The Queen of fashion

It's hard to imagine that the royal look could be a fashion icon in the UK but that's exactly what it has become in recent years.

The Queen's headscarf, Burberry check or tartan skirt might seem old-fashioned, but when they are reinvented by famous designers such as Dolce & Gabbana, these country clothes take on a very trendy look. Changing the position of a sleeve or a pocket can give them a modern touch. The royal tartan check was even used in punk fashion as a statement of rebellion. Yes, rock stars wore kilts!

But the Queen's Barbour jacket is perhaps the most distinctive of all her garments. Dating from the 1890s, Barbours were originally made for country people and sailors who needed hard-wearing, waterproof clothes. But now they are equally popular with farmers, 'fashionistas' and film stars – both male and female. One of the latest stars to wear one was actor Daniel Craig in the James Bond films. Helen Mirren also wore one in her role as – yes, you guessed it – the Queen!

However, the real queen of royal fashion these days is Kate Middleton, or Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William's wife. Unlike Princess Diana, who wore royal tiaras and her hair short, Kate prefers the more informal trend for long hair. She also dresses in a more extravagant but affordable way. In fact, her look is a careful combination of designer fashion with everyday clothes that can be bought anywhere in the UK.

Her influence is so great that it's become known as 'the Kate effect'. As soon as she wears a particular dress that is available on the high street, the same garment sells out in no time. In this way, she has made some British clothes brands more popular. Now, thanks to Kate, everyone can feel like a queen for the day!

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