

STYLE


THE SUNDAY TIMES

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MEN'S FASHION SPECIAL

FROM STRANGER
THINGS TO X-MEN

MEET FASHION'S
REBEL PIN-UP
CHARLIE HEATON

EXCLUSIVE

BRINGING UP BOYS
BY QUEER EYE'S
KARAMO BROWN

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL RIERA



THIS PAGE JUMPER,
£835, WOOL-MIX
JACKET, £2,150, AND
MATCHING TROUSERS,
£835, LOUIS VUITTON.
VINTAGE CONVERSE,
WORN THROUGHOUT,
STYLIST'S OWN
OPPOSITE SHIRT, £195,
JOSEPH. JUMPSUIT,
£545, DRIES VAN NOTEN



NORTHERN SOUL

CHARLIE HEATON IS
THE 25-YEAR-OLD BOY
FROM BRIDLINGTON
WHO GOT HIS BIG BREAK
IN STRANGER THINGS
AND IS NOW JOINING
THE X-MEN FAMILY.

SCARLETT RUSSELL
TALKS TO HIM ABOUT
HIDING AN OFF-SCREEN
ROMANCE, T-SHIRT TIPS
FROM WINONA RYDER —
AND WHY HIS FRIENDS
WON'T LET HIM PAY
FOR ROUNDS AT THE
PUB JUST YET

Photographs **Daniel Riera**
Styling **Darcy Backlar**





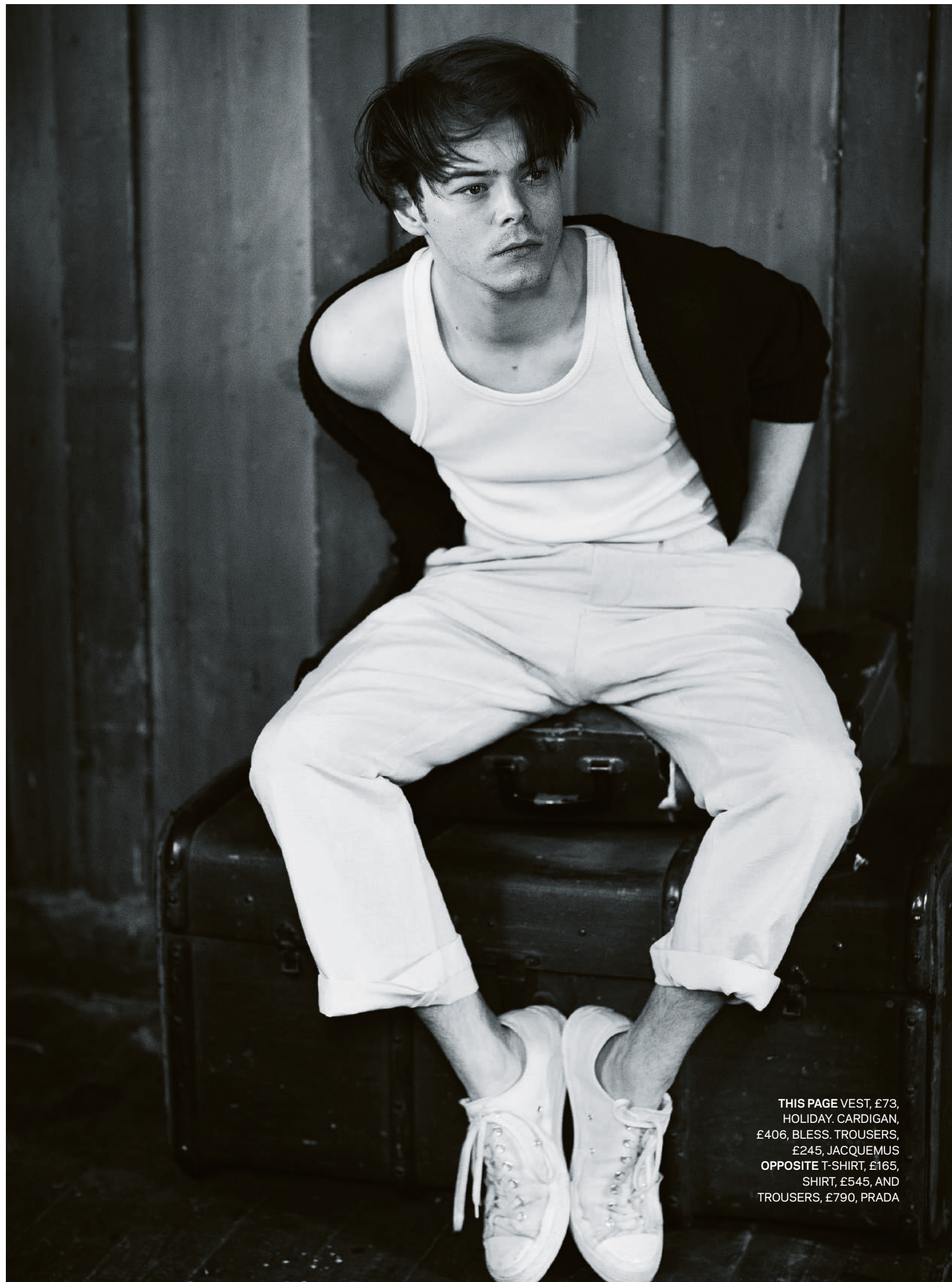
Even if you're not one of the 139m people worldwide subscribed to Netflix, you will have heard of *Stranger Things*. The American sci-fi/horror/coming-of-age series, which was launched in July 2016, became the most-discussed TV show of the year and was impossible to ignore. Twitter hashtags went viral, and there were rave reviews, thinkpieces upon thinkpieces and celebrity fans from Reese Witherspoon to Barack Obama. It rebooted the career of its lead, Winona Ryder, and made overnight stars of its unknown cast members, including 22-year-old British actor Charlie Heaton, now 25. "When it launched, I was shooting a film in a tiny Spanish town where most people don't speak English," Heaton says. "In a day or two, my Instagram following went up by thousands. I was at a street market and some Spanish people came up and said, 'Stranger Things!' That's when I knew it had blown up."

The *Stranger Things* juggernaut is still going strong — the third series will start on July 4 — as is Heaton. He's about to take up one of the lead roles in a highly anticipated X-Men horror spin-off, *The New Mutants* (out in August), has landed the title role in the BBC's new version of *The Elephant Man*, and last month was at the Ferragamo show in Milan fashion week. As for that Instagram following? It's now in the millions.

Heaton arrives on the set for this shoot — a pub in East London — bang on time, holding a pack of rolling tobacco and wearing Burberry trousers and a coat with the collar turned up. He shakes hands with everyone and asks if there's time for a "quick smoke". He is slightly restless — and will "nip out for a quick smoke" and to check his constantly beeping phone three more times before we break for lunch. So convincing is his American accent (which he maintains throughout filming), most people



THIS PAGE SWEATER, £365, AND COTTON AND LINEN TROUSERS, £285, JOSEPH
OPPOSITE SHIRT, £99, AND TROUSERS, £149, BOSS. JACKET, £296, LEMAIRE. VINTAGE VEST, STYLIST'S OWN



THIS PAGE VEST, £73,
HOLIDAY. CARDIGAN,
£406, BLESS. TROUSERS,
£245, JACQUEMUS
OPPOSITE T-SHIRT, £165,
SHIRT, £545, AND
TROUSERS, £790, PRADA



Style Interview

are surprised to learn that he's from Bridlington in Yorkshire. "I tell people I'm from up north and that blows their mind," he laughs. Disappointingly, the northern accent isn't strong. "It gets stronger when I go home at Christmas," he says. He's still best friends with the lads he went to school with, some of whom "don't even watch anything I'm in". Do they make you get all the drinks in now? "Actually, a lot of them are like, 'Let me buy you a drink, mate, I can still get you a drink.' It's a northern thing." He smiles and lights another roll-up.

In *Stranger Things*, Heaton plays Jonathan Byers, older brother of Will Byers, the young boy who disappears in the first episode and kicks off the core storyline of the series. Jonathan's on/off love interest, Nancy, is played by 22-year-old Nashville-born Natalia Dyer. In real life, the actors have been dating publicly for the past two years, but also dated for a while in secret before the rest of the cast found out. "It's nice to be with someone who is in the same world," Heaton says. "We've gone through the same trajectory, so have got to share the ups and downs." They're about to move in together and are scouting apartments in New York's East Village. "I'm very happy," he smiles, willing the conversation on.

Part of the viral success of *Stranger Things* was down to its nostalgia-drenched fashion (the first series is set in 1983). The oversized glasses and pussy-bow blouses could have fallen straight off a Gucci campaign, and Louis Vuitton's Nicolas Ghesquière was so inspired, he sent a *Stranger Things* T-shirt down the SS18 catwalk. Heaton, with his thin frame, messy hair and razor-sharp cheekbones, is made for designer mood boards. Last May, he sat front row at the Dior cruise show. That said, "I never knew what a brand was growing up," he tells me over a beer in the pub's garden post-shoot. "I'd heard of Gucci and Chanel, but didn't really know what their purpose was. Then, as you get introduced to them more, you realise their importance in the fashion world."

On the topic of fashion: it was T-shirts that he and co-star Winona Ryder bonded over on set. "She gave me a T-shirt with the Clash on that she got when she went to see them years ago. Then I was reading *The Catcher in the Rye* and she told me it was her favourite book. She had made T-shirts based on Pencey Prep, the school [the book's protagonist] Holden Caulfield went to, so she gave me one of those. She was like, 'I designed it, I hope you like it!' Of course I liked it. She's the queen of cool T-shirts and the queen of cool."

Heaton grew up with his mother, Michelle, and two older sisters (one of whom, Levi, is also an actress). They are incredibly close. "I think there's a sensitivity that you have from growing up with three women that you maybe wouldn't have if you grew up in a house of boys," he says. His parents separated when he was two, but he remained close to his father. At 16, Heaton went to live with him in London. "That's where I wanted to end up," he says. "When I moved there, my uncle said [here he adopts a strong Yorkshire accent], 'Do you like London, then?' I said, 'Yeah, it's great. Do you think you'd ever leave Bridlington?' He went, 'Nah, I've got everything I need.

I've got my house, my girlfriend and Sky Sports.'" Heaton chuckles. "The simplicity of it was great, but I've always been one for... excitement."

Heaton's first taste of acting was drama classes at school and local youth theatre aged eight to 15. He was also a drummer and, aged 16, he joined a noise rock band, Comanechi, that toured globally and supported Gossip. "I went to Japan, Canada and around Europe, living out of van for a couple of years, which was brilliant." He got back into acting in adverts, as a way of making cash (one of which involved "congaing behind Kevin Bacon in an EE commercial"). A few small TV roles followed before he went to LA in 2015, found an agent and appeared in a horror film, *Shut In*, with Naomi Watts. "I'd never been to America, I didn't have any money, so I stayed in youth hostels, basically backpacking for a month and auditioning," he says. "By then I knew that all I wanted to do was act." That same year, he got the part in *Stranger Things*.

In 2017, Heaton made headlines when he was denied entry into the US at LAX airport, reportedly because traces of cocaine were found in his luggage. After being detained, Heaton released a statement, saying that due to "an issue at US immigration", he was unable to enter the country. I ask how he feels about the incident now, if there is anything he'd like to say about it. He shifts in his seat, clearly wishing to be anywhere else, then switches off my Dictaphone. He only wants to speak off the record about this. It seems he doesn't know yet what he wants to say, he feels terrible about the whole thing and desperately wants to change the subject. "Can we talk about something else?" he asks.

We return to the safer territory of how life has changed since *Stranger Things*. "I still audition for stuff I don't get," he says; though one role he has just secured is Joseph Merrick, the 19th-century Englishman whose facial deformity led to him becoming known as the Elephant Man. The BBC project is still in development, but Heaton has already faced criticism from the disability charity Scope and some actors, who say the role should have gone to a disabled actor. "I can see their point," says Heaton. "I think there has to be some balance. There are roles in both episodes that will include disabled actors with that specific disability. But, disabled or not, you would hope that the right person for the role gets it and that's based on a whole range of things. I don't make those decisions."

The pub's garden is busying and the landlady is waiting impatiently for a picture with Heaton. He's due to meet some mates at another pub before heading back to his dad's place, where he stays when he's in town. Then what? "I'm looking for something different," he replies. "I've played a lot of outsiders." Maybe it's time for a comedy? "Yeah, but I'm not funny! I just want to keep acting, keep casting the net wide." The boy from Bridlington as Hollywood's Next Big Thing? *Stranger Things* have happened. ■

Series one and two of Stranger Things are available on Netflix. The New Mutants is in cinemas on August 2



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GROOMING YUMI NAKADA-DINGLE AT HOME AGENCY USING BOY DE CHANEL, CHANEL SUBLIMAGE L'ESSENCE FONDAMENTALE AND ORIBE HAIRCARE
THANKS TO THE GEORGE TAVERN (THEGEORGETAVERN. LONDON)