Bellbottoms Encyclopedia Article

Bellbottoms

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Bellbottoms

Bellbottomed trousers, named for the bell-shaped cut of the cuffs, have been worn by sea-farers since the 17th century. While sailors prefer the cut because the wide bottoms of the trousers make them easy to roll up for deck-swabbing duty, young people bought the trousers from navy surplus stores in the 1960s because the fabric was cheap and durable. Bellbottoms flattered the slim, unisex figure in vogue during the late 1960s and 1970s, and soon designers were turning out high-price versions of the navy classic. In the 1990s, the revival of 1970s fashion has seen the return of bellbottoms, especially as jeans.

Two women modeling bellbottoms.

Further Reading:

Blue Jeans. London, Hamlyn, 1997.

Dustan, Keith. *Just Jeans: The Story 1970-1995.* Kew, Victoria, Australian Scholarly Press, 1995.