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What the men of the world owe Great Britain

An international horde of well-dressed gentlemen will descend on London this Sunday to cast a discerning eye over the latest developments in British menswear. During its three-day run, London Collections: Men (aka the fashion shows for blokes) will showcase everything from the loopyest, attention-seeking high-fashion impracticalities to the best of Savile Row tailoring. Before the event, the [British Fashion Council](#) has compiled a list that it says represents the 10 greatest Made in Britain menswear innovations.

1 The Three-Piece suit and 2 Tweed & Tartan

These trends started at the very top. According to the Victoria and Albert Museum, Charles II first paired a waistcoat with a jacket, in 1666. During the Twenties it was the Prince of Wales, later the Duke of Windsor, who made country tweed and Scottish tartans fashionable beyond Britain (although Sir Walter Scott should be credited, too). So this picture of the current Prince of Wales perfectly combines both.

3 The Wellington Boot

Before he won at Waterloo, Arthur Wellesley made a significant contribution to shoe design. In search of a boot he could wear beyond the battlefield, he asked his shoemaker to alter the traditionally tassled and pointed hessian boot to make it more comfortable. The result, in calfskin, became famous and was later recast in rubber by Charles Goodyear.

4 The Bowler Hat

Although synonymous with the City, the bowler's story began in the countryside, where it was commissioned as a helmet-cum-hat for gamekeepers. Slowly it crept

up the social strata – and became big in America, too – but it was not until Edward VII started wearing it that today's hedge funders' grandfathers took it to heart.

5 The Trench Coat

There is an unresolved debate as to which company – Burberry or Aquascutum – created the trench coat. The most likely answer is that this dashing officer's tailored waterproof evolved from competition between the two companies, which once were the Apple and Samsung of outerwear. What is undisputable is that it is Burberry that has made the trench its own – even if Humphrey Bogart was an Aquascutum fan.

6 The Kipper Tie and Floral Shirt

Carnaby Street, aka Peacock Alley, was to menswear what The Beatles were to music, and its generation-defining hits were the kipper tie and floral shirt. Later incorporated into the Jermyn Street pantheon by tailor (not weatherman) Michael Fish, the style – as shown off below by Alan Hudson, a Chelsea footballer, in 1970 – fell out of favour by the 1980s.

7 The Dandy

He died penniless and with syphilis, but at least Beau Brummell had a good time along the way. This dedicatedly vain Regency clothes horse made long trousers fashionable and dapperness something to celebrate.

8 Bondage Trousers

This is the most questionable inclusion but makes it as the trousers are

synonymous with punk. Just don't try them at a job interview.

9 Riding Coat

Pre-Henry Ford, the horse was the ultimate gentleman's accessory, and the clothes he wore on it became emblems of taste and wealth. The riding coat became the tailcoat, which eventually became the modern jacket of today.

10 Brogues

The decorative holes were supposedly designed to encourage water to drain out mid-country walk. This seems like a dubious theory but the result, for whatever reason, makes this English shoe one of the most attractive styles.

Do you agree with this top 10? Personally, I'm only 80 per cent convinced; where is the British Warm, Argyle or the bespoke tailoring? But still, Boris Johnson – a man noted for his mastery of a certain style – has put his name to it ...

Luke Leitch



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