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**Article:**

Bide, B [orcid.org/0000-0002-5531-7190](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5531-7190) (2021) The Fashion City and the Suburb: How Bentalls of Kingston Upon Thames Helped Rebuild Cultures of Fashionable Consumption in London after the Second World War. *The London Journal*, 46 (1). pp. 47-65. ISSN 0305-8034

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03058034.2020.1772446>

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## **The fashion city and the suburb: how Bentalls of Kingston Upon Thames helped rebuild cultures of fashionable consumption in London after the Second World War.**

### **Abstract**

The Second World War disrupted the usual networks and geographies of London fashion, changing the way fashion was made and sold in the city. Taking Bentalls department store in Kingston Upon Thames as a case study, this article explores how this disruption created new opportunities for suburban shops to challenge the West End's supremacy as they key site for London fashion retail in the immediate postwar era. It explores how Bentalls pioneered innovative retail methodologies that satisfied consumers' desire for individuality and plenty at a time of austerity, and played an important role in developing retail methodologies for selling to the newly emerging teenage consumer. This article argues that Bentalls, through its innovative publicity, store design and display, contributed to rebuilding London's postwar fashion cultures in a way that demonstrates the need to incorporate London's suburbs into future histories of the fashion city.

**Key Words:** fashion retail, department store, marketing, teenage, austerity, suburb

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London's outer suburbs remain conspicuously absent from historical accounts of its emergence as a world fashion city over the twentieth century. Literatures on the subject invariably locate London fashion in Mayfair and the West End, a traditionally prosperous area to the west of the City but still in London's urban centre.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes they stretch the city's fashionable geographies to include the factories and workrooms of the East End, but rarely venture any further out.<sup>2</sup> This article argues that the relationship between urban and suburban fashion consumption and London's fashionable identity deserves further attention. If, as Patricia Casadei and David Gilbert have suggested, successful fashion cities are varied, multiple, and evolve over time, then studying how the changing nature of London's suburbs and their inhabitants interacted with fashion throughout the twentieth century can help us understand London's development as a fashion city with greater nuance.<sup>3</sup> This article tests this idea by asking how a case study of suburban fashion retail at Bentalls department store in Kingston Upon Thames—a prosperous middle-class area on the south western edge of Greater London—might further our understanding of London's development as a fashion city in the aftermath of the Second World War.<sup>4</sup>

There is no doubt that the West End is a significant site for the study of the twentieth century fashion city. By the outbreak of the war 1939, London's West End was well established as a centre of fashionable consumption with both a national and international reputation.<sup>5</sup> But the West End was not the only site for fashionable consumption in London. Bronwyn Edward's research into the geographies of fashionable consumption in the West End in the 1930s suggest that although a hierarchy of urban, suburban and provincial retailers existed in and around London, this relationship was often complicated and multidirectional.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the damage wrought on London's West End by aerial bombardment, government regulation and rationing during the war significantly disrupted its fashionable geographies.

This article argues that the disruptive impact of the Second World War provided an opportunity for suburban retailers to capitalise on the emergence of a more democratic and less centralised understanding of what constituted the fashion city in the late 1940s. Drawing on research comparing material from the Bentalls archive to that found across the archives of multiple central London department stores, as well as the fashion retail trade press and fashion publications from this period, it demonstrates that the important developments in fashion retail that would help shape London's future as a fashion city with a reputation for accessibility, youth fashions and innovative street styles were not only occurring within the West End. In particular, it presents Bentalls as a suburban pioneer that significantly raised its own fashionable cultural capital through the way it sold inexpensive ready-to-wear fashions to a newly emerging demographic of teen-aged women and girls—the 'Junior Miss'. It concludes by asking whether the innovative techniques Bentalls developed to foster strong consumer relationships and loyalty with the Junior Miss should be better recognised for their important contribution to London's successful reinvention as a postwar fashion city.

### **The Impact of the Second World War on London Fashion Retail**

Over 50 per cent. of the buildings within Greater London were damaged by aerial bombardment between 1940-1945.<sup>7</sup> It is well documented that this bombing made alien landscapes of once familiar streets, upset domestic routines, razed workplaces and rewrote social conventions.<sup>8</sup> However, the impact of bombing on the city's fashion industry is less commonly discussed, in spite of the widespread disruption it caused by destroying stock, machinery, factories, warehouses, and retailers.<sup>9</sup> Fashion retail was particularly disrupted by the bombing of the West End during the London Blitz between 1940-1941, which destroyed a

number of well-known retail buildings, including the John Lewis flagship store on Oxford Street.<sup>10</sup>

Amid the dramatic and devastating stories of lost buildings and livelihoods resulting from the London Blitz, it is easy to overlook the more everyday disruption of broken windows and small-scale damage, but these deeply impacted everyday retail experiences in the West End. The same raid that raised John Lewis's West House also damaged Selfridges's lifts and shattered Peter Robinson's Oxford Circus storefront windows.<sup>11</sup> Shopping for fashion in the West End was stripped of pleasurable spectacle, and by 1945 Oxford Street looked like a shabby mismatch of decaying and old-fashioned buildings that were no longer fit for the purpose of selling fashionable aspiration.<sup>12</sup> Although rebuilding plans were swift, the West End would remain blighted by unpleasant reminders of war in bomb sites until well into the 1950s.

But London suffered unevenly from aerial bombing. The middle class suburbs that surrounded Bentalls in the west and south west of the city largely escaped the worst of the Luftwaffe's destruction.<sup>13</sup> Reports on department store trading from 1947-1949 show that while high- and medium-end stores in central London suffered year-on-year falls in sales of women's outerwear, equivalent stores in suburban London saw an increase in sales.<sup>14</sup> This suggests consumers voted with their feet by shopping in environments that did not carry such heavy wartime scars, a trend that gave suburban Bentalls something of a competitive advantage in the immediate aftermath of the war when compared to retailers in badly bombed areas. The retail trade magazine *Display* gives a further sense of how the uneven geographies of bomb damage rearranged the hierarchies of various urban and suburban retail centres. The publication's regular features on Bentalls's focus on how the store's use of innovative visual merchandising and promotional techniques directly challenge the supremacy of West End department stores,

while coverage of the same West End stores laments their slow pace of recovery in due to problems sourcing materials and labour.<sup>15</sup>

The West End also suffered from broader changes to the British fashion industry that resulted from the Second World War, which disproportionately hurt the type of high-end department stores found there.<sup>16</sup> Clothes rationing persisted until 1949, limiting the number of purchases wealthier consumers could make.<sup>17</sup> High rates of purchase tax further dampened the luxury market and inflation materially diminished the purchasing power of many middle and upper class consumers.<sup>18</sup> Less immediately obvious but no less significant in its impact on the West End, government austerity regulations encouraged the rapid growth of mass-manufacture fashion. This had two main impacts on London's fashionable geographies. Firstly, it meant that London's West End department stores were increasingly reliant on sales of branded ready-to-wear items, rather than more exclusive made-to-measure or wholesale bespoke garments.<sup>19</sup> This made it harder for West End stores to distinguish themselves from competitors in the suburbs and regions who stocked the same ready-to-wear brands.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, in combination with heavy bombing to the city's fashion wholesale and manufacturing districts, wartime regulation caused a decline in the number of fashionable goods that were 'made in London', as the city's industry had largely consisted of the types of small-scale manufacturers that the government was trying to discourage.<sup>21</sup> As London-based brands increasingly manufactured outside of the city, so the public's tightly defined geographical understanding of London fashion was stretched beyond the West and East Ends and 'London fashion' became a broader and more slippery symbolic concept than ever before.<sup>22</sup>

The cumulative effects of bombing and government regulation on West End fashion retail had broader implications for London's fashionable reputation and the way the city's inhabitants

drew on this to construct their own fashionable identities. Urban retail centres not only provide spaces in which individuals can purchase goods, but also spaces in which they can explore their own relationship with broader consumer society.<sup>23</sup> Thus the damaged and depleted nature of West End shops and the newly elastic boundaries of London fashion in the immediate postwar years offered suburban stores like Bentalls an opportunity to redefine the symbolic capital of London fashion in relation to an emerging sense of individuality and localised, suburban identity.

### **Shopping and Suburban Identity**

London's suburbs have rarely been thought of as places at fashion's cutting edge, and their associations with cultures of consumption have rarely been portrayed positively. In the interwar period, they were often damningly represented as sprawling, homogenous, conservative, and insular places, inhabited by individuals whose lives were 'meaningless, consumerist, secular and tied to an empty fascination with American cultural sources.'<sup>24</sup> Where the suburb was praised, it was for its connections to the countryside and its offerings of open space, not for its distinct forms of urban culture.<sup>25</sup> But much like fashion cities, suburbs are also varied and multiple.<sup>26</sup> They are generally understood to be areas on the outskirts of cities that possess something of dual identity as both part of the city but also distinct from it.<sup>27</sup> This allows suburbs and suburban residents to develop specific local cultures through experimentation in hybrid ways of living that negotiate tradition and modernity, city and country, work and leisure, and the individual and the community.

London's growing middle class suburbs were particularly active in developing new ways of urban living in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>28</sup> Recent scholarship has

revealed that suburban space during this period enabled an immense spirit of creativity and innovation that empowered suburbanites to grow their individual interests and build new communities.<sup>29</sup> As Dion Georgiou argues, these studies highlight the importance of researching suburban leisure practices in order to understand experiences of suburban life and to disrupt the simplistic but persistent stereotypes that divide city centres as sites of production from suburbs as sites of consumption.<sup>30</sup> However, amid the recent academic focus on suburban creativity, craft, and community organising, there is a danger that we lose sight of the significance of suburban consumption as a positive and constructive force through which women in particular could shape local leisure cultures.<sup>31</sup>

It was particularly important for suburban department stores to encourage their female customers to exercise creative, political and cultural power through consumption because they relied much more heavily on sales of womenswear than their central and West End counterparts.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the history of fashionable consumption and department store retail in London is particularly entwined with the development of suburban space, and with its relationships to class and gender. The emergence of the department store was enabled by the same growth in middle class households that fueled London's Edwardian and interwar suburban building boom.<sup>33</sup> By opening consumer culture to the middle classes, department stores offered a means through which a much broader demographic was able to experiment with self-creation through consumption, and therefore invested those consumers with the power to shape mass culture.<sup>34</sup>

But suburban department store retail not only offered a more democratic model of consumption. As opposed to the pervasive misogynistic interwar anxiety that suburban space posed an emasculating threat to British culture, the department store celebrated consumption



as a means of female empowerment.<sup>35</sup> Writing about London's West End, Erica Rappaport notes how the early department store provided women with a safe space over which they were able to exert control and create their own pleasurable activity through consumption.<sup>36</sup> Bill Lancaster further argues against the portrayal of women as manipulated and unthinking consumers by highlighting how the presence of department store advertisements in the suffragette press demonstrate that women were able to exercise political power through acts of consumption.<sup>37</sup>

### **Postwar Fashion Retail at Bentalls of Kingston Upon Thames**

Bentalls provides a particularly interesting case study of the relationship between female identity construction, leisure practices, and consumption in suburban London. Bentalls is a large department store located on the very edge of south west London in the historic Surrey market town of Kingston Upon Thames. Bentalls's history throughout the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century mirrored that of its local surroundings. The opening of Kingston railway station in 1863 provided new retail opportunities in the area, and Frank Bentall founded his draper's shop in the town in 1867.<sup>38</sup> But it was the rapid interwar expansion of Kingston after the opening of the bypass in 1927 and the creation of new neighbouring suburbs such as Motspur Park and New Malden that enabled Bentalls to establish itself as one of south west London's most significant department stores and open a large new building in 1935.<sup>39</sup> Bentalls's growing interwar success was fueled by the influx of middle class suburban affluence that followed these building schemes. It capitalised not only on a growing number of local middle class consumers but also on the building boom itself by selling furnishing packages to new homes.<sup>40</sup>

Although Bentalls's day-to-day activities were interrupted by the arrival of war, its physical holdings escaped the Blitz relatively unscathed—unlike its West End counterparts.<sup>41</sup> This gave Bentalls something of a head start in the postwar race to re-establish fashionable consumption habits because it allowed the store to allocate resources to cosmetic alterations rather than structural rebuilding. The store was also in an unusually strong financial position at this time because the company was successfully floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1946, raising a large amount of capital that was then invested in building improvements and expansion to other suburban areas such as Ealing and Worthing.<sup>42</sup>

Bentalls's postwar plans for their Kingston store were especially ambitious. The Kingston store underwent a programme of expensive remodeling which involved large-scale artistic commissions—such as the grand new murals created for the walls of the escalator hall—that seem at odds with broader cultures of shortages and economic uncertainty in London at the time. The confidence with which Bentalls approached selling fashion at a time of austerity merits further attention, indicating that they responded to the changed circumstances of the postwar period differently from their West End counterparts in order to compete for custom by constructing—and celebrating—a specifically suburban type of fashionable identity.

### **Celebrating Suburban Style at a Time of Austerity**

The Bentalls archive reveals the store's role as an early adopter and pioneer of many postwar changes through a series of carefully compiled press clippings and photograph albums that date from the late 1930s to the early 1970s, with the bulk of the material covering the immediate postwar period. The details of the albums demonstrate that while Bentalls was an undeniably modern store at the cutting edge of retail research during this period, it was also a defiantly

suburban shop. Although the store had a wide-reaching reputation during the postwar period and regularly featured in national magazines such as *Vogue*, the newspaper adverts in its press albums indicate that it considered its primary target audience to be inhabitants of London's south west suburbs, followed by the surrounding counties of Surrey and Middlesex.<sup>43</sup>

Bentalls's marketing highlighted that it was possible to be at the centre of London retail without being geographically central by drawing on the idealised interwar representation of the suburb as a hybrid space that was both part of the city and comfortably removed from it. Advertising and staff confidently described to the Kingston branch as a 'London shop' and frequently made reference to London based events, including the 1948 Olympic Games.<sup>44</sup> Display staff appropriated London symbols, such as bus stop signs, in window displays, indicating that they wished to capitalise on the fashionable selling power of the London brand.<sup>45</sup> At the same time, Bentalls took care to promote the convenience of suburban shopping over the hectic experience of the West End. Bentalls's advertising made a strong feature of their description as a suburban 'out of town shop' in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar's* lists of recommended stockists, because they could use this to position themselves as the best of both worlds in their proximity to central London, only '15 minutes from Waterloo' by train, but with ample space for car parking and a more relaxed atmosphere.<sup>46</sup>

Bentalls's successful suburban balancing act was also present in the way they weighed tradition against modernity. Many of the store's print adverts between 1946-1950 explicitly refer to this in their featured tag line: 'The Modern Store by the Royal River.'<sup>47</sup> Bentalls's version of postwar spectacle aimed to provide a reassuring vision of social change, one which focused on the promise of increased prosperity and leisure while also providing a reassuring sense of continuity. These brand values were carefully cultivated through their events schedule, for

example in their choice to stage a display of historical costumes to celebrate the Festival of Britain (and in their invitation to Queen Mary to visit it), which positioned the store as a point of continuation in a city that had been frighteningly changed by war.<sup>48</sup> Bentalls wished to be seen as a place to go, but, recognising the unsettling impacts of the war years on its customer base, it also needed to be known as a place where local people felt empowered to belong.<sup>49</sup>

In order to achieve this, Bentalls needed to understand what notions of belonging, community and suburban identity meant to their consumers. The albums and business records suggest that Bentalls believed their local consumers would be most susceptible to fashionable promotions that celebrated domestic life whilst drawing on an individualistic, anti-austerity mood it perceived in its local consumers. While Second World War is generally remembered as a time when people ‘came together’, public interest in notions of community diminished rapidly after the war. There is a general sense across Mass Observation diarists that Londoners were, frankly, exhausted by expectations of collective sacrifice in the immediate postwar era, and Mass Observation reports concluded that the majority of people in London were thinking predominantly in terms of their own individual wellbeing when considering what kind of postwar world should be built.<sup>50</sup>

Fashion was represented in contemporary culture as an important tool through which consumers were able to reassert notions of individual identity and push back against the limitations of government austerity policies. Between 1946-1949, the British fashion press stopped running stories that supported government austerity measures as patriotic and began to actively criticise restrictions on individual consumption. Fashion was increasingly employed as a political tool and became a symbol of individual freedom in politically conservative discourse. Parliamentary debates about the New Look and the extravagance of Princess

Elizabeth's wedding dress in 1947 expose a broad—although not universal—political divide. While Labour MPs used fashion as a symbol of the unfairness at the heart of the British class system, Conservative MPs employed it as a representation of the plenty and prosperity they claimed to offer the British public as an alternative to the austerity caused by Labour's socialist agenda.<sup>51</sup> As the MP Thomas Moore put it in one particularly passionate speech: "We Tories believe in incentives [...] We believe in prettier clothes for the women with fewer coupons."<sup>52</sup> This message likely resonated politically with many of Bentalls local consumers, in a constituency that returned a Conservative MP at every election between 1931-1997.<sup>53</sup>

In response, Bentalls's marketing strategy actively positioned itself against the national landscape of austerity by selling shopping as a leisure activity rather than as a necessary means to obtain needed goods. Some of these activities can be seen as an extension of the types of retail and promotional activities department stores had been experimenting with in the 1930s.<sup>54</sup> For example a hair salon and crèche were opened in order to encourage female customers returning home from war work to 'Spend a day at Bentalls.'<sup>55</sup> However, what was new and strikingly different for a suburban store was the crucial role that women's fashion played in Bentalls's provision for its customers' leisure time. Renovations placed fashion at the physical centre of the store, with a number of departments relocated in order to make space for a new teenage fashion department in 1947 and to relocate the women's shoe department to a more prominent ground floor location in 1948. Bentalls's publicity team worked to make the store's fashion offering a key part of its destination status, for example through the lavish 'We've Captured the Sun' summer fashion window displays in 1947. Visiting these visually arresting modern windows was promoted as an event in itself, with adverts placed in local and London-wide papers that invited people to come and view the window displays as a leisure activity, making no mention of the actual goods they promoted.<sup>56</sup> These types of events broke with

Bentalls's pre-war focus on homewares and actively positioned the store as a place at the forefront of new fashion trends, and therefore in much greater direct competition with West End retailers.

Like West End stores, the most important promotional activities in Bentalls's fashion departments occurred in spring and autumn, following the couture shows in Paris and London. Bentalls staged special fashion shows and in-store promotional events to coincide with these seasonal shows, aligning timing to signal to customers that the suburbs were no less up-to-date with global trends than the city centre.<sup>57</sup> But Bentalls's buyers also recognised that local tastes were more than just watered-down versions of West End fashions. For example, the store publicised the opening of a new women's sportswear department in October 1948 through a series of displays sponsored by Pimms. These rejected the traditional presentation of London fashion as situated in the urban centre and celebrated instead the comfortable, leisured lifestyle of the ideal suburban existence through a series of window displays that featured female mannequins lounging in a suburban garden setting, under sun umbrellas, clearly referencing the luxury of space afforded by suburban dwellings.<sup>58</sup>

In order to foster a sense of agency and proactive consumption amongst customers Bentalls also used advertising and promotions to encourage consumers to be confident in their suburban tastes. This was made increasingly necessary due to the introduction of self-service retail methodologies—where customers selected garments off a rack of different sizes themselves, without the assistance of a member of retail staff. Like other London stores, Bentalls moved particularly quickly to adopt self-service into fashion departments in the aftermath of the war due to a shortage of skilled sales staff as a result of new employment opportunities and population decrease during the war.<sup>59</sup> Bentalls negotiated this change in retail methodology

through advertising that specifically celebrated the fashionable tastes of their suburban clientele. This is exemplified through the series of promotional fashion postcards the publicity team produced from the mid to late 1940s (figure 1). The front of these postcards featured images of new fashion lines recently brought into the womenswear department. Information about the garment and its price was printed onto a small perforated section on the bottom of the card, which invited the customer to ‘tear off and use Post Card for your own correspondence.’ These attractive and colourful cards were distributed at events and in-store. They acted both as adverts for new fashion stock and as an invitation for customers to confidently share their own fashionable knowledge and discerning suburban tastes with friends and family.

### **Introducing the Junior Miss**

The most significant contribution Bentalls made to modernising London’s fashion cultures in the immediate postwar period was in the development of techniques to sell to an emerging new demographic: teen-aged women and girls. Although the British teenager is often understood as a product of 1950s affluence, there is strong evidence that a specific consumer identity amongst teen-aged women and girls began to develop interwar and was well established in the immediate postwar period.<sup>60</sup> Retailers across Britain were further encouraged to think about targeting their promotional activities towards teenagers during the mid-to-late 1940s following the publication of research that suggested publicity had a particularly strong effect on teenagers.<sup>61</sup>

The increased availability of ready-to-wear clothing that resulted from wartime changes to British fashion manufacture accelerated the development of postwar teenage consumption

cultures because its low cost accessibility allowed teenagers greater autonomy to purchase clothes for themselves.<sup>62</sup> The inexpensive nature of teenage fashion offered particular opportunities for Bentalls. Because its customers were never as wealthy as those of its West End competitors, Bentalls sometimes struggled to offer comparative fashion offerings with West End stores, but the low prices of teenage clothes enabled Bentalls buyers to compete on a more level playing field when offering its customers the very latest in teenage styles.

The war also re-shaped the perception of youth culture in London with profound implications for teenage consumption. In the interwar years, teenagers might have had increasing financial means, but their consumption was often limited by the social perception of youth consumer behavior as threatening and potentially subversive.<sup>63</sup> The consumption of young women was particularly controlled by their parents, who often continued to choose and purchase their clothes for them while they lived at home.<sup>64</sup> But the war provided a new social impetus to encourage teenagers to participate in consumption cultures within the respectable space of the department store. Across Britain there were concerns that the war had increased juvenile delinquency due to the disruptions it had caused to children's structured routines, education, and family life.<sup>65</sup> These fears were particularly acute in London where the bomb damaged city provided an ideal backdrop for the press and popular culture to portray unruly and ungoverned gangs of roaming teenagers.<sup>66</sup> Some of this behavior was attributed to the inadequate provision of youth leisure activities, leading fashion retailers to suggest that teenagers could keep busy in their leisure time through shopping.

Spotting an opportunity, Bentalls rushed to open one of the first specialist teenage fashion departments in the country, beating well-known West End retailers such as Liberty & Co., D.H. Evans and Peter Robinson to create a space where the visual merchandising of fashion goods



could be targeted specifically at a youth demographic. The idea of a physically separate department for teenage fashion, distinct from the womenswear and children's departments, first emerged in 1926 at the Hutzler Brothers department store in Baltimore, U.S.A., but did not transition to British department stores until the 1940s.<sup>67</sup> Most frequently called the 'Junior Miss' department (although its title varied from store to store), this new department provided a space where the fashionable imaginations of young consumers could be set free, unhampered by associations with the clothes of the children's department, selected for you by your mother, or the womenswear department where your mother shopped for herself.

### **Collapsing the Divide Between Consumer and Retailer**

Bentalls were particularly interested in creating a space in which young female consumers could feel a sense of belonging and ownership. They wished the department to be somewhere for these new consumers to gather and try on clothes, without pressure to purchase or move on elsewhere. The layout of the department designed both social and entertainment functions in to the space towards this end. It was conspicuously less formal than the main women's dress department, with racks of clothes placed sporadically at uneven intervals and odd angles, which would have encouraged browsing and self-selection (figure 2). To display fashionable tableaux, the department borrowed the winding island designs that had been so successful at the *Britain Can Make It* exhibition the year before. Like in an exhibition, this encouraged customers to follow a meandering browsing route. Customers paying close attention were rewarded with irreverent styling details, such as display mannequins accompanied by toy dogs or climbing stuffed monkeys. These were changed frequently along with the garments displayed, adding a subtle sense of spectacle and novelty to shopping in the department. Compared to the stark, white modernity of Liberty & Co.'s Young Liberty department, which opened the following

year, the Bentalls Junior Miss department had a more comfortable and welcoming aesthetic. It mixed modern features with more reassuringly familiar pieces of furniture that lent the department a sense of continuity and intergenerational connection to the store's history. Once again, Bentall's drew on the hybrid nature of suburban space to create a retail environment that both felt innovative to its teen customers whilst simultaneously reassuringly familiar to their parents.

In order to further foster an inclusive atmosphere, Bentalls collapsed some of the traditional distinctions between staff and shoppers in order to impress that the store was embedded in the local community. Bentalls's fashion staff were presented as knowledgeable and professional, but also friendly and reassuringly middle class, as demonstrated by the 1947 photo story the store created for display at recruitment events entitled 'A day in the life of a shop girl,' which depicted the ideal staff member as an attractive and smartly dressed assistant from the fashion department.<sup>68</sup> The images show her both working on the shop floor and enjoying Bentalls's staff leisure facilities—playing tennis and having her hair done in the store salon—presenting a clear message that successfully selling clothes to Bentalls customers required blurring the boundary between staff member and middle-class fashionable consumer.

Management encouraged staff to be knowledgeable fashion consumers and to use their own fashionable capital to sell merchandise. Staff were instructed in new styles by means of special fashion shows, featuring clothing selections that were designed to both educate staff in the latest looks and to give them confidence in their own fashionable opinions.<sup>69</sup> Bentalls's suburban location enabled the store to achieve a much closer relationship between customer and staff member than its West End counterparts. Although London's suburbs are often thought of as places filled with commuters, the interwar suburb largely depended on local

employment.<sup>70</sup> This meant that Bentalls's staff were predominantly drawn from the same local area, and often very similar socio-economic groups, as their customers.

Nowhere was the blurring of boundaries between staff and consumer more apparent than in the Junior Miss Department. Unlike staff in other departments, Junior Miss sales assistants wore items of stock rather than the store's official uniform. They were also noticeably younger than their counterparts in womenswear, as they were intended to be approachable figures of fashionable aspiration for the young consumer rather than matronly figures didactically imposing stylistic constraints on youthful experiments in fashion.

Bentalls used promotional events to create even closer relationships between the Junior Miss department's stock, its staff and its customers with the aim of cultivating customer loyalty. These events were designed to both attract young women into the store and to position the store as a place where they could learn to create a fashionable identity that was inextricably linked to Bentalls. This was achieved by encouraging customers to interact with staff members as if they were their peers, as can be seen in images of the 'Junior Miss Tent' at the store's popular annual Film Garden Party event in July 1948, which show staff members engaging potential customers in friendly two-way conversation.<sup>71</sup>

Events such as the Film Garden Party proved so successful that the department launched the 'Miss Junior Saturday Club' in March 1949. The Saturday Club was highly popular with local teens. There were 200 people in attendance at its inaugural meeting in the store with a further 3500 on its mailing list. The Saturday Club ran along the lines of a community-based youth club, providing free talks and workshops for its members. It advertised itself as a space for socialising and fun, not for selling clothes, but it had a clear agenda to encourage sales by

promoting fashionable aspiration amongst its members. It achieved this by offering suburban teens glimpses of lives beyond their home and school experiences, hiring speakers including actresses to give talks on themes such as ‘the American teenager and her way of life.’<sup>72</sup> Crucially, it also promised that its members could achieve the kind of glamour and romance they saw at club events.

The Saturday Club invited members to participate in events with a clear message that the Bentalls Junior Miss did not just emulate fashion—she embodied it.<sup>73</sup> The most popular of these were the fashion shows in which the live mannequins were all members of the Saturday Club. In 1949, British Pathé captured the first of these shows in a newsreel entitled ‘Schoolgirl mannequin,’ which comments on the novelty of the concept.<sup>74</sup> The fashions on show represent a hybrid of the latest American and British styles, presented with affluent suburban London summer holidays in mind. For example, American style two-piece beach outfits were followed by a girl wearing jodhpurs and clutching a riding crop.

The newsreel shows that the audience demographic mirrored the girls on the catwalk. Aside from a few mothers (and bored-looking younger brothers), the audience was filled with attentive teenage girls taking the event extremely seriously. Many seem to have carefully styled their hair and worn their most fashionable outfits. Providing an accurate representation of the school-age audience in the live mannequins positioned the audience and models as peers. This elevated the audience to equal status with the models, reminding them that, by attending the show and passing judgement on the clothes presented, they were actively participating in the formation of local youth fashions, rather than waiting to be passive recipients of new trends.

Bentalls further built on the success of the Saturday Club meetings by producing a newsletter entitled *News for Miss Junior* (figure 3). This publication had a similar tone to the Hollywood fan magazines of the period.<sup>75</sup> It treated the reader as a friend by addressing them in a casual, conversational manner. Although produced to promote the department, the newsletter was more than just a sales catalogue; it featured recipe ideas as well as information on new music, books and local theatre productions—and noted that the featured records, books and theatre tickets could all be purchased at Bentalls.<sup>76</sup>

The conspiratorial tone of the newsletter exemplifies how Bentalls successfully used promotional events and marketing to blur the distinction between the store and the individual fashionable identities of its customers. This enabled Bentalls to position itself as a collaborator to its teenage consumers whilst simultaneously strengthening its role as the arbiter of local youth tastes. Bentalls were subtle in masking the way their buyers edited fashions on behalf of customers by staging promotional activities that promised consumer choice. The store created a visually coherent retail environment, to the extent that it is often difficult to distinguish between staff members and older attending customers in images of Saturday Club events, as staff members were dressed in the stock customers were encouraged to buy, and, in turn, customers were encouraged to both emulate these looks and see themselves as a part of the department and its workings.

Although Bentalls's Junior Miss department had been joined by numerous other teenage fashion departments across London department stores by the end of the decade, its local focus and attention to accessibility seem to have made it uniquely successful in building a lifestyle brand around the inexpensive ready-to-wear clothes the department offered for sale. By fostering a new type of fashion confidence that did not revolve around a social elite, Bentalls

catered to a generation of young, confident suburban consumers in south west London who felt a greater sense of ownership and control over their own fashionable identities than their parents' generation.

### **Evaluating Bentalls's role in remaking London's fashion cultures after the Second World War.**

Bentalls capitalised on the difficulties faced by West End retailers to rebuild and modernise at a time of postwar austerity by promoting the suburb as an attractive alternative to the city centre and by using publicity to openly celebrate suburban fashion as different, but not lesser than, that found in the West End. This proved to be a successful strategy; according to several Mass Observation diarists in the late 1940s, Bentalls was a 'seething mass of people' on Saturdays.<sup>77</sup> While many central London department stores struggled to regain pre-war sales figures for fashionable goods in the late 1940s, Bentalls celebrated 1947 as a year of record turnover.<sup>78</sup>

Bentalls's postwar success demonstrates how parts of London that were previously excluded from a tight definition of London fashion were able to capitalise on the increasingly fluid geographies of the postwar fashion city in order to sell clothes. But Bentalls's sales figures were not merely a happy accident of suburban location: they were the result of fiercely competitive adoption of the latest retail techniques. Although Bentalls was not necessarily typical of all suburban department stores, it does reveal that the important developments in fashion retail that would help shape London's future as a fashion city with a reputation for accessibility, youth fashions and innovative street styles were not only occurring within the West End and provides a cautionary tale about the limitations of histories of the fashion city that exclude its suburbs.

Bentalls's experimented in retail methodologies that blurred the boundaries between leisure and retail space, and between sales staff and customer. Coverage of Bentalls in the trade magazine *Display* demonstrates that these increasingly inclusive and democratic marketing strategies were adopted by its competitors in the West End as they grew their teenage fashion offerings during the latter half of the 1940s.<sup>79</sup> This makes the innovation apparent in Bentalls's Junior Miss department a particularly important point of connection in the development of youth fashion cultures in London, explaining how the city's retailers transitioned from the fairly homogenous interwar copying of American techniques to cultivating the increasingly distinctive, diverse, and democratic range of youth styles and modes of retail for which the 1960s city is celebrated.<sup>80</sup> Although press coverage of the store suggests that Bentalls's record of innovation in youth consumption cultures faltered by the late 1950s, it is clear that Bentalls played at least a small part in London's postwar transition from a city known for traditional and high quality tailor made clothes to a destination for consuming innovative, youthful and democratic fashion trends.<sup>81</sup>



A JACKET DRESS FROM BENTALLS  
Moss Crepe in eye-catching colour contrasts **5** GNS



NEWEST OF COATS . . . FROM BENTALLS  
Camel Hair and Wool. Adaptable collar **4** GNS



A JACKET SUIT FROM BENTALLS  
Tailored dress and matching coat. Wool Boucle **8 $\frac{1}{2}$**  GNS

BENTALLS · KINGSTON-ON-THAMES  
*the Great Store for all your needs*  
Fashion No. 324

POST CARD

THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING INTERESTING AT BENTALLS

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF BENTALLS  
*Tear off and use Post Card for your own correspondence*

Figure 1:

Promotional fashion postcards by Bentalls, c.1944-1947. Credit Bethan Bide.





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Figure 2:

Opening of the Junior Miss department at Bentalls, 1947.

**"RECIPE FOR SPRING"**

All the ingredients for Miss Junior's Spring wardrobe shown in your very own Fashion Parade.

FRIDAY 3rd MARCH at 4.30 and 6 p.m.  
SATURDAY 4th MARCH at 11 a.m. and 2.45 p.m.  
*\*Society Club Members only.*

Come see the dress when designers had to dress as best they could in clothes that just happened to be. New "short" fashions are especially designed to suit daily youthful figures, practical and pretty and they were here their own Fashion Parade!

To make a date, Miss Junior, is on the lovely Spring wardrobe we have planned for you. Our "Recipe" for this exciting season of the year includes just everything that waits for the other, suitable for weekends and those "special" dresses for dancing and fun time.

To get your tickets they are free of course write to:  
The Editors,  
News for Miss Junior,  
Dorothy Limited,  
Kingsway House,  
and give full details of the day and time you want to come and how many tickets you require. They will go quickly so don't delay. Is it NOW?

\*Admission to the Parade on Saturday at 11 a.m. will be by Members only. ~~and~~ Saturday Club members and NOT apply for tickets.

Have fun in the kitchen and surprise the family.

Try two new recipes—we bullied them out of our Chef!

**FRIAR'S OMELETTE**  
1/2 lb. Apples  
1/2 lb. Sugar  
1 pint Water  
1/2 pint Butter or Margarine  
1 pt. Bread/Crumb.  
A few leaves Bread/Crumb.  
Put and cook the apples in their own and put them in a sieve with sugar and water. Let them soak and cook soft. Then add the butter. Butter a tin dish, sprinkle bread/crumb all over it, fill with alternate layers of apple and bread/crumb, sprinkle top with brown bread/crumb and bake in a hot oven for about 15 minutes. When done run out on to a hot dish, sprinkle with milk, sugar and nuts, but sufficient for a pudding.

**FIG COOKIES**  
1 lb. Butter or Margarine  
1 lb. Sugar  
7 Eggs or 3/4 pint Eggs  
2 lb. Flour  
7 oz. Figs  
1 Teaspoonful Baking Powder.  
Cream butter and sugar together, beat in the eggs, mix at a time, stir figs finely and mix into the butter and eggs. Sift the flour and baking powder together into a bowl with the butter and eggs, adding more flour if necessary to make it into a stiff dough. Roll out thinly, cut into cookies and bake in a moderate oven for about 15 minutes.

**AND TALKING OF "AMATEUR COOKS"**  
we made the girl friends take their special off to show their "at home" remark.

The "Mrs. Benson" on the left has one navy wool skirt and a lace blouse with tucking at the yoke. The skirt 21", 20" waist, 22", 24". The blouse is pink Green is White, 22", 24". It is just one style chosen from the latest in the Junior Miss shop.

Marjorie's Grey flannel skirt is so indispensable, she says—and so agree. With two big patch pockets and slightly flared. Waist size 21", 20" 22", 24".



Figure 3:

News for Miss Junior newsletter, Spring 1950. Credit Bethan Bide.

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- <sup>1</sup> See case study locations in: C. Breward, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); C. Breward, E. Ehrman, and C. Evans, *The London Look: Fashion From Street to Catwalk* (London: Yale University Press, 2004).
- <sup>2</sup> A. De La Haye, 'Court Dressmaking in Mayfair from the 1890s to the 1920s' in *London Couture 1923-1975: British Luxury* ed. by E. Ehrman and A. de la Haye, (London: V&A, 2015), p. 11.
- <sup>3</sup> P. Casadei and D. Gilbert, 2018. 'Unpicking the fashion city: global perspectives on design, manufacturing and symbolic production in urban formations,' in *Creative Industries and Entrepreneurship: Paradigms in Transition from a Global Perspective*, ed. by L. Lazzeretti and M. Vecco (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2018), pp. 79-103.
- <sup>4</sup> Existing research considers the 1940s as a pivotal moment for London fashion, but concentrates disproportionately on the West End. See: J. Walford, *Forties Fashion* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011).
- <sup>5</sup> C. Breward, *The Hidden Consumer; Masculinities, Fashion and City Life 1860-1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and E. Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women and the making of London's West End*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- <sup>6</sup> B. Edwards, 'West End Shopping with *Vogue*: 1930s Geographies of Metropolitan Consumption,' in *Cultures of Selling: Perspectives on Consumption and Society Since 1700* ed. by J. Benson and L. Ugolini (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 34.
- <sup>7</sup> L. Mellor, *Reading the Ruins: modernism, bombsites and British culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.
- <sup>8</sup> A. Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Cape, 1991).
- <sup>9</sup> The scale of damage is apparent in the level of compensation the garment industry received under the War Damage commodity and business schemes. *Draper's Record*, 5 January 1946, p. 50.
- <sup>10</sup> ARP Message Form, 18 September 1940 (Westminster City Archives).
- <sup>11</sup> ARP Message Form, 19 September 1940 (Westminster City Archives).
- <sup>12</sup> B. Edwards, 'Shaping the Fashion City: Master Plans and Pipe Dreams in the Post-War West End of London' in *Fashion's World Cities* ed. by C. Breward and D. Gilbert (London: Berg, 2006), p. 162.
- <sup>13</sup> Ministry of Home Security, *Bomb Census survey records 1940-1945: London* (TNA, HO 192/328-809).
- <sup>14</sup> A. Plant and R. F. Fowler, *Report on Department Store Trading for trade year 1949-1952, Analysis by Departments* (London: Retail Distributor's Association, 1950-1954), p. 13.
- <sup>15</sup> For example, throughout 1946, *Display* disparagingly reports on a number of central London stores, complaining 'the signs of austerity are still present' and these stores 'still seem to be at war.' *Display*, March 1946, p. 3 and *Display*, February 1946, p. 48. Bentalls coverage contrastingly focuses on excitement and optimism, reporting that 'Happy holidays begin at Bentalls.' *Display*, September 1946, p17.
- <sup>16</sup> B. Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 105.
- <sup>17</sup> G. Howell, *Wartime Fashion: From Haute Couture to Homemade, 1939-1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 118.
- <sup>18</sup> I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption 1939-1955* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 85.
- <sup>19</sup> Although there had been a clear interwar trend towards mass produced ready-to-wear at the expense of retail bespoke manufacture, the Second World War accelerated this. Between 1935 and 1938 the number of people employed in retail bespoke garment making across the

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U.K. fell by 47.8 per cent. Board of Trade, *Final Report on the Census of Production for 1948* (London: HMSO, 1952), Table 5.

<sup>20</sup> B. Bide, 'More than window dressing: visual merchandising and austerity in London's West End, 1945–50', *Business History*, 60:7 (2018) 983-1003.

<sup>21</sup> The decline in London manufacturing can be seen in Board of Trade, *Final report on the Census of Production for 1948*, Table 5.

<sup>22</sup> B. Bide (2020) 'London Leads the World: The Reinvention of London Fashion in the Aftermath of the Second World War,' *Fashion Theory*, 24:3 (2020), 349-369.

<sup>23</sup> S. Miles, *Spaces for Consumption* (London: Sage, 2010), p. 184.

<sup>24</sup> M. J. Law, *The Experience of Suburban Modernity: How Private Transport Changed Interwar London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> R. Bowdler, 'Between the Wars: 1914-1940', in *The London Suburbs*, ed. by A. Saint (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p. 114.

<sup>26</sup> For a fuller historiography of London suburbia, see D. Georgiou 'Leisure in London's Suburbs, 1880–1939,' *The London Journal*, 39:3 (2014), 175-186.

<sup>27</sup> R. Silverstone, 'Introduction', in *Visions of Suburbia*, ed. By R. Silverstone (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1–27; R. MacManus and P. J. Ethington, 'Suburbs in Transition: New Approaches to Suburban History,' *Urban History* 34:2 (2007), 317–37.

<sup>28</sup> A. Saint, 'Introduction: The Quality of the London Suburbs,' in *The London Suburbs*, ed. by A. Saint (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> D. Georgiou, 'The Drab Suburban Streets were Metamorphosed into a Veritable Fairyland': Spectacle and Festivity in The Ilford Hospital Carnival, 1905–1914,' *The London Journal*, 39:3 (2014), 227-248; D. Gilbert, 'The Vicar's Daughter and the Goddess of Tennis: Cultural Geographies of Sporting Femininity and Bodily Practice in Edwardian Suburbia,' *Cultural Geographies*, 18:2 (2011), 187–207.

<sup>30</sup> Georgiou, 'The Drab Suburban Streets', p. 244.

<sup>31</sup> Further examples of work on suburban creativity: T. Flew, M. Gibson, C. Collis and E. Felton, 'Creative Suburbia: Cultural Research and Suburban Geographies,' *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15:2 (2012), 199–203 and D. Gilbert, C. Dwyer, N. Ahmed, L. Cuch Graces and N. Hyacinth, 'The Hidden Geographies of Religious Creativity: Place-Making and Material Culture in West London Faith Communities,' *Cultural Geographies*, 26: (2019): 23–41.

<sup>32</sup> Report on Department Store Trading, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Lancaster, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> D. Slater, *Consumer Culture & Modernity* (Oxford: Polity, 1997), pp. 10 and 71.

<sup>35</sup> J. Giles, *The Parlour and the suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), pp. 42-45.

<sup>36</sup> E. Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Lancaster, p. 192.

<sup>38</sup> R. Bentall, *Bentalls, My Store of Memories* (London: W. H. Allen, 1974).

<sup>39</sup> Scott, P. and J. Walker, 'Advertising, promotion, and the competitive advantage of interwar British department stores.' *Economic History Review*, 63:4 (2010), 1105–1128.

<sup>40</sup> The most popular of these offered to furnish a three bedroom home for £100. P. Scott, *The Making of the Modern British Home: The Suburban Semi and Family Life Between the Wars*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 156.

<sup>41</sup> The only notable damage was an incendiary bomb which destroyed the piano department in August 1940. Bentall, p. 228.

<sup>42</sup> Bentall, pp. 235-236.

<sup>43</sup> *Unlabeled press clippings scrapbook, c. 1940-1950* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

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- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> 'Sun Comes to London' promotional campaign clippings, 1947 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive)
- <sup>46</sup> *Unlabeled press clippings scrapbook, c. 1940-1950* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>47</sup> 'We've Captured the Sun.' *Display*, August 1947, p. 15.
- <sup>48</sup> 'Queen Mary visits to view display of historical costumes,' *Bentalls Staff News*, June 1951 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>49</sup> Interview with Jean Hacker discussing the disorientating experience of the train journey from Raynes Park into Waterloo due to bomb-damaged landscape, changed beyond recognition, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- <sup>50</sup> S. Cowan, 'The People's Peace: The Myth of Wartime Unity and Public Consent for Town Planning,' in *The Blitz and its Legacy: Wartime Destruction to Post-War Reconstruction*, ed. by M. Clapson and P. Larkham (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) p. 79.
- <sup>51</sup> HC Debate, vol. 445, col. 1715, 17 December 1947, in *Hansard*.  
<<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/index.html>> [accessed 9 September 2015].
- <sup>52</sup> HC Debate, vol. 443, col. 877, 29 October 1947, in *Hansard*.  
<<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/index.html>> [accessed 9 September 2015].
- <sup>53</sup> E. Hicks, E. Uberoi and P. Loft. *General election results from 1918 to 2017*.  
<<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8647/>> [accessed 5 March 2020].
- <sup>54</sup> Scott and Walker.
- <sup>55</sup> *Unlabeled press clippings scrapbook, c. 1940-1950* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>57</sup> *Photographs of the 'Paris is our inspiration' window and advertising campaign, 1949* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>58</sup> *Unlabeled photograph album, 1948-1949* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>59</sup> 'Notes on introduction of self-service in fashion departments in the autumn of 1951.' *Peter Jones Weekly Notes*, 27 November, 1951 (Cookham: The John Lewis Partnership Heritage Centre).
- <sup>60</sup> The persistent idea that teenage culture only emerged in Britain after 1945 can be traced to M. Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (London: London Press Exchange, 1959). But D. Fowler, *The First Teenagers: The Lifestyle of Young Wage Earners in Interwar Britain*, (London: Woburn Press, 1995), p. 93, argues that youth culture actually emerged in the interwar period, during which time youth wages increased dramatically.
- <sup>61</sup> *Display*, September 1947, p. 35.
- <sup>62</sup> K. Schrum, 'Oh the Bliss: Fashion and Teenage Girls,' in *The Girls' History and Culture Reader: The Twentieth Century* ed. by M. Forman-Brunell and L. Paris (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011) p. 136.
- <sup>63</sup> K. Peiss, 'Putting on Style' in *The Girls' History and Culture Reader: The Twentieth Century*, ed. By M. Forman-Brunell and L. Paris (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011), p. 49.
- <sup>64</sup> Fowler, p. 98.
- <sup>65</sup> D. Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), pp. 363-370.
- <sup>66</sup> Consider the cultural portrayal of London's postwar youth in films and books such as: *Hue and Cry*. Dir. Charles Crichton. Ealing Studios. 1947; and Macaulay, R. *The World My Wilderness*. (London: Collins, 1951).
- <sup>67</sup> Schrum, p. 142.
- <sup>68</sup> *Photograph series 'A day in the life of a shopgirl'* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).
- <sup>69</sup> Fashion features in *Bentalls Staff News Bulletin* encouraged debate and promoting the importance of personal style and the pleasures of shopping for clothes. This is starkly

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different to the instructional and didactic tone found in other corporate publications, such as Marks and Spencer's staff magazine. *Bentalls Staff News Bulletin*, September 1947 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>70</sup> Saint, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> *Photograph of the Miss Junior tent at Bentalls's Film Garden Party, 1948* (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>72</sup> *Bentalls Staff News Bulletin*, March 1949 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>73</sup> *Bentalls Staff News Bulletin*, July 1948 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>74</sup> British Pathé, 'Schoolgirl Mannequins, 1949'

<<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/schoolgirl-mannequins/query/fashion>> [accessed 2 February 2020].

<sup>75</sup> The thriving genre of film fan magazines—such as *Picturegoer*—and annuals including *Film Parade*, were particularly influential disseminators of fashion information to young people at this time.

<sup>76</sup> *News for Miss Junior* newsletter, Spring 1950 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>77</sup> Diarist 5474, 'Diary for 1 December 1948,' and Diarist 5098 'Diary for 13 December 1945,' in *Mass Observation Online* <http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk> [accessed 6 June 2014].

<sup>78</sup> Compare figures showing a 'slump' in London stores to figures for Bentalls. See *John Lewis Gazette*, 14 August 1948 (Cookham: The John Lewis Partnership Heritage Centre) and *Bentalls Staff News Bulletin*, January 1948, p. 1 (Farnham: Bentalls Archive).

<sup>79</sup> Citations of Bentalls as an example of new ideas and best practice to copy from peak in 1949. See: 'Bentalls Easter Parade,' *Display*, May 1949, p. 20; 'Report on Lindsay Maid display at Bentalls,' *Display*, August 1949, p. 23; and 'Pryor of Bentalls to take research trip to U.S.A.', *Display*, December 1949, p. 44.

<sup>80</sup> It is commonly proposed that the postwar British teenager was a copy of an American invention, imported in to the cultural vacuum left by the end of the war. J. Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth 1875-1945*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 2007), p. 461.

<sup>81</sup> S. Ashmore, "I think they're all mad:" Shopping in Swinging London,' in *Swinging Sixties*, ed. by C. Breward, D. Gilbert and J. Lister, (London: V&A, 2006), pp. 58-79.