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Fashion parades – for men only: Multiple tailor Hepworths, designer Hardy Amies and the marketing of men's suits in Britain in the 1960s

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Abstract

This article will examine the use of male fashion shows as a marketing and promotional tool by British high street multiple tailor Hepworths in the 1960s as part of their design collaboration with women's fashion designer and couturier Hardy Amies. The partnership successfully brought the concept of the branded designer label to British men for the first time and was a major initiative for the menswear industry as it highlighted and consolidated a design ethos which strongly emphasized men's fashion. Drawing on a wide range of primary source material including oral history interviews with two male models who worked for Hepworths and Amies; object studies of surviving garments; and film and images of the shows, this article will explore the significant and innovative approach to selling men's fashionable tailoring taken by this mid-market menswear company. It also provides a broader understanding of the history of men's fashion during this period, a narrative which is dominated by the concept of the peacock revolution, by demonstrating Hepworths' important contribution to everyday men's fashion in post-Second World War Britain.

Keywords

fashion shows

fashion parades

menswear

tailoring

suits

multiple tailors

male models

In 1955 designer Hardy Amies gave the second Hollander lecture to the annual meeting of the Clothing Institute. His comments on menswear were reported by *The Outfitter* in which he expressed the opinion that men's clothes 'always march in parallel with women's clothes', but pointed out that for menswear 'the difficulties of promotion and display are enormous' and gave the example that male fashion parades 'verged on the embarrassing, even on the ludicrous' (Anon. 1955: 6). Amies' judgement on male fashion parades (which appears to have changed by 1958 when he used such a show to promote his men's accessories) highlights the fragility of men's relationship with the rituals of fashion; rituals which still had overt connotations of femininity (Amies 1958). There is long precedence for some aspects of men's appearance in public being deliberately showy: the tradition of the Regency dandy, working-class monkey parades – in which young men walked the streets in their best clothes – and the striking presence of youth subcultural styles such as the 1950s Teddy Boy. However, the fashion parade has overwhelmingly feminine associations. Originating in the mid-nineteenth century as part of the development of French couture and becoming more widespread through the twentieth century, fashion parades performed femininity as well as fashion (Evans 2001, 2013). This was very different from the male parallel to couture – bespoke tailoring. Amies made the point in 1964, that while in terms of status Savile Row could be thought of as the equivalent of women's haute couture it was, 'always at the

disadvantage of not being able to hold seasonal fashion shows. It has thus never been asked to be an authority, but has been merely a vehicle for executing the fashionable ideas of its private customers' (Amies 1964a: 24).

During the 1960s the Leeds multiple tailor Hepworths collaborated with Hardy Amies on a range of men's suits and tailoring. They innovated by deploying design and fashion in a variety of ways to appeal to male consumers – including the use of men's fashion parades. This pioneered the use of fashion designers by men's tailoring companies in Britain, contributed to making a focus on this type of fashion mainstream for the Leeds multiples, and brought these designs to men on their local high streets. Hepworths had a long history in producing mid-market men's tailoring using the made-to-measure method of retailing and production. Established in Leeds in 1864, by the mid-1960s they had nearly 300 stores across the United Kingdom (Honeyman 2000). In contrast Hardy Amies' background was in the London couture trade and women's fashion, opening his own atelier in 1945 and designing for Queen Elizabeth II (Pick 2012; Ehrman 2002).

A key element of the promotion of the collections created by Hardy Amies and Hepworths were the annual fashion shows put on by the company, making them an excellent case study to explore the ways that the Amies and Hepworths relationship operated, the impact on men's fashion design, and fashion promotion within the menswear industry in Britain. While fashion shows and female models have a long history in the presentation of women's clothing, particularly in the traditions of couture, the place of fashion shows in menswear and the role of the male model is far less well understood or documented historically. There are scattered examples of men's fashion shows from the first half of the twentieth century: Caroline Evans has found evidence from the 1910s and 1920s; the English Men's Dress Reform Party conducted shows to promote their designs; and William R. Scott's research into the California menswear industry has demonstrated how important they were to its

development in the United States (Evans 2013; Burman 1995; Scott 2007). My own research has found that menswear trade shows using male models appear to have become more formalized from the late 1940s in Britain (Sprecher 2016). For Amies and Hepworths the use of male fashion shows during the 1960s was an essential part of the marketing of their collections and put them at the forefront of developments in men's fashion at this time. Along with the developing professionalization of male modelling in this period, the fashion show provides the means to look at this neglected area of fashion history and to rethink these rituals of fashion performance. This is particularly significant, given the strongly gendered associations of modelling and fashion shows with femininity and women's fashion. It also allows a more nuanced understanding of the history of men's fashion of this period, the narrative of which is often dominated by the boutiques and extravagant styles of the peacock revolution of London's Carnaby Street and Kings Road.

Fashion shows

By 1959 men's fashion shows were popular enough for British menswear trade magazine *Style for Men* to positively declare that the year to date had seen 'some of the most successful style parades ever staged in the men's trade' and to outline the economics of staging such parades for their industry readers with costs of up to £350–£400 including model fees, hire of the appropriate hall, building the stage setting, printing and sending invitations (Anon. 1959). And in 1960 at least one of the Leeds multiples was also venturing into this form of display in motion. The largest men's tailor in Great Britain and Ireland, Burtons, staged what menswear and outfitting trade journal *Men's Wear* called 'one of the biggest one-firm fashion parades ever to be staged in Britain' in which 120 garments were modelled to an audience of 400 sales managers at their annual conference in Harrogate who greeted the appearance of a range of 'exceptionally short Continental-styled raincoats' with prolonged applause (Anon. 1960a,

1960b). In February 1960 there was a brief mention by Hepworths that ‘local fashion shows will be stepped up this year’, indicating that they were already using them before their approach to Hardy Amies (Anon. 1960c). A year later Hepworths declared that they planned a ‘vast programme of public fashion parades […] Eight shows will be held in major towns in England and Scotland’, a total of nearly 500 shows between March and October (Anon. 1961a). The adoption by the multiples of this new form of promotion was notable enough for *Men’s Wear* to declare that while previously ‘scoffing and derision would have greeted anyone who suggested a fashion parade for men. Today it is considered no less masculine than a visit to the hairdressers’ as the fashion show had become ‘very much part of the pattern of selling menswear. And the large audiences it draws mirrors how much the public is absorbed in men’s clothes’ (Anon. 1961b). It is clear that these gradual moves by the menswear industry to adopt a method of promoting clothing which had strong associations with femininity signalled an awareness of what these fashion rituals could offer the industry as well as requiring the development of new formations of masculinity. This is particularly the case considering the way these shows explicitly positioned men as fashionable subjects.

However, from their first show with Hardy Amies in 1961 Hepworths distinguished themselves from any other menswear company in their use of fashion parades due to the scale of the performances, the publicity they attracted and their adoption of an approach more commonly used for women’s fashion. It also mirrored what French designer Pierre Cardin was doing in Paris at the same time with his shift from women’s wear to men’s fashion and use of a fashion show to promote his first men’s haute couture collection in 1960 (Graziani 1960; Pick 2012: 280–81). In his autobiography Amies declared that the Hepworths directors were initially wary of his ideas and ‘they were even more worried when I told them that I planned to give a show, just as we did with our women’s collection, only using male models. They thought the sight of a group of male models parading up and down would make them a

laughing stock' (Amies 1984: 68). Amies recounted that after he had designed the collection, a parade was organized at a private London house to show the Hepworths executives the garments, at the end of which he said 'there was a stunned silence. Then one of Hepworths' managers said in an amazed voice, "By gum, we could sell these!"' (1984: 68). In complete contrast, a Hepworths source described this event as being the culmination of a long period of discussion on the designs between Hepworths' technical designers and sales staff and Amies, while the suits were tailored for Hepworths' house model William Buck (Anon. 1961c).

This private showing was followed by a public fashion show held at the stylish location of the Savoy Hotel in London for fashion writers and representatives of the British and foreign press. The *Guardian* described the atmosphere as being like a first night, the first scene of the show opening with 'three town suits' modelled with 'a spirited snatch of mime by three strapping male models' (Anon. 1961d: 8.). A very short clip of unused footage of the event from the BBC reveals the modest nature of the show, with one model on a short runway modelling a short coat to a majority male audience (Anon. 1961e). The initial responses to the show were overwhelmingly positive with Hepworths proudly boasting of the world wide press coverage in their in-house magazine the *Hepworth Mercury* (Anon. 1962). *Men's Wear* concluded that:

> The Hepworths parade had more meaning than a show of clothes. It contained a convincing piece of evidence that a mass-multiple clothing firm can be versatile in spite of size. The special items which Hepworths threw in – sweater jackets, motoring coats and evening coats – shattered what remains of the theory that the vast production machines are capable of turning out only run-of-the-mill lines. (Anon. 1961f)

The company immediately followed up the London event by taking the show to the rest of the country in a promotional push that became significant to the marketing of the Hepworths and Amies collections throughout most of the 1960s. While London was viewed as the fashionable centre of the United Kingdom, Hepworths was a notable presence on high streets across the entire country; their campaigns were aimed at their customers nationally and required huge investment (Bromwich 1967: 1). Journalist Nik Cohn claimed that Hepworths were spending up to £25,000 on the fashion shows by the mid-1960s, which although it seems extravagant may well have been the case (1971: 74). Internal Hepworths documents show publicity manager Brian Bromwich stating that the cost of putting on the shows outside of London in the 1966–67 financial year had been an estimated at £10,000 and an unsourced report in the *Daily Express* claimed that the 1967 London Savoy show had cost £10,000 (Anon. 1967a; Clarke 1967).

The first Amies Hepworth collection event outside London was at the *East Midlands and Leicester Home Life Exhibition* where three Hepworths models were already engaged in a programme of shows prior to the Amies launch. After 12 September they switched 'from their existing wardrobes to […] show the whole of the Hardy Amies collection' (Anon. 1961g: 6.). This was to be followed up by a similar programme at the *Birmingham Mail Homes and Gardens Exhibition* for nearly a month through September and into October (Anon. 1961g). By 1963 the *Hepworth Mercury* proclaimed that 150,000 people had seen their fashion shows in a twelve-month 'Round-Britain' tour of 22 different towns and cities (Anon. 1963). In December 1964 this included shows at the *Teens and Twenties Exhibition* held in Manchester where Hepworths was the only men's clothing company to take part (Anon. 1964a) while the following summer seaside towns were a focus. Thousands packed venues at 'Southport Floral Gardens, the Pontin's ballrooms at Blackpool and Morecambe

camps, and the Butlin's Hotels at Brighton, Margate and Blackpool to see fashion presentations featuring Hepworths' (Anon. 1965b: 4.) The sheer size of the crowds can be seen in Figure 1, a photograph of one of the shows at Southport. At their height in 1966–67 Hepworths put on 59 shows nationally (Bromwich 1968: 2). All of these locations were destinations for the upper working class and lower middle class men who purchased Hepworths suits making them important sites for the company to target.

Figure 1: Hepworths fashion show at Southport Floral Gardens, on the coast of north west England in 1965 where it was watched by an estimated 5,000 people. The biggest audience was at Blackpool where around 8000 people packed the South Beach (Anon. 1965b: 4). Image courtesy Leeds Museums and Galleries.

However, depending on the venue and event, the shows varied in how much menswear was paraded. In an oral history interview model George Rutland remembered that for quite a few of the smaller shows

> they chose about three of us, uh, to travel around the country and stick us in with Hepworths clothes to model in women's fashion shows around. They would just stick one guy in modelling Hepworths clothes. And, uh, I did a lot of that as well. (Rutland and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.)

Despite these differing levels of participation in individual shows, during this period Hepworths strategically utilized fashion shows as part of their wider publicity campaign.

Their aim was to position Hepworths as the Leeds multiple who was clothing British men through a new approach to tailoring, tailoring led by a fashion designer.

The annual London Savoy show functioned as the glamorous beginning to the year's publicity for Hepworths (since 1950 when the Savoy hosted Christian Dior's first fashion show in the United Kingdom it had been a popular location for big fashion parades). What distinguished the Hepworths Savoy shows from other menswear shows that had been undertaken was how they adopted tropes common to women's fashion – drawing on Hardy Amies' experience. These included the level of investment and associated marketing, the employment of professional models and presentation of collections that were seasonally ahead. Hepworths ran the shows every September from 1961 until the last one in 1967 when they decided to shift the strategy of their advertising and marketing. Each show was structured theatrically into 'scenes' or 'acts' to distinguish the different types of garments from country tweeds to formal evening wear. The two most spectacular shows appear to have been those of 1964 and 1965. The shows lasted between 40 and 45 minutes and the models paraded around 100 outfits from suits to overcoats and evening dress – 132 in 1965 (Anon. 1965d: 23). The *Hepworth Mercury* described the team behind the 1965 event as comprising 30 models – '18 men and 12 girls' – ten dressers, eight people organizing the staging (including director, producer, stage manager, sound and lighting) as well as fourteen front of house (Anon. 1965a: 2). In all of the surviving programmes Amies is credited with devising the shows with direction by Eddy Franklyn in 1962 and then by Michael Bentley (who modelled in the 1962 show) in 1964 and 1965. The set designs, or 'décor' as they were described in the programmes, were by Kenneth Partridge who had undertaken designs for Amies since the late 1950s and became known in the 1960s for his work for various Beatles; in 1964 he was commissioned by John Lennon to re-work his newly purchased country home

(Pick 2012: 205; Anon. 2015: 31). An uncredited Partridge and Amies women's wear designer Ken Fleetwood could be fleetingly glimpsed in film watching a rehearsal of the 1964 show; another indication of the huge amount of resources (both financial and of design talent) required to ensure the shows were a success and made possible by Hepworths (Anon. 1964b).

Professional models were used for the shows. They had to audition and be approved by both Hepworths staff and Hardy Amies. Tony Armstrong-Barnes remembered being invited to audition in around 1961:

> Uh and then, in 19 I don't know if it was '60 or '61, um, I got a call to go in for an audition to− Hepworths had their um offices on the corner of a road in Regents Street to see a man called Brian Bromwich, who I think was probably their PR man, and uh and he said me, he said, 'Yes, I like you, I like you', would you like to go around the corner and see Hardy, Hardy Amies at 14 Savile Row.' He rang, checked and he said, 'Yes, you can go now.' So I went round. It was fine, Hardy was happy, so we did the first Savoy show, which we did every year for I think about six or seven years. (Armstrong-Barnes and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.)

Actor George Rutland auditioned several times for Amies' designer Michael Bentley with a number of other candidates before being allowed to meet Amies:

> […] went into Savile Row, walk into this room, there he was sitting at the end of the desk, and he, he just looked at me and he said, 'Good God,' he said, 'What waist have you got?' And I said, 'Oh, 27 and a half inches, just under 28'. He said, 'Sign him up! Sign him up!' I didn't have to do very much. And, um, and so was my introduction to Hardy and the whole Hepworths set up, which I found fascinating, you know, because that was yet another avenue opening for me, something that I didn't want to do, but, um, it was great and, and, uh, I just loved the fittings, the clothes […] And, um, he used to call me 'the bottomless wonder'. [laughs] 'Give it to the bottomless wonder. He can wear that. Give it to him!'. (Rutland and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.)

Rutland's slim build provided the perfect body type for Amies and Hepworths tailoring which featured a narrow and fitted silhouette. It also reflected the shift in the idealized fashionable male form into the 1960s which was clothed in tight-legged trousers and narrow shouldered jackets.

Armstrong-Barnes particularly remembers the age range of the models used for the Amies for Hepworths shows:

> There was, I think there were 14, 16 models in the Hepworths show but they remained the same every year.. He might have moved a couple, but of them all they were mainly […] For myself the youngest, then there was George [Rutland], and we go right up through Pete Christian, Michael Bentley who'd

> actually worked for Hardy Amies after a while […] He was, he actually didn't do the Hepworths shows because he was working for Hardy then but he was probably, when I started the top show model. And there was Dick Horn and there was George McGraw. Now when I was, did my first Hepworths show I was probably about 20 where George McGraw was probably about 60. (Armstrong-Barnes and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.)

For both Rutland and Armstrong-Barnes the Savoy shows were the highlight, particularly due to the attention to detail and the resources put into them. 'The Savoy show, they were the high spot, I mean, lovely celebrity audience and uh that was all we re-rehearsed and, uh, we did it in the blue room at the Savoy' (Armstrong-Barnes and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.) Rutland also remembered the shows with obvious pleasure:

> You know, um, but, you know, it was such a prestigious show. At the Savoy, Hardy Amies, Hepworths, everything beautifully put together, meticulously watched over by Hardy, so you were proud to walk down in that. You felt good, you felt really, really, really good, you know. (Rutland and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.)

A selection of photographs from the 1964 and 1965 shows published in the *Hepworth Mercury* give an indication of the atmosphere of the shows with the hundreds of guests, the lighting and the runway – all of the elements which had been established in the women's fashion industry. This can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, photographs of the 1965 Savoy show as the models parade under dramatic lighting. The 1964 show featured a backdrop of scaled up

houndstooth patterned cloth for dramatic effect and a selection of the models were filmed practising the show, including Tony Armstrong-Barnes and George Rutland (Anon. 1964b). Unfortunately the show was not filmed live and I have not found any footage that includes sound or music. At the end of the 1965 parade, 'men and girls crowded the stage dancing to the beat of pop music, in a party scene which presented the new Hardy Amies concept for semi-formal party wear – the Ad Lib suit', which had the 700-strong audience clapping from the start (Anon. 1965a: 2).

Figure 2: Hepworths and Hardy Amies fashion show, Savoy Hotel, London, 8 September 1965 (Anon. 1965a: 2). Image courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Figure 3: The 1965 Amies for Hepworths fashion show at the Savoy, London featuring the 'Ad Lib' collection with the models dancing to pop music (Anon. 1965a: 2). Image courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

This seems to have been unusual, however, as models Rutland and Armstrong-Barnes did not remember other examples of choreography: 'They just had background music for you to walk to, as I said, nothing […] Nothing was choreographed. I mean, it was done in scenes of overcoats, scenes of suits, scenes of sports jackets and things like that' (Rutland and Sprecher 2013: n.pag.). Getting the models to dance was not an especially original move as women's wear designers such as Mary Quant had introduced this into their shows earlier in the 1960s, but it did reinforce the Hepworths stance as being fully engaged in the fashion business by bringing ideas from elsewhere and trying them with men's tailoring (Evans 2001: 297).

The 1964 centenary show

The 1964 fashion show was particularly significant for Hepworths as it marked the centenary of the company and the show was explicitly designed to demonstrate the company's respect for past tailoring styles while also projecting future trends. A large proportion of the garments that were made and modelled for the 1964 parade have survived and are now part of the Leeds Museums and Galleries collection. Out of 112 outfits in the show, 37 suits, capes, coats and trousers were kept along with eighteen hats, three types of top hats and bowlers (Leeds Museums and Galleries 1964). I will focus on two of the suits as they provide an insight into Amies designs for Hepworths and the production process of the shows. The programme described the show as being 'much more than a men's fashion parade. It is a study in three Acts of the evolution of men's fashion over the past 100 years – since the foundation of Hepworths – and forward a little to the likely future' (Anon. 1964d: 2). This was played out by three collections. The first involved garments replicating 'important points of fashion progress since 1864', the second was the usual collection for the coming year, while for the third 'Future Indicative' collection Amies said he had been inspired by the past (Anon. 1964d: 2, 13, 4). Along with the show programme, the company published a booklet, stylishly designed by Edward Burrett, celebrating the event with photographs of many of the garments (Anon. 1964e). See Figure 4 illustrating one of the pages of the booklet and featuring two of the suits from the show. Model George Rutland has a suit from the 1966 show, but apart from these pieces, there do not appear to be any other survivals from the Amies for Hepworths fashion shows from the 1960s and 1970s.

Figure 4: Two garments from the 'future' collection of the 1964 centenary show. Left 'Country suit in black and white tweed, with knee breeches'; right 'Collarless suit in basket-weave tweed'. Both suits are in the Leeds Museums and Galleries collection (Leeds

Museums and Galleries, accession number LEEAG.2010.0349, Suits accession numbers LEEDM.S.1979.0021.3 and LEEDM.S.1979.0021.6). Image courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

One suit from the 'future' collection of the show is made of a very distinctive tweed – it features a collarless jacket with a high round neck and narrow trousers with elastic loops to go under the foot and ensure the correct taut line to the leg when worn, see Figure 5 for the full suit and Figure 6 for details (Leeds Museums and Galleries 1964: LEEDM.S.1979.0021.6).

Figure 5: Collarless suit made of Bernat Klein- designed space-dyed Scottish tweed in a basket-weave pattern (Leeds Museums and Galleries, accession number LEEDM.S.1979.0021.6). Photograph courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

The basket-weave space-dyed tweed by textile designer Bernat Klein (one of two of his Scottish tweeds included in the collection by Amies) and is part of an experimental collection of menswear suiting fabrics designed by Klein in the 1960s but never put into production (Anderson 2015: 91). The suit was modelled by Bill Buck (he can be seen wearing it in the catalogue above where it has been styled with a dark polo neck sweater and dark high suede boots) and his name appears in the collar of the jacket after the model number – as with most of the other garments from the collections. The design of the suit, its narrow trousers and collarless round neck clearly a nod to Pierre Cardin and the Beatles, was also inspired by Amies' apparent discovery of some of the detailing of historic menswear, the 1860s designs can be seen in Figure 7 photographed for the centenary booklet. The influence was also described in the fashion show programme:

> In presenting these trend-setters, Hardy Amies points out that they contain many of the features that reflect elements of Edwardianism seen in the period costumes of Act I. He emphasises that this is logical, since men's fashion development is merely taking up again where it left off 50 years ago…In the process of designing, the thoughts for the future came first. They have been confirmed by the study of styles of the past. (1964d: 4)

This didactic style of commentary appeared frequently in the Hepworths marketing material as they sought to establish themselves as an authoritative voice for men's fashion. They used the weight of Amies' status as a fashion designer while also making reference to their long history in manufacturing and selling men's tailoring.

Figure 6: Detail of trousers with elastic loops and '95 Buck' label in the back of the jacket. The multicoloured space-dyed yarns making up the weave of the cloth are also visible (Leeds Museums and Galleries, accession number LEEDM.S.1979.0021.6). Photographs Danielle Sprecher.

Figure 7: 'Past Historic' 1860s styles (Leeds Museums and Galleries, accession number LEEAG.2010.0349). Image courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

This interpretation of the past could also be seen in a suit with a high-buttoning jacket and narrow trouser, illustrated in Figure 8 (Leeds Museums and Galleries 1964: LEEDM.S.1986.0022.2). This suit was modelled by Tony Armstrong-Barnes in the 1964 show as one of the 'Present Infinite' collection for 1965 – it has been labelled '95 Barnes'

inside. Significantly, it was also chosen to feature on the cover of Amies first book on menswear, *The ABC of Men's Fashion*, which can be seen in Figure 9 (Amies 1964b). This book consolidated Amies' status as a notable menswear designer and authority on men's fashion. The suit's cut fits with the other pieces from the collection and reflects the 'long lean look with high-fastening jackets, with four buttons and short, extra-slim lapels […] low, hip-fitting trousers', which characterized the designs (Anon. 1964e). It also imitates the silhouette and tailored styling adopted by Mods at this time (Weight 2016: 54). Made of a subtle black and blue diamond-patterned worsted, the suit was designed with interesting details, such as reefer-style vertical pockets which give it a more relaxed casual wear look, small 1½ inch (3.8cm) sleeve vents (with no buttons), while the back jacket panels have been tapered to narrow to the hem with an 8 inch (20cm) central vent. The trousers have a 32 inch (81cm) waist with flat fronts and horizontal slit pockets, a narrow waistband and trouser bottoms narrow (14 inch, 35.5cm) and slanted – so they would sit neatly over shoes.

Figure 8: Suit from the 'Present Indicative' collection, 1964 (Leeds Museums and Galleries, accession number LEEDM.S.1986.0022.2). Photograph courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

Figure 9: The same suit being modelled by Tony Armstrong-Barnes on the cover of Hardy *Amies ABC of Men's Fashion*, 1964. Image courtesy TI Media Limited.

In their review of the trends for 1965, *Men's Wear* was sceptical of the Amies for Hepworths autumn show describing 'some very modern, and some very advanced styles. Some of his offerings looked like a kite-flying exercise', particularly the 'extreme high-buttoning jackets' and 'leg tight trousers tucked into calf-fitting knee boots – was there a rush on the shops for

them?' (Anon. 1965c: 11.). They did quote Bill Green of influential Soho men's fashion boutique Vince – credited as Vince Green (Wholesale) – who felt that trousers would continue to be narrow as well as noticing that buyers from provincial shops and stores were more interested in fashion than they had been before: 'they have not been at all shocked by equally advanced merchandise we showed them last year. We have not changed the type of merchandise – it is the buyers who have changed' (Anon. 1965c: 11.). It does not appear that the blue and black worsted casual suit modelled by Armstrong-Barnes actually went into production, and the basket-weave tweed collarless suit was always intended as one of the 'gimmicky' garments to attract press attention. However, both these suits showcased the enterprise and aspiration of Hepworths as they actively sought to engage with fashion and design during the 1960s and to make men's mass produced clothing both fashionable and desirable. This can be seen in the advertisements and style guides which presented styles that would be saleable and appealing such as Figure 10, a 1964 advertisement from the *Daily Mirror* that features Amies high-buttoning style and narrow fitting, 'making fashion available to the average man' (Anon. n.d.: 7).

Figure 10: High-buttoning suit 1964, Hepworths advertisement, *Daily Mirror*, 2 October (Collections Resource Centre, Leicestershire County Museums Service unaccessioned Advertising Guard book, Autumn 1964). Image courtesy Leicestershire County Museums Service.

Conclusion

The annual Savoy fashion show – and subsequent public shows around the country – had served a very useful purpose for Hepworths in establishing their fashion and design credentials and the name of Hardy Amies as a menswear designer but in 1967 the company

decided to take a different way forward. Hepworths managing director Norman Shuttleworth indicated that the company was planning to change their strategy by emphasizing window displays and advertising 'and full merchandising to the Hardy Amies designs' in their stores rather than persisting with the fashion shows (Anon. 1967a: 1). From Shuttleworth's statement it appears that the company could not see enough of a sales benefit from the publicity generated from the shows compared to more traditional promotional techniques. In financial terms this meant they decided to spend a budget of £160,000 on their autumn 1967 advertising campaign in national and provincial papers (Anon. 1967b). As Shuttleworth later described it, the company did not want to create 'the impression that we were seeking an almost theatrical standard of publicity in which most of the focus was directed towards the way-out styling and the lavishness of the presentation' (Anon. 1968: 1). Instead, Shuttleworth reiterated the ethos of compromise which the Leeds multiple tailors continually advocated, describing Amies as 'a down-to-earth hard working designer who keeps a constructive balance between design innovation and customer acceptability – between trend-setting and trend analysis' (Anon. 1968: 1). The company re-purposed their shows into 'hard-selling, commercial' presentations aimed at an in-house Hepworths sales audience (Anon. 1971: 1). One of these can be seen in Figure 11 where Hardy Amies has been photographed watching a much smaller scale show at a hotel in Leeds. The end of the Savoy fashion shows could be seen as a retreat from the business of fashion which the company had argued was key to their relationship with Amies. For Hepworths it appears that the fashion shows were not reaching the audience they were primarily concerned with – the men who wanted to purchase a reasonably priced, well cut and styled suit – and for the company that was the consumer they needed to capture. However, the Amies for Hepworths fashion shows were enormously successful in positioning the company at the forefront of menswear promotional trends and were crucial in mainstreaming a focus on fashion for the Leeds multiple tailors.

Figure 11: Hardy Amies (fourth from right) watching the Autumn 1971 collection fashion show at the Queens Hotel, Leeds (Anon. 1971: 1). Image courtesy of Leeds Museums and Galleries.

The fashion shows in this study demonstrate how significant the collaboration between fashion designer Amies and Leeds multiple tailor Hepworths was to the development of British men's fashion in the 1960s by paving the way for many of the more radical approaches later in the decade. The partnership with Amies was highly original as it was the first time a women's couturier had designed men's tailoring for the British high street. Hepworths' innovative use of fashion shows as promotional tools throughout the 1960s was a major initiative for the multiple tailoring and menswear industry: it highlighted and consolidated a design ethos, which strongly emphasized men's fashion and was a substantial change for the sector. The partnership lasted until 1982 and was financially successful for both sides, though it became much less of a focus for Hepworths during the 1970s as tailoring declined. Hepworths actively responded to developments that occurred within the menswear industry in the 1950s and then took a lead on these trends into the 1960s. The hugely ambitious promotional fashion shows were key to the success of the collections as they presented men's fashion to ordinary men across Britain as being stylish and attainable, far from the 'embarrassing' or 'ludicrous' of Amies' 1958 comments.

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