

Do you know what's lurking at the back of your wardrobe?

A stock take of everything in his wardrobe has made **DICK LUMSDEN** turn over a new leaf

I have a clothes rail in the airing cupboard at Lumsden Towers with 43 shirts hanging on it....I know that because I just counted them.

There are plain shirts, striped shirts, long sleeved, short sleeved, button down collars and some with double cuffs.

Do I wear all of them? Of course not. No more than I wear all of the 23 assorted pairs of trousers and jeans; the five suits and innumerable sweaters, polo shirts, tee shirts, socks and underwear that I possess.

In fact, if I took every single item of clothing out of drawers, cupboards and wardrobes and started two piles – one for items I actually wear, and the other for things that have not graced my frame in years – the unworn pile would tower over six times higher than the other one.

You may be wondering what has prompted this sudden sartorial audit.

I'm a sucker for those great little pieces of research created in the name of PR which find their way into the news columns every week. And one which has recently caught my eye was that pushed out from a company called Thread – a London based online "stylist" which claimed that men only wear 13 per cent of the clothes they own, because most of the rest they have been pestered into buying by the women in their lives and they just don't like them.

Clearly, based on what I have discovered about my clothes stash, I agree with the part about only wearing 13 per cent, and it is true that Mrs. Lumsden does indeed buy most of my wardrobe, but I disagree about not wearing stuff because I don't like it.

I end up just wearing the same stuff over and over out of habit, or because I've forgotten what lies deeper than the top layer in any drawer, or further than one row back in the wardrobe.

My father's generation would be horrified at the wastefulness of having so much and doing so little with it. In his 80s now, his generation had very little, but made the most of it. Take their trousers for example.

They had a pair of trousers for work, a pair of trousers for "good" (remember flannels?) and one suit



■ The reality is that while cool, young models with perfect bodies wear the clothes, it is largely middle-aged men with less than perfect bodies who buy them, says Dick Lumsden.

Photo: CONTRIBUTED

“I wouldn't want to buy clothes on the basis of someone like me modelling them.”

appearance. I may be nearly 60, but I still want to look as good as I can within the limitations of being short, bald and round.

So, I have decided that Mrs Lumsden and I (well I can't make these big decisions on my own now can I) are going to go through my clothes with the ruthlessness of Vladimir Putin's bodyguards at a Gay Pride march. In, out, shake it all about....the charity shops in Manningtree are in for a major boost.

And today, curious as to what makes Thread so special, I have just signed up at www.thread.com

mation I have typed in, Georgia is going to get back to me every week on email with a few items she has personally picked out which she thinks would suit me.

Within no time at all, Georgia will have me keying in my credit card number so many times I will have it memorised and I'll be strutting round town like Chris Eubank.

I am a bit worried about what she might turn up for me though because every single photograph on their website is of men aged around 20-35. All slim, tall and impossibly cool. Not a single photograph of a 60 year old man with a 29 inch inside leg to be seen anywhere.

In my imagination, I see my virtual stylist Georgia bustling round the stores of London picking out hand stitched leather shoes, slim fitting moleskin trousers and a natty fedora, but the reality, of course, is Mrs

advertising. The fantasy is that every pair of jeans, every casual jacket and every beautiful sweater you see advertised on cool, young models with perfect bodies.

The reality is that they are bought and worn by middle aged men with less than perfect bodies, because they (we) are the ones who can afford to buy them.

It's the same with cars, holidays, furniture and even insurance. Most advertising is youth obsessed, and older customers like us buy things in spite of the advertising not because of it.

There again. I wouldn't want to buy clothes on the basis of someone like me modelling them...so I suppose it is a bit of a double edged sword.

I guess I'll just carrying on letting Mrs Lumsden be my personal shopper – and I won't tell her about Georgia just yet.

■ Dick Lumsden is Managing