

THE BOTTOMLEY LINE

MWB deputy editor Tom Bottomley - our man on the inside of menswear.



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BUZZ BACK AT JACKET REQUIRED

There definitely seemed to be energy back at Jacket Required as the menswear industry once again congregated at The Old Truman Brewery last month.

Admittedly the trading word coming back from a handful of independents I spoke to at the show was that it's tough out there, with many citing the growing scourge of pre-Christmas discounting and customers leaving it even later to spend, increasingly hopeful of getting what they want a bit cheaper.

However, it's always good to see people get out there and chat, swap stories and talk about new product, and Jacket Required really is great for that. The exhibitors are, of course, great indicators of how the market is, and most I spoke to seem happy with how things were going - and how much interest there had been from buyers this time around. I even saw a couple of orders being placed, and that's not something you often see at most of the shows these days.

REYNOLDS BIKES LAUNCHES CASUALWEAR IN COLLABORATION WITH OI POLLOI CO-OWNER

A tasty new line of casualwear given the design treatment by Oi Polloi co-owner Nigel Lawson looks set to raise the bar for cycling gear for a/w 17. Actually it's more essential kit you'd wear down the pub than on your bike, but it looks a hell of a lot better than a lot of the monstrosities being sported by so-called Weekend Warriors. This is sharp, and given Lawson's attention to detail you wouldn't expect any less.

Mike Smith, owner and director of Foundry Brands, explains how this collection materialised: "I have been working with Reynolds, introducing them to prospective partners away from their core business in the cycling world. I introduced them to Heritage Apparel, who we then signed up as a licensee.

"Oi Polloi came about as I got talking to Nigel in the store, who turns out is really into vintage British bikes and the Reynolds brand. I introduced Nigel to Heritage and they decided to work together on this collection. I'm going to be selling the Reynolds collection in the south on Heritage's behalf."

Reynolds is legendary in the cycling world



JACKET REQUIRED ▲

REYNOLDS ▶



for winning more Tour de France races than any other brand and this collection features famous 531 and 753 Reynolds decal branding. Established in Birmingham in 1897, the company revolutionised cycle manufacturing with the development of butted steel tubes, and in 1935 launched the much-revered Reynolds 531. Inspired by Reynolds' rich British cycling heritage and its extensive archive, this casualwear collection references classic cycling pieces for detailing and styling and comprises T-shirts, polos, track tops and outerwear.

For the launch of the collection, Oi Polloi's Nigel Lawson says: "It's been great working with the team at Heritage, re-energising one of British cycling's most famous brands with this new line. When we started to look at designing the collection, it was amazing to see the wealth of Reynolds historical memorabilia available to us and the depth of the history of the Reynolds brand. We've respected the brand's history while giving things a modern twist." It definitely works.

KODAK BRINGS BACK PROPER FILM

Without doubt it's a modern-day contradiction that more photographs than ever are taken on smartphones and digital cameras, but hardly anyone bothers to print them out. I've got

memory sticks with pictures going back years that I've never got round to editing and printing out. And I've put them in such a safe place I now can't even find them.

So a recent story I spotted in the papers immediately got my attention; Kodak is bringing back traditional 35mm film, apparently thanks to massive consumer demand. It will restart selling its Ektachrome brand this year, with others to follow. Ektachrome was phased out in 2013 but, according to Kodak, there has been a resurgence in interest among professionals.

The turnaround is another instance of old technology coming back in to fashion. Sales of vinyl records were in the region of three million last year, the highest number for 25 years, as more customers shun digital formats. While an element of nostalgia is no doubt playing a part behind the revival of camera film, photographers also find that traditional film can do things digital machines cannot. That's certainly something an old fashion photographer mate of mine used to say all the time. Ektachrome film is well known for a particular look with very fine grain, strong contrasts and clean and vivid colours, so we will be able to see the world in full colour glory once more. Who knows, with all these revivals going on, we may one day see the return of Grace Brothers-style retailing.