

THE POST-WAR SUIT

The 1940s – 1950s

IN THE UNITED STATES, men's tailoring in the forties and fifties saw a boom-time of creativity: big, bold, colourful, wide-shouldered, double-breasted – the look of the era embodied the confident exuberance of excess. Not so in the UK, where rationing was still in force and suits were sober and single-breasted. Many men made do with the shapeless, low-quality 'demob' suit issued to them on leaving the Army for their return to Civvy Street. If the 'Man in the Gray Flannel Suit' was an American invention – suggesting the anonymous salaryman – the minimalism of the style, with its narrow lapels and trim, and turn-up-free trousers – was more likely the standard across war-ravaged Europe. The late forties and fifties offered some positivity, with the pioneering of dependable and affordable made-to-measure and later off-the-rack tailoring from Sir Montague Burton. •



THE PEACOCK REVOLUTION

The 1960s

IN THE SIXTIES, London was the epicentre of a pop cultural revolution. Nutter's, as Edward Sexton and the Kilgour-trained Tommy Nutter's business was called, cut suits with a modern if slightly thirties Hollywood flair: subtly exaggerated proportions, strong lines, narrow waists, parallel-legged trousers, wide peak lapels, and mixed-and-matched fabrics. The celebrities came in their droves, including Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton, Elton John, and The Beatles. Meanwhile, Douglas Hayward's fresh, streamlined approach brought other faces of the era to his door – Terence Stamp, David Bailey, and Michael Caine. The adventurous spirit of influential retailers also contributed to flamboyant experimentation in menswear: designer Rupert Lycett Green, for example, reimagined Edwardian style through his Mayfair boutique, Blades, whereas shirt maker Michael Fish introduced very wide 'kipper' ties, polo necks, and even dresses for men at his Mayfair shop, Mr Fish. •

