



# An officer and a gentleman, why isn't Wills a style icon?

**Luke Leitch** wonders what happened to the male equivalent of the Middleton fashion effect

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As Britain's clothing retailers mutter darkly that the dip might just be redoubling, there is one royal ray of light casting a rosy glow on the

fashion industry.

Kate Middleton's patronage has transformed the fortunes of Issa and sparked fevered runs at Reiss, Burberry and Temperley.

It is still too early to say whether, like Michelle Obama — who, recent research revealed, significantly boosts the share-price of companies whose clothes she wears — Middleton will become an irresistible lightning rod for women in search of fashion inspiration.

But she is highly visible, hugely relatable-to and apparently beyond the corrupting influence of commercial incentive or freebies, so now perfectly equipped to become a fantasy fashion avatar for years to come.

Which makes it all the more remarkable that her fiancé has had about as much impact on the men's fashion industry as Rio Ferdinand's manbag collection.

Because Prince William happens to be a rather snappy dresser. From Eton — where he wore those ridiculous robes with raffish elan — to his stints across all three Armed Forces, the second in line to the throne has displayed a great talent for looking dashing and princely. This is fortunate, as on April 29 he is highly likely to wear



Gieves & Hawkes-made RAF ceremonial attire (though there are a few suggestions that he might opt for Royal Navy uniform instead, as it is easily the swankiest of the three). Thus the Buckingham Palace balcony-kiss moment, should it transpire, will have maximum *Officer and a Gentleman* value with no visible bald patch.

Out of uniform the Prince has occasionally flirted with the unorthodox (beards, hoodies, and bad trainers), but is conservative at heart. His default outfit for formal occasions is a peak-collared navy blue suit (he reputedly still goes to Ede & Ravenscroft, the Eton tailor on Savile Row), teamed with a shirt from Turnbull & Asser, and shoes from Lobb. He regularly haunts Jermyn Street in St James, where a friend of mine spotted him and his fiancée lunching at Franco's last week, and like the Prince of Wales is a fan of the great British menswear companies based there.

Yet there has been no William-effect, no horde of royal wedding-fuelled punters descending on the streets desperate to emulate his style.

While his brother and father, and even Rio Ferdinand make occasional appearances in men's magazines' best-dressed lists,

William never does. He just doesn't have it — which is a shame, because almost all the great men's outfitters of Savile Row and Jermyn Street deserve to be much more widely celebrated than they are.

