



# WHAT, THIS OLD THING?

*Why shop designer, when charity shops across London can satisfy even the most luxurious taste?*

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London is a city of fashion, from the luxury outposts of Bond Street to the popular retailers on Oxford Street, shoppers can nab the latest trends. While new season treasures can be found that will fit most budgets, sometimes the smaller, less known locations are where the real treasures are hiding. Charity shops and vintage stores lie within most areas of the bustling city, planted across high streets and little hidden corners. Although sourcing these items can be a mission in itself, a part of the overall thrill is the unique and rare challenge that comes with the hunt.

Charity shop and vintage store finds are a treasure if you know how and where to look. You can expect that wealthier areas of London will offer some high-end labels along with some funky vintage wear.

A popular shop amongst students of London's fashion universities like Central Saint Martins, London College of Fashion, and Westminster can be found within the walls of Cancer Research UK. Although Cancer Research charity shops can be found across the country, the location situated on Marylebone High Street in West London is a draw for young students and those interested in discovering vintage bargains for as little as the price of their meal deal. The location of this shop brings a large following of students from these nearby universities, making their rounds from Oxford Street to Daunt Books, followed by a quick stop into Cancer Research next door. Savvy shoppers visit the two floors of this quiet location frequently, looking for the perfect little something to wear Saturday night. Amongst the rails of classic tweed suits and dainty tea dresses at reasonable prices, every once in a while you may be able to spot an absolute treasure.

### **"I WOULD BE COMMITTING A CRIME IF I PASSED UP ON THE WHITE LEATHER DIOR HEELS I FOUND FOR UNDER £50"**

Stated a student from the London College of Fashion, and a regular at Cancer Research.

For those with a taste towards rummaging through grandma's wardrobe, Retromania just outside of Victoria train station is the perfect little vintage haven. Retromania is a speciality shop under the organization Fara, which have charity shop locations across London. They offer a perfectly curated and carefully selected assortment of vintage and retro clothing. Although the budget for these items comes at a higher price than your average high street Oxfam or British Heart Foundation, the items that can be found are truly unique and one of a kind. Rails of perfectly organized shirts, coats, dresses, and skirts are arranged in a systematic way, making it easy for shoppers to search for those treasures. Men's dagger collared shirts from the 1970s can be found in multitudes of prints and patterns, while 1940s and 1950s day dresses billow in abundance.

"The best time to visit the shop is early when we open. The shop is a little tidier, quiet, and easier to have a browse through because it can get busy!" A shop worker advised. Sifting through these rails, shoppers can find a large assortment of Yves Saint Laurent, Prada, Miu Miu, Chanel, and Christian Lacroix, just to name a few. Although their prices are higher than you may expect, considering the history and the value of the item makes this charity shop worth your time and money.



Treasures like Burberry Harris Tweed can be found on the jam packed rails of Retromania in London.



Rummaging through rails and shelves is a daunting and dusty task, but if you go in with an open mind and keen eye, you can strike plenty of luck. Just remember, if you go into a charity shop looking for the latest Dior sunglasses, you will sadly be disappointed. Many people are set back by charity shops, as the thought can be an intimidating experience. For those who are pros at discovering these hidden finds, victory can be had due to a combination of determination and knowing what to look for. Paying close attention to what the item is, the condition it is in, whether it is real or a replica, and even down to the year made are a few key factors that can turn any charity shop or vintage store find into a sport. Although most people would love a vintage monogram Louis Vuitton bag, charity shops are hideouts for occasional replicas, which can look almost identical to the genuine article to an untrained eye..



A vintage Gucci bag, purchased new by a lucky owner, might eventually become a wardrobe space filler collecting dust, never to see the light of day again. Where these luxury items once had their day to shine, there comes a time to let go and donate towards a great cause. After parting with a once-beloved item, these goods can do some good for a worthy cause and a grateful, keen-eyed shopper.

Genuine Gucci bags, and rails of colourful day dresses and vintage garments are a huge treasure hunt for shoppers in London. Retromania hold selections of some exciting items.