



Z I N E

TRAINERS  
SNEAKERS  
KICKS+WEBS  
STRIDES+SOLES  
CREPS+BEATERS  
TRABS+TRAINEES

Whatever you call your footwear, there is a particular tribe who are obsessive about theirs.

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Liverpool has fashion deeply rooted in its identity. The Terrace Casuals were born in the late 70's on the terraces of Anfield and Goodison. This British Subculture went on to influence modern menswear as we know it today. Arguably it provided the first accessible space where the working-class man could engage with fashion in a positive way. In this issue we talk to Chris Staunton, (the first employee of the businessman and pioneer in the scene Robert Wade-Smith) to find out about those early days of trab culture...



with @trimmtrabtales

**KO:** Hi Chris, welcome to Sole-Zine, and thanks for taking time out to talk to us today. Lots of people we've spoken to have been looking forward to hearing your story about working in Liverpool, and that pivotal time of the birth of the Terrace Casuals movement.  
**CS:** No problem.

**PO:** Hi Chris, let's start with what you think the best decade for trainer culture or design was?  
**CS:** I think I'd have to say the 80's as this was the time we discovered all these amazing trainers that still stand up today in style and design. Culturally they changed our outlook on fashion and made trainers something that wasn't just for sport. Good trainer design though carried on through the 90's, Nike Air Max 95 (otherwise known as 110s in Liverpool due to their price) was a triumph of design and style, and of course is still very popular today. For me though by the time the 80's was over, trainer culture suffered a lull and workwear boots such as Timberland experienced a rise in sales.

**KO:** What does the trainer community mean to you?  
**CS:** The trainer community at the moment is unique. I've been a part of it for a few years now, after I put some personal Wade-Smith photos online, and these created a massive interest so I started my @trimmtrabtales Instagram page, and continued to share more photos. Through this I have reconnected with lots of adidas enthusiasts who shopped at Wade-Smith in the 80's, and are still passionate

about the three stripes. Festivals like Laces Out and shops like Transalpino have brought these people together again, and highlighted the trainer community brilliantly. The knowledge these collectors and enthusiasts have for the three stripes and other trainer brands is amazing.

**PO:** Do you think you could define a date in time when trainer culture took off in Liverpool?  
**CS:** I think it's been well documented that the trainer culture in Liverpool took off in the late 70's, with those who travelled abroad following Liverpool FC predominantly. I think Robert Wade-Smith was massively influential to get the trainers to a wider audience, firstly at the adidas concession in Top Shop, and then when his shop opened in November 1982 (40 years ago this year). Liverpool lads will probably have begun their obsession with trainers when they got a pair of adidas Kick from Jack Sharps or Whitteys in the mid 70's. Stan Smith though which came a bit later was the gateway trainer to the phenomenon that was to come.

**KO:** How did the local, national, global market differ back then?  
**CS:** Locally and in some cities nationally, trainers became leisure footwear, whereas globally they were still seen as sports footwear.

**PO:** So, how far did people travel to Wade-Smith - any stories?  
**CS:** Looking back to the early days of Wade-Smith I would

say it was mainly local people who shopped, although talking to people now I hear stories of how they would come from the likes of Manchester in an early morning behind enemy lines trip, to get their trainers and leg it back quick smart to their city. I remember a group of lads from Stoke who made regular trips to get their adidas fix. Mainly though it was local lads who would hang around for hours after buying a pair for a chat. Robert was very knowledgeable about all things adidas and would hold court.

**PO:** What was the best seller, and what was the rarest that came through the door?  
**CS:** Definitely the best seller in the early days was adidas Trimm Trab. The trainer was something we hadn't seen before, with its unique sole unit and suede upper in some great colours. At Wade-Smith we sold thousands of Trimm Trab in the first year. Nearly as popular were adidas Marathon TR (about 3000 pairs) adidas Munchen, adidas Olympia S, adidas Handball Spezial and L.A. Trainer.

As far as rare trainers go lads would come in wearing crackers they had obtained on foreign visits. One lad had a pair of adidas weight lifting shoes on, brilliant blue suede with a wooden sole that weighed a tonne, probably took him an hour to walk up Bold Street! But trainers back then like adidas Waterproof, adidas Zelda, adidas Micropacer, adidas Adistar, Diadora Ed Moses, Nike Air Max 95 to name just a few, would certainly be of interest to today's collectors.

# time capsule back to the 80's

## SPOTTED

Chris talks us through some of the (now) rarities from the infamous 'wall' in the Wade-Smith store.

### Columbia

A highly desired collectors item. Originally the upper was constructed in nubuck leather and the sole from direct injected dual-density polyurethane. This shoe used a Trimm-Trab-like 'D' lacing system for speed and integrated adjustable peg system. Recognisable from a higher side profile and its silver accents against the navy blue silhouette - this shoe was truly built for comfort.

### Trimm Trab

1975 adidas Trimm Trab was introduced as a running shoe and featured a suede upper with a thick white sole made from a dual-density polyurethane. It came with a speedlacing system and was released in various colourways. The Trimm Trab is the predecessor to the Munchen, originally only available in Germany and limited parts of Europe - Liverpool being one of them. It was quickly adopted into the 'casual' movement on the terraces of Anfield, Goodison, and in the North West. Today, it is arguably one of the most iconic footwear pieces of that time in Liverpool, and paved the way to the athleisure market as we know it. Chris tells us the Wade-Smith store sold over 4000 pairs in the first year.

### L.A. Trainer

The L.A. Trainer was released to coincide with the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, USA. The first running shoe to feature the adidas vario shock absorption system, an adjustable peg cushioning mechanism of the midsole. The peg system included three different colour rods (red, white and blue), each would provide different levels of cushioning which could be used to enhance trainer stability, balance, support and comfort for different athletes. Along with the signature tri-colour pegs in the midsole the shoes also featured serrated edge three stripes. This technically advanced lightweight nylon running silhouette gained much recognition in the terrace casuals movement of the 80's.

### Grand Slam

The Grand Slam was designed for professional tennis players. Made from premium full grain leather, with a perforated nubuck toe and adjustable cushioning system through the use of interchangeable pegs on the outsole. The peg mechanism was made in three different colours, red, white and blue, and each had varying density, giving the user the ultimate control of their game.

### Munchen

The Munchen was designed as a lightweight indoor training shoe with a nubuck upper. It had a distinctive thick midsole and a mesh rear which made it stand out from other shoes of the time. During the 80's the UK saw some exclusive versions appear, such as the grey with silver heel and silver three stripes edged with red seen here.



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## PRICES BACK IN THE 80'S

Trimm Trab £29.99  
TRX Trainer £22.99  
Grand Slam £32.99

Gazelle £22.99  
Waterproof £59.99  
Dallas £54.99

L.A. Trainer £26.99  
Stan Smith £19.99  
Trieste £26.99

Trekking £39.99  
Forest Hills £34.99



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### Handball Spezial

A suede shoe designed for playing indoor handball, consisting of a rubber outsole with a contrasting coloured heel tab and three stripes to the side. The shoe was said to be 20% lighter and featured air holes to the front side of the sole.

### Gazelle

Originally designed in 1968 and known as the all year, multi-purpose training shoe with a hexagonal shaped tread sole. The shoe was the first adidas shoe manufactured from suede. Having been adopted on the football terraces in the 70's and 80's it went on to become a classic in terms of style on a global scale.

### Grand Prix

A leather upper that featured a suede perforated toe-cap and side panel. This tennis silhouette featured a soft cushioning midsole and padded heel. With its blue outsole, this in some circles is considered timeless.

### Samba

The original black with three white stripes was first produced in 1950 to enable football players to train on hard surfaces, including ice, snow and frozen grounds. Made of full-grain kangaroo leather with suede trim and a contrasting gum sole. Today, it remains the longest running model in production.

### Samba Super

The adidas Samba Super is a version of the Samba, but with a larger toe cap and an extra long tongue designed for indoor sports.

### Bamba

adidas Bamba is part of the Samba family originally released in 1973. Known by collectors as Samba's little brother. A design classic that sits in the football shoe category for hard ground. A little cheaper than the Samba when released as it was a partial leather upper with a suede toe.

### Mamba

Introduced in 1978 with a sawtooth sole. This completed the 'holy trinity' of football trainers - Samba, Bamba and Mamba.

### Kick

The adidas Kick is a clean and timeless football trainer inspired by decades of iconic adidas football designs. Produced with a rubber sole with herringbone pattern, this often became the first pair for many young football fans and school boys alike, due to its entry level retail cost.

### Wimbledon

Released in '79, but a true 80's favourite in tennis and on the terraces. It's blue-red-blue three strips stood out against a classic white silhouette.

### Rod Laver

Another successful sports collaboration and pioneering design made for ventilation on the court. Interestingly, the trefoil was used on the heel rather than the three stripes, which gave the shoe a very understated look.

known as 'the wall' where  
shoe quickly became a  
veted fashion accessory



# trimm trab tales

all imagery sourced from Chris's personal archive

I'd been into fashion from an early age. Got my three star jumper from St. Johns Market, Birmingham bags, platform shoes, must have been the glam rock influence. I went to see Slade at The Liverpool Empire when I was ten. Me and me mum had a boss seat at the front, then when the band came on we were surrounded by a mob of skinheads, it was brilliant. Through my early years my clothes buying seemed to be bank rolled by my Nan. A fisherman's jumper from Tony Harris on Lime Street, a pair of Pod or Kickers from Rocky on Renshaw Street, a pair of Kios from Close Encounters in the precinct. Maybe a trip to Groatie Market for a pair of Inega stretch jeans or a shop called The Westerner in the precinct, which had saloon doors, you might even find a pair of Lois in there.

a few trainees the other shops never had, like the amazing Forest Hills and Grand Slam which were a step up from my adidas Stan Smith. I'd been into adidas since I got my first pair of Kick, from a sports shop called Whiteys tucked away behind Church Street. There was also the main sports shop on Whitechapel called Jack Sharpe where I'd get football boots by Gola, and buy my Subbuteo teams plus various accessories like floodlights or a St. Johns ambulance man for the side of the pitch. The players or the ambulance men would need replacing on a regular basis as they'd get stood on by my mum or the dog!

Anyway I got chatting to the lad that ran the concession and he told me about a new shop that was getting opened in Slater Street by the guy who managed

## So one bleak November day in 1982 I was on the dole and my love of fashion and trainers brought me up Bold Street in search of this Aladdin's cave of trainees called Wade-Smith.

in the window. As a rule you didn't really go up to the top of Bold Street as there wasn't much there. I'd been to Ellis Brigham when I was into skateboarding, got some lime green kryptonite wheels for my Tony Alva



So one bleak November day in 1982 I was on the dole and my love of trainers and fashion brought me up Bold Street in search of this Aladdin's cave of

looking Rob. He had panicked when I hadn't returned earlier, as the bank was only around the corner! He told me some time later that it was a bit of a



When I left school I needed to find a job, so I could fund my passion for fashion and not rely on my Nan. A mate of mine got me a job in the Princes Salmon factory where he worked in Huyton. It was a shit laborious job packing tins of salmon but the money was good and it meant me and a couple of mates could make a pilgrimage every month to London on the first train out on a Saturday and return on the last. We made for Oxford Street a pair of FU's cords from Jean Machine, or a Lillywhites sweatshirt from Piccadilly Circus and we helped ourselves to Lacoste polos and cardies in Harrods and Selfridges. I picked up a pair of Diadora Borg Elite in London - what a shoe that was.



## I picked up a pair of Diadora Borg Elite in London - what a shoe that was!

Although the factory job paid well, I hated it, and after an argument with the charge hand I was let go. I'd then spend my days window shopping in town whilst visiting the Job Centre in Williamson Square, without any luck. I used to love visiting Top Shop on Church Street where there was a small adidas concession. They had

the adidas concessions for Peter Black, an adidas agent and bag manufacturer. I'd never heard of Slater Street but made it my quest to go and find this shop. It was up Bold Street he said, it's called Wade-Smith Shoes, you can't miss it there's a big trainee



board. I'd had a look in Neil's Corner, a ladies shoe shop run by an old hippy character called Neil (obviously). Now and again he'd stock some men's shoes like Pod or Kickers. There was also a clothes shop called Karlsons, which sold high end designer menswear, frequented by the likes of Graeme Souness and Bruce Grobbelaar, you didn't go in there, way too expensive. Oh and a diner half way up Bold Street called Teddie's that me and my mates went to every Saturday that sold the best milk shakes in town.



trainees called Wade-Smith. Turning right into Slater Street all I could see was a bathroom shop called Gees, but I walked further and then saw a red, white and blue shop front that appeared to be in the bathroom shop, then I noticed the iconic big trainee in one window and a big adidas trefoil light in the other. I'd found the shop!

On entering it was tiny and adidas shoes were displayed sparingly around the shop, but it was a sight to behold for a trainee addict like me.

Sitting on a stool at a desk in the corner was a young man not much older than myself. He introduced himself as Robert and we got chatting about adidas and his reasons for being here, far from his Yorkshire home. I wasn't sure if this posh fella would last in Liverpool, but his enthusiasm for adidas and for Liverpool as a city was there to see. I called in to the shop most days that week and helped out. I'd go round to Uncle Sam's on Renshaw Street and pick up chilli burger and chips for lunch, paid for by the posh fella, and run round to the local newsagent to get his cigarettes, these french ciggies called Gitaines that smell like pot! When Robert's girlfriend Angie came up I was sent out into town with fliers and targeted every scally walking on Church Street. One day he sent me out with a £20 note to get change at the bank. I took a walk down to the only bank I knew, Barclays on Water Street where my aunty worked, I'd go and see her and get some change. I arrived back about an hour later to a relieved

test, to see if this Liverpool scally would return! I was soon offered a Saturday job but just went in every day anyway. The shop became known very quickly by every scally in town eager to get

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their hands on a pair of Trimm Trab, Munchen or Forest Hills and for me it got me off the dole and started a love affair with the three stripes that still remains to this day, almost 40 years later.

Instagram: @trimmtrabtales  
Size: 8  
First Pair: adidas Kick  
Latest Pair: Winterhill Spezial  
Holy Grail: adidas Zelda

