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The Pocket, The Portable Archive: Exploring methods and creating garment biographies with what we wear and carry

A thesis
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CERYS DALLAWAY DAVIDSON



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Abstract

This thesis proposes and tests the concept of the ‘pocket archive’ as a site to encounter both garment and wearer biographies, through both object-centred and creative research methodologies. The pocket archive is the site of pocketed or attached material culture in garments and accessories, which is examined as a portable and embodied archive of both the garment and the wearer. Pocket archives move with the wearer, and hold intimate, private, often ephemeral items, whilst also sharing connection to wearers’ communities and their wider historical context. In this manner I argue that the pocket archive reveals insightful histories about the wearer and garment.

This research draws upon and contributes to dress history and material culture studies. Both are established fields, though the site of the pocket is less explored in the historiography to date. Within these fields this thesis takes a methodological approach grounded in material culture and object-based analysis. I utilise established frameworks from Prown, Mida & Kim, Kopytoff’s object biography approach, and oral history research, alongside creative non-fiction and creative practice, to further the insight we may gain of garment, object, and wearer. The combination of research approaches establishes a framework, specific to the study of pocket archives, which enables novel, tacit, sensory and emotive insight on multiple levels of garments and wearers.

The thesis is centred on examples from Aotearoa New Zealand over the last 200 years, with a focus on the 20th century. The research is conducted with both museum-held and second-hand sourced garments, ranging from former Prime Ministers’ clothing to wedding wear to everyday jeans and blazers. Its methodological focus, however, is broader. The diverse sources and creative research tested the boundaries of the pocket archive concept through garment deconstruction and creative non-fiction. Pocket archives capture histories which are less likely to be found in formal records: often ephemeral, with items worn and used by all of us every day. Likewise, they capture unique narratives of care, privacy, health and gender inequalities. The site also holds memory and is used to keep memory by wearers, creating a duality to the pocket archive concept.

I demonstrate that pocket archives are liminal spaces connecting both to wearers and bodies within clothing, alongside sharing insight into the public sphere these bodies’ function in. The cloth of garments is distinct in its ability to hold biography through wear, repair and material traces, highlighting the value of pocket archives in garments specifically. Overall, the thesis argues for both the value of pocket archives as sites for social and cultural history and for combining object-based and creative research methods to most fully understand the stories encoded in our pockets.

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Introduction

It is a Friday evening, the end of my work week. As I ready myself for bed, I locate an archive of the week's events in my jean pockets as I empty them out in readiness for the trousers' long overdue engagement with our washing machine. From both back patch pockets my personal and work phone are each first retrieved. Then tucked behind this, in the proper right back pocket, I discover the \$40 stuffed in there upon the Facebook Marketplace sale of my son's last season's football boots that morning. It was conveniently transferred from the new owner into my dominant right hand, and therefore swiftly into this pocket as we rushed out the door to other activities.

The first items uncovered in the front inset pockets – one from each – are a set of sterile-looking nitrile gloves in medical blue from my day of art installation at work. Deeper in the front proper left pocket I uncover what would appear to the naked eye to be a ball of cotton wool. Those who encountered my daughter after school a few days prior might know that this is in fact part of an Easter bunny tail which had started falling off. I quickly grabbed and pocketed it in case the lost tail was requested at a later moment. Its placement in the left, non-dominant pocket, was perhaps in relation to a quick twist of the body to hide said severed tail in the hope that no imminent crafting request to reattach would be required. Back to the proper right front pocket and further down, a tissue is excavated. The questionable blessing of the inheritance of poor sinuses results in the requirement to always have one at the ready. Finally, in the small watch pocket again on the proper right side, is a security 'T' screw from the aforementioned artwork installation that day.

Could this collection be considered an archive of my week or offer insights into my life or connected communities? Would this conglomeration of material culture, imprints on the fabric, 'barcode' on the denim jean seams combined with the pocketed items share a snapshot of this garment's biography and the story of me to some historian in the future?¹ They surely

¹ See Hauser for details on the 'barcode' patterning which appears on the seams of denim jeans marking 'ridges and valleys' imprinted from the manufacture and each individual wearers use of the garment: Kitty Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin', in *Fashion and Modernity*, ed. by Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans (Berg, 2005), pp. 153–70 (p. 153).

would not be able to deduce the level of detail about my life which I have divulged, though I would likely be dateable and locatable via the New Zealand Just Jeans brand and early 21st century skinny jean style. Would they think of me as a medical practitioner due to the gloves, and cotton wool like substance (quite the red herring)? Or would they conduct tests to learn that it is in fact a polyester stuffing commonly used in crafts during this period. How would they know it came from my daughter, however? The money would certainly provide a date range, though they would not be able to identify why it was there. The unique 'T' screw security mechanism could be traced back to its manufacturer and its function, which combined with the gloves, perhaps rounds out the story.

It is the following week at work; I am back to desk-based activities after the previous week's artwork installations. This means more creativity in my dressing, engaging more broadly with my wardrobe, which in turn means in many cases, pocketless garments. I find myself wearing an Anna Stretton dress purchased for a special outing on my 16th birthday. It is a classic early 2000s bias cut design, which holds memories within its very fabric, silky thread, and hugging feel. It also inherently does not easily accommodate pockets, a very challenging task in a silky bias cut. I am left fumbling through my day as I carry around my various accoutrements and can only leave a surface imprint on this garment which does not allow the easy attachment of other material culture.

As the day ends, I walk across the campus to my car, and I tuck my hands in my jacket pocket. It is a simple Max brand grey leather jacket that I inherited from my grandmother when she passed several years ago. As a very stylish lady, much of her wardrobe was coveted by her granddaughters and happily shared out amongst us as a unique inheritance. This jacket is one of two items which came into my possession holding forgotten tokens from her within their pockets, now kept there as a memento to her. The grey jacket contained a single impeccably clean, neatly folded white, lace edged handkerchief. The other was a shocking pink boiled wool coat, which appropriately held a pink ribbon pin in one of its two pockets, likely worn to a breast cancer awareness event. I stroke the handkerchief and remember the petite, stylish, Welsh priest that was my grandmother and end my day on a good note.

I share these reflections to set the tone for this thesis, which considers historical study through worn garments holding additional material culture within or adjacent to their pockets. Garment pockets are essentially folds of stitched fabric within or atop dress, creating a receptacle for the activities of our bodies within, positioned between said bodies and the external world. The items held within pockets are often revealing of this body, and the activities, personal moments and public connections of that individual. Placing the historic garment at the centre, I consider how the biography of this piece of material culture can be revealed by the item itself alongside its pocket contents or connected objects. We imprint aspects of our bodies onto the fabric of garments through use, staining, wear and alterations, while sharing the public persona of that body to the world through messaging on the external clothing surface, all leaving traces of garment biography. Pocketed garments provide additional receptacles for information of the wearer. In connection with the garment's biography, they offer insight into the clothed individual and their connected communities. To what extent is a pocket a portable archive of a moment in its wearer's life, era they lived in or both?

Amid pondering this question as I began researching for this thesis, the concept of the 'pocket archive' began to form. Lily, who runs a second-hand clothing shop online, posted on Instagram 'Pocket finds', sharing the image of a BARKER & POLLOCK (historic NZ department store) receipt. I reached out to her, and the following discussion began to spark the concept:²

Pocket finds [are] a talked about curiosity in the world of 2nd hand /thrifting. The most usual is a tissue often crumpled, but upgraded from that is a lovely pressed vintage cotton handkerchief (unused). I recently sold a collection of clothes from an estate of a[n] elderly woman who had a very high end designer wardrobe mainly 80s-y2k, every pocket on every garment contained two neatly folded fresh tissues. So each pair of pants had four tissues. It was a lovely observation of her meticulous regime of being prepared.

I've had receipts, shopping lists, bus tickets and movie stubs, cigarette lighters, smoking papers, and lolly wrappers. I once dated a handbag via some lolly wrappers found in it. I always clean (vacuum) pocket fluff and lint out and that in itself is interesting as some is routine dust, but sometimes there is all sorts of biscuits and food crumbs as well.³

² Cerys Dallaway Davidson, interview with Lily, (Auckland), 27 April 2023, Social media message. Note the specific Instagram post is not linked, to preserve research participant's anonymity.

³ Lily, Social media message.

The collected material culture and detritus we accumulate and often leave behind in our pockets share insight into personal habits, consumer tendencies, dates of wear, location of wearer, biography of garment and more as identified by Lily, in my reflection and discussed in depth through this thesis. Later in the conversation I suggest that pockets may be portable archives, something which was soon shortened to simply ‘pocket archives’, a term I use throughout the thesis.

Pocket archives are, in the simplest form, filled pockets in historic clothing. They are a site of connection between dress history and material culture. Throughout this thesis, I define pocket archives in a broad sense: from traditional pockets themselves to pocket-adjacent garment surfaces and extending to pocketed bags. Researching pocket archives involves the analysis of a garment’s biography through both its fabric, seams and its connected material culture from the site of the pocket, treating garment and pocket contents together as an archive. Pocket archives may also include consciously kept archival spaces by wearers who use pockets for memory keeping. In my opening reflection I have shared descriptions of both types of pocket archive. In their essence, the pocket archive embodies the site of the pocket, or adjacent garment surface, in reference to its connected material culture.

This thesis examines the site of pocket filled garments, or pocket archives, sourced from both museum collections and second-hand stores across Aotearoa New Zealand. While Aotearoa based, this thesis does not engage directly with the bicultural nature of the country and its history. This is not because of exclusion, but due to the nature of garment selection through items with filled pockets. This resulted in sources being chosen by the pockets so to speak, which resulted in predominantly Pākehā individuals, or research subjects which did not share any reference to ethnicity. In the case of museum sourced garments this perhaps highlights inequitable historic colonial museum collecting practices.⁴ The second-hand garments sourced, were generally found through their pocket contents to tell us more about gender, class and social milieu than ethnicity and culture, which outlines an important limitation of research through pocket archives historically.

⁴ Bronwyn Labrum, ‘Expanding Fashion Exhibition History and Theory: Fashion at New Zealand’s National Museum since 1950’, *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 1.1 (2014), pp. 97–117, doi:10.1386/inf.1.1.97_1; Laura Jovic, ‘Resources for the Study of European Dress and Fashion in New Zealand’, in *Berg Encyclopaedia of World Dress and Fashion. Volume 7, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, ed. by Margaret Maynard, 10 vols (Berg, 2010), vii, pp. 281–87.

The use of the dual sources of both museum and second-hand garments was consciously undertaken as this thesis is both an exploration into the material culture of pocket filled garments, as well as an exploration of methodology and at times an enquiry into museum collecting and registration practice. Museum collections also held some provenance on their collection garments which in turn provided insight to test the methodologies undertaken. Second-hand sourced garments found via a technique that I coin ‘pocket diving’ allowed me to explore the material culture-based methodology via a creative lens through embodied hands-on approaches.⁵ This research contributes firstly to our understanding of New Zealand history through the lens of dress for which we all wear, and the zone of the pocket, to which we all have varying degrees of access. Alongside, it is also a study in methodology of dress history and material culture, connecting to a broader global historiography.

From the seemingly small site of the pocket, this thesis addresses a breadth of topics and methods. This research contributes to the field of material culture analysis through an engagement with dress history within the last 200 years. It is methodologically focused, utilising found and museum collection garments, both selected when located with pocket contents or other physically connected objects. The research undertaken follows a parallel process with garment and pocket contents as the primary sources, expanding, querying and testing where and how we might understand more of a garments’ history in relation to the connected material culture found with it. I used several approaches on the subjects, including two methodologies for object-based research: Mida & Kim’s material culture observation analysis which is designed to be conducted on garments/accessories, and Prown’s object-based research methodology which assesses pocket contents and/or accessories connected to garments.⁶ Following this, the methodology expands to a variety of approaches to address how the garment or accessory and pocket contents may be synthesised and contextualised in relation to past wearers and their communities. This includes Kopytoff’s object

⁵ I have developed the term ‘pocket diving’ to describe the action of seeking second-hand store examples for this study. In op shops I found myself literally pocket diving, plunging my hand into garment pockets through stores and in the sorting area of the Hospice Shop where I was able to take my pocket diving behind the scenes. This action you could argue I undertake when contacting museums and asking them to, on my behalf, pocket dive through their collections, an action which I believe is conducted more metaphorically, via enquiries into their collection management systems. Before contacting each institution, I myself pocket dove through their collections online space via simple key word searches.

⁶ Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Jules David Prown, ‘Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method’, *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17.1 (1982), pp. 1–19, JSTOR <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/stable/1180761>> [accessed 29 April 2023].

biographies, archival and oral history research, creative research approaches, auto ethnographic reflections on the research process and creative non-fiction.⁷ Through this, the richness and limits of observational methods are tested, and creative approaches are found to add texture and tacit understanding.

The study of pockets for historic enquiry is limited. However, scholarship by Burman and Fennetaux & Carlson reveals the site to be a valuable and rich area of study.⁸ Both studies are orientated differently to this study and are from outside Aotearoa New Zealand. This thesis seeks to take the concept of the pocket further, asking: in what way does a garment itself hold some of this history in its very fabric, the wear of it, its seams, encapsulated pockets themselves where the original colour may lie protected from the fading ravages of time? This study considers garments as vessels themselves in that garment seams and the fabric itself hold stories of a garments' use, wear, and history, in the lint captured, the stains and dirt ingrained, or scents held within the very fibres of the cloth.

Whilst garments are found to capture evidence of routine and wear over time, pockets often capture shorter or more specific moments in time – a day, a week. Together garments and pocket contents therefore share multiple levels of insight into garment biographies. Pockets can be practical spaces where ephemeral everyday material gathers, sharing unique insight into wearers, which may not be captured in the textual archival record or even general museum collections. They are also found to be nostalgic and memory keeping sites as demonstrated through oral history interviews conducted, echoing my personal reflections on this practice in the wear of inherited garments. Research in this thesis also highlights a lack of pockets in womenswear and sexism in dress, and I expand the research scope to accessories like handbags to accommodate. Both private and personal histories are told through pockets and handbags as well as more public social histories, as the view of

⁷ Throughout the thesis I work with what I term at points academic, traditional and archival approaches, by which I generally I mean what we stereotypically consider traditional research approaches and outputs. Alongside I bring in creative research tools which at numerous points connect with academic practice but may be called creative research, creative interventions, experimental history or non-traditional research approaches and outputs.

Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commodization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things : Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

⁸ Barbara Burman, 'Pocketing the Difference: Gender and Pockets in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Gender & History*, 14 (2003), pp. 447–69, doi:10.1111/1468-0424.00277; Barbara Burman and Carole Turbin, *Material Strategies: Dress and Gender in Historical Perspective* (Blackwell, 2003); Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux, *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women's Lives, 1660-1900* (Yale University Press, 2019); Hannah Carlson, *Pockets: An Intimate History of How We Keep Things Close* (Algonquin Books, 2023).

pocketed items also encompasses the display of material culture atop and adjacent to pockets. Pocket archives engage with the intimacy of the private space of the pocket, connect to the public realm in the garment surface beyond, and reveal the inner workings of worn garments. This combines to give layers of biography and rich, complex insight into dress material culture.

Stitching Together Historiographies of Dress and Pockets

In studying pocket filled garments this thesis sits within the field of dress history, considering pockets, material culture and methodology. In addition, the work connects with many tenets from museum studies to gender, social and private histories, memory, creative methodology and more. As inherently material items, I often find myself considering dress and material culture as one and undertake the study of it as such in this thesis. This initial section focuses on literature in the dress history field to date and the specific zone of the pocket within. The section following therefore addresses dress in the context of material culture alongside creative practices in the wider field.

Dress History

People throughout the world undertake the activity of getting dressed, whether practical jeans, impractical silky dresses, or all the options in between and beyond. As Calahan and Zachary note, clothing ourselves is something all eight billion people in the world do each day.⁹ Wilcox suggests there is the presence of clothing whenever people are represented and Barthes argues that clothes are part of human primal character.¹⁰ Dress is something all can understand, a fact that Svensson suggests contributes to the popularity of fashion and dress history exhibits.¹¹ Given the connection we all have to clothing, the garments we wear are valuable material culture: they are witness to our

⁹ *Dressed: The History of Fashion*, hosted by April Calahan and Cassidy Zachary (2024) <<https://dressedhistory.com/>> [accessed 18 February 2024]; Likewise, St Clair reiterates this colloquially, identifying in the preface that assuming her 'dear Reader' is not naked, if they were to look down, they would likely find themselves 'encased in cloth': Kassia St Clair, *The Golden Thread : How Fabric Changed History* (John Murray Publishers, 2019), p. xi.

¹⁰ Claire Wilcox, *Radical Fashion*. (V&A Publications, 2001); Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*, trans. by Andy Stafford and Michael Carter, English ed. (Berg, 2006).

¹¹ 'Introduction Understanding Fashion and Dress Museology', in *Fashion and Museums : Theory and Practice*, ed. by Marie Riegels Melchior and Birgitta Svensson, Dress, Body, Culture (Bloomsbury, 2020).

everyday lives today and throughout history, and holders of information on our private and public lives.¹²

The subject has recently come to have an established place in the historiographic landscape, despite challenging early years. The field was initially plagued with limited resource for many decades and still has gaps, due in part to the predominance of it being a female-led area of study, and the association of the fashion world with frivolity.¹³ As Taylor notes in her survey of the field, much literature on the topic was also initially descriptive rather than analytical.¹⁴ Since the 1970s however the field developed and scholars challenged traditional disciplinary boundaries, with theory often evolving from more practice based enquiry.¹⁵

One of the distinctive features of contemporary dress history is its interdisciplinary methods. Taylor identifies how the field has moved from its art and social history origins into an interdisciplinary field.¹⁶ Other overviews similarly emphasise the breadth of the practice, range of contributors,

¹² For further on the recognised value of the study of dress history see Taylor, who charts the development of the dress history field, illustrating its value quoting Claire Wilcox's identification that 'Clothes are shorthand for being human.': Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, Studies in Design (Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 1–2; See also St Clair who places cloth in which we surround ourselves in daily, as a piece of material culture which 'changed, defined, advanced and shaped the world we live in.': St Clair, *The Golden Thread : How Fabric Changed History*; Likewise Breward outlines dress history as providing valuable 'cultural evidence' in the study of material culture: Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress*, Studies in Design and Material Culture (Manchester University Press, 1995); Pouillard and Dube-Senecal note the expansive area the field infiltrates, noting 'cultural history, fashion studies, economic history, art history, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, gender studies, and more.': Véronique Pouillard and Vincent Dubé-Sénécal, *The Routledge History of Fashion and Dress, 1800 to the Present* (Routledge, 2024), doi:10.4324/9780429295607.

¹³ Melchior and Svensson, 'Introduction Understanding Fashion and Dress Museology'; Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Valerie Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History* (Costume and Fashion Press, 2004); Valerie Steele, 'A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes-Bag', *Fashion Theory*, 2.4 (1998), pp. 327–35, doi:10.2752/136270498779476109; Christine Boydell, 'Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice', *Fashion Theory*, 20.5 (2016), pp. 595–99, doi:10.1080/1362704X.2016.1162554; Jessie Bray Sharpin, 'The Enduring Links between the Feminine and the Domestic: A Case Study of the Development of the Textiles Collection at Broadgreen House in Nelson, New Zealand' (Victoria University of Wellington, 2021); Labrum, 'Expanding Fashion Exhibition History and Theory'.

¹⁴ Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Veronica Manlow, Eugenia Paulicelli, and Elizabeth Wissinger, *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies* (Routledge, 2022); Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History*; This was mirrored in the curatorial fashion field as identified by De La Haye, Clark and Eicher, with Fukai outlining three distinct periods: 'The First Period: Pre 1970; The Second Period 1970-1990s; The Third Period: The Twenty-first Century.': 'Dress and Fashion Museums', in *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion. Volume 10, Global Perspectives*, ed. by Joanne Bubolz Eicher and Akiko Fukai, 10 vols (Oxford University Press, 2010), x.

¹⁶ Lou Taylor, 'Fashion and Dress History: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches', in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

multiplicity of sources, methods, and ideas.¹⁷ Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger suggest multiple angles through which fashion can be studied, offering insight into social, cultural, economic, and aesthetic histories.¹⁸ As such, the study of dress history is expansive and at times addressed on peripheries of other fields. Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger also identify that ‘Clothing is at home on everyone’s body, but in no one’s discipline. If ever a subject both called for inquiry and resisted classification in a single field or method of inquiry, fashion would be it.’¹⁹ Perhaps the challenges of breadth are reflected in issues around defining the name of the field, initially described as costume but moving in recent decades instead to fashion and dress.²⁰ Within museum collections, clothing is also categorised broadly within applied arts, social history and textile collections.²¹ Despite these broad and murky beginnings recent scholars identify the burgeoning opportunities in the field, with Butchart describing the current moment as a ‘golden age’.²² This thesis sits within this scholarly tradition, grounded in both dress history and methodological enquiry.

The development of dress history in Aotearoa has traced similar lines to overseas: likewise the field is modest, though affected by our colonial context and positionality in the world.²³ Fashion is a key topic dealt with in dress history in recent years, particularly in response to the so-called 1999 emergence of New Zealand fashion design onto the world fashion scene, something debated by Lassig, Hammonds, Jenkins and Regnault.²⁴ The establishment of the New Zealand Fashion Museum in 2010 further aided research on the topic, with publications tracing the histories of New Zealand

¹⁷ Katherine Appleford and others, *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017); Boydell, ‘Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice’; Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger, *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies*.

¹⁸ Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger, *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies*.

¹⁹ Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger, *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies*, pp. 1–2.

²⁰ Amy De la Haye, with Phyllis G. Tortora, ‘Introduction: Dress and Fashion in the Context of the Museum’, in *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion. Volume 10, Global Perspectives*, ed. by Joanne Bubolz Eicher, Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion, 10 vols (Berg, 2010), x; Labrum, ‘Expanding Fashion Exhibition History and Theory’.

²¹ For example, AWMM’s dress history collection was catalogued with ‘T’ numbers in reference to being part of the textile collection.

²² *The Dress Detective, an Interview with Amber Butchart*, hosted by April Calahan, with guest Amber Butchart, Dressed: The History of Fashion (Spotify, 21 May 2019) <<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1KgI7JIWsN10KTAjQ73Gh7?si=uqAxLSH3RkybbuiGbYq0aA>> [accessed 24 January 2026]. 14:04

²³ Parts 7 through 9 detail dress history of Māori and Pākehā as well as broad from a social history perspective and considering the context of Aotearoa New Zealand in connection to Australia and the wider Pacific.

²⁴ Angela Lassig, *New Zealand Fashion Design* (Te Papa Press, 2010); Lucy Hammonds, Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, and Claire Regnault, *The Dress Circle: New Zealand Fashion Design since 1940* (Godwit, 2010). See also: Stacy Gregg and Cathrin Schaer, *Undressed: New Zealand Fashion Designers Tell Their Stories* (Penguin, 2003).

fashion designers, fashion's connection to broader societal and political issues, cultural and social history and engaging with fashions of particular eras.²⁵ Outside of this, publications trace everyday fashion history as well, and scholars also often address topics through object-based dress history methodology, with literature addressing dress and object stories though particularly charting wider social and cultural histories.²⁶ Recent work certainly has a grounding in object based methods, with various collaborations between academics, practitioners and museum curators along with much scholarship coming out of the museum field.²⁷ Within this setting this thesis contributes in adding to the story of everyday fashions, and discussion from a material culture led perspective.

In the museum setting the development of dress history in both collections and exhibition contexts is likewise still maturing. Historic garments were initially collected at the periphery of other more solid and lasting objects.²⁸ Those garments collected were often in a much neglected, poorly kept fashion (pardon the pun); were generally of the fashion elite or focused on designer fashion. Instead engagement was channelled through the representation of fashion in art history, photography, fashion plate drawings and archival textual sources, which has a long history.²⁹ Exhibitions became

²⁵ For example: Doris de Pont, with Angela Lassig and Linda Tyler, *Looking Terrific : The Story of El Jay* (University of Auckland, Gus Fisher Gallery, 2010); Doris de Pont, Kelly Dix, and Jane Groufsky, *A Certain Style : Bruce Papas* (New Zealand Fashion Museum in collaboration with Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2018); *Black: The History of Black in Fashion, Society and Culture in New Zealand*, ed. by Doris de Pont (Penguin, 2012); Doris de Pont and Cerys Dallaway Davidson, *Age of Aquarius: A 1970s Revolution in Fashion* (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2013); Kelly Dix, Doris de Pont, and Arielle Walker, *Elle & the Youthquake : The Changing Face of Fashion* (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2014); Doris de Pont and Dan Ahwa, *Moana Currents: Dressing Aotearoa Now* (New Zealand Fashion Museum, 2019).

²⁶ *Looking Flash: Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. by Stephanie Gibson, Bronwyn Labrum, and Fiona McKergow (Auckland University Press, 2007); Bronwyn Labrum, *Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s* (Te Papa Press, 2015); Annabel Cooper, Lachy Paterson, and Angela Wanhalla, *The Lives of Colonial Objects* (Otago University Press, 2015); Claire Regnault, *Dressed : Fashionable Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840-1910* (Te Papa Press, 2021); Richard Wolfe, *The Way We Wore: The Clothes New Zealanders Have Loved* (Penguin, 2001); *Fragments: New Zealand Social & Cultural History*, ed. by Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum (Auckland University Press, 2000).

²⁷ Jane Malthus and Moira White, 'The Business of Staying Dry: Designing Waterproof Textiles and Garments in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *Scope* (Dunedin), no. 17 (2019), pp. 23–31, doi:10.34074/scop.1017003; Anna Deacon and Jane Groufsky, *Heirloom Textiles* (Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2025); Margot Barton, Jane Malthus, and Moira White, 'Together: The Collaborative Curatorial Practices of a Museum Curator, Dress Historian and Fashion Design Educator', *Scope* (Dunedin), no. 22 (2021), pp. 102–10 <<https://thescope.org/journal/art-and-design/art-and-design-22/together-the-collaborative-curatorial-practices>> [accessed 25 March 2026].

²⁸ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*.

²⁹ John Styles, *The Dress of the People Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (Yale University Press, 2007); Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Bronwyn Labrum, 'Hand-Me-Downs and Respectability: Clothing and the Needy', in *Looking Flash : Clothing in Aotearoa New Zealand*, ed. by Stephanie Gibson and Fiona McKergow (Auckland University Press, 2007), pp. 112–31.

a key research output since the 1990s, though as identified by many, therein lies the challenge of displaying the ‘empty vessels’ of garments divorced from the bodies they were created to clothe.³⁰ Various scholars in relation to this, write on the display challenge of dress, though also outline the range of innovative approaches this has developed in response.³¹

Clothing both encompasses elements of protection, practicality, and memory alongside opportunities for self-expression, creativity, and aesthetics. Spector identifies clothing as a dwelling for the body (or perhaps also a vessel in the same manner of the pocket within?).³² Barnard builds on this idea, considering the communicative nature of fashion.³³ Likewise, Nicklas and Pollen identifies that ‘through original research and innovative case studies, we argue that dress is a fundamental means, indeed sometimes one of the only available ways, by which groups and individuals express and negotiate their identities’.³⁴ Dunseath shares an anthology of these varied and vital ways that clothing offers insight into the human experience, and the strong nostalgic pull of fibre, cloth and style.³⁵ Similarly, this thesis considers when and how pockets are used as communicative spaces, revealing some of their contents or holding pins and badges as markers of identity and community connection.

While the field of dress history is formed from a range of methodologies, dress is inherently material. I, along with numerous scholars, see the most logic in studying it this way as a form of material culture. Sykas writes comprehensively on research via the ‘physical substrate of garments’.³⁶

³⁰ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, p. 18; Angela Lassig, ‘Fitting Forms: Problems of Dress Display for Museums’, *Te Ara Journal of Museums Aotearoa* (Wellington, N.Z), 29.1 (2004) <https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE30518096> [accessed 26 February 2026]; Judith Clark and Amy de la Haye, with Jeffrey Horsley, *Exhibiting Fashion: Before and after 1971* (Yale University Press, 2014).

³¹ For examples see: Greer Crawley and Donatella Barbieri, ‘Dress, Time, and Space: Expanding the Field through Exhibition Making’, in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 44–60; Robyn Healy, ‘Immateriality’, in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 325–43; José Teunissen, ‘Fashion: More Than Cloth and Form’, in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 197–214.

³² Nancy Spector, with Germano Celant and Guggenheim Museum Solo, ‘Art vs. Fashion: A Vortex’, in B. di Firenze, *Art/Fashion*, English language trade ed (Distributed Art Publishers ; In cooperation with Skira editore, 1997).

³³ Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2002).

³⁴ Charlotte Nicklas and Annebella Pollen, *Dress History : New Directions in Theory and Practice* (Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury PublishingPlc, 2015), p. 1.

³⁵ *A Second Skin : Women Write about Clothes*, ed. by Kirsty. Dunseath (Women’s Press, 1998).

³⁶ Philip A. Sykas, ‘Investigative Methodologies: Understanding the Fabric of Fashion’, in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 235–67 (p. 235).

Likewise, Mutsaers considers cloth, collecting and dressmaking in connection to its consumer, she identifies 'dressmaking fabrics simultaneously embody the personal and social narratives which reflect the emotional and cultural values of a particular period.'³⁷ Palmer also reiterates Sykas' argument, with a focus on fashion and the 'rich, multifaceted and often unexpected history of dressmakers, consumers, fashion imagery, fashion writing, politics and taste' which object focused analysis offers.³⁸ Edwards likewise positions dress as being 'the ultimate signifier of a person's gender, age, class, employment, and religion down to more subtle indications such as aesthetic predilection, political standpoint, and marital status.'³⁹ Riello outlines three approaches to dress history study: story of things (object as subject), story from things (object as source) and story with things (object and history interrelate, object able to create its own stories) which builds on earlier methodology borrowed from anthropology and archaeology called the 'material culture of fashion'.⁴⁰ This thesis is very much grounded in the study of dress history as material culture, and is written with things, in the manner of Riello.⁴¹ Garments, and their imprints of other material culture and connected material culture itself, are all addressed in an interrelated fashion.

Pocket Archives: defining the research site

Within garments is the small site of the pocket, a receptacle for holding things in a liminal zone between the private body and public realm beyond. Our bodies move through the world as the 'threshold' between the 'individual' and 'society' as identified by Attfield.⁴² In considering this, clothing is the transitional layer which keeps the individual self physically separate – as desired – from the space of society. As Burke identifies 'close to the body, a tiny submerged, unexplored, and

³⁷ Lilian Mutsaers, 'Unpacking Mrs Wood's Suitcases : The Signifying Potential of Unsewn Cloth : A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Philosophy at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand' (Massey University, 2009), p. 13.

³⁸ Alexandra Palmer, 'Looking at Fashion: The Material Object as Subject', in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 268–300 (p. 295).

³⁹ Lydia Edwards, *How to Read a Dress: A Guide to Changing Fashion from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2015), p. 12.

⁴⁰ Giorgio Riello, 'Things That Shape History Material Culture and Historical Narratives', in *History and Material Culture*, ed. by Karen Harvey, 2nd edn (Routledge, 2017), pp. 27–50 <<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315165776-2/things-shape-history-giorgio-riello?context=ubx&refId=ed009049-1381-464f-bf53-07d223beeff3>> [accessed 9 March 2026]; Giorgio Riello, 'The Object of Fashion: Methodological Approaches to the History of Fashion', *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, 3.1 (2011), para. 1, doi:10.3402/jac.v3i0.88651.

⁴¹ Riello, 'Things That Shape History Material Culture and Historical Narratives'.

⁴² Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, Materializing Culture (Berg, 2000), p. 238.

intimate liminal space, that arguably affords us access to a significant site in what we identify as the spaces and places of education, is the pocket.’⁴³ This thesis centres on the site of the pocket where garment biographies and more are found through the transitional items located in this space and adjacent, and the simple evidence they provide of a presence of a hand which put them there.

The space of the pocket has been identified as a valuable focus for dress history and material culture study, though the existing literature is not expansive unless addressing pocket sexism.⁴⁴ Recently however two significant works have been published indicating the relevance of the site for historical enquiry.⁴⁵ The general focus has however been on pockets specifically – rather than in combination with their contents – and the history of their development, identifying the pocket as a symbol of wider social and cultural concerns and a valuable avenue into some hard-to-reach histories.⁴⁶ This sentiment reflects Thatcher Ulrich’s earlier suggestion of pockets as an icon for women’s history, specifically in the context of tie-on pockets prevalent in womenswear from the seventeenth to twentieth century.⁴⁷ Likewise, as noted by Carlson, Carlyle proposes the pocket as one of the key reasons for the development of clothing – to provide the means to carry the tools that make us human, a function for which our taut skin is unable to accommodate – tying its importance to the overarching study of dress history.⁴⁸

Burman is a key scholar in this niche area, writing on pockets and gender, with tie-on pockets being a focus.⁴⁹ Recent work and collaboration with Fennetaux share a comprehensive history of the pocket in womenswear in Britain between 1660-1900, naturally focusing on the tie-on pocket which dominated this period of dress history in female dress.⁵⁰ They suggest that ‘by refocusing our gaze on

⁴³ Catherine Burke, ‘An Exploration of Liminal Pockets of Contestation and Delight in School Spaces’, *Paedagogica Historica* (Abingdon), 57.1–2 (2021), pp. 11–22 (p. 14), doi:10.1080/00309230.2020.1769147.

⁴⁴ As discussed shortly and more in depth in chapter two this has been a well-trodden topic in reference to the limited pocketing in womenswear for centuries.

⁴⁵ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*; Carlson, *Pockets*.

⁴⁶ For example see further writing from these two key authors: Burman and Turbin, *Material Strategies*; Burman, ‘Pocketing the Difference’; Hannah Carlson, ‘How the Humble Pocket Came to Signify Feminist Liberation’, Literary Hub, 12 September 2023 <<https://lithub.com/how-the-humble-pocket-came-to-signify-feminist-liberation/>> [accessed 16 January 2025]; Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux, ‘Women’s Tie-on Pockets: Bags: Inside Out’, Museum exhibition article, Victoria and Albert Museum, 13 October 2021 <<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/womens-tie-pockets>> [accessed 16 January 2025].

⁴⁷ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives : Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*, First Vintage books edition (Vintage Books, A Division of Penguin Random House LLC, 1991).

⁴⁸ Carlson, *Pockets*.

⁴⁹ Burman, ‘Pocketing the Difference’; Burman and Turbin, *Material Strategies*; Burman and Fennetaux, ‘Women’s Tie-on Pockets’.

⁵⁰ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*.

what is small and apparently tangential, we see more not less. The pocket merits a close up study in itself because what is small can recalibrate our vision of the large.’⁵¹ This work was grounded in object-based methodology, undertaking a close reading of nearly 400 extant examples. The publication was well received, with valuable insights shared, particularly around the revealing nature on the history of women the site offered.⁵² They identify pockets as ‘material extensions of the self’ and Chrisman-Campbell noted in response to the publication: ‘Like the apps on her phone, what a woman carried in her pockets revealed her activities, interests, and values.’⁵³ In her earlier scholarship, Burman also addresses dress history study through the space of pockets in both men’s and womenswear, and the gendered nature of pockets further highlighting the expansive opportunities of study in this area.⁵⁴

Carlson is also a key writer on pockets, using the pocket and its development through history as a inroad to understand how the nature of carrying things, or limitations in this, has impacted fashion, society and the way humans move through the world over time.⁵⁵ Carlson’s work is broader in focus to Burman, tracing the history of the pocket in predominantly western dress from its inception to modern day. The work does not connect with object-based examples in the manner of Burman, which is where my research lies, however it does consider what Carlson terms ‘Pocket Inventories’, something which connects to my concept of pocket archive, though more closely addresses historic perceptions on what is kept in pockets.⁵⁶ The chapter dedicated to this charts the huge fascination of the bulging and mystifying contents of the pockets of young boys reported historically. In contrast, it finds that young women historically were more likely to carry practical items to provide care to those around them, which moved onto discussion about older women’s handbag contents across time. Pocket inventories are outlined to be incredibly personal and potentially revealing of the wearer. In this vein, Townsend’s analysis of a young boy’s pocket collection held by Tāmaki Paenga Hira

⁵¹ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 15.

⁵² Sarah Birt, ‘The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women’s Lives, 1660–1900 by Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 34.2 (2021), pp. 240–42, doi:10.3138/ecf.34.2.240.

⁵³ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 212; Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell, ‘Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux, *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women’s Lives, 1660-1900*’, *Revue de La Société D’études Anglo-Américaines Des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles*, 79.17–18 (2022), p. 264, doi:10.4000/1718.11128.

⁵⁴ Burman and Turbin, *Material Strategies*; Burman, ‘Pocketing the Difference’.

⁵⁵ Carlson, *Pockets*; Carlson, ‘Hannah Carlson Explores the History of Women’s Pockets’.

⁵⁶ Carlson, *Pockets*, p. 143.

Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM) sheds further light on the meaning created by the collection of objects held together in a vessel, this one being the pocket.⁵⁷

A key tenet in Carlson's work is pocket sexism and how gendered garments provide or restrict the ability to carry personal items upon oneself.⁵⁸ Are recent women's histories less likely to be revealed via pocket contents due to the lack of pockets in womenswear and limited capacity of them? Burman shows us that pre-twentieth century this was the opposite, with pockets providing valuable insight into women's lives in the past.⁵⁹ In recent history, however, women's pocketed spaces have been pushed off the body into bags, and as Boyages considers the gendered nature of pockets, they find carrier bags to be an important pocketed area for research.⁶⁰ Knight finds the vessel of the button box or tin as another space in which women's histories lie, in memories of garments and thus the people who wore them, the family histories are captured and, in many cases, passed down.⁶¹ The buttons and trims from garments often last longer than the fragile fabric, which inherently falls foul to the ravages of time faster. Van den Heuvel and Oskarsen, Holton and Styles likewise find women's history in unique spaces tangential to the pocket.⁶² The gendered differences in pockets across men's and womenswear in clothing across recent history is addressed in this thesis and likewise discussion on what may be defined as a pocket.

In considering pockets and their contents broadly we find histories of often menswear, due to the pocket imbalance across gendered garments. Might this approach share more on 'working-class' fashion, and/or interestingly menswear, which despite 'his'tory being tuned towards histories of men, is less addressed in the study of dress history to date?⁶³ While well pocketed, I query whether men's

⁵⁷ Lynette Townsend, 'Collecting Kids' Stuff: In Search of the History of Childhood in New Zealand Museums', *Tuhinga*. (Wellington (Nueva Zelanda)), no. 23 (2012), pp. 39–51.

⁵⁸ Alexandra Jacobs, 'Carry On', *The New York Times Book Review* (New York), 2023, p. 16.

⁵⁹ The literature on pocket sexism is somewhat vast and particularly concentrated recently, particularly in the journalistic area. It is discussed in depth in chapter two.

⁶⁰ Boyages Felicia, 'Caring and Carrying: The Bag of Female Experience', *Metaphor (English Teachers' Association of New South Wales)* (Leichhardt, N.S.W), no. 1 (2022), pp. 14–17.

⁶¹ Lynn Knight, *The Button Box : Lifting the Lid on Women's Lives* (Chatto & Windus, 2016).

⁶² Dinie van den Heuvel and Anne-Carine Oskarsen, "'Hidden Treasures': Garments Used for Smuggling and for the Concealment of Valuables, 1900–60", *Fashion Theory*, 18.4 (2014), pp. 385–98, doi:10.2752/175174114X13996533399874; Viki Holton, *A Woman's Will : The Changing Lives of British Women, Told through the Things They Have Left Behind* (Amberley Publishing, 2023); John Styles, *Threads of Feeling : The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770* (2010).

⁶³ Art historian and author James Laver suggests the general lack of interest in menswear over womenswear in dress history study may be due to the more stagnant nature of the former, though perpetually changing form of the latter: Clark and Haye, *Exhibiting Fashion*. (p. 38 in 'Exhibiting Fashion before and after 1971).

pocket archive stories may be more at risk due to the practical movement of items in and out of trouser pockets each day. This is potentially the case in the 20th and 21st century, though throughout history as Carlson identifies men made sure to have dedicated spaces to decant their pockets to each night.⁶⁴ These limitations are important to keep in mind, and thus pocket spaces which move off the body are also addressed.

Pockets and the breadth of pocket-like spaces when encompassing carry bags, may demonstrate the value of this research site in conjunction with the study of dress itself. The carrier bag theory of human evolution places the vessel of the bag as the first tool developed by humans, rather than the spear. Fisher argues for the benefits of gathering energy rather than simply pushing it outwards, suggesting 'woman's invention of the carrier bag as the take-off point for the quantum advance which created the multiplier effect that led to humanity.'⁶⁵ John Robb supports Fisher's theory, identifying 'it is likely that storage was one of humans' earliest and most important adoptions.'⁶⁶ He notes that carrying containers would have been one of human's most valuable and early adoptions to allow the use of resources over time rather than just in a present moment. This suggests that the items we carry and the vessels we carry them in – often through clothing and their accessories – are highly valuable and stem from a feminine historical narrative.

The value of the carry bag and ability for it to contain expansive narratives, particularly for women's histories, is also expressed by Miles who traverses three generations of women through a single carrier bag and its contents.⁶⁷ Miles' book traces a carry sack and its contents given by an enslaved woman Rose to her daughter Ashley when they were separated in the 1850s. The tracing of this object and the material culture within illuminates an archive across three generations of women. The work is an excellent example of the power of material culture and the many embedded meanings held in objects, particularly those which are vessels: 'It is at once a container, carrier, textile, art piece, and

⁶⁴ The 'vide poche (empty pocket)' was a piece of private bedroom furniture designed with a deep rim around the top or secret drawer to house the man of the house's pocket contents overnight between clothing changes: Carlson, *Pockets*, p. 64.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth. Fisher, *Woman's Creation : Sexual Evolution and the Shaping of Society*, 1st ed. (Anchor Press, 1979), p. 56.

⁶⁶ John Robb, 'Material Time', in *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, ed. by Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 123–39 (p. 130).

⁶⁷ Tiya Miles, *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake* (Random House, 2021).

record of past events.⁶⁸ The ability for clothing and accessories to hold layers and layers of meaning and narrative seems boundless.

The carrier bag is not only a tool, but its varying forms over time and place also situate it as fashion.⁶⁹ Lai considers the handbag broadly in this context through an exhibition at AWMM.⁷⁰ The ‘Carried Away’ exhibition and connected publication delves into the diverse uses of carrier bags across cultures, considering the social and historical significance, the gender divide, the move from pockets to bags, what they are used to carry and overall, what their value and meaning is in society through the past and to today. The site of the pocket, both on and off the body offers opportunities for valuable historic insights and narratives, as many of the studies in this area show through material culture-based enquiry.

Historiographies of Material Culture and Creative Methodologies

Given I am interested in the methodologies undertaken to research dress history and theorise with these objects as sites of enquiry, this thesis is as much a study on methodology itself as it is an exploration of garment pocket archives from the last 200 years in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through the thesis I am thinking with objects, writing with objects, and exploring creatively with objects. The term object I use often interchangeably with material culture and dress when writing about garments and pocket contents. Likewise varied methodological terms are at times used, with academic and archival often encompassing what is generally considered traditional research, and creative research encompassing terms from creative intervention to experimental history. This section delves into some of the literature behind these methodologies, which as a key part of the thesis are expanded in chapter one and developed throughout subsequent chapters.

Material Culture and Object Biography

How do you read an object in the manner you might read text or transcribe words from a research subject? Is this possible, or is the term ‘read’ entirely inappropriate here, as it implies textual

⁶⁸ Miles, *All That She Carried*, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Manlow, Paulicelli, and Wissinger, *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies*.

⁷⁰ Grace Lai, *Carried Away: Bags Unpacked* (Allen & Unwin, 2019).

involvement? Would an object then be observed for its study? A passive party in a one-way transfer of information? Read and observe imply a one-way transfer of information from the object disregarding the researcher's impact. So, interpret perhaps is the verb? The interpretation of information gathered from a physical object into another medium, be it text, art, photography. This study puts the object very much at the centre in the manner of art history and archaeology, seeking to interpret an item in the manner of an interpreter translating signs embedded in the visual, physical and material aspects from one form to another. This research will therefore reference the garment research subjects in the manner of an artwork reference, giving them the same quality as any primary research source.

Cultural theorists have likewise grappled with these thoughts. Ferdinand de Saussure's and Charles Sanders Peirce's theories on signs and Ronald Bathes writing on fashion underpin much work in the study of the material culture of dress.⁷¹ Within the science of semiology, dress is a system of signs. According to De Saussure, the 'signifier' is the garments themselves and the 'signified' is the societal-placed meaning of the garment, which in turn give insight into the wearer.⁷² Peirce suggests that there are three, instead of two, essential characteristics of a sign, incorporating that of pure demonstrative application, alongside material quality (in the context of Saussure the signifier) and appeal to the mind (the signified).⁷³ As such, Peirce gives more consideration to the wearer and the physical evidence of a garments' use, linking the sign with how it might be interpreted. Barthes also addresses the wearer, writing that a garment must be perceived in conjunction with the body, likewise he addresses the makers and the code embedded in the construction of garments which along with elements of wear, use and society form the language of fashion.⁷⁴ The sign system of dress encompasses garments themselves, their creation, the wearer, the wearers use of them and the societal meaning formed through all of this.

⁷¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, with Albert. Reidlinger, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, trans. by Wade Baskin, [3d ed.] (The Phillosophical Library, Inc, 1959); Charles Sanders Peirce, 'On the Nature of Signs', in *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. by James Hoopes (The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 141–43; Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. by Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (University of California Press, 1990); Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*.

⁷² Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*.

⁷³ Peirce, 'On the Nature of Signs'.

⁷⁴ Barthes, *The Fashion System*; Barthes, *The Language of Fashion*.

These layers of meaning and systems of signs also form biographies as established by Appadurai and Kopytoff.⁷⁵ Object biography was born out of the field of anthropology, accepted in the archaeology field, and more recently been adapted in relation to the ‘material turn’ in history.⁷⁶ Kopytoff is a key writer in the field of material culture, though from an anthropological angle. This thesis connects to his notion of object biography and considerations in relation to the ‘life’ of an object.⁷⁷ As Gosden and Marshall identify, this approach considers objects through time, addressing their production, exchange and consumption instead of focusing on one point in an item’s existence.⁷⁸ The approach allows us to consider the phases of metaphorical birth, life and then suggested death of an object, in relation to what is culturally considered the ideal life of the object. However, as Joy suggests, just as a human biography may not always be linear, an object’s biography can be formed in a relational manner, in this context the relationship between the garment, its pocket contents and those who have connected to it through time.⁷⁹ In taking this approach, I am able to consider all these touchpoints to synthesize and present the data gathered through the first two phases of methodology.

Some recent literature has moved away from the term object biography instead to considering object itineraries, to allow for the potential non-linearity of object entanglements across their ‘life’, removing the risk of thinking of objects as human-like and addressing the challenge of establishing a clear birth and death of an object, allowing objects to be considered in the present, seemingly beyond their theoretically useful life.⁸⁰ Though with this we sadly lose the poetics of object narrative in the more

⁷⁵ *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge University Press, 1986); Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’.

⁷⁶ See for example: Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*; Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects : How Things Tell the Stories of People’s Lives* (Routledge, 1998), doi:10.4324/9781315022598; Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, ‘The Cultural Biography of Objects’, *World Archaeology*, 31.2 (1999), pp. 169–78, doi:10.1080/00438243.1999.9980439; Lynn Meskell, *Object Worlds in Ancient Egypt : Material Biographies Past and Present*, Materializing Culture, 1st. (Routledge, 2004); Jody Joy, ‘Reinvigorating Object Biography: Reproducing the Drama of Object Lives’, *World Archaeology* (Abingdon), 41.4 (2009), pp. 540–56, doi:10.1080/00438240903345530.

See for an overview: Alexander Bauer, ‘Itinerant Objects’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Annual review of anthropology, 48 (2019), pp. 335–52, doi:https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102218-011111.

⁷⁷ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, p. 66.

⁷⁸ Gosden and Marshall, ‘The Cultural Biography of Objects’.

⁷⁹ Joy, ‘Reinvigorating Object Biography’.

⁸⁰ Dannehl also proposes an approach merging the concept of biography with a life cycle model for a more complete methodology: Karin Dannehl, ‘Object Biographies: From Production to Consumption’, in *History and Material Culture*, ed. by Karen Harvey, 2nd edn (Routledge, 2017), pp. 171–86, doi:10.4324/9781315165776-9.

prosaic term of an itinerary. Fontijn identifies, however, ‘the idiom of *biographies* is still ubiquitous’ and critically considers the approach alongside itineraries, concluding that in essence the use of metaphor is the crucial element in the trajectory of the use of both, and the ability for us to consider closely the interlinked nature of people and objects.⁸¹ Joyce & Gillespie also acknowledge that the use of the biography metaphor was still in practice and simply needs to be used consciously, accepting its limitations.⁸² Perhaps it is not the term which needs to be changed, but the scope of biography, which for a human still often addresses the parents from which the individual came and children they left behind and perhaps could better acknowledge the complex connections and linkages of a human life to that who came before and who is left behind.

The object biography approach has been well received in the material culture field, particularly in history and dress. Since the material turn in the 1980s the use of objects for historic research across related fields has become prevalent, and at times engages with an object biographical approach.⁸³ As Dyer identifies the material turn is well established within history.⁸⁴ Wells provides a good summary of how museum studies literature develops on Kopytoff’s approach, identifying multiple

For the proposals of object itineraries see: ‘Introduction: Biographies, Travels and Itineraries of Things’, in *Mobility, Meaning and Transformations of Things : Shifting Contexts of Material Culture through Time and Space*, ed. by Hans Peter Hahn and Hadas Weiss (Oxbow Books, 2013), p. 1; Rosemary A. Joyce, ‘Life with Things: Archaeology and Materiality’, in *Archaeology and Anthropology: Past, Present and Future*, ed. by David Shankland, 1st edn (Routledge, 2012), pp. 119–32 <<https://doi-org.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/10.4324/9781003084679>> [accessed 16 July 2025]; Rosemary A. Joyce and Susan D. Gillespie, *Things in Motion: Object Itineraries in Anthropological Practice*, School for Advanced Research Advanced Seminar Series (SAR Press School for Advanced Research Press, 2015).

See for an overview: Joyce and Gillespie, *Things in Motion*.

⁸¹ David Fontijn, ‘Epilogue: Cultural Biographies and Itineraries of Things: Second Thoughts’, in *Epilogue: Cultural Biographies and Itineraries of Things: Second Thoughts*, ed. by Hadas Weiss and Hans Peter Hahn (Oxbow Books, 2013), pp. 183–96.

⁸² Joyce and Gillespie, *Things in Motion*.

⁸³ For selected examples of historic studies with objects, and at times utilising the object biography approach see: Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (Penguin Books, 2012); James M. (James Murray) Cornelius and Carla Knorowski, *Under Lincoln’s Hat : 100 Objects That Tell the Story of His Life and Legacy* (Lyons Press, 2016); Jock Phillips, *A History of New Zealand in 100 Objects* (2022); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Samantha S. B. Van Gerbig, *Tangible Things : Making History through Objects*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2015)

<https://waikato.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/64WAIKATO_INST/10hutka/alma9917681272603401> [accessed 25 June 2024]; *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. by Steven D. Lubar and W. D. Kingery (Smithsonian Institution, 1995); Knight, *The Button Box : Lifting the Lid on Women’s Lives*; Miles, *All That She Carried*; Cooper, Paterson, and Wanhalla, *The Lives of Colonial Objects*.

⁸⁴ Serena Dyer, ‘State of the Field: Material Culture’, *History*, 106.370 (2021), pp. 282–92 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.13104>> [accessed 11 May 2023].

scholars who have applied the object biography concept to the museum context.⁸⁵ Often this approach is utilised to specifically write on a place, person or event where the object is an example for the subject, rather than the object itself being the subject.⁸⁶ In dress history, the approach of Lou Taylor and more explicitly Alexandra Palmer consider garments as cultural loaded vessels capable of holding biography.⁸⁷ Likewise, Mida and Kim acknowledge the influence of Kopytoff in their approach to material culture based dress history, as discussed shortly.⁸⁸

Objects, however, are identified by many scholars and historians as more challenging to interpret than textual accounts of history. Prown and Attfield each discuss these challenges, with Prown describing material culture as 'mute objects' and Attfield terming objects as 'wild things'.⁸⁹ Eaton and McKergow also identify the issue of the interpretation of material culture, and while more focused on the function of objects, Eaton notes that silent objects are unable to share where they came from on their own. McKergow speaks of the challenges of 'reading' objects in the manner that Steven Lubar and David Kingery outline: 'They are illegible to those who know how to read only writing. They are mute to those who listen only for pronouncements from the past.'⁹⁰ Burke likewise grapples with this and how to deal with disassociation of objects from their provenance, suggesting engagement with numerous types of evidence.⁹¹ Taylor suggests that 'material objects matter because they are

⁸⁵ Megan Rosemary Wells, 'Collection-Based Research in Museums : Understanding, Structure, Visibility' (unpublished Master in Arts in Museum Studies, Massey University, 2012)

<<http://hdl.handle.net/10179/4237>> [accessed 7 February 2025]; Charles Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in *New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (Reaktion Books, Limited, 1989), pp. 6–21; Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

⁸⁶ For example: Labrum writes on New Zealand in the 1950s through objects of the time: Labrum, *Real Modern*; Cornelius and Knorowski write on Abraham Lincoln through objects connected to his life: Cornelius and Knorowski, *Under Lincoln's Hat : 100 Objects That Tell the Story of His Life and Legacy*; Hunter and Ross write on the experience of New Zealanders during WWI through connected objects: Kate Hunter and Kirstie Ross, *Holding on to Home: New Zealand Stories and Objects of the First World War* (Te Papa Press, 2014).

⁸⁷ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Alexandra Palmer, 'Untouchable: Creating Desire and Knowledge in Museum Costume and Textile Exhibitions', *Fashion Theory*, 12.1 (2008), pp. 31–63, doi:10.2752/175174108X268136.

Likewise see Kuchler and Miller for broader discussion on clothing as material culture where they identify a gap in literature at the time between theoretical and simply material based studies: Susanne. Kuchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (Berg, 2005).

⁸⁸ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

⁸⁹ Prown, 'Mind in Matter', p. 7.

⁹⁰ Fiona McKergow, 'Opening the Wardrobe of History', in *Fragments : New Zealand Social & Cultural History*, ed. by Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum (Auckland University Press, 2000); Lubar and Kingery, *History from Things*.

⁹¹ Peter Burke, 'Conclusion', in *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, ed. by Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter (Oxford University Press, 2020).

complex symbolic bundles of social, cultural and individual meanings fused onto something we can touch, see and own. That very quality is the reason that social values can so quickly penetrate and evaporate out of common objects.⁹² Taylor highlights what is also discussed by Attfield, the transient nature of meaning held within material culture or ‘things’ and the challenges of retaining and interpreting this.⁹³

Prown, who is a significant writer on material culture, proposes approaches for reading or interpreting ‘mute objects’ or ‘wild things’.⁹⁴ In 1980 he suggested that the style inherently within objects shares cultural markers valuable for historic enquiry.⁹⁵ Following this in 1982, he established a three-phase methodology for meticulous observation and interpretation of objects, thus proposing material culture as a discipline of study in a similar manner to art history.⁹⁶ The method cites that of Fleming’s four phase artefact study model which begins with identification (factual description), moves to evaluation (judgement), assesses cultural analysis (relationship of the artefact to its culture); and finally suggests interpretation (significance).⁹⁷ Prown alters this to three phases of description, deduction and speculation, providing a clear outline and more streamlined format to interpret signs within material culture.⁹⁸ As Steele identifies, the methodology highlights the importance of addressing the relevance of the artefact, not only description, but a contextual analysis and discussion.⁹⁹

Gerritsen and Riello also consider the challenges and limitations of material culture study, arguing that objects have agency.¹⁰⁰ They critique Prown’s work suggesting that historical analysis of material culture cannot be an one-size-fits-all approach and argue that the agency of objects must be taken into account.¹⁰¹ Mida and Kim touch on this challenge too, focussing on dress history specifically.¹⁰²

⁹² Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, p. 72.

⁹³ Attfield, *Wild Things*.

⁹⁴ Jules David Prown, *Art as Evidence: Writings on Art and Material Culture* (Yale University Press, 2001), WorldCat.org <<http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy033/2001045350.html>>.

⁹⁵ Jules David Prown, ‘Style as Evidence’, *Winterthur Portfolio*, 15.3 (1980), pp. 197–210, JSTOR <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/stable/1180742>> [accessed 29 April 2023].

⁹⁶ Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’.

⁹⁷ E. McClung Fleming, ‘Artifact Study: A Proposed Model’, *Winterthur Portfolio*, 1972, pp. 153–73, WorldCat.org <<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/WP/journal/>>.

⁹⁸ This methodology is discussed in depth in chapter one.

⁹⁹ Steele, ‘A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes-Bag’.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Introduction: Material Culture History: Methods, Practices and Disciplines’, in *Writing Material Culture History*, ed. by Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, Second Edition (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

¹⁰¹ Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, ‘Introduction’.

¹⁰² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

They identify that often historic garments are separated from their provenance, and while they do not necessarily have solid markers sharing their biography – like makers marks on pottery for example – they are the most intimate objects humans are connected to due to their close connection to the body. This intimacy they suggest leaves behind markers which with the right tools, questions and observations are interpretable, a sentiment echoed by many in the field.¹⁰³ Mida and Kim set out a valuable framework for conducting dress-based object research specifically.¹⁰⁴ Their framework establishes a systematic process by which to acquire information from a dress object to illuminate its stories. This is broken down into the three areas of observation, reflection and interpretation, directly responding to Prown's three-phase methodology.¹⁰⁵ Mida & Kim's methodology was designed not only to then suit dress history, but also as a refinement of Prown's, tweaking issues in his approach both they and past scholars using it had identified.¹⁰⁶

A key takeaway from Mida and Kim's methodology is the 'Slow Approach to Seeing', which is a call for focused time observing the artefacts under study, working 'methodically and carefully' during the often limited time available in museum storerooms with garments.¹⁰⁷ Becker identifies this as a key message in the work, and a useful technique to learn the 'life' of an object.¹⁰⁸ This approach also

¹⁰³ See for example: Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America : The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation ; in association with Yale University Press, 2011), p. 215; Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin'; Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux, *The Pocket : A Hidden History of Women's Lives, 1660-1900* (Yale University Press, 2020); Steele, 'A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes-Bag'; Palmer, 'Looking at Fashion: The Material Object as Subject'; Hilary Davidson, 'The Embodied Turn: Making and Remaking Dress as an Academic Practice', *Fashion Theory*, 23.3 (2019), pp. 329–62, doi:10.1080/1362704X.2019.1603859.

¹⁰⁴ The work also surveys the field of object-based research at the time and the development of dress history as a discipline, outlining the key players which they identify are mainly English, US & Canadian based. Alongside Prown, they identify: Doris Langley Moore, Anne Buck, Janet Arnold, Valerie Steele, Alexandra Palmer, Lou Taylor, Patricia Cunningham, E McClung Flemming, Igor Kopytoff and Linda Baumgarten, to name a few: Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

¹⁰⁵ This is discussed further in chapter one.

¹⁰⁶ For example: Steele, 'A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes-Bag'; Sara Chong Kwan, 'Drawing on Jules Prown's Material Culture Method of Object Analysis to Investigate Sensory Engagement with Everyday Dress', *Working Papers in Fashion Studies 2* (London), 2012
<https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/9218/1/Chong_Kwan_S_2012_Drawing_on_Jules_Prown.pdf> [accessed 8 February 2026].

¹⁰⁷ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁸ Likewise Becker highlights the accessibility the methodology offers practitioners working with dress material culture: Annette Becker, 'The Dress Detective', *Fashion, Style, & Popular Culture* (Gale Academic OneFile), 4.2 (2017), pp. 251–54 (p. 252)
<link.gale.com/apps/doc/A487433315/AONE?u=waikato&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=6809b2e6> [accessed 3 May 2023]; A review by Petrov does however identify areas where the suggested approach may benefit from expanding the checklists and proposing additional prompts for reflection, something which may be coming in the second edition, due out June 2026 following the submission of this thesis Julia Petrov, 'Book Review:

aligns with the argument of Thomas III on the early digitisation of archival content, warning that: ‘Digital imaging and other techniques do not in and of themselves “displace” intellectual engagement with original sources...’¹⁰⁹ Likewise, Laite voices concerns around surface level engagement with digitised archives, echoing Thomas III and Mida and Kim’s call for close and considered research with primary sources.¹¹⁰ This methodology and Prown’s method are key approaches undertaken in this thesis with consideration to their critiques. Used in conjunction with each other for both garments and their found pocket contents or other material culture, the methodologies are also expanded to allow for creative approaches to examine how far we might take material culture analysis with dress and the site of the pocket.

The object biography approach works well when considered in relation to dress. Taylor and Malcolm-Davies both address the approach when discussing museum collections and collecting practices.¹¹¹ Mida, Kim and De la Haye also mention garment biographies in this vein, with Mida and Kim identifying the benefit of this approach as garments entering museum collections have often become separated from their provenance and De la Haye identifying a gap at the time in this area decrying in 2006: ‘the cultural meanings of the imprints we leave upon the clothes we wear are barely explored within fashion history or curation.’¹¹² Styles and Horsley approach this slightly differently with Styles writing ‘clothing biographies’ utilising the autobiographical texts of individuals from the eighteenth-century England and Horsley creating a “fashion autobiography” sharing his own personal life history through an exhibition of his own clothing associated narratives.¹¹³ Likewise, Wilcox and Finn discuss garment biographies beyond the wearer, bringing in a discussion of the

Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim, ‘The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion’, *Book Reviews, Museum & Society*, 14.2 (2017), pp. 357–58, doi:10.29311/mas.v14i2.649.

¹⁰⁹ William G. Thomas III, ‘Renegotiating the Archive: Scholarly Practice in a Digital Age’, *Faculty Publications, Department of History, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, no. 197 (March 2016), p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Julia Laite, ‘The Emmet’s Inch: “Small” History in a Digital Age’, *Journal of Social History*, 53 (2018), doi:10.1093/jsh/shy118.

¹¹¹ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Jane Malcolm-Davies, ‘Knitting Virtual Tribes Together: New Audiences for Cultural Objects’, *IOP Conference Series. Materials Science and Engineering* (Bristol), 364.1 (2018), p. 12031, doi:10.1088/1757-899X/364/1/012031.

¹¹² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*; Amy de la Haye, ‘Vogue and the V and A Vitrine’, *Fashion Theory*, 10.1–2 (2006), pp. 127–51 (p. 136), doi:10.2752/136270406778051067.

¹¹³ Styles, *The Dress of the People Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*; Jeff Horsley, ‘Autobiography as a Proposed Approach to a Fashion Exhibition’, in *Fashion and Museums : Theory and Practice*, ed. by Marie Riegels Melchior and Birgitta Svensson, Dress, Body, Culture (Bloomsbury, 2020), p. 180.

maker.¹¹⁴ These approaches reiterate the valuable insight clothing offers on those from the past, and somewhat touches on my garment biography approach, which considers how the biography of the garment might reveal its wearer and cultural context in the manner of Kopytoff rather than the other way around.

Object biographies are expressed well through denim garments leading to scientifically viable insight into wearers. Townsend also engages with this, addressing that the biography of the wearer can be revealed through a 'narrative of wear' within the denim fabric.¹¹⁵ As noted by Robb, denim cloth is unique in its ability as a 'canvas' for the body through the passive process of wear, likewise it has been used as a canvas for fashion designers in latter part of the twentieth century who through design features retard the process of time.¹¹⁶ Hauser also illustrates the discoveries to be found in the close analysis of worn denim garments with scientifically viable outcomes. She outlines the unique 'barcode' patterning which appears in the 'ridges and valleys' on denim jean seams from the imprint of manufacture and individual wearers use of the garment, which was used in a bank robbery prosecution.¹¹⁷ Butchart likewise illustrates the power of dress history research in an investigative manner through her work as a dress detective applying forensics and fashion history analysis in a crime lab setting.¹¹⁸

It is not just the impact of makers and wearers of garments that form their biographies, but garments have agency themselves. While objects have limited control over the forming of their biography, their simple inherent materiality forces limitations or directs their use, users and stories through time.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Wilcox writes on the manipulation of garment biographies by designer Issey Miyake through collaboration with the wearer allowing them participation in the making of the garment in the A-POC (A Piece of Cloth) collection, and in turn an imprint on its biography pre-wear. Finn touches on this from a sustainability angle: Wilcox, *Radical Fashion.*; Angela L. Finn, 'Fashion Manufacturing in New Zealand : Can Design Contribute to a Sustainable Fashion Industry?' (unpublished Bachelor of Art & Design (Hons) dissertation, Auckland University of Technology, 2008).

¹¹⁵ Katherine Townsend, 'The Denim Garment as Canvas: Exploring the Notion of Wear as a Fashion and Textile Narrative', *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture*, 9 (2011), pp. 90–107, doi:10.2752/175183511X12949158771554.

¹¹⁶ Robb, 'Material Time'.

¹¹⁷ Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin', p. 153.

¹¹⁸ Calahan, *The Dress Detective, an Interview with Amber Butchart*.

¹¹⁹ For example, even a static garment stored safely encased in acid free tissue and card in a climate-controlled storeroom will find its fibres moving and shifting with gravity and age over time. Likewise, objects hold agency in their very materiality, for example the fluid nature of the fabric makes the cloth the garment is made from likely unsuitable to construct a building, orientating its use: Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, 'Introduction'; Anneke Smelik, 'New Materialism: A Theoretical Framework for Fashion in the Age of

Others suggest that garments perhaps hold agency in collaboration with their makers and wearers. Sadkowska writes that all second-hand garments are invested with lives of their own and journalist Fromson was led on a journey of discovery by a second-hand jacket he purchased.¹²⁰ These experiences speak to the agency that objects and garments have, even sharing their biographies through their pockets in Fromson's scenario. I argue that historical clothing located with contents in its pocket, initially tells us the item was worn or used in some way, a hand connected with the pocket, divesting consumable objects of some kind within for some purpose.

Often, however, garments are not described as imbued with life and agency. Second-hand, unworn garments can conversely be described as dead when disconnected from the body which wore them. Wilcox describes '...the imprint of the wearer on a dress is like a literal memento mori'.¹²¹ Hutchinson considers used clothing as dead and imbued with echoes of those who previously wore them.¹²² Windsor and Liscombe describe how historic clothing 'maintains an aura'.¹²³ White suggests that these objects 'we move from place to place and through time, for their ability to point back to another place, another time.'¹²⁴ The items left behind in garments' pockets may be past wearers pointing future users of the garments back to their place and time, whether on purpose or inadvertently.

Technological Innovation', in *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, no. 1, Intellect, 2018, v, pp. 33–54, doi:https://doi.org/10.1386/inf5.5.1.33_1; Robb, 'Material Time'.

¹²⁰ Fromson writes on his experience in finding a note in the pocket of a suit jacket purchased from an op shop and being able to find the identity from its previous owner based on it: Ania Sadkowska, 'Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: "Making," as a Means of Embodied Fashion Enquiry into Older Men's Lived Experiences', *Fashion Practice* (Abingdon), 10.3 (2018), pp. 405–32, doi:10.1080/17569370.2018.1507167; Daniel Fromson, 'Used Clothing', *The New York Times Magazine* (New York), 2018, pp. 20–26 <<https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=waikato&id=GALE|A547175479&v=2.1&it=r>> [accessed 7 September 2023].

¹²¹ Wilcox, *Radical Fashion.*, p. 3.

¹²² Jeremy Hutchinson and Sunny Dolat, hosted by Amber Butchart, Cloth Cultures with Amber Buchart (31 August 2023), episode 1 <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6gJXGwQOxSIawbRK0zymtG?si=oyd-Cn_wSQG6C0p0uUChvg> [accessed 12 April 2024]; Jeremy Hutchinson, 'Dead White Man', Artist, Jeremy Hutchinson, ongoing 2023 <<https://jeremyhutchison.com/Dead-White-Man>> [accessed 2 January 2026].

¹²³ Emma Windsor- Liscombe, 'Fabrics of Memory', *Fashion Theory*, n.d., pp. 1–21 (p. 5), doi:10.1080/1362704X.2024.2326330.

¹²⁴ Georgina White, *Take These with You When You Leave : Treasures of the Archive* (MTG Hawke's Bay, 2013), p. 17.

Creative Methodology

In addressing how we might capture the biography of a garment, this thesis expands from the methodologies outlined above to creative approaches. The creative lens allows the researcher to potentially seek the limit of material culture-led methodology and think through the process of the research. This allows deep analysis of museum collection items through techniques like creative non-fiction, and more intensive hands-on creative approaches with second-hand sourced pieces. In turn, this advances discussion on object biographies and lifecycles, material culture study and museum collection practices themselves, and allows for nuanced and embodied questioning of pocket filled garments.

Creative research practice ‘provide[s] the opportunity to advance critical thinking and more nuanced methodologies enroute to insightful articulated and grounded ways of addressing research questions, modes of enquiry and subsequent research findings.’¹²⁵ My approach joins the increasing demand for creative-practice or practice-led approaches across the last decade as identified by Allpress et al.¹²⁶ There are many practitioners working in creative practice specifically with second-hand garments for a range of drivers. Here I also consider the work of Jana, Keeley & Victoria, Hauser and Miles who attest to the extraordinary nature of clothing in holding memory of its past wearers, the personal stories they tell through the physical contact with the body.¹²⁷ Kelley & Victoria identified that '[b]ecause textiles often function in intimate contact with the human body [...] they are exemplary 'biographical' objects, telling the story of people, events and passing of time in their physical dissolution.'¹²⁸ They are biographical of the person or people who wore them. Hauser goes further, suggesting not only that newly brought clothes are simply waiting to receive the impressions of humanity, but that these already come with the imprints of their makers.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Rodrigo Hill and Cerys Dallaway Davidson, *Malleable Boundaries - Creative Modes of Practice and Inquiry in the Academy* (The University of Waikato, 2024).

¹²⁶ Brent. Allpress and others, *Supervising Practices for Postgraduate Research in Art, Architecture and Design*, in *Supervising Practices for Postgraduate Research in Art, Architecture and Design*, Educational Futures, Rethinking Theory and Practice, 57, 1st ed. 2012. (SensePublishers, 2012).

¹²⁷ Rosalind Jana, 'Louise Bourgeois and How Old Clothes Can Haunt Us', News, BBC, Culture, 7 April 2022 <<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20220406-louise-bourgeois-and-how-old-clothes-can-haunt-us>> [accessed 3 July 2024]; Kelley, Victoria, 'Object in Focus 15 - Time, Wear and Maintenance: The Afterlife of Things', in *Writing Material Culture History*, ed. by Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, second edition (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), pp. 228–33; Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin'; Miles, *All That She Carried*.

¹²⁸ Kelley, Victoria, 'Object in Focus 15 - Time, Wear and Maintenance', p. 228.

¹²⁹ Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin'.

The creative methodology I draw upon in this thesis includes a range of often hands-on approaches – which I at times term as creative interventions – which are led from the embodied practice methodology of historic dress reconstruction. Davidson outlines ‘doing’ as an even deeper form of Mida and Kim’s ‘slow approach to seeing.’¹³⁰ This is in relation to the ‘embodied turn’, a development in history ‘that recognizes the processes of doing, making and remaking, and reconstructing as a fruitful methodology with quantifiable, academically valid results.’¹³¹ This methodology is largely undertaken in the field to seek understanding of garments’ lesser known to history or which have little to no extant examples, as is undertaken by Bendall.¹³² Many garments in this thesis are not of this nature, and instead are mostly 20th century pieces with comparable examples in collections across the country and world. As discussed, many of them have also been easily sourced from second-hand stores. Yet many are still limited or non-existent in their provenance details. I propose, in expanding the scope of doing, making and constructing, to undoing, unmaking and deconstructing, further insight may also be found.¹³³

The historic reconstruction approach heavily focuses on the making stage of a garment’s biography, as explained by Bendall and Dyer.¹³⁴ I acknowledge the importance of the origins in a garments’ biography and am influenced by a piece by Borland which considers the fibre cloth our garments are made from, their origins and the processes they moved through prior to the industrial revolution in the hands of harvesters, spinners and weavers.¹³⁵ However, in reversing the reconstruction practice, the history of the garment can be explored at depth as desired, potentially covering the full life cycle in the manner Dannehl proposes, merging this with biography. Sadkowska undertakes a similar methodology, engaging with second-hand garments, de-constructing, making, undertaking

¹³⁰ Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

¹³¹ Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’.

¹³² Bendall outlines the embodied reconstruction processes undertaken for two underskirts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, which provided knowledge that was otherwise limited in the archive and extant examples: Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Sarah A. Bendall, ‘The Case of the “French Vardingale”: A Methodological Approach to Reconstructing and Understanding Ephemeral Garments’, *Fashion Theory*, 23.3 (2019), pp. 363–99, doi:10.1080/1362704X.2019.1603862.

¹³³ Bendall, ‘The Case of the “French Vardingale”’.

¹³⁴ Sarah Bendall and Serena Dyer, *Embodied Experiences of Making in Early Modern Europe: Bodies, Gender, and Material Culture*, Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700, 1st edn (Amsterdam University Press, 2024), doi:10.5117/9789463722698.

¹³⁵ Christina Borland, *Projection Cloth*, 2023, Textile <<https://www.christineborland.com/projection-cloth-text>> [accessed 2 January 2026].

embodied and creative experiences and revealing deep insights into garment and wearer.¹³⁶ In this thesis my approach is however most influenced by Vita Cochran's 'exploded coats' and Claire Batt's 'seam butchery'.¹³⁷ In notes on this practice Cochran identifies aspects of garment biography - noting original colour under collars; she also details that the process reveals 'the secret language of clothes' and describes it as 'pattern (un)making', with a process of 'learning by unmaking' and 'learning by making'.¹³⁸ Batt explores the liminal space of seams, likewise working with second-hand garments deconstructing and then using all parts to create new visual languages.¹³⁹

Burman & Fennetaux and Windsor-Liscombe & Hauser are also conscious of the body within clothing and its impact on what Hauser identifies as its 'cultural wrappings'.¹⁴⁰ As Burman & Fennetaux note:

The pull or stretch of the cloth in some places, the wear and tear in others, as well as the traces of soiling where the hand rubbed, all register traces of the body of a pocket's wearer, just as the construction and repairs show the hand of the maker and mender. In the way an old shoe or coat can bear the imprint of the user's of the body and movements, so too the sensory context of the use of pockets can help us further understand their emotionally charged functions.¹⁴¹

Along with hands on and creative approaches addressing these tactile aspects, I explore personal reflections on the research process and methodologies, as well as the use of creative non-fiction. This textual approach was adopted particularly for analysis of museum collection garments, where I do not have the freedom of intensive creative interventions I undertake with the second-hand sourced pieces. This approach is underpinned by work from Gutkind, Scott and Zemon Davis.¹⁴² The

¹³⁶ Sadkowska, 'Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: "Making," as a Means of Embodied Fashion Enquiry into Older Men's Lived Experiences'.

¹³⁷ Vita Cochran, *Exploded Coats*, 2022, Wool, wall hanging <<https://annamilesgallery.com/exhibitions/vita-cochran-5/>> [accessed 11 February 2024]; Claire Batt, *Seam Butchery*, 2022, Embroidery <<https://mashow.mmu.ac.uk/2022/profiles/claire-batt/>> [accessed 11 February 2024].

¹³⁸ Cochran, *Exploded Coats*.

¹³⁹ Batt, *Seam Butchery*.

¹⁴⁰ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*; Windsor-Liscombe, 'Fabrics of Memory'; Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin', p. 156.

¹⁴¹ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 212.

¹⁴² Lee Gutkind, *The Art of Creative Nonfiction: Writing and Selling the Literature of Reality* (Wiley, 1997); Joan Scott, 'Storytelling', *History and Theory*, 50.2 (2011), pp. 203–09 <Wiley for Wesleyan University> [accessed 12 March 2022]; Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Harvard University Press, 1983); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford University Press, 1987); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Harvard University Press, 1995).

narrative approach pulls from Fennimore Cooper who lays the groundwork for textual record of the witnessing of a garment to shifting cultural values through the perspective of a handkerchief.¹⁴³ In relation to this anthropomorphism I also draw from Butchart's discussion, and Van de Polder who offers an alternate creative avenue for dress history exploration in a creative non-fiction style transcript between a museum dress collection item and the obsession which collected it.¹⁴⁴ This approach allowed a creative outlet for these untouchable examples, a way to intimately know them when doing, making and unmaking are not possible.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter one analyses two case studies, both burgundy-coloured blazers, to explore the benefits and limits of object-based methods for examining pocket archives. Both blazers hold 'pocket archives' though beyond these similarities they share no known connections: one garment was sourced from the collections of the Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao (NPM) and the other from a local second-hand store. Through the chapter the research framework for this thesis is outlined, tracing a parallel research enquiry of pocket contents and garments through the material culture methodologies of Prown and Mida & Kim respectively.¹⁴⁵ Following this an adapted final phase through a creative lens addresses each garment and their pocket contents together as a 'pocket archive' considering the richness of data held by objects themselves when explored in a slow methodical approach.

Chapter two zooms out to consider the site of the pocket more broadly in varied social contexts. I combine archival research with object methods to trace topics of gender, health, privacy, social history and more, which are highlighted through the space of the pocket and the items held or forgotten in these, including empty or even non-existent pockets. Through this chapter the examples

¹⁴³ James Fenimore. Cooper, *Autobiography of a Pocket-Handkerchief* (LibriVox, 2022).

First published by Graham's Magazine in 1843

¹⁴⁴ *Cloth Cultures with Amber Butchart*, hosted by Amber Butchart (n.d.)

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1egVQd99ez6fR7cTcPcfrK?si=wjPh2UouSQeb_dXhYf2TeQ> [accessed 12 April 2024]; Shirley van de Polder, 'Dialogue between Obsession and Dress', *Fashion Theory*, 22.4–5 (2018), pp. 509–13, doi:10.1080/1362704X.2018.1425499.

¹⁴⁵ Prown, 'Mind in Matter'; Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

highlight the liminal zone of the pocket between private and public, how bodily functions that clothing hold are revealed, and the gendered nature of pocketed and un-pocketed garments.

Chapter three draws on oral history, as wearers reflections on their use of pockets and the concept of pocket archives is tested with a small group of research participants. The interviews reveal the pocket as a site of memory and nostalgia: not only a space for interpreting the past wearer and their historic context, but also as both a passively and actively maintained archive space by the wearer or user.

The final chapter considers how much further we can take both the methodology and exploration of pocket as a site for historical enquiry. Firstly, influenced by Kopytoff, I explore object biography and creative non-fiction as a means to further understand object biographies in museum-held clothing. Secondly, I examine how creative interventions with second-hand garments might both reveal and communicate history from within the seams of the pockets themselves.

The order of chapters has been designed to bookend the thesis with a focus on methodology. There are, of course, other entry points or possible ordering but this structure centres the process and methods for analysing historic pockets and their contents. Throughout the thesis, in deeply exploring this space that I have proposed we may call a 'pocket archive', the liminal zone of the pocket and areas adjacent – where material culture may collide and spill out – share insight into the garment, its past wearers, and wider social and cultural history.

Chapter One

Parallel Threads: Considering the pocket archive through two burgundy blazers

This chapter follows two burgundy blazers of different provenance as case studies to explore the strengths and limits of using material culture research methodologies. One was sourced from Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao (NPM) and the other from Frankton Hospice Shop, Hamilton. Both are a shade of burgundy, and both are blazers, though beyond that, they share no known connection. These two ‘pocket archives’ are addressed together in this chapter as parallel threads of research, in an exploration of the methodology as it would apply to both second-hand sourced garments and museum sourced collections.

To examine how garments can convey their histories through narratives embedded in their fabric, shaped by the wearer, and encapsulated within their pockets, I utilize two specific methodologies from Jules David Prown and Ingrid Mida & Alexandra Kim to derive deeper insights from selected examples of garments and objects.¹ As discussed in the introduction, both works propose methodological approaches constructed for material culture-based analysis. The core concept underpinning both these methodologies are a focus on spending time with the material culture under study, utilising the technique Mida & Kim identify as the ‘Slow Approach to Seeing’, which in its essence simply takes time.² In undertaking a combination of these two methodologies – with Prown’s approach more appropriate for the often object-based pocket contents, and the Mida & Kim methodology for that of the garment or accessory it was found within – then looking at them in relation to each other, I have established a framework which considers groupings of material culture in a dress history context (fig. 1).

¹ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*; Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’.

² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

Pocket Contents (Prown 1982)	Garments (Mida & Kim 2015)
Description – capturing what is observed in the objects found in the pockets themselves.	Observation – analysis and capture of information from the dress artefact.
Deduction – considering the perceivers’ relationship to each of the objects.	Reflection – thoughtful contemplation of the dress artefact from the positionality of the observer.
Speculation/Interpretation – synthesising all that has been found from both pocket contents and garments through the experience of the researcher, fashion history research and creative theory. e.g. via: Kopytoff’s object biography approach, creative non-fiction, creative intervention	

Figure 1: Methodology framework.

Joan's Blazer



Figure 2: 'Jacket, Doug Heinz Band' Joan's Blazer, Nelson Provincial Museum.

One of my early 'pocket diving' enquiries to museums across the motu that received a fruitful response, was from the NPM. There, the Senior Collection Technician located a blazer identified in their records as 'Jacket, Doug Heinz Band', manufactured by Basil Dalefield Ltd and having previously belonged to Joan Godbaz who played with the Doug Heinz Band for 16 years, from around 1948 to 1964 (fig. 2). The garment fitted my research scope due to the following identifier in the object record: 'Found in breast pocket- one black plastic comb, one black hair pin, one wrapped mint 'Digestif Rennie' [and] a 1922 one penny coin found in proper left waist pocket.'³ Alongside, the jacket held embroidery stitched into its top proper left pocket and a piano pin on proper left lapel. Through this

³ Basil Dalefield Ltd., *Jacket, Doug Heinz Dance Band*, with Joan Godbaz, n.d., Wool, metal, Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/12051/jacket-doug-heinz-dance-band>> [accessed 18 October 2023].

material culture gathered in this jacket is insight into the individual, Joan, the piano player for the band; one of her communities; as well as personal details of perhaps one of her evenings playing in the band.

I initially conducted Joan's pocket contents object descriptions and photographic analysis in the first phase. Separated out from their original pocketed locations and neatly within archival polyethylene zip lock bags were (fig. 3):

- 1x black comb: 12.5cm x 3cm, black plastic, curved on one edge, with wider tines on one side and narrower on the other.
- 1x one penny coin: 3cm D, metal. From, 1922.
- 1x bobby pin: 5cm x 0.5cm, metal, black.
- 1x mint: 1.5cm x 0.5cm, white rounded square mint, wrapped in (yellowing) clear cellophane style wrap featuring the embossed words in capital letters 'DIGESTIF / RENNIE'.

These details may seem minute, though they are very useful, as the date imprinted on a coin may be able to roughly date a garment it was pocketed within. For example, a second-hand store clothing retailer I came across during this study was able to roughly suggest the date a vintage leather clutch based on the Italian lolly wrapper found within.⁴ Likewise, numerous receipts found in pockets throughout the period of this study have clear date marks suggesting the date of at least one moment of wear of the garment. This is bearing in mind the receipt may have made its way into the pocket by way of a clean-up at some other point, outlining the flaws of going off this fact alone.⁵

Following this capturing of the 'evidence' of each object individually, I began to explore them holistically in the deduction phase, considering what sensory or intellectual engagement I had with them and what my emotional response was. It was at this point I noted in my research notes: The pocket collection creates a visualisation of Joan in her jacket across a performance evening. Hair tidily combed back, tucked into place with the bobby pin, a mint to freshen the breath after a drink shared following the show or perhaps to prep the vocal cords prior if she was also a singer. The penny to pay for what...? To be assessed further, in the final phase which Prown outlines as 'speculation' (see appendix A).

⁴ Lily, Social media message, 3 August 2021.

⁵ For example: Urban Angel, *Jeans*, with Cerys Dallaway Davidson, c 2000, Denim, 14y, Researchers own.

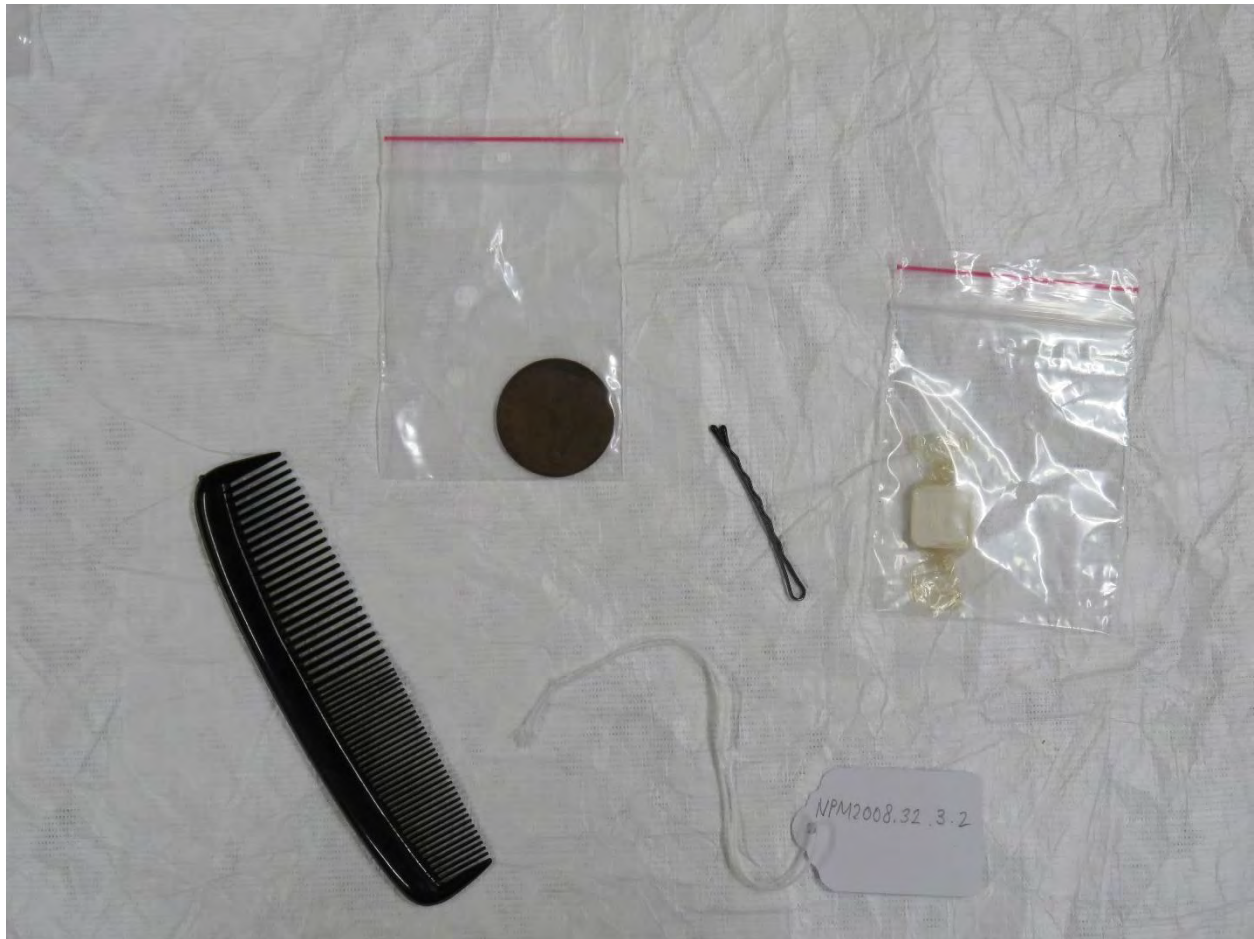


Figure 3: Pocket contents of Joan Godbaz's blazer, Nelson Provincial Museum.

Pausing there we look to the garment itself. The Mida & Kim method also follows three phases, firstly working through general observation of the item, secondly a reflective process, and finally interpretation.⁶ In this first phase of description, factual or empirical, general information was gathered about Joan's blazer, including its maker, measurements and general construction details, its fabric content, evidence of previous use via repairs, and any supporting material held with the garment. The detailed garment description I recorded in this phase identified:

Traditional three button wool blazer. Minimally padded shoulders, cream lining in sleeves opposing grey lining in body. Darts from shoulder top and at waist, so fitted style. 1x top proper left patch pocket with insignia. Inset welt? Pockets at both hips. 2x silver metal buttons at each

⁶ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

wrist. ... Some original staining as well as dust/dandruff/animal hairs throughout? ... Single split at back centre and tailored to flare in at hips (appendix A).

I liken this phase to very comprehensive cataloguing data a museum would hope to gather when accessioning a garment into its collection, with the caveat that many institutions do not have the sufficient resources to undertake this in such a detailed manner, and likewise even if it were available it would still be beneficial for the researcher themselves to undertake this independently, as new eyes often see new things. In this case, Joan's blazer featured the interesting addition in the proper left pocket where particles of brown residue could be found, they appeared natural looking of origin, were they tobacco? Tea? Desiccated plant matter? Another archival find within the pocket which may allow future forensic analysis opportunities if budget and time allowed.

The next phase of analysis considered the benefits of contemplation through reflection: an emotional or sensory engagement is undertaken with the garment to deepen our insight. As Mida and Kim note, this stage is also 'a guide to the shifts in cultural beliefs between the time at which the garment was created and the present.'⁷ Here our current day assumptions and personal biases are addressed. In this case, I noted my initial assumption upon first encountering the blazer. Before knowing its owner, I identified the garment as a man's jacket based on its blazer style. As I observed more fully and learnt of the Museum object record details, the picture in my mind evolved, and Joan took the place of a mystery slim built man I had initially conjured. This perception of the research subject often changes multiple times through the research process. Later when conducting more traditional textual-based research into Joan, through the dance hall band culture of the mid-twentieth century I began to consider again the bias I had placed on my early imaginings of Joan, which I will come back to shortly. As identified by Steele, this is often the case and it is important to 'put aside as conjecture or subjective feelings', become aware of cultural biases, and then use them to 'fuel the creative work that must now take place'.⁸

This brings us to the final phase of this methodology where I bring the two threads of enquiry via the garment and pocket contents together in interpretation. Here all that has been observed, and the goals of the research are combined and carried forward. For my research, I merge this with the third phase of the Prown method: we come back to the research question seeking the biography of the

⁷ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

⁸ Steele, 'A Museum of Fashion Is More Than a Clothes-Bag'; Prown, 'Mind in Matter', p. 10.

garment and its use, through the clothing item and pocket contents. I consider it with the information we have identified of each item and establish research avenues to take the study forward.

At this point I began to explore publications, and primary source extracts seeking mentions of the dance hall bands of the mid-twentieth century, Joan herself, the Doug Heinz Band specifically, even details on the blazer's manufacturer Basil Dalefield. I found extracts on Joan outlining many of her activities from her pre-teen and into young adult years in her hometown of Foxhill.⁹ This data coupled with reading scholarship on teenagers and dance halls through the mid-twentieth century, brought to my attention that I had also been thinking about Joan as an adult or older lady, placing a timestamp on her story.¹⁰ While my perception or bias had turned away from considering Joan to be a young man, I had begun I realised, to associate her perhaps in relation to my Grandmother who shared the same name. This along with perhaps an awareness that the jacket was donated to the Museum in 2008 following her death in 2004, tied her in my mind to the later years in Joan's life. As Brickell identifies, this is a common gap in the historiography as general history often centres on the world of adulthood with teenagers often only featuring on the periphery.¹¹

Through Joan's early teenage years we can track her studies in pianoforte, and identify an extracurricular activity of participation in the girl's 50 yards race at the Foxhill Sports Gala through local newspaper articles of the time.¹² Based on her date of birth, 4 Nov 1925 in Queensland,

⁹ 'Trinity College of Music London', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 10 September 1935, p. 2 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19350910.2.20>> [accessed 14 May 2025]; 'Trinity College of Music', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 22 August 1936, p. 6 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19360822.2.44>> [accessed 14 May 2025]; 'Competitions', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 11 May 1938, p. 8 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19380511.2.126>> [accessed 14 May 2025]; 'Wakefield News', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 3 October 1938, p. 3 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19381003.2.23>> [accessed 14 May 2025]; 'Foxhill News', Sports and Gala, *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 3 November 1938, p. 8 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19381103.2.114>> [accessed 15 May 2025]; 'Foxhill School: Break Up Ceremony', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 21 December 1939, p. 5 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19391221.2.23>> [accessed 14 May 2025]; 'Fighting Services Club', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 1 November 1943, p. 4 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19431101.2.69>> [accessed 18 May 2025]; 'Fighting Services Club', *Nelson Evening Mail* (Nelson), 8 November 1943, p. 4 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19431108.2.54>> [accessed 18 May 2025].

¹⁰ Chris Brickell, *Teenagers: The Rise of Youth Culture in New Zealand* (Auckland University Press, 2017).

¹¹ Brickell, *Teenagers*.

¹² 'Trinity College of Music London'; 'Trinity College of Music'; 'Competitions'; 'Wakefield News'; 'Foxhill News'; 'Foxhill School: Break Up Ceremony'.

Australia, we know she moved to New Zealand to live when she was around the age of 10, following the passing of her mother.¹³ At around the age of eighteen, in the midst of WWII, Joan is identified as the pianist numerous times for the Fighting Services Club between 1943-45. These weekly entries on page 4 of the *Nelson Evening Mail* identify details of the events, for example:

A very pleasant evening was spent on Saturday when the usual dance was held, the music being supplied by Miss Joan Godbaz at the piano. A member of the Air Force carried out the duties of M.C., and another airman played two extras on the bagpipes.¹⁴

As the war wound up, Joan entered her twenties and moved past this adolescence phase to her young adult years. At around the age of twenty-three she joined the Doug Heinz Band which she then played in as pianist for the next sixteen years.¹⁵ At this point, we are brought back to the period in Joan's life where this jacket likely featured. Sixteen years however, from the age of twenty-three to thirty-nine, was a significant portion of her adult life, though as we know she passed away in 2004, it was only a snapshot. Two lines of enquiry I propose at this point are: firstly, into the Doug Heinz Band to contextualise what an evening playing for the band may have been like; then secondly considering the blazer, and at which point in Joan's career with the band this was worn. Was it from her last night with the band? Or did the uniform change earlier in her time with them and is this a time capsule from when she first played in her early twenties?

Mentions of the Doug Heinz band in publications of the time identify that it was set up in 1946 and played, with many changes to the band members over the years, for many decades. The band's namesake certainly appears to be the personality of the ensemble, with writing and imagery of him giving a feel for the vibe of an evening attending an event for which they were playing:

Doug is no ordinary fiddler. During the 1960s, when there was a ball practically every Friday night in Nelson during the "season," he was always engaged to play at the Highland ball — probably the best of the year. In kilt and tam-o'-shanter, Doug Heinz would have the Stoke

¹³ Queensland Government, 'Birth Registration: Joan Margaret Godbaz', Family History Research, The State of Queensland, 2021 1995
<<https://www.familyhistory.bdm.qld.gov.au/details/01bab18cd27161a0b66dbaf923350c4bbec226338faed41745614bf607db43df>> [accessed 1 June 2025].

¹⁴ 'Fighting Services Club', 8 November 1943, 8 November 1943.

¹⁵ 'Roving Camera', *Nelson Photo News* (Nelson), no. 41 (April 1964), p. 56
<https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN41_19640404/t1-body-d40.html> [accessed 18 May 2025].

Memorial Hall rocking as he egged on the dancers with some prodigious leaping and hollering and prancing — all the while either playing the fiddle or singing. His acrobatic feats are legend.¹⁶

The band was in its infancy when Joan joined around 1948: it had officially only been running two years, though Doug Heinz was already a well-known entertainer in the region and even across the South Island. Doug, and as we have identified, also Joan, utilised their musical talents playing for bands at the regular weekly local ball dance and social events, an activity which Labrum outlines was one of the most popular social activities of the period.¹⁷ Heinz recalls in his small local community of Cobden, Greymouth, growing up, ‘...the school hall was the focal point of social life. “We had concerts regularly and everybody, children and adults alike, contributed something to the evening — a recitation, a song, or an instrumental number...”’¹⁸ As Labrum also identifies, these were held practically at any opportunity and were a key form of entertainment at the time.

Where did Joan fit in this setup? We have only a little detail of her, particularly around her experiences in the band, not much to visualise her playing during an event, though perhaps another record of a fellow pianist in another band of the time gives us insight into this role in the band. Labrum shares a photo of the Majestic Dance Band of Christchurch in the 1950s which features Lottie Duckworth on piano, not quite in the same blazer uniform as her band mates, though perhaps suggestive of Joan.¹⁹ Pictures of the Doug Heinz band themselves feature through photographic and publication records held by NPM, often out of the blazer portion of their uniforms, or perhaps before the band uniform had blazers. In general, though imagery focuses on the male band members and leader of

¹⁶ Barry Simpson ed., ‘Doug Heinz Has Been Helping Dancers to Trip the Light Fantastic for 60 Glorious Years’, *Press*, 8 June 1984, p. 12 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19840608.2.75>>.

¹⁷ Labrum, *Real Modern*, p. 320.

¹⁸ Simpson ed., ‘Doug Heinz Has Been Helping Dancers to Trip the Light Fantastic for 60 Glorious Years’.

¹⁹ Labrum, *Real Modern*, p. 320.

the group.²⁰ Two photos do however show what is possibly Joan sitting in the background at the piano.²¹ More on that shortly.

We now know a little about Joan, albeit not much more than surface level, her general interests and basic biographical data. To contextualise within the scope of this study and research question we go back to the object itself. As Mida and Kim note in reference to the sentiment of Cunningham, ‘we should do whatever it takes to answer our research question and, above all, when we think our questions take us beyond artifacts, we must shift, look back and then reconsider the artifact. There is more there than we think.’²² Here we could turn to narrative around the manufacturer Basil Dalefield who appears to have started the company in Nelson after a return from service for WWI, the company was registered from 26 May 1947 to 13 Dec 1989 at the premises of 38 Halifax St, Nelson.²³

Connecting back to the artefacts under study, though not specifically Joan’s blazer, NPM also holds a clothing label in its collection from the manufacturer Basil Dalefield Ltd. Separated out from the garment it came from, it only features part of the jagged cut out lining from a ghost garment which featured iridescent green and red shot lining in its construction. It is a different iteration of the Basil

²⁰ For example: Barry Simpson ed., ‘Twas a Bonny Night’, *Nelson Photo News* (Nelson), no. 10 (August 1961), p. 48 <https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN10_19610819/t1-body-d32.html> [accessed 18 May 2025]; Geoffrey C Wood, *Geoffrey C Wood Nelson Evening Mail Proof Sheet: Nelson Centre Easter Bowling Tournament*, March 1962, Proof sheet, Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao, Geoffrey C Wood Collection <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/148805/geoffrey-c-wood-nelson-evening-mail-proof-sheet-nelson-centre-easter-bowling-tournament>> [accessed 5 July 2025]; Barry Simpson ed., ‘Licensed Victuallers Ball’, *Nelson Photo News* (Nelson), no. 45 (July 1964), p. 5 <https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN45_19640725/t1-body-d3.html> [accessed 18 May 2025]; Barry Simpson ed., ‘Hoots Mon! It Was a Braw Ceilagh’, *Nelson Photo News* (Nelson), no. 130 (August 1971), p. 40 <https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN130_19710821/t1-body-d29.html> [accessed 18 May 2025].

²¹ Geoffrey C Wood, *Geoffrey C Wood Nelson Evening Mail Proof Sheet: Nelson Centre Easter Bowling Tournament*.

²² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 22.

²³ Auckland War Memorial Museum, ‘Basil Wilfred Dalefield’, Biographical database, Online Cenotaph, Auckland War Memorial Museum, n.d. <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/107068>> [accessed 18 May 2025]; New Zealand Companies Office, ‘Basil Dalefield Limited’, Companies Register, New Zealand Companies Office, 3 November 2013 <<https://app.companiesoffice.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/167097?backurl=H4sIAAAAAA AAC2LQQR CMBBFb5NNFz3BllrQTRaCXuCTGW0gTWJmUujtDcXd%2B4%2F%2F5oqP6BzKVpHjIBW0sF62wkJqylzGzo4qJNmijYv70g0a03RHkneUxJM3duAdOQg%2FkCWRtS7uLI7XiJWu3v%2F302Bdl1Z6PfUPPnnq84MAA AA%3D>> [accessed 18 May 2025]; Barry Simpson ed., ‘About People’, *Nelson Photo News* (Nelson), no. 122 (December 1970), p. 64 <https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN122_19701212/t1-body-d45.html> [accessed 18 May 2025].

Dalefield Ltd label, with black text instead of yellow, and an addition of 'MADE IN N. Z.' Alongside this, a label stitched beneath identifies the garment it came from was 'guaranteed Harris Tweed'.²⁴ This starts again to take us further away from Joan and her jacket, over instead to the 'Crofters of the Hebrides' as also identified in the label. Likewise, Joan's pocket contents could take us to explorations on the hairstyling tools of a black comb and bobby pin, we could wind back to 1922 when the one penny coin was stamped, seek out the manufacturer of the 'DIGESTIF RENNIE' mint, or conduct forensic enquiry into the desiccated plant matter all found in Joan's pockets. These all may give insight into tangential topics raised by this collection of material culture. However, it is important to connect back to our purpose, and circle back to the research question: what does this garment and its pocket contents share of the biography of the garment? To what extent are these blazer pockets a portable archive of this phase in Joan's life and the mid twentieth century dance hall band culture? Does the blazer itself hold some of this history in its very fabric, the wear of it and imprint of Joan over time?

As I write this now, almost exactly two years on from my visit to the NPM and time with Joan's blazer, the twists, turns and tangents of a research journey add layers of interpretation to my reading of this example. Subsequent expansion of the research to consider the badges and pins emblazoned across surfaces of garments added an external visible touchpoint to a garment's story. Joan's blazer carried a piano pin on the proper left lapel and also embroidered insignia for the band on proper left top patch pocket. Here her public communities as a band member and pianist are shared in a similar manner to the newspapers reports of her piano playing and band membership over the years. The private details of Joan's attentions to her hairstyle and breath freshness (perhaps in relation to the desiccated plant matter suggesting tobacco), are instead held within her pockets and we are only privy to them due to their inadvertent or purposeful donation with the jacket to the Museum.

²⁴ Basil Dalefield Ltd. and Harris Tweed, *Clothing Label*, n.d., Fabric/textile, 115 x 95mm, Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/61431/clothing-label>> [accessed 25 May 2025].



Figure 4: Nelson Centre Easter Bowling Tournament, 1962. Nelson Provincial Museum, Geoffrey C Wood Collection: L4051_fr9 & L4051_fr10 [cropped from screenshot].

Again, mind's eye imaginings of Joan morph and reform in relation to research developments or to address various pieces of information from her material culture bundled up in this jacket. In considering her studies and performances of pianoforte with the potential image of her in the background of a photo held by the NPM I find myself connecting her to my daughter conducting her first few years tentatively beginning the same studies. The image of our potential Joan at the piano, blurry and unfocused in the background, merges with an imagining of my daughter as a young adult established in her playing, though comfortable not being the forefront of the show (fig 4). Likewise, I find myself reminiscing of my mother and one of my aunts, the image feels evocative of similar photos of them from around the same era, showing them as gangly hunched teenagers with short hair, long limbs yet to develop into womanly bodies, long-sleeved early synthetic tops in a similar manner to Joan's white top of which we can only get a glimpse, for all we know from the blurry outline it could be a crisp white shirt worn under the blazer which perhaps she took off for freedom of movement when playing.

These interpretations of Joan, influenced by my positionality are thoroughly challenged when the

Museum shares a high-resolution digitisation of the previously blurry image with me (fig 5). This confirms that it is indeed Joan at the piano, and unsurprisingly she looks nothing like my daughter, mother or aunt. She is older than my imaginings, though fitting with her age whilst in the band. These discoveries through the long labyrinth of research into this subject connect back to Mida and Kim's reflection phase, highlighting the non-linear nature of this methodology and awareness that the back-and-forth working across the phases is an element of the process which must be prepared for. In getting to know Joan through her blazer my reflections on her have morphed from a slim-built man,

to my Grandmother, to a teenager version of my Mother, Aunt, and daughter, and hopefully eventually closer to Joan, though I will always be an outsider and can only interpret.



Figure 5: Nelson Centre Easter Bowling Tournament, 1962. Nelson Provincial Museum, Geoffrey C Wood Collection: L4051_fr10.

Following these phases of description, observation, deduction and reflection we start to bring all that we have found together from both garment and pocket contents in speculation and interpretation. What have we learnt and how might we present it? For Joan's blazer I have chosen the tool of creative

non-fiction, through which I present the findings from the garment analysis through an imagined piece of text.²⁵ This text is an opportunity to let the garment speak as is done by van de Polder.²⁶ The work that follows is created in the manner of Cooper, and Oldfield as discussed with Butchart.²⁷ In the sentiments of Zemon Davis, '[w]hat I offer you here is part my invention, but held tightly in check by the voices of the past.'²⁸

My arms, crooked at the elbow, move up and down, flying across the keys to the rhythm and voice I recognise well from these outings. After some time, they settle to rest at my side and we are moving through the crowd of dancers, receiving compliments and thanks as we pass. A door swings open, and we move into the harsh lighting of a bathroom, in and out of the stall, and I glimpse my deep maroon in the mirror, a glint of the piano pin pierced through my left lapel, and the tattoo of embroidered scroll and text on my breast pocket I have always been proud to sport despite my lack of understanding for its meaning. Joan plucks a black comb from the pocket, taming an errant curl which she secures with a bobby pin, leaving one behind in case further curls escape later.

We move back into the throng to nip outside for fresh air, and Joan secures my three buttons tight against the cold. Her hands burrow into the hip pockets first for more warmth and then to retrieve a packet from the left. She fiddles around with the contents, shuffles to a nearby bin to dispose of the crinkly packet, and soon her dominant arm is rhythmically moving up and down from Joan's face. I see something glowing at her fingers in the dim night air and a haze swirls around us. She soon rustles around in my top pocket again, unravelling one of the two mints pocketed there, leaving the other behind for later, absent mindedly plucking out that wayward one penny coin, loose change which hadn't found its way back to her purse I assumed, or

²⁵ This considers the narrative and storytelling techniques proposed by Zemon Davis and Scott, for example: Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; Scott, 'Storytelling'.

²⁶ van de Polder, 'Dialogue between Obsession and Dress'.

²⁷ Cooper, *Autobiography of a Pocket-Handkerchief*; Nick Jordan, Jacob Cartwright, Emily Oldfield and Andrew Hann, hosted by Amber Butchart, Cloth Cultures with Amber Buchart (31 August 2023) <<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6FDd4eyA0E0fxlyLISfHuw?si=5997098276104dde>> [accessed 12 April 2024]; Nick Jordan, Jacob Cartwright, and Emily Oldfield, *Larksong*, 2023, Film, Installation and Poem <<https://www.nickjordan.info/larksong/>> [accessed 8 January 2026].

²⁸ Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, p. 5.

perhaps it was a lucky coin, it was always there when she played. She deposits it in my left pocket and shifts back into action.

Back in the warmth of the hall, bustling with crowds of the regular weekend teenagers, Joan shrugs me off, neatly folding me in half, shoulder to shoulder, arm to arm and tucks me over the back of the chair she settles in at the piano. Time for a rest.

~

After a period of dark, cosy stillness – my awareness of how long is only by the lengthening of the warp fibres across my shoulders as gravity slowly drags them from the coat hanger – the world shifts and light floods in. Unfamiliar hands grasp me and slide me along the rail stretching me out in examination. All that is next to me falls like leaves into a glistening shadowy pit I glimpse beneath. Then the light goes out again, though with it the cosy embrace of my fellow closet mates, I am left with dark emptiness.

A short while later the light returns and I am swooped off the rail, off the hanger, and folded into a box. Two bulky mechanical items are placed on top, nudging at my back, and a series of smaller items tucked in alongside. The lid flips shut and noises echo through the box as it is secured, finishing within a rhythmic scratching across the top surface. My bulky box mates and I share this space for a period, moving on all angles, bumping back and forth into each other through a range of unfamiliar background soundscapes, our only clues to our movements. The final of these is the deep rhythmic whirr of an engine. Alongside my bulky companions we are lifted from the box and spread out for examination.

I find later that this was simply the first of a lengthy analysis, undertaken sometime later, perhaps days, perhaps months or even years, my fibres shift more slowly now. Time stills here as I am enveloped in a calm and cool climate. White gloved hands probe all my pockets, extracting Joan's black comb, one penny coin, a single bobby pin and a mint. These are ziplocked in see-through bags — the coin and mint in fact double-bagged — and set aside from me. My left arm is tagged with a label looped over one of the cuff buttons, and I am tucked into a bed of crisp white tissue. Layers of this are stuffed between my folds, curved rolls support each wrinkle as I am concertinaed into a blue box. My pocket contents are laid delicately on top, grasped by my right sleeve. I am at rest.

~

She delicately unfolds my wrinkled skin, caressing open each of my padded folds. She plucks at all edges of me, stretching a measuring tape across my torso, top to bottom, left to right. A black form looms down, an additional eye in front of her face. It clicks over each part of me, mechanical whirring as the eye extends, closing in on my piano pin and embroidery, label and up into my sleeves. She moves away, hovering instead over my pocket archive, my deposits from Joan. She settles back on me for one last examination, peeking in and out of my three pockets, pinching open the two on my hips to record with the black eye. I am folded back up, tissue tucked back in, bag placed again on top, and lid resecured. Back at rest.



Figure 6: Joan's blazer packed in museum storage box, Nelson Provincial Museum.

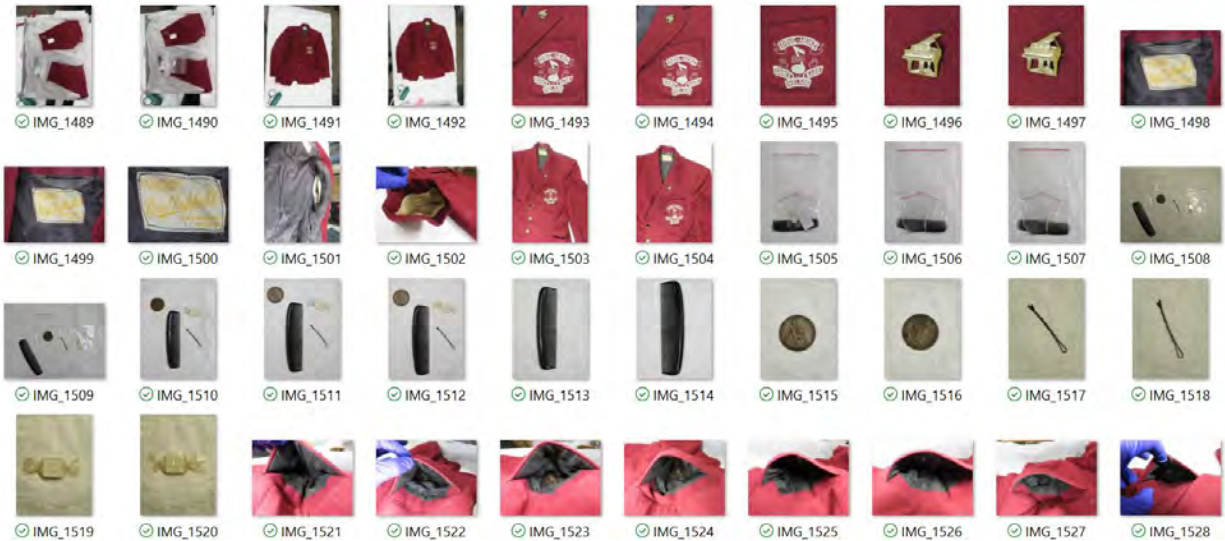


Figure 7: Sample of photographic essay on Joan's blazer, Nelson Provincial Museum.

This approach shifts the lens to the first person to explore the change in narrative to how we understand the garment. As opposed to the second person, focused on the wearer, or third person, the historian or viewer of Joan during an evening, the creative text from the perspective of the jacket focuses directly on the objects. This creative license is formed from the consultation taken with the objects through the analysis phases and then in collaboration with expanded research from the object as outlined in the research material (see appendix A) and traditional textual research as already identified and including that of Mulligan and White.²⁹

In writing the text I enjoyed embodying the blazer in a figurative sense, mentally shrugging into it and envisioning myself in Joan's shoes (or more appropriately jacket) picturing what an evening playing in the band might have been like. I was again challenged by my positionality writing this from my 2025 lens. I wished to take her outside to engage the buttons on the coat, burrow her hands into the pockets for warmth and to address the potential tobacco there, which my modern mind of course placed her outside to use due to current day law around smoking indoors. While I established her being outside was unnecessary, I decided I would still take her there, in response to descriptions I had read of the packed dance halls and the likely need for fresh air during her break, coupled with

²⁹ 'New Zealand Retro: Dance Halls', *Afternoons*, performed by Jesse Mulligan (New Zealand, 13 April 2015), Nga Taonga Sound and Vision <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/20174516/new-zealand-retro-dance-halls>> [accessed 3 August 2025]; Georgina White, 'Dancing down the Decades', *New Zealand Geographic*, no. 075 (October 2005) <<https://www.nzgeo.com/stories/dancing-down-the-decades/>> [accessed 3 August 2025].

perhaps Joan wishing to be more private and respectable, not smoking openly in public inside. I also grappled with placing her one penny coin, assuming she would not have had to pay the entry fee as a band member, and even if she did, one penny was not logical change to the likely six-shilling entry fee.³⁰ Discussions with acquaintances who had lived through this time period and attended dance halls suggested this may have been for entry to the ladies bathrooms. Despite these thoughts, the mystery of it seemed appropriate, and I left it as such in that manner in the text.

This text, like any creative work could have been formed entirely differently if written on another day or edited at another point.³¹ Other details from observation could expand this text, details like addressing the dust and dog hairs on the jacket's surface, along with the wear at the neck and cuffs and staining at the hip. The creative text gives us just one potential avenue into elements of the biography of the jacket, its association with Joan, experiences in use and later phase entering the world of the museum.

³⁰ Rosa Shiels, 'Christchurch Dance Halls of the 1960s', The noisy library of New Zealand music, Audio Culture Iwi Waiata, NZ On Air, 6 April 2022 <<https://www.audioculture.co.nz/articles/christchurch-dance-halls-of-the-1960s>> [accessed 3 August 2025].

³¹ For example, it has been found following the submission of this thesis that what was identified as a mint by Nelson Provincial Museum is an antacid: Bayer 'Celebrating 90 Years of Rennie Heritage', *Rennie* (2026) <<https://www.rennie.co.uk/node/636>> [accessed 1 August 2026].

This was an unfortunate oversight which occurred as both the museum record was not interrogated in this case (as is done in an example in chapter four), and the depth of research into this blazer pocket contents was not such as to pick this up. This identifies an aspect to be conscious of in the use of this combined methodology, ensuring adequate attention is both paid to the garment research as well as the pocket contents through all phases. In this case the research was weighted towards the garment which likely connects to my bias and interest in dress history, over medical history which the mint/antacid connects to. The nature of this thesis would also have had an impact, with the breath of examples explored, and scope only for a range of depths of research exploration, alongside additional focus on methodology rather than simply historic enquiry into the pocket archives.

Future revisions of this part of the study for any publishing could carry on the journey of discovering Joan and her blazer with this new information. The creative text would alter, and the antacid could expand the story into the evening with Joan partaking in supper, which were described by many detailing these weekly events as a key feature. The lack of mint also leads to the question of whether the desiccated plant matter in her pocket was tobacco as I had surmised, connecting the two with one being used after the other. Alternate stories may be possible, though I still struggle to imagine why Joan might have had tea in her pocket or other plant matter, tobacco still seems the likeliest regardless of the lack of mint.



Figure 8: picture of Joan Godbaz upon retirement, receiving gift from Doug Heinz. © Copyright PHOTO TAKEN BY Rosalina-Ludmila McCarthy (formerly Palamountain) FOR Rod Neill Studio Nelson 4th January 1964.

The Crewe Blazer

Turning from Joan's blazer, though to a very similar looking garment, the Crewe blazer had its own unique story told through its fibres and pocket archive (fig. 9).³² As it was sourced from a second-hand store, I had more scope in my methodological approach compared to Joan's blazer. This blazer was made by Canterbury New Zealand who is well known for their iconic rugby jerseys and is a clothing line manufactured by Lane Walker Rudkin. Found in the sorting area of the Hospice Shop in Frankton, Hamilton, it entered this study due to a collection of ambiguous business cards and a single unused expired condom found in its proper right internal pocket, an intriguing introduction to this garment, giving signals to at least one past wearer of it.



Figure 9: 'Crewe Blazer', 1984, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

In the same manner as Joan's blazer, I conducted the prescribed analysis on this jacket and its pocket contents, with the phases of description and observation undertaken through both written and photographic recordings (appendix B). Through this methodology I quickly identified a further chapter in the garment's story. I identified another label sewn in the proper right internal pocket where the

³² Canterbury New Zealand, *Crewe Blazer*, 1984, Polyester, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

name R. J. White is inscribed, two faint signatures are evident (likely the garment maker and inspector) and details of the garment manufacture are all recorded (fig. 10). This outlines the garment style (CREWE), size & cut (112 NORMAL), fabric content (polyester with manufacturer-specific codes) along with dating the jacket production to 7 September 1984.³³ The garment's biography is revealing itself: four potential individuals connected through this one pocket's contents. These close details connect us to not only two wearers in the garment's biography, but to at least two of those through the journey of manufacturer, the hands of its makers. Labels like these are tangible links to these individuals, the penmanship, conducted likely in their own hand, claiming a moment in the story of this garment, whether at the beginning in its creation during production or ownership during use.³⁴ While labels with maker details such as this are rare, garment makers have identified that they can often tell their own sewing in a garment illustrating the imprint this moment can make in the garment's biography.³⁵

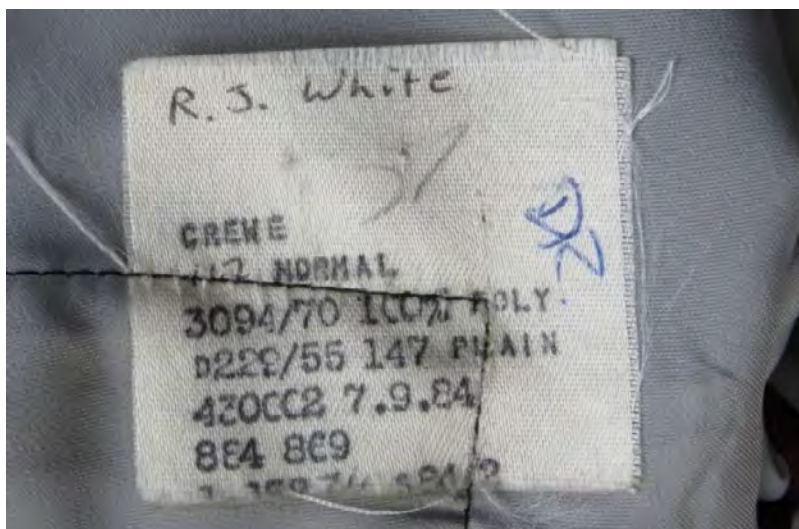


Figure 10: 'Crewe Blazer', proper right internal pocket label.

³³ With thanks to experts from the New Zealand Fashion Museum for their advice on interpreting the label.

³⁴ Recent fashion history developments related to fast fashion often mean it is less likely an individual maker would be identified due to line sewing, as opposed to manufacture previously done with the Crewe blazer and this further example: @nzfashionlabelarchive, 'Kings Road suede bomber, complete with craftsman's signature 🍷', Instagram, 6 March 2024 <https://www.instagram.com/p/C4KiYS2rB-S/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D> [accessed 3 August 2025].

³⁵ For example @nin_cortina comments that whilst these labels are removable they note they can often recognise their own sewing: @nzfashionlabelarchive, 'From a time when NZ had a decent resource of machinists in the clothing industry. Hilton faux fur crop jacket', Instagram, 27 May 2024 <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7dPAWmvtH3/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D> [accessed 3 August 2025].

The close details captured through this methodology take us through the chapters of construction and into one of the wearers. Between these two points is the step of retail where one of the garment wearer's first encounters the jacket. While this Canterbury blazer did not come to my hands with any of its original Canterbury retail labelling, this proper right internal pocket had one additional feature identified during observation in the form of two staples left in the fabric. These staples I hypothesize were for attaching a price tag during sale at a second-hand shop, though interestingly not the Hospice shop where I had come across this jacket in the sorting area, prior to its processing to the shop floor ready for sale. These staples outline perhaps an earlier resale of the jacket – rather than a hand-me-down – to the wearer who held the business cards in the pocket. They could also allude to the attachment of a tag during a previous dry clean of the jacket, though the cleanliness of the jacket suggests that this does not appear to be a recent occurrence.



Figure 11: 'Crewe Blazer', manufacturer label and forgotten staples.

Through my descriptive observations I also noticed the buttons, haphazardly sewn on with slightly mismatched thread suggesting their addition following garment manufacture. The design on these buttons was a crest split in two with a dragon in one half and harlequin diamond pattern in the other. The inclusion of these buttons may have been intended for aesthetic purposes or to indicate the wearer's affiliation with a specific group, similar to how the Doug Heinz Dance Band logo embroidery on Joan's outer patch pocket signified her association with that community. Further research would be required to decode them; however, we can identify at a simple level the indication of purpose and intent of one of the wearers to customise the jacket through this notion.



Figure 12: 'Crewe Blazer', buttons.

Along with this detail, I noted all the stains, discoloured areas, fabric pulls and marks, in both written observations and comprehensively through a photographic essay. The 'slow approach to seeing' was a key element here, taking the time with the garment.³⁶ I found the technique of exploring the jacket through the visual lens of the camera, as I recorded the textual descriptions, was an effective way to get to know the jacket at this early point. All the information gathered at this point indicated the jacket's well use, and also potentially pointed away from the staples in one of the inner pockets being

³⁶ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

for dry cleaning or at least recent dry cleaning due to the numerous stains and marks I located on the fabric.



Figure 13: 'Crewe Blazer', stains, marks and pulls to fabric.

Following this, I undertook the reflection phase. Considering my personal reactions to the jacket I noted:

As soon as I saw the jacket hung up in the sorting area at The Hospice shop, I felt some pull to it. It was as if I knew it had something in its pockets and it had a story to tell. This was confirmed as soon as I felt inside the inner proper right pocket and connected with [the] business cards. The colour also drew me to it, I think in connection with Joan Godbaz's burgundy blazer I had engaged with at the Nelson Provincial Museum (appendix B).

The method of gathering research subjects provided its own reflection of the research process. In pocket diving through clothing behind the scenes in this second-hand store, I found myself constantly addressing the biases I have as I engaged with different clothing items. I found myself drawn to particular garments and trying to balance the equity of my garment sources across the study, taking time to focus on womenswear where pockets are rarer. Likewise, at points I found time limitations in contrast had me simply beelining straight for what I came to know often had good examples: menswear jackets. My first pocket diving session I started at the sorting pile where big bins of clothing items were gathered at a large central table to be pulled out one by one for a quick

inspection for sale suitability (anything stained or damaged was quickly tossed to the disposal pile, due to the absolute mass amount of clothing which comes in). After some time, it was suggested by the shop manager, I was working with that I move to the racks where pocketed garments could instead be targeted.



Figure 14: 'Crewe Blazer', pocket contents

Regarding the pocket contents, with Prown's deduction phase I started to consider further the individuals who were previously connected to this blazer, particularly that of the person whose business card and unused condom were left behind in its pocket. How could I learn more about this wearer, their place in history and use of this garment? The business card would be assumed to be an easy tool, a communication method used to share an individual's contact details with others. However, this unique card (redacted in the image for ethical reasons) featured little more than the wearers name and a 021-cell phone number.³⁷ Dating the era of the business card via its phone number was considered. Could it tie in with the establishment of the Vodafone network in 1998? This, in connection to

the expiry date of the unused condom as 2003, places the potential most recent wear of this jacket (for use of its pocket contents) in the late 1990s and early 2000s (depending on the wearer's conscientiousness on the condom's expiry date).

This example is also included in a selection of garments that have formed part of a creative research thread within the study and is written further about in chapter four. To deepen my enquiry with the pocket filled garments located outside museum collections I applied a hands-on creative research lens. Might I encounter the previous wearers if I took up its mantle as garment to be worn, and then would I encounter further evidence of the garment's makers, understand more clearly its imprint of

³⁷ An unfortunately common name did not provide any clear leads and following ethics approval a process of texting and calling the number periodically also shed no further light.

use, reveal original fabric colour protected within the seams, lint or additional small matter in its pockets with further creative investigation? Might the garment reveal further of this biographical phase if I undertook a reversal of its construction process, connect with those who created it, stitched the seams, piecing the garment together from its cut pattern?

I considered an initial embodiment in relation to the suggestion in a section of Mida & Kim's observation process where they propose the researcher consider in personal reflections whether the person who previously wore the garment was bigger or smaller, whether the researcher themselves would wear it if they could, and consider how it would feel on their body.³⁸ I had been the previous wearer of the jeans, my first example, I surmised it gave me valuable insight into the garment, the texture and weight of the cloth on my skin, as well as an insight into the design's triumphs and flaws.

I undertook the first wear via a quick, practical, observational approach to simply understand its shape and size. This was undertaken during the photographic analysis of the garment, and likewise observational photos were captured showing me swimming in the garments overlarge size on me (appendix A). Following this I undertook a day-long embodiment of it, styling it with my wardrobe for a day at work. Notes I took following outlined the experience of this embodiment:

I enjoyed the sturdy envelopment of the blazer throughout the day. Though its large size made it less than comfortable when sitting at my desk. The two hip pockets were invaluable for dropping a phone into each and a tissue at the ready in the right one.

Embodying this through wear was an intimate and visceral way to connect with the garment and in turn its past wearers, bringing consciousness of the pocket contents I was carrying as well as the other free pocketed spaces I was still entitled to make use of.

Conclusion

Through this chapter I have outlined the main methodological framework utilised in this research. Working through both the Prown and Mida & Kim approaches and undertaking each research stage both textually and visually, enhanced the ability to slow down and take time with each set of pocket

³⁸ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, pp. 29 & 220.

archives. The different vantages of museum and second-hand store pocket filled garments led to different approaches with the framework, particularly in the final phase where the garment and pocket contents were addressed together. Here, the creative approach helped to consider both blazer pocket archives from a new angle, alongside helping to identify the importance of grounding in what we know from the material culture, balancing the archival insight with the creative thinking.

Along the research journey I found I was able to spend extended time with the Crewe blazer due to its placement outside the museum collection realm, in turn taking deeper material culture insights from it. Joan's blazer in contrast held more provenance details which offered tantalising research avenues beyond the garment's biography if I chose to take them. This included personal details of Joan – from her hair care to her taste in sweets and her conscientiousness of breath – to various communities she was connected to as a pianist – New Zealand dance hall culture, the Doug Heinz Band and even Basil Dalefield. The Crewe blazer, while lacking this formal provenance information, shared details on four possible individuals through just one pocket and offered further biographical insight through resewn-on buttons, left behind staples and stains across the surface. The pocket archive spaces each revealed a range of research avenues, some of which we will look to delve into further in chapter two.

At this point, I wished to bring the stories of these two burgundy blazers not to a conclusion, as we cannot predict their futures, but perhaps a connecting point on their journey, where disparate though similar colour and designed garments which I met at a similar point on my research journey might also meet each other. As mentioned, they share no known connection. However, in discussing them here together I have connected them, at least for a brief and bizarre moment in their biography, one unbeknownst to them. I wished to also connect them in a creative non-fiction text, however in attempting to do so I found I could not force a meeting between the two. The creative process must be informed by the initial investigations and observations, there are only so many creative liberties I can take as Zemon Davis outlines.³⁹

At no point did I find any details on either of these garments that suggested they would have crossed paths. This is both due to the timeframes during which they were active and their geographical locations. They may have encountered each other if Joan's blazer had been worn between the mid-

³⁹ Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*.

1980s (following the Crewe blazer's production) and 2008 when it was donated to the Museum, though with the items left behind in the pockets it felt more like it was tucked away when she retired from the band in 1964 and then, as identified by the museum donated to them by a relative after her passing in 2004. I had contemplated taking the Crewe blazer for a visit to NPM in a piece of text, clarifying from the museum whether it had been on display during that period, and having them face to face over a display cabinet. However, nothing in the Crewe blazer's pocket contents or details obtained through the garment observation and deconstruction suggested it might have travelled to the South Island, so this felt like I was leading it down a path I desired rather than letting it speak to me. My final thought was suggesting a potential future meeting, proposing the Crewe blazer be entered into the Museum collection and envisioning it being placed on the storage shelf atop the box holding Joan's blazer. This felt too unlikely and too generous a stretch of creative license. Instead, my fingers found themselves typing out the latest chapter in the Crewe blazer's biography from its time with me. A piece of creative non-fiction instead shares my reflections on the blazer's viewpoint of the creative intervention I undertook – an embodied [de]construction of the garment as detailed in chapter four – conducted to connect to earlier stages in the jacket's biography.

She has dissected me. I am Benjamin Button, reverting to my origins. Her hands pulled me apart through the snip by snip of a tiny pair of scissors, whilst I was draped across her lap, some sound and light blaring from a screen in front of her. I now lay, my pieces, flat atop one another. I was once filled out by broad lively bodies, twice shrugged across bony shoulders, wrapped tight about the waist at one point and bound in a similar toned belt. Now I am leaves of myself, fallen, layered one on top of the other within a box which is darkened by a blanket of tissue and its lid.

She does not fully know my history, though her investigations have revealed much. I felt her pluck the cards and a pointy ended sachet from my internal pocket and then delve further within, turning my insides out, spilling my guts, tugging at a label. Though now that is jumbled around, severed from me, and littered atop my skeletal form. I have given all I can reveal in this interrogation.

Chapter Two

Exploring the Depth and Breadth of Pocket Archives

Pockets themselves and the things they carry are explored further in this chapter, which examines a range of topics accessible through the site of the filled pocket. This spans from the private to the public sphere; health and wellness issues; memory and sensory traces; gender inequality and sexism. Through this chapter we move to more traditional archival research to trace these topics, which also examine pocket contents without their pockets, empty pockets and clothing without pockets. As these diverse examples will highlight, this chapter reveals the pocket as a liminal zone, a zone between public and private, able to reveal or hide its contents at the wearer's discretion, though shaped by the gendered nature of clothing. The nature of items held in pockets takes us to the often deeply personal functions of the bodies held within, and the consideration of the nature of garments as vessels regardless of pockets, holding the imprints of bodies worn into the very fibres. The inequality of pocketing across menswear and womenswear reflects the gendered nature of garments, which also impacts childrenswear and accessories. Through this chapter taking a higher-level research approach, I further the argument that the site of the filled pocket, a pocket archive, is an accessible zone for historians to encounter the lives of both garments, past wearers, makers and communities.

Through this chapter, as we encounter past wearers through pocket archives, deeply personal and at points also traumatic experiences are revealed, highlighting the ethical challenges of researching through this private zone. The mobility of the pocket archive in both garments and accessories result in items which individuals keep close when in environments away from the comforts of home. Examples in this chapter in relation to this, share insight into some of the unseen impacts of war, both on the physical and mental health of individuals. In contrast, alongside looking inside pockets I address the differences in pocket archives when items are instead revealed out the top of pockets or displayed adjacent. The space has the ability to transition from incredibly private to public, with both uses holding variations of archival evidence of wearer.

The number and size of pockets within each garment however varies and often delineates the nature of the garment being in the category of menswear or womenswear. Recent publications and historic

newspaper articles identify that womenswear is sorely lacking in both the number of pockets per garment, and the size and practicality of those pockets.¹ Consequently, the pockets within a handbag (or other accessories) also speak volumes, particularly for women's histories. This in turn is informative on the private, or in this case, less private pocketed zone. As Carson identifies, items can disappear into pockets, while the visible nature of handbags indicates something is being held within.²

Pockets and the Bodies that Keep Them

Peeling back the layers of clothing we all wear each day, it is the body within which dress is designed to cover, for a combination of practicality, privacy and adornment. Twigg places clothing as 'the interface between the body and its social presentation, one of the ways whereby bodies are made social, given identity and meaning.'³ Alongside this community connection, as identified in the introduction, the purpose of clothing beyond the mere covering of our nakedness is theorised to be as a means to carry things for which our smooth skin cannot.⁴

In the Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao (NPM), folded up within a large archival textile storage box atop a series of other garments from the same donor, is a pair of nondescript, beige, well-pocketed trousers.⁵ Crumpled up, though housed with care, within a layer of tissue atop the

¹ For example: Carlson, *Pockets*; Carlson, 'Hannah Carlson Explores the History of Women's Pockets'; Vanessa Friedman, 'Why Don't Women's Clothes Have More Pockets?', *The New York Times* (New York), 8 November 2023, International Edition Edition, ProQuest One Academic, 2887697525 <<https://ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/why-don-t-women-s-clothes-have-more-pockets/docview/2887697525/se-2?accountid=17287>>; Fleur Britten, 'How Pockets Became a Feminist Fashion Issue', *The Telegraph*, 7 November 2021 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/style/pockets-became-feminist-fashion-issue/>> [accessed 13 January 2025]; 'World's Use of Pockets: Men's Clothes Full of Them, While Women Have But Few. Civilization Demands Them: A Tailor Tells the Queer Purposes Pockets Are Made by Some Men to Fulfill', *New York Times* (New York), 28 August 1899 <<https://www.nytimes.com/1899/08/28/archives/worlds-use-of-pockets-mens-clothes-full-of-them-while-women-have.html>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; 'A Crusade for Pockets', *Sun* (Christchurch), 19 July 1915, p. 4 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/SUNCH19150719.2.18>> [accessed 9 January 2025].

² Carlson, *Pockets*.

³ Julia Twigg, 'Fashion, the Body, and Age', in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. by Sandy Black and others (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p. 78.

⁴ Carlson, *Pockets*; Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1st ed. (Electric Book Co., 2001).

⁵ Gurtex, *Suit, Mens*, with Keith Holyoake, 1984 1970, Polyester, plastic buttons, nylon zipper, metal tab and button hook, Suit, worn by Sir Keith Holyoake. Gift of the Holyoake Family and the Museum of New Zealand

trousers sits a cream coloured, used-looking handkerchief. This utilitarian and frankly rather unappealing clothing collection (due to the likely used nature of the handkerchief) is not just any simple pair of twentieth century men's trousers, but that of past New Zealand Prime Minister Keith Holyoake. The trousers form part of a gift of a collection related to the prime minister, donated to NPM by the Holyoake family and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) owing to Holyoake's connection to the town of Motueka within the wider Nelson region.

Across the Cook Strait in a storeroom of said national Museum also likely tucked away in storage, there lies another clothing collection from one of New Zealand's past prime ministers. Fast forwarding to the next century, in 2023 Jacinda Ardern gifted several clothing items worn at significant moments during her time as New Zealand's prime minister between 2017-2023. Within this collection is a coat by local designer Juliette Hogan which was gifted with a blue medical facemask in its pocket, something the curators asked Ardern to leave in place for the moment in time the item represented.⁶ The item is memorable to her time in office which spanned the Covid-19 pandemic. Many will likely even remember an instructional session on face mask wear, she demonstrated, during one of the regular press briefings. It then became a feature in her communications being taken on and off, likely pocketed and un-pocketed during this time. As identified by the curatorial team, the item ties the coat and its wearer to the time and place the garment was worn.

It is interesting to consider these two pocket archives in relation to each other. They have links not only for their connection to past New Zealand prime ministers, but also related to their pocket's contents, both health-related items of the body. The connection of each item to the bodily functions we all have, shares humble and humanising insights into these figures of power. The medical facemask was so common in our lives across the globe through the start of the 2020s; it is an item most of us have used. While less common today – with easily accessible disposable tissues taking their place – the handkerchief highlights a recognisable bodily function in all of us. Respiratory health

Te Papa Tongarewa, 2012. Nelson Provincial Museum, Holyoake Memorial Trust Collection: NPM2012.115.15 <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/27269/suit-mens>> [accessed 30 June 2023].

⁶ Juliette Hogan, *Coat*, 2020, Textile, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Gift of the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, 2023 <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/2177273>> [accessed 16 June 2023].

– whether it be in relation to a world-wide pandemic, or simple sinus issues – like much general illness and health issues, are oddly, a connecting topic across most walks of life.

Keith Holyoke's pocket contents share a unique insight, not commonly the focus in the biography of a politician.⁷ It is valuable for the familiarity it evokes both due to the item and the relatability of the simple faux pax. We can likely all recall a time pulling some clothing out of the wash and finding a left behind item in its pocket. Jacinda Ardern's public narrative to date, by contrast, is closely intertwined with health-related issues, though not in relation to her health specifically. Her time as prime minister coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is unavoidably connected with perceptions of her in this role. This public narrative becomes two-fold when the facemask in said pocket is considered in relation to the coat pocket it came from. As noted on the collection online record for the garment, this coat is notable for its wearing at two significant events in Ardern's time as prime minister, firstly in 2020 when she was sworn into Parliament after Labour won the election, and secondly during her visit to U.S. president Joe Biden in 2022.⁸ It may be possible the pocketed facemask is the very one worn during her meeting with Biden.⁹

In comparing Holyoake's and Ardern's pocket contents, one item appears more private and suited for keeping within the pocket, while the other is more public. The handkerchief once used becomes an item less publicly acceptable out of the pocket. This contrasts with Ardern's face mask, an item that transitions from a private pocket to a public face covering. More widely during the pandemic, face masks became global commodities, even evolving into fashion accessories. As predicted at the start of the pandemic by Pathak, 'face fashion' became a thing, something also captured in an online exhibition by Westminster Menswear Archive.¹⁰ The 2021 Grammy Awards in the USA featured celebrities adorned with custom designer face masks perfectly matched to their outfits. Cronin

⁷ This biography on Holyoke's life and career mentions his health only in relation to his political career and the perceived impact on this by the press and public: Barry Gustafson, *Kiwi Keith: A Biography of Keith Holyoake*, 1st edn (Auckland University Press, 2007).

⁸ Hogan, *Coat*.

⁹ I could not locate any media imagery or footage of the visit showing Ardern wearing a face mask, but we might assume she did at some point given the timing and the images of her colleagues wearing them during the visit.

¹⁰ Ananya Pathak, 'Can the Face Mask Be More than a Commodity?', *Afaqs* (Mumbai), 2020, p. 2.

Prof Andrew Groves and Dr Danielle Sprecher, 'Undercover: From Necessity to Luxury: The Evolution of Face Coverings during COVID-19', Archive, with Alexandra Larion, Westminster Menswear Archive, 2021 <<https://www.mensweararchive.com/undercover>> [accessed 9 January 2025].

Breana Omana, 'Pandemics Don't Stop Fast Fashion: Brands Sell Face Masks during Crisis', *University Wire* (Carlsbad), 2020.

observed that, especially in America, face masks turned into fashion accessories, with many people creating ‘mask-drobes’ to match their masks with their outfits daily.¹¹ Face masks were more publicly accepted through this period compared to handkerchiefs. However, these too when unused and decorative did have their moment in fashion history, proudly displayed peeking out of pocket tops as discussed later in this chapter.

In November 2023, three years after the start of the pandemic I encountered another medical face mask identical to that buried in Ardern’s coat pocket. While not a custom-made face mask, it was ‘haunted by the ghost of its previous owner’ in the manner suggested by Groves and Sprecher.¹² This medical blue face mask was discovered in the left proper pocket of a Newport Collection shower proof raincoat during a session of pocket diving at the Salvation Army Store in Hamilton East and found in the right proper pocket was a collection of tissues.¹³ All were well crumpled, with clear marks of use, and signs of ‘the ghost of its previous owner’.¹⁴ Evidence of this previous owner was further identified through potential makeup stains on the facemask straps and across the used tissues.

As a quite attractive coat in my size, this example was purchased from the second-hand store not only to be a specimen in this study, but also as an addition to my own wardrobe. Prior to research processing, an unexpected wear took place when a rainy day combined with an outfit to match the new coat. Reflections made that day give sensory insight into the previous body which passed on the garment:

I wore it to the supermarket on a drizzly day, a good way to test out its waterproofing abilities. Definitely a little bit shower proof. At first, I noticed the perfume of the previous wearer rather strongly. Later on, after the rain had hit it and I had worn it for a small period, a different smell started appearing. The smell of cigarettes, reminding me of my auntie, the only smoker in our family, although having since quit. I was aware of what was in the pockets and not to put my hands

¹¹ Emily Cronin, ‘Why Mask-Matching Was the Biggest Trend at the 2021 Grammy Awards’, *Telegraph*, 15 March 2021 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/events/mask-matching-biggest-trend-2021-grammy-awards/>> [accessed 9 January 2025].

¹² Within their online exhibition of the facemasks of the early 2020s Groves and Sprecher captured what they termed ‘absentee portraiture’ of discarded masks on the street. They identify, even across the range of masks - many of which are simply the quintessential medical blue mask - the discarded accessories all offer clues to the past wearers’ identity: Groves and Sprecher, ‘Undercover: From Necessity to Luxury’.

¹³ Newport Collection, *Shower Proof Raincoat*, n.d., Polyester, cotton, Salvation Army, Hamilton East.

¹⁴ Groves and Sprecher, ‘Undercover: From Necessity to Luxury’.

in there and get mixed up with the used tissues and face mask. I had visions of it being worn out on the street during a ciggy break, the sprays of perfume being put to it later, before heading back into the office or similar.

What I was experiencing here was what Burman and Fennetaux identify that tailors call 'memory - the distinctive ability of a textile to retain intimate sensory traces of the body.'¹⁵ Prown identifies this as the encountering of a 'direct sensory experience of surviving historical events.'¹⁶

The impact of the body on its worn clothing, and the evidence of wear imprinted to its surface, is also very well expressed by Hauser in relation to denim fabric as mentioned in the introduction.¹⁷ Our clothing, within the very fabric, the creases and folds from manufacture and wear, tell the story of its life. When musing on second-hand garments, Carlyle describes this as the 'ghosts of life', identifying the garments as silent though expressive of their past, witnesses to the human life lived within them.¹⁸ In the case study Hauser examines, a pair of J.C. Penny jeans were the key witness to the robbery of a US Bank on 1 April 1996. The conviction was based on the work of Bruegge, in which he established that the thick seams on denim jeans develop unique 'barcode' patterning produced through layers of factors across the life of each pair of jeans, from the unique cut of the fabric grain to the tension of this fabric beneath makers hands and thread through the machine. Following production, when worn, the body sculpts the fabric around it through wear, which combined with the individual washing and drying techniques of each wearer, add unique imprints onto the seams. These layers of production and use create individual patterning – which is particularly evident in denim fabric – unique almost in the same manner as fingerprints.

While not technically pockets, seams do fit a pocket-type definition here as enclosed receptacles. In this case they are holders of data on the wearer and maker. Furthermore, if we are considering garment seams as pockets, then why not also the fabric which garments are made of as well? They are again holders of information on the body within, denim jeans also showing clear signs of bending knees for example. They are also capable of holding our very DNA, as hair and skin particles are captured by the fabric fibres.

¹⁵ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 215.

¹⁶ Prown, 'Mind in Matter', p. 3.

¹⁷ Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin'.

¹⁸ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, p. 284.

Within a subtly grey striped wool pair of trousers – another example I came across during a second-hand store pocket diving session – bodily functions in this manner were evidenced in the fibres. Selected for the matching suit jacket which housed a collection of colourful hand hole punched confetti in its top proper left chest pocket, the pair of suit pants held in contrast a urine stain just below the fly on the proper left side.¹⁹ It is a pristinely made suit of good quality fabric from around the early-mid twentieth century, New Zealand made by ‘high grade tailors and mercers’ of Hamilton, registered as a company between 21 July 1937 to 24 February 1994, under the trading name ‘S. Meltzer Ltd.’ The suit and its pocket full of confetti was suggestive of wear to a festive event such as a wedding. The jacket was indicative of this possible celebratory public event, though its trousers told a more personal story of its wearer, perhaps having low personal hygiene standards. Or was it simply a later part of the biography of the garment across the evening? One following a few too many celebratory drinks, leading to more clumsy personal ablutions?

Again, the nature of the pocket being a transitional space between the public outer and private interior, holder of tools and activities for both these functions is highlighted. During the same op shop visit in 2024 a faux fur coat found its way into my possession for its similar story.²⁰ Its grand, deep chocolate brown fur exterior, ‘styled by EL. Mondo Clothing’, evocative of a stylish outing, hid the delicate, though crumpled and stained, white cotton handkerchief within its proper left outer pocket. Embroidered simply in one corner with two chains of blue forget-me-nots and a series of blue and pink centred white daisies, its delicate feminine presentation is marred by its used appearance like Holyoake’s used handkerchief. The ghost of the past body within becomes present due to these pocket tokens. As identified by Fromson, we now become witness to this previous owner’s imprint on the biography of the garment.²¹ He notes, having found a note in the pocket of a purchased second-hand suit jacket, the presence of its previous owner led him to feelings of not being able to be the garments’ ‘true owner’, and that ‘another person’s clothing never really belongs to you.’²² I would then query however, whether the ownership or imprints of connection goes further back to its sellers and producers, to all the hands which have touched and imprinted upon the garment?

¹⁹ S. Meltzer LTD., *Suit - Jacket and Trousers*, n.d., Wool, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

²⁰ styled by EL. Mondo Clothing, *Fur Jacket*, n.d., Faux fur, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

²¹ Fromson, ‘Used Clothing’.

²² Fromson, ‘Used Clothing’, para. 12.

Second-hand jeans particularly as discussed and shoes for that matter literally have the shape of the past wearers sculpted into their interiors.²³ New wearers simply add layers to the garment's biographies. The two jeans of my own discussed in this thesis – one mentioned in the introduction, and the other in chapter four – have imprints of myself both within their fabric and seams.²⁴ A gardening pair discussed in chapter four even having my knees break through the fabric, marking the exact location of some of my joints. Coupled with this information captured within the fibres, they held a plethora of items in their limited pocket space, from items of my family and work communities, in my child's bunny tail, Playcentre note scrap, work tools and nitrile gloves, to items of my body in the form of hair ties and tissues. There is much evidence of me wrapped up in the contents of my jeans, though in many of my other garments, a lot less evidence of self can be gathered within the limited or often non-existent pocket receptacles sewn into womenswear garments.

The Pocket: A Zone of One's Own?

The often-binary gendered nature of clothing is highlighted through pockets, their contents, and their absence. In looking again at the pocket archives of Ardern and Holyoake, I observed that Holyoake's handkerchief was located in a pair of generously pocketed trousers – the pair has five pockets in total with the largest extending to 34.5cm in depth – while Ardern's pocketed item was located in an outer coat pocket, a separable item from the body, not one of her dresses, or the single pair of trousers also gifted to Te Papa. As many womenswear wearers can attest to, and many studies have shown, women's clothing is not afforded the same pocket allocation as menswear.²⁵ Diehm and Thomas

²³ For further discussion on the ability of denim to act as canvas for, and narrative of the body and techniques utilised in commerce and the fashion industry see Townsend: Townsend, 'The Denim Garment as Canvas'.

²⁴ Urban Angel, *Jeans*; Just Jeans, *Jeans*, with Cerys Dallaway Davidson, 2021, Denim, Researchers own.

²⁵ Carlson, 'Hannah Carlson Explores the History of Women's Pockets'; Carlson, *Pockets*; Burman, 'Pocketing the Difference'; Burman and Turbin, *Material Strategies*; Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*; Burman and Fennetaux, 'Women's Tie-on Pockets'; Britten, 'How Pockets Became a Feminist Fashion Issue'; Friedman, 'Why Don't Women's Clothes Have More Pockets?'; Pilita Clark, 'Women Are Big Losers in the Politics of Pockets', *Financial Times*, n.d. <<https://www.ft.com/content/58904cf6-198b-4a70-abee-c2c821a4b318>> [accessed 12 February 2025]; Matthew Smith, 'What Women Want: Pockets They Can Use', YouGov, 30 October 2020 <<https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/32765-what-women-want-pockets-they-can-use>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; Saman Shad, 'Why Young Girls' Clothes Need More Pockets', SBS Voices, 25 September 2018 <<https://www.sbs.com.au/voices/article/why-young-girls-clothes-need-more-pockets/di4ntoqsc>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; Saman Shad, 'Florence Pugh's Love of Pockets Is a Trend We Can Get behind', SBS Voices, 14 December 2022 <<https://www.sbs.com.au/voices/article/florence-pughs-love-of-pockets-is-a-trend-we-can-get-behind/t0hkqqpoe>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; Kylie

found that ‘on average, the pockets in women’s jeans are 48% shorter and 6.5% narrower than men’s pockets’, with only 40% of women’s front pockets able to fit one of the top three smart phones at the time completely in a front pocket.²⁶ This study was conducted on jeans which were all of the same size. Johnson reported that in 1954 Christian Dior stated that ‘Men have pockets to keep things in, women for decoration.’²⁷ This is but one example in a long line of anecdotes on the limited state of pockets in womenswear through history. Out of the twelve garments Ardern donated to Te Papa, only four have pockets, two of which were not used, either still stitched closed or fake decorative pockets in the manner identified by Dior. The accessible pockets were in the full skirt section of a Kate Sylvester Dress, and at the sides of the Juliet Hogan coat holding the face mask discussed.

Pocket sexism may seem like a minor issue, but it has been a topic of discussion in the literature, as well as among womenswear wearers, for over a century. At the start of the twentieth century, artist Gwen Raverat lamented, “Why mayn’t we have pockets? Who forbids it? We have got women’s suffrage, but why must we still always be inferior to men?”²⁸ Inequal pocket allocation was an issue addressed by the suffragettes, though around 50% of the population have little to say about them - as men are generally content about their pockets.²⁹ Summers references a more recent political figure, Hillary Clinton, who wore a white suit symbolizing suffrage when she accepted her party’s nomination for president. Similar to Ardern’s clothing, this ensemble was notable for its lack of pockets, a feature that should be standard in a pantsuit, a garment capable of accommodating the

Cheung, ‘In “Black Widow,” Here’s Why a Simple Vest with Pockets Means so Much’, Salon.Com, 19 July 2021 <<https://www.salon.com/2021/07/19/black-widow-yelena-vest/>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; Chelsea G. Summers, ‘The Politics of Pockets’, Vox Media, 20 September 2016 <<https://www.vox.com/2016/9/19/12865560/politics-of-pockets-suffragettes-women>> [accessed 10 January 2025]; ‘World’s Use of Pockets: Men’s Clothes Full of Them, While Women Have But Few. Civilization Demands Them: A Tailor Tells the Queer Purposes Pockets Are Made by Some Men to Fulfill’; ‘Woman’s Sigh for a Pocket’, *Manawatu Herald* (Manawatu), 16 September 1909, p. 4 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/MH19090916.2.21>> [accessed 9 January 2025]; ‘A Crusade for Pockets’; ‘Return of Pockets’, *Evening Post*, 29 February 1908, p. 11; ‘Sleeve Pockets’, *Levin Daily Chronicle* (Levin), 12 November 1926, p. 8; ‘Revival of the Pocket’, *Feilding Star* (Feilding), 12 November 1910, p. 3.

²⁶ Jan Diehm and Amber Thomas, ‘Someone Clever Once Said Women Were Not Allowed Pockets’, Online publication, The Pudding, August 2018 <<https://pudding.cool/2018/08/pockets/>> [accessed 16 January 2025].

²⁷ Paul Johnson, ‘The Power of a Pocket: Why It Matters Who Wears the Trousers’, Online publication, The Spectator, 4 June 2011, para. 7 <<https://spectator.com/article/the-power-of-a-pocket/>> [accessed 16 January 2025].

²⁸ Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece : A Victorian Childhood*, 2003 by Clear Press Ltd (Faber & Faber Ltd, 1952), p. 267.

²⁹ Summers, ‘The History of Pockets Isn’t Just Sexist, It’s Political’.

same level of pockets as those in Holyoake's trousers. Clinton's and Ardern's pocketless status contrasts an example Johnson shares of another political figure Winston Churchill, who with his well pocketed status was able to stage a distraction for the restless House by way of conducting an elaborate search of his pockets in 1951.³⁰ As Johnson identified, political theatre of this nature would not have been afforded to Clinton and Ardern, though it would have been a simple tool available to Holyoake and Churchill.

These two pocket archives raise the question of whose history we may be able to study through this liminal space in garments if it is so limited within womenswear. Historically however, pre-1900, ladies were well pocketed with what were called tie-on pockets, which were essentially one or two bags sewn to a band positioned and tied around the waist in a similar manner to the modern bum bag or fanny pack.³¹ These were worn underneath the outer skirt layer which had slits in the side in order to reach the pockets. Through this period the histories of women were very accessible through this area of research. Tie-on pockets however experienced a demise at the start of the twentieth century as dress silhouettes changed to neoclassical style which did not allow the bulge of tie-on pockets, leading to the introduction of the reticule handbag. There was however a moment around the 1860s when womenswear briefly turned to tailoring traditions and had inset pockets sewn within garments, in a similar, if not less prolific manner to menswear.³²

Another series of examples I have come across in this study also highlight pocket inequality through our first encounters with garments, accessories and sometimes pockets as children. Prown identifies that the study of material culture unlocks the stories of those from the past who were either not literate or not well featured in textual records.³³ The world of children is within this category. Their words, reading and writing abilities are developing, so their imprint on history is more likely through the material culture that they gather around them. And in a world built for adults, the spaces allocated to each child as their own which are without adult input are limited. Pockets are one of those spaces, between washes of clothing or the emptying out of school bags periodically.

³⁰ Johnson, 'The Power of a Pocket'.

³¹ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*.

³² Carlson, *Pockets*.

³³ Prown, 'Mind in Matter'.

One day on the walk home from school pick up with my then 7-year-old girl and her 5-year-old brother, I noticed my daughter gathering items from the park path and tucking them into one of the side pockets of her hot pink Smiggle school bag. In querying this with her, she shared with me insight into the “cool stuff for my secret reusing station” she gathered into her “secret storage” beneath her drink bottle.³⁴ This space was her private area for the gathering of fascinating things she encountered in her day, particularly from the park and the likes of materials gathered up during tidy up time at the end of each school day. Along with leaves, feathers, flowers, her collection included bits of coloured card and other craft related offcuts.

At that time, I had also been corresponding with the Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum’s (AWMM) curatorial staff on a ‘Pocket Collection’ held in their collections.³⁵ This assemblage was that of 8-year-old Rongotoa’s, which had been initially collected for display in their Wild Child Gallery sharing histories of childhood in New Zealand. The two collections of items are similar in their childlike wonder, and amalgamation of a collection of small items within a pocket-like vessel. Unlike my daughter’s collection, which was formed in a bag pocket, Rongotoa’s collection came from his trouser pockets which the acquisition record suggests he embodied at the time of donation.³⁶ Pockets, plural, is referred to in the catalogue record: those of his trousers, suggesting both left and right pocket were well utilised, though not specifically identified which items were from which.

The pocket collections, whilst similar in nature, unsurprisingly differ. Each suggest the interests that each child holds. My daughter was both interested in preservation, reusing materials and a highly keen crafter with the items she salvaged. Rongotoa bears some similarities potentially in the collecting of the gladwrap, elephant pencil top, shell, loose button, pen lid and pencil sharpener, all items easily turned to crafts. Was he also interested in Star Wars in reference to the cards he held? A sweet tooth with a taste for ‘SUPERMAN’ candy sticks? Was it nearing Halloween, with the Dracula teeth coming from a costume? Did he play golf or marbles, or were these just lost, and now found,

³⁴ *School Bag and Craft Collection*, with Frances Davidson, 2024, Nylon and mixed media, Researchers own.

³⁵ *Pocket Collection*, with Rongotoa Harris, c. 1990s, Mixed media, Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1999.213.10 <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/collections-research/collections/record/am_humanhistory-object-64818?k=pocket%20collection&ordinal=0> [accessed 24 August 2023].

³⁶ It is important to note here that my daughters school uniform does not have pockets in the girls skort, unlike the well-tailored zip up pockets which are in the boys’ shorts version of the uniform.

treasures which wound their way into his pockets for an interest they sparked in him? Whilst I know the reasoning regarding my daughter's pocket collection, we are unlikely to ever know that of Rongotoa's.

As identified by Gerritsen and Riello, objects often hold varied and broad meanings from person to person.³⁷ Discussing toys, they note: 'Toys, more generally, can also assume very different meanings: for the children who play with them, and the parents who bought them, the friends who gifted them, never mind the producers and sellers of the items.'³⁸ A stone picked up and discarded by a caregiver may be crucial currency in a game, only known to the child. Carlson considers boys' pocket 'inventories' through historic literature, addressing what people in the past thought about things found in young boys' pockets, from which they concluded that nothing could be easily deduced.³⁹ Townsend however addresses Rongotoa's pocket collection specifically, suggesting the grouping provides context and awareness into their significance for the collector.⁴⁰ I agree that we can however still interpret a picture of Rongotoa's general interests through the items (even if it was just for the feel of something or the colour it had), likewise with my daughter's pocket archive, the collections gives an idea of items of interest to children in that time and place.

In Te Papa's collection is another assortment of items tucked away in the manner of my daughter's schoolbag collection, however even further off the body, not in a garment pocket or bag, but pocketlike space in a house. The Randell Cottage Collection includes a group of gathered objects found within the gap between a kitchen chimney and weatherboard of the Randell Cottage in Thorndon, Wellington, a space only big enough for the small hand of a child.⁴¹ Again a small glimpse into childhood is given through a collection of objects, this time instead of the early 2020s period or 1990s, it is the turn of the century for which we have some insight. Thought to have originally belonged to the youngest three girls of the family of ten siblings, the collection included 'broken brooches and bracelets, bits of toy china tea sets, tiny broken china dolls and other precious objects.'⁴² Te Papa's collection record suggests these were tucked away due to their special nature,

³⁷ Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, 'Introduction'.

³⁸ Gerritsen, Anne and Riello, Giorgio, 'Introduction', p. 4.

³⁹ Carlson, *Pockets*.

⁴⁰ Townsend, 'Collecting Kids' Stuff'.

⁴¹ Lynette Townsend, 'The Randell Cottage Collection', Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, n.d. <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/2072>> [accessed 4 February 2025].

⁴² Townsend, 'The Randell Cottage Collection'.

as we also assume Rongotoa and my daughter's collection were kept. I would however also consider a contrasting scenario, whereby perhaps these were broken items hidden away out of guilt instead due to their damaged nature. This also suggests these young girls may not have had pockets in their clothing to keep these items – unlike their brothers – and therefore had to create their own private pocket space.

Burman and Fennetaux identify privacy being an important feature of pockets for women historically.⁴³ Women could not historically own property and had limited rights in a similar manner to children; and the spaces they had as private for themselves were similarly as limited. Unfortunately for women, as the privacy of the tie-on pocket was lost, the inconvenience of a handbag more or less took its place. Lai outlines that women have been, and still are reliant on handbags to hold necessities, which in turn restricted women's mobility and placed them at heightened risk of theft and misplacement.⁴⁴ Bari is also of this opinion, noting that the burden of luggage is a decidedly female inconvenience. She identifies that 'if purses are apparently feminised in culture, the pocket is resolutely male.'⁴⁵ Carlson highlights another big issue here, particularly in the USA whereby the 4th amendment considers pockets a space on the body (and therefore not legally searchable without a warrant) whilst bags are separate and part of the social sphere (and legally searchable).⁴⁶ For womenswear, privacy and security are not a function afforded.

The findings discussed on pocket sexism parallel somewhat to the ratio of all the examples I have found for this study, where menswear examples trump womenswear when looking specifically at worn clothing (fig. 15). However, interestingly, in adding in accessories, womenswear takes over (fig. 16). Whilst a small sample, it highlights something we already know; women are required to carry items generally in bags as opposed to on our person as was the case with my daughter compared to Rongotoa. For Ardern's case it was in an outerwear garment, which again like an accessory is a more separatable item from the body and therefore less practical, less secure and less private. This

⁴³ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*.

⁴⁴ Lai, *Carried Away*.

⁴⁵ Bari, *Wild Things*, p. 254.

⁴⁶ Carlson, *Pockets*.

Under New Zealand Law this is not the case, instead when searching people the items under a person's control include anything they are wearing or carrying: New Zealand Police, 'Search - Police Manual Chapter', New Zealand Police Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa, New Zealand Police, January 2026 <<https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/search-police-manual-chapter>> [accessed 4 March 2026].

disparity underscores the gendered nature of pockets in general and is just a small sample of examples which highlight what is already quite well addressed in the literature on pocket sexism, though frustratingly more limited in its application in the fashion industry.

Womenswear Pocket Archives	1994 'Canterbury' Americas cup jacket + ticket stubbs & US \$1 Vintage Clothing Retailer	Max' leather jacket + white lace trimmed handkerchief Joan Dallaway, inherited by researcher	Joan Godbaz Blazer + 4x pocket contents NPM	1860 Wedding Gown + lavender sachet AWMM	Jacinda Adem's jacket + medical face mask Te Papa	Urban Angel jeans + 2x receipts, 'Playcentre' note, moist towelette & hair tie Researchers own	Shower proof rain coat + used tissues & medical blue facemask Op Shop	Skinny jeans + Kmart receipt Op Shop	Suit (jacket & trousers) 'Massimo Dutti' + Aeroplane tickets & 2x toothpicks Op Shop	Faux fur coat 'Styled by El. Mondo Clothing' + Embroidered handkerchief Op Shop					
Menswear Pocket Archives	Keith Hollyonke Trousers + hanky NPM	William Phillips military jacket pocket + sand from Middle East & blooded bandage Te Papa	Fred Hansen's apron + note Te Papa	Naval uniform + note Te Papa	Airmans Tunic + letter AWMM	Hoodie 'Kit' + Blue toothpick Op Shop	Suit Jacket 'Barkers' + business cards Op Shop	Tuxedo + fake moustache & broken toothpick Op Shop	Canterbury' Crew Blazer + business cards + unused condom Op Shop	Oliver Shepards jacket (Antartica) + product packaging for four items Canterbury Museum	Suit Jacket 'Meltzers Quality Clothes' + Note listing clothing, dry cleaning tag & drycleaning coat hanger Op Shop	Suit (jacket and trousers) 'S. Meltzer Ltd.' + Homemade confetti, note with number 5 written on Op Shop	Tailored Waistcoat + Signed and coded cloth Op Shop	Blazer 'Goldwyn' + badges & pins (& lindt) Op Shop	Black linen shirt + fake moustache Op Shop
Unisex Pocket Archives	High vis jacket + beanie Op Shop														
Accessory Pocket Archives	Marjorie Naylor lipstick case + items NPM	Former member of the New Zealand Contingent in East Timor Hangbag + medication for treatment of PTSD Te Papa	Woman's handbag + 2x unknown pills AWMM	Marjorie Naylor purse + perfume sachet NPM	Purse + Italian lolly wrapper Vintage Clothing Retailer	Black handbag + membership card for Rotorua Creative Fibre with handspun wool cord Susan Skudder	Purse + wedding order of service Sian Dallaway	Wallet + 1929 calendar & 2x postage stamps Puke Ariki Museum	Wallet 'by Baron' + Model t tankers paper slip Op Shop						
Childrens-wear Pocket Archives	Child's pocket collection AWMM	Frances' school bag pocket collection Researchers own	1950s Girls dress & ribbon in pocket NPM												
Empty Pockets	Unknown garment + Barker and Polock receipt Vintage retailer	Pocket diaries Te Papa													

Figure 15: Pocket Finds (accessories separate)

Womens-wear Pocket Archives	1994 'Canterbury' Americas cup jacket + ticket stubbs & US \$1 Vintage Clothing Retailer	Max' leather jacket + white lace trimmed handkerchief Joan Dallaway, inherited by researcher	Joan Godbaz Blazer & 4x pocket contents NPM	1860 Wedding Gown + lavender sachet AWMM	Jacinda Adem's jacket + medical face mask Te Papa	Urban Angel jeans + 2x receipts, 'Playcentre' note, moist towlette & hair tie Researchers own	Shower proof rain coat + used tissues & medical blue facemask Op Shop	Skinny jeans + Kmart receipt Op Shop	Suit (jacket & trousers) 'Massimo Dutti' + Airplane tickets & 2x toothpicks Op Shop	Faux fur coat 'Styled by EL Mondo Clothing' + Embroidered handkerchief Op Shop	Marjorie Naylor lipstick case + items NPM	Former member of the New Zealand Contingent in East Timor Hangbag + medication for treatment of PTSD Te Papa	Woman's handbag + 2x unknown pills AWMM	Marjorie Naylor purse + perfume sachet NPM	Purse + Italian lolly wrapper Vintage Clothing Retailer	Black handbag + membership card for Rotorua Creative Fibre with handspun wool cord Susan Skudder	Purse + wedding order of service Sian Dallaway	Wallet + 1929 calendar & 2x postage stamps Puke Ariki Museum	Revolving Handbag + Collection of memory filled items which move from bag to bag Interview subject
Mens-wear Pocket Archives	Keith Hollyoake Trousers + hanky NPM	William Phillips military jacket pocket + sand from Middle East & bloodied bandage Te Papa	Fred Hansen's apron + note Te Papa	Naval uniform + note Te Papa	Airmans Tunic + letter AWMM	Hoodie 'Kit' + Blue toothpick Op Shop	Suit Jacket 'Barkers' + business cards Op Shop	Tuxedo + fake moustache & broken toothpick Op Shop	Canterbury' Crew Blazer + business cards & unused condom Op Shop	Oliver Shepards Jacket (Antartica) + product packaging for four items Canterbury Museum	Suit Jacket 'Meltzers Quality Clothes' + Note listing clothing, dry cleaning tag & drycleaning coat hanger Op Shop	Suit (jacket and trousers) 'S. Meltzer Ltd.' + Homemade confetti, note with number 5 written on Op Shop	Tailored Waistcoat + Signed and coded cloth Op Shop	Blazer 'Goldwyn' + badges & pins (& lindt) Op Shop	Black linen shirt + fake moustache Op Shop	Wallet 'by Baron' + Model t tankers paper slip Op Shop			
Unisex Pocket Archives	High vis jacket + beanie Op Shop																		
Childrens-wear Pocket Archives	Child's pocket collection AWMM	Frances' school bag pocket collection Researchers own	1950s Girls dress & ribbon in pocket NPM																
Empty Pockets	Unknown garment + Barker and Polock receipt Vintage retailer	Pocket diaries Te Papa																	

Figure 16: Pocket Finds (accessories added in)

Wants, needs and necessities: pocket stories of lived experiences

As identified, the pocket historically provided a rare private space, a zone of one's own, particularly for women. More recently however, this zone in womenswear has moved off the body and become less private. Women are more likely to carry their day-to-day accoutrements within handbags. Curator Grace Lai writes identifying the prevalence of the handbag in womenswear over pockets, and that the general attitude from the nineteenth century onwards was that women should not have pockets, as adding them to their clothing would add an additional 'ungainly' bulge to a silhouette which already featured that of two breasts and hips.¹ And so it was that in the twentieth century the age of the handbag properly began to take hold after the early use of a reticule. Much of the literature on the pocket issues in modern womenswear blames numerous factors for this including a fashion industry run by men, the now well-established handbag industry and fast fashion system focused on cutting costs where possible, all plausible possibilities for this.² To account for this, my study extends to garment accessories as part of 'pocket archives' for balance.

AWMM and Te Papa hold valuable examples in their collections of carry bags with items left within. The NPM also had a unique example in this manner as well, and in my research, I also located several second-hand store finds. Included in the 'Carried Away: bags unpacked' exhibition by Lai at AWMM in 2019 were several bags with something in them. This included the finding of a map of London's Underground Railway within one bags outer compartment, indicating the use by a woman on the go.³ Another housed medication, a medical item, as previously discussed giving insight into the body which carried the handbag.⁴ One was a hidden compartment within a built-in compact case holding

¹ Lai, *Carried Away*, p. 10.

² For example: Ellen Scott, 'We Need to Talk about This One Massive Issue in Women's Clothing', *Metro* (London), 4 July 2016 <<https://metro.co.uk/2016/07/04/we-need-to-talk-about-this-one-massive-issue-in-womens-clothing-5983782/>> [accessed 19 January 2016]; Lai, *Carried Away*; Summers, 'The History of Pockets Isn't Just Sexist, It's Political'; Britten, 'How Pockets Became a Feminist Fashion Issue'; Clark, 'Women Are Big Losers in the Politics of Pockets'.

³ *Handbag, Woman's*, n.d., Leather, metal, Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1995X1.303 <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/5756?k=map&f=classification:Handbag>> [accessed 3 February 2025].

⁴ *Handbag, Woman's*, with 'Holiday', 1950s, Bag, purse, mirror, pills, Purchased with funds provided by the Charles Edgar Disney Art Trust, 1993, collection of Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira, T1539. <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/511?k=1994.11#gallery>> [accessed 3 February 2025].

make up.⁵ Yet another was a simple New World branded paper bag, the receptacle for a collection of buttons that were the items actually being collected by the Museum.⁶ This was a unique case in which the ‘pocket’ contents were the items collected and recorded, and their holder later becoming an added bonus to the collection.

The insight given by items we gather and carry on us can lead beyond the body and into the mind of an individual. Within Te Papa’s collections is a handbag and contents held from a former member of the New Zealand Contingent in East Timor in the early 2000s.⁷ Within are items which give a very personal insight into the mental health of an individual when functioning under the extreme circumstances of war. Whilst a simple black leather Strandbags branded women’s handbag, like many held by pocketless women across New Zealand, this bag and its contents share unique multilayered insights into the owner, and wider communities they were connected to and impacted by. Items kept within the handbag and donated as a collection to Te Papa total 22 pieces. They include a handkerchief, rosary box, makeup packaging, NZ 5 cent coin, theatre ticket, café coffee card, doctor’s appointment card, Veteran SuperGold Card, War Pensions Treatment Card, Malaria Warning Card, cotton pull through and pharmaceutical medications with associated packaging and information sheet for the treatment of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and serious depression as a result of her service.

Within this pocket archive, each item tells part of its holder’s story, all there for a particular purpose, nothing is forgotten or left behind as with some other examples discussed. I understand from discussion with one of Te Papa’s Curators, the owner donated the bag deliberately with its contents. In contrast to the forgotten pocket item, the accession records note the careful thought behind the contents assembled in some detail. Each item within is critical, including the handbag itself, which is a portable and publicly acceptable vessel to hide these private things. The purpose of some of the items within are not for what might be their assumed use. As with Holyoake’s pocket archive this

⁵ *Purse*, 1930s, Metal, enamel, rayon, glass, cotton, Collection of Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira, 1996.113.6

<<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/37738?k=1996.113.6&f=department:Applied%20Arts%20and%20Design#gallery>> [accessed 4 February 2025].

⁶ *New World, New World Bag*, n.d., Paper, Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 1998x.1.61 <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/at-home/things-to-explore/virtual-exhibitions/carried-away>> [accessed 4 February 2025].

⁷ *Strandbags, Handbag and Contents*, 2000s, Leather, cotton, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Gift of a soldier, 2017 <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1507317>> [accessed 7 January 2023].

collection includes a handkerchief, and while we assumed in his case due to its crumpled and used looking nature that it was there for sinus related purposes, this is not the reason for its presence here. Te Papa's acquisition record notes: 'She used the handkerchief in her handbag to muffle the pills she took for PTSD and depression. Stopping such rattles was influenced by infantry training where soldiers tried not to make any noise when they moved.'⁸ Alongside this, an empty makeup box was used to hide her medicines so that she would look 'normal' if the contents of her handbag were ever discovered. Likewise, a single NZ 5 cent coin was kept not for its currency value, but both as a lucky keepsake along with its lesser-known use as tool to adjust the sights on a Steyr assault rifle.

As identified in the object records, items within this inventory were also kept as keepsakes. A theatre ticket for the play Othello held memories of betrayal evoked in the storyline; the user lost her job in 2009 as a result of her PTSD. Though dually the ticket carried memories of hope as a reminder of her re-mergence into the world attending the performance in 2011. Te Papa's records note from the donor: "The ticket was a reminder of something very different to what I was feeling inside my head." So, she kept the ticket with her in her handbag as a reminder of her experience.' Other appointment and café cards speak to the narrative of this woman's experiences as a soldier and then veteran, attending subsequent doctor's appointments, along with struggles with insomnia and needing excessive coffee to function.

The full picture shared through these gathered objects is a visceral and emotive painting of this individual's experiences through this period of her life. The catalogue record identifies:

Her handbag contained so many different pills that it was like an "emergency pharmacy".

However, the amount of medication led to further deterioration in her mental health. She recalled that 2010 was her worst year and that all these pills "equalled death. If I had taken all these pills together it would not have ended well... If I wanted to give up I had everything I needed." In 2013, she decided to get rid of her medication and try non-pharmaceutical methods of coping.

⁸ This insight was gleaned from the restricted full catalogue record of this collection item shared by Te Papa for this research. This text on the collection items and donor has been approved for publication in this thesis by Te Papa curatorial staff in consultation with the donor: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 'Web Summary Report [for Object GH025335]', Collection Database Printout, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 16 June 2023, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

The contents of her handbag are a snapshot of her life when most heavily medicated, and tell a personal but important story about the impact of war on mental health and how society deals with PTSD.⁹

Everything contained within this pocket like vessel, as well as the carrier itself are valuable insights into the experiences of an individual functioning in the crisis environment of war and the subsequent impact on their mental and physical health. The context provided by the catalogue record also heighten our reading or interpretation of the objects, highlighting the value of well-kept archival records giving voice to the ‘mute’ objects described by Prown, Eaton and McKergow.¹⁰

Many military uniforms in collections across the country also give insight into the items chosen by individuals to keep close through the extreme circumstances of war. Messages of love are held in an airman’s tunic from WWII, which holds the letter to his wife ‘to be delivered only in the event of accidents.’¹¹ Admiral John Fisher’s frock coat from circa 1904 bears his religious affiliation through a note in its pocket.¹² The card, found inside one of the pockets identifies: ‘Admiral Lord Fisher’s Uniforms. Presented by Sir Thos McKenzie’ with a note on the back: ‘Please Enrol Me as a member of the Protestant Political Association’.¹³ Practical medical equipment, evidence of the body and the location of battle are all captured within the pockets of the jacket of William Phillipps worn during the First World War.¹⁴ Hunter and Ross identify the tangible link to the legacy of the Great War the Middle Eastern sand and bloodied bandage share from the left pocket of Phillipps’ jacket.¹⁵

⁹ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, ‘Web Summary Report [for Object GH025335]’.

¹⁰ Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’; A. W. Eaton, ‘Artifacts and Their Functions’, in *The Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture*, ed. by Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter (Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 35–53; McKergow, ‘Opening the Wardrobe of History’.

¹¹ F/S Andrew Crawford Fletcher, *Letter*, 17 June 1944, Paper, Collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, 2018.22.9 Gift of Mrs Margaret Hale-Owens <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/collections-research/collections/record/am_humanhistory-object-858903?c=ecrm%3AE22_Man-Made_Object&k=envelope%2C%20%20letter%20and%20cover%20letter&ordinal=0#gallery> [accessed 5 January 2023].

¹² *Naval Uniform - Frock Coat, Admiral of the Fleet*, with Lord Fisher, c 1904, Coat, Gift of Sir Thomas Mackenzie, date unknown, Collection of Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1223353>> [accessed 6 January 2023].

¹³ *Naval Uniform - Frock Coat, Admiral of the Fleet*.

¹⁴ *Military Uniform, Jacket, Service Dress, Other Ranks, 1912 Pattern*, with Abraham Levy, 1915 1914, Jacket, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Gift of W J Phillipps, 1955 <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1271954>> [accessed 7 January 2023].

¹⁵ Hunter and Ross, *Holding on to Home*, p. 1.

These form both practical and emotive narratives of individuals at war, from the poignant moments of a soldier leaving home, to the many long and homesick days on the battlefield. Hunter and Ross also write that many soldiers ensured to empty their uniform pockets out in advance of the final march on New Zealand soil, through crowds of well-wishers in the moments before they set sail. Mementos and tokens of home were given out to those embarking on war at this optimistic starting point and carried by many throughout their time away. Other items kept in pockets were more practical possessions, which provided basic comfort, something highly valued in the hostile and generally uncomfortable environment on the front. Connections to home and reminders of simple civilian life were also maintained through items carried in soldiers' pockets including John Booth's fire brigade ticket, and a lock of hair held by Sutherland McNeil.¹⁶

The practicality of a well-pocketed garment allows for the keeping of important items close, accessible and easily transportable for an individual away from home comforts and thrust into unfamiliar and likely harsh environments. This garment function was also utilised by those embarking on expeditions into other harsh climates, like that of Antarctica. The jacket of Oliver Shepard, mechanic on a three-man party expedition crossing the Antarctic in 1980 held the packaging of four consumable items, all likely used up on the journey.¹⁷ This included: the 'remains of Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate wrapper, a packet (unopened) of Nescafé Gold Blend Instant Coffee, a box of Marlboro Filter Cigarettes and three packets of matches with advertising on the packet on the packet reads 'Mosquito Bites Cause Malaria'.¹⁸ Each item bears likely familiar branding to those New Zealanders over a certain age, branding likely also creating nostalgia for home in the same manner as the familiar tokens which were kept in the military jacket pockets while away at war. The deep purple 'Cadbury' colour is iconic, the Nescafé, a comforting favourite coffee brand perhaps, and 'Marlboro' is an easily recognisable logo. In connection with the jacket which held them, they share a story of access to practical and familiar items when away from home. Though separated from the jacket and the narrative of their purpose, they are recognisable items, sharing recent histories of consumption. Pocket archives – both on the body in garments and held in carry bags – due to their

¹⁶ Hunter and Ross, *Holding on to Home*.

¹⁷ *Product Packaging*, with Oliver Shepard, Pre 1980, Ephemera, Collection of Canterbury Museum <<https://collection.canterburymuseum.com/objects/49145/product-packaging>> [accessed 2 January 2024].

¹⁸ *Product Packaging*

inherent mobility and ability to be kept close, share at points very personal and at others very practical insights into the wants, needs and necessities of the bodies that carry them.

Accessories: extending the concept of the pocket archive

Pocket archives may encompass bags and accessories in the absence of pocketed garments, but whether and how these objects are kept or collected has varied alongside shifting social and cultural practices. In discussing the carrying of items in pockets, at points away from home, often with limited pocket space, we also address what material culture is valued in different contexts. This also carries over to what museums identify as valuable when vessels are collected – at points unintentionally – and how that can change over time. Likewise, the nature of individuals gathering items together in pocket-like spaces can place perceived value on them.

In the 1970s a collection of buttons was gathered into a New World branded paper bag and donated to AWMM.¹⁹ This was collected by the Museum, not for the paper bag but for the button collection it held. Over time however the bag has increased in cultural value and found itself featured in an exhibition ‘Carried Away: Bags Unpacked’ at the museum, as it shared a social history narrative of shopping for everyday supermarket goods. This common practice has evolved over the years, an evolution which may be traced in recent times through the types of carry bags consumers used to transport their goods.²⁰ Initially paper bags were used, and following this the eponymous plastic bag became universal, which by the end of the 1980s, ‘almost entirely replaced paper bags around the world.’²¹ From 2019 these were banned in New Zealand, leading to the use of the reusable totes of today along with the purchasable handled paper bags and mini versions which are representative of

¹⁹ New World, *New World Bag*.

²⁰ Grace Lai, ‘Bags & Other Stories’, Carried Away: Bags Unpacked, 7 December 2021 <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/at-home/things-to-explore/virtual-exhibitions/carried-away>> [accessed 20 February 2025].

²¹ ‘From Birth to Ban: A History of the Plastic Shopping Bag’, United Nations Environment Programme, 20 December 2021 <<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/birth-ban-history-plastic-shopping-bag>> [accessed 20 February 2025].

an online shopping experience, harking back to the days of grocery delivery or grocery shop selection of goods for the customer, bringing us almost full circle.²²

Items purchased and carried in these bags, also consumable items in various forms themselves, often find their value changes over time. Along with the bag itself – as was the case in the change in value of the AWMM paper bag – these things have social lives. As identified by Trentmann, '[a]s they moved from producer via merchant to consumer they changed their meaning and role in society.'²³ Perhaps they also speak to the challenge of what to do with goods we have consumed when they are no longer able to fulfil their original purpose. A lipstick case held within the collection of NPM holds a range of (for want of a better word) 'things' we presume the owner Marjorie Naylor popped there at some point or over time.²⁴ As identified during observation at the Museum, this was 'an eclectic arrangement of items to be held within a lipstick case: unrelated to makeup but connected as clothing accessories.'²⁵ The small red lipstick case is holder of half a dozen seemingly unrelated miscellaneous items including two pocket watch winders, two broken chain attachments, an oval jewellery or button piece and a clothing stud. Whilst there is no insight into why this collection was gathered into the lipstick case and kept in Marjorie Naylor's home, in which it was gifted along with almost 200 items from her home to the museum following her death, we can hypothesise their meaning.

My interpretation of these items is a tidily tucked away collection of things that had lost or were awaiting the use of their original purpose. In the manner of Kopytoff and considering the biography these items each had, were they perhaps nearing the end of their active life, in retirement, gathered together in the lipstick case for their potential occasional use, or possible preparation for disposal?²⁶ Was the gathering together of this collection a preliminary step before the consumption of these

²² 'Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bag Ban: Facts for Businesses', Ministry for the Environment, 21 June 2021 <<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/birth-ban-history-plastic-shopping-bag>> [accessed 20 February 2025].

²³ *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, ed. by Frank Trentmann (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 8, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199561216.001.0001.

²⁴ *Lipstick Case and Accessories*, with Marjorie Naylor, n.d., Metal, glass, textile, plastic, Nelson Provincial Museum, Marjorie Naylor Collection <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/59121/lipstick-case-and-accessories>> [accessed 20 February 2025].

²⁵ Cerys Dallaway Davidson, 'Lipstick Case and Contents - Observation Notes', Research Notes, Nelson, 30 June 2023, Nelson Provincial Museum, Marjorie Naylor Collection <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/59121/lipstick-case-and-accessories>> [accessed 20 February 2025].

²⁶ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things'.

items was completed, allowing the user to group them together for their end-of-life status? They all have the appearance of aged and no longer useful items, even the lipstick case was noted during observation to be 'worn throughout, particularly at corners, with scratches across outer surface, suggesting it had been stuffed into bags, rubbing up against other items within. Internal lining is stained with rust-coloured stains around edges and mirror is degrading.'²⁷ However, my placement of my cultural values on these objects may not align with those of Ms Naylor's, something for which we will never know.

Consumable goods are alluded to in some other small carry bags identified. Whilst a couple of wallets unsurprisingly no longer held the money or monetary equivalent for which they were most likely initially procured for, they do however still hold evidence of goods that money would have been used to purchase. One wallet, made by the company 'by Baron', held a card identifying a series of FORD MODEL T TANKERS. With columns of codes, years, and one of description, four of the rows then crossed out, could this potentially be a wish list of items for purchase at an auction?²⁸ Another wallet holds a 1929 calendar and two New Zealand stamps, the stamps another form of currency, for the transportation of letters.²⁹ The calendar is an example of the rise in pocket-sized goods which was had in the early twentieth century. As identified by Hunter & Ross, during the period of the first world war a range of small-sized items were produced to allow for ease of sending over as gifts to those on the front, these had the dual benefit of being able to fit into pockets and to be carried on the person of soldiers.³⁰ The making of pocket-sized goods was one of many developments during the world wars which during peacetime stuck around in the general economy of goods for the useful purpose they had.³¹

Some other wallets and purses in this study were however found to have money left behind. A carved bone purse in AWMM's collection was found to be holding 'a 50 cent note dated March 1863, fractional currency or shinplasters, introduced by the United States Federal Government

²⁷ Dallaway Davidson, 'Lipstick Case and Contents - Observation Notes'.

²⁸ by Baron, *Wallet*, n.d., Leather, paper, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

²⁹ Alex Harvey & Sons Ltd., *Wallet*, c 1929, Imitation leather, paper, Puke Ariki
<<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/15399/wallet>> [accessed 7 January 2023].

³⁰ Hunter and Ross, *Holding on to Home*.

³¹ Bill Bryson, *At Home: A Short History of Private Life* (Black Swan, 2011).

following the outbreak of the civil war.’³² A Hospice Shop located a sizeable sum of money in an old wallet along with a poignant letter to the owner’s son. Both items were thought to be highly valuable by the staff and efforts were unsuccessfully made to locate a family member through the details in the letter to return the contents.³³ A purse donated at the same second-hand store was, however, able to be reunited with its owner, when it was discovered some valuable appearing contents had been left behind.³⁴ A 1984 photo of Patti Clark and her husband riding an elephant in Thailand, along with the ID of her late mother Kathryn, was found inside a purse purchased by Morgan McCaskill in 2023. The intriguing items led McCaskill on a social media-based treasure hunt, finding the daughter of the original purse owner through enquiries over Facebook.³⁵

In the same manner as garment pockets, accessories are unique receptacles of the material culture of their owners and users. Both accessory and contents share insight into their previous users in a similar manner as clothing, despite less security when carried off the body, illustrating the value of historic research into these objects. The concept of the pocket archive easily extends into this zone, as the world of garments likewise encompasses the world of accessories where carry bags lie. Whilst transferring less insight into the body, or the carrier as worn cloth does, we can see other pocketed spaces share archives on wearers.

Pockets on Display

Something yet to be explored is how pocket spaces in some cases are used as display settings. In many cases pockets are placed on clothing for their display aesthetic, sometimes with the purpose to display a pocketed item out the top. At times, the surfaces of garments serve as carriers of information about the wearer and communicate signals to their community, rather than functioning primarily as tools.

³² Jennifer Carol, ‘Carrying the Past’, *Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira Blog*, 2 July 2019 <<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/stories/blog/2019/carrying-the-past>> [accessed 13 March 2025].

³³ As the time of this research, the return of these had been unsuccessful.

³⁴ *Purse*, c. 1950s, Leather, paper, Hospice Shop, Thames, Waikato.

³⁵ Jim Birchall, ‘Op-Shop Purse Bought in Thames Triggers Series of Amazing Coincidences’, *Bay of Plenty Times* (Bay of Plenty, N. Z.), 22 May 2023 <<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/bay-of-plenty-times/news/op-shop-purse-bought-in-thames-triggers-series-of-amazing-coincidences/RUDFOEPDYBGWLKXSX2EA33INVUA/>>.

As examined, the biography of garments and insights into previous wearers can be obtained – though with varying degrees of detail and subject to the positionality of the interpreter – through the private space of the pocket. Carlson theorises that pockets were illuminating on their wearers due to the closeness of them to the body and the privacy of the space, she notes ‘because pockets were experienced as a quasi-extension of the person, the things held in them were thought to be especially revealing.’ She identifies that in *The Tempest*, Antonio asks, ‘Could your pockets “speak”? ... And if so, would they say you “lie”?’ suggesting we hide elements of our true selves within our pockets.³⁶ In the 1970s *The Press* reported that pockets were in fact being used to reveal the true character of the garment’s wearer during job interviews. Like a modern day psychometric test, it was thought that ‘what you have in your pockets — and your reaction when someone asks you to display the contents — is now regarded as a pretty significant key to how you would act under stress.’³⁷ What then of items held within pockets which are purposefully partially on display like pocket handkerchiefs, pens, fob watches and hands themselves, or displayed slightly afield from the pocket like decorative buttonholes, badges and pins. Would this curated selection of items chosen for display to the world be less or more revealing of the person which selected them than the items they keep hidden away within their pockets?

Another blazer style jacket found during this study with a potential tale to tell, was ‘speaking’ in the manner asked in *The Tempest* through its displayed badges and pins rather than its pocket contents.³⁸ The Goldwyn bowling blazer expanded my research scope from the already extended realm of accessories when it was collected for the plethora of badges and pins displayed across its front lapels.³⁹ Through its pinned and displayed material culture I set about uncovering this chapter in the garment’s biography. These items connected the blazer and in assumption its wearer to the community of the Wairarapa Bowling Centre in Landsdowne, Masterton. In the manner of Joan’s blazer discussed in chapter one, the information presented to the world on the external surface of this jacket share a clear link to a community presumably chosen by the wearer to show off. However,

³⁶ Carlson, *Pockets*, p. 39.

³⁷ Paul Wallace, ‘Pocket Test for Job Candidates’, *Press* (Christchurch), 27 December 1977, p. 7.

³⁸ Carlson, *Pockets*.

³⁹ Goldwyn Clothing and ARTHUR GILL & Co Ltd., *Blazer*, Mid-late twentieth century, Wool and polyester, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

unlike Joan's blazer, this jacket shares less private information about the wearer, e.g. the bobby pin and comb were indicators of Joan's hairstyle.

Similarly adorned garments feature in studio portrait collections across the country, capturing for example what may be the marching uniform of Jennifer Coull, worn with over 40 badges pinned to a bib on the waistcoat she wears. Eric John Barriball was likewise captured seated wearing Scouts "NZ Wolf Cubs" uniform with the badges delineating these details, as well as the Okato Rifle Team with a pin on each lapel.⁴⁰ Here the wearers' community is consciously captured in staged photography, the garment and its adornment appearing specifically chosen for the photographic occasion. Unlike the more private contents of our pockets, that which we display out the top or pinned to them appears consciously chosen not only to display to the world, but to purposefully capture in official photography such as this. The public life of the individual is curated and documented for display. How much this reveals of said individual we know from pocket contents examples, is only part of their and the garments biographies.

Through the recent century the pocketed area on the chest was a way to make a fashion statement, or fashion faux pas. 'Faults can be avoided' *The Press* decried in 1968 in a menswear fashion column, on the pocket handkerchief they stated, 'The pocket puff may be white or a colourful silk print, but the squared-off pocket handkerchief is out.'⁴¹ In February of the same year, they reported fashion designer Hardy Amies sporting a red handkerchief, accessorised on display from the top of the breast pocket of his 'English pinstripe suit with polka dot tie...'⁴² The year prior he identified this should clash spectacularly with the whole outfit.⁴³ Much earlier in 1899 *The New Zealand Graphic Ladies Journal* reported on the history of the pocket handkerchief suggesting its display origins were due to the bad

⁴⁰ Bernard Woods Studio, *Jennifer Coull*, 1960s, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/106398/jennifer-coull#&gid=1&pid=1>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Bernard Woods Studio, *Eric Barriball*, 1 March 1963, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/177918/eric-barriball>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Bernard Woods Studio, *Okato Rifle Team, Group*, 1939, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/147969/okato-rifle-team-group>> [accessed 7 January 2023].

⁴¹ 'Faults Can Be Avoided', *Press* (Canterbury), 2 April 1968, 31644th edn, p. 23, Papers Past <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19680402.2.149>> [accessed 7 April 2025].

⁴² 'Bright Show of Men's Fashions', *Press* (Canterbury), 29 February 1968, 31616th edn, p. 12, Papers Past <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19680229.2.110>> [accessed 7 April 2025].

⁴³ 'No Thought For Tubby People', *Press* (Canterbury), 14 February 1967, 31294th edn, p. 9 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/CHP19670214.2.91>> [accessed 7 April 2025].

teeth of Empress Josephine who constantly fluttered decorative ones across her mouth to hide them.⁴⁴ Whether this is gossip or fact, it does outline that it was a topic of conversation as does numerous entries in the *New Zealand Women's Weekly* through the mid twentieth century. Men are, in particular, pictured (both photographed and illustrated) with neatly displayed pocket handkerchiefs out the top of not only suit jacket pockets, but also in some cases dressing gown pockets.⁴⁵

Through studio portraiture in the mid-twentieth century, peeking out the tops of pockets – in particular left breast patch pockets – more handkerchiefs can be found, along with pocket watches, pens, possible notebooks and hands themselves.⁴⁶ Through this time 'Twentieth-century designers began to explore pockets in women's garments as elements that could be as fashionable as they were functional.'⁴⁷ Unsurprisingly, these pockets were made use of not only for their practicality, but for display and fashion. Considering this with decorative buttonholes on lapels and badges pinned to clothing, the display of accessories across garment surfaces is a way to billboard messages of the wearer.⁴⁸ This may be simple fashion or style statements, though can also indicate a wearer's

⁴⁴ 'History of Pocket Handkerchiefs', *New Zealand Graphic Ladies Journal* (Auckland), 13 May 1899, XIX Edition, p. 630, Papers Past <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/NZGRAP18990513.2.10>> [accessed 7 April 2025].

⁴⁵ For example: Pamela, 'Winter Cosiness for the Adults of the Family', *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 3.22 (1935), p. 43; 'Clark Gable's Story of His Life', *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 6.49 (1938), pp. 10–11; 'Two Years Overseas... Wellingtonian Returns Home', *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 1 September 1949, p. 42; 'High Fashion "Boutique" for Men', *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, 1 July 1957, pp. 44–45.

⁴⁶ Bernard Woods Studio, *Gilbert, Wedding*, 1941, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/157605/gilbert-wedding>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Swainson's Studios, *Lines, Woman*, 5 November 1958, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/98034/lines-woman>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Swainson's Studios, *Sisarich, Man*, 3 August 1948, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/49277/sisarich-man>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Bernard Woods Studio, *New Plymouth Boys High School, Boy*, 3 February 1977, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/173146/new-plymouth-boys-high-school-boy>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Swainson's Studios, *Beamish, Boy*, 1929 1928, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/75359/beamish-boy>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Swainson's Studios, *Genden, Boy*, 1934 1933, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/84280/genden-boy>> [accessed 7 January 2023].

⁴⁷ School of Graduate Studies, *Pockets to Purses: Fashion + Function* (The Museum at FIT, 2018) <<https://exhibitions.fitnyc.edu/pockets-to-purses/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/05/Pockets-to-Purses-Brochure-FINAL.pdf>> [accessed 14 March 2025].

⁴⁸ Bernard Woods Studio, *George and Mary Julian*, By 1940, Photograph, Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries <<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/135995/george-and-mary-julian>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Bernard Woods Studio, *Eric Barriball*, 1 March 1963, Photograph,

occupation, affiliations or simply conscientiousness to be prepared for any situation which requires a pen for example.

Being prepared was a motto of the Girl Guides, and the use of pockets to carry what might be needed in any given situation was part of the course. Included in the display in AWMM's past 'Wild Child' gallery was a section on girl guiding with a double patch pocketed uniform and selection of the items a prepared girl guide would hold in their pockets:

The Girl Guide who was prepared for any emergency carried in her pocket a notebook, a pencil, a piece of string, two pennies (to make a phone call) and in an envelope had a clean handkerchief which could be used as a bandage.⁴⁹

Alongside the items within their pockets, Girl Guides are one of many groups who denoted their membership through the display of badges on the uniform.

Badges and pins attached to garments' outer surfaces proclaim membership to clubs and alliances and document achievements won. Tiny little billboards on the garments' surface, often pinned or stitched to an outer pocket, share a piece of the story of the wearers' place in the world. Katherine Hermes notes, they 'once lived over someone's beating heart, proudly proclaiming a point of view, an identity, an alliance with a cause'.⁵⁰ As opposed to hidden pocketed items, badges and pins are consciously, constantly on display during garment wear, sharing public aspects of the wearer to their communities.

Swainson/Woods Collection, Puke Ariki and District Libraries
<<https://collection.pukeariki.com/objects/177918/eric-barriball>> [accessed 7 January 2023]; Bernard Woods Studio, *Okato Rifle Team, Group*.

⁴⁹ This text is from the label when the item was displayed in the 'Wild Child' display, a past exhibit at AWMM. Unfortunately, the curator was unable to identify an object number linked to the record, suggesting it was likely in a backlog collection following the decant of the gallery some years prior. The display can however be viewed virtually here: <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/at-home/things-to-explore/virtual-tours>. The exhibition label also identified that the display was *Presented C Landels, Cavell Coy 1999*.

⁵⁰ Stephanie Gibson and Claire Regnault, *Tiny Statements: A Social History of Aotearoa New Zealand in Badges* (Te Papa Press, 2023), p. 8.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the importance of an expansive conceptualisation of what counts as a pocket archive. In taking a broader view of the pocket in this chapter, considering pockets from a fibre level out to the garment surface and into accessories we gain further insight into garment and wearer biographies, their community connections, personal lives and more. All these varied pocketed zones are informative when the combination of garment or accessory and pocket contents data is considered together. Alongside highlighting the pocket as a liminal zone, pocket inequality contributes to and demonstrates the sexism experienced in dress through time. To account for this inequality, I argue that carry bags should be likewise considered pocket archives, which in turn reveals insight into such spaces for keeping items private or close by when in extreme or harsh environments and the deeply personal experiences of trauma encoded in these small but carefully curated collections. Finally, we explored what is displayed atop pockets and adjacent, revealing details on both the private and public lives of the wearer or carrier. Social lives and material worlds collide in various ways: at times hidden within the pocket, at other moments displayed proudly atop, or even sewn into fabric itself.

The complex life of our clothes is very much told across their surfaces as well as within the pockets of both garments and accessories. These spaces share private and public tales through pocket and fibre layers. Many worn pocket-filled garments discussed in this chapter speak to the bodies garments hold, and the messy nuanced, complicated, and embodied stories about past lives. These bodies which sneeze and require tissues and handkerchiefs; with long hair, requiring bobby pins and combs at the ready; desire pockets to house facemasks to navigate worldwide pandemics; manage life in harsh environments; hide away their struggles, or desires and personal details, tucking within inner pockets; to others who emblazon their community connections onto the surface of their wear. In expanding the scope of the pocket archive, and in examining numerous and diverse types of pocketed spaces, we see how the pocket archive shares a range of unique insights into past lives.

Chapter Three

Pocket Archives, the Wearer's Perspective

As discussed in the introduction, I keep within the pocket of a jacket I inherited from my grandmother a pristine, neatly folded, lace trimmed white handkerchief.¹ I found it there upon my inheritance of the jacket, and I have ever since left it in place due to the memory it brings of her through the tactile moment of touch in finding it in my pocket when I wear the jacket. When I was sharing details of my thesis project with one of my sisters, I was surprised to find she also keeps a similar handkerchief of our grandmother's in the pocket of a jacket she likewise inherited.² In the same manner, she has kept it within the pocket as a connection point to our grandmother when she wears the garment. Mida and Kim identify the act of pocket use for memory keeping, noting:

Pockets were choice receptacles for mementos given by loved ones: worn close to the body, the gift mirrored the emotional closeness of donor and recipient. Such physical proximity is associated by anthropologists and sociologists with intimacy and intense sentimental investment.³

While I was not consciously carrying the handkerchief in this exact manner, for its closeness to my body, I felt instead there was an element of practicality and frequency of proximity to something which connected me to my late grandmother. Instead of being packed away for safekeeping in a trunk or similar, this memento had an active afterlife in the less static location of a pocket, within a garment regularly worn. The private space of the jacket pocket allowed this memento to travel and connect to the wearer more regularly and to be incorporated into daily activities. I believe here there may also be a relational element in play. The relationship between the garment and pocketed item or items results in a desire to keep these items linked physically. The repository space of a pocket provides this when the item relates to the person who wore the garment. In the case of my sister's and my inherited jackets and handkerchiefs, an important element is that both items were our grandmother's

¹ Max, *Leather Jacket*, with Cerys Dallaway Davidson and Joan Dallaway, c. 2010s, Leather, polyester, Researchers own

² Cerys Dallaway Davidson, interview with Chloe, (Auckland), March 2023, Conversation.

³ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 202.

and that she herself had placed them there. If they were stored away separately this provenance might be lost.

This chapter gives agency to wearers, and in doing so considers some of our uses of pockets and why we keep what we do within them, testing the pocket archive theory through interviews with pocket wearers. At this point we have discussed garments from both museum and second-hand store collections, identifying biographies which can be interpreted from each through the tales they tell both in their fibres and tucked within their pockets. Alongside, we have surveyed a wealth of topics found when considering the site of a pocket filled garment. Many of the examples to this point had little provenance however, due to historic museum registration practices and the nature of utilising anonymous second-hand store sourced research subjects. Through this chapter, we can gain potential insight to aid in reading historic pockets by collecting some personal experiences of contemporary garment wear and pocket use. This is with the caveat that within the confines of this thesis, a wider scope engagement with the public was not possible, and instead what follows are insights gathered from my community through interview and other correspondence, I am conscious of the limitations of my community and potential bias to narratives within. Likewise, we understand how people use pockets today is not necessarily the same as how they did in the past.

Insights were gathered from seven participants through either semi-structured interviews or written correspondence, at the discretion of each individual. I gained ethics approval before starting any interviews, and information sheets and consent forms were completed by research participants.⁴ Pseudonyms have been used where requested. The full interviews discussed the participants' use of pockets in garments and accessories day-to-day, whether they keep anything in their pockets not specifically for day-to-day activities and whether they had found unexpected things in their pockets and the feelings this brought up (appendix C).

Throughout both the interviews and the literature, we see the wide range of spaces we might use in a similar manner to the pocket spaces in garments and accessories, and often for keeping precious or personal information or treasures. Several individuals made use of their pockets as little archive spaces to hold memories of place, time or person. What also comes through, however, is evidence of the multilayered manner through which textile-based pockets can hold memory of these things

⁴ Research ethics was approved by the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology & Social Sciences Human Research Ethics on 1 December, 2023. Research ethics reference number: FS2023-56

and the people who used them, in a manner which other materials or vessels might not. Likewise, alongside 'mute objects' we encounter textual records in pockets and pocket-sized material giving voice to these items in a multi-fold manner.⁵

Pockets as Memory Keeping Spaces

While talking about tie-on pockets, Burman and Fennetaux consider pockets spaces which provided intimate contact between 'self and other' and 'in turn, could become embodiments of their owners'.⁶ They describe a pocket from 1733, which held memory of its past owner through both embroidery recording their name and date of use, as well as physical wear from the body which had worn it, and markings of past makers and menders. They further identify pockets and textile/clothing in general:

As embodiments of memory and identity. Any act of object making that may potentially outlive the maker is also an act against oblivion. The distinctiveness of a binding or shape, the particularity of a stitch or a darn, the unique creases and strains imprinted in cloth from wear - what tailors call 'memory' - the distinctive ability of a textile to retain intimate sensory traces of the body, all these mean that any pocket could embody its maker, turning it into a unique material register of the self.⁷

This literature and the reflections of my sister and I on the use of pockets as consciously kept archiving spaces, suggested a new type of pocket archive, one that held a different vantage point to the more practical or empirical pocket inventories I have been considering. Often, I was assuming the items found within pockets were for practical reasons and was therefore composing biography of the garment within that light, thinking of the contents that archive a moment in time for the wearer. Sentimental reasons, however, are generally personal to the wearer, and it can be challenging to deduce when an item is there for reasons other than its functional purpose. Burman and Trubin believe however that more than surface level information on the wearer may be determined by pockets.⁸ In considering the report of an inventory of a lost tie on pocket, they note that while the owner is not revealed, a great deal about her can be deduced by her pocket contents alone, including

⁵ Prown, 'Mind in Matter', p. 7.

⁶ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 212.

⁷ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 215.

⁸ Burman and Turbin, *Material Strategies*, p. 12.

the care and value placed on certain items through their treatment, noting a mourning ring which was carefully wrapped in paper within. The treatment of items in the pocket can help identify their use or purpose for being there.

Much like my sister and I, findings from other research participants identified that the small vessel of the pocket is a choice receptacle for memory keeping. Lily, who runs a second-hand clothing store online mentioned in the introduction also shared with me insight into her personal use of pockets as archives. She has a 1994 Canterbury brand Americas Cup work jacket in her wardrobe. After not having worn it for many years, she found in its pocket a ticket stub & US \$1 bill.⁹ Since finding this she now keeps these items permanently in the jacket's pockets in memory of that time in her life.

Likewise, Liz keeps a special collection which she transfers to every handbag she uses so that the items may be with her always.¹⁰ Instead of a paper wrapping outlined by Burman and Trubin she uses the inner pocket of a handbag and a business card holder branded as the Penguin book *Lost Girl* by D H Lawrence, to hold her "little treasures".¹¹ Alongside a broken key ring holding a photo of her son around age three, there is a love note from her partner and a drawing from her stepdaughter. Interestingly, these are gathered together with some practical items, sitting snugly alongside her business cards - being that it is a business card holder - a few slips of paper with unknown pin numbers on them (perhaps kept here as she knows it is a collection of things she keeps safe) as well as postage stamps.

Liz has a ritual of transferring her "little talisman" in the regular process of changing her handbags to match her outfits. She often connects with the sentimental items in this cache during the process, noting how they make her smile. At the time of interview, she was commuting between her workplace and home weekly, and she suggested this was likely a subconscious moment of connection she sought. She identified:

When I look at that little love note from Ed. I'll immediately be transported back to the house he was living in at that time on his own. And you know, like it's a, it's a very, it's quite a visceral thing. Like I can suddenly remember what it smelled like there and what his cat looked like.¹²

⁹ Lily, Social media message.

¹⁰ Cerys Dallaway Davidson, interview with Liz, (Hamilton), 17 October 2024, Audio recorded.

¹¹ Liz, Audio recorded, 03:40.

¹² Liz, Audio recorded, 13:14.

Liz also has one florin coin from 1951 which she carries in her money purse, she notes that:

I think my grandmother gave me a purse when I was a little girl and she put that in it because it was, you know, obviously not legal tender then and it was a bit of a treasure. I probably would have been like nine or something like that. And so, every... I don't change purse very often, but every time I do that goes into a little part of my purse. Yeah. Every purse I've ever had I've carried that florin around.¹³

These memory-keeping artefacts are consciously chosen to move around with Liz and be accessible daily. At one point she notes, even if she is just going out for an evening, they will transfer to her evening bag. The carrying of them on her, choosing to retain them and connect with the memories associated with each item when she transitions the contents of her handbag is a miniature version of what Marcoux describes: 'things that people move with them are at the heart of the constitution of a memory which often resists displacements.'¹⁴

Lorraine also carries items in various parts of her handbag that are memory holders.¹⁵ This includes shells, a Palm Sunday cross, a small, dried daffodil, pieces of wool from garments knitted for grandchildren, pegs which remind her of her practical father, and an unexpected bangle connected to her mother. She describes the memories associated with one of these items: "[...] this is a piece of silk. Silk wool [...] something I originally had for a practical reason, but now because, I have finished the knitting of it of the garment, it reminds me of my youngest granddaughter."¹⁶ She also notes scraps of wool from knitting for some of her other grandchildren when they were babies. These scraps were in her wallet outer pocket: "so that's a tangible reminder of my grandchildren who are very special and it's just an easy thing to carry around."¹⁷

Burman & Fennetaux identify the personal nature of pocket spaces and how the inclusion of textile-based materials to also decorate them highlighted this heightened meaning the items within held.¹⁸ Along with well-made pockets highly embroidered with love and care, the embroidering of makers

¹³ Liz, Audio recorded, 08:48.

¹⁴ Jean-Sébastien Marcoux, 'The Refurbishment of Memory', in *Home Possessions*, ed. by Daniel Miller, 1st edn (Routledge, 2001), pp. 69–86 (p. 70), doi:10.4324/9781003085607-5.

¹⁵ Cerys Dallaway Davidson, interview with Lorraine, (Auckland), 28 February 2024, Audio recorded interview.

¹⁶ Lorraine, Audio recorded interview, 13:14.

¹⁷ Lorraine, Audio recorded interview, 13:32.

¹⁸ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 205.

and loved one's initials, personalisation through decoration, and creation with reused textiles associated with loved ones illustrate personal memories held in the item. Likewise, reusing textiles associated with loved ones carried memories into a new item. The authors share an example of a mother marking her absent son's birthday with the creation of a pincushion with a scrap of fabric from a coat belonging to him. They write that 'Patchwork was a way in which scraps and off cuts, 'tangible fragments of the past', could be pieced together in an object that potentially carried a whole life story or even a family history over several generations.'¹⁹ The scraps of wool Lorraine keeps in her wallet suggest a modern-day representation of this.

Similarly related to craft, Susan keeps her mother's membership card from a local craft group as a memento, which was found in her late Mother's regularly used handbag after her aunt inherited it:

[The handbag] was small but had a lot of useful pockets. She found in it mum's membership card for Rotorua Creative Fibre (branch of the NZ Spinning, Weaving and Woolcrafts Society). Mum had attached it to a handmade cord made from hand spun black wool.

The card was for 2012, which was probably the last year that mum attended meetings, exhibitions and competitions as after that my father's dementia made it difficult for her to leave him alone for very long. Not long after he died in 2014, she sustained an injury that meant she couldn't knit or weave anymore and she stopped going to meetings.

So, it had been in a small pocket in the bag for 10 years (mum died in 2022). I don't know if she forgot about it or kept it on purpose, though I suspect the latter. She was a very creative and talented knitter, weaver, and felter, and loved the fellowship of the society and the challenge of learning new techniques and creating things for exhibitions. I have a photograph of her wearing not that membership card but the previous year's, on the same cord, standing by her prizewinning floral tea cosy.²⁰

Susan's suggestion that her mother kept this card purposefully echoes the findings of Burman and Fennetaux. They identify that, whilst numerous pockets in their survey bore the initials of the owner for practical purposes, particularly as laundry marks, many were marked in more personal and

¹⁹ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 205.

²⁰ Susan, 'My Mother's Handbag', personal communication to Cerys Dallaway Davidson, 15 March 2024.

elaborate manners.²¹ This signifies both 'assertions of identity and ownership', and I would suggest is also a telling sign that the item itself and those kept alongside were treasured.²² This could be a good tool in analysing pocket contents which are utilitarian versus those for memory keeping. Both the handmade connected textiles and the name inscribed, along with it being found 10 years following its last known use, suggest the sentimentality the card held for Susan's mother.

Sian also identified numerous items kept in her handbag which held sentimental meaning, like a picture made by one of her grandchildren, a card from a game of mini golf with a friend and a wedding order of service found in a purse which hadn't been used since attending the wedding.²³ Likewise, she identified items held in pockets which evoked other feelings of disgust, like used tissues, or anxiety when locating a past Covid-19 mask. Sian highlighted that like any vessel, pockets have the ability to hold contents that might produce a range of emotions when an unknown item within is encountered, from sentimentality to disgust, to sadness, happiness, anger and beyond.

Sian identified a locket of her mothers, which used to hold 5c coins, able to be slotted out as if by magic. Previously used to entertain grandchildren, she herself now carries on the tradition with her own spin, keeping 10c and 20c coins in it.

[...] she would always give her 5 cents worth. And so, and this is probably gonna seem a bit funny, a bit silly maybe, but I've put a 10, a 10-cent piece and a 20-cent piece in there because sometimes I give my 10-cents worth and sometimes I give my 20-cents worth.²⁴

Daniel was the only male interviewed. He generally made more practical use of pockets and despite mentioning past use of a backpack during work commutes, did not make use of bag pockets as the majority of the female correspondents did.²⁵ He predominantly discussed his clothing pockets, and the general practical uses they had. He identified that other than said handkerchief (which he had mentioned earlier was always a constant in his pocket), there were three things which went into his pockets: "Car keys, wallet, and what is now, of course, the ubiquitous cell phone."²⁶ Daniel suggested

²¹Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*.

²² Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 203.

²³ Cerys Dallaway Davidson, interview with Sian, (Hamilton & Auckland), 15 May 2024, Zoom recorded interview.

²⁴ Sian, Zoom recorded interview, 15:43.

²⁵ Daniel, interview with Cerys Dallaway Davidson, 27 February 2024, Audio recorded interview.

²⁶ Daniel, Audio recorded interview, 01:41.

he does not use any pockets for sentimental reasons. However, later in the interview he identified that he kept a unique item in his wallet pocket for some time following the period it was in use. He previously kept a guitar pick in the coin section of his wallet for years following playing bass guitar in a band in his 20s, which he gave up following the birth of his second daughter. This pick had transferred through a few different wallets over a period of around three decades. He indicated this was not for sentimental reasons, though it does provide context about Daniel as a guitar player at some point in his life. The guitar pick is suggestive of his imagined self – as a past player and perhaps a future one – more than the present reality of him as a guitar player. A tangible link to a different stage of life before parenthood drew time and energy to new things does suggest some nostalgia or fondness for this past, or an intention to return to playing, despite his disavowal of its sentimental potential.

Pocket Like Spaces

Daniel made an interesting observation – something which a curator at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM) also identified – in that cell phones are pocketable items also holding vast personal information and digital versions of many pocket-sized artefacts. The curator at the Museum referred to a girl guide’s pocketbook displayed in a past exhibit (as discussed in chapter two), which outlined the recommended items a girl guide should always have in her pockets including notebook, pencil, string, pennies, envelope and clean handkerchief.²⁷ Excluding perhaps the hanky and string the curator reflected that many of the items are now available to us in digital form on a cell phone. Likewise, as mentioned in the introduction, Chrisman-Campbell compares a woman’s pocket contents to the apps on her phone in response to Burman & Fennetaux’s publication.²⁸ Daniel shared similar thoughts, querying the personal information held on individuals tucked into the digital space of a cell phone:

²⁷ This text is from the label when the item was displayed in the ‘Wild Child’ display, a past exhibit at the Museum. Unfortunately, the curator was unable to identify an object number linked to the record, suggesting it was likely in a backlog collection following the decant of the gallery some years prior. The display can however be viewed virtually here: <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/at-home/things-to-explore/virtual-tours>. The exhibition label also identified that the display was *Presented C Landels, Cavell Coy 1999*.

²⁸ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*; Chrisman-Campbell, ‘Barbara Burman and Ariane Fennetaux, The Pocket’.

Interestingly though is what's sitting on our cell phones, because you sit and think about it. There's a huge amount of information. What, what you choose to put on your cell phone is, is interesting and that [...] is something we now carry around with us personally. You know. I've got. Authentication type apps. I've got all of my password vault is on my cell phone. I have got some games that I regularly play. I've got [...] the Met Service application. Online banking. Probably not surprising. Some e-mail things.²⁹

He goes onto identify the notes he also keeps within, on music that he would like to get and things he is planning. Likewise, the photos we keep on our phones are huge visual archives to our lives. This alludes to the broader range of pocket-like spaces – beyond garments and accessories – utilised for personal record keeping.

Further off the body, Lorraine mentioned a pocket like space in her car which she uses for collecting sentimental items. Along with her handbag as previously identified, Lorraine also keeps shells in the side door of her car.

I know it's not in a bag and it's not a pocket, but in the, in the passenger door of my car. Even if I swap cars as in go to buying a new car, I will move what's in the passenger door, to the next car and it's bits of rock and shells from [my favourite] Bay, which is my turangawaewae I suppose and it's where my mother would go as a young mother, after she lost [her baby] who was born before me and, then, when she was pregnant with me, and then when I was in a bassinet as a very young child. And I'd stay in a bach. And I would go as a young child. And then I took my girls when they were older. So that is my spiritual home. And every time I go back [there I] will try and go there and every single time I go back there, I will take a little trinket and it's in the passenger side of that car. And sometimes I may put it in my handbag.³⁰

It is almost as if the transient nature of a vehicle, with the ability to take her to the place which she connects to as her spiritual home is chosen as the archive keeping area. That and perhaps the impracticality of carrying shells from each visit in her handbag. I note that at one point in the interview she mentions issues she has with her shoulder when it becomes too heavy from time to time. It is

²⁹ Daniel, Audio recorded interview, 11:21.

³⁰ Lorraine, Audio recorded interview, 07:39.

interesting however that these items do not make it into the house she lives in, perhaps they do not match to the association of the place which really makes her feel at home.

The use of a pocket-like space within a house is also highlighted in the collections at Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa). As discussed in chapter two, the Randell Cottage collection holds a set of items gathered by the three youngest girls and tucked into a pocket of space literally within the walls of the house.³¹ Burman and Fennetaux also share details on finding items in the wall space of a house. This was the contents of a tie-on pocket which held a baby's bonnet, pointing to the womb like nature of a pocket.³² Here the items kept had a double layer of encasing, firstly within the soft cloth of a tie-on pocket and then within the harder, though more permanent walls of a domestic space. Both these examples signify either the preciousness of the items being kept, or the secrecy surrounding them or both.

In comparing these other pocket-like spaces to garment and accessory pockets, I argue however that there is something distinctive about cloth, and the memory holding nature of it, both through our associations with it and the physical nature of fabric – impressionable by the more solid shapes it encounters. Windsor and Liscombe address this impressionable nature of garments, suggesting it as two-fold, connected to the physical and mental. They note 'clothing, worn on our physical bodies, selected by the psychological 'body', has memory pressed into its very substance [...]'³³ They go on to say that:

In a real sense, clothing can perform as a holder of memory. In being worn clothing takes on aspects of the wearer's body that can alter the very substance and even texture of the fibre, while also being invested with new meaning through the process of wearing.³⁴

Whilst as I suggested earlier this insight can often be personal to the wearer, they also identify that the process can be applied to historic clothing which they believe 'maintains an aura', similar to what Burman and Fennetaux outline that tailors call 'memory' in cloth as already discussed.³⁵

³¹ Townsend, 'The Randell Cottage Collection'.

³² Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 210.

³³ Windsor- Liscombe, 'Fabrics of Memory', p. 5.

³⁴ Windsor- Liscombe, 'Fabrics of Memory', p. 5.

³⁵ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p. 215.

This memory-keeping nature in cloth illustrates the layers of history or memory held by clothing pocket archives. In many of the interviews conducted, the wearers' use of pockets in a day-to-day manner were also discussed. Standard modern items such as cell phones, wallets, reading glasses, access fobs or keys and tissues or handkerchiefs and, for one wearer, her hands were identified as kept within clothing pockets on the body. These items were there for generally the practical reasons. However, as fabric holds memory, over years of use these items along with the bodies held within imprint their hard edges onto the cloth. Edges of wallets create lines of wear; tissues and handkerchiefs shed their fibres into lint fluff; and hands themselves along with all the curves of a body embed sag and wear to the cloth in the same manner as our own skin which loosens and thins over the years.

Textual Pocket Finds

A key focus of this thesis is the exploration of objects rather than textual sources. Pocketed items found through this study and discussed by these participants also includes textual based materials. Already mentioned for example are receipts and business cards which with arguably simpler reading of the text within give easy insights into date, place or person. Through these interviews Liz shared details of a love note, Susan a membership card, and Sian a wedding invitation, all sharing their memories through the written word.

Memory is also very consciously kept as written by diary writers, with pocket diaries arguably memory keeping tools three-fold: the memory of the diary as an object, worn as handled by its user; then in the memories written inside; and finally, the imprints it makes to the pocket it was held within. As noted in the previous chapter, Hunter and Ross identify that this range of items were developed during WWI, for their ease to be sent to the front and be carried by soldiers.³⁶ They note that many kept these pocket diaries, along with letters from loved ones to maintain a link to home. Many varieties of diaries were developed by retailers including tear off varieties to send home as letters.

³⁶ Hunter and Ross, *Holding on to Home*, p. 45.

Lorraine shared that she has created her own version of a pocket diary, through the keeping of docketts and small ephemera from memorable events within a compartment in her wallet in her handbag:

I keep docketts and pieces of paper that relate to parts of my life that are very special, as in, sort of like moments in your life which you, you remember far more than, say, other parts of your life. So, in here are like special docketts. Or as I said bits of paper that relate to places I have been or people I have encountered. If I touch it, I can tell you where I was. Who was there? What happened? And to me, it's like a little mini visual diary.³⁷

She shared that she used to keep a diary through her teenage years and then consciously across the years she had her babies, stopping when her youngest was one. She still wished to capture memorable moments in this perhaps easier manner in the hope to one day write a brief memoir. The gathering place in her wallet of these papers appears to be the practicality of the mobility of the wallet in her handbag traveling with her day-to-day. She identifies that the material is filed away when it becomes too large, into a dedicated spot on her bookshelf.

In the collections of Te Papa and the University of Waikato (UOW) are two sets of pocket diaries, though both are separated from their pockets. Held by the former, Lya Riley's diaries span the mid-late 1930s. They detail her everyday life in Vienna in the lead up to WWII, recording in the last diary her movement to England just before the declaration of war.³⁸ Lya would later emigrate to New Zealand with her mother. Recordings in the diary vary from brief daily noting of attendance at school to detailed entries on holidays and attendances at concerts and other performances, illustrating the weight she placed on recording memories of the different events in her life.³⁹ The holiday recordings also illustrate that the diaries travelled with Lya, and were mobile in the pockets of either her clothing or luggage in some way.

³⁷ Lorraine, Audio recorded interview, 14:49.

³⁸ Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 'Lya Riley's Collection', Topic Page, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, n.d. <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/11098>> [accessed 4 September 2025]; Katie Cooper, *Lya Riley (Née Kleinmann), 1921–2024*, 10 June 2024 <<https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2024/06/10/lya-riley-nee-kleinmann-1921-2024/?cn-reloaded=1>> [accessed 2 April 2026].

³⁹ Lya Riley, 'Pocket Diary', Vienna, 1937, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Gift of Lya Riley, 2022 <<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/2038458?page=1&rtp=1&ros=1&asr=1&assoc=all&mb=c>> [accessed 4 September 2025].

The UOW Library holds a collection of six pocket diaries of Richard Grant of Hamilton.⁴⁰ Richard's diaries also detail his daily life, recording his job, activities with wife, friends and other family members. Like Lya's diaries these did not come into a public collection connected to any pocket. Instead, this set of diaries were quite separated from other artefacts or provenance of the diary keeper, as they were recovered from a dump sale for \$5 by one of the librarians working with the collection. In a journal article on the diaries, Parsons writes on the insights she was able to ascertain from the diaries about Richard's life, noting the recordings were not very personal, though gave the sense that there was a useful purpose to him in recording his everyday events and activities.⁴¹ Perhaps more would have been revealed on Richard if other material culture connected to the diaries were also to be retained.

These two pocket diary collections beg the question of how our insights are impacted when there is no pocket, or pocket-like space at all? In reading the diaries of Lya and Richard I got the sense, whether rightly or wrongly, that the diaries were not necessarily carried around in each of the writers' pockets or carry bags day-to-day, but perhaps just a handy small size to keep these brief personal recordings of the writers' day, small and more private. This may have been for the simple fact that I was not able to engage with any 'pocket' they may have come from. In other areas of this thesis, separated pocket contents were also found: AWMM holds a pocket collection without its pocket (discussed in chapter two), and a wedding dress (discussed in chapter four) had had its pocket contents separated and recovered by happenstance following my research enquiry to them.⁴²

In sharing my research enquiries across the motu, other museums suggested they cleared the pockets of garments out upon donation, some hadn't recorded which pocket items came from. These un-pocketed, separated collections, or empty pockets help us consider what is lost when we adjust what we might term the 'original order' (borrowing from terminology in archival practice) of a museum collection acquisition. The term 'original order' derives from archival practice, where the

⁴⁰ Richard Grant, 'R.S. Grant Diaries', Hamilton, 1950 1945, University of Waikato
<<https://onehera.waikato.ac.nz/nodes/view/5219>> [accessed 4 September 2025].

⁴¹ Kathryn Parsons, 'Opening the Pages of a Man's Life, 1940s', *The New Zealand Journal of Public History*, 2.1 (2013) <https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=FL18569936> [accessed 21 September 2025].

⁴² *Pocket Collection; The Wedding Dress*, 1860s, Silk taffeta, Collection of Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira, 1975.208, T606
<<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/10233?tag=wedding+dresses+across+cultures>> [accessed 12 April 2024].

sequence or arrangement of records by the original archive holder is maintained during the arrangement and description process.⁴³ The theory is that this order, alongside maintaining the principle of provenance may give insight into the archive holder's use of the material and is a valuable tool when researching in the archive. In pocketed garments we lose potential insight into a wearers dominant hand, whether items were tucked deeply in internal pockets for their value or secrecy, or if items were designated for display atop a particular pocket illuminating the personal styling of a garment. The principle of 'original order' retains these insights, which whilst may not always be evident at the time, may be revealed by some researcher in the future.

Conclusion

Personal insights from a select sample of garment wearers and pocket users as discussed in this chapter are useful in decoding pocket archives of the past. Through these discussions the pocket is further revealed as a site of memory, at times not only a space for interpreting the past wearer and the historic context through the items left behind in a garment's pockets, but also as both a passive and actively maintained archive space by the wearer or user of the garment or accessory. Details of pocket use by wearers in turn provide further insight into the value of research within this site. Evidence of the memory keeping nature of cloth itself, something which comes through also in previous chapters is again highlighted as the interview recipients and related examples by contrast make us consider the breadth of what we define as a pocket archive and how we make use of pocket-sized things. From car doors and gaps in the walls of homes, to pocket diaries and cell phones, in connection to chapter two, the breadth of research within this small space is expanded further. Likewise, in looking closely at textual sources found in pockets the materiality and textuality identify numerous ways to interpret and understand garment biographies.

Pockets in garments and bags are however distinctive for materiality, often made of cloth, which I have identified carries memory from the bodies that wear them as well as the items pocketed within them. Even with bags made from materials sturdier than cloth, they experience similar everyday use and the same closeness with the body, imprinting on shoulders for example, experiencing similar

⁴³ Joanne Evans, Sue McKemmish, and Barbara Reed, 'Archival Arrangement and Description', in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, ed. by John D. McDonald and Michael Levine-Clark, 4th edn (CRC Press, 2018), pp. 115–26, doi:10.1081/E-ELIS4-18.

connection to the pocketed items and holding often deeply personal objects. It is these distinctive characteristics which perhaps provide the extent to which I might define a pocket archive. The pocket-like spaces further from the body and of different materiality do not share the same characteristics. Having defined the concept of the pocket archive and now drawing a line in the sand as to its limits, we will return to the methods in the next chapter to see where their extent might lie.

Chapter Four

Finding the Seams: exploring the edges of object biography and creative methodologies with pocket archives

This final chapter looks at how much further we can take the methodologies and the concept of the pocket archive discussed thus far. I explore the concept of object biography in the manner proposed by Kopytoff alongside broad creative methodologies, picking up from the ‘embodied turn’ in the dress history field.¹ This chapter takes a deep approach in two sections, both combining different creative interventions with the material culture methodological framework already examined in the thesis. Firstly, I explore a narrative approach, using creative non-fiction to extract and reimagine a perceived object biography of a museum-held wedding dress using data extracted through the Prown and Mida & Kim methodologies. Secondly, a series of hands-on, creative interventions into pocket-filled garments explore the potential of embodied research and how we might uncover object biographies in this manner when unrestricted by institution limits.

Through taking a creative approach, I further analyse pocket filled garments, along with how we might collect them and capture their stories in imaginary museum collection scenarios. In doing so I grapple with both the challenges of interpreting dress material culture, and manage some of the realities of collecting dress in public museum settings. In undertaking this exploration, the garments and their connected material culture are examined in an embodied manner through various stages of their life cycle, and in doing so, I consider where a garment’s biography may begin or end. This work is undertaken in response to the invitations of Mida and Kim to draw creatively and imaginatively in the interpretation phase.² Likewise, the processes undertaken in connection with suggestions by Robinson to touch, Davidson to embody and conduct experimental history’, and Bendall to seek tacit knowledge of the past.³

¹ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’; Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’.

² Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

³ Emily Robinson, ‘Touching the Void: Affective History and the Impossible’, *Rethinking History*, 14.4 (2010), pp. 503–20, doi:10.1080/13642529.2010.515806; Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Bendall, ‘The Case of the “French Vardingale”’.

In this chapter, I show that close observation and creative practice enable us to interpret and share pocket histories beyond the confines of traditional methods. Moreover, I demonstrate that creative interventions informed by material culture methodologies enables nuanced, tacit and embodied insights into garment and wearer biographies. When informed by the material culture-based framework established in chapter one, alongside broad creative interventions in the final research phase, the pocket archive is further positioned as a valuable research site for historic enquiry.

Pocket Biography from a Pocket Archive: Imagining the biography of a wedding dress

The following section explores a possible approach for the interpretation and deduction phase of analysis of a garment as outlined in chapter one, where the material gathered is contextualised ‘in order to translate the evidence into hypothesis, or a narrative that can be used to intersect and enrich theories of fashion and material culture.’⁴ Here I take a narrative approach centred around Kopytoff’s notion of object biography discussed in the introduction.⁵ Through this I interpret a perceived biography of a wedding dress which held a sachet of plant detritus in its pocket.⁶ In line with Kopytoff’s concept of singularisation I have written a piece of creative non-fiction to consider the potential ages and process in and out of the ‘common’ towards ‘singularisation’ the wedding dress undertakes based on data extracted through the Prown and Mida & Kim methodologies.⁷ In taking on this methodology I consider it in light also of the work of Cooper, along with more recent works including as discussed by Butchart, creative writing by Van de Polder, that of Miles and likewise considering the garments agency in the manner of Hauser & Townsend.⁸

⁴ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 78.

⁵ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’.

⁶ *The Wedding Dress*.

⁷ Kopytoff discusses the ‘common’, being when objects are exchangeable or saleable, as opposed to the ‘singular’, when they are the polar opposite, and instead are unique and removed from being in a potential state of exchange due to their perceived value. He identifies this as a scale which objects move across throughout their biographies: Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, p. 69; Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’; Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

⁸ Cooper, *Autobiography of a Pocket-Handkerchief*; Butchart, *Nick Jordan, Jacob Cartwright, Emily Oldfield and Andrew Hann*; van de Polder, ‘Dialogue between Obsession and Dress’; Miles, *All That She Carried*; Hauser, ‘The Fingerprint of the Second Skin’; Townsend, ‘The Denim Garment as Canvas’.



Figure 17: The Wedding Dress', storage, AWMM.

In taking this approach the following section will tease out the biography of a Wedding Dress held in the collections of Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum (AWMM), using my garment observations as primary sources, and additional material found as secondary. Kopytoff identifies:

In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized "ages" or periods in the "things life,"

and what are the cultural makers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?⁹

As Mida and Kim attest, despite the lack of provenance garments often bring with them when they enter museum collections, the intimate nature of them reveals compelling insight into not only their use but their lives. They identify this in relation to Kopytoff's concept of biography, charting the changing value of an object through time.

The Wedding Dress was selected due to a mesh sachet of unknown plant material being found in the single pocket the dress contained. However, the desire to examine the garment 'in the flesh' so to speak, was also because it was the earliest example found in my research and I was intrigued about a womenswear garment from this early period with an inset pocket.

Let us backtrack slightly, however, and start by allowing the garment to first introduce itself to us. When starting a biography, one of the initial identifiers to be clarified is generally the subject's name. Referred to as 'dress, wedding' in its collection online record, as well as within a descriptive drawing of the dress, it is also identified as 'SHOT-SILK DRESS' through the metadata, and 1975.208, 'T606' and '1860', the first code referring to the accession number, the second its other id, an old textile reference number, and the third, the approximate date of production. With little provenance details available on the gown, I will refer to it as 'The Wedding Dress', as it is the only wedding dress identified in this study. Moreover, in general I am against using codes like accession numbers to refer to items which I feel further removes objects' agency and unique histories.

The next step was to establish a general description of the biographical subject. Even if a photograph can be shared, it only gives a two-dimensional, secondary viewing for the reader. During my visit to the AWMM I was able to spend some time getting to know The Wedding Dress through the observational methodology outlined by Mida and Kim.¹⁰ The wedding dress is silk taffeta of a vibrant purple-lavender tone, shot with an amber/bronze colour, thought to be made in New Zealand, but unverified. It was identified by a curator at AWMM as having a gauze or mesh sachet of dried plant matter originally held in its single pocket situated on the proper right hip seam, which had been removed during conservation and stored in a small zip lock bag. The dress design is a fitted bodice,

⁹ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', p. 66.

¹⁰ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

with a very small mandarin collar, a slightly dropped shoulder with piping at shoulder seam and brown lace cord/trim stitched from each shoulder/neck point out into points at the top of the chest and then meeting at the centre front (CF) opening on the torso in a 'V' shape. This trim appears to have numerous areas of breakage, and areas of repair, with transparent thread on proper right breast (perhaps from a conservation treatment?). There are nine glass buttons down the centre front, filled with abstract glittering bronze and black 'blobs', though these are decorative, with hooks and eyes instead for the closure. It has a double darted waist, with whalebone inserts providing structure. The sleeves are shaped with gussets at the underarm; these are finished in decorative trim and lace shaped into a 'V' at the cuff. From the waist, the dress falls into a full ten gored style skirt, with larger panels at CF and centre back (CB). The hem has a large facing which is gathered at points, and a moderately poorly finished hem with a brown binding. The dress is fully lined in a rust/brown/tan shaded drill of potentially wool or cotton. On top, the dress is finished with a separate bustle featuring a CB bow and double petaled design beneath. This bustle is trimmed with the same brown cording along with ruffled edges. It is fixed at CF waist with hook and eyes. There are interesting repairs to one side of the bustle's waist band.



Figure 18: 'The Wedding Dress', laid out, AWMM.

‘What sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized?’¹¹

Kopytoff suggests initially picking up biographical questioning around the ‘status’ of the object within its period and culture. With the wedding dress I have already identified its approximate date of production. Whilst noted down as 1860 within the descriptive drawing in its records, it is officially recorded as circa 1860 in the record itself. This secondary source data should be verified and cross-referenced and here it is useful to go back to the object itself. Mida & Kim note, ‘Unlike the textual accounts of history, ordinary objects such as clothing can be considered "less self-conscious and potentially more truthful" about culture.’¹² They quote Prown in relation to his material culture methodology already discussed, and his thinking that ‘Objects created in the past are the only historical occurrences that continue to exist in the present.’¹³ As the time travellers of the past, rather than secondary retellings, it seems only logical to go to the object, the direct source, the thing that witnessed its creation in the first instance. Here we can come back to Prown, not only his 1982 work, but also the 1980 essay it stemmed from, in which Prown argues that an analysis of style can be a tool of value here.¹⁴

To assess the style of The Wedding Dress, while not being an expert in nineteenth-century clothing, I head to secondary sources who are more knowledgeable in the nuances I wish to ascertain from this dress. Edwards provides a visual dictionary for western women’s dress history, decoding style elements in each era between the 16th and 20th centuries.¹⁵ In her section on the period 1837-69 she identifies numerous stylistic features fitting with the data I gathered on the gown during its observation. She notes at this time ‘the edge of the shoulder extended onto the upper arm, and the popular *fan front bodice* design led an observer’s eye down the front of the torso until the slim V of the conical waistline was reached.’¹⁶ This feature was slightly earlier in the period, and The Wedding Dress has only slight elongated shoulders, and while ‘V’ shaped decoration towards the centre waist, it is not pronounced and finishes in a straight not pointed waistband. However, through cross

¹¹ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, p. 66.

¹² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 12.

¹³ Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’, p. 3.

¹⁴ Prown, ‘Style as Evidence’.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Real Modern*.

¹⁶ Edwards, *Real Modern*, p. 80.

referencing it with some of her examples I can see these features match with a c. 1865 'Brown silk moiré taffeta afternoon dress'. Haines-Bellamy also identifies dresses in the Nelson Provincial Museum Pupuri Taonga o Te Tai Ao (NPM) collection that have stylistic features mirroring The Wedding Dress, a short, rounded mandarin collar, CF button opening, slightly dropped shoulders, brocade details at the cuff, straight waist with mention of a detached waist, 'Detached Waist, Peplum? Bustle?'.¹⁷ It was however machine stitched, which as the author identifies would then place it in production after the early 1860s.

Ebbett and Regnault identify that fashions in Aotearoa were often either modified or a year or so behind fashions of the United Kingdom and Europe which we followed at the time.¹⁸ Regnault also identifies in the New Zealand context that wedding dresses were often a best dress instead of the likely less attainable white dress popularised by Queen Victoria in 1840. Further exploration into other museum dress history collections of the same period also illustrates this and highlights a few wedding dresses through the period from the 1850s-70s which bear similarities to this wedding dress.¹⁹ Alongside these insights the 1860s was a brief period when the inset pocket appeared in womenswear.²⁰ Together these indeed suggest the late 1860s as the production date of this gown.

This brings the discussion back to the pocket in the garment, and the reason for my selection of this example to study. The biography of the dress, its connected material culture, and related records tell the story of potentially a dress made for the most special of occasions, which was then worn, loved and cared for, for many years following. My romantic sensibilities first wished to consider the sachet a sensory comfort for the bride on her wedding day or placed there soon after as the wedding dress was tucked away for safekeeping as is often done in modern day. However, it seems unlikely that it would have been kept in the pocket all the years following. The evidence the dress shares of its

¹⁷ Paula Haines-Bellamy, *Unpicking the Past: Revealing Our Dress Collection*, ed. by Judith Taylor (The Nelson Provincial Museum / Tasman Bays Heritage Trust with the generous assistance of Canon New Zealand Limited., 2008); *Dress*, c 1870, Textile, Dress, 19th Century. Nelson Provincial Museum Collection: A4496 <<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/G21837/dress>>.

¹⁸ Eve Ebbett, *In True Colonial Fashion: A Lively Look at What New Zealanders Wore*, in *In True Colonial Fashion : A Lively Look at What New Zealanders Wore*, A Reed Gold Star Book (Reed, 1977); Regnault, *Dressed : Fashionable Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840-1910*.

¹⁹ *Wedding Dress*, c 1850, Textile, Te Whare Taonga o Te Awamutu Museum <<https://collection.tamuseum.org.nz/objects/1051/wedding-dress>> [accessed 21 July 2025]; *Gown, Wedding*, with Emily Selbie, 22 December 1868, Textile, South Canterbury Museum <<https://timdc.pastperfectonline.com/Webobject/D0FFBDEB-A7BD-4197-B1FF-399836720957>> [accessed 21 July 2025].

²⁰ Burman and Fennetaux, *The Pocket*; Carlson, *Pockets*.

ongoing wear outlines its active life beyond the wedding day but prior to its entrance into the museum.

Was it simply a homemade sachet of dried herbs that was a detractor to pests? Was it added many years later to protect the dress as it went into storage? Was it tucked in the pocket by some descendant of the original wearer at the time when the hem may have been resewn with what appears to be more modern binding? If nothing else, it simply tells of the presence of a hand in the pocket to deposit the sachet. It suggests a caring, emotive gesture either in comfort of the wearer, enhancing their sensory wear of the garment at a later time, or for protection of the gown.

Kopytoff suggests addressing the “status” of the object in the telling of its biography.²¹ The sachet in the pocket of the dress suggest it held prominent status, certainly for its wearer in the care, attention and clear ongoing use it had, though its textual record tells a more limited story. Another wedding dress, located in a museum collection far away, also presents questions regarding its wearer and the reasons for its alterations. Mida & Kim note that this situation is somewhat uncommon for wedding dresses, which typically have well-documented histories when added to collections.²² They notes however '[t]he wedding dress becomes a physical embodiment of memory.'²³ The physical appearance of that wedding dress, which also had similar alterations over time to The Wedding Dress, held the status of it as a wedding dress despite its provenance remaining elusive. I would also argue the simple act of its gifting of this wedding dress to a museum collection signifies its importance in the eyes of the holders of the dress, whether they be descendants, or unrelated second-hand clothing carriers. How the status has carried through the years, with the potential ‘repair’ to the hem line, suggesting possible re-wear at a much later date and then gifted into the safekeeping of the museum. All these point to the treasured nature of the garment.

The alterations and ongoing wear also signify its well-loved or well-worn status, as does the keeping of the object in an active state, rather than passive, stored away status. We may query in line with Kopytoff whether the garment was still in a state of being common as it would have been so upon purchase, starting to wear out and being considered for passing on, or moving towards a state of

²¹ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, p. 66.

²² Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

²³ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 178.

singularity with the attention of care the garment was receiving.²⁴ Following its entrance into the museum however, like its newly acquired bed mates in other garment boxes stored next to it, it enters a state of the singular, with the prestigious status of being a museum collection object, no longer used, but treasured.

‘Where does the thing come from and who made it?’²⁵

The physical substrate of the garment and forensic details of the sachet may reveal clues to those with the expertise and forensic equipment, which this study does not. A textual journey into the provenance may be the way forward, learning of the garment’s family tree, its relations so to speak. My notes during observations and the gathering of catalogue data from the Museum identify:

The garment’s textual records share very little provenance data as was often the case in this period. It was donated in 1975 along with two other dress history items, a silk satin, cotton lace cape, and a silk satin coat. Details of a thank you letter from the Director of the time to the donor Dorothy Ellen Miles. The catalogue card has little detail beyond a description of the garment: ‘shot lavender/brown taffeta - full skirt, high plain neck, slight leg-o-mutton sleeves to wrist, most of brown braiding missing, small buttons down front bodice. Lined.’ It also identifies the condition was good. It was gifted 15.10.75. Donor has noted it as made in New Zealand, though this cannot be confirmed. From c. 1860. A ‘Woman’s Dress / Wedding Dress / also waist band & bow as bustle.’ Silk.²⁶

From this the path of family history research can be conducted via the name Dorothy Ellen Miles with reference to the date she donated in 1975. Possibly it was the ‘Dorothy Ellen Miles nee. Pricor 1905 – 1978, who donated the sound system’ to St Francis De Sales and All Souls Roman Catholic Church, 2a Albert Road, Devonport, North Shore City as identified in the churches short history?²⁷ This however moves us more in the direction of the biography of the donor. Whilst it is likely it could detail

²⁴ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’.

²⁵ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’, p. 66.

²⁶ See Appendix D.

²⁷ Devonport Catholic, *Short History: St Francis de Sales and All Souls Roman Catholic Church 2A Albert Road Devonport, North Shore City* (Devonport Catholic, 2006), p. 6 <https://devonportcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/St-Francis-de-Sales_Short-History_amended.doc> [accessed 24 June 2024].

further on the developments of the gown's story; in this instance we will not move down this path and instead stick with the dress.

'What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things?'²⁸

Moving on now to consider Kopytoff's question of its career, I take cues from the garment, which shows the dress had an active life as would be the case for many a wedding dress in Aotearoa in the mid nineteenth century.²⁹ Writing on preparing a trousseau in *The Daily Southern Cross* reports: '...the wedding dress, which a bride should wear as often as possible in the early days of her married life. It is considered a compliment to the host and hostess to appear in it...'³⁰ In *The Wedding Dress* this is evidenced through many features in the gown's materiality as recorded during an in-depth observation of it via the method of Mida and Kim on 12 April 2024 (appendix D).³¹ Structural alterations within the dress show ongoing wear beyond ephemeral wedding day dress. Clear lines of stitching on both of the side seams at the waist show the gown has been extended at this point twice, approximately 1.5cm each time. This matches with an extension to the bustle waistband as well, where there is a unique jigsaw patchwork of fabric as if the last scraps were used on the underside at the proper right CF to aid the extension. This evidences a changing body over time, whether due to pregnancy, the change in size of an aging body, or even adjustments to the garment for refitting to another wearer.³² Whilst the details are lost to time, we can be confident the adjustments signify ongoing wear by a wearer, even if not the original owner.

²⁸ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', p. 66.

²⁹ Regnault, *Dressed : Fashionable Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840-1910*.

³⁰ 'Hints on Buying a Trousseau (From the Queen)', *The Daily Southern Cross*, 29 October 1868, p. 4 <<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/DSC18681029.2.32>> [accessed 21 July 2025].

³¹ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

³² We could classify this as a potential 'accidental' mode of encountering maternity in dress collections: Catriona Fisk, 'Looking for Maternity: Dress Collections and Embodied Knowledge', *Fashion Theory*, 23.3 (2019), pp. 401–39 (p. 409), doi:10.1080/1362704X.2019.1603871.



Figure 19: 'The Wedding Dress', side seam extensions.



Figure 20: 'The Wedding Dress', CF bustle waist band extension.

Further wear, or at the very least care is evidenced by what may be more modern binding on the hem, perhaps stitched on at a later date. The thread colour is inconsistent with much of the rest of the garment and its fibre appears modern and possibly synthetic. It is of a similar colour to the amber tone in the shot silk, though it contrasts with the more yellow-toned lining. It is also clearly machine stitched in another brown tone and is less than straight in many areas, which does not match up with the pristine sewing (excluding other repairs) in the rest of the dress. Davidson, Sykas and Gordon outline the attention paid to thread can help reveal biographical details of the garment and insights into makers and manufacturers.³³



Figure 21: ‘The Wedding Dress’, hem binding.

³³ Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Philip A. Sykas, ‘Re-Threading: Notes towards a History of Sewing Thread in Britain’, in *Textiles Revealed : Object Lessons in Historic Textile and Costume Research*, ed. by Mary M. Brooks (Archetype Publications, 2000), pp. 124–31; Beverly Gordon, ‘The Hand of the Maker: The Importance of Understanding Textiles from the “Inside Out”’, unpublished paper delivered at Silk Roads, Other Roads (26 September 2002), *Proceedings of the 8th Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America* <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/389/>> [accessed 7 March 2026].

Care is a consistent theme in this dress. Various other home sewn repairs have been conducted, mainly around the waist and bodice. These are suspected to be both from its time prior to entering the Museum and later in conservation within the institution. One at the proper left waist appears to be carried out whilst the gown was still in active wear: the waist repair has been conducted in a yellow toned thread, contrasting to the original amber thread in both colour and skill. The stitches stretch across the two sections of the gown, drawing it together with uneven, jagged, scarring lines. Whilst suggestive of repair and ongoing use of the garment, they contrast markedly to the original careful construction of the gown. They suggest a different stitcher to the original maker, which may simply outline the making of the gown not being done by the wearer, or that a later generation who were not handed down these skills, conducted the repair.

Interestingly this repair both contrasts and connects to another we can assume was undertaken by one of the wearers of the gown. The suspected extension of the waistband tells a confusing story. It utilises a black thread, suggesting actioning at a different time to the waist repair, though the original amber thread is also used, particularly in the resewing on of the hooks. This is done in a clearly different manner to the original sewing of the gown and again, the stitches are uneven and haphazard with loose lines of thread tangled amongst tight irregular loops across the hooks (see fig 23).



Figure 22: 'The Wedding Dress', repairs at waist.

Evidence of an active career for the garment is not only told in the care, which was taken to keep the gown useful, but also through the ageing of its materiality through wear. To liken it to a person, the soiling and damage offer similar references to the wrinkles, age spots, aches and pains of an active body over time. The gown has evidence of various small spots of insect damage throughout the fabric. Physical wearing out of the fabric is also evident from the pressure of the body within on its fibres. In some areas stitching has popped (particularly again at the pressure point of the waist), and the fabric has worn through, creating holes, particularly the proper right breast dart and at the CF waist (fig. 23 & 24). External forces have also impacted the garment over time, some of the glass buttons down the centre front are chipped (fig 25). Here ghost objects interact with the dress; we can imagine it encountering closely held things, or the body within the gown leaning over a table, the glass buttons clinking together, and onto the table surface expelling shards of their edges, scars marking the action of living.



Figure 23: 'The Wedding Dress', fabric wear at front waist darts.



Figure 24: 'The Wedding Dress', hole in fabric at front waist band.



Figure 25: 'The Wedding Dress', CF buttons showing chips at edges.

The aforementioned repairs and wear imprints from past gown wearers contrast markedly to the hair fine nylon thread restitching of the trim across the front bodice, which due to the thread, stitching type and Museum records we can fairly confidently presume was conducted by a conservator once the gown was in the Museum (fig. 26 below shows the trim on the front bodice). This was not easily captured on camera due to the fine craftsmanship of the conservator, the delicate stitches across some sections of the trim are almost invisible save very close observation. The conservation illustrates further care in the garment's biography, though following Kopytoff in relation to the career of the garment, it speaks to a different phase in life and the very conscious transition of the object to singularization (presuming it didn't already have heirloom status prior to its donation).

I also suggest the museum chapter in an object's life could be an odd transition into zombiedom – to speak colloquially for an object. Collected items cannot see out their natural life cycle but are instead kept in a prolonged phase of zombie-like limbo, resuscitated for exhibition and display, but otherwise kept semi-sleeping in museum storage. Alternatively, this phase of life for an object may be likened to a prolonged semi-retirement. Having undergone all the expected phases in the career of a well-used and active object as Kopytoff describes, it has reached the time in its life to both rest and provide wisdom to the future generations.³⁴ Palmer argues a garments' biography continues into its museum phase as its materials will continue to shift even in a museum storeroom.³⁵ This discussion also evokes the work of French sculptor Christian Boltanski with used clothing, as written about by Jana: 'What is beautiful about working with used clothes is that these have really come from somebody. Someone has actually chosen them, loved them, but the life in them is now dead. Exhibiting them... is like giving the clothes a new life – like resurrecting them.'³⁶

³⁴ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things'.

³⁵ Palmer, 'Untouchable: Creating Desire and Knowledge in Museum Costume and Textile Exhibitions'.

³⁶ Jana, 'Louise Bourgeois and How Old Clothes Can Haunt Us'. para 15



Figure 26: 'The Wedding Dress', bodice section where conservation repair has taken place.

'What are the recognized "ages" or periods in the "things life," and what are the cultural makers for them?'³⁷

Reflections I wrote following my visit to view the gown share my queries into the 'tantalizing mysteries' of the gown's biography.³⁸ These thoughts query the "ages" or periods in the "things life" as Kopytoff suggests, they consider the cultural makers for these as evidence shared by the gown's physical form.³⁹ In reflecting on my impetus to examine the garment I noted:

I was drawn to the beauty of the garment, the colour, the good condition despite its age. There was a romance around it in connection to it being identified as a wedding dress. Its pocket contents combined with the nature of the garment set my imagination alight. Who was the young

³⁷ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', p. 66.

³⁸ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 178.

³⁹ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', p. 66.

lady who wore this as her wedding dress, perhaps with a sachet of fragrant flowers in the pocket as a comfort or alluring scent to her betrothed? I initially didn't think beyond the dress's connection to a wedding.

Upon reflection, since examining the dress, I can see the evidence of its wear and broader biography is clear. The waist has been taken out twice, was it worn during pregnancy, or after this with the body changes that often do not return to the younger figure's shape. It has been well cared for, repaired at the waist, not overly faded, so perhaps the wearer's best dress. The hem indicates wear at a much later date, perhaps decades, even 100 years following its creation. Well, chosen colour with the copper tone, though its weave and the thread colour used belies that it appears to have been added certainly following initial construction. Was it worn by later generations; did it find itself in a dress up box as my great grandmothers 21st birthday gown did as a child?

With this dress we may surmise that it was initially purchased or made up in the form of a commodity as the best dress for the original wearer. From its catalogue record we understand that it was then worn as a wedding dress, moving it slightly from the common towards becoming a singular artefact. Its ongoing use however may have moved this garment back towards the common, and we do not clearly know whether the garment changed hands as a commodity at this or other points. The alterations as discussed over time may be from ongoing wear, wear by another individual or even wear as a dress-up costume, for this we are also uncertain. We do know however that it has come back to the singular when it entered the Museum in the 1970s, taking it now quite far from the common.

'How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?'⁴⁰

To consider how The Wedding Dress journeyed through its ages and where it ended up as it reached the end of its usefulness we turn again to creative non-fiction, as addressed in chapter one. As noted by Miles, there is opportunity in history for 'supposition and imagination, recognising that there are a

⁴⁰ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things', p. 66.

great many things about the past that we cannot know for certain.⁴¹ This is with a mind to ground these in 'interpretations based on evidence, comparison, and context'.⁴² What follows is a creative based imagination of how The Wedding Dress charted Kopytoff's concept of commodification and singularisation through its biography.⁴³ The creative non-fiction biography traces the life of the dress, from production of the garment, to best dress use, as a wedding dress, through ongoing wear and then to a museum artefact. In the concept of singularity, the dress moves in and out of the realm of the singular, based on the perceived use and likely increasing significance and uniqueness to its owners, we have identified through the object-based analyses conducted.

I am common.

I am amongst a bundle of other bolts of glistening deep lavender silk taffeta; my fibres shoot golden amber glowing sunset ripples as hands caress my folds.

I am common.

Hands press other cloth shapes onto me and trace around dusty lines of chalk; I am sliced into foreign forms with a 'schwip' of long scissors. Fine needles and long thread pierce me back together, neat lines, crunchy pleats, mechanical like precision.

I am common.

⁴¹ Miles, *All That She Carried*, p. 17.

⁴² Miles, *All That She Carried*, p. 17.

Production of the garment is described in relation to the scholarship of Regnault, Wilson, Kidwell and Haviland: Regnault, *Dressed : Fashionable Dress in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840-1910*; Kathryn E. Wilson, 'Commodified Craft, Creative Community: Women's Vernacular Dress in the Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia', in *The Culture of Sewing : Gender, Consumption, and Home Dressmaking*, ed. by Barbara Burman (Berg, 1999); Claudia Brush Kidwell, *Cutting a Fashionable Fit: Dressmakers' Drafting Systems in the United States* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979); Patricia Marie Haviland, 'Construction Techniques Used on Women's Dresses and Wraps during the 1860s' (unpublished Master of Science, Major: Textiles and Clothing, Iowa State University, 1983) <https://behost.lib.iastate.edu/DR/Haviland_ISU-1983-H299.pdf> [accessed 7 March 2026].

⁴³ Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things'.

Flat no more, I smooth across a supple form, securing across a tightly held waist, hung across bony shoulders, draped across a set of petticoats. Into my one pocket rests a delicate hand.

I am singular.

Across the same waist I am buttoned, though this time with trembling fingers. I rustle and swish as she moves forth, the same hand depositing a sachet into my pocket, oils escape, encasing my fibres in scent.

I am common.

Snip, snip, snip go my side seams, one, two times. I stretch around a soft and bulging waist.

I am singular.

Further jagged seams are wrought through my bursting edges, whalebone pokes through at my bust, fragments of glass frame my waist, flecks of fire and speckles of rust puncture holes at my hem. Though, despite these abrasions, these wearying intrusions marking my surface, a gentle hand appears in my pocket, and a new sachet is deposited. A memory of scent is awakened amongst my threads.

I am singular.

Across a body no more, I am lain to rest, though not to rot. I am laid bare with the information of my fibres, my testament to my decades.

Creating Pocket Archives: Creative intervention into pocketed clothing as archives

Further creative research considers the embodied process of close engagement with pocket filled garments. Utilising tools of deconstruction and alteration, the methodologies in this chapter endeavour to further share a garment's biography, potentially archive it and consider how they might function in response to current museological collecting practices. I take cues from the 'embodied turn' in these processes, undertaking 'experimental history'.⁴⁴ The approach I follow focuses on the embodied knowledge in the process of hands-on garment analysis. My methodology addresses the garment, its pockets and contents considering the garment a vessel in itself, and looking to embody its process of creation, wear and use to understand its biography. The creative interventions give further insight into the impact of the body on garments, our use of pocketed garments, what we keep in the pockets, what we carry around with us, and how the combination of these elements may be synthesised. In extending traditional methods of historic enquiry with this hands-on approach, I was able to engage with the garments at a deeper level.

The creative processes were influenced by the work of Cochran & Batt as discussed in the introduction, who undertake processes of garment unpicking and reuse in a creative investigative manner for different reasons.⁴⁵ I argue [de]construction and other creative interventions with historic garments have similar embodied elements to the embodied turn. In engaging with the process of construction in reverse, feeling the place of the makers, or tangible connections to the wearers and other imprints on a garment through the stitching into stains, insect/pest damage, applied material culture (badges etc).

It is through our embodied use of garments that we imbue into what we wear layers of narrative. Textiles are tactile holders of memory, they engage with most of the senses; smell, touch, sight even hearing can all be triggered when encountering cloth. Fibres absorb easily, from body odours and perfumes to knobbly knees and elbows; they give off the sounds of crunchy rustles of silks and scrapes of denim between two thighs. We caress them, encountering the feel of lush velvet or cool textured linen; they visually engage the eyes, the iridescence of shot silk and layered muted textures

⁴⁴ Hilary Davidson, 'The Embodied Turn: Making and Remaking Dress as an Academic Practice', *Fashion Theory*, 23.3 (2019), pp. 329–62, doi:10.1080/1362704X.2019.1603859.

⁴⁵ Cochran, *Exploded Coats*; Batt, *Seam Butchery*.

of shades of black. In engaging with all of these senses in an embodied manner, in connection to the garment and its connected artefacts, we can ascertain more about the biography of a garment.

A Blueprint for Creative Interventions

Following a writing weekend at my parents I scrawled at the top of a page in my blue notebook, 'New Approach'. At the time I had been reading Knight's publication which offered insight into women's lives through remembrances of garments and wearer from snipped off buttons retained in button boxes and handed down through generations.⁴⁶ A mirrored experience followed, with a session of show and tell of my grandmother's, mother's and a found second-hand store button and haberdashery boxes. Due to the fragility of cloth, buttons and haberdashery have a greater likelihood of standing the test of time and in doing so also can become holders of memory of a garment and its wearer. They are more compact and more permanent forms of material culture and in turn can be condensed memory holders of a bigger picture. I query in my notebook whether a creative intervention methodology might also be able to capture the essence of garments in this light, protecting garment's and pocket contents' biography metaphorically from the inherent vice and inevitable destruction of fibres. Loaded with the full meaning of the garment, they are the boiled down, or essence of the memory of a garment. From the epiphany I scrawl in my notebook:

New Approach!

Collecting the essence of a garment through a micro historical approach whereby the concept of it as a vessel and archive is captured in a manner which is data gathering, but addresses the limitations of collecting institutions in this mass-consumption world we live in. A proposed sustainable collecting approach for dress history, which may be radical:

- 1) Prown/'Dress Detective' analysis. Including detailed photography, sketches and text.
- 2) The removal of all pocket contents & buttons/accessories.
- 3) The 'exploded coat' method, taking the garment back to its original pattern pieces, whilst retaining some examples of the thread & stitching techniques/methods used.

⁴⁶ Knight, *The Button Box : Lifting the Lid on Women's Lives*.

- 4) Gather into its own 'button box' via an envelope or similar, made by a swatch of the garment itself. Or using a pocket?
- 5) Store in see through windowed museum archival storage with a selection of 'handling swatches'.

Garments all start from flat cloth, sliced into unique shapes, some pieces kept, others discarded. The garment is made up, shaped around a body, sharing intimate connection. Pocketed garments are then filled with items in relation to the activity of the garment and the body or mind of its wearer. Reverse this and what is re-discovered of the biography of the garment?

This 'New Approach' became a blueprint for the embodied creative interventions that followed with a series of pocket filled second-hand store garments. This began initially in the manner outlined in chapter one with a textual analysis gathered through the 'slow approach to seeing' as well as a detailed photographic essay.⁴⁷ As outlined by Ulrich, 'This form of image capture, though perhaps rivalled by drawing in its ability to force the viewer to deeply engage with a subject, is unequalled in its capacity to quickly compress a wealth of three-dimensional information into an easily disseminated two-dimensional reference.'⁴⁸ Through the camera lens I was able to zoom in and out analysing the garment from all angles, capturing down to the tiniest detail. Through this I found additional details were revealed to me following the initial analysis. It essentially doubled my viewing time with the garment. I was not capturing the images to refer to for analysis but getting to know the garments two-fold. First an introduction, and then a visual conversation.

In feeling I had now captured this essential information in a comprehensive manner, the next step would be to begin deconstruction. In this process I gathered as many thread samples as I could, alongside of course detached trimmings and pocket contents. At points I queried whether I might leave some sections unpicked to be able to retain some style features, though determined the photography would provide documentation of this. Pattern pieces are then to be photographed again on a contrasting or standardised background in the manner they may have been laid on a length of cloth ready for cutting, along the folded warp grain or bias as appropriate. Through this the length of cloth which would have been used to make the garment is able to be determined. This may then be cut down to a standardised swatch sampler (A5/A4 depending on the original garment size), some

⁴⁷ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ Ulrich and Van Gerbig, *Tangible Things : Making History through Objects*.

swatches designated for handling, then the whole garment is filed in either a four-flap archival folder or mylar windowed folder box, or perhaps an envelope made from the fabric of the garment itself. This then could either have a QR code stamped label or similar, linking the physical remains to the digital record of its textual and visual analysis.

I also had thoughts around what we might find if we were to treat a garment like an archive of its wearer. Here I was thinking about museum registration practice and contrasting it with the archival practice of 'original order' as defined in chapter three. Consider, if we were to liken a wearer's wardrobe to a collection of manuscripts gathered across the wearer's lifetime, each for specific purposes. What if we were then to undertake an archaeological dig into one of the garments and then catalogue it as an archive? The item itself (without considering its broader hierarchy within its wearers' wardrobe, or the season's collection from a particular designer, or broader work from its maker or manufacture) may be a description at the collection level. Each series might then be the different pockets across the garment, suggestive of theme or purpose or use by the wearer of each different one. Finally, the pocketed artefacts are items, technically the 'thing that moves', though this then does not work entirely, how do we get down to piece level?⁴⁹ While contemplative and valid creative considerations, along with thinking through how we might retain 'original order' better in museum practice, like any creative process which evolves at points, I largely moved on from this line of thinking.

I went back to the initial blueprint, which evolved as it was applied and as different garments were encountered. The core purpose however remained the same throughout: evaluating what can be found from a pocket filled garment by exhausting a range of hands on and traditional object-based methodology, interrogating museum and public collecting practices and their challenges, considering dress history research methodology and creative research practices. Following initial embodiment through wear, a reversal process of construction takes place, uncovering hidden seams, construction techniques, all the lint in the pockets, revealing pattern pieces, taking it down to the flat cloth where each garment originated before finally archiving the garment and its pocket contents. What follows are four creative interventions undertaken as flowed from this.

⁴⁹ Dr. Susan Skudder, 'Arrangement and Description Workshop', (University of Waikato Library), 2024.

'Archiving Denim', 2023

The initial experiment with this activity used an old pair of gardening jeans and followed more or less the initial blueprint of the proposed creative approach outlined above (fig. 27).⁵⁰ This revealed a wealth of evidence of its previous wear, including hidden colour in its light protected areas and 'barcoding' on its seams.⁵¹ This garment was chosen as the starting point for the creative exploration in this research as I knew its biography - being the garment's owner - so could test the findings. They were pulled from a box of items destined for the Op Shop, which had instead been sitting in the garage gathering dust for months; they were selected when I found I had carelessly left things behind in its pockets. They had been in my wardrobe many years prior to this, having been purchased from Urban Angel – a young adult or 'tween' line from the New Zealand Pumpkin Patch brand – in the early 2000s during my late teen years.



Figure 27: Urban Angel jeans, front, label and front waistband.

⁵⁰ Urban Angel, *Jeans*.

⁵¹ As discussed by Hauser, who shares the case study of a bank robbery prosecution based on the CCTV footage of the outer seam imprint of the denim jeans of the offender. Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin'.

As previously discussed, these pockets contents identify at the base level, suggestion of the garment's use, and therefore a chapter in its biography indicating wear. These also offer breadcrumbs to us of the activities undertaken, here a moist towelette sachet and piece of a 'Playcentre' notebook suggest childcaring activities, which being the mother of two young children at the time I know to be the case. The hair tie alludes to the long hair of the wearer, the tissue, the poor sinuses I inherited from my mother, and if it were legible, the receipt would offer a clear date suggesting one occasion of wear of the garment. The garment itself shares many occasions of wear, from the dirt ingrained holes in the knees showcasing the gardening wear, to the tears in both inner thigh areas illustrating wear by a body evolving from teenagerhood to young woman and through the birth of two children.



Figure 28: Urban Angel jeans, pocket contents.

The deconstruction process revealed a wealth of information on the garment's use. From the original denim shade revealed in the light protected seams, within pockets and beneath the stitching lines – revealing for example the ghost lines of the machine embroidered owl in shadow on the back pocket (fig. 29) – to details on the different threads used across the garment, of which there were six. This deconstruction began by first removing the belt loops. They were approached initially as they would swiftly allow the removal of the waistband which would quickly start to render the garment to its pattern pieces. They were also a small part to quickly detach and experience. The first fully unstitched belt loop did not disappoint. The tucked in sections and areas previously held within a seam, clearly revealed the original denim shade. It is a simple rectangle of fabric, but its years of wear were

easily visible in the threadbare folds. They also left behind a shadow of their place on the waistband in a dark indigo mark. Following this I soon got to the point where the button was excavated via a painstaking process aiming to retain the thread as much as could be. At this point the garment was rendered no longer easily wearable. This was a moment of note, undoing my own work in fact, having sewn the button on years previous, replacing the original.



Figure 29: Urban Angel jeans, original fabric colour revealed behind seams and stitching following deconstruction, included a machine embroidered owl imprint.

Despite launching into this with gusto, with notes I made at the time describing how my fingers were itching to analyse through deconstruction, I felt a loss for this garment. I felt also mischievous, wrong, backward and cruel, rewinding the process of construction. The hard-earned stitches. The lengthy process of creation wound back to naught. I consoled myself with the words of Jana that 'They're not marble. They're vulnerable fabrics. They are ageing... like second skins. Clothing extends time, but it

doesn't freeze it. We can't hold on to anyone forever.⁵² Even garments held in climatically controlled, acid-free, inert museum collection storage are only delaying the inevitable inherent vice in most cloth.

Many evenings of unpicking later – at many points recalling that unpicking was my least favourite garment construction activity – the jeans got to the point where they simply resembled the pattern pieces of their creation. Following unpicking, these pattern pieces were laid to understand its fabric yardage impact, and a further photographic essay was captured (fig. 30). The large pieces were then cut down to A4 sized handling swatches and filed in a four-flap archiving folder. This, along with the pocket contents, unpicked threads and detached haberdashery were all filed away into a neat foolscap box. It became its own tidy pocket really, ready to be tucked onto some imaginary museum storage shelf, waiting to be labelled with a QR code to link it to its digital textual and photographic records. A neat and tidy essence of jeans captured into a physical and digital pocket archive. I felt the manner of 'archiving' the garment may address both the harsh truth of the sterile context garments entering a museum find themselves in, never to be worn or touched again, alongside being catalogued with archival principles where the 'original order' of jeans and its pocket contents would be captured theoretically in the process of observation, analysis and record. Its multi layered narrative was almost clinically captured and filed through the range of methodologies applied.

⁵² Jana, 'Louise Bourgeois and How Old Clothes Can Haunt Us'.



Figure 30: Urban Angel jeans, pattern pieces laid as they may have been originally cut for sewing.

Crewe Blazer, 2023

The next exploration in this creative approach was the Crewe blazer, which has been discussed more comprehensively in chapter one.⁵³ Following description and deduction, observation and reflection on the pocket contents and garment respectively, I turned inward back to the jacket to conduct a creative investigation, delving further into the jacket's biography through embodying it myself, and then undertaking a reversal of its construction process in the manner I had done for the jeans.

⁵³ Canterbury New Zealand, *Crewe Blazer*.



Figure 31: 'Crewe Blazer', pattern pieces laid as they may have been for sewing.

Deconstruction of the Crewe Blazer or an embodied un-stitching had variances in its effectiveness due to the fabric and garment type differences. The indestructible polyester fabric has had no change in colour from its seams to its outer sections. Though I felt an embodied connection to the original makers as I followed apparel construction directions for a blazer in reverse to unpick it, firstly the labels and then the buttons, being conscious of the hard work I was undoing with each unpicked

stitch.⁵⁴ All thread was retained in their own individual archival polyethylene zip locks, along with pattern pieces as they separated themselves from the garment. I attempted again where I could, to unpick large sections of thread whole to appreciate and analyse the stitching style of the buttons which I could see were sewn or resewn on following the suit's production, notes from the time identify the stitching technique of these as 'very in expert and erratic' (appendix B). The deconstruction of this garment highlighted some of the limitations of the deconstruction methodology I was undertaking. Due to its synthetic fabric, despite being older than the jeans, the jacket was unable to take on an imprint of time in the same manner.

['Ghost Lines: embroidering the biography of a bowling blazer onto its carcass', 2024](#)

At this point, I had run out of pocket-filled specimens with which to dissect. And so, another trip to the Op shop was had, pocket diving into garments with hand sanitizer at the ready. I was conscious of several factors as I sought research subjects. Firstly, my examples were becoming gender biased as I initially excluded accessories like handbags and wallets, and secondly that they tended towards the outerwear for the obvious reason of the more likelihood of pockets in both menswear and women's jackets. I attempted to focus on seeking womenswear examples first, though many pockets later, I had only found a women's 21st century suit and short faux fur coat, holding an aeroplane ticket from Hamilton to Wellington and a crumpled-up handkerchief respectively.⁵⁵ These did not spark my interest, and instead, it was a masculine green blazer and set of three men's suit items which caught my attention.⁵⁶ Notes I made at the time identify that the garments chosen for further observation are those which overtly appeared to 'show' or 'present' their biography to me through their well-worn nature and their collision with material culture. In considering this now, I note there is a strong subconscious bias, perhaps partly to the influence of the prominence of men's-based history telling over time as well as the suggestion of older, well-worn garments being able to tell a more valuable story than more recent history.

⁵⁴ Helen Joseph Armstrong, *Patternmaking for Fashion Design*, 4th ed. (Pearson Education, 2006).

⁵⁵ Massimo Dutti, *Suit - Jacket and Trousers*, c. 2000s, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

⁵⁶ Goldwyn Clothing and ARTHUR GILL & Co Ltd., *Blazer*.



Figure 32: Goldwyn blazer.

It was therefore that a green blazer expanded my research, for it was collected not for its pocket contents (of which it did have a healthy collection of lint, noted shortly) but for the material culture emblazoned on its surface instead of hidden away (fig. 32).⁵⁷ Across both front lapels and sewn onto its breast pocket was a cacophony of information in the form of badges and pins. Remarkably left intact upon its donation to the op shop, these proved to only be the start in the story told across the

⁵⁷ Goldwyn Clothing and ARTHUR GILL & Co Ltd., *Blazer*.

surface of this jacket. Manufactured in the mid-late twentieth century by Goldwyn Clothing in New Zealand, run by Arthur Gill & Co Ltd. Dunedin as identified by its maker label, the blazer was clearly the uniform for a bowling club member as identified by its billboard of material culture across its frontage (fig. 33).⁵⁸



Figure 33: Goldwyn blazer, badges and pins across front lapels.

This information proclaims elements of the wearer and garments biography to viewers. As discussed in chapter two, its largest badge places a previous wearer as likely being a member of the Wairarapa Bowling Centre in Landsdowne, Masterton, which is in the Southern part of the North Island. The numerous smaller pins outlining awards suggest membership from around 1993-2006, as well as tours overseas including to England and Canada. Though in considering the likely date of the jacket's production this may only be a display of the most recent bowling activities of the wearer. Further information may be gathered in the decoding of the crest on the face of buttons which appeared to

⁵⁸ The blazer's manufacturer operated from 04 Jul 1946 to 16 Jun 1987 – based on its New Zealand Companies Office records. This information, then combined with information from the Woolmark label in the jacket – which was a brand established in 1964 – would date the jacket's production to between 1964-1987: New Zealand Companies Office, 'Arthur Gill & Co. Limited', Companies Register, New Zealand Companies Office, 3 November 2013 <<https://app.companiesoffice.govt.nz/co/144099>> [accessed 13 July 2024]; 'History', Woolmark, n.d. <<https://www.woolmark.com/about/history/>> [accessed 8 March 2026].

have been sewn and resewn onto the jacket. Likewise, in the manner of previous garment observations further details in the materiality of the jacket give clues to past owners. A cotton tape label hand sewn into the back collar of the jacket features some faint writing in blue pen, unfortunately too faint to clearly make out, it may read W DUCKETT. One of the badges on the jacket lapels, has the name 'McCATHIE' engraved upon it. Either of these could refer to the name of a previous owner of the garment.

This blazer did also share information of another community alongside the bowling club, that of insects (fig. 34). Here another creative process was initiated, which highlighted a unique narrative playing out across the jacket's fabric surfaces. In the manner of visible mending, instead of deconstruction, the archived life of the jacket is told in stitches across the holes made by not only these badges and pins, but insects, which during my close observation I identified had clearly also occupied the garment for a period.⁵⁹ Markings of ghostly white thread archive the façade of the jacket, highlighting its previous surface adornments, punctured holes and nibbled fibres (fig. 35). I viewed these stitching's as a creative imagined conservation technique to document both the positioning of the badges – where I have placed thread through exact holes the badges moved out of, leaving thread at a length to mark the ones around them – as well as filling in the holes opened by various insects over time.

⁵⁹ Visible mending in textiles is a repair technique which highlights the repaired area in a manner to draw attention to the mend in a positive manner, rather than trying to hide it or make it invisible as if the garment is still new.



Figure 34: Goldwyn blazer, insect damage.

All removable trimmings, badges and pins were detached harking back to my considerations of button boxes and the ability of some of these more permanent materials to record memory of the garment they came from. This included all the loose items connected to the garment, which as described by my noted observations at the time felt somewhat clinical again:

In the manner of a [rather creative] forensic scientist attending to a crime scene, I [ceremonially] extract fibres, hairs, dust and lint from the pockets and tuck all evidence safely into individual zip lock bags (aka their own archival pockets) for protection now in perpetuity, never to be touched by another hand again.

Combined with the embroidering of the biography of the Goldwyn bowling blazer onto the original sites on its carcass, the storage of its detached material culture created a twofold archive. ‘Ghost Lines’ is a visualisation of what is lost when museums separate garments from their pocket collections, and a way to highlight the wear and use chapters of garment biographies. Through this process I however got to know the jacket on a surface level literally, due to its lack of written provenance. I did not develop insight into the wearer or wearers personal story, nor did I learn of its use (apart from perhaps as food for insects) prior to the earliest recorded badge from 1998, approximately forty years potentially following the jacket’s construction.



Figure 35: Goldwyn blazer, archived as 'Ghost Lines'.

Meltzer's Suit Collection, 2024

The final garment explored in the creative process led me to question how far I might take this creative methodology. A set of trousers, which were part of a wider collection of three suit items donated to the op shop literally during one of my visits and brought straight to me as they clearly suggested a story to tell from years gone by.⁶⁰ Grouped together they appeared to have come from a single donor and included a waistcoat which appeared to be from an earlier period and unlabelled, a blazer by S. Meltzer Ltd, and a suit which included jacket and these trousers also by S. Meltzer Ltd. which have initially been discussed in chapter one (fig. 36). The pocket collections across all the garments included a handwritten tailors' slip, a numbered sheet of paper, a garment listed note, drycleaners tag with matching wooden drycleaners coat hanger, and a collection of hand hole punched coloured confetti. The confetti suggested wear to a wedding, leading this subtly striped, grey-blue suit to draw me in with its potentially romantic tale.



Figure 36: Collection of tailored garments from Hospice Op Shop, Frankton Hamilton; Figure 37: Meltzer suit.

⁶⁰ S. Meltzer LTD., *Suit - Jacket and Trousers*; Meltzers Quality Clothes: Hamiltons leading tailors, *Suit Jacket*, Mid-late twentieth century, Wool, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton; *Waistcoat*, N.d., Wool, Hospice Shop, Frankton, Hamilton.

I began with the trouser part of the wedding suit as my entry point. Close observation of the garment shows intricate hand stitching suggesting construction during the earlier period of the tailors' business activities (fig. 39 & 40). How could I possibly consider undoing all this skilled, painstaking work? My initial hesitancy which I encountered with the jeans came back to me. I would not do it I decided; this stitching should be celebrated, and I instead began working on only deconstructing a section of this garment, opening it up to a point where it may lie flat and reveal both sides so that the stitchwork within may be easily viewed. I also endeavoured to follow the stitchwork I undid with the same white thread used in the bowling blazer to mark the journey of the original needle.



Figure 38: Meltzer suit jacket and trousers.

At this point I encountered a growing sense of discomfort working with these aged and well-made garments, not just practical challenges of my approach, but also concerns about the ethical boundaries of this method and the point where second-hand clothing becomes a potential museum collection item and should not be altered by my modern fingers. Could I loop it back to a creative writing exploration instead? Write up my reflections on the practical challenges as well as the valuable nature of the garment, what does this mean for this methodological approach? Could I also make this a visually-led engagement, with only a photographic essay instead?



Figure 39: Meltzer suit, back pocket, hand sewing detail.



Figure 40: Meltzer suit, hand sewing at trouser hem.

I, however, found myself starting to consider the processes undertaken prior to the garment's construction. The fine wool fabric had an intricate stripe pattern of not only blue-grey but also buttercup yellow, black and cornflower blue when examined in magnification. What process was undertaken in the weaving of the cloth? What might the re-creation of a sample of this share in further insight? From close examination of the fabric under magnification I created a weaving pattern, documenting the warp and weft threads, at times a twill weave, at other points a basket weave, the weft threads dancing across the warps, revealing or hiding the subtly vibrant blue and yellow tones in amongst the sea of blue-grey creating a subtle texture and soft iconic warmth of what I assume is New Zealand wool (fig. 41). The threads brought me to considerations of histories of New Zealand's wool industry, an integral primary industry across our history, key proponents in our economic and agricultural history.⁶¹

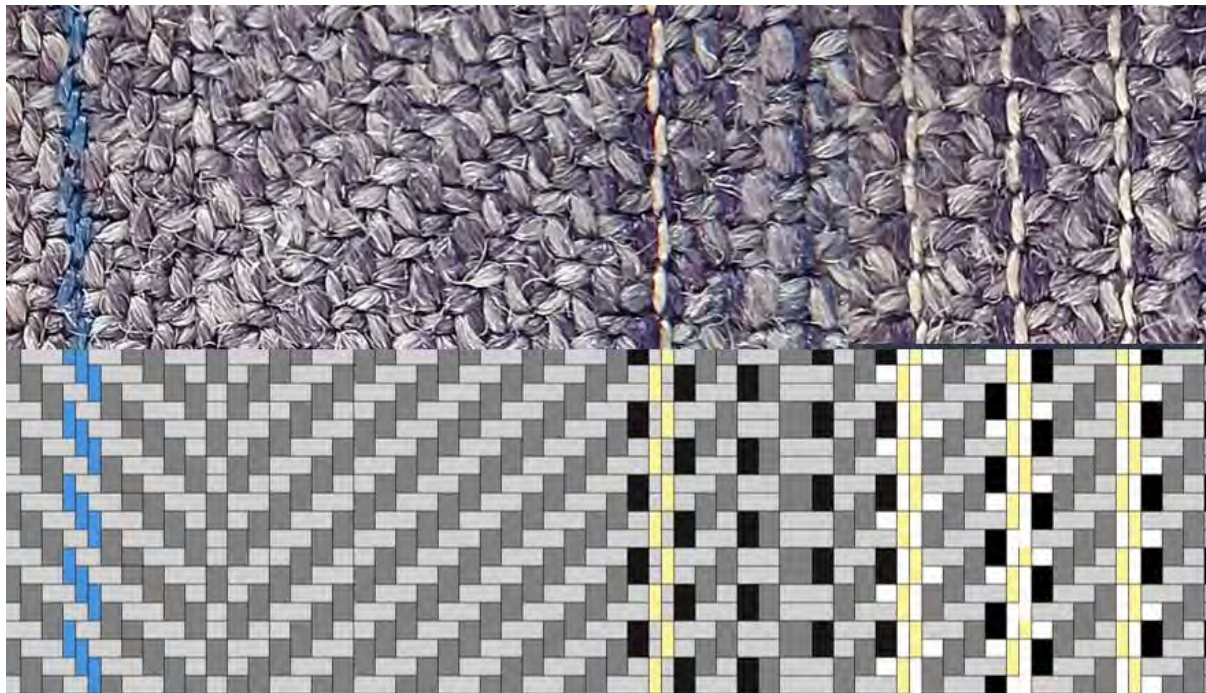


Figure 41: Meltzer suit, fabric under magnification & weaving pattern.

⁶¹ For insight into our manufacturing history see for example: Heather Halcrow Nicholson, *The Loving Stitch: A History of Knitting and Spinning in New Zealand* (Auckland University Press, 1998); Raechel M. Laing and Cheryl A. Wilson, 'New Zealand Textiles and Apparel Sectors', in *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion. Volume 7, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, ed. by Margaret Maynard, 10 vols (Berg, 2010), vii, pp. 298–304.

I began a toile for the fabric sample recreation on a small hand loom and found the swatch creation gave closer insight into the subtle stripe pattern of the suit. This could be developed and enlarged to give further visibility to this subtle element. Perhaps to more fully tell the biography of this wedding suit which was a vessel for colourful confetti, a woven sample could be made which merges the cloths thread colours with that of the pink, yellow, orange, green and white confetti? This might be a way forward along with the garments being opened up rather than deconstructed to reveal a 360-degree viewing of the wedding suit if I decided to carry on with that. This would both showcase the suit's expert tailoring as well as allowing for practical flat or rolled theoretical museum storage.



Figure 42: Meltzer suit, confetti found in top left pocket.

At this point I started to query: when does the unravelling end, and in line with the concept of object biography, where does the garments' story start and end? If we consider Cooper's scholarship, we

could take it back to the wool from the sheep.⁶² In reverse, it is not an itinerary as has been proposed, but an evolution.⁶³ Is it a family tree or hierarchy of parent and child like developments or connected modifications? With the consideration of pockets and their contents are we simply looking at a meeting of ‘things’ each with their own stories and the coming together of them tells us a fuller picture? I found myself moving away from these creative interventions, winding them down. In the words of Campbell and Hill I used creative practice to ‘think through’ these elements of my research, though this did not necessarily need to be a creative output.⁶⁴ Or not at this point at least.

⁶² Cooper, *Autobiography of a Pocket-Handkerchief*.

⁶³ Hahn and Weiss, ‘Introduction’; Joyce, ‘Life with Things’; Joyce and Gillespie, *Things in Motion*.

⁶⁴ Donna Cambell and Rodrigo Hill, *Ngā Ara Auaha - Creative Practice Student Showcase* (The University of Waikato, 2025), p. 1.

Conclusion

Through this chapter I have outlined how the last phase of the research methodology framework could be addressed through a range of approaches. This is conducted in synthesising the observations and analysis of each full pocket archive, garment and pocket contents together using a range of creative methodologies. Initially Kopytoff's object biography approach led me to a piece of creative non-fiction addressing also its concepts of the common and the singular. This allowed me to think through and present the potential phases of the garment's biography as found through its very materiality. Likewise, broader and increasingly more creatively led research conducted with second-hand garments stretched the limits of the ethics of researching in an embodied manner with historic dress.

Through the evidence of the garment coupled with traditional archival tools, we have ascertained a level of insight into how The Wedding Dress changed with age, was altered, mended and cared for. We may take this further and delve into deeper explorations of the donor and their family, though this may give details on the wearer rather than the dress itself. Whether this is a problem is however something which can also be debated. We may research further archivally to understand where and when the sachet may have entered the pocket and why, was it through clothing care techniques of the 19th or 20th century, was it superstition, perfume? Initial enquiries have not revealed an answer, and the scope of this thesis would be derailed with a sole focus on this. From this process I feel we have charted possible material courses of the life of the garment and are nearing the limits of the object-based focus. In turning to further creative avenues however we start to really extend the traditional object-based methodologies.

Taking other creative approaches also took me further than traditional methodologies alone with a range of second-hand garments: it gave me close contact and time with the pieces I was unable to obtain with the museum collection items. The embodiment of some of the garments through both wear and an embodied un-stitching gave valuable insight during the research journey. From unpicking my old jeans, I could experience the layers of the 'barcode' effect on the side of each denim seam.⁶⁵ In wearing the Crewe blazer I was able to understand the size of its past wearer or wearers in a way I could not feel through taking measurements of museum collection items. Through

⁶⁵ Hauser, 'The Fingerprint of the Second Skin', p. 153.

embroidery across the Goldwyn Bowling Blazer, I marked the pocket archives' original order and highlighted the community connections shown by the bowling pins and badges as well as the insect damage lines, something only easily visible up close or under magnification. In digitising the weaving pattern of the Meltzer's suit, I magnified what from a distance may simply look like a drab grey suit, though on closer inspection, was colourful and intricate, connecting to the confetti in its pocket and illustrating its pocket archival story. These creative journeys were particularly valuable in their combination with the techniques proposed by Prown and Mida & Kim, along with support from traditional archival research. Through these approaches I was able to get to know these garments at a deeper level and really embody the 'slow approach to seeing'.⁶⁶ These creative methods may thus also have potential to inform the archiving and displaying of historic pockets and pocket archives, better enabling curators and viewers to understand how these material histories are both entwined together, as well as entangled with the wider histories of their manufacturers and wearers.

⁶⁶ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*.

Conclusion

I began this thesis with a personal reflection of a week of my life as charted by the decanted contents of my jean pockets. Likewise, I reflected on a contrasting period at work where due to the pocketless clothing I was wearing my garments could not divulge the same level of information about me. Yet I still found I held memories in the pocketless items worn, while another single set of pockets held further nostalgic material, whereby I had created an archive to my grandmother within. These reflections were essentially hypothesising the concept of the pocket archive that is developed throughout the thesis. As these examples demonstrate, I suggest that the pocket archive encompasses the material culture we wear and carry in the vessel of our clothing, which holds layers of data on the wearer, from the fibre, through private pocketed items, and out to further material culture emblazoned on garment surfaces.

Deep research on our worn material culture through the combined and altered methodologies of Prown and Mida & Kim decodes some of this story and reveals garment and object biographies in the manner of Kopytoff.¹ In taking a material culture lens, I have focused predominately on object based primary sources, which are historical occurrences which exist in the present, often sharing broader insight into general populations historically than that of the textual record.² In this thesis this included many everyday garments, as opposed to fashion of the elite as was historically collected in museums.³ The range of examples also came from diverse origins, not only from curated museum collections but through ‘pocket diving’ in second-hand stores, pulling from the discards of past garment wearers. With the garments outside the institution of the museum, I was also able to extend methodology and apply hands-on research approaches.

Alongside examining dress history in Aotearoa through pocket archives, the study explored a range of methodologies for research into dress history and material culture, in the process finding the boundaries of these alongside their advantages. The key focus of these approaches was the ‘slow approach to seeing’ - the spending of time with garments and other material culture, conducting

¹ Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things’.

² Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’.

³ Styles, *The Dress of the People Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*; Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*; Labrum, ‘Hand-Me-Downs and Respectability’.

close analysis through both textual and photographic record.⁴ This core methodology was beneficial to one of the main challenges of working with material culture, that by their very nature they are ‘mute objects’.⁵ I also found that combining this technique with other sources and methods gave the most insight, at points working closely with each garment and object, at other times engaging with traditional archival sources. In addition, I conducted oral history and zoomed out from the objects to gain an expansive view on the topic. Through these broad approaches various lenses and viewpoints gave varying levels of insight into each pocket archive.

Through this framework we encountered layers of biography in Joan’s blazer and various personalities in the Crewe jacket. Alongside, with rich data shared directly from the objects and secondary sources, as led from the garment and pocket contents, a broader insight into each garment’s community, place and time was developed. These direct insights were coupled with awareness into the complexity of research into pocket archives, constantly addressing biases, remaining reflective and open to changes in the research path along with early thoughts on the extent of the research approach. Deep insights were also found in metaphorically unpicking the biography of The Wedding Dress, addressing its progress towards singularity as a museum item in storage, as told predominantly through its materiality. In adding the object biography approach and creative non-fiction I was able to get to know garments in layers. Analysing these garments in association with each pocket’s contents through a material culture lens illustrated the possibilities of a pocket archive approach.

This research drew upon, and in turn contributes to a variety of fields. The landscape of topics that pockets connect us to is broad, from the fibres, through the lifecycle of a pocketed garment, into use during wear. The thesis sits most centrally within the field of material culture and object-based research, and within the field of dress history. Given the inherent materiality of dress, I have generally addressed garments through a material culture lens. Some of my sources also relate to museum studies, and in turn I discussed museum practices in the collecting of dress. I theorise the benefit of pulling from archival practice and applying the concept of original order in museum cataloguing processes in the capture the full information of garment and pocket contents. Many garments and their pockets’ contents have been separated, which limits the potential for historical research

⁴ Mida and Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p. 29.

⁵ Prown, ‘Mind in Matter’, p. 7.

through the pocket archive. Accessioning with original order might therefore enable further research, as studying garments and their pockets contents together allows for more detailed insight into past lives than either component alone.

The uneven nature of the pocket collections found throughout the study highlighted the significance of gendered experience of pockets in 20th century Aotearoa. The segregated nature of clothing between menswear and womenswear is particularly heightened when looking closely at pocketed (or lack of) spaces within garments throughout time. Likewise, the lesser told history of childhood is highlighted from the site of the pocket and that of carry bags. Along with carry bags more recently, the pocket historically provided a rare private space for women in particular, and it could be argued that it still - when there - provides a limited private hidden space on the body. For this reason, I expanded the concept of the pocket archive to include carry bags, as well as pockets proper.

In dress, the space of the pocket is a liminal zone between the private body and public clothing covering, its contents are items which transition between spaces. The cloth of the garment itself can hold both the wearer within, with imprints of those wearers messaged on its surface as well as pockets and contents between its woven or knitted fibres. Items or accessories found within or connected to garments are identified as a collision point between dress history and wider object-based studies. They are also coincidentally often items which are more likely to survive the degrading ravages of time as opposed to fragile cloth fibres. Many items are found to hold layers of narrative from their materiality in interaction with the garment they were connected to, becoming worn at points of contact wedged between the body within and clothing without. Alongside the body, many of these items imprinted to the cloth, embedding their connection to their holders. Likewise, at points they shared textual insight on their history, suggestive of holding deep memory as purposeful archives.

Through oral history research I further revealed – building from the literature, archival, material culture and personal reflections – pocket archives as spaces of memory and nostalgia, both purposefully and unintentionally. Participants shared details on pocketed items, how and why they were collected by the wearer. The relevance of grouping material and pocket placement extended the pocket space at points from garments, into houses, cars and more. I found the pocket archive was not just inadvertent space holding forgotten things, but a consciously kept memory space by some. Participants talked about both practical and treasured items, sharing some insight into different categories of pocketed material. The use of pocket-sized material highlights the challenges

and sometimes benefits, of the small size of most pocket spaces. In this space, material can be kept private, though at points was challenging to maintain due to limited capacity.

I have discussed the private and personal nature of material found in pockets, from condoms to private notes, used hankies to facemasks, bloodied bandages to medication. Both garment and accessory pockets held vital material for the functions and management of the health of the bodies within, the space of the pocket providing both suitable privacy and close vicinity. In this light pocket contents were revealing of both the physical and mental health of wearers. Alongside the imprinting of objects into material surfaces of garments and accessories, these bodies imprinted their physicality to the items they wear and carry as well and vice versa. Handbag straps pull on aching shoulders and in turn wear thin themselves, jeans bulge out in knees and hips echoing the sag and loosening of our skin with age.

To understand this more comprehensively, the multilayered explorations of the pocket were sometimes best approached through a creative lens due to their complexity. In expanding to creative research practice, I connected with the ‘embodied turn’ in dress history and undertook ‘experimental history’ on second-hand sourced pocket filled garments.⁶ This was also another way to understand wearers and pocket users through embodying the garment myself and through creative methodologies of de- and re-construction leading to deeper and tacit understandings. This included insight into the imprint of the body and wear onto denim in another set of my jeans, being able to both figuratively and literally embody the Crewe blazer, tracing lines of wearer and garment communities with thread across the Goldwyn blazer and using historic reconstruction techniques at the cloth level to understand the woven fabric of the Meltzer’s suit.

All these threads carry through this research to reveal pockets as valuable archives of everyday lives. Likewise, in examining and reflecting on the methodologies undertaken throughout the thesis and how far object-based methodology can take us, dress history, museum and creative practices became part of the exploration. Our lives, our museums, our second-hand stores are full of clothing, and of pockets (though we often bemoan their absence in womenswear). Exploring these pocket-filled garments in a hands-on embodied manner illustrates how our dress material culture and their collided objects, when considered in relation to each other, are valuable connectors to the past in

⁶ Davidson, ‘The Embodied Turn’; Bendall and Dyer, *Embodied Experiences of Making in Early Modern Europe*; Dyer, ‘State of the Field’.

tangible ways. The methodology I explored reveals lives of the past and what we wear and carry in new dimensions – tactile, sensory and emotive – sharing insight on multiple levels and capturing the multilayered biographical details of historic garments and wearers. Consider, the next time you empty your pockets in preparation for an encounter between your washing machine and that clothing item, what does the portable archive you were carrying around in your pockets or attached to your lapels say about your use of the garment, this moment in time or you as an individual to some historian in the future?

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Appendix A – Joan’s Blazer Research Material

Mida & Kim Checklist for Observation

Joan Godbaz's Blazer

GENERAL

Worn by Joan Godbaz and approximately last performed in 1964 and she was with the band for 16 years.

1. a. What type of garment is it? Blazer/jacket	b. Is the garment intended for: Male, Female, Unisex? Darts tailored for female figure.
2. a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment? Assume wool outer, synthetic or silk lining	b. Are these fabrics predominately natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend? Mainly natural
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment? Burgandy or maroon/rust red	4. Does the garment have any labels? 'THE LEADING / TAILORS / Basil Dalefiled . Ltd / 128 BRIDGE ST / NELSON' 'DOUG . HEINZ / PIANO / DANCE N.Z BAND / NELSON'
5. What decade or general period does the garment or accessory belong to? Mid 20th century	6. Can the garment be handled safely without causing further damage? Yes
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment? Features a piano 'pin' on the left proper lapel, and also embordered insignia on left proper top patch pocket	8. Does the collection have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period? Yes from same period, some related to the dance band e.g. sticker etc, also other perhaps unrelated material from the donor. There is also at least one other jacket by the same tailor. One was a jacket used by a theatre company as a costume, then they also have a cut out label.

CONSTRUCTION

9. Describe the main components of the garment, such as the bodice, collar, sleeves, skirt.

Traditional three button wool blazer. Minimally padded shoulders, cream lining in sleeves apposing grey lining in body. Darts from shoulder top and at waist, so fitted style. 1x top left proper patch pocket with insignia. Inset welt? Pockets at both hips. 2x silver metal buttons at each wrist.

Some original staining as well as dust/dandruff/animal hairs throughout?

Single split at back centre and tailored to flare in at hips.

If relevant to your research, note measurements in both imperial and metric measurements such as:

a. Bust

c. Hips

e. Sleeve length (outer)

50cm

52cm

60cm

b. Waist

d. Waist to hem

f. Other

g. Pockets

14.2cm (left H) x 13cm (right H) x 12.5cm (W)

10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body?

Just upper half of the body

11. Is the garment machine-stitched, handmade or a combination of these methods?

Machine stitched

12. How is the garment closed or fastened?

3x silver metal buttons
13. Are there any front, side, flap, or hidden pockets? 1x top left proper patch & 2x inset welt at hips
14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of nontraditional materials or structural elements? Tailored to fitting with darts
15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment? No
16. Is the type of construction consistent with the dating of the garment? Yes
17. Is the garment reinforced in any way, such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements? Padding at shoulders
18. Is the garment lined? Yes, grey in body, cream in lining

TEXTILE

19. What is the dominant textile or material that has been used? Is it a natural or man-made fiber? Wool, natural
20. Has the dominant textile been subjected to a finishing process, such as bleaching, pressing, or glazing? Pressing
21. Have any other textiles been used in the garment or in the lining? Synthetic or silk
22. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stenciling, painting or manipulation of fabric?

No
23. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there signs that any such decoration has been removed? Embroidered insignia on patch pocket
24. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires, or boning? At shoulders
25. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in color with the passage of time? Yes in stained areas and worn slightly around the collar top.

LABELS

26. Is there a maker label? If so, is the label consistent with the designer's <i>oeuvre</i> and does it offer clues as to dating such as a number or season? Yes, I believe so.
27. Is there a store label to identify where the garment was purchased? Does this reveal anything about the garment's history? No
28. Are there any care labels or information about the garment? No
29. Are there any size labels in the garment? No
30. Is there a marking inside the garment that indicates the specific owner of the garment, such as an embroidered initial, nametag, or laundry mark? No

USE, ALTERATION AND WEAR

31. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way? No
32. Where does the garment show wear? Around neck, cuffs and stains around hips.

33. Is the garment soiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk split, or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? Stains around hips, dust/dandruff/animal hair? Throughout The left proper pocket contains residue, brown 1x1mm (ish) sized particles of natural looking origin, tabaco? Tea? Dessicated plant matter? There is a little bit of this in the right proper pocket, not as much. However, this pocket also has a hole internally on the left internal seam. I felt around beneath this to feel for any lost items through the hole, but did not find anything. Some dust/lint in top patch pocket.
34. Has the garment been dyed to alter its original color? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed? No
35. Does the styling of the garment conform to the predominant fashions of the period, or does it represent a hybrid, perhaps custom-made for the owner? Uniform for a band

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

36. Does the collection have any provenance records associated with the garment? Yes
37. Are there any photographs of the garment? No, one of past wearer on Nelson news? Not available online
38. Are there any further documents or information about the garment that might indicate the original price of the garment? No
39. Are there any manufacturer, store tags or original packaging associated with the garment? No
40. Are there any similar garments by the same designer, or by other designers from the same period, in this collection? Yes

Checklist for Reflection

SENSORY REACTIONS

Sight 1. Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references? No	2. Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it? Yes
Touch 3. What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment? Medium weight wool	
Sound 4. Would a person wearing this garment make noise? Only minimally	
Smell 5. Does the garment smell? Musty like op shop	

PERSONAL REACTIONS

6. What was the impetus to examine this garment? Were you interested in the person who wore it, the maker, or some other aspect of its object biography? Selected by Museum collection manager/curator due to it fitting the criteria I had emailed about seeking garments in their collections which had been collected with contents in their pockets.
7. Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment?

Yes same gender, and thereabouts similar size. Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body? Yes I imagine I would fit it
8. How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause discomfort or pain? I imagine it would be tight across the shoulders and tops of the arms, though not particularly uncomfortable.
9. Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and colour appealing to you? Yes, the colour in particular appeals to me and the history that would come with wearing something which has some of its biography blazoned across it and carried within its pockets.
10. Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design? It demonstrates the standard complexity that all tailoring requires. In some senses the uniform nature of the blazer style evokes simplicity, however the skilled nature of tailoring construction also shows through. The artifact is also very functional in its purpose of sharing the message of a uniform, placing the wearer in the socio-cultural[?] grouping of the Doug Heinz Band and identifying Joan as the piano player (note. Did the other players have their different roles identified in the embroidery and/or pins on their lapel?)
11. Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humour, joy, sorrow or fear? I think simply the blazer style evokes a bit of uniformity and power.
12. Do you have an emotional reaction to the garment? Can you identify a personal bias that should be acknowledged in your research? I initially thought it was a menswear jacket based on the traditional blazer style, overlooking the fact that the darts were tailored for womenswear, it did not have overly padded shoulders and no internal pocket which may not be relevant.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

13. *If you were permitted access to the provenance record for the artifact, what does this information reveal about the owner, and their relationship to the garment?*

Little, it was donated by a relative following Joan's passing. However, there is a little on Joan via Ancestry.com and Papers Past:

Joan Margaret Godbaz b. 4 Nov 1925 in Queensland

Appears to have come back to Nelson/ Foxhill with her father to live with his parents in 1935 after the death of her mother in 1934

Married Guy Gordon Galway (b. 13 Jan 1920, d. 1 Mar 1989)

Lived in Kaikoura at the time of her death 11 May 2004

Link to Nelson Photo News article about Joan Godbaz retiring from the band in 1964 https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN41_19640404/t1-body-d40.html Let me know if you would like to access the image and I'll pass the request on to Darryl our photographic curator to see what can be managed.

Several good hits for her playing for concerts around Nelson region during WW2

14. *Does the museum, study or private collection have other garments that are similar, or by the same designer/maker?*

Only a clothing label of the maker 'Basil Dalefield Ltd', which is separated from the garment.

There is other 'jackets' in the collection, however the styles are very different. There are a few more 'blazers' however these are mainly menswear. Several of these tags show up in studio photography in the collection however.

15. *Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?*

Numerous public collections have 'blazers' in their collections, as shown via Digital NZ, including those with insignia/badges connecting them to a sport or cultural organisation.

16. *Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer-reviewed journals?*

Not specifically, though some topics in relation to Joan's blazer, e.g. dance hall culture in mid20th century, historical accounts of Nelson at the time, book on badges and pins:

History of teenagers in NZ touches on dance halls, of which in Nelson, the band would have played for. - Brickell, Chris. *Teenagers the Rise of Youth Culture in New Zealand*. Auckland University Press, 2017.

Labrum, Bronwyn. *Real Modern: Everyday New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s*. Te Papa Press, 2015.

17. *Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) available for sale on Etsy, eBay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites?*

Several of the tags 'jacket' and 'blazer' show up in studio photography in the collection however.

There is one other item in the Museum's collection related to the Doug Heinz Band, where the band logo features on a lectern in the photo proof sheet from the Nelson Evening Mail.

<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/153584/geoffrey-c-wood-nelson-evening-mail-proof-sheet-a-p-board-farewell-to-mr-parker>

18. *Are there photographs, paintings, or illustrations of this garment, or of similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections, or online?*

1961: kilts (still no blazer): https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN10_19610819/t1-body-d32.html

1962: Doug Heinz Band set up for Nelson Centre Easter Bowling Tournament, some of the photos may be of a few band members in their blazers, they were worn with white shirt & trousers, dark tie & in some cases a white jersey:

<https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/148805/geoffrey-c-wood-nelson-evening-mail-proof-sheet-nelson-centre-easter-bowling-tournament>

1964: Two members out of blazers but with bowties:

https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN45_19640725/t1-body-d3.html

1971: The band out of uniform, but with tartan ties for the Highland Ball:

https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN130_19710821/t1-body-d29.html

Doug Heinz the person, rather than his band features often, in photograph collections, newspapers etc <https://collection.nelsonmuseum.co.nz/objects/168951/geoffrey-c-wood-nelson-evening-mail-proof-sheet-mr-d-heinz>

https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN4_19610304/t1-body-d46.html

https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN104_19690628/t1-body-d46.html

Heinz Electronic Industries: https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN51_19650206/t1-body-d23.html

19. *Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, novels, and other forms of written material?*

Not specifically

20. *If the maker of the garment is a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?*

Cenotaph record with AWMM for WWI: <https://digitalnz.org/records/41209658/basil-wilfred-dalefield>

Company registered from 26 May 1947 to 13 Dec 1989 at premises 38 Halifax St, Nelson:
<https://app.companiesoffice.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/167097?backurl=H4sIAAAAAAAC2LQQrCMBBFb5NNFz3BIlrQTRaCXuCTGW0gTWJmUujtDcXd%2B4%2F%2F5oqP6BzKVpHjIBW0sF62wkJqylzGzo4qJNmijYv70g0a03RHkneUxJM3duAdOQg%2FkCWRtS7uLl7XiJWu3v%2F302Bdl1Z6PfUPPnnq84MAAAA%3D>

Notice on his 'retirement from the rag trade' in 1970 includes confirmation of business start date of 1947. Nelson Photo News, Issue No 122 December 12, 1970:

https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN122_19701212/t1-body-d45.html

Various other news articles on Basil Dalefield, mainly related to him the person, rather than his tailoring business: <https://digitalnz.org/records?text=basil%20dalefield&page=1>

Prown Method

Pocket Contents

Description (observation of object)

NPM2008.32.3.2: 1x black comb, 1x one penny coin, 1x bobby pin, 1x mint

Substantial Analysis (dimensions, materials, descriptive physical inventory etc)

1x black comb: 12.5cm x 3cm, black plastic, curved traditional style, with wider tines on one side and narrower on the other.

1x one penny coin: 3xm D, metal. From 1922

1x bobby pin: 5cm x 0.5cm, metal, black.

1x mint: 1.5cm x 4.5cm, white rounded square mint, wrapped in (yellowing) clear cellophane style wrap.

Content (subject matter, iconography)

Text on coin to be transcribed.

'DIGESTIF / RENNIE' embossed on mint

Formal Analysis (objects form, visual characteristics)

The mint is most interesting, and guessing it is of its time. The plastic wrapper is yellowed from time, and there is dust caught up in it likely from its time in the pocket.

Deduction (use or interaction with object)

Sensory Engagement (see, hear, taste, feel)

Smooth black comb, likely thrum sound if flicked across finger

Cool metallic penny

Familiar springy bobby pin

Imagined cooling peppermint fresh mint

Intellectual Engagement (what it does, how?)

Two items for hair management

One for currency

The other for breath freshening or sweet treat

Emotional Response

It creates a visualisation of Joan in her jacket across a performance evening. Hair tidily combed back, tucked into place with the bobby pin, a mint to freshen the breath after a drink shared following the show or perhaps to prep the vocal chords prior if she was a singer. The penny to pay for what... to be assessed further.

Speculation (creative imaginings)

Theories and Hypotheses

It was not recorded which pocket these items came from in the jacket only that they were from the jackets pocket/s. I would assume likely the hip pockets due to practicality for access.

Program of Research

- Joan Godbaz
- Doud Heinz Band
- Club uniforms, mid-twentieth century















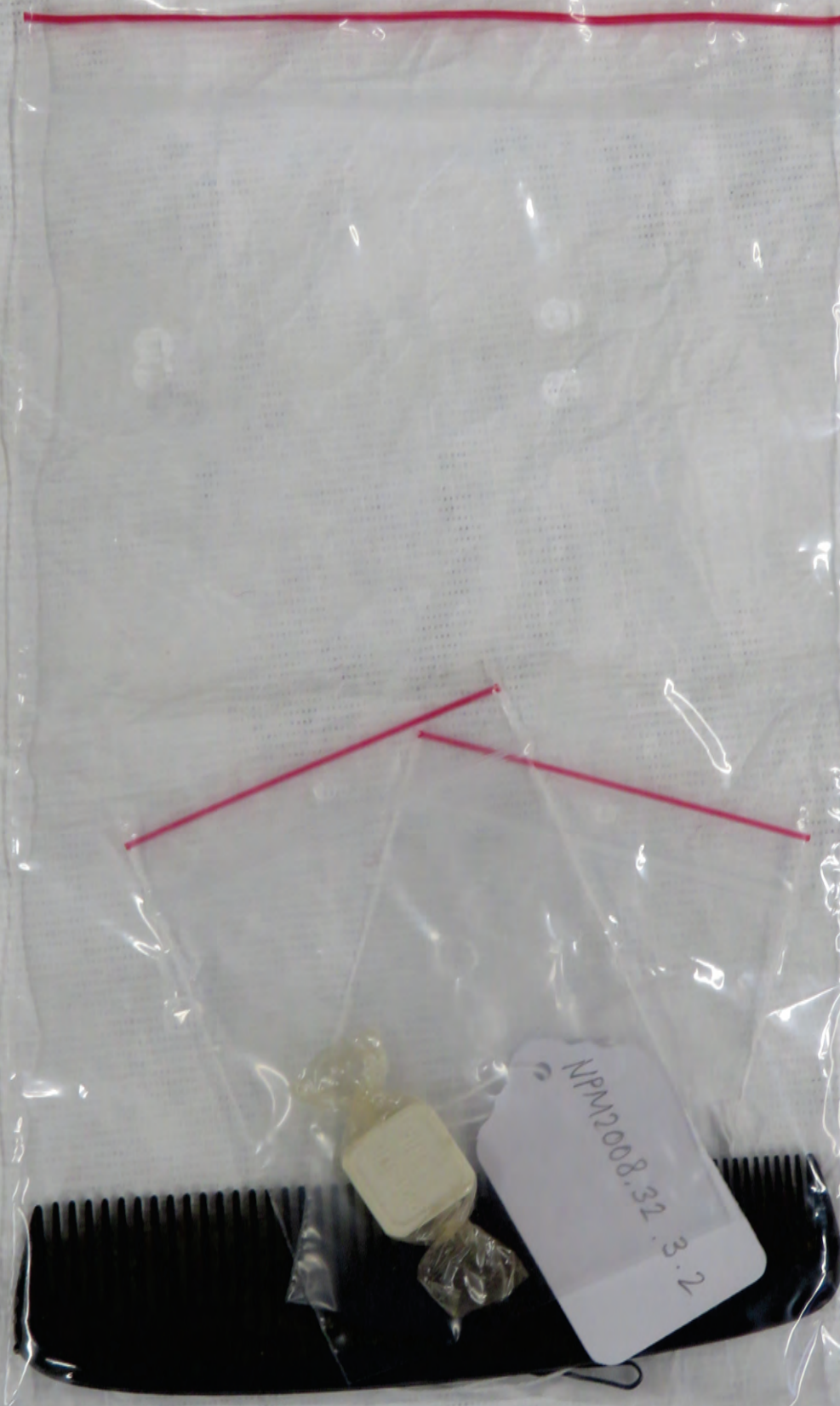
THE LEADING
TAILORS

Bras Duffield Ltd

128 BRIDGE ST
NELSON





















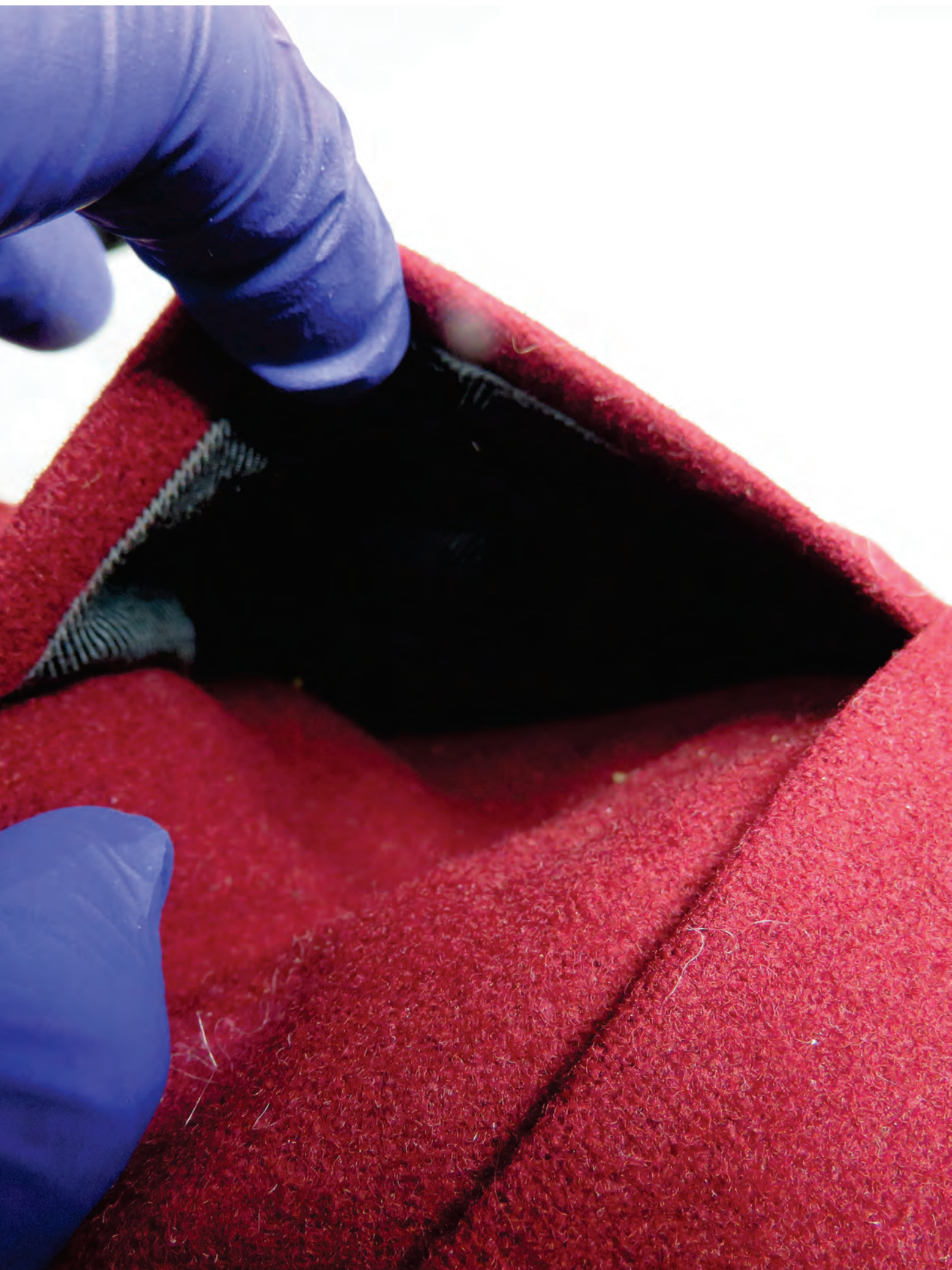












Appendix B – Crewe Blazer Research Material

Mida & Kim Checklist for Observation

Crewe Blazer

GENERAL

1. a. What type of garment is it? Men's Canterbury blazer	b. Is the garment intended for: Male , Female, Unisex?
2. a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment? Polyester	b. Are these fabrics predominately natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend? Synthetics
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment? Maroon/burgundy/red outer, grey lining with main maroon fabric trim to pockets	4. Does the garment have any labels? Yes
5. What decade or general period does the garment or accessory belong to? Twentieth century	6. Can the garment be handled safely without causing further damage? Yes
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment? Its buttons, pocket contents and pocket lining.	8. Does the collection have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period? N/A

CONSTRUCTION

9. Describe the main components of the garment, such as the bodice, collar, sleeves, skirt. Traditional darted fitted blazer/suit jacket. Standard notch lapel. Two button closure at front. False button closure at each cuff. Three rounded patch pockets on front, one top left proper, two at each hip. Single back vent. Two internal double welt pockets at chest level. Possible 'Crewe' design, as identified in internal pocket label.

If relevant to your research, note measurements in both imperial and metric measurements such as (measured flat):		
a. Bust 57cm	c. Hips 58cm	e. Sleeve length (UA & OA) 42.5cm & 66cm
b. Waist 54cm	d. Centre back length 81.5cm	f. Vent length 26.3cm
g. Pockets Hip patch: 17.2cm W (top), 18.5cm W (base) x 21.3cm H Chest patch: 11.6cm W (top), 12cm W (base) x 13.8cm H Inset: 13.6cm W (opening) x 20.5cm H		h. Shoulder width 49cm
10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body? Shoulders slightly		
11. Is the garment machine-stitched, handmade or a combination of these methods? Machine stitched		
12. How is the garment closed or fastened? Two centre front buttons		
13. Are there any front, side, flap, or hidden pockets? Two front outer hip patch pockets, one left chest outer patch pocket and two inner welt pockets, one on each side.		
14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of non-traditional materials or structural elements? Not particularly, though there is tape sewn into the top inside of each lower patch pocket, perhaps for stabilisation and protecting against wear?		
15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment? Not visible in sewn garment, though may appear when unpicked.		
16. Is the type of construction consistent with the dating of the garment? Yes		
17. Is the garment reinforced in any way, such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements? Some shoulder padding		
18. Is the garment lined? Yes, fully		

TEXTILE

19. What is the dominant textile or material that has been used? Is it a natural or man-made fiber? Polyester, man-made fibre, but analysis of label will reveal more information.
20. Has the dominant textile been subjected to a finishing process, such as bleaching, pressing, or glazing? No
21. Have any other textiles been used in the garment or in the lining? Grey lining, suspect polyester or other man-made fibre again.
22. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stenciling, painting or manipulation of fabric? No
23. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there signs that any such decoration has been removed? Buttons are the only particularly decorative element.
24. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires, or boning? Padding in shoulders and likely interfacing throughout which is visible on inside of patch pockets.
25. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in color with the passage of time? Don't believe so, though unpicking will reveal this more fully.

LABELS

26. Is there a maker label? If so, is the label consistent with the designer's <i>oeuvre</i> and does it offer clues as to dating such as a number or season? Yes and yes, the label inside the right proper internal pocket suggests the date of '7.9.84' for the production date. More research needs to be conducted to decipher this more confidently.
27. Is there a store label to identify where the garment was purchased? Does this reveal anything about the garment's history? No
28. Are there any care labels or information about the garment? Yes, illustrated in photo essay, indicates dry clean only.
29. Are there any size labels in the garment? The label inside the right proper internal pocket suggests it is size '112 NORMAL'. More research needs to be conducted to decipher this more confidently.
30. Is there a marking inside the garment that indicates the specific owner of the garment, such as an embroidered initial, nametag, or laundry mark? Yes, two forms (possibly three) of identifiers indicating at least two owners of the garment to date: • 'R. J. White' is written in black pen on right proper internal pocket label. • What may be the initials 'DR' is also written on the right proper internal pocket label in blue ink and what appears to be a different hand. • The jacket was found with eleven business cards with the name 'S [REDACTED] C [REDACTED]' along with their cell phone number in this same right proper internal pocket.

USE, ALTERATION AND WEAR

31. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way? The buttons appear to have been re/sewn on as their thread colour is different to the one used in the stitching of the jacket.
32. Where does the garment show wear? There is discolouration of the front label sections of the lining from the top of the chest down to a little below the waist. There is an unknown rectangle (below centre back neck on right proper side) where some adhesive residue is perhaps left behind or something similar, this has a faint maroon dot in the centralish position which is stuck through to the outer fabric, it is not visible on the topside of the fabric. There are two staples embedded in the right proper pocket on the right side beneath the opening as if a label had previously been stapled to this area. Left proper sleeve cuff is pilled on the inside front.
33. Is the garment soiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk split, or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? As noted above, discolouration to lining along centre front. Some stains also below this on the right proper side. Also a few minor white marks across outer of jacket, faint outline of insect frass under right proper arm. Brownish mark on left proper hip patch pocket outer. Mark on upper section of left proper arm. Mark at waist level on proper left back section. There are three pulls to the fabric, next to the hem at right proper side back, and two under right proper arm, next to frass mark. Loose thread connected to button on right proper sleeve hem.
34. Has the garment been dyed to alter its original colour? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed? I don't think so, although button thread colour on all buttons does not match the thread used throughout the rest of the garment and has a novice hand stitched appearance.
35. Does the styling of the garment conform to the predominant fashions of the period, or does it represent a hybrid, perhaps custom-made for the owner? Conforms

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

36. Does the collection have any provenance records associated with the garment? No, it was sourced from a Hospice Opportunity Shop, found in the sorting area out back. Its only identifiers are the garments itself and what was located in its pockets, eleven business card and one unused expired condom.
37. Are there any photographs of the garment? A photo essay has been captured since purchase.
38. Are there any further documents or information about the garment that might indicate the original price of the garment? Possibly through research into the manufacturer at the time of production.
39. Are there any manufacturer, store tags or original packaging associated with the garment? No, however there are garment labels, which contain the information below: Centre back neck - 'Canterbury' stitched onto a black fabric label in red thread, this is stitched into the maroon fabric section of the back neck at two points, on each side. Beneath right proper internal inset pocket, on the outside of the lining – 'Canterbury / MADE IN NEW ZEALAND LWR [with a box around the last three letters in the format of a logo]'. This is stitched in red thread with the 'MADE IN NEW ZEALAND' section in white thread. It is on a black fabric label, stitched all around the edge in black thread. Hanging from the top part of the inner section of the right proper internal inset pocket – '[symbol] DO NOT WASH / [symbol] DO NOT BLEACH / [symbol] COOL IRON IF NECESSARY / USE SOFT CLOTH FOR / PRESSING / [symbol] DRY CLEANABLE / Member NZ CLA 315 LWR [with a box around the last three letters in the format of a logo]'. This is printed in black with the text in a table, onto a white fabric label which is stitched just at the top to the garment underneath the top welt on the pocket. On the inside part of the right proper internal inset pocket – 'R. J. White', handwritten in black ink pen; '[unknown signature]', faintly handwritten in black ink pen; 'DR.', handwritten in blue ink pen; & 'CREWE / [hard to decipher but looks like a '1'] [hard to decipher but looks like a '1']2 NORMAL / 3094/70 100% POLY / D222/55 147 PLAIN / 430CC2 7.9.84 / 884 869 / [illegible numbers or text which are cut off due to the edge of the label being cut at this point]' printed in black ink. This is all on a white fabric label which is sewn to the inner part of the pocket from the black thread which sewed the outer 'Canterbury' label to the topside of the lining beneath the pocket.
40. Are there any similar garments by the same designer, or by other designers from the same period, in this collection? N/A

Checklist for Reflection

SENSORY REACTIONS

Sight 1. Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references? No	2. Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it? Yes, it is a traditional style, dating would be more around its colour.
Touch 3. What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment? Medium weight outer fabric and lining.	
Sound 4. Would a person wearing this garment make noise? Not particularly.	
Smell 5. Does the garment smell? No.	

PERSONAL REACTIONS

6. What was the impetus to examine this garment? Were you interested in the person who wore it, the maker, or some other aspect of its object biography? This garment was found to have pocket contents which is the criteria for garment examination.
7. Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment? Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body? I am not the same gender, the person who wore this was likely male and bigger than me. I wore the garment for a day, it was large but wearable with the sleeves rolled up and a belt to cinch in the waist.
8. How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause discomfort or pain? It felt like putting on a warm protective layer, not quite as cosy as a hug, but enveloping, and providing of sturdy protection, practical and powerful with its many pockets and body padded shoulders. I felt noticeable wearing it.
9. Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and color appealing to you? Yes, and I did. Though I would prefer it slightly smaller in size and with a wool instead of synthetic based fabric. I really like the burgundy/maroon, red shade and the buttons.
10. Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design? It is a standard staid suit jacket design which has been well established in menswear. A budget version of a classic designed menswear suit jacket, manufactured in polyester for the mass market.
11. Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humour, joy, sorrow or fear? I would suggest the garment invokes gender roles in the classic padded shoulder design. The garment expresses a tool for conformity, providing a suit jacket design at likely a lower cost.
12. Do you have an emotional reaction to the garment? Can you identify a personal bias that should be acknowledged in your research? As soon as I saw the jacket hung up in the sorting area at The Hospice shop, I felt some pull to it. It was as if I knew it had something in its pockets and it had a story to tell. This was confirmed as soon as I felt inside the inner right proper pocket and connected with S [REDACTED] C [REDACTED]'s business cards. The colour also drew me to it, I think in connection with Joan Godbaz's burgundy blazer I had engaged with at the Nelson Provincial Museum. I had some personal additional bias following on from this initial pull due to the interest in

the colour and connection to Joan's blazer. I assumed the garment would have first been worn by an older gentleman, who took the time to change the buttons to connect with a community he was part of (family crest, club insignia etc.) I then assumed it had been worn by someone who sourced it from an op shop to temporarily wear for an event requiring a formal suit (e.g. school ball).

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

13. *If you were permitted access to the provenance record for the artifact, what does this information reveal about the owner, and their relationship to the garment?*

The provenance is within the threads of the fabric, the seams, textual information in the labels and its pocket contents:

- Discolouration to lining along centre front is suggestive of the simple fact that the garment has been worn and perhaps sweated in, spilled drink which didn't affect the outer fabric?
- Other stains throughout the exterior of the jacket suggest the use of the garment as well and perhaps limited care in the cleaning of it, of lack of awareness and casual use of the garment in its later years.
- There is a faint outline of insect frass under one sleeve indicating it was perhaps tucked away for a period unused.
- There are various pulls to the outer fabric which illustrate the cheaper fabric and ongoing use of the garment.
- Loose thread connected to button on right proper sleeve hem, shows more obviously than close inspection that these are likely not the original buttons of the garment. They have been sewn in a lighter maroon shade and inexpertly/erratically done so indicating the later addition of them.
- There is an unknown rectangle/adhesive residue at centre back neck, this may be a repair, or sticker residue? Unknown.
- The two staples embedded in the right proper pocket on the right side beneath the opening suggest either drycleaning or previous label during sale at a previous op shop.
- The perfunctory look at this identifies wear within the internal left proper sleeve, suggests the wearing of a watch on the left wrist.
- The inner right proper pocket reveals more provenance with a label sewn in with the label production information. This also includes what is possibly three signatures/names of people who have had some connection to the garment. Either as the maker, its inspector, and one of its wearers. These are the initials 'DR', one which is illegible, and 'R. J. White'.
- The inner right proper pocket also located eleven business cards of what is likely another wearer 'S. C.', which included his cell phone number. This also included an unused expired condom which was situated at eight business cards into the stack.

14. *Does the museum, study or private collection have other garments that are similar, or by the same designer/maker?*

The Hospice had many 'pocket contents' examples which were in suit jacket pockets compared to other garments. Three were found at first visit, only other example was found in a wallet.

15. *Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?*

New Zealand Museums have many examples of items by Lane Walker Rudkin Canterbury brand, mainly sportswear and swimwear. There are also photos connected to the company, their clothing shop in Canterbury New Zealand, Lane Walker Rudkin factory

16. *Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer-reviewed journals?*

<https://nzfashionmuseum.org.nz/canterbury/> &

https://waikato.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/64WAIKATO_INST/taerp5/WorldCat156635823

17. Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) available for sale on Etsy, eBay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites? <https://designerwardrobe.co.nz/listings/2036905/nz-vintage-canterbury-blazer> (accessed 10 Sep. 23) - NZ Vintage Canterbury Blazer. Classy navy and classic cut. 48cm underarm to underarm. Unsure of fabrication. For sale price \$74.40 (later discounted to \$49.40).



https://shoponcarroll.org.nz/products/canterbury-pure-wool-retro-suit-jacket-fab-lining?variant=39867203321955¤cy=NZD&utm_medium=product_sync&utm_source=google&utm_content=sag_organic&utm_campaign=sag_organic&utm_campaign=gs-2022-05-10&utm_source=google&utm_medium=smart_campaign&gclid=Cj0KCQjw0vWnBhC6ARIsAJpJM6dt3gmkwglRoEErjlzJfDZqYw_KdNyispEM8X7m5OMiwqYAgVZ_mL4aAokPEALw_wcB

Canterbury pure wool retro suit jacket, fab lining! Regular price\$45.00

- Brand: Canterbury Pure Wool
- Fabric: Yates of Yorkshire pure wool, made in England, N/A lining
- Colour: Brown with faint pale blue and red weave
- Size: N/A, Large?
- Underarm to underarm laid flat: 63cm
- Shoulder to hem: 73cm
- Condition: Great, retro. Selling as is. A few threads loose here and there.
- Tailored in New Zealand



18. Are there photographs, paintings, or illustrations of this garment, or of similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections, or online?

Photographs in digitised photographs of Canterbury NZ shops. Story of manufacturer published on NZ Fashion Museum website: <https://nzfashionmuseum.org.nz/canterbury/>.
Published book: [LWR Lane Walker Rudkin : 100 years in the making 2005](#).

19. Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, novels, and other forms of written material?

Could look into 'Canterbury Tales' journal which I wonder if it could have been the internal

newsletter for LWR? https://natlib-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=NLNZ&docid=NLNZ_ALMA21185711590002836&context=L&search_scope=NLNZ

20. *If the maker of the garment is a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?*

Prown Method

Canterbury Blazer Pocket Contents

Description (observation of object)

Eleven business cards, one condom in its packet, an internal label with 3x signatures.

Substantial Analysis (dimensions, materials, descriptive physical inventory etc)

1. Business cards: 5.4cm H x 9cm W; printed white card; simple minimalistic graphic design, sans serif typography, black text for name, red for phone number, all in general good condition with only minor wear at edges.
2. Unopened condom: 5.3cm²; presumed latex condom, foil wrapper; crumpled packaging which has burst open in one area showing the edge of the condom, it also has an expiration date which has passed.
3. Internal label: 4.5cm H x 5cm W; white [polyester?] satin label with black printed text, black [ball point?] pen handwriting and blue [ball point?] pen handwriting; there are strong stitching lines through the horizontal centre and lower right quadrant as well as fraying along all edges particularly top and right side.

Content (subject matter, iconography)

1. - 'S [REDACTED] C [REDACTED] / 021 [REDACTED]' – on face of business card, positioned in centre horizontally and vertically, the name is printed in black ink with the phone number in red ink.
- '021021021021021[...]' - on verso of business card, this is repeated over and over again in grey ink with a large '021' faintly coloured into the background across the whole verso within the smaller text.
2. - 'Extra / Confidence / durex' - printed on both sides of the packet wrapper many times, orientated on a diagonal angle with the first two words in bold green ink and brand label 'durex' in the blue durex branding logo.
- 'Lot 058313 / EXP. 2003-0[?possibly '6' or '8'] / 0[?possibly '9']' – printed as if stamped due to loss of some of the outer areas of text, in a central position of one side of the packet.
3. - 'R. J. White' - handwritten in black ink pen, top left corner of label.
- '[unknown signature]' - faintly handwritten in black ink pen, centre mid.
- 'DR.' - handwritten in blue ink pen, right centre.
- 'CREWE / [hard to decipher but looks like a '1'] [hard to decipher but looks like a '1']² NORMAL / 3094/70 100% POLY / D222/55 147 PLAIN / 430CC2 7.9.84 / 884 869 / [illegible numbers or text which are cut off due to the edge of the label being cut at this point]' - printed in black ink, left alignment, from lower edge of label.

Formal Analysis (objects form, visual characteristics)

1. business card is traditional size and shape, very minimalistic design, only featuring a name and phone number on the main side. There is lack of context as to why the holder has a

business card and may wish to share their contact information using this method. It suggests that they may not yet hold a job position they wish to publicise, or they are unemployed and are using this as a tool to seek out employment. Perhaps however they are a designer, and the minimalistic element is part of the design of their business. The verso of the card features the numbers 021 on repeat and in large font within the background which could refer to the name of a company (a bit of a stretch). This does not turn up any hits on NZ Companies Register Website.¹ It feels like a dated tool in this technology heavy era, so perhaps could be an older person, or someone younger who is following advice from a more traditional minded mentor.

2. With the branding this is easily identified quickly. It appears slightly old, crumpled as if it has been in a pocket for a while. This is supported by the expiry date on the packet and the fact that one of the sealed edges has popped open. The carrying of this in the pocket suggests the garment was being worn by a younger individual who is likely male, or some one who is single and not in a relationship.
3. This label appears to hold practical manufacturing information on the garment.
 - 'R. J. White' – a previous owner of the jacket?
 - '[unknown signature]' – the person who completed sewing the garment?
 - 'DR.' – the person who inspected it?
 - 'CREWE / [hard to decipher but looks like a '1'] [hard to decipher but looks like a '1']² NORMAL / 3094/70 100% POLY / D222/55 147 PLAIN / 430CC2 7.9.84 / 884 869 / [illegible numbers or text which are cut off due to the edge of the label being cut at this point]'

Deduction (use or interaction with object)

Sensory Engagement (see, hear, taste, feel)

1. Minimal design and information, feels like modern business card design and weight, no other particular sensory experiences.
2. Instantly recognisable as modern contraception, it looks slightly old as if carried around for a while, dogeared and close inspection shows wrapping opened.
3. Slippery feeling cheap quality fabric for unseen labelling.

Intellectual Engagement (what it does, how?)

1. For transmission information on the contact details of individuals. Opportunities for enquiry into history of business cards, methods of the sharing of contact details, networking and self-promotion. Enquiry into design styles of business card design. History of the names S [REDACTED] and C [REDACTED], development of phone numbers from area codes to cell phone numbers.
2. Contraception methods through the ages, condom design development, brand history exploration.

1

<https://app.companiesoffice.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/search?q=%22021%22&entityTypes=ALL&entityStatusGroups=ALL&incorpFrom=&incorpTo=&addressTypes=ALL&addressKeyword=&start=0&limit=15&sf=&sd=&advancedPanel=true&mode=advanced#results> (accessed 19-Sep-23).

Emotional Response

1. When looking into who S [REDACTED] C [REDACTED] might be, three quick possibilities appeared via a Google search (accessed 7 Oct. 23) 'S [REDACTED] C [REDACTED] Waikato', though all appear potentially too young when consider the expiry date of the condom:

- a. [REDACTED]
- b. [REDACTED]
- c. [REDACTED]

Deconstruction Observations

Outer jacket usage: 168cm length required of 150cm wide calico (pre-shrunk, so down to 148cm)























DO NOT WASH



DO NOT BLEACH



COOL IRON IF NECESSARY
USE SOFT CLOTH FOR
PRESSING



DRY CLEANABLE

Member NZ CLA 315



MADE IN NEW ZEALAND



R. S. White

CRENE

112 NORMAL

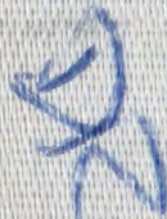
3094/70 100% POLY.

D229/55 147 PLAIN

430CC2 7.9.84

884 889

1 100 24 500/9









DO NOT IRON

Canterbury

MADE IN NEW ZEALAND

ANR



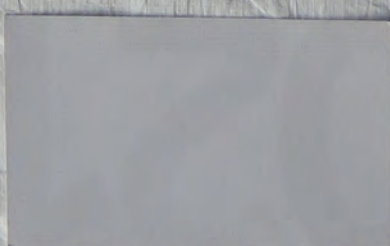
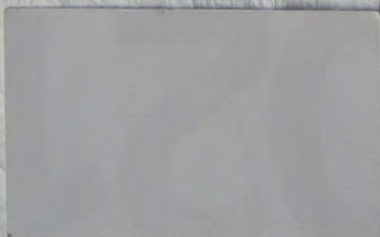
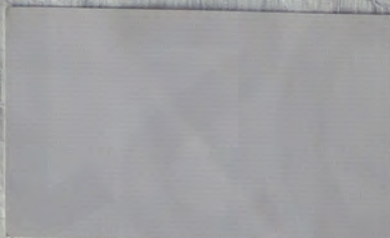
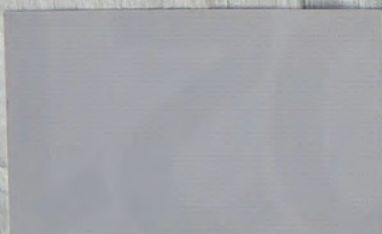
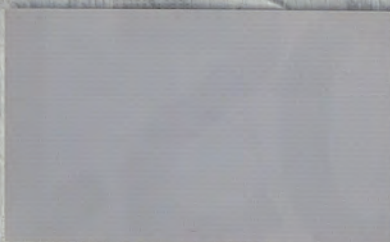
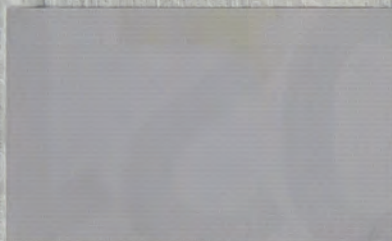
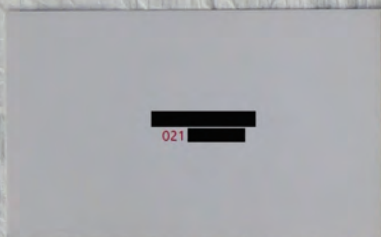
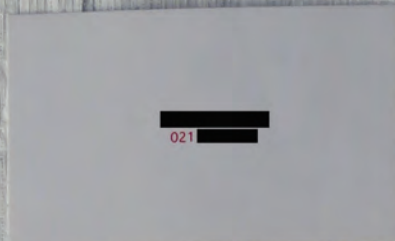
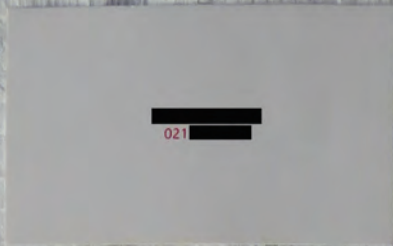


S [REDACTED]
021 [REDACTED]

021







██████████ ██████████
021 ██████████

[illegible]







































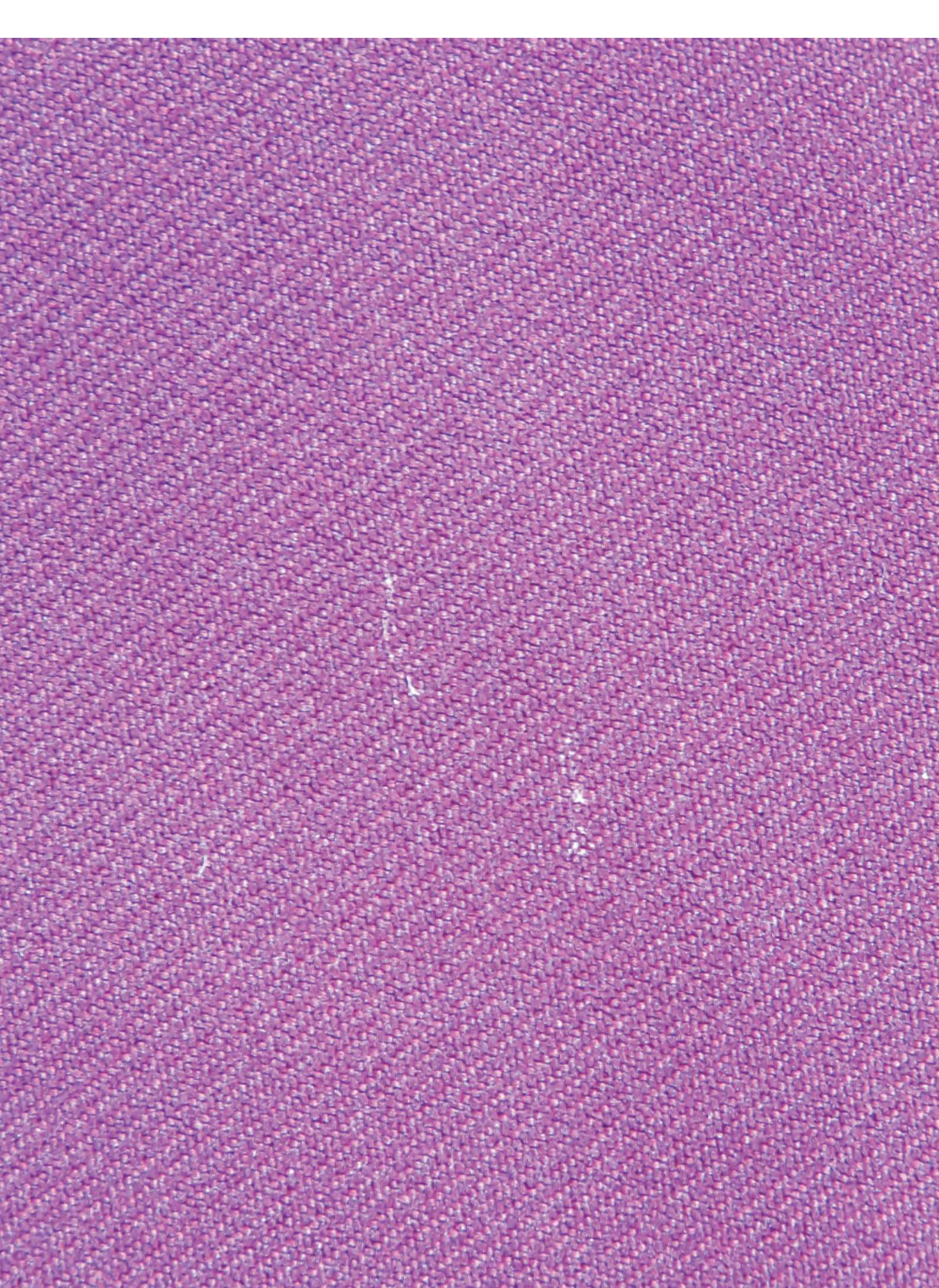


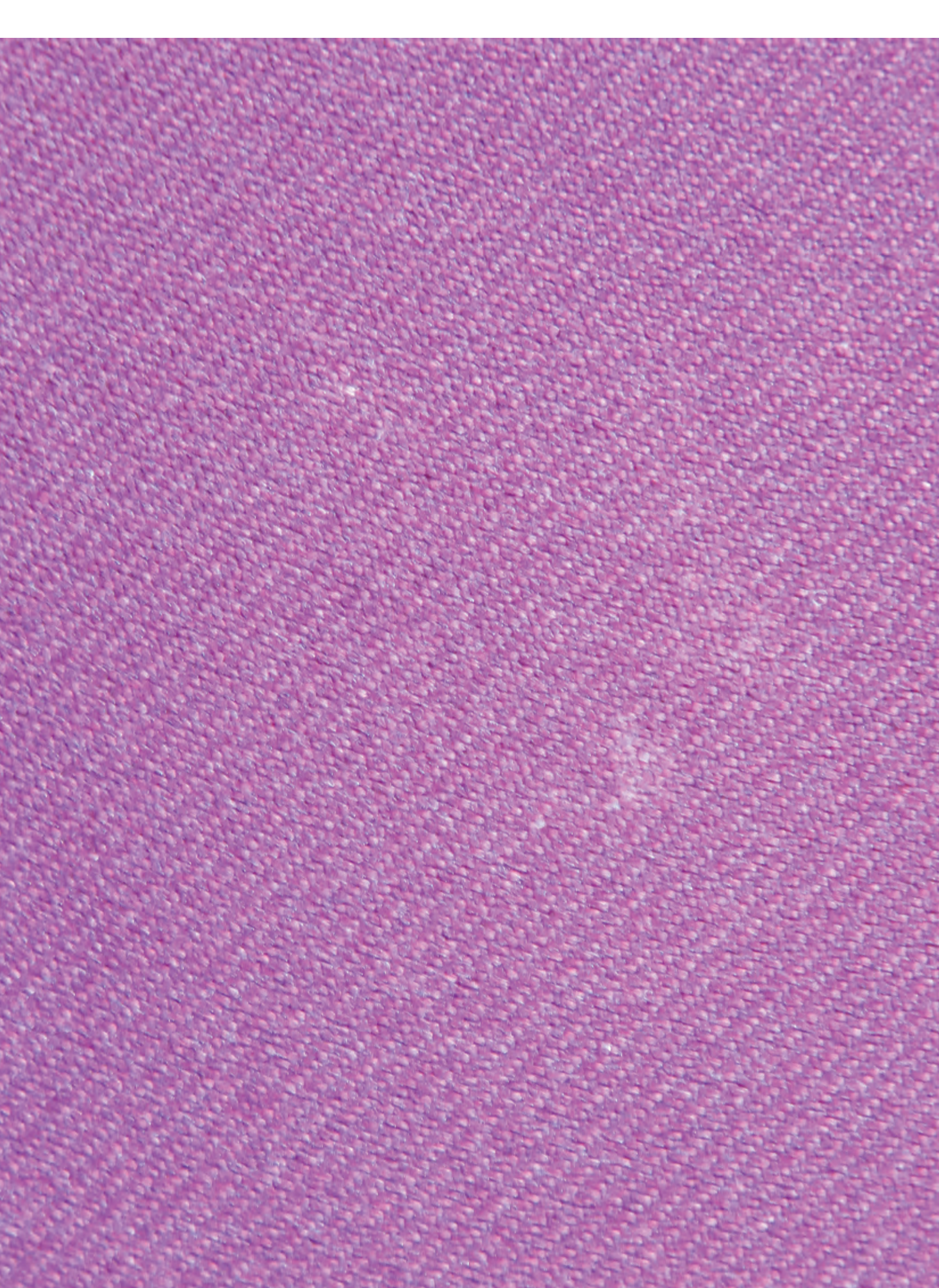


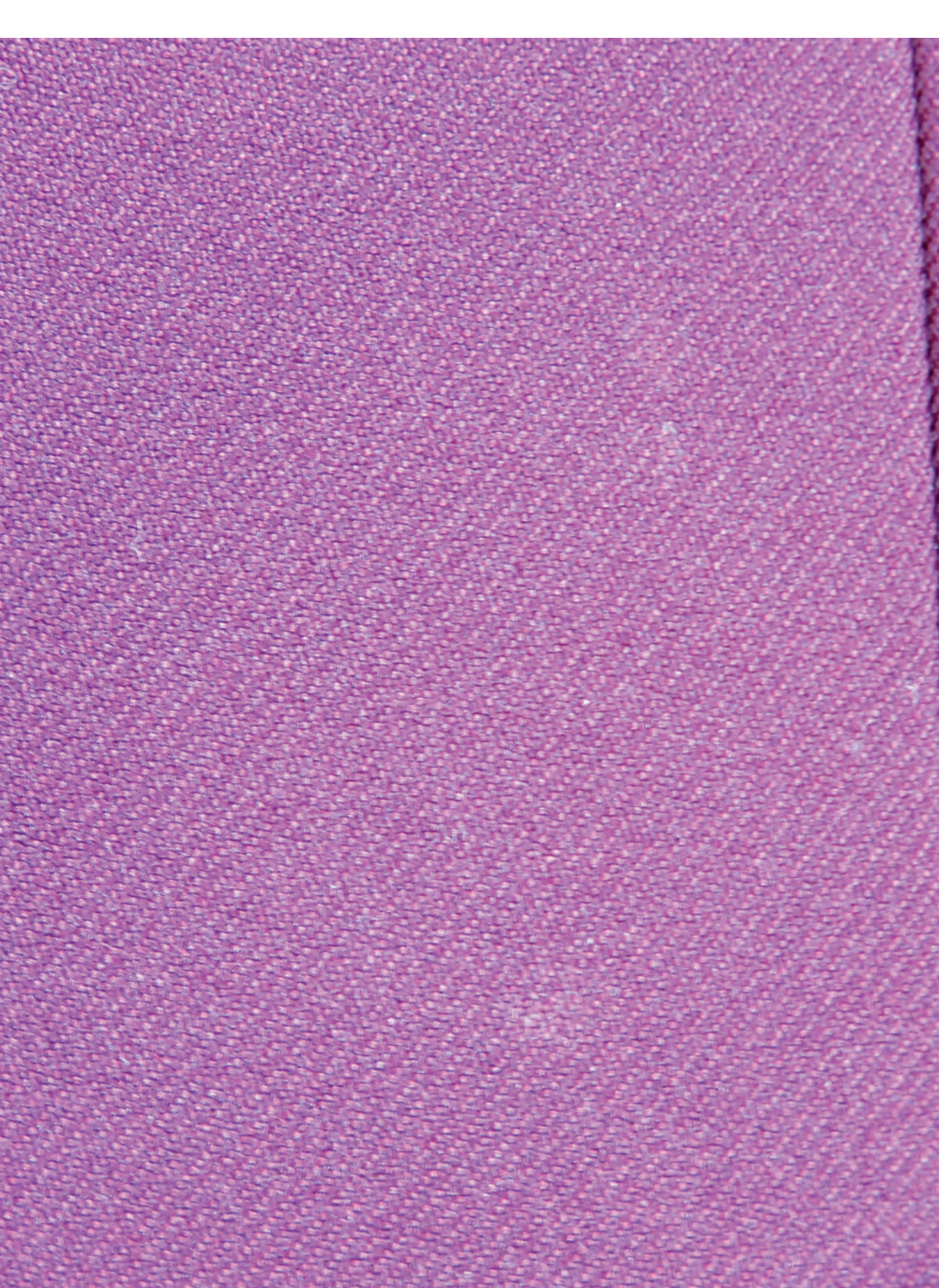














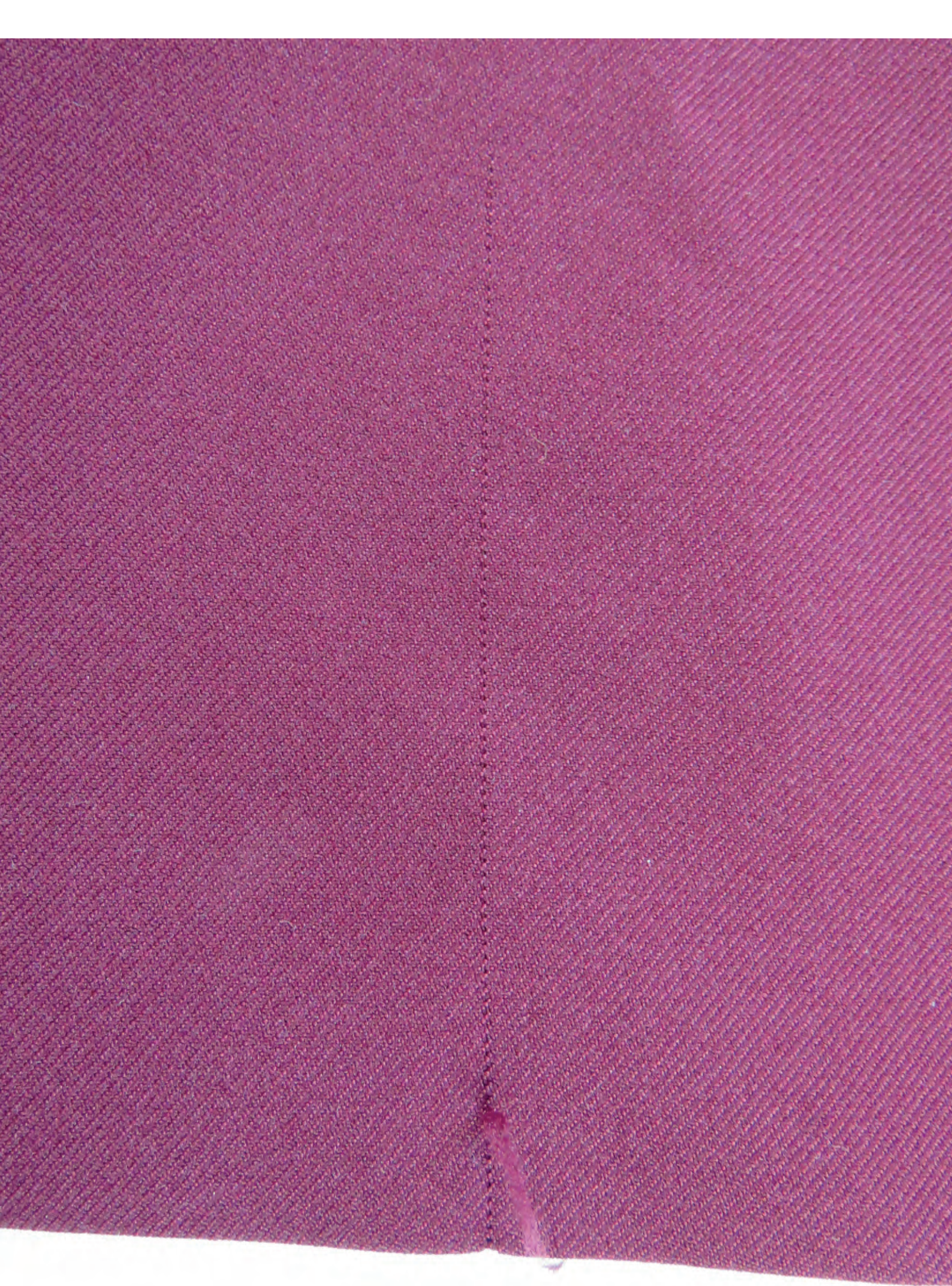






















































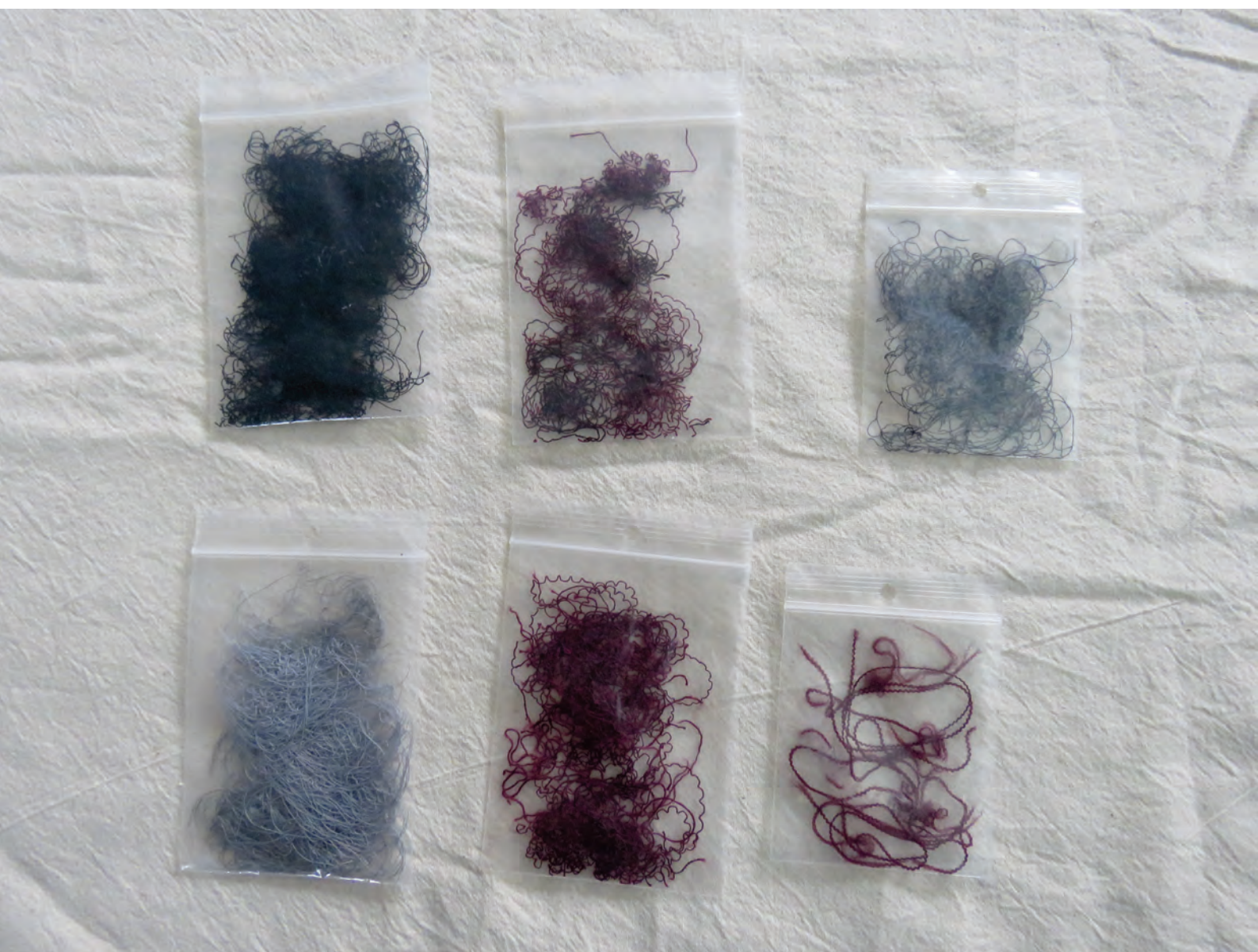


















Appendix C – Interview Questions

Interview/email questions

- 1) Could you please share your name, and if you are comfortable your age?
- 2) How do you use your pockets in both your garments and accessories day-to-day?
- 3) Have you used pockets to keep things outside of day-to-day use? If you have done so, would you be happy to share an example?
- 4) Have you ever found something in a pocket which you did not expect? Can you describe it along with how it made you feel?
- 5) Is there anything else you'd like to share about this topic, pocket items, or your memories about these that we haven't discussed?
- 6) Can you recall any experiences with pockets growing up.

Appendix D – The Wedding Dress Research Material

Mida & Kim Checklist for Observation

Wedding Dress

GENERAL

1. a. What type of garment is it? Wedding Dress	b. Is the garment intended for: Male, Female , Unisex?
2. a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment? Silk taffeta	b. Are these fabrics predominately natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend? Natural
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment? Purple, lavender tone, shot with amber/bronze	4. Does the garment have any labels? Just the museum label, T606
5. What decade or general period does the garment or accessory belong to? 1860s	6. Can the garment be handled safely without causing further damage? Very carefully
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment? A gauze/mesh sachet was found in the single pocket in the dress. The buttons appear quite modern, in excellent condition on their façade. Stunning vibrant colour of the shot silk.	8. Does the collection have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period? Yes

CONSTRUCTION

9. Describe the main components of the garment, such as the bodice, collar, sleeves, skirt.
Fitted bodice, very small mandarin collar, slightly dropped shoulder with piping at shoulder seam and brown lace cord/trim stitched from each shoulder/neck point out into points at the top of the chest and then meeting at the CF opening on the torso in a 'V'. This trim appears to have numerous areas of breakage of thread and areas of repair, with transparent thread on right proper breast (conservation?). Nine glass buttons down centre front filled with abstract glittery bronze and black 'blobs'. Double darted at waist, inserted with whalebone. Shaped arm with gusset at underarm. Finished in decorative trim and lace shaped into a 'V' at cuff.
Centre front opening moves to left proper side with slit opening. Hook and eye closures. Dress falls into a full skirt. Ten goared style skirt, with larger panels at CF & CB. Hem has a large gathered at points facing and moderately poorly finished hem with a brown binding. Dress is fully lined in a rust/brown/tan shaded drill (wool? Cotton?)
The dress is finished with a separate bustle featuring a CB bow and double petaled design beneath. This is trimmed with same brown cording along with ruffled edges. It is fixed at CF waist with hook and eyes. There are interesting repairs to one side of this.

If relevant to your research, note measurements in both imperial and metric measurements such as:		
a. Bust 48cm	c. Hips N/A	e. Sleeve length 54cm
b. Waist 38cm	d. Waist to hem 105cm (CF) CB extends another 18cm	f. Pocket See notes on pocket @ point 13
10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body? Small waist, wide hips, rounded shoulders. Creates an hourglass figure.		
11. Is the garment machine-stitched, handmade or a combination of these methods? Combination I believe (would need to check record)		
12. How is the garment closed or fastened? Hooks and eyes CF.		
13. Are there any front, side, flap, or hidden pockets? 'The dress has one pocket, which sits about 110mm below the waistband, along the seam at the proper right of the central front panel of the skirt. The opening is 175mm, and the pocket extends about 350mm deep from the top of the opening to the deepest point. It is about 180mm at the widest interior point.'		
14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of nontraditional materials or structural elements? The inset pocket is unique, this was part of a 20 year period when pockets were in womenswear.		
15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment? No		
16. Is the type of construction consistent with the dating of the garment? I believe so		
17. Is the garment reinforced in any way, such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements? Whale boning at two front darts.		
18. Is the garment lined? Yes, fully integrated with the silk outer.		

TEXTILE

19. What is the dominant textile or material that has been used? Is it a natural or man-made fibre? Natural, silk.
20. Has the dominant textile been subjected to a finishing process, such as bleaching, pressing, or glazing? I don't believe so, it is shot silk however, giving it a luminous iridescent effect.
21. Have any other textiles been used in the garment or in the lining? Yes, wool or cotton drill.
22. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stencilling, painting or manipulation of fabric? No
23. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there signs that any such decoration has been removed? Trim at bodice front, bustle edges and sleeve cuff. Lace is also in place at sleeve cuff.
24. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires, or boning? Boning
25. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in colour with the passage of time? Stains are prevalent down CF bodice as well as deep up the hem both internally and externally. These have yellowish/rust tones to them on the outer silk with lighter and darker tones on the lining. Also discolouration at sleeve cuffs and notable sweat darkening the fabric and affecting the lustre at the underarms.

LABELS

26. Is there a maker label? If so, is the label consistent with the designer's <i>oeuvre</i> and does it offer clues as to dating such as a number or season? No maker label
27. Is there a store label to identify where the garment was purchased? Does this reveal anything about the garment's history? N/A
28. Are there any care labels or information about the garment? N/A
29. Are there any size labels in the garment? N/A
30. Is there a marking inside the garment that indicates the specific owner of the garment, such as an embroidered initial, nametag, or laundry mark? N/A

USE, ALTERATION AND WEAR

31. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way? Yes, it has been extended in the waist, twice, approximately 1.5cm each time. This matches with the extension on the bustle too. It also may have had the binding on the hem stitched on at a much later late in the 1960s? 1970s? Thread colour is inconsistent with much of the garment and the material of it appears modern and possibly synthetic. There are various repairs conducted, mainly around the waist and bodice, suspected from its time prior to entering the Museum and since in conservation.
32. Where does the garment show wear? At the waist, top points of bust darts, under arms, hem
33. Is the garment soiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk split, or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? There is evidence of various small spots of insect damage throughout. Some areas where the fabric has worn through, particularly the right proper breast dart and at the waist. The waist band of the bustle has a potential extension added to it. Or it was simply the last feature of the garment created, as there is a unique jigsaw of fabric as if the last scraps were used on the underside at the right proper CF. Obvious hand stitched repairs to right proper waist. Repair to front bust trim, part still loose, another repaired by a conservator. Some of the glass buttons are chipped.
34. Has the garment been dyed to alter its original colour? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed? No. Potentially with the hem. The manner of how it is sewn on and the thread colour appears different to the rest of the garment.
35. Does the styling of the garment conform to the predominant fashions of the period, or does it represent a hybrid, perhaps custom-made for the owner? Yes, somewhat.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

36. Does the collection have any provenance records associated with the garment? AWMM has limited records on the provenance of the dress: 'T606 [its accession number] was donated in 1975 by Dorothy Ellen Miles. As Jane has noted, the Director often wrote a thank you letter acknowledging gifts at that time, but usually only reflected the most basic information that we hold in the register/Vernon records/catalogue card (name of donor and item given).'

Observations conducted by Cerys Dallaway Davidson during visit to Auckland War Memorial Museum's B2 storage area as facilitated by Applied Arts Associate Curator on 12 April 2024.

The dress was possibly on display for a period in either the 'Landmarks' or 'Encounters' galleries in the Museum.
37. Are there any photographs of the garment? Some, poorly captured to date.
38. Are there any further documents or information about the garment that might indicate the original price of the garment? No
39. Are there any manufacturer, store tags or original packaging associated with the garment? No
40. Are there any similar garments by the same designer, or by other designers from the same period, in this collection? Designer information is not available.

Checklist for Reflection

SENSORY REACTIONS

Sight 1. Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references? No	2. Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it? I believe so
Touch 3. What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment? Whilst each of the two main fabrics used in the garment would not have individually been overly weighted, the combination of them and sheer amount of fabric in the garment would have made it quite a weight garment. The texture of the outer fabric was lustrous and luminous through the effect of the shot silk, giving it a vibrant appearance despite its age. The lining was well chosen to match with one of the tones in the shot silk, the copper shade. It has a clear diagonal drill weave pattern. Interestingly and in a very naïve manner, I initially thought the lining was the underside of the silk outer and wondered at the unique nature of such a fabric with the shot silk outer and drill weave interior. The stunning making process with the full lining was phenomenal.	
Sound 4. Would a person wearing this garment make noise? Very much so, the dress would have made significant rustling when the wearer was moving. I think also the shot silk fabric would give off this slightly crunchy swish sound when the arms moved past the body for example.	
Smell 5. Does the garment smell? There was certainly a general old smell, this would have been partially influenced by the various smells coming from the numerous collections items stored around the processing space which was situated in the double story B2 storage area. I encountered what I would term as a placebo scent from the sachet which came from the pocket. I think the esters from whatever plant matter it previously contained would have been long gone, though my mind seemed to indicate a floral scent was coming from it. Interestingly this did not include any notes of lavender.	

PERSONAL REACTIONS

6. What was the impetus to examine this garment? Were you interested in the person who wore it, the maker, or some other aspect of its object biography? This garment was chosen for examination due to a mesh sachet of unknown plant material being found in the single pocket the dress contained. Initially it fitted within my research scope to be included in my thesis. However, the desire to examine the garment was mainly simply because it was the earliest example found within my research scope. I was also very much initially intrigued about a womenswear garment from this early period holding a pocket which was not a tie-on detachable pocket, or one added at a later date. I soon found in literature on the topic of the history of pockets that there was a twenty-year period at this time when womenswear had large inset pockets included. From this initial connection to my research scope, I was certainly drawn to the beauty of the garment, the colour, the good condition despite its age. There was a romance around it in connection to it being identified as a wedding dress. Its pocket contents combined with the nature of the garment set my imagination alight. Who was the young lady who wore this as her wedding dress, perhaps with a sachet of fragrant flowers in the pocket as a comfort or alluring scent to her betrothed? I initially didn't think beyond the dress's connection to a wedding.

Upon reflection, since examining the dress, I can see the evidence of its wear and broader biography is clear. The waist has been taken out twice, was it worn during pregnancy, or after this with the body changes that often do not return to the younger figures shape. It has been well cared for, repaired at the waist, not overly faded, so perhaps clearly the wearers best dress. Then hem indicates wear at a much later date, perhaps decades, even 100 years following its creation. Well, chosen colour with the copper tone, though its weave and the thread colour used belies that it appears to have been added certainly following initial construction. Was it worn by later generations; did it find itself in a dress up box as my great grandmothers 21st birthday gown did as a child?

7. Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment?
Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body?
The same gender, a little tricky to determine the size. I think I could fit into it, though doubt it would fit properly.

8. How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause discomfort or pain?

I think the arms would be tight, sleeves not designed for movement as such. I could imagine that despite being let out twice, the waist could likely be too snug, certainly if attempting to wear without a corset. I could envision the whalebone darts being uncomfortable to a modernly clothed accommodated figure as well. I could also imagine the wonder in wearing the full skirt with the thickly gathered pleats at the bustle. The joy of picking handfuls up of it to swish and move around, the freedom of legs hidden beneath layers and layers of silk. Though the challenge of moving around in it. I recall the joy of wearing my own full length wedding dress, layers and layers of soft silk chiffon with a glorious train spilling out behind (coupled with the hearty challenge of traipsing up stairs without tripping on the hem!

9. Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and colour appealing to you?
Yes, the colour in particular appeals strongly to me, the style would be glorious to wear for a brief occasion. Though the reality of wearing this nature of dress with its restrictions day in and day out is not something I could fully imagine. It does have a good pocket though!

10. Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design?

The pleats at the bustle are stunning. All through the bodice the techniques are masterful and simply illustrate the well-made clothing of years gone by compared to poorly made fast fashion of current day.

The functional component is most certainly the pocket, and this brief moment in the history of womenswear in which inset pockets were adequate.

11. Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humour, joy, sorrow or fear?

Gender roles perhaps, the garment is overtly feminine, though of its time. I think the colour is romantic and emotive.

12. Do you have an emotional reaction to the garment? Can you identify a personal bias that should be acknowledged in your research?

I was drawn to it being that it was womenswear which I am more drawn to generally. I also was attracted to the vibrant iridescent colour which is very beautiful. The aesthetics of the gown and the general good condition bit hint that it had content to share were very appealing. I also simply wanted to be able to include more womenswear in my research as most of my examples were in menswear and I wished to balance the scales somewhat.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

13. If you were permitted access to the provenance record for the artifact, what does this information reveal about the owner, and their relationship to the garment?

Very little. It was donated in 1975 along with two other dress history items, a silk satin, cotton lace cape, and a silk satin coat. Details of a thank you letter from the Director of the time to the donor Dorothy Ellen Miles. The catalogue card has little detail beyond a

description of the garment: 'shot lavender/brown taffeta - full skirt, high plain neck, slight leg-o-mutton sleeves to wrist, most of brown braiding missing, small buttons down front bodice. Lined.' It also identifies the condition was good. It was gifted 15.10.75. Donor has noted it as made in New Zealand, though this cannot be confirmed. From c. 1860. A 'Woman's Dress / Wedding Dress / also waist band & bow as bustle.' Silk.

14. Does the museum, study or private collection have other garments that are similar, or by the same designer/maker?

The online collection is not searchable in a manner to obtain this information. The garment does not have manufacturer/designer/maker details to utilise and searching by circa year of creation or generic topic word searches like 'dress' only featured limited results showing some relevant examples but with lack of clarity around the overall number. This is also not that relevant for the purposes of this research.

15. Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?

Te Papa:

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/45856>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/45914>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/45880>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/45495>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/53929>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/35416>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/47325>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/593179>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/593173>

C. 1859s maternity dress: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/47082>

Crinoline: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/35435>

Corset: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/330415>

1970s bodice: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/49438>

Reticule: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/558616>

Misers purse: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/48530>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/45496>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/47094>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/64328>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/35655>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/66861>

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/59076>

other, AWMM:

1850s jacket:

<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/discover/collections/record/1794?k=1860&f=department:Applied%20Arts%20and%20Design&p=6&dept=Applied%20Arts%20and%20Design>

NZFM

16. Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer-reviewed journals?

Claire Regnault 'Dressed'

Lydia Edwards 'How to Read a Dress'

Mida & Kim 'The Dress Detective' write on a wedding dress of a different era

17. Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) available for sale on Etsy, eBay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites?

18. Are there photographs, paintings, or illustrations of this garment, or of similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections, or online?

There is a sketch of this dress held with the records of it, used for analysis of it.



19. Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, novels, and other forms of written material?

Yes, there is a letter from the Director of the time to the donor Dorothy Ellen Miles.

20. If the maker of the garment is a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?

NA

Prown Method

Wedding Dress Pocket Contents

Description (observation of object)

A piece of gauze/mesh has been gathered and folded into a bag/sachet like structure, holding desiccated bits of plant matter. This is fixed into a bag structure with a light (sage green) thread wrapped around twice and tied into two knots, one with ends extending approx. 4cm.

Time has flattened the folds and made the plant material indistinguishable without forensic investigation.

Substantial Analysis (dimensions, materials, descriptive physical inventory etc)

7.7cm H x 5cm W x 1cm D

Cotton & unknown plant material.

Content (subject matter, iconography)

Something of comfort to the wearer.

Formal Analysis (objects form, visual characteristics)

Yellowed in areas, particularly at base where plant matter is held. Top edges are frayed as well as bits along back edge which had not been fully gathered into tie at top.

All folded are well creased. Thread colour may be faded.

Deduction (use or interaction with object)

Sensory Engagement (see, hear, taste, feel)

I think I imagine a floral scent from the sachet, as I envision its purpose. Likely the essential oils have all expired, so more likely imagined.

Intellectual Engagement (what it does, how?)

Explored in the dress analysis section.

Emotional Response

Explored in the dress analysis section.

T 606 .5
Contents of
pocket



T No.
606

Country
New Zealand

Locality
-

Period
c 1860

1.14W
Type
Woman's Dress

Medium

T0233

silks.

Wedding dress

also waist band &
bow as bustle.

MAHE

01-05-01

TD JB

Acquisition

pres Mrs. P E. Miles.

Description

shot lavender/brown taffeta - full skirt.
high plain neck, slight leg o mutton sleeves to
wrist - most of brown braiding missing -
small buttons down front bodice.

Dimensions

lined.

Marks

Maker

Condition

good

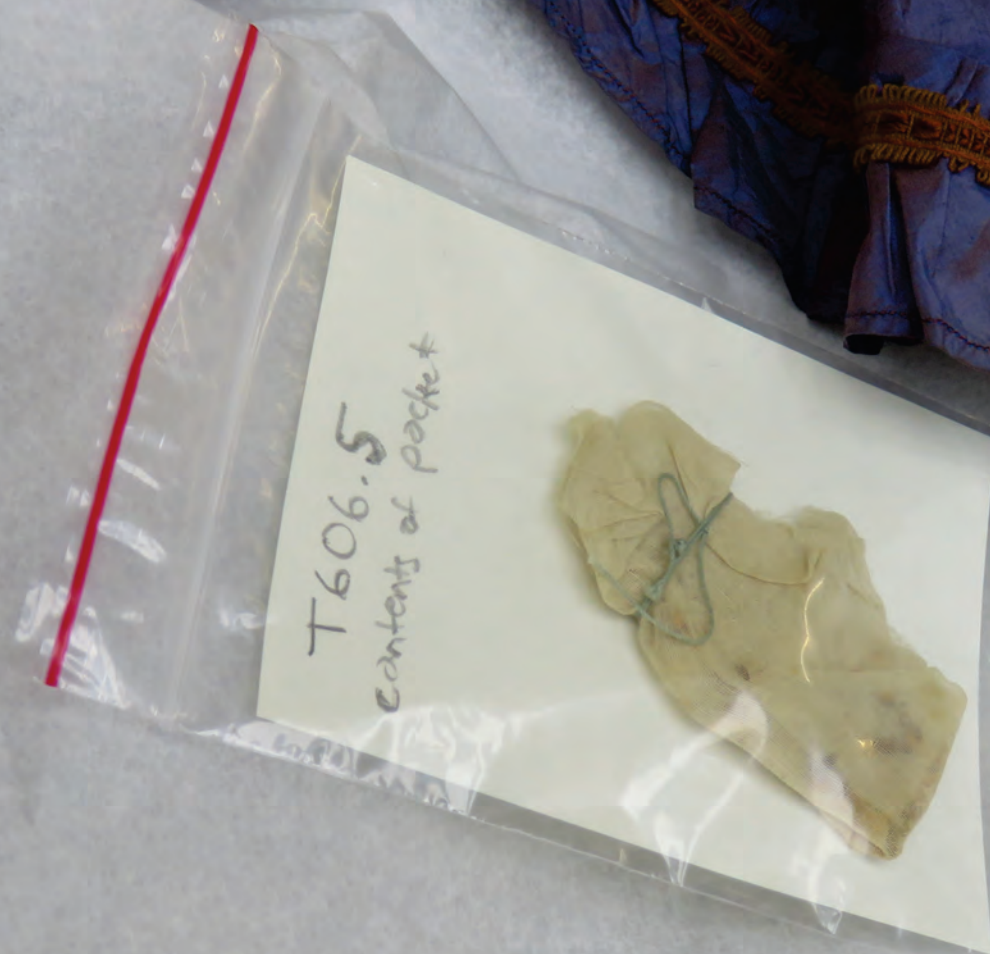
References

15-10-75

COMPRINT-392489

Mus. Loc.

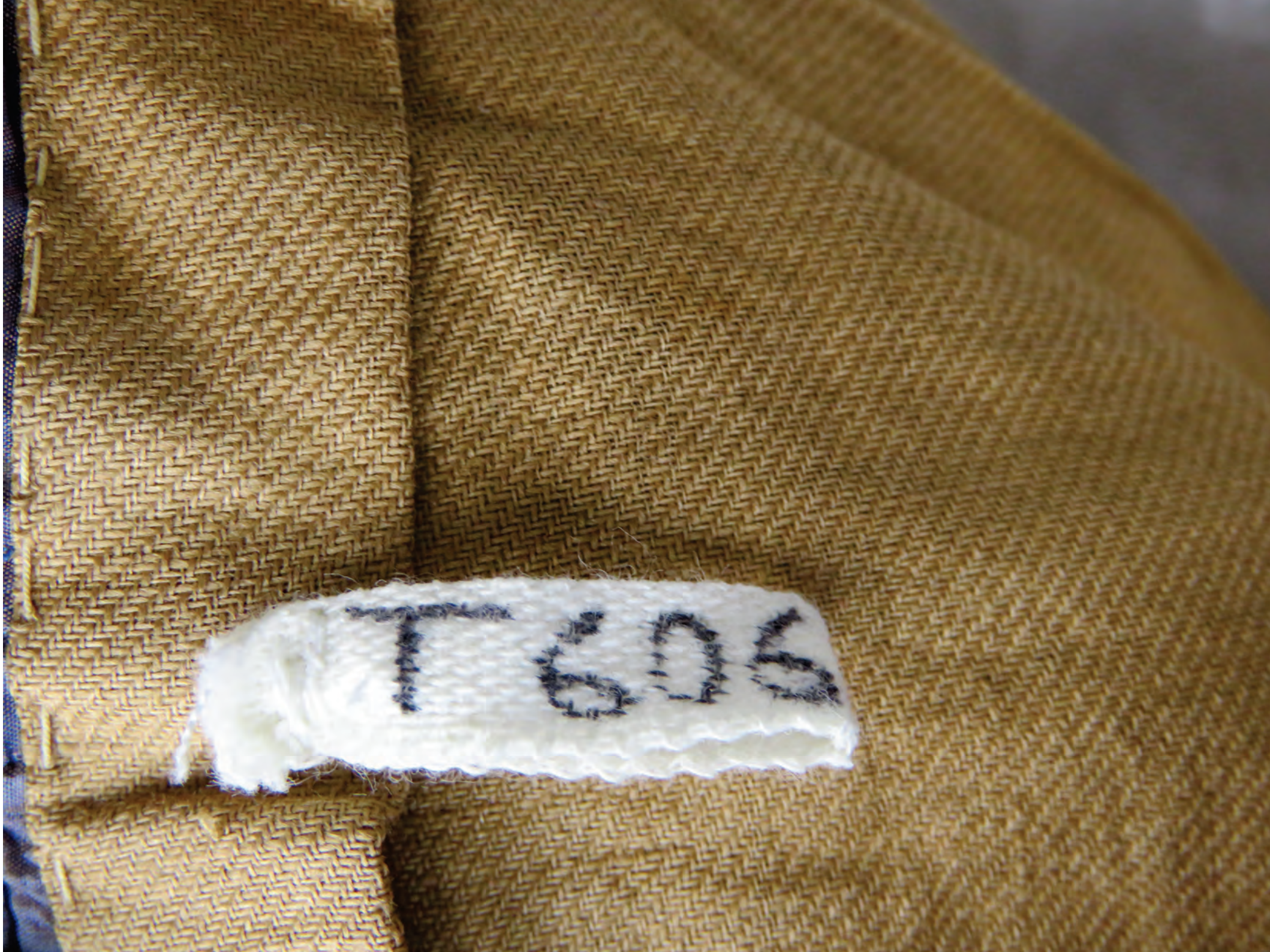












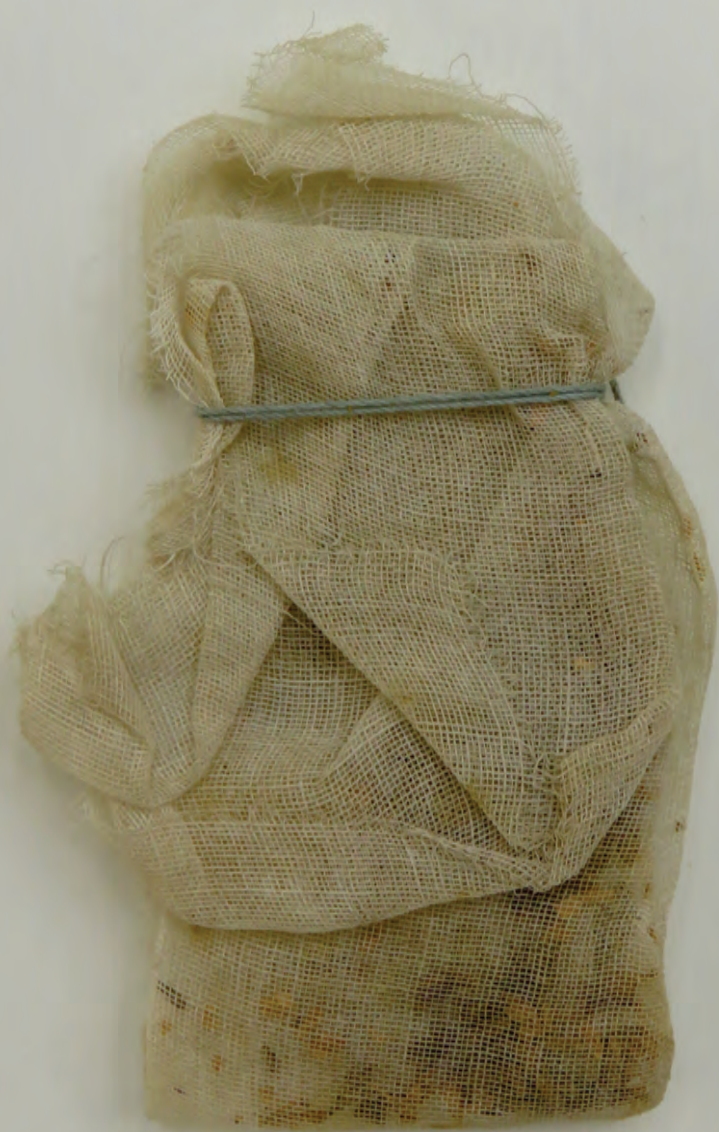




T606.5
contents of packet



T606.5
contents of pocket*





T606.5
contents of packets































































































Appendix E – ‘Archiving Denim’ Research Material

Checklist for Observation

Jeans

GENERAL

1. a. What type of garment is it? Denim straight cut jeans	b. Is the garment intended for: Male, Female, Unisex? Youth
2. a. What are the main fabrics that have been used to make the garment? Cotton denim	b. Are these fabrics predominately natural in composition (silk, wool, cotton, linen), synthetics or a blend? Natural
3. What are the dominant colours and/or patterns of the garment? Light 'denim' blue, with white/cream/tan tones in the worn areas and some brown areas showing mud stains.	4. Does the garment have any labels? Yes. 1) Centre back, grey with reverse white stitching 'urban / s / 14y / MADE IN CHINA'. 2) Left proper hip, white fabric label, writing has worn off.
5. What decade or general period does the garment or accessory belong to? Early 21st century, c. early 2000s	6. Can the garment be handled safely without causing further damage? Yes
7. What are the most unusual or unique aspects of the garment? It has an internal piece of elastic in the manner of childrenswear which can be adjusted with a button at the back left proper hip to elasticate across the back of the pants for size adjustment of a growing body (though mainly works across the left part of the back). The button is not a usual denim jean style button, it is decorative and is known to be a replacement, it also is missing its internal section. There is a machine embroidered owl on the left proper back pocket. There is silver thread machine stitched in a zig zag fashion down each side seam at the top under the waist band.	8. Does the collection have any other garments like it, either by the same designer or from the same period? Yes, from the same period, though limited. No, by the same designer. Though previously did from Urban Angel and Pumpkin Patch.

CONSTRUCTION

9. Describe the main components of the garment, such as the bodice, collar, sleeves, skirt. The jeans are straight to skinny cut style. They feature a low-rise waist with a small fly and small sized pockets. The waistband is a standard slightly contoured style, double layered and fully encased, though it does not feature a standard leather label/patch at the back. The waistband is elasticated with a buttonhole elastic tape, which is predominately effective on the left proper side, finishing in a clear plastic four-hole button which allows adjustment of the elastic band. This is fastened at the ninth buttonhole from the side seam. Onto the waist band are sewn five standard belt loops. There is not the standard two-part metal stud button as the front fastener. Though the hole on the back of the button position on the waistband indicates where it would have been, is still visible. Instead, there is a decorative metal button handsewn in its place. The front fly is

fastened with a short metal zip, the zipper tab is however broken, meaning it no longer holds in place.

The pocket construction is standard jean five pockets, with two curved inset pockets at the front on each side, which are secured at their top points with a rivet each in which are embossed stylised butterflies. There is a watch pocket on the right proper side. At the back are two patch pockets, the left proper featuring a machine stitched owl design, the right featuring more traditional double stitched arch/point. Both have back tacking stitched at top corners. Above the pockets is a slightly v shaped yoke.

Standard strong lock stitch common in denim jeans is used throughout, top stitched down the inner leg and back/crotch seam, throughout pockets, waistband and belt loops. There is also silver zig-zag stitch 5mm wide undertaken 14.5cm down from waistband at side seams. The hem is a standard double turned 1.5cm hem with single topstitching.

https://sewguide.com/parts-of-jeans/#1_waistband 12/6.23

If relevant to your research, note measurements in metric measurements such as:

a. Bust	c. Hips circumference 102cm	e. Sleeve length
b. Waist[band] circumference 78cm (elasticated) 82.5cm (un-elasticated) 3.8cm (width)	d. Out seam & inseam 103cm (OS) 83.5cm (IS)	f. Other – front & back rise 19cm (front) 33cm (back)
g. Other – leg opening width 17cm	h. Other – knee width 19.5cm	i. Other – thigh width 28cm
j. button diameter 2.5cm (font) 1.8cm (side seam elastic)	k. Other – pocket dimensions 15cm W x 13.5cm H (front inset (largest points to side seams)) 7.3cm W x 6.4cm H (watch (largest points to side seams)) 11.5cm W x 13cm H (back (largest points to side seams))	

<https://propercloth.com/reference/measure-tailored-suit-pants-trousers/#:~:text=Spread%20the%20legs%20further%20apart,the%20legs%20meet%20one%20another.> 18/6/23

10. Does the structure of the garment emphasize one part of the body?

Probably the lower waist, hip and buttocks areas.

11. Is the garment machine-stitched, handmade or a combination of these methods?

Machine stitched

12. How is the garment closed or fastened?

Button and zip fly

13. Are there any front, side, flap, or hidden pockets?

Yes, five, identified in construction description

14. Are there any remarkable features in the construction, such as a bias cut, or use of nontraditional materials or structural elements?

Silver zig zag stitching down each outer side seam. Machine stitched owl on left proper back pocket. Two curved inset pockets at the front on each side, are secured at their top points with a rivet each in which are embossed stylised butterflies.

15. Is the fabric selvedge visible in the seams, and has this been incorporated into the cutting or construction of the garment?

No

16. Is the type of construction consistent with the dating of the garment?

Yes

17. Is the garment reinforced in any way, such as padding, boning, metal hoops, or wire reinforcements?

No, only reinforces stitching areas and rivets in line with traditional denim jean construction.

18. Is the garment lined?

No

TEXTILE

19. What is the dominant textile or material that has been used?

Is it a natural or man-made fiber?

Natural

20. Has the dominant textile been subjected to a finishing process, such as bleaching, pressing, or glazing?

Yes, denim distressed fading in five horizontal lines across upper front section, as well as three lines in a 'sun ray' pattern from the lower corners of each curved front inset pocket.

21. Have any other textiles been used in the garment or in the lining?

No

22. Does the garment incorporate a stripe or pattern? Is it woven into the fabric or printed or formed by a different method such as stencilling, painting or manipulation of fabric?

No
23. Is there any form of applied decoration such as applique, trim, lace, beading, embroidery, buttons, ruffles, pleated bands, or bows? Are there signs that any such decoration has been removed? Silver zig zag stitching down each outer side seam. Machine stitched owl design on left proper back pocket.
24. Has the fabric been reinforced in any way with padding, quilting, interfacing, wires, or boning? No
25. Has the textile faded or otherwise changed in colour with the passage of time? Yes, appearing down top front sections of legs, from upper thigh point to just below the knee. This is the same on the back, across buttocks sections and down to just under the knees. Both knees are browned from presumed mud stains, as well as unknown brownish drip patterned stain on inside right proper knee.

LABELS

26. Is there a maker label? If so, is the label consistent with the designer's <i>oeuvre</i> and does it offer clues as to dating such as a number or season? Yes, 'urban / s / 14y / MADE IN CHINA'. The brand is Urban Angel, a young adult or 'tween' line from the New Zealand brand Pumpkin Patch which operated c. 2004-2017.
27. Is there a store label to identify where the garment was purchased? Does this reveal anything about the garment's history? (See note 26)
28. Are there any care labels or information about the garment? It has worn off so cannot be read
29. Are there any size labels in the garment? 14y (14-year-olds)
30. Is there a marking inside the garment that indicates the specific owner of the garment, such as an embroidered initial, nametag, or laundry mark? No

USE, ALTERATION AND WEAR

31. Has the garment been structurally altered in any way? Top button has been replaced and elasticated backing was worn tightened to the ninth button hole.
32. Where does the garment show wear? Front and back tops of legs, distressed at pocket top edges (may have been part of original design) and at back hem. The decorative silver thread at the top of each outer side seam is broken in many areas. There are tears to the fabric at the inner thigh point on both legs, from the inner side seams approx. 6cm towards back of trouser. Right proper knee is torn and both knees feature brown [mud] stains.
33. Is the garment soiled or damaged in any way? Have seams ripped, silk split, or fabric decomposed? Is there evidence of insect damage? (See note 32)
34. Has the garment been dyed to alter its original color? Have trim or other forms of embellishment been unpicked or removed? No
35. Does the styling of the garment conform to the predominant fashions of the period, or does it represent a hybrid, perhaps custom-made for the owner? Yes, perhaps early days of skinny jeans.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

36. Does the collection have any provenance records associated with the garment? No
37. Are there any photographs of the garment? Not that are known

38. Are there any further documents or information about the garment that might indicate the original price of the garment?

No

39. Are there any manufacturer, store tags or original packaging associated with the garment?

No

40. Are there any similar garments by the same designer, or by other designers from the same period, in this collection?

No

Checklist for Reflection

SENSORY REACTIONS

Sight 1. Does the garment have stylistic, religious, artistic or iconic references? No	2. Is the garment stylistically consistent with the period from which it came? Does it seem to reflect the influences of that period or diverge from it? Yes
Touch 3. What is the texture and weight of the cloth or other materials used to construct the garment? Medium weight cotton denim	
Sound 4. Would a person wearing this garment make noise? A slight rustling as the denim in the legs pass each other in movement.	
Smell 5. Does the garment smell? No	

PERSONAL REACTIONS

6. What was the impetus to examine this garment? Were you interested in the person who wore it, the maker, or some other aspect of its object biography? The garment was set to go to the op shop as they were no longer being worn regularly due to the low-rise waistline cut which results in them slipping down regularly at the back. When looking for examples to explore interventions and creative research outputs for this wider study I went to fossick in the box of items for the op shop. These pants were identified as a good contender due to their pocket contents and years of memories in their wear as well as the common and work nature of denim jeans which traditionally are practical work wear featuring pockets for their practical uses.
7. Are you the same gender and size as the person who wore or owned the garment? Did a person who was bigger or smaller than you wear it? Would the garment fit your body? Yes, I purchased and wore the garment from around between a decade and 15 years.
8. How would it feel on your body? Would it be tight or loose? Would the garment cause discomfort or pain? Snug around hips, post childbearing. This is also evident in the worn inner thigh areas from teen to womanly thighs. Also has always been too low waistline in the back, constantly requiring pulling up.
9. Would you wear this garment if you could? Is the style and colour appealing to you? Yes, I did. The jeans were purchased for their affordability and the quirky embroidered owl on the back pocket.
10. Does the garment or accessory demonstrate a complexity of construction or element of mastery in the design? Does the dress artifact have a functional component to the design? . Functional denim jeans with a small flourish in back pockets embroidery and silver stitching down the side.
11. Did the maker want to invoke emotion, status, sexuality, or gender roles with the garment? Does the garment seem to express humor, joy, sorrow or fear? Quirkiness, gender roles, female youth oriented but with a practical spin.
12. Do you have an emotional reaction to the garment? Can you identify a personal bias that should be acknowledged in your research? The garment was my own, so clear personal bias. I have memories mainly from recent times wearing the jeans gardening in our home. These are evidenced by the dirt ingrained into the knees in particular and wearing through of the inner thighs and one knee. I have faint memories of choosing to purchase them from, I recall, the Urban Angel/Pumpkin Patch shop in Thorndon near where my Mother worked on the outer area of Wellington CBD. This was potentially during an outing coupled with a lunch date at either Bordeaux Bakery or La Cloche with my mother during my early University or late high school years.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

13. *If you were permitted access to the provenance record for the artifact, what does this information reveal about the owner, and their relationship to the garment?*

That this garment was worn over a long period of time from late teen years through to mid-thirties. A set of sturdy loyal jeans which went from slightly quirky not your average jeans with their owl embroidered pocket, to strictly at home wear when tears appeared in the inner thigh sections of each leg due to wear by a no longer teen but womanly body. Ending as garden wear and eventually set for the op shop due to their lack of comfort.

14. *Does the museum, study or private collection have other garments that are similar, or by the same designer/maker?*

No, though previously shopped at Urban Angel and Pumpkin Patch when young.

15. *Do other museums have similar objects? Can you identify similar objects in online collections of dress?*

Only Pumpkin Patch collection items found, these mainly relate to childrenswear specifically. There may be a gap in teen age and young adult dress history in collections.

16. *Have other scholars written about this type of garment or the designer's work in books or peer-reviewed journals?*

No

17. *Are there similar garments or related ephemera (advertisements, fashion photographs, packaging, and other print material) available for sale on Etsy, eBay, online vintage retailers, or on auction sites?*

Yes, various garments from the same maker for sale on Facebook Marketplace and Trademe.

18. *Are there photographs, paintings, or illustrations of this garment, or of similar garments in books, magazines, museum collections, or online?*

Some images of other Urban Angel garments online. Urban Angel website located through Wayback Machine.

19. *Has this garment, or others like it, been referenced in documents, such as letters or receipts, or magazines, novels, and other forms of written material?*

No

20. *If the maker of the garment is a known designer, what information is available about them? How does this garment fit into their oeuvre? Have there been exhibitions of the designer's work? Has the designer written an autobiography or been profiled in magazines or journals?*

Not much, a brand as opposed to a designer.

Prown Method

Jeans

Description (observation of object)

Pocket contents of jeans including 2x faded receipts, 1x 'Playcentre' note paper, 1x moist towelette packet, 1x brown hair tie & 1x used tissue.

All forgotten items located within the bowels of three of the front pockets of the jeans. Apart from the hair tie, all are no longer of much use. The receipts can no longer be easily deciphered, the 'Playcentre' note paper is a well-worn scrap and the towelette is split open and contents dried up.

Substantial Analysis (dimensions, materials, descriptive physical inventory etc)

2x faded receipts

1x 'Playcentre' note paper: ..x.. Paper. Worn, embedded creases, crumpled and worn off colour though significant parts. It has also been cut at varying odd angles along the top.

1x moist towelette packet: ...X... Paper, aluminium foil

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue

Content (subject matter, iconography)

2x faded receipts:

1x 'Playcentre' note paper: Playcentre branding and logo from current Playcentre organisation. This includes black san-serif handwritten style bold font for the text. Following this is a purple eight petaled flower with a yellow centre, stem and two green leaves, this is all outlined in thick black ink. This is on a faded yellow background.

1x moist towelette packet: One side features an image of the American flag. This is illustrated as a section of it waving in the wind on an angle with only 14 of the white stars and five red stripes which are illustrated in wavy lines.

The other side features the text: 'REFRESHING / FRESH NAP / MOIST TOWELETTE / A VERY STRONG NAPKIN SIZE TOWELETTE / SATURATED WITH A PLEASANTLY SMELLING SCENT / ED CLEANSING LOTION. CLEANS AND / REFRESHES HANDS AND FACE WITHOUT / SOAP OR WATER, SELF DRIES IN SEC- / ONDS. LEAVES SKIN SOFT AND SMOOTH. / DIRECTIONS: JUST TEAR OPEN PACKET AND USE / KATI-OUT COMPANY / WWW.KARIOUT.COM / 10'

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue

Formal Analysis (objects form, visual characteristics)

2x faded receipts

1x 'Playcentre' note paper:

1x moist towelette packet

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue

Deduction (use or interaction with object)

Sensory Engagement (see, hear, taste, feel)

2x faded receipts

1x 'Playcentre' note paper:

1x moist towelette packet

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue:

Intellectual Engagement (what it does, how?)

2x faded receipts

1x 'Playcentre' note paper:

1x moist towelette packet

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue

Emotional Response

2x faded receipts

1x 'Playcentre' note paper:

1x moist towelette packet

1x brown hair tie

1x used tissue

Reflections from Deconstruction

There are six different types of thread used in these jeans:

1. Mustard coloured heavy weight top stitching thread.
2. Mustard coloured light weight thread used on bar tacks.
3. Cornflower blue coloured thread used for inner overlocking of jeans.
4. Navy blue coloured thread used for sewing of elastic within the waistband.
5. White coloured thread used for the sewing of the pocket lining.
6. Decorative silver thread used in a zig-zag stitch at the top of the side seams.

Need to do next time:

- Measure and record amount of fabric used for flat lay



















































































Playcentre 



REFRESHING
FRESH NAP
MOIST TOWELETTE

A VERY STRONG NAPKIN SIZE TOWELETTE
SATURATED WITH A PLEASANTLY SCENT-
ED CLEANSING LOTION. CLEANS AND
REFRESHES HANDS AND FACE WITHOUT
SOAP OR WATER, SELF DRIES IN SEC-
ONDS. LEAVES SKIN SOFT AND SMOOTH.
DIRECTIONS: JUST TEAR OPEN PACKET AND USE

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