

## **Resources for Fashion Research in the University of Westminster Archive**



This guide gives a brief overview of resources that might be useful for researching fashion within the University's Archive. It covers:

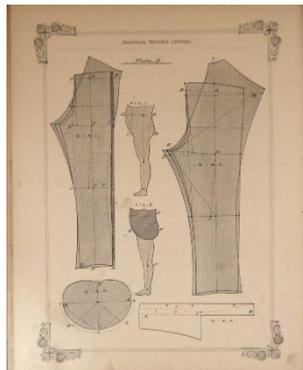
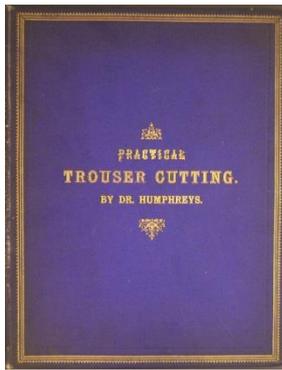
- fashion design, dressmaking, tailoring and hairdressing taught within the University and its various predecessor institutions
- sportswear for both men and women since the 1880s
- fancy dress, costume and pageantry
- street fashion
- the Hogg, Sons & B Johnstone tailoring firm.

Fashion students might also find inspiration in other resources that the archive holds – such our travel collection, our printed ephemera, and our historic architectural books. Please contact us for more information or advice on your research.

## History of Fashion Teaching at the University of Westminster

Now regularly ranked among the world's top fashion schools, the University of Westminster's fashion teaching has two parallel but distinct histories, originating from both the Polytechnic and Harrow College.

### **Regent Street Polytechnic (including the Young Men's Christian Institute)**



The first **cutting (tailors)** classes began when the Polytechnic moved to 309 Regent Street in 1882, taught in the evenings by Dr Thomas Darwin Humphreys – a staunch advocate of teaching anatomy to tailoring students. Dr Humphreys published several books detailing his techniques and the Archive holds 3 of these: The Polytechnic Coat System, Practical Trouser Cutting and

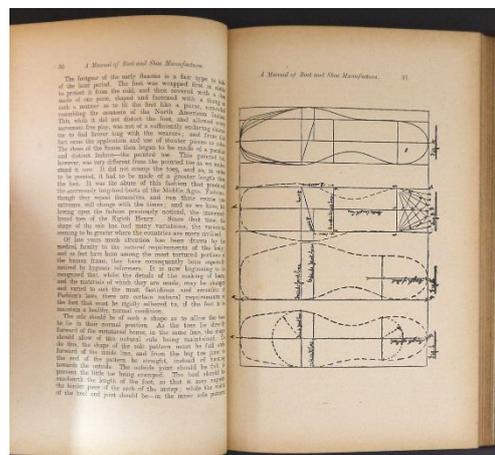
The Academy and other Trouser Systems. The course had strong links with industry and a prize for the best student was awarded by Messrs H. Poole & Co.



By the time of the First World War the School of Art was running **classes in fashion drawing and designing**, and there was also a **Day School of Tailoring** for boys rather than adults, with youngsters from the course later apprenticed to Master Tailors across the city. Tailoring was amongst the classes offered to **disabled ex-servicemen** returning from the First World War, and the archive holds this one photograph of the students on this course

From 1884 to 1903 the Polytechnic also held classes in **Boot and Shoe Manufacture**, led by Mr W.J. Waterman, and the Archive holds a 1900 'Manual of Boot and Shoe Manufacture designed for the use of technical students' relevant to this course.

A series of classes aimed at young women, including **dressmaking and millinery**, began in 1888 and continued to be offered in the School of Domestic Science until 1963. Many of the young women at the Polytechnic used





their craft skills for charitable purposes, including **knitting** for deep sea fishermen and during both world wars<sup>1</sup>.

**Ladies Hairdressing** classes started at the Polytechnic around 1900, with a course in Hairdressing (gents) started in 1926 at the request of the Hairdressers Guild.

In 1929 the **Polytechnic Craft Schools** were established in the newly built Little Titchfield Street. The building contained purpose-built facilities for the teaching of Tailoring, Hairdressing, Motor Body Building, Architecture and Engineering, and also housed state-of-the-art classrooms for teaching Domestic Science (including dressmaking). The Craft Schools taught boys from aged 13 and up, but evening classes were also held for adults, usually aimed at those already employed in the relevant industry. The Archive holds the notebooks kept by a student, Ethel Bil, of the **Ladies Garment Cutting** course at this period, which include written notes, diagrams, and scale paper patterns.

At the **outbreak of the Second World War**, the attendance at the Craft School was 350 day pupils and 700 evening pupils. Evening classes were cancelled, and 120 day students from the Craft School, were evacuated to Somerset, where the Craft School was housed in Sidcot Quaker School in Winscombe. The hairdressing and tailors classes returned to London in 1942 (with day and evening classes resuming). As a result of the 1944 Education Act, the Craft Schools ceased to exist, last appearing in the prospectus for the academic year 1946/47. Needlecraft courses continued in the Domestic Science department until 1956.

The classes at the Polytechnic are well-documented through the **prospectuses**, which often give a good level of detail about the syllabus and the teaching staff, and through **photographs** taken of students at work. The classes also regularly held displays in the Polytechnic's annual New Year Fete which are reported on in-depth in the **Polytechnic Magazine** [available online at <http://westuni.websds.net/>].



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<sup>1</sup> A history of knitting at the Polytechnic can be found in *Textile* 12:1.

## Harrow

Harrow College of Higher Education provided **dressmaking** classes (for girls only) from 1889 onwards. Aged 14 to 20, students served an apprenticeship for several years, where they qualified to earn a wage only 'once they had acquired the knowledge of cutting-out'. The Archive unfortunately holds few records of these early courses, except for press cuttings and a few surviving prospectuses.



During the 1950s and 1960s, Harrow College's School of Art continued to expand and thrive. Dress Design had been offered since at least the 1940s, and the Archive holds a collection of student **textile designs**, believed to date from around the 1950s-1960s.



During the 1970s and 80s fashion students were regularly winning international prizes, and **David and Elizabeth Emanuel**, who designed Princess Diana's wedding dress, both studied fashion at Harrow. As well as prospectuses, the Archive holds presscuttings and Fashion Show programmes for the course at this period.



In 1990 Harrow College of Higher Education merged with the Polytechnic and in 1992 the institution was re-designed the University of Westminster

## University of Westminster

Today, the renowned Department of Fashion at the University's Harrow Campus offers students pioneering courses in **design, merchandising, buying and business**. It also provides professional development for prominent retailers including Harrods, Tesco and New Look. Graduates include Markus Lupfer and Christopher Bailey.

The University Archive holds programmes for final year **Fashion Shows**, prospectuses and course leaflets detailing the syllabus, and photographs of students at work, and of their degree shows.

## History of Sports and Leisure Wear



The Regent Street Polytechnic was not just an educational establishment but was also known for its popular sports and social clubs. The clubs regularly documented their activities and so the University Archive holds a large number of photographs of sportsmen and women from the 1880s to the present day. These photographs document the changes to sportswear over this time, including the use of knitwear for sports garments, changing shoe shapes, and notions of masculinity and femininity both in costume and body shape.



In particular the University Archive holds large numbers of photographs relating to fencing, athletics, cycling and boxing. The archives of the Polytechnic Ramblers and the Polytechnic Touring Association (who organised trips in the Swiss Alps) also cover the changing fashions in walking and other outdoor activities.



## Fancy dress, costume and pageantry



1ST PRIZE FOR ARTISTIC MERIT.  
MISS HILDA STEVENS.

Fancy Dress was enormously popular during Queen Victoria's reign, helped by her own enthusiasm for the pastime. It formed a regular component of the Polytechnic's annual New Year's Party and Fete, with prizes awarded for the best costumes. The Archive holds a number of photographs of the winners, with many more printed in the Polytechnic Magazine.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s, historical pageants were also hugely popular in the UK. These were also incorporated into the New Year celebrations and formed the basis of the Polytechnic's contribution to the 1928 Lord Mayor's Parade. The Poly presented a pageant of Students Through The Ages, with costumes designed by Dorothy Hartley, author of *Medieval Costume and Life* [please see the separate guide on Dorothy Hartley at the Polytechnic].

## Street Fashion

**Legs . . .**  
**Legs . . .**  
**Legs . . .**

**They've Never Had It So Good**

By TONIE WHITE

**LEGS**, legs and more legs : that was the story last year, and it looks like staying that way for quite some time. In fact, legs have never had it so good.

The story began in Britain last year when the Boot craze swept the country and even spread across the Channel, where it became a prominent feature in the Spring Collection.

**Flame is Dying**

However, the flame is dying down as quickly as it began, so count yourself lucky if you were unable to buy any knee-length boots this Winter, as they will be completely old-hat by the Spring.

In place of boots, we see spats which are just as warm, and twice as cheap. The prices range from 39/11 for a pair of imitation leather, to under £1 for double-nylon stretch spats complete with buttons to give them the authentic touch.

legs, thicker stockings in diamond or bold square designs which were such a hit last winter, are still very much in the running.

Charros have produced a stocking which combines fashionable elegance with serviceability. Called "Diamond Mink" this stocking is well worth buying, as apart from its attractive appearance, it is extremely hard wearing and comes in the most original shades.

**The Shoes that Granny Wore**

By SALLY MINGARD

A S far as shoes are concerned this



How to succeed in business?—Here's a suggestion by a pert young Miss Wearing "Arosa" and at home on the (Country Club) Range

As an institution for young people based in the heart of London, the students at the Regent Street Polytechnic and its successors have always been early adopters of fashion trends. The changes in youth culture and dress over the years are documented in the University's archive both through the many photographs of the student body, and through the students' own magazine, which often included fashion pages.

## Hogg, Sons & J B Johnstone Ltd tailoring collection

J.B. Johnstone tailors was founded in 1820 and acquired the firm of Hogg & Sons of Hanover Square after the Second World War. The firm, now called Hogg, Sons & JB Johnstone Ltd, moved to Clifford Street in the 1980s and traded until 1999. In the 1980s it had also acquired Tautz & Co (founded 1820).

The firms specialised in military uniforms and the University of Westminster Archive holds the two regulation books from the firm which detail the tailoring and dress regulations for army and navy (UK and overseas) regiments, European royalty, Hunts, civil servants and ancient societies. They include numerous fabric samples, sketches and even watercolours of the uniforms.

