angus Young of AC/DC started performing in school uniform in the 1970s and still appears in the guise today), it was the first instance of a heavily sexualised school uniform in mainstream music. This was

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[550] S. Kinsella, "What's Behind the Fetishism of Japanese School Uniforms," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture 6,* no. 2 (2002): 219

[551] L. Miller, "Cute Masquerade and the Pimping of Japan," *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 20, no. 11 (2001): 18.

followed by other popstar appearances in similar garb including Madonna (2001) and the Russian pop duo t.A.T.u (2003). These women used adapted school uniform and the sexual associations that it had developed to play into the schoolgirl fantasies which originated with St Trinian's and, if viewed cynically, to sell records.

These mass media appearances had two main effects in that sexualised uniform made an appearance in nightlife and clubbing culture and that modification of uniforms spread back into schools. Published in 2007, Lucy Mangan offers the following advice in *Hopscotch and Handbags: The Essential Guide to Being a Girl*:

> You can wear the regulation skirt, shirt, jumper and tie if you are either a dull conformist…or supremely confident that your good looks and vibrant personality will mark you out sufficiently from any crowd and secure you the attention and respect that is your due as a unique and exceptional individual. All those in between must customise whatever combination of navy gaberdine, maroon serge or dark-green polyester pleats they labour under as quickly and as heavily as possible. Tried and tested ways include:
> 1. Shortening the skirt by rolling up the waistband or hacking six inches off the hem…
> 2. Shortening the tie or tying it so that the thin bit shows at the front instead of the fat bit…
> 3. Wear jewellery [552]

Modification of school uniform is by no means a new concept - Christ's Hospital boys rolled up their gowns in the eighteenth century in order to better play sports, although this was practical rather than appearance-based.[553] In the twentieth century customised school uniform became a byword for teenage rebellion as adolescents sought a more comfortable appearance in line with current fashion trends as hats were altered, skirts rolled up and top buttons left undone. This process can be viewed as an attempt to regain the individuality that uniform removed and in the case of girls to re-feminise often shapeless uniforms in line with current notions of femininity, in this instance aggressive sexualisation. The shortening of the skirt and the addition of jewellery imitates the style and attire of the female musicians, but this is being enacted by schoolgirls who are, perhaps, less conscious of the encoded meaning of their modified appearance, confusing the publically understood messages of school garments further.

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[552]Lucy Mangan, *Hopscotch & Handbags; The Essential Guide to Being a Girl* (London: Headline Review, 2007), 88-89.

[553] Phillis Cunnington & Catherine Lucas, *Charity Costumes of Children, Scholars, Almsfolk, Pensioners* (Adam & Charles Black, London, 1978, 73-74.

Opening in 1999, School Disco was a club night which toured several locations before finding overwhelming popularity at the Hammersmith Palais in the early 2000s. Running twice-weekly, it regularly attracted three thousand party-goers and was seen as an antidote to dance music and the superclubs which had dominated the nightlife scene for some years previously. They actively encouraged large groups, dressing up was compulsory and the music featured nostalgic sing-along rock and pop hits.[554] So successful was the brand that it spread to other British cities and spawned numerous imitators including School Dinners, a themed restaurant and club staffed by "St Trinian's girls and Eaton boys" and a huge number of student events at institutions from Sheffield and Leeds to Edinburgh and Durham.[555] The school uniform that was worn to these nights bore a much greater resemblance to those worn in *The Craft* or popularised by Britney Spears than actual uniforms and as such the appearance of fancy dress uniform began to fundamentally diverge from reality and create a unique appearance of its own. This meant that it became more socially acceptable to find modified school uniform of this type sexually appealing as the connotations of underage girls had been diminished, if not entirely removed. School Disco traded on this change in attitude using the number of women attending in school uniform as a positive marketing technique to encourage male attendance and to promote the adult nature of the event.[556]

Sexual appeal alone, however, cannot explain the huge and continued attraction of the school outfit in this context nor does it account for modern male attempts to modify their own school uniforms to wear to such events rather than appropriating female wear (although this also continues). Whilst a sexual fascination with girls in school uniform has been well established the same cannot be said of boys' school uniform and consequently feminine allure must be considered in conjunction with other factors. The wearing of school uniform in an adult context allows individuals to relive what is often an awkward and uncomfortable stage of their life with greater confidence and experience, succeeding in their romantic and sexual advances where their teenage self may have failed. In this capacity the wearing of school uniform operates as wish fulfilment in which the disappointments of

[554] Tim Marsh, "Clubbers Night Out at the School Disco," *London Evening Standard,* October 11, 2001, accessed July 9, 2015 http://www.standard.co.uk/goingout/music/clubbers-night-out-at-the-school-disco-6352691.html

[555] Alex Davidson, *Blazers, Badges and Boaters: A Pictorial History of School Uniform* (Horndean: Scope Books, 1990), 147.

[556] Alexis Petridis, "Boys and Girls Come Out to Play," *Guardian*, July 05, 2002, accessed July 09, 2015 http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2002/jul/05/artsfeatures.popandrock

adolescence are erased and replaced with a different narrative. In the same vein fancy dress permits the wearer to adopt an alternative persona which allows them to behave in a fashion that would be considered unacceptable in other contexts.[557] In this way they mirror the actions of performers who often take the role of schoolteachers or other authority figures at such events and align with themselves with the theatricality innate in the proceedings. The practicality cited by Hugh-Jones also survives, school uniform of the variety seen at fancy dress events can be easily and quickly fashioned from the contents of the average wardrobe and allows the wearer to look like they made an effort, but, critically, not too much, in a society that often judges those who try too hard.

Moreover school uniforms plays into the vogue for nostalgia that has developed over the last twenty years. This has manifested itself in a fashion for vintage clothes and accessories, along with catwalk, high street and homeware trends that closely replicate previous eras, with whole businesses such as Cath Kidston being built around the vintage aesthetic. These have operated in conjunction with a resurgence in the popularity of the homemade item and the 'make do mend' message. From sewing and knitting to baking, these hobbies have been promoted through books and television series such as *The Great British Bake Off and The Great British Sewing Bee.* Such trends can, perhaps, be attributed to the need to find reassurance and stability in the past in periods of fast-paced technological change and this mirrors the nineteenth century passion for historical recreation discussed earlier in the chapter. The technology that triggered the trend, however, also reinforces it allowing people to stay in touch or reconnect with friends from school through Facebook and older sites such as Friends Reunited. This creates an emphasis on retaining juvenile connections and culture which helps to further normalise signifiers of both adolescence and the past such as school uniform.

Whilst School Dinners may have shut for business in 2007 and School Disco in 2011, the school event remains a popular choice for students and continues to surface in new incarnations. In 2007 the first St Trinian's film in 27 years, and the sixth overall, was released. This updated the concept for modern audiences and introduced a new generation of girls to St Trinian's. At the more sophisticated end of the spectrum is the pop-up restaurant, 'The After School Club' at the Round Chapel Old School Rooms in Clapton,

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[557] Dinesh Bhugra & Padmal De Silva, "Uniform – Fact, Fashion, Fantasy and Fetish", *Sexual and Marital Therapy,* 11, no. 4 (1996): 397.

London which opened for eleven days in July and August 2015. Despite being rather more expensive, it was not too dissimilar in concept from the more downmarket School Dinners. It offered menus in homework books, school dinner inspired food and waiters attired as prefects. Dressing up was not compulsory for those in attendance but nor was it considered unusual, demonstrating how normalised the idea of dressing up in school uniform has become in British society.[558]

In the twentieth century the mode of transmission of school uniform changed and school uniform also became increasingly prominent in contexts outside of the educational environment. Additionally there was some subtle alterations in the messages that garments were intended to convey. The use of school uniforms waxed and waned in many schools in conjunction with wider social, political and disciplinary alterations in thought and practice and these factors also affected the design and formality of garments. The exception to this were the elite schools who tended to retain their historical appearances throughout and continue to do so to date. This can be attributed to a combination of pride, tradition and the importance placed on the continuance of a unique, and, often, profitable identity.

The pattern seen throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, in which the school uniform of upper class establishments was imitated by a majority of schools, altered from the 1950s onwards to one in which state comprehensives led the way through increasing informality, and the blazer and tie model was removed in many institutions. This trend was reversed in the 1990s as a response to perceptions of indiscipline and uniform was readopted across the social spectrum, schools, once more, taking some form of lead from the elite. During the nineteenth century school uniforms gradually became associated with concepts of equality and these associations have been maintained and broadened in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, although ideas of control and identity have also resurfaced in a modified form which aligns with contemporary thinking on discipline and community building.

In the last twenty five years, a new range of influencing factors both social and technological emerged and these opened two-way channels of dialogue between a range of educational establishments and the media and entertainment industries and elements of

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[558] Jonathan Wells, "The Pop-up Restaurant that Turns School Dinners into Fine Dining," *Telegraph*, July 8, 2015, accessed July 09, 2015 http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/the-filter/11722853/The-pop-up-restaurant-that-turns-school-dinners-into-fine-dining.html

design crossed from one to another and back again. Ideas from the silver screen, youth culture and fashion filtered into uniform design whilst school uniform influenced costume and performance as well as discussions of sexuality. This dialogue continues and recently the debate surrounding religious adaptations to uniform and the suitability of face-coverings in schools have played out in the press. An increase in information technology allows this dialogue to be faster, more involved in people's lives and led by the general public rather than journalists or politicians, ensuring that this exchange of ideas is likely to continue.

Conclusion

Like many people and many parents, I think it is absolutely right for schools, if they want, to choose to have a tough and robust uniform policy.[559]

This thesis has sought to document the trends and changes in British school uniform over its five hundred year history, offering a broad perspective on its origins and development. It has particularly focused on how uniform implementation and design have been instigated by, and responded to social change, linking the visual appearance of schoolchildren with educational development and a wider picture of political and public transformation. This is the first academic study of this kind on a subject which is of wide popular appeal and a topic on which the majority of the population have first-hand experience. Its academic neglect to date is surprising and it is a field in which there is the potential for a great deal of further study.

Many factors have played a role in shaping school uniforms. Throughout the course of the thesis, however, a number of key themes have emerged, most notably gender and class but also religion and national identity. These pressures, often working in conjunction, constructed an ideal appearance for children, albeit one that changed with time, social norms and the relative importance of each factor in a given context. School clothing was most often a reflection and reinforcement of this ideal appearance and the class and gender appropriate behaviours that were associated with it, conveying these meanings to both the wearers and to external viewers. This was seen, most notably, in the early charity schools where uniform operated as a symbol of humility, lower class status and expected social role. Alternatively school uniform was sometimes a rebellion against the adoption of these expected identities, instead producing new appearances shaped by practical concerns or mirroring the aesthetics of other more influential groups. The two differing faces of this force can be demonstrated through the gradual adoption of the gymslip by girls' schools, creating an appearance in opposition to adult gender norms and through the imitation of the uniforms of elite schools by their middle class counterparts.

As gender and class distinctions were increasingly broken down in the twentieth century (at least in a superficial sense) these ideal appearances converged until a standardised and widely accepted design for school uniform emerged across classes and, to some extent,

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[559] David Cameron, "Questions to the Prime Minister," *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, United Kingdom: House of Commons, September 04, 2013, col. 314.

genders.[560] This, despite variations in colour and detail, demonstrated the same basic concepts of design and style across the majority of schools. The impact of nationalism waned in the wake of the Second World War and religion, too, ceased to play such a prominent role in the determination of morality and appropriate styles of dress in modern culture.[561] Recently, however, an increasingly multicultural society has led to a resurgence in the importance of religion in determining dress characteristics and this has, once again, had an impact on school uniform.

The way in which uniform designs and their corresponding social meanings were diffused are also of importance. Transmission occurred in two forms, the first between schools, as ideas were passed on through staff movement, direct engagement and umbrella organisations such the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Girls' Day School Trust and the Headmasters' Conference. The second transmission was the communication of an image of pupils to the outside world. School uniforms were the most visible expression of the ethos of a school and they reinforced the gender, class and sometimes religious affiliation of pupils to the viewer allowing them to place themselves socially and morally in relation to the schoolchild. Initially this viewing occurred through public spectacles such as processions and ticketed mealtimes, as in the early charity schools. These events were school sponsored and consequently the image presented was fairly easy to control. As print media such as newspapers, periodicals and magazines were popularised, however, these became an increasingly important method of viewing, discussing and analysing schools and uniforms. These forums were far less simple to influence, apart from through such items as advertisements and so tend to paint a more balanced picture of appearances and the conflict and discussion that they generated. This trend is still prominent today through the use of online outlets.

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[560] Changes in class and gender distinctions are discussed in: Judy Giles, "Narratives of Gender, Class, and Modernity in Women's Memories of Mid-Twentieth Century Britain," *Signs* 28, no.1 (2002), 34-35; Bonnie English, *A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th and 21st Centuries: From Catwalk to Sidewalk* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 92; Terry Nichols Clark & Seymour Martin Lipset, "Are Social Classes Dying?" *International Sociology* 6, no. 4 (1991), 400-401 and Barry Eidlin, "Class Formation and Class Identity: Birth, Death, and Possibilities for Renewal," *Sociology Compass* 8, no.8 (2014), 1045 amongst others.

[561] For discussions of national identity and modern religion see: David McCrone, "Unmasking Britannia: The Rise and Fall of British National Identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 4 (1997), 597; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Routledge, 2006), 2; David Nash, *Christian Ideals in British Culture: Stories of Belief in the Twentieth Century* (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2013), 5.

The importance of newspapers, and more recently the internet, in initiating and reflecting national and local debate is apparent in the letters and articles cited throughout the thesis which discuss matters of school uniform from the reoccurring issue of cost to its outmoded appearance and, more recently, its effectiveness in a modern educational climate. Other media, too, had an impact and this can be clearly viewed through the wide-ranging and long-term effects of the St Trinian's cartoons, books and films. These increasingly accessible forums for viewing and discussion, in conjunction with a rise in pictorial advertising and the mercantile imitation of uniforms allowed designs and ideas to be disseminated to the general public with greater rapidity which in turn allowed easier transmission between schools through emulation. This aspect is particularly notable in relation to the commercial spread of the Eton jacket, but also in recent fashions for modified school uniform.

Each of the five chapters of this thesis resulted in a set of conclusion which can be linked closely to these broad themes. Each section will be examined individually before being discussed as a whole. Chapter one considered early uniform adoption with a particular focus on charity schools of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In these institutions uniforms functioned as both a practical method of ensuring children were sufficiently clothed and a way by which the working class status of pupils could be reinforced. Garments sought to inculcate humility in the children designating their role and intended career paths within society whilst also indicating their lowly status and demonstrating the difference between them and people of higher rank. This is demonstrated through, not only the design of the uniform, but the colour and type of fabric used to manufacture them. Blue was most prominent in charity uniforms and this dye was cheap and generally associated with the clothing of servants and the working classes. Additionally the fabrics used at Christ's Hospital, whilst warm, were coarse and inexpensive to purchase.[562]

Modesty of dress was also important, not only in the good habits that it was supposed to encourage, but also as a reflection of the strong role of religion in most charity schools. Charitable funding of schools was instigated by a growth in Protestantism and a lack of

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[562] Maria Hayward, "Dressed in Blue: The Impact of Woad on English Clothing c. 1350-1670," *Costume* 49, no. 2 (2015), 174-176; Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel; Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 100-101; Treasurers' Account Book, 1552-1558, Financial Records, Christ's Hospital Collection, London Metropolitan Archives.

provision elsewhere. Establishments often took the biblical verses of Matthew 25 as a *modus operandi* - "For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked and ye clothed me".[563] The charity school statues surviving at St Mary Abbots School, Kensington, for instance, show part of this phrase on a scroll in the hand of the bluecoat boy. Although uniforms do not appear to have been directly modelled on ecclesiastical garments they were modest in cut and style to reinforce Protestant moral codes. This is particularly true for girls, who were considered more likely to stray morally from religious expectations of behaviour. Most benefactors were wealthy individuals and uniforms also allowed their good deeds to be displayed in a public fashion through the use of escutcheons, buttons and other visible symbols of support. This allowed patrons to define their role in society in comparison to both the children and other non-supporters.

At the opposite end of the social spectrum chapter two considered the public schools of the mid to late nineteenth century, focusing particularly on Eton and Harrow, but also using examples from Rugby, Malvern, Marlborough, Charterhouse and Pocklington amongst others. Although initial uniform adoption occurred on the sports field and stemmed from practical concerns, implementation of day uniform was more complex, nuanced and socially reflective. In a period of middle class growth and aspiration these elite institutions sought to distinguish themselves from schools of lower rank, excluding non-elite pupils and maintaining their class status through intricate visual and practical exclusion processes. One of these was the adoption of expensive and socially correct clothing as uniform. These uniforms subsequently developed complicated hierarchical markers which further served to confuse and exclude the uninitiated such as those noted at Charterhouse by Robert Graves.[564]

Uniform also worked to create and maintain group identity within the establishments, consolidating the status difference between those within the public school system and those outside it. Public school uniforms reinforced Victorian and Edwardian notions of masculinity, a concept which was tied closely with religion in the form of muscular Christianity, a moral code promoted at the majority of public schools. Thus uniforms were expensively well-cut and obtained from gentlemen's outfitters but often simple and restrained in appearance. Public schools and their uniforms were widely imitated by middle

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[563] Matt. 25: 35-36.

[564] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Penguin Books, 1960), 43.

class schools such as Marlborough (1843) which was originally founded for the sons of clergymen. These schools sought to align themselves with establishments of higher status, utilising their reputation and providing a similar education at a more accessible price. Many, such as Marlborough, along with Lancing (1848), Hurstpierpoint (1849) and Haileybury (1862) were successful in this aim, later becoming public schools in their own right. This meant that the exclusionary processes put in place by the public schools became ineffective. Indicators such as uniform moved from a clear method of distinguishing between schools on a class basis to a technique for disguising the difference between public schools and their imitators.

The British Empire was at its peak in the nineteenth century and both public schools and their imitators sent large numbers of former pupils to work abroad in colonial administration and the military. These young men transferred British notions of education, masculinity and religion across the globe, developing education systems and founding new schools which were similar in operation to the British public school model. Uniform was considered a vital part of this ethos and uniforms were introduced throughout colonial countries, many examples of this remain today. As a visible marker of colonial rule and one that had an impact across generations, school uniform became globally associated with the British Empire and consequently with Britain itself. In this manner school uniforms began to be viewed as part of the British national identity and a way by which Britain was represented abroad.

Focusing on a similar time period, chapter three looked at the comparative history of female education, starting with the pioneering girls' public schools. School uniform for girls was introduced later than for their male counterparts and this reflects the tentative nature of early female schooling. Academic education was viewed by many in the mid-nineteenth century as inappropriate for women. It was supposed to encourage manly traits and consequently prevent women from adopting their ordained role in society – one of marriage, reproduction and decoration. The loss of femininity through education was deemed a serious social concern and early women educators were, therefore, keen to produce pupils who conformed closely to the feminine ideal of the period, demonstrating to detractors and the wider public that schooling did not adversely affect femininity. Consequently early pupils were encouraged to dress in a fashionable and feminine way. They also had to maintain a modesty of dress in line with contemporary ideas of female morality and purity perpetuated by the Church.

As it became clear that girls' education did not cause a significant drop in the marriage rate or adversely affect the sanity of attendees, it became more acceptable and the pressure on pupils to appear overtly feminine abated to some extent (although an emphasis on morality did not). In its place, new forces arose, these were initially practical and focused on the adoption of more suitable attire for games and sports such as the Dio Lewis gymnastic suit and, later, the gymslip, although lingering concerns of femininity did survive in early designs. These outfits, once adopted in the gymnasium, were often introduced throughout the day as well, being more comfortable and allowing greater movement than normal clothing. This pattern can be seen at the North London Collegiate School and Croft School.

Later, as women's education continued to develop and opposition to it diminished, the focus moved from fighting to allow schools to operate to demonstrating that women could compete with men on an academic footing and should consequently be granted full access to both the universities and professions. To this end girls' schools gradually adopted the trappings of boys' public school life from the sports ethic to the internal organisation in an attempt to demonstrate similarity and consequently equality. School uniforms were no exception and increasingly masculine items were added to the aesthetic in imitation of those worn at boys' school, notably shirts and ties and this process was noted through the increasingly prescriptive and formal uniform lists of Wycombe Abbey.[565] Thus in sixty years girls' school dress moved from the explicitly feminine, in line with contemporary notions of gender to an appearance that was more closely aligned to boys' school uniform than fashionable femininity, representing a clear shift in the way in which women and their education were viewed in the same period.

Chapter four, which also considered a timeframe parallel to the two previous chapters, reviewed the spread of state education and the impact that this had on uniform practices. This was investigated in two main areas, middle class secondary education and the introduction of compulsory elementary schooling for all children. In middle class schools the pattern was found to be one of imitation similar to that seen between the boys' public schools and their upper-middle class emulators. School uniforms for both genders were copied from the relevant public schools and examples of this process include the schools of the Girls' Day School Trust and Tunbridge Wells County School for Girls. The appearance generated indicated status to attendees, but also, on a more mundane level, respectability, a concept which was of particular importance to the middle classes. Consequently the new

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[565] Uniform lists for Wycombe Abbey School 1922, 1925 & 1932, Wycombe Abbey School Archives.

County, Grammar and High schools which opened to fulfil an increased need for this type of education presented an image not unlike the schools to which they aspired, further levelling appearances to the untrained eye.

In state elementary schooling practical concerns such as a lack of clothing were not dealt with as in previous centuries through allocation of garments, instead the emphasis was placed on teaching basic cleanliness and good habits such as mending clothes alongside encouraging family economy. This in conjunction with increased state provision in areas including free school meals and improved access to healthcare enhanced childhood conditions for the majority of the population. These issues required resolution prior to the adoption of uniform and it wasn't until the interwar years of the twentieth century that conditions had improved sufficiently to allow this to occur. School uniforms were initially voluntary, but were later made compulsory despite concerns about costs to parents and this issue was referenced in contemporary newspaper articles.[566] In design, uniforms followed the general appearance of other schools, albeit in a pared form more appropriate to the context. Thus school uniform design passed down the social scale from elite institutions to become a universal symbol of the British education system, retaining and intensifying its links with national identity.

In the final chapter the twentieth century from the Second World War onwards was discussed. School uniform was retained in many schools throughout the War in direct defiance of the Board of Trade and despite problems obtaining fabric and making garments as well as insufficient coupon allowances. Examples of this include Aysgarth School, Eton, Christ's Hospital and the North London Collegiate School. National identity became more prominent in the wars of the twentieth century as a traditional image of the British and their way of life was promoted through propaganda. In the Second World War Lord Macmillan, the first Minister of Information stressed, in a memorandum to the War Cabinet, that all propaganda should place an emphasis on the British character – stoicism, determination, humour and good sportsmanship, qualities that bear a great similarity to those promoted in the public schools and were, therefore, already closely associated with school garments.[567] In political and social rhetoric, the Second World War was a time when a nation of diverse individuals were united in a single cause, the Home Front was as important as the fighting front, and this rhetoric helped to reinforce ideas of nationhood and nationalism. The

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[566] "School Clothes Which Make Mothers Worry," *Hull Daily Mail*, June 15, 1934, 8.

[567] Jeffery Richards, *Films and British National Identity: From Dickens to Dad's Army* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 85-86.

ordinary person became a symbol of British resilience and their normal activities in the face of adversity took on a heroic dimension.[568] The determination to maintain school uniforms under these difficult circumstances demonstrated the role that it had come to play in society as a symbol of both British identity and normality. This same process of retaining the traditional when faced with difficulties can be seen in the determination of the British public to make wedding cakes and Christmas delicacies despite severe butter, sugar and egg rationing. The maintenance of traditional activities in the face of adversary formed an important part of the public coping mechanism generating feelings of familiarity, continuity and security.[569]

The post-war period, chiefly the 1950s and 60s, was a time of rapid social change, especially in relation to young people and this affected both schooling and school uniform. Young people became a more prominently recognised group, with a new focus in advertising and social policy. This gave them a greater voice in society and in doing so allowed them to become more politically aware and active. They also developed their own sub-cultures, sharing interests, music and specific styles of dress which resulted in a greater interest in fashion and clothing. Schooling also relaxed in an increasingly liberal social climate, most notably after the introduction of comprehensive schools. Once again school dress reflected these changes, uniform requirements were relaxed and in some schools, particularly the less traditional, more casual comprehensives, uniform was abolished altogether. This move towards informality was initiated within the state system and gradually filtered into the more traditional schools where it was adapted for its new context, showing a reversal of previous trends where imitation had occurred exclusively in the opposite direction. This demonstrates the diminishing role of the elite as arbiters of fashion and taste and their replacement as style leaders by more widely accessible cultural icons and links with the new methods of the transmission of ideas discussed below.

As discussed in detail in the final chapter a cultural phenomenon that had a huge impact on the way in which school uniform is viewed was St Trinian's, the high-spirited and often violent schoolgirls conceived by Ronald Searle in the 1940s. Their huge popularity, which was increased by the films of the 1950s and 60s, initiated a trend for dressing up as schoolgirls that continues today and saw school uniform styles enter adult fashion and

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[568] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War?: National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain 1939-45*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-5.

[569] Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain : Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 147.

music as well as British drinking and clubbing culture. This movement of school uniform into popular culture further demonstrates the reversal of the top down method of dissemination of ideas. Instead it points to the more eclectic sources of twentieth century innovation in school uniforms brought about by increasing emphasis on popular culture and the faster transmission of ideas through television and the internet. From the late 1980s school uniform was formalised or reintroduced in many schools. This move was generated by concerns about lax discipline in institutions and uniform was seen as an alternative method of imposing control and order. In many ways this harks back to the charity schools in which uniform was perceived as a method of social restraint. Parallels can also be drawn between the Protestant modesty of sixteenth century uniforms and the modern need to cater for the requirements of Muslim, Sikh and Jewish religious dress codes in schools.

It is clear, then, that school uniform is a reflector of social and educational trends. It either closely aligned with status and gender norms or created and projected new aspirational identities in terms of increased status and greater liberation from constricting gender-based expectations. The speed of transmission of ideas and uniforms correlate closely with the contemporary capabilities of media, technology and transport. Concepts moved more slowly between charity schools with transfer in the initial stages often occurring through wealthy benefactors such as John Carr, founder of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, who stated in his will that the school should be a model of Christ's Hospital, which he had seen on his visits to London. With increasing availability of print media throughout the eighteenth century, ideas could be disseminated more swiftly and this continued into the Victorian and Edwardian period with the further introduction of commercial, pictorial advertisements and illustrated periodicals, better transport links and urban migration.[570] The relationship between technological capability and the transfer of ideas is seen most clearly in the twentieth century with the introduction of visual media from televisions to the internet. These new technologies allowed faster communication and flow of ideas but also gave the general public full access to relevant information and forums in which they could engage directly with issues, contributing to the discussion. This has resulted in authorities which are more responsive to public demand and the development of a society which values popular culture and media icons and this, has in turn, affected school uniforms, a case of the

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[570] For discussion on the effects of print media on the dissemination of clothing styles see: Reed Benhamou, "Fashion in the *Mercure*: From Human Foible to Female Failing," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 31 no. 1 (1997), 27-43; Hazel Hahn, "Fashion Discourses in Fashion Magazines and Madame de Girardin's Lettres parisiennes in July-Monarchy France (1830–48)," *Fashion Theory* 9 no. 2 (2005), 206.

method of transmission, affecting the message. The impacts of this, however, have operated only within the already established and understood framework of school uniform usage.

A similar interplay of technology, influence and design is apparent in the recent rise of the fashion blogger and significant parallels may be drawn between this and the transmissions apparent within the field of school uniform in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Whilst new styles are still adapted and reproduced from the catwalk, ideas are also drawn from a broader base with online forums particularly blogs now providing inspiration for high street collections. These blogs transmit ideas, both reflecting and influencing fashion; responding to catwalk and shopping trends, whilst also providing a new cultural resource for clothes retailers to draw on. This has allowed ordinary fashion consumers to play a new role in shaping fashion cycles whilst also reinforcing the hierarchical structures associated with the fashion world, situating the role of blogger in the existing system.[571]

The role of practicality is also an important one and functional concerns often precede other interests. The first, charity school uniforms were introduced to provide warm, hard-wearing clothing for the needy and early public schools adopted uniform for games to negate the impracticalities of playing sport in normal daywear as well as to identify teams. Conversely, unless provided by the school, uniform could not be introduced unless the necessary practical, and particularly financial, conditions existed amongst the families of attendees, as demonstrated in the early state elementary schools. Thus the act of adopting school uniform was often reliant on practical considerations first and foremost, but the style and design of the uniform reflects the ideology of the school or their preferred image.

School uniforms have generally been regarded as an important method of value transference and continue to retain these associations today. The transmission of meaning though school clothing was aimed both at the pupils themselves and at any viewers of the children, although the significance of the clothing was not conveyed equally to both in all social contexts. The uniforms communicated the role and status of the child in society, demonstrating variously class, gender, religious affiliation and the role of individual benefactors. The messages conveyed to the children through their clothing, were further reinforced within the educational environment, with lessons reflecting expected career paths, meaning that the significance of their attire was understood on a subconscious, if not

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[571] Ida Engholm & Erik Hansen-Hansen, "The Fashion Blog as Genre—Between User Driven Bricolage Design and the Reproduction of Established Fashion System," *Digital Creativity* 25 no. 2 (2014),140-154; Agnes Rocamora, "Hypertextuality and Remediation in the Fashion Media," *Journalism Practice* 6 no. 1 (2011),103-104.

conscious level. On the other hand the viewer, although able to determine major characteristics, may require an understanding of the type and aims of the institution to fully comprehend the message that is being conveyed by its uniform. For example the nuances and distinctions between public school uniforms might not be discernable to someone outside the system and consequently may be interpreted in an alternative manner than by those with direct experience or background knowledge. This meaning may be unintentionally encoded or purposely aimed only at those with the relevant understanding, the latter is demonstrated by the importance of the 'old school tie' in nineteenth and twentieth century business and politics.

The most prominent theme to emerge from this thesis is that of the impact of class on schooling and, more specifically, on uniform. Class shaped clothing practices, whether through practical concerns such as a lack of money for clothing, or more complex notions of class appropriate wear, the display of status and aspirational dressing. This can be seen in the intricate dynamic between public schools, the public school ethos and the middle class imitators of such institutions. Class also played an important role in the type of school which pupils attended, with the education system clearly divided on class lines until the twentieth century and class divisions persisting even today. Schools were in a position, therefore, that the status of the school was expressed through the daywear of pupils and as uniforms were first introduced, it was not unnatural that they should mirror the normal dress practices of attendees. In both instances, however, uniform was also a tool through which the status of pupils could be reinforced. In the case of charity schools this was predominantly to indicate to pupils their expected role in society and to prevent them from accessing jobs and services intended for those of higher status. This was intended to combat contemporary anxieties regarding the breakdown of class structures, whilst also demonstrating to the public, through the display of the children in their class-suitable garments, that appropriate action had been taken regarding the issue. In the public schools, uniform, whilst also fulfilling an important role in group identity creation, acted as a very visible marker of upper class status to a wider audience, demonstrating the place of the school in society and the expected rank of pupils. This, too was a reflection of class anxieties in a period in which the elite felt under threat from the burgeoning middle classes.

Uniforms in charity schools were only imitated by similar schools, whereas public school clothing was widely copied within the school system, as well as by commercial enterprise. It was rare for the dress of the working classes to be reproduced in fashionable circles. Public school uniform, on the other hand, in clearly defining itself as upper-class wear became a

status symbol both within the education system and as fashionable dress for children and was widely copied. In the same way as fashions, it was adapted to new contexts, with garments streamlined in schools with lower-income parents through the use of cheaper fabrics and manufacturers and fewer regulated items. Elements of the attire were also adopted by those that could not afford the whole ensemble, with Eton collars becoming a particularly popular accessory for the respectable working classes. Consequently class and the anxieties associated with it can be viewed as a major catalyst in the initial adoption of school uniform and the imitation of high status uniforms fits into a wider picture of emulation of upper class clothing. This process was reversed in the 1960s with more elite establishments taking their lead from state comprehensives in moves towards greater informality of dress.

This closely reflects and parallels wider changes in the dissemination of fashion where the top down model, in which fashion trends were passed down the social strata from the elite to the middle, and then, working classes, was the most prevalent method of transmission in Britain until the mid-twentieth century. As Diana Crane writes:

> The top down model was characteristic of Western societies until the 1960s, when demographic and economic factors increased the influence of youths at all social class levels. The enormous size of the baby-boom generation and its affluence compared to previous generations of young people contributed to its influence on fashion. Since the 1960s, the bottom-up model has explained an important segment of fashion phenomena.[572]

The bottom up model refers to styles that are sourced from lower socioeconomic groups and are most often created and propagated by adolescents engaging in specific youth cultures and this is particularly applicable to school-age communities. In a similar way to school uniform, this picture has become yet more complicated in recent years with fashionable influence drawn from multiple sources and transmitted through diverse channels including the fashion industry, celebrities and online spaces. This has created a dialogue between fashion and identity and placed a greater emphasis on individual expression based on factors other than class including gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, an emphasis which is at odds with the increasing uniformity in schools.[573]

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[572] Diana Crane, "Diffusion Models and Fashion: A Reassessment," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* no. 566 (1996), 15.

[573] Deniz Atik & A. Fuat Fırat, "Fashion Creation and Diffusion: The Institution of Marketing," *Journal of Marketing Management* 29, no. 7-8 (2013), 838.

The other major factor in determination of school uniform design was gender. This played a role across all educational establishments, albeit one of varying influence, with its impact seen more prominently in girls' education than in boys'. An early differentiation along gender lines is visible in the charity schools in terms of both clothing and curriculum, although this is simply reflective of normal working class dress and labour practices. In boys' public schools, the designation of status through uniforms was the most significant factor, but garments also embodied contemporary notions of masculinity. Public schools were the training ground for the Empire and boys needed to demonstrate manliness to be seen as competent to fulfil roles abroad. Those who did not conform to this stereotype were viewed with suspicion. Thus school uniforms replicated the sombre colours, simplicity of cut and formal design of correct masculine attire of the period. This reinforced the appearance of manliness amongst pupils and carefully avoided flamboyant or foppish garments which were associated with less appropriately manly traits.

Gender was hugely significant in the early stages of girls' education with the importance of feminine appearance and behaviour a constant concern for early female educators. Girls must appear consistently and obviously feminine in line with contemporary notions of femininity in order to combat claims that education would cause girls to develop the manly characteristics so valued in boys' schools. This demonstrates how engrained the concept of the boys' public school had become in the public consciousness. So much so that people found it difficult to separate ideas of learning and education from the public school ethos as a whole. This ethos promoted and rewarded masculine traits and it was consequently assumed that female education would do the same. Girls' schools, therefore, consciously chose to present themselves in a different manner closely focusing on a socially correct external appearance.

This emphasis continued until girls' education became less controversial and more widely acceptable towards the end of the nineteenth century. From this juncture uniforms were introduced and although initially the focus was on practicality, the design became increasingly masculinised in imitation of the boys' public school. This occurred alongside the implementation of other aspects of public school life from the games to the overall organisation of the school. In adopting such appearances and practices schools sought to demonstrate equality, but they also fulfilled the early prophesies whereby female education increasingly encouraged traits and styles of dress which were still considered masculine in society. Boys' school uniform, therefore, remained closely aligned with definitions of

masculinity, but female uniforms did not retain connotations of femininity, resulting in a disconnect between the expected wear and behaviour at girls' school and what was considered normal upon leaving. This meant that female pupils had to adjust to a new set of social norms in order to fulfil the domestic requirements that were still expected of most young women and this situation continued until the mid-twentieth century.

Gender stereotypes gradually began to break down in the second half of the twentieth century and this in conjunction with an increasing use of mixed education, saw uniforms streamlined to increase the similarity between the wear of the sexes, although some key differences were retained, most prominently the distinction between skirts and trousers and the origins for this can be traced back to early fears surrounding women in trousers. In recent years this has been challenged on equality grounds and many schools now have identical uniforms for both genders, although some schools continue to distinguish between the sexes.

Whilst less of a driving force for change, national identity has played an important role with regards to school uniforms, reflecting notions of patriotism and colonialism. This association originated within the British Empire and consequently can be traced back to boys' public schools who provided the administrators and figure heads that predominated in colonial countries, spreading the traditions of the British public school, including the uniforms, in a global capacity. The connection between Britain, Empire and school uniforms became cemented in both colonial countries and within Britain itself due to their visual prominence within society. This was further reinforced by the fact that very few countries outside the Empire utilised any form of school uniform, making school uniform uniquely British. The relationship between school uniform and national identity continued into the twentieth century and was particular prominent in times of war when British identity was felt to be at risk. In these instances school uniform became a symbol of normality, in opposition to military uniforms which represented the conflict. The link between nationalism and school uniform became less explicit in the post-War period as patriotic sentiment was expressed in new, less overt ways. British school uniform today still projects notions of national identity, but this has adapted with our own changing ideas of nation from dominant ruler of the Empire to modern multicultural society, there is, however, still something exclusively British about school uniform.

Comparisons can be drawn between these concerns of class, masculinity, British identity and the role of invented tradition and those created, preserved and expressed by military

uniforms in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The most prominent comparison is the role of uniform in the demonstration of hierarchy. Hierarchies in the armed forces corresponded closely with wider class gradations, with the majority of commissioned officers drawn from, the public-school going, upper-middle classes. Consequently normal class behaviours became associated with corresponding military and naval ranks and 'correct' class and masculine qualities were projected and reinforced through the official symbols of these positions. This operated in a number of different ways with the exclusion of poorer applicants due to the expense of purchasing officers' uniforms as well as through the replication of upper class dress practices. Military uniforms made the designation of class more visible and easily understandable than the more subtle class markers of everyday life and in this manner they operated in the same way as public school uniforms, designating status and reinforcing class-based norms of action and masculinity. [574]

The role of religion in uniform design is harder to isolate and with a few minor exceptions, affected design through its influence over contemporary ethics rather than garments directly reflecting ecclesiastical dress. The dominant religious ethos in an institution or period influenced notions of morality and consequently the correct mode of dress. This was particularly true for women who were considered more likely to stray from Godly principles. The influence of religion can be seen throughout this thesis from the Protestant emphasis on modesty in charity school uniforms to the propagation of muscular Christianity in boys' public schools in which a neat and correct appearance was seen to reflect an internal strength of character and good moral fibre. In girls' schools there was a greater emphasis on the risks of revealing too much and the concern that this would convey the wrong impression about pupils, visually associating them with less respectable girls. In this instance the role of the viewer was paramount with the hazards of distracting men or inciting unwelcome attention regularly alluded to. Recently religious dress in schools has become more prominent with the need to allow the wearing of items of religious significance. This is particularly relevant in a society in which a wide spectrum of beliefs are represented. Items of uniform religious dress have been introduced alongside standard uniforms and it is this ability to adapt whilst also retaining the traditional aesthetic which has ensured the survival of school uniforms for such a prolonged period

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[574] John M. Mackenzie, *Popular Imperialism and the Military: 1850-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 26-27; Quintin Colville, "Jack Tar and the Gentleman Officer: The Role of Uniform in Shaping the Class and Gender-Related Identities of British Naval Personal, 1930–1939," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, no. 13 (2003), 106-108.

This thesis is limited geographically, focusing on Britain and the British uniform model and there is a huge potential for research into the development of school uniform in other countries as well as the role of Empire in transmitting and imposing the British uniform model abroad. The thesis is also a broad overview of an extended chronological period and within this there are many areas that would warrant further study. Amongst these, a dedicated survey of school uniform manufacturers and suppliers, work on the fabric, cut and construction of individual uniform pieces, particularly the gymslip and djibbah, further research into the direct involvement of pupils in school uniform adoption and the social impacts of the St Trinian's cartoons stand out. In a wider context there appears to be a paucity of material on nineteenth and twentieth century fancy dress practices. Whilst outside the historical field there is also a significant lack of quantitative, non-anecdotal research into the actual effects of school uniform on pupils in terms of behaviour, academic performance and identity creation, particularly within Britain.

Conversely, a study of this scale is able to draw broader conclusions than more closely focused research might allow. Only broad comparisons across a long chronology would be able to show the relationship between fashion diffusion theories and the transmission of school uniform; the impact of works such as St Trinian's on recent concepts of adolescent femininity or the link between the nationalistic and Empire-orientated ethos of the Victorian and Edwardian public schools and Second World War associations between school uniform and notions of Britishnness.   If elements of the thesis had been considered in isolation it would have been possible to conclude, for instance that girls' school uniform was a product of sportwear and practicality. Taking a broader view, however, it is evident that the impact of boys' public schools was also significant. By sampling a wide range of source materials it is possible to trace a wider cultural transfer of influences and ideas, that are clearly not specific to a particular parliamentary report or unique to the ways in which uniform is advertised in newspapers, but rather indicative of much larger cultural trends and social changes that are expressed in a diversity of ways.

It looks certain that British school uniform will be around for a number of years to come and the pressures which have shaped the styles and designs over its history continue to have an impact, albeit in an altered way. The current trend of re-adoption and formalisation shows no sign of abating for the time being and continues to be supported by public figures and politicians such as David Cameron, quoted at the head of the chapter. There are also moves to implement school uniforms in other countries, particularly in America where it

has sparked serious debate over its merits and problems, notably its infringement on personal freedom and identity.

Abbreviations

GDS – Girls' Day School (Trust)

NLCS – North London Collegiate School

SPCK – Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

TWGGS – Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School

Glossary

A la Hussar – an article of clothing trimmed with parallel rows of horizontal braid in the fashion of a Hussar uniform.

Bands – the term initially (early sixteenth century) referred to the shirt neck-band, but later it was used to mean a pair of short, narrow pendants of white linen worn by ministers of religion, barristers and collegians. Also known as 'tabs'.

Blazer - originally a scarlet university coat, the name was applied, from the 1880s to any light, flannel jacket of a bright colour in use for sports and summer wear. These were generally vertically striped with the club badge on the upper pocket. Later the design was retained but the word came to encompass heavier, often wool jackets worn as part of school uniform.

Bloods – various meanings, used at some public schools and universities to denote a person whose dress or behaviour was widely emulated, at others a senior member of the institution who excelled at games. Often used with the additional implication of a rowdy or foppish young man.

Bloomers – a term originating from the reform dress promoted by Mrs Amelia Jenks Bloomer. The outfit consisted of a jacket and knee length skirt worn over full Turkish-type trousers. It was these trousers which were referred to as 'bloomers'. The intention was to provide women with more healthy and sensible attire which would give them much greater freedom of movement. Despite efforts in the 1850s to promote the style it failed to become popular.

The word 'bloomers' was revived in the 1890s when women began to wear the full style of knickerbockers with a jacket and blouse for sports and leisure activities.

Blue Coat School - see 'Charity School'

Board School - following the findings of the Newcastle Commission the Elementary Education Act was passed in 1870 to ensure that there was sufficient provision for the elementary education of all children aged 5to 13. School Boards were to be formed for areas where there was currently insufficient provision, and they were empowered to raise funds from rates to build and run non-denominational schools. The Boards could also impose compulsory attendance by the introduction of by-laws and pay the fees of the poorest

children. The Board Schools that were created tended to provide education for the poorest sections of society and focussed on teaching the 3Rs (reading, writing and 'rithmetic). They were generally staffed using the monitorial system which allowed a teacher to supervise a large class with assistance from a team of monitors (usually older pupils).

Boater - a stiff straw hat with moderately deep flat-topped crown and straight narrow brim, worn during the summer and for participation in sporting activities. The hat band was of petersham ribbon and as sports clubs and schools developed specific uniforms the colour of the trim often denoted the wearer's affiliation. Originally this style of hat was worn by men but as female sports developed it was adopted by women as well.

Brewer's Cap - a knitted stocking cap, coming to a point, often with a tassel and generally red. Also known as a fisherman's cap. Such caps were normal wear for working men but by the middle of the eighteenth century they began to appear as items of clothing worn for sporting events. This type of cap remained in use in the sporting arena until the 1890s when, with the codification of sports and standardisation of club outfits, it gradually disappeared.

Charity School - a school, supported by charitable bequests or voluntary contributions, for the free or cheap education of children of the poor. In the initial stages of the charity school movement these establishments dealt mainly with orphaned or abandoned children, providing not only education but accommodation and clothing. Perhaps the best known example of this type of school is Christ's Hospital, founded in 1552. Such schools also became known as Blue Coat schools through the practice of dressing the pupils in blue dyed cloth.

Although the practice of establishing charity schools for the poor by private donors had begun in Elizabethan times, a great increase in numbers occurred towards the end of the seventeenth century. The main object was religious and moral, as well as enabling the poor to earn a livelihood. By this stage of development many of the charity schools were day schools providing education not just for orphans but more generally for the very poorest classes.

The Clarendon Commission - the Royal Commission on the Public Schools was set up in 1861 under the chairmanship of Lord Clarendon: "To inquire into the nature and application of the Endowments, Funds and Revenue belonging to or received by the hereinafter mentioned Colleges, Schools and Foundations; and also to inquire into the

administration and management of the said Colleges, Schools and Foundations". Nine schools (including two day schools) were investigated and these were Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St Paul's, Merchant Taylors', Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury. The Commission sat until 1864, when its Report was published with general recommendations on questions of curriculum and governance.

The Clarendon Report - the report published by the Royal Commission on the Public Schools which sat from 1861 to 1864 under the chairmanship of Lord Clarendon.

Coif - a white linen cap worn by both sexes during various periods. In shape it resembled a baby's bonnet, close-fitting to the head and tied under the chin with strings. The coif was worn from the early Middle Ages onwards as a nightcap or under another cap, headdress or hat.

Common Round Hat - see 'Top Hat'

Comprehensive School - a state school that does not select its intake on the basis of academic achievement or aptitude. Such schools generally provide education for students from 11 to 18, although there are other variants, and are often very large, being intended to provide facilities for all the children in a neighbourhood. The term is commonly used in relation to England and Wales, where comprehensive schools were introduced on an experimental basis in the 1940s and became more widespread from 1965. About 90% of British secondary school pupils now attend comprehensive schools. Comprehensive education is in contrast to the selective school system, where admission is restricted on the basis of selection criteria.

Cotton - the soft, white, fibrous substance which envelops the seeds of the cotton plant and one of the most important of the natural textile raw materials. Although cotton was widely grown from ancient times it did not become readily available in Europe until the seventeenth century when painted cottons were first imported from India. Initially supplies were limited so the fabric acquired a scarcity value and was much prized. During the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the manufacture of cotton in England developed very rapidly and the fabric became widely available.

Cotton Cloth - from fifteenth to the seventeenth century this term referred to a woollen cloth of which the nap had been 'cottoned' or raised.

Dame School – an early form of private elementary school, usually run by women in their own home. They catered to a working-class clientele and were predominantly in existence between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Djibbah - a garment introduced by Roedean School in 1906. It was a knee-length dress with a round neck and short sleeves**,** being A-line in shape, without pleats. It was worn over a blouse or shirt. For wear during School hours it was navy blue with a cream yoke and with the School crest embroidered on the breast. Pupils were permitted to wear the same style in their leisure hours made up in a fabric and colour of their choice. The djibbah never became universally popular although a number of other girls' schools did adopt the style.

Drill Slip, Drill Tunic – see 'Gymslip'

Duck - a firmly woven white linen used for washable trousers and sportswear. (nineteenth century).

Ducks - trousers worn for sports made of duck. See 'Duck'

Ell - a measure of length, varying in different countries. The English ell was generally accepted to be 45in.

Eton Jacket - a short jacket, the fronts cut square or slightly pointed with a shallow, turned down collar and wide lapels turning nearly to the bottom. The centre back seam ends in a slight point and the sleeves have no cuffs. The style first appeared in the late 1790s and seems to have been a development of the skeleton suit (see 'Skeleton Suit'). It became standard wear for boys of the middle and upper classes well into the early twentieth century and is most familiar from its continued use at Eton, although it did not originate at the School.

Goffered - strips of fabric were gathered into frills and when washed and starched they were goffered, that is, set into stiff folds by inserting heated metal setting or poking sticks into the folds. Ruffs of the sixteenth century were treated in this way.

Grammar School - the title of 'grammar school' has been used to denote a variety of educational establishments over the centuries.   The name was attached to the early ecclesiastical foundations which provided an education in Latin grammar for boys entering the service of the Church. With the Reformation many of these schools disappeared to be replaced by new foundations which still focused mainly on an education in the classics, and

specifically upon the grammar of Latin and Greek, but intended for a wider range of pupils drawn from the upper and middle classes, but with their roots in the older ecclesiastical foundations. Over the centuries these schools continued to exist in various forms and with a widening, but still strongly academic, curriculum. They included a number of foundations which we now think of as 'Public Schools', including Eton, Winchester and Harrow, and most required pupils to pay fees. Following the Education Act 1944 (Butler Act), local authorities were empowered to set up secondary schools inspired by this model, and the name became attached to the selective schools in the tripartite secondary system designed to cater for the needs of the most academic pupils. Selection of pupils was carried out at the end of primary schooling through the Eleven Plus examination, which was believed to identify the type of schooling most appropriate to each child. Those not selected for grammar schools were allocated places at a secondary modern school or, in some local authorities, a technical school. The tripartite system largely disappeared following the passing of various Education Acts in the 1960s and 70s which introduced the concept of comprehensive education, although some local authorities continued to maintain their grammar schools. It is interesting to note, however, that in recent times permission has been granted for the creation of extensions to several established grammar schools.

Gymslip, Gym Tunic - the gymslip or gym tunic was first introduced in 1892 at the college for female physical training teachers founded by Madame Bergman Osterberg. Tunics were knee length, sleeveless and worn with a washable blouse. They had three box pleats back and front and were confined at the waist with a narrow sash of braid. The style became universally popular with sportswomen of all ages as it allowed far greater freedom of movement than any of the garments which had preceded it. Gymslips were often of navy blue serge but other colours were adopted by clubs, schools and colleges, brown, green and maroon being popular choices. The gymslip eventually passed from the sports' field to become the garment of choice for ordinary uniform wear in girls' schools. Also called a 'Drill Slip' or 'Drill Tunic'.

House System - the patchy nature of secondary school provision in the United Kingdom until the late nineteenth century meant that any school with a good reputation attracted pupils from a wide area. Often, in the initial stages of this type of growth, the schools had insufficient accommodation to house all the pupils who wished to attend and they were boarded in houses in the local towns. Rivalry sprang up between the various boarding houses and this was encouraged by sporting and academic competitions. When schools built suitable accommodation for the pupils who boarded they often maintained the notion

of individual houses seeing it as a useful tool for managing the number of boys involved and providing individuals with a sense of belonging. Such establishments also continued to promote the rivalry between houses, allowing the pupils a suitable outlet for their energies in leisure hours.

With the establishment of many more day schools providing education for older pupils the idea of a house system was maintained. There seem to have been various reasons for this; breaking large units down so that pupils had a better sense of belonging; structuring a vertical system which rewarded worthy senior pupils with appropriate roles as house captains and prefects; imitation of the older, established institutions and creating suitable units for sports and academic competitions.

House names chosen by schools were hugely varied and could include names of local heroes or worthies, notable headmasters, historic houses, saints or, more boringly, colours. The division of the school in this way had an effect on uniform because each house would often be given a colour as well as a name and pupils would wear ties, badges, hat bands or belts in the appropriate colour.

Kersey - a coarse woollen cloth with many varieties in quality and pattern. The name possibly derives from the Suffolk village of Kersey where it may have originated.

Lisle - a firm cotton thread used especially in the making of gloves and hosiery.

Morning Coat - the fronts of the morning coat sloped off from the bottom button near the waist to rounded, short tails at the back. The rear vent ran from hem to waist seam with two hip-buttons. The garment was generally single-breasted with a turned-down collar and short lapels. By the second half of the nineteeenth century it had become the accepted dress for formal wear. It was generally black or grey in colour and the edges were often finished with braid.

Nankeen - a strong cotton cloth of a yellowish-brown colour, originally from Nanking in China (eighteenth century).

Newcastle Commission - the Royal Commission on the state of popular education in England, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, was appointed in 1858 "To inquire into the state of public education in England and to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people".

The investigation revealed that many districts were without sufficient school places for the number of children resident in the area. Where places were available children often failed to attend regularly and, therefore, gained little benefit from the teaching provided. Much of the teaching provided was felt to be inadequate and the curriculum taught unsuitable for the age and needs of the children attending.

Newcastle Report - the Newcastle Commission published its six volume report in 1861. The recommendations were embodied in the 1870 Elementary Education Act which required that every school district should have sufficient schools and made sources of funding available for this programme. For further details see 'Board Schools'

New Look - a look introduced in the late 1940s and particularly associated with the couturier Christian Dior and his 1947 collection. The new creation had calf-length, full skirts, a tiny waist and feminine sloping shoulders. It was accompanied by elegant hats and high-heeled shoes. It was a radically different look from how women had dressed during the war years, when women's dresses tended to be knee length, shoes low-heeled and sensible and hats relatively small. The name is said to have originated from Carmel Snow, Editor of Harper's Bazaar, who supposedly quipped "It's quite a revolution, dear Christian! Your dresses have such a new look".

Pill-box Hat or Cap - a small, oval hat with straight sides and a flat top, named for its resemblance to the small boxes used for storing pills. The style has existed for many centuries and has been worn by both men and women. It appeared as part of military uniform in the British Army in the 1850s and continues to be worn by most of the Gurkha regiments in modern times. In the 1870s the pillbox began to appear as part of the outfits worn for various sports, including cricket and football.

Public Schools - in Britain this term was originally used to denote any of a class of grammar schools founded or endowed for public use and subject to public management. From the nineteenth century it indicated a fee-paying secondary school which developed from former endowed grammar schools, or was modelled on similar lines, and which took pupils from beyond the local constituency and usually offered boarding facilities. The term was officially used in July 1860 in the appointment of a Royal Commission, and in 1867 in 'An Act for the better government and extension of certain Public Schools'. As this act applied to the ancient endowed grammar schools or colleges of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse, and Shrewsbury, these foundations were regarded as the elite Public Schools.

Over time, however, the use of the title was extended to include other schools of similar organization. Initially, these included those institutions founded in the nineteenth century to provide schooling for the sons of the middle classes, who felt themselves to be excluded by the established Public Schools. Examples of this type of school are Stowe, Lancing and Fettes.

More recently it has been applied to all schools who are members of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC). These schools may also be referred to as 'Independent Schools' and in many people's minds the two terms have become virtually interchangeable.

The Royal Commission on the Public Schools - see 'Clarendon Commission'

The Royal Commission on the state of popular education in England - see 'Newcastle Commission'

The Schools Inquiry Commission - see 'Taunton Commission'

Skeleton Suit - from around 1770 a young boy was dressed in what was termed 'skeletons' or a skeleton suit, often made of nankeen. The suit consisted of a tight jacket and ankle length trousers. The jacket generally had two rows of buttons ascending over the shoulders and was worn over a frilled shirt. The trousers appear to have originated from country peasant attire and are of interest because they were introduced for boys a generation before their use was accepted for men. The term 'skeleton suit remained in use until around 1830.

Skull Cap - a small, round cap, closely fitting the top of the head and with no brim or peak. The style was widely used in medieval times from the twelfth to the fifteenth century and was often worn under another cap or hat. It continued to be worn as part of the dress of clergy and academics and in later periods reappeared as a nightcap or smoking cap. By the mid-nineteenth century it had been adopted as an item of sporting wear.

Stomacher - a decorative panel of a V or U shape worn attached to, or separate from, the front of a doublet or gown. It formed part of the clothing of men in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century and appeared in women's clothing from about 1570 until the 1770s. The stomacher was stiffened and reinforced with strips of metal, whalebone or wood in order to maintain the smooth and rigid form of the doublet or gown bodice and descended

to a sharp or rounded point at the waist. It was often ornately decorated and was in a different material and colouring from the rest of the costume.

Tabs - see 'Bands'

Tail Coat - for the first decade of the nineteenth century the tail coat was cut straight across at the waist in front and fell to long tails at the back. The coat lapels were large and the collar high up to the ears and the sleeves were fitting. Over the next fifty years the coat continued to change in subtle ways, the tails becoming shorter, the collar flatter and the lapels smaller. It continued to be worn until about 1860 for use in town, but was seen less often after 1855. The style has survived in formal evening wear for men.

The Taunton Commission - in 1864 the Schools Inquiry Commission, under the chairmanship of Lord Taunton, was appointed to inquire into the education in secondary schools as a whole: that is, all those schools which lay between the nine great public schools covered by the Clarendon Commission and the elementary education of the working classes which had been dealt with by the Newcastle Commission. Its brief was "to consider and report what measures (if any) are required for the improvement of such education, having especial regard to all endowments applicable or which can rightly be made applicable thereto".

The Commissioners investigated 782 grammar schools, plus some proprietary and private schools. They found that provision of secondary education was poor and unevenly distributed. Two thirds of English towns had no secondary schools of any kind and in the remaining third there were marked differences of quality. There seemed to be no clear conception of the purpose of secondary education, nor was there any appropriate differentiation of courses adapted to the needs of pupils who left school at different ages.

The Commissioners were also profoundly concerned about the provision of education for girls - there were only thirteen girls' secondary schools in the whole of England – and they were not impressed by the quality of education that was on offer.

The Taunton Report - in their report issued in 1868 the Commissioners recommended the establishment of a national system of secondary education based on the existing endowed schools. Their report envisaged three grades of secondary education in separate schools. This was essentially the start of the tripartite system which was in place until the

education acts of the 1960s introduced comprehensive education. (See 'Grammar School' for more details)

The resulting 1869 Endowed Schools Act created the Endowed Schools Commission and gave its members considerable powers and duties. They were to draw up new schemes of government for the endowed schools and were to extend the benefits of endowments to girls as far as possible.

Top Hat - a tall, high-crowned hat with a narrow brim usually slightly rolled up at the sides but at some dates with an almost flat brim. The style appears to have developed from the English round hat of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which had a tall crown and small, rolled brim. The term 'common round hat' appears in the Clarendon Report on the public schools in answer to questions concerning the styles of dress being worn by the pupils. It can, from other evidence, only refer to the top hat, which was standard wear for males of the upper classes at the period when the report appeared.

Tussore – wild silk, cream or brownish in its natural state, varying in quality and weight depending on the source of the raw silk and the method of weaving. Most tussores came from India although China was also a source. It was a fabric much used for dress materials at the end of the nineteenth century as at least some of the varieties of tussore were washable.

Voluntary Schools - by early in the nineteenth century it was clear that educational provision in the United Kingdom was both patchy and inadequate. Several societies were set up to provide basic education for the poorer classes. These societies included the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, the Catholic Poor School Committee and the British and Foreign Schools Society; many, but not all, of the schools created by these societies promoted a particular set of religious beliefs. The schools established by these societies became known as 'Voluntary Schools' to distinguish them from the schools, such as the Board Schools, established by local public authorities (see 'Board Schools'). Under the terms of the 1870 Elementary Education Act public funds were made available to support the network of voluntary schools.

Zouave Jacket – a style of jacket fashionable in the middle years of the nineteenth century, the zouave was a collarless jacket worn open in front, with a single fastening at the neck. The style had no back seam and the front borders were rounded off at the bottom corners.

It was named after the uniform jacket of the Zouave regiment in Algeria who were involved in the Italian war of 1859.

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