

# Teddy boy youth movement



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Teddy Boy Youth Movement The consumer boom of the 1950s America did not reach Britain until the 1960s but nevertheless working class teenagers could for the first time afford good clothes, a bicycle or motorcycle and entertainment.

Teddyboys were the first group of youths to dress to impress, they made it acceptable for young people to care about what one looked like all the time and dress purely for show, instead of just having one's work or school clothes. The style was tailored, and featured long high necked jackets, usually of velvet, or velvet trimmed collar and cuffs, and were lined with bright colours. This was worn with a bootlace or ' slim jim' tie, narrow ' drainpipe' trousers, wing-collared shirts and suede shoes. An important accessory, along with the cycle chain was the comb. Common hairstyles included long, strongly-moulded greased-up hair with a quiff at the front and the side hair combed back to form a Ducktail at the rear of the head, although there were many variations such as ' the bop', ' the Tony Curtis', ' the be-bop', ' the tevee', ' the panama' or the ' back sweep and crest'. It was greased and usually accompanied by sideburns.

Teddygirls adopted American fashions such as tight capri pants called ' treader pants' and circle skirts, but they also wore items such as drape jackets, hobble skirts, straw boater hats, cameo brooches, and espadrilles. They usually wore their hair in a ponytail. Because the look was based on the Edwardian period, a newspaper headline shortened Edward to Teddy which then evidently coined the term Teddyboy. The British pop boom of the 1960s brought new music and new youth culture. Rock'n'Roll was immediately adopted by the Teddyboys.

American musicians such as Elvis, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and British musicians like Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard and the Drifters, Billy Fury, and Marty Wilde became the teenagers idols. Shortly after, the first Rock'n'Roll pubs appeared, as did the Rockers who liked the same music and rode powerful British motorcycles. Teds and Rockers liked each other and the leather motorbike jacket became the normal wear for many Teddyboys and Teddygirls for daytime use and for rough pubs. Unfortunately Teds also had many enemies.

They were known for being in tough racist gangs. They formed gangs who sometimes had a common uniform like a particular colour of jacket or socks. For the most part, violence and vandalism was not too serious by modern standards, and exaggerated by the media, but there were instances of serious gang warfare with razors and knives. Some Teddyboys had fascist tendencies and were involved with gangs of youths that attacked the West Indians that emigrated to Britain in the mid fifties. This racism was the most unfortunate of the Teddyboy's tendencies and it closed off much American Rock'n'Roll to them. This was their loss as a lot of white covers of African American songs were not as good in comparison with the originals.

In the 70's, the new generation of Teds developed a strong identity : Hair spray started to replace grease, the drapes were brighter and, the drain-pipes were tighter. Gradually, this new generation discovered one of the roots of Rock'n'Roll : Rockabilly and Country Music. People like Carl Perkins, Charlie Feathers, Billy Lee Riley, Charlie Rich, George Jones, Carl Mann, Hayden Thomson, Janis Martin, and Wanda Jackson, became suddenly

famous in England, then soon after in the rest of Europe. The interest for Rockabilly coincided with the internationalisation of the Teddyboy's tradition.

New bands like Crazy Cavan & the Rhythm Rockers, the Flying Saucers, and the Riot Rockers exported all over Europe their own songs, their own music.

Creating a new sound called British Rockabilly. In the 90's the Teds and Rockabillicies buried the hatchet, and any remaining racism amongst

Teddyboys evaporated. The original Teddyboys were by now too old for violence and those that appeared in the 80's were not interested in fighting.

This led to a new type of safer Rock'n'Roll where people could feel comfortable without Rock'n'Roll clothes.