

The middle class
music fans, but there



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

THE 50S In the early 1950s, at exactly the time that the teenage Elvis Presley was making the first forays into clothes and music in Memphis, disaffected post war youths of Great Britain were granted the less colourful set of options. The homegrown pop music scene was still dominated by the big bands and dance halls, which had sprung up after the war. More excitement was generated by the far more stylish imported American acts such as Johnny Ray, Frank Sinatra and Guy Mitchell, but they had in turn inspired a set of UK copy cats such as Teddy Johnson. Many in the UK were turned on by the Jazz scene that was awakening. The mode of dress was baggy flannel trousers and loose jumpers with college scarves and duffel coats for men and women. More adventurous women wore ponytails, gingham blouses and dirndl skirts or Juliette Greco fringes with dark make-up around the eyes and black clothing.

Dowdiness was prevalent amongst the middle class music fans, but there was one trend that had started in the immediate post-war years among the upper classes and had been popularised by the working class lads: the neo Edwardian look. This in turn gave birth to the first youth cult: the Teddy Boys. Many Ted's settled for tight jeans beetle crushers and a DA Because the Teddy boy look was associated with teen violence the idea that fashionable clothes were a threat to society was made. That was how James Dean, Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando came to symbolise rebellious youth.

When Hollywood looked around for rebellious images that would suit stars like Dean and Brando they settled on White T-shirts, jeans and leather jackets. When the kids in Britain saw it up on the big screen they wanted the look too. Women Women dressed " smartly' in the Fifties. Good grooming and

a tailored look were prized. Acting and looking “every inch the lady” was taught virtually from the cradle. The poodle skirt is the look most associated with the Fifties. Young women wore them. A poodle skirt is a wide swing skirt with a poodle transferred onto the fabric.

Poodles were not the only items used to adorn these skirts, they are just the best remembered. Preppie qualities were neatness, tidiness and grooming. Girls wore full dirndl or circular skirts with large appliques. Bouffant paper nylon or net petticoats supported the skirts. On top they wore scoop neck blouses, back to front cardigans, tight polo necks or three quarter sleeve white fitting shirts often with a scarf knotted cowboy fashion at the side neck. These fashions that originated in America filtered to Britain in watered down fashion. Marks and Spencer in the 1950s Marks & Spencer produced the best ready to wear chain store clothes in the fifties and quadrupled their profits at the same time. Their clothes were not the least expensive, but they were the best value for money.

The quality became so high in the 1950s that limits were set on production, as everyone wanted the affordable stylish Paris inspired clothes. Paper Nylon and Net Petticoat Support 1950sThe full skirts needed support to look good and nylon was used extensively to create bouffant net petticoats or paper nylon petticoats. Several petticoats often of varying styles were worn to get just the right look. Each petticoat was stiffened in some way either by conventional starch or a strong sugar solution. Eventually a hoop crinoline petticoat was developed and it had channelled tapes, which were threaded with nylon boning in imitation of whale bone petticoats. A single net petticoat worn over it softened the look of the rigid boning. Whit Sunday in the

1950s Most of the British nation still kept religious holidays like Whitsunday and Whit Monday when the mixed congregations from chapels and churches would march through British towns parading their chapel banners and wearing their Sunday best.

The clothes would follow the up to date fashions of the time and be sparkling clean often in the new fabrics. Girl's dresses were almost always in nylon with skirts puffed out with petticoats. 1950's Teenage Consumers Until 1950 the term teenagers had never before been coined. Children were known as girls and youths once they displayed signs of puberty.