

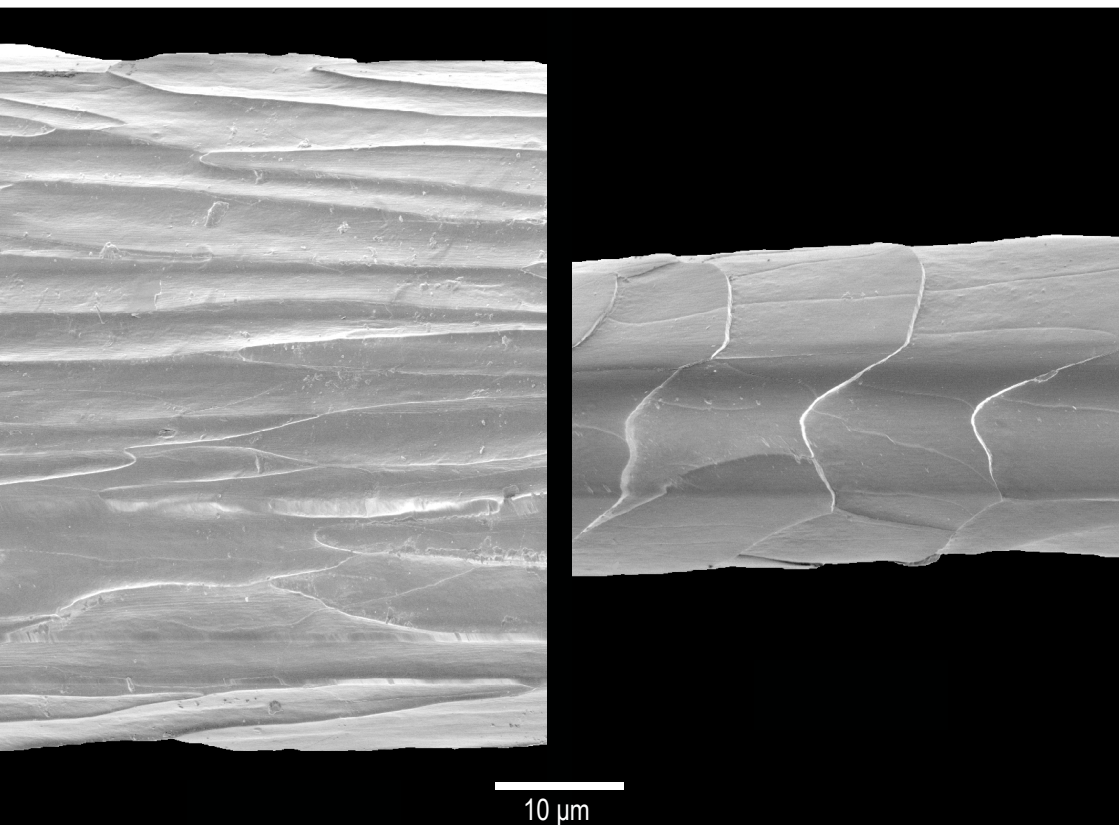
Tailor & Cutter

THE AUTHORITY ON TRADE AND CRAFT

Vol. 1 No. 3

FREE OF CHARGE

JULY 2025



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Division is the fil rouge for this quarter's issue, because the world is on a precipice, there is no market for print journalism, and we're cashing in on negativity bias.

But consider this optimistic syllogism: if dress history is social history, and we are able to shape dress, then we must also be able to shape society? On the surface this might sound fanciful, but the size of our trade's muscle has held enough oomph in the past to bat cliques into forced reconciliatory smooches (more on that later).

So while estranging contemporary parley amplifies the raging schismatic present, let's baste some benevolence over the world and lead with a message of love and unity, from fan of the T&C and timid Instagrammer, Mr Portwood:

j_portwood25 7h
@tandcmag I know your motives. Who is funding and helping you? Soros? The Chinese Communist Party? Savile Row is already dead.



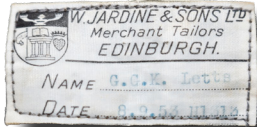
In line with our commitment to transparency, we would like to declare the following:

A sizeable donation to the magazine from comrade Xi himself, in exchange for promoting the aesthetic values of the Zhongshan suit, was turned down in July, on account of our acceptance of an even larger sum from his American counterpart which—in line with libertarian values—will sustain us financially while also delivering us from external influence and bear absolutely no sway whatsoever on any direction this periodical takes henceforth.

H
S

Except for j_portwood25's factual Instagram comment, this is a work of satire, written for entertainment purposes only and not representative of the Tailor & Cutter's values. No endorsement by or affiliation with any real individuals mentioned is intended or should be inferred.

ONCE - OVER



W. JARDINE & SONS Ltd
Two-and-two twill tweed Argyll coat
08/09/1953 (private collection)

In contrast with the 18th century vestiges this Argyll coat bears (gauntlet cuffs, raised cords, pointed flaps) its bygone appearance is intruded by idiosyncrasies of the 1950s.

The most eye-catching of these intrusions being the long collar and slanted gorge that are not confined to, but are so reminiscent of, postwar British fashion. Added to this are the internal manifestations of a craft that had reached a state of competence which successfully married the demanding constructional expectations of its time, with the tribulations engendered by thick fraying weaves.

All points have been rounded or stubbed, and those which form acute angles have been turned by hand and felled back. The flaps have been sewn to the top jetts before being applied to the forepart, and the top jetts have later been top stitched all the way through to the pocket bag on their upper and lower edges, before being trimmed to a scant. The flaps thus sit flush to the coat, meeting perfectly with the pockets' edges, and bar tacks further reinforce the mitres. The overall effect is refined, staggered and robust, showing no signs of weakening in spite of its 70 years of life.

The coat contains no shortage of holland, which can be found in all the usual places in addition to strips acting as pocket stays extending up to the scyes, segments interlining the entire lapel down to the second button, and as tape for the front edge.

Its cut sways from the 'Tweed Kilt Jacket' draft included in the MTOC's contemporaneous printing of its second volume, insofar as it hosts a front fish cut and more evenly distributed suppression across its panels. The effect is skirted, and supported by 2 1/4" of inlay at the bottom of the coat.

Curiously, the coat is not edge stitched from nape to first button, and below, it is only under-stitched, yet it maintains to this day a firmly displaced front edge seam. Further notable elements include the chest canvas being snipped for length over the shoulder points, the crown seam being pressed open with the use of a flannel strip sewn into the scye, and the piecing of the facing a few inches from the bottom.

Although the Jardine house seem to have been mostly associated with regimental tailoring, this coat was almost certainly a skiffle made for the civilian wedding of Gavin Letts to Dorothy Wood in Edinburgh, 11 days after it was ordered. Letts emigrated to the US the following year, where he pursued a career as a venerable Palm Beach judge until his death in 1993.



Wood-Letts Engagement Announced From Edinburgh

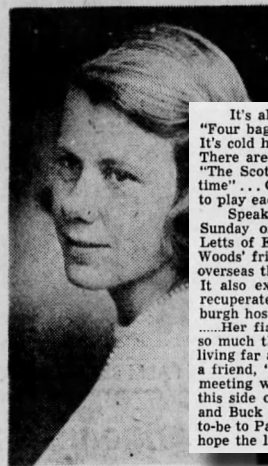
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall B. Wood, of 441 Sea Breeze Ave., Palm Beach, announce the engagement of their daughter, Miss Dorothy Middleton Wood, to Gavin Graham Kenyon Letts, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kenyon Letts, of Edinburgh, Scotland.

The announcement, of widespread interest both in Palm Beach and Scotland, was made from Edinburgh, where Mr. and Mrs. Wood and their daughter are at present visiting at the Royal British Hotel. The three sailed Aug. 13 on the Mauretania.

No wedding plans were announced at this time.

Miss Wood, a native of Palm Beach, was graduated from St. Margaret's School at Tappahannock, Va., and from Sweetbriar College. She studied art for a time in New York, and last year spent some months in Europe and in the British Isles. It was while on this trip that she met her fiancé.

Mr. Letts was educated at Melville College, University of Edinburgh, and is now associated with the North British Rubber Co. in Edinburgh.

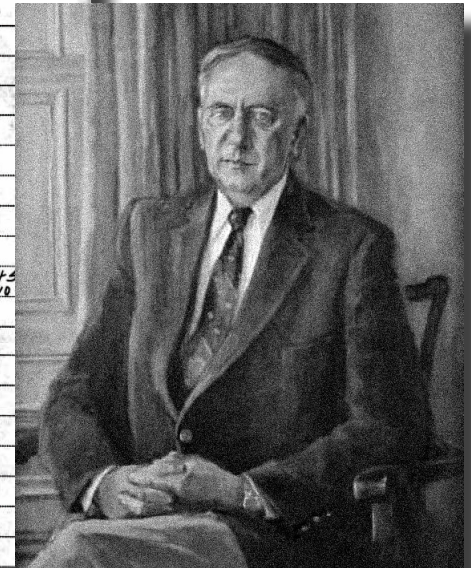


MISS DOROTHY WOOD

It's all a matter of taste... Friends traveling in Scotland report "Four bagpipes are playing on the common under our window... It's cold here and we sleep with stone hot water bottles nightly... There are no locks on the hotel room doors... Yet they assure us "The Scots are a great people" and "they are having a wonderful time"... Oh, well, they're golf enthusiasts and find a different course to play each day..."

Speaking of the land of the thistle... the announcement last Sunday of Dotsy Wood's engagement to Gavin Graham Kenyon Letts of Edinburgh served to bear out the suspicion of most of the Woods' friends that there was more behind Dotsy's and Buck's trip overseas than a desire to take a horseback ride through Scotland... It also explained why it took Dotsy so many weeks last fall to recuperate from an attack of measles that landed her in an Edinburgh hospital just about the time she was slated to start for home... Her fiancé it reported to have charmed his parents-in-law to be so much that they're even reconciled to the fact that Dotsy will be living far away... Dotsy went over with her parents and has written a friend, "I can't wait for you to meet him"... but whether that meeting will be before or after the marriage no one... at least on this side of the water... seems to know... Will it be before Dotsy and Buck return to this country?... or will Gavin follow his bride-to-be to Palm Beach for a ceremony here?... Of course their friends hope the latter will be the case...

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE			MANIFEST OF OUTWARD-BOUND PASSENGERS
S. S. "QUEEN MARY"			14TH APRIL 1934
Sailing from NEW YORK			bound for port of SOUTHAMPTON
NAME	PASS. NAME—GIVEN NAME	TRADE DOCUMENT NO.	449
1	CORDINGLEY Cecelia	T.2360842	
2	CUFF Elsie	I.424	
3	CASAS Augustin	V.637809	
4	CASAS Roseana	V.637752	
5	DOBSON Frank	T.2599380	
6	DOBSON Winifred	T.2602080	
7	DEAN Stanley	V.727126	
8	ELRABIE Abdul	V.1509162	
9	GOWSER Geoffrey	V.551478	
10	GREENSPON Edward	I.424	0306-45
11	GRAHAM Dennis	T.416578	10
12	GRINDWELDER Hans	T.2203377	
13	GOMEZ PRIMA Xochitl	V.635129	
14	HORTON David	I.424	
15	HOLMES Joseph	V.406204	
16	HAYES Jean	I.424	
17	HORTON Joan	I.424	
18	HOWLEY Gertrude	V.471591	
19	HARRIS Gladys	I.424	
20	JOST Friedrich	V.704842	
21	KIRKWOOD James	I.424	
22	LETTS Gavin	V.716185	



Letts, 64, West Palm Beach judge

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH — Gavin K. Letts, a judge on the 4th District Court of Appeal who helped shape the state's divorce and civil rights laws, died of liver cancer. He was 64.

Letts died Sunday at Good Samaritan Medical Center after his hospitalization for the past 10 weeks since he collapsed on the bench in June.

"He had a skill with writing that most judges would hope to attain," said John Dell, a fellow appeals judge. Letts managed to weave subtle humor into his decisions, where appropriate. "The lawyers loved it and the judges did, too."

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Letts had been a member of the appeals court since 1977, when he left his practice and the municipal court bench in Palm Beach.

Colleagues on the 12-member court, which handles cases from Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Okeechobee, Indian River and Broward counties, said he knew matrimonial law as well as any judge in the state. He wrote court decisions that guided other courts' interpretation of Florida's no-fault divorce law and lectured on it.

Judge Letts wrote decisions on domestic relations, real estate, business and commercial law, but attained perhaps his greatest fame on a dissenting opinion about civil rights — a 1985 cocaine-trafficking case in which Broward County sheriff's deputies searched a man's belongings on a Greyhound bus.

Letts is survived by his wife, Dorothy Woods Letts, his daughter Sophia Letts, foster daughter Deborah Harris, sister Jean McMichael and several nieces and nephews.

The choice for Letts to wear Highland dress to his wedding—and for Scots generally to adopt this mode at formal occasions—is one steeped in blurred autochthony, complex identitarianism and invented tradition; as described by collector, archaeologist and former Chairman of the Costume Society of Scotland, John Telfer Dunbar, in his 1962 book, *The History of Highland Dress*:

'The evolution of Scottish Highland Costume makes a fascinating study mainly because of the interesting historical events which motivated it. From its early Irish entanglements it emerged in a unique form to become a symbol of rebellion forbidden by the English government. Then, largely due to the visit of a Hanoverian monarch, it experienced a revival which has continued to the present day.

The ancient dress of the Scottish and Irish Gael was a shirt or tunic known as the léine, and a mantle known as the brat. This costume is of considerable interest as, although we might draw comparisons with the Greek peplos and chiton, it has no comparable style with the costume of any other European people. However, in both Ireland and Scotland we find two distinct styles of dress being worn at an early period; the loose garments described above, and the tight fitting trews. This latter costume is more easily accounted for as it is typical of the trousered North Europeans.

*It has been suggested by Major H. F. McClin-tock, author of *Old Irish and Highland Dress* (1950), that the two styles of dress indicated two distinct cultures or streams of people—the pre-Gaelic inhabitants who wore trousers and the conquering Gaels with their loose garments.*

There is certainly a great deal of evidence to support such a theory. In the early carvings and the Book of Kells it is inevitably the person of lower rank who wears the trews. Magnus Berfaet's Saga of 1093 refers to the short tunics and upper garments of the Western Highlanders. John Major's History (1521) describes the Highlanders "mantle instead of an upper garment and a shirt dyed with saffron". In fact, there are at least a dozen sixteenth-century references to shirts and mantles which can be said to describe the characteristic garments of the period. It has become common practice to refer to the "saffron" shirt, but I doubt whether all of them were dyed with true saffron made from the stigmas of the autumn crocus.

With the arrival of the seventeenth century this shirt-like garment became displaced by the belted plaid in Scotland.



Hard tartan man's kilt suit (c.1820). H.TTA 20 A. National Museum of Scotland.

Quite unlike the shaped Irish mantle, it was simply a long rectangular web of cloth roughly two yards wide and six yards long. The word "plaid" is the Gaelic for a blanket and blankets have had a world-wide usage even to the present day. The Scottish Highland belted plaid (Gaelic, feilidh-Mor or breacan an fhéilidh) was however worn in a distinctive way. A belt was laid on the ground and on top of it the plaid was folded lengthwise into pleats, these being at right angles to the now hidden belt. The wearer then lay down on top of the plaid parallel to the pleats, folded the material on either side of him over the front of his body and fastened the belt around his waist. On standing up he had a pleated skirt below his waist and a mass of material above it. This upper section of the garment could be arranged in a number of ways either as a protection to the upper body or draped to allow the arms complete freedom of movement. [...] At night a tug at the belt converted one's day clothing into bedclothes.

The modern kilt is, of course, merely the lower half of the belted plaid with the pleats stitched up. Also the pleated section in front of the body has been replaced by two overlapping flat aprons. The trews (Gaelic, triubhas) continued to be worn into the eighteenth century. Although the tartan trousers worn by some present-day Highland regiments are called "trews" this is an incorrect description.

The major changes in Highland dress took place within a short space of time unlike the gradual evolution of most other traditional costumes. Several historical factors influenced these changes. The proscription of the dress following the Jacobite Rising of 1745, the exploits of the kilted Highland regiments against Napoleon's armies, the writings of Sir Walter



Hard tartan man's kilt suit (c.1830). A.1993.60 A. National Museum of Scotland.

Scott, the mysterious Sobieski Stuart brothers, and the visit of King George the Fourth to Scotland in 1822, all played their part. The earliest of these events, the ban imposed after the defeat of the Stuart army at Culloden, had perhaps the greatest effect on the evolution of the dress. The Jacobite Rising frightened the English government badly and the reaction after such a fright held no half measures. The warlike nature of the Highlander had to be stamped out, his peculiar clothes and weapons destroyed and his country penetrated by the new roads. [...]

What is interesting is the enormous revival within a space of seventy years of a dress worn by a minority group living in a remote area, to a national dress.'

Dunbar, J.T. (1962) *The History of Highland Dress*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.

The imperative recut of sleeves after fittings involving scye-related alterations, is a step relegated no so rarely to the unfortunate coatmaker—whose wasted time is unearned money—as the cutter’s production KPIs weigh heavily on their conscience or more often, their altitude on the tailoring food chain provides them an unfair prerogative.

This initial short paragraph aimed at the cutter, bears one simple plea as a solution to the entire ordeal: ‘For the love of Vera, just recut them.’

The remainder of this article will present makers with a somewhat comprehensive method by which to address this (mostly) unforgivable curfuffle. But we must first pre-empt any hawk-eyed detractors with the following statement: this is by no means a lecture in sleeve pattern recutting, nor is it an exhaustive and uncompromised methodology in recutting cloth sleeves; this article is a toolkit (as far as we can tell, the first of its kind in print) to enable fast pre-baste verification—and eventual recutting—to support coatmakers’ earnings.

For more detailed corrections of sleeve faults: see p.24-38 of R. Sytner’s (1967) ‘The Art of Fitting’.



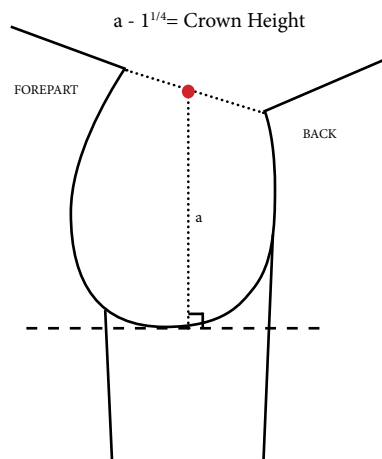
The sleeve is dictated in fit and construction by a number of variables, amongst which a maker must consider in this order:

- Crown Height
- Fullness
- The Base-sleeve Run
- Length
- Pitch (which we will not address)

Forewarning: do not cut anything before point 4.

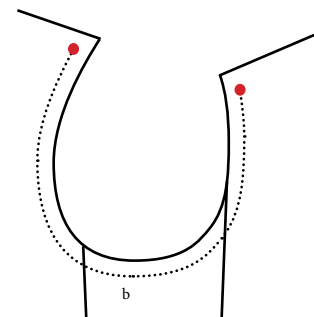
1.Crown Height

With your scye laid open at the shoulder on the board, draw a line connecting your back and front shoulder ends (on the mark stitch), locate its middle, and measure on a perpendicular down to the chest line. Deduct 1 1/4” from this length, and you have obtained a well-estimated crown height.



2.Fullness

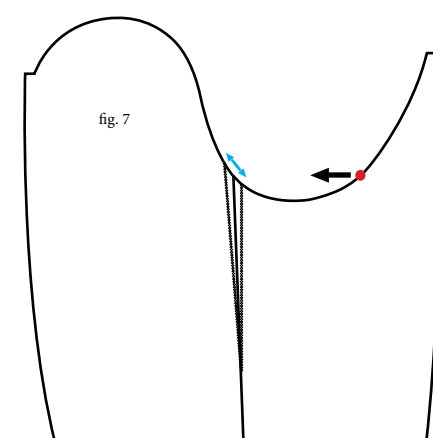
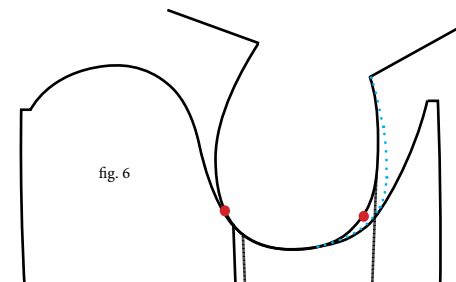
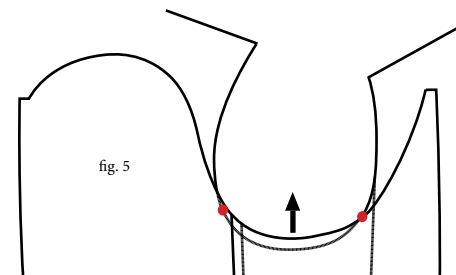
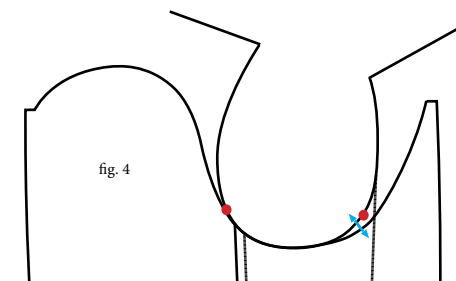
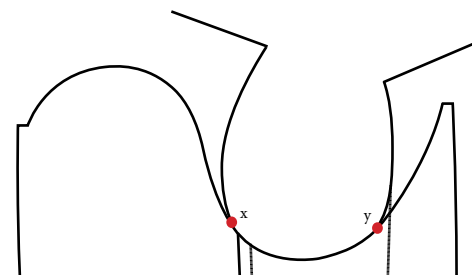
With the EDGE of your tape (or else you risk increasing this measure), determine the finished (i.e. without seams) circumference of your arm-hole. Add to this number an amount of fullness varying from 4% for the lightest cloths, to 10% for the heaviest, or for rich rope. A healthy average would sit at around 6%.



$$b \times 1.06 = \text{Sleeve Circumference}$$

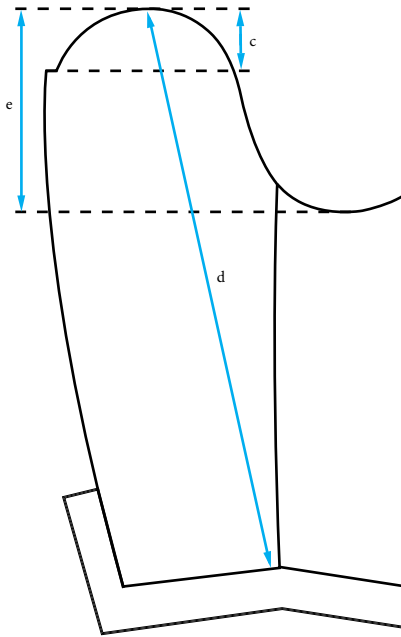
3.The Base-sleeve Run

Lay your sleeve into the scye, matching the pitch given by the cutter and check that the base-sleeve and base-scy runs (between points x and y) are harmonious. If they aren’t, make them so by reshaping the base-sleeve.

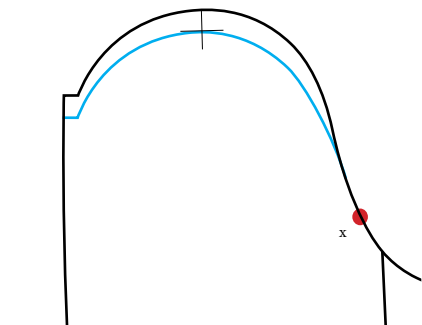


If you are struggling to match the runs because your sleeve is too wide at its base (fig. 4) and this isn’t a checked job, raise your sleeve into the scye slightly while ensuring the forearm stays in the same position (fig. 5), and reshape this run as necessary. If this is a checked job, or if you are still struggling to reshape this run because the base-sleeve is exceedingly wide, you can reshape the back scye outwards (fig. 6) at the potential expense of comfort and reach, the cross back measure and the shoulder end run; and/or take in the top of the forearm sleeve (fig. 7) at the potential expense of reduced forearm curvature and ensuing fit issues.

Whether or not you have needed to reshape the base-sleeve run, you should now take note of the crown step measure (c), crown to cuff measure (d), and lastly verify your crown height (e).

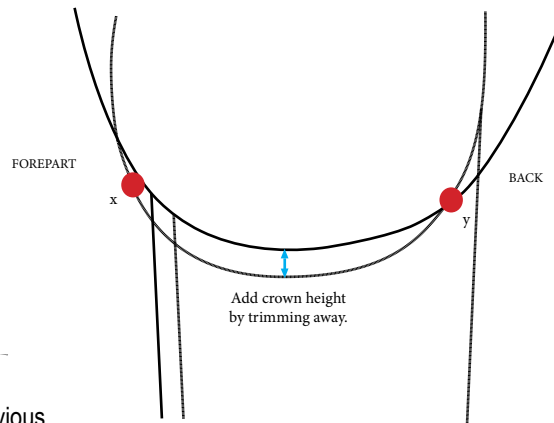


If your crown is too high based on your previous calculation, mark its location (i.e. the sleeve apex) with a vertical line, and then mark its new height with a horizontal line. Lower as necessary the top sleeve's seam step to maintain the same crown step measure, and draw a provisional top sleeve run hitting the new crown mark and x.



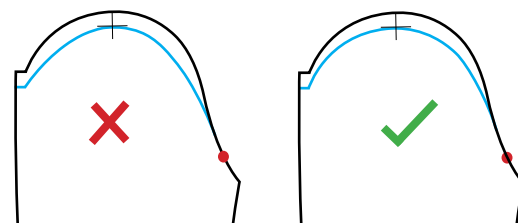
If your crown is too short—and this isn't a sports coat—then lay your sleeve against the scye once more, and carve from the base-sleeve run the amount by which your crown height must be increased.

N.B. A sports coat's sleeves may have intentionally been cut short of crown and forward pitched for amplitude of movement. Furthermore, a checked job's sleeves should not be increased in crown height, as this raises your checks against the foreparts and misaligns them.

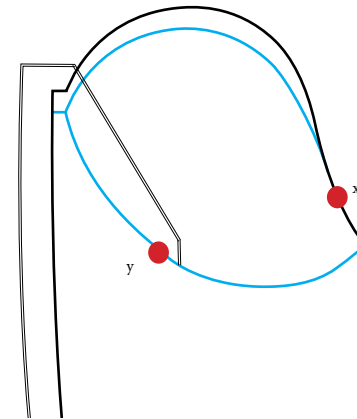


Be mindful that if shaped too pointed, your sleeve could become tight across the crown (a particularly troublesome dilemma for fitting deltoids).

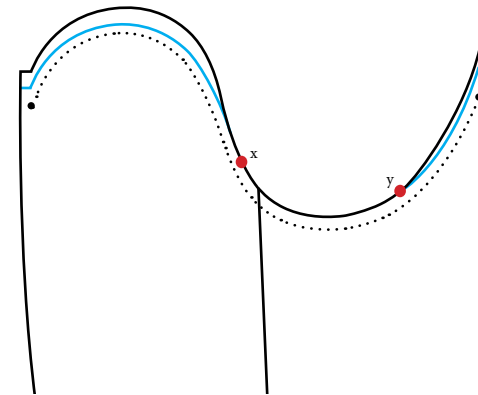
N.B. A crown may be displaced subtly forward or rearward to distribute more or less fullness to the front or rear sleeve.



Now lay in your top sleeve against your under sleeve's mark stitches, transfer as necessary a new under sleeve seam step, and reshape your under sleeve into the base-sleeve run at y.

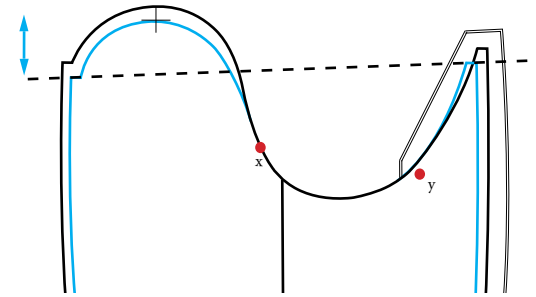


Now, measure your finished (i.e. without seams) sleeve circumference with your tape's EDGE.



If it is incorrect, take in or let out the sleeve from the hind arm on the double if inlays allow, but maintain the same crown step measure as best you can.

N.B. Given your sleeve runs meet the hind arm at an acute angle, it is usually necessary to add roughly 1/8" on the double to your intended alteration to achieve the desired circumference.

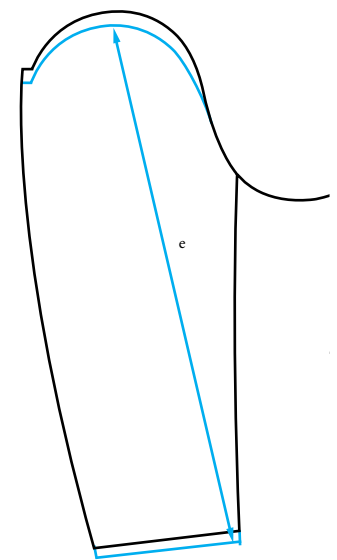


Rerun your top sleeve and/or undersleeve into their new seam steps while still maintaining (within reason) the same crown and base-sleeve, and reconfirm your circumference measure.

4.Length

Finally, remark your crown to cuff height before cutting and mark stitching your sleeve to these new runs. Baste your sleeve in and refine your recut and pitch.

N.B. Check both armholes are identical in shape, circumference and depth before cutting the opposite sleeve identically.



PASTORAL CONTINGENT

Claire Emerson-Checkley & Emma Brigitte Martin, Coatmakers.

While having a workshop at home makes balancing work and family life easier, it can leave a maker feeling a little isolated from the craft's goings-on, and this is compounded by having young children.

As freelance parents, we have the flexibility to design our days to simultaneously suit our boards' and children's' needs, losing no hours to those dreadful London commutes. Being omnipresent in our children's' daily lives during these early years and close to hand when their needs inevitably require us to be, is a privilege we would never want to revoke. This mode of work encourages a healthier life holistically, providing us the time to also shape our home environments to better fulfil our most basic requirements (we now both rear chickens).

But it must be said that socialising does take a hit if you're not actively pursuing friendships, which in itself requires considerable effort. It must also be said that while children might mostly be loveable, they are at times equally loathable—a little space from them does no harm.

This is where our idea for creating social outings for tailoring parents came, feeding two birds with one scone (the children might be reading).

The first event was a success, with a trip to the Young V&A, followed by no fewer than three local Bethnal Green parks, where we put our trusted childless homosexual avuncular cutter friend to the task of running the children around after feeding them copious amounts of calorific fuel.

He tired faster than they did, but we relaxed slightly away from the hubbub, and chin-wagged in relative peace until an intervention was necessary—it was that or reanimation was on the cards for him.

This is an open invitation to all in our wonderful community, to join our crew, for the sake of parental sanity and a touch of respite.

Contact us via Instagram DM for details on future meets:

@claire_emerson_bespoke

@emma_brigitte_martin



'DJ hit that switch'

We are witnessing a watershed in our style of dress unlike any since the subversion of formalwear in the late 1960s. And whether it be welcomed or not by those amongst us who profess a staunch conservatism in respect of structured attire, it must be regarded as a renaissance to be hailed with many cries of 'slay'—for too long, we have had too little by way of development.

The endless iterations of lounge, morning and frock dress which unfolded at the start of the Victorian age could not have better contradicted the 150-year staleness that would follow the death of the Prince Consort. As black became the new black and national commemoration was nigh imposed, so too was that most unhealthy form of national grieving which required culture to be immobilised for as many generations as would be tolerated (four).

It wasn't until Timothy O'Leary-style post-age stamps gained currency that the face of Neo-Victoriana would finally be dethroned. Alas, the suit's unifying and levelling nature would unfortunately not align with the then burgeoning individualistic hype, and it would eventually be cast away like some spun and woven Agnus Dei. By relegating the 2-piece to Mum and Dad's wardrobe, and committing themselves to a flimsy life void of interlinings, generation X would begin to efface all kinds of formalwear custom by virtue of their self-imposed disconnect with our art and a growing ignorance of its traditions. This was thought to be our last revolution, until we began noticing that bridegrooms had developed a penchant for Black Tie.



Ask yourself the following: How many more dinner suits than morning suits have you made for grooms in the past 5 years? And for the cutter and front-of-house reader; how many of those grooms did you encourage to order a morning suit instead?

Just as the morning coat dethroned the frock coat for daywear during the Edwardian period, so too has the dinner suit dethroned morning dress as the most formal daytime attire.

Traditions extinguished as a consequence of ignorance? Heresy? Do the keyboards of a frantic battalion of Permanent Style commentators beat in unison across England's pleasant green pastures? Savile Row, what have ye done?



Without even mention of our trade's precarity, dress history already provides ample justification for our actions and ample reason to silence even the most establishmentarian suit nerd:

"It was Brummell who asked John, sixth Duke of Bedford, 'Bedford, do you call this thing a coat?', and it was Brummell who told the Prince to stop wearing gaudy coats and to honour that well-established British tradition that waistcoats may be decorative but suits must be absolutely plain. He put the Prince into dark blue or black coats for evening, and as kneebreeches for balls were usually black this resulted in the black evening suit."

(D. de Marly (1985), *Fashion For Men*, Batsford.)

Given that the tailcoat was initially designed as daywear; that the tonal boundaries Brummell implemented between day and night remained somewhat ambiguous until the 1830s; and that the silk facing maintained its presence on day-worn frock coats until their demise in the early 20th century, one cannot convincingly make a case for their having ever been firm boundaries between day time and night time dress until the interwar. If today, one can accept the silhouette of the tailcoat at a dinner, and simultaneously reject a black lounge suit as not strictly appropriate, then one has no grounds for claiming that black tie cannot be worn by grooms as ceremonial attire while the sun is still out.

Any frustration at this phenomenon would be better spent directed at the awful rise in brides' Chantilly lace.

HISTORY



Anne Kershen is Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Migration at Queen Mary University of London, as well as the centre's founder.

Her book, *Uniting The Tailors* (1995), begins with a detailed pan-sector perspective on the often harsh working conditions of tailors in London and Leeds between 1870 and 1939, followed by a comprehensive study on the proceeding activism which culminated in successive union amalgamations, reconciling class and ethnic divisions within our trade and country. This book speaks to many great developments, but the most impressive amongst which today, might be the remarkable efficacy of our past concertation.

Anne was generous enough to invite us into her home and answer the T&C's questions about her research. A video recording of the full 35-minute interview is available to readers on our YouTube channel, accessible through the link in our Instagram bio (@tandcmag).

T&C: Anne, could you begin by painting a picture of the tailoring trade at the period when your book commences, 1870-80?

AK: Well, the tailoring trade sort of grew with the development of an improved way of life for the

working class at a time when they wanted to have new clothes rather than clobbered or shoddy. Clobbered was when you put pieces together from other garments, shoddy was just rubbish cloth recycled from stuff you got off the floor. It opened the door for people to actually sell cheap ready-made clothes. In the 1870s you would find that in the workshops of the East End, the majority of tailors were actually of Irish origin. When the Irish started to move out to America, people were saying: 'Who's going to work in the tailoring trade?'. And of course, you suddenly had this huge influx of Eastern Europeans who were escaping poverty and oppression back home. The one thing that they could do—because you could start working in tailoring with no skills—was go into the clothing industry, so by the 1880s you're getting a build up of small-scale tailoring workshops in very poor conditions with a gradation of skills, because you also had subdivisional labour.

T&C: What were conditions like for tailors in the workplace?

AK: Some of the tailoring shops, let's say Savile Row, might well have had a manufacturing area within the shop itself. You then had a lower gradation of workshops just off Savile Row, and we shouldn't forget that there were a number of tailoring workshops in Soho too. When you get to the East End, you get increasingly bad conditions with small overcrowded workshops of 10-15 people overheating because of the iron ovens. There was also an unpleasant habit of using urine to glaze cloth which added to the disagreeable environment. If you go up to Leeds, you had much bigger workshops, the conditions were poor too and you had, as I say, gradations of labour. For the majority of East End firms, there were no skilled cutters in the workshops; the Cutter would strike out in a separate location (at the wholesalers'), put the garments into bundles, and the master would wheel them to his workshop and hand them to his machinists, pressers, under-pressers, etc.

The wholesalers would insist that the master wasn't more than a half a mile away from their outlet so that they could take the bundles back and forth very quickly.

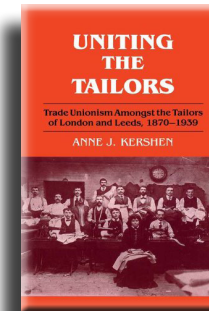
T&C: How did workers oppose these conditions?

AK: You had the Amalgamated Society of Tailors, which called itself a skilled union; it was founded in Manchester in 1866—they had numerous branches all over the country. And then there were a number of smaller trade unions in London which didn't endure for long because union members and leaders were not always reliable down South. One of the most important aspects of a good trade union is a good trade union leader. Whereas in Leeds, you had very good union leaders, in the East End they fluctuated and could be very hot tempered.

Another problem for the capital was the busy and the slack: in the lead up to the London season you'd have everybody working like mad and then it would all slow down; that would be the slack before it would build up again in the autumn. So it was no good organising a strike in the slack because tailors weren't particularly willing and it didn't impact the employer so much. If you were going to go on strike, you only really did so in the busy, which explains why there were a number of multifarious trade unions which sort of came and went, often disappearing after a strike.

T&C: In the book, you speak of the debate around pay structures which is incredibly still ongoing.

AK: Yes, there were great debates about whether you should be paid by piece or time. That was another problem with actually organising: agreeing how much you got paid by the hour!



T&C: So, who was the sweater then?

AK: The sweater was the middleman, that is to say the master not the wholesaler, although the middle man would argue that it was because the wholesaler was paying them so little that they had to sweat their workers to get any profit. It wasn't until about 1888 that a Royal Commission on the sweating industry was set up to address the practice in tailoring and elsewhere. Later in 1909, the landmark Trade Boards Act attempted to set wages and conditions. It came at a time of great improvement generally with the creation of the Old Age Pension and Sick Benefit under the Liberal government who began to treat the working classes with due respect.

T&C: How did this sweater-union-immigrant curffuffle unfold?

AK: There was a strong anti-alien sentiment at the time, that really came from the Trades Union Congress (TUC). They were concerned by the number of 'pauper aliens' arriving into the country—which is analogous to more recent conversations—who were 'taking our jobs'. In 1895, the TUC passed a motion saying that there had to be a stop to the entry of these aliens which was followed by the first immigration act ever, in 1905.

T&C: It seems as though in every generation, the same dialectics repeat themselves. What was the culmination of all this antipathy?

AK: These issues were not easily mastered... But as all the various groups realised they could no longer stand alone in their fight for a decent life, they began to amalgamate; the culmination of which in 1939 was a National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW) that had overcome gender, ethnic, class and craft differences for the common purpose of improving everyone's living conditions.

Click the link in bio @tandcmag to watch the full YouTube interview.

AFGHAN CASHMERE



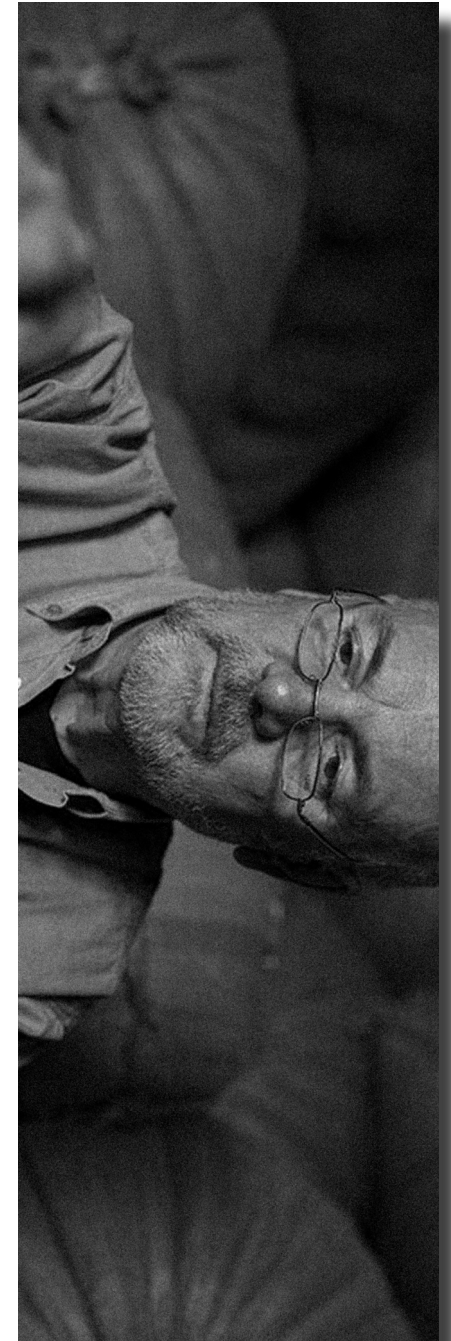
Ronnie Lamb precedes the start of his interview for the T&C with a request for reassurance that his Caledonian elocution is more comprehensible to an English set of eardrums than Mick McGahey's, Arthur Scargill's Scottish counterpart, whose phone tapping (lore has it) failed on account of his unintelligibility to secret services; only further compounding the suggestion by many of our close neighbours that British Intelligence is first and foremost an oxymoron.

Reference to the unrest following the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, is not without analogy to today's post-2008 decline, in particular the increasing US isolationist trend, which has plagued Ronnie in his international endeavours. He leads on the Afghan Cashmere Project, a multi-pronged attempt to raise the living standards of herders in Afghanistan, whilst simultaneously introducing to the market an alternative equivalent in quality to the Chinese and Mongolian fibres which have dominated thus far.

The tale of Ronnie's involvement with the project took us on a history of his worldly career in textiles. A through and through Crombie boy, the 78-year old Aberdonian began in 1966 as a processing equipment engineer at the firm once hailed for its famous triple cloth, made up of a face, middle and back, and of a weight and quality so prized as to even flood the Soviet Market. Its appearances on the likes of Khrushchev at Red square parades and Gorbachev as he made his significant first visit to Britain in December 1984, bear witness to its renown. Crombie's crowning jewel, the Aberdeen Grandholm Works, would go from producing over a million yards of cloth annually to seeing its closure in the 1990s following a restructuring in the previous decade headed by former Tory vice-chairman Alan Lewis, after a takeover by Illingworth-Morris, the then largest UK woollen textile firm.

It was the decision to further verticalise Crombie by expanding its activities from cloth production into garment manufacture, that would see the end of the business-to-business model by which it operated for close to two centuries, in an exit strategy that extinguished its prevalence in the consumer market. Ronnie's ascent at Crombie culminated in his appointment as managing director in 1985, earning him the responsibility to oversee the firm's failed transition, before his departure 4 years later in what he describes as an unwilling move:

"Within our group of companies, the only thing that resembled a tailoring company was a firm in Strood that made schoolboy uniforms. I knew it wasn't going to work, and that it was a recipe for disaster. Luckily, I got approached by Amicale Industries in the States who are famous for cashmere and camelhair production. That was my Get-Out-of-Jail-Free card. But I was so reluctant to take it because I was a Crombie boy and I knew everybody that worked there."



The last thing I did, because I was determined to leave a legacy, was to negotiate another huge contract with the Russians which kept the factory going for another nine months. And I thought: "fine, my conscience is appeased".

Following the order of enough cloth to make 100'000 overcoats, the workforce of 350 was cut by a fifth and the 35-acre site at Grandholm was relocated to a smaller mill in Dumfries and Galloway.

As Mongolia underwent its peaceful 1990 Democratic Revolution—an indirect extension of the 'glasnost' openness set out in Perestroika market-like reforms—it became as with so many other nations emerging from the Eastern Bloc, open for business. The end of its command economy ushered in the likes of Amicale, who established a joint venture in Ulaanbaatar for processing fibres out of the formerly state-owned Gobi factory, set up by the Japanese as part of unofficial war reparations in 1978 which were designed to strengthen economic ties between the two neighbours.

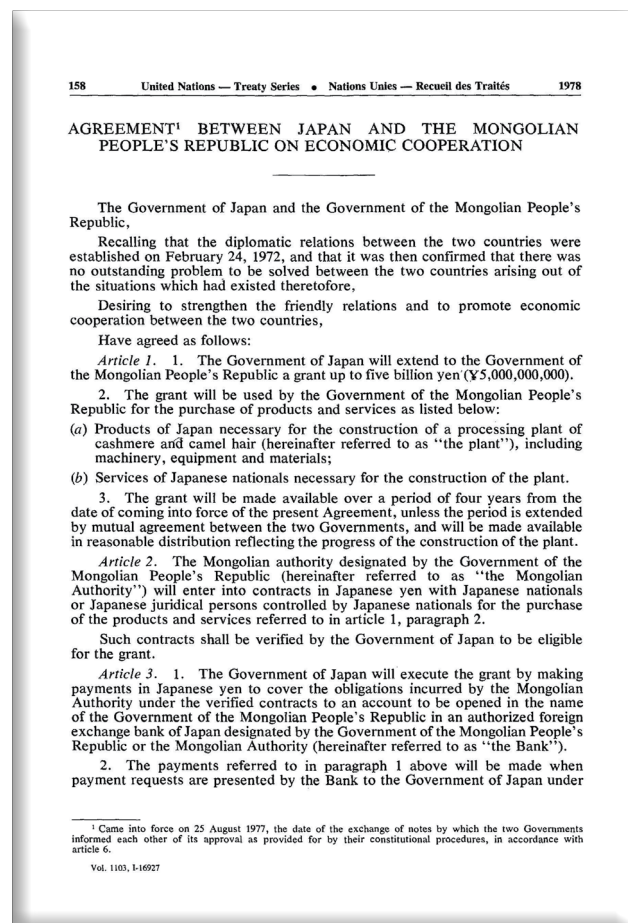
The factory was state-of-the-art for the day, and involved flying over Japanese technicians to train Mongolians in every aspect of cashmere value-added processing, effectively kick starting its large-scale cashmere industry by diversifying its former confinement to transacting raw material. A large part of Ronnie's work in the country—for which he received a medal from President Babagandi—was centred around training, equipment and infrastructure expansion, in addition to addressing issues arising from the herds:

'Before the 1990s, Mongolia had a policy of maintaining the quality of cashmere by limiting the number of goats. Just like humans, female goats grow old gracefully, while male goats don't; their hair becomes coarser and eventually downgrades the fibre quality. In the days of communism, male goats were culled by the age of 3 and sold to the Russian military (Mongolians have a preference for fattier meat). But as the Soviet Union collapsed, that trade route was closed, the Russians couldn't afford the meat, and the herds were privatised back to the herders who were told they could do what they liked with their animals. They soon realised that the older the males got, the bigger they became and the more cashmere they gave. But that led to the problem they had been avoiding: making the cashmere coarser. So I spent nearly 20 years trying to arrest the trend by setting up a nucleus herd and a collection system throughout the country which selected the best goats for breeding, in order to raise the overall quality of their output. Amicale then bought a factory in Bradford to complement the factory in Mongolia, which brought me back to the UK. But as with everything in textiles, things move rapidly and China took over. After years only getting profit on the greasy cashmere, they also started developing their value-added chain with scouring, dehairing, etc... and now of course, they have near total dominance. I continued for a few more years in Mongolia, but by the time the effects of the 2008 crash hit, I'd had enough.'

In the aftermath of the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—the largest aid agency in the world until Musk closed its doors last year, under the auspices of the Trump administration's Department Of Government Efficiency—had begun developing cashmere farming in the country as part of a wider drive to bolster its economy. It took a phone call in 2010 from a colleague working for the agency and looking to rehabilitate a factory in Kandahar, to convince Ronnie out of semi-retirement.

Until USAID's efforts began to bear their fruit, Afghan production had been excessively inefficient. Preventable maladies in goats were leading to combined mortality and morbidity rates of 50%, and an unaddressed anthrax contagion meant that the greasy cashmere was being smuggled out through Pakistan to Belgium, where European and US traders would fly in to select their bales before getting the cashmere scoured and disinfected at the Traitex factory in Verviers. This route to market was plainly unfavourable to herders. From the early 2010s under Ronnie's guidance, training, medication and foodstuff was provided directly to communities, with a limit on the circulation of liquid assets to prevent the Taliban from diverting investment. Gradually, things would improve on the ground, but the lacking farmer and market awareness for the fibre still had to be tackled. Afghans understood the market for wool at \$0.30/kg as a result of their local carpet trade, but had little understanding for the considerable difference in price achievable for cashmere at \$25/kg, an underhand opportunity for profit which was being exploited by local businessmen.

An educational effort to expose this injustice was made difficult by high rates of illiteracy, but projections of YouTube videos showing London and New York high streets selling the high-value items helped to drive the message home: cashmere was a cash cow.





The process of going up the value-added chain began with the investment by USAID and UKAID in local factories for scouring and dehairing. This was accompanied by Traitex, who had initially been treating the anthrax-contaminated fibre in Belgium, placing their production line directly in Herat along with other facilities set up by a Bradford based firm. But when the US military withdrew from the region in 2021, marking the end of the main phase of the war on terror, Taliban reclamation of authority halted affairs.

Afghan cashmere has thus lost its identity once more, as it now travels from Herat, into Kabul, Karachi, and finally into China where it is mixed in at low ratios with local or Mongolian fibre. No trader now wants to disclose its use, which has

further devalued its price, despite it being a good component. Ronnie's single-handed attempt to keep the project going after investment was shut off, is testament to his belief in its virtues—both material and human:

'I thought, screw this, I'm going to tell the world that Afghan cashmere is Afghan cashmere, and it has merits. That was the essence of my roadshow presentation in Biella to Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) members, and in Beijing at the Natural Fibre Connect conference. And I told them: "Here is a bloody good cashmere". I didn't go in there like Bob Geldof claiming it was just about the locals—and particularly the women—their fibre truly doesn't adulterate the blend and it should be purchased at a competitive rate'.



Four years on from the Taliban takeover, the situation for women and girls has become increasingly untenable. According to reports by gender equality agency UN Women:

'The Taliban is closer than ever to achieving its vision of a society that completely erases women from public life.'

In most cases women are not allowed to move freely in public without being accompanied by a *mahram*, a male guardian. In Herat, where Ronnie concentrated much of his work, the authorities have begun to strictly enforce hijab regulations, impeding women's movements in public spaces and banning them from secondary and higher education.

Taken together, these edicts have made it functionally impossible for women to receive degrees, enter into training programmes, or find jobs. As a result, over 78 per cent of Afghan women are not in education or employment. Almost half of the work force is therefore not contributing to the economy in measurable ways, which is a considerable problem for a country whose finances have been devastated by sanctions. There are however suggestions that the Taliban have been turning a blind eye to women collecting and selling cashmere, particularly if their heads of family have been killed and they are the sole breadwinners for their household. But their ability to earn a living by herding goats was set back even further by the emergence of SFA certification:

'So the brands will now say they're not buying unless it's SFA certified, which is understandable. It's like if you buy an expensive watch, you want to have a bit of paper that goes along with it. It's an ethical guarantee that the entire production line has been vetted by independent auditors, covering environmental, social, and animal welfare aspects. I knew that Afghan cashmere would fall victim to not being certified and that this would further devalue it, so I took my case to USAID who agreed to engage the SFA to work with us; we were one year into a two-year programme when the Taliban embarked. Then, when the Trump Administration pulled the plug on all aid, we got a double whammy.'

The project's latest marketing push to raise awareness for the complex plight of the herders, involved a collaborative competition with London-based Bespoke Tailoring Students.

A donation of Afghan-origin cashmere suit lengths made by Mr Qin of Wealth Cashmere, on behalf of the project, saw 6 final-year apprentices showcase their creations this past July at their graduate show in Shoreditch. The aim of the collaboration was to promote the values of the cashmere itself, in addition to its more general versatility as a fibre, by encouraging students to produce design-led pieces which broke from the typically conservative cuts it is more commonly associated with.

Ronnie also continues to promote his endeavours on a LinkedIn page, where he describes to stakeholders why and how to get involved in this most public-spirited undertaking:

'I still have many contacts in Afghanistan, and I am more than delighted to share these with any interested parties, or to answer any questions anyone may have about the availability, quality and supply chain of Afghan cashmere.'

We might not have control over the USAID budgets, but we can try and influence where businesses source their precious fibres. Now more than ever, those sourcing decisions matter.'

The study of our past continuously supports the notion that the development of economic stability in places where precarity dominates, is integral not just to the creation of comfortable livelihoods for individuals in remote lands, but also to the prevention of events that bear worldwide repercussions we often believe we will be immune to—but which ineluctably affect us in ways that could scarcely have been predicted.

And in this particular instance, we find ourselves as a trade in the most advantageous position, to participate in this altruistic and preventative measure, without spending a farthing more on equivalent cashmere to the kind we already sell.

Ronnie Lamb
ronnie9647@yahoo.com



THE LA BOWTIQUE CUP (for beauty)



1ST PRIZE Xie Zhiding (Cutter) at Cultum in Dalian, China.



2ND PRIZE Erikado Takuya (Coatmaker) at Clarence Wong in Shanghai, China.

“After much reflection he came to the conclusion that beauty is often very relative, just as what is decent in Japan is indecent in Rome, and what is fashionable in Paris, is not fashionable in Beijing; and he saved himself the trouble of composing a long treatise on beauty.”

Voltaire (1764), Dictionnaire Philosophique.



3RD PRIZE Laal Avgambayeva (finisher) at Anderson & Sheppard in London, England.

THE BRUMMELL CUP (for cut & make)



1ST PRIZE Mai Zheng (Cutter) at LDiamon in Wenzhou, China.

“I really appreciate the prowess showed by succesful combination of outstanding fit and construction, with beautiful management of this white translucent fabric. This shows a height of skill legitimately worthy of 1st place.”

Andrew Livingston.



2ND PRIZE Samuel Silvester (Coatmaker) & Katherine Reed (Finisher) at Dunhill in London, England.

“This topcoat demonstrates mastery in heavy-cloth handling, with beautifully balanced proportions and immaculate finishing. The lapel roll, pocket placement, and drape reveal both control and refinement.”

Biao Wang.



“A highly polished entry, distinguished by a clean pattern and superb iron work. The shoulder and chest are expressive and shapely, while hand-finished details further elevate the work to reflect both technical discipline and a sensitive respect for bespoke standards.”

Biao Wang.



3RD PRIZE Xixiang Deng (Cutter) at Clarence Wong in Shanghai, China.

THE VALET CUP (for imagination)



1ST PRIZE Jiyoung Choi (Finisher)
at Dege & Skinner in London, England.

• One readily conjures the scene:
A gallery opening (naturally), on
entry of which one casts a cursory
glance about the place and eyes
the prospects. Overserious faces
amid a sea of serious and shape-
less monochrome—and then, this
peculiar form, that hand... And an
overbearing impulse to touch, to
meet the gaze of its strange owner.
The sheer effrontery of the
garment, and of wearing it here,
belies decorum, and so the
interruption is perhaps more than a
shade indiscreet when it is uttered:
‘Well, and who the hell are you?’

Luke Adams.



2ND PRIZE Zuyi Guan (Cutter) at Rainier & Co
in Shanghai, China.

• Especially in British tailoring, aspects such as
understatedness and subtlety tend to be cele-
brated, but what of majesty? One sees majesty
and drama coursing through every line and fibre
of this coat—an apologetic expression of might
and heft and all that we once knew to value, and
have forgotten. Death or victory!

Luke Adams.

V
A
L
E
T

• What struck me about this suit
was how at home it looks in the
world, how utterly wearable,
how of a part with its surround-
ings. A suit, after all, is not a
static thing; it is built to move.
In this example we see a suit as
it was meant to be—a beautiful
encasement for all that is live
and human!

Luke Adams.



3RD PRIZE Erikado Takuya (Coat-
maker) at Clarence Wong
in Shanghai, China.



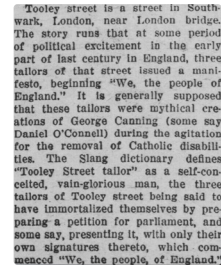
A LOT MORE THAN A NINTH

*The Tailor & Cutter, Vol. 105, No. 5398,
May 15, 1970.*

With bespoke trade promotion in the air, and taking note of the current urge for the tailor to show a bold front to the world, we are moved to give account of what we have discovered as the true story of the tailor who has been held to have started the legend that a tailor was but “the ninth part of a man.” [...]

We ourselves have never thought that the tailor could ever have been a weakling. Were there not the famous Two of Tooley Street? [...] Here was boldness if you like; no apologetics from those Tooley Street pliers of the needle.

On the contrary, they had a very strong assessment of their importance. They were representatives of a whole people! What an inspiration for the tailors of the 1970s.



TAILORS OF TOOLEY STREET

*The Highland Recorder, Number 28,
21 July 1933.*

Tooley street is a street in Southwark.

The story runs that at some period of political excitement in the early part of last century in England, three tailors of that street issued a manifesto [...].

It is generally supposed that these tailors were mythical creations of George Canning (some say Daniel O’Connell) during the agitation for the removal of Catholic disabilities.

The Slang dictionary defines “Tooley Street tailor” as a self-conceited, vainglorious man, the three tailors of Tooley street being said to have immortalized themselves by preparing a petition for parliament, and some say, presenting it, with only their own signatures thereto, which commenced:

“We, the people, of England.”



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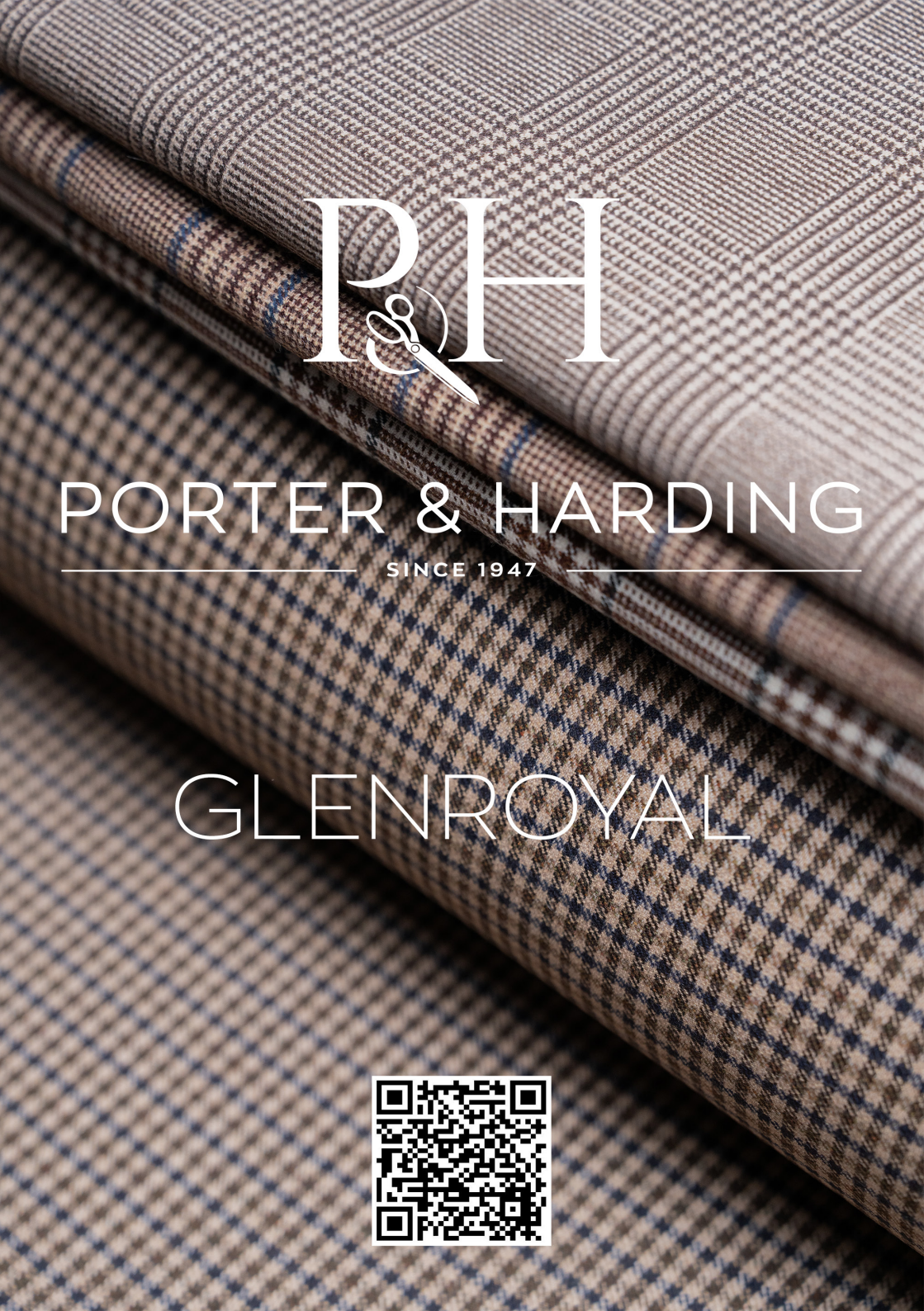
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