

WECS Wardrobe

wecs
west of england
costume society



www.wofecostumesociety.org

Autumn issue 2025
£8.50: Free to members

Janet Arnold Study Day

The Evolution and Influence of Menswear
– from Function to Fashion

Saturday 4 October 2025

■ Bath & County Club

Christmas Meeting

Medieval Christmas

Saturday 15 November 2025

■ Bath & County Club

AGM

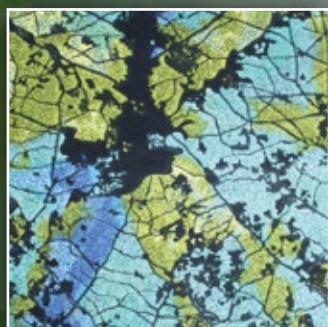
14 February 2026

March Study Day

African, Indian, Japanese Contemporary
Culture and Fashion

21 March 2026

■ Bath & County Club



William Morris Gallery
Page 6



Bath Fashion Museum
Pages 10 - 11



Dress Codes Kensington Palace
Pages 12 - 13



The Greensleeves Project
Page 14 - 15

Janet Arnold Study Day

October 4 2025

THE EVOLUTION AND INFLUENCE OF MENSWEAR – FROM FUNCTION TO FASHION

Saturday 4 October 2025

■ Bath & County Club

£30 WECS Members

£40 Non Members

Lunch £15

Programme:

9.30am Registration

10.10am Cally Blackman
'Sartorial Shapeshifting'.

11.10am Coffee Break

11.40am Guy Hills
Dashing Tweed
Colour in menswear and
the influence of sport on
tailoring

12.40pm Lunch Break

2.10pm Raffle

2.25pm Dr Danielle Sprecher
'Where would menswear
be without Black British
designers?'

3.35pm Close



SARTORIAL SHAPESHIFTING AND GENDERED BODIES

Talk by Callie Blackman

Cally's lecture will explore the evolution of menswear with a focus on tailored clothing and how it has been used to signify and subvert gender over the centuries. Once almost exclusively made by men for men, since the late seventeenth century the tailored suit has been appropriated into the female wardrobe. More recently, men have increasingly adopted garments once only worn by women. From riding habits and power suits to Jean Paul Gaultier's skirts for men, we will take a relaxed look at how tailored clothes have been used to signify and subvert gender.

Cally studied fashion design at St. Martin's School of Art and gained an MA in History of Art (Dress) from the Courtauld Institute. She has taught fashion history at Central Saint Martins for over 20 years.

She has written several books including *100 Years of Fashion Illustration* (2007), *100 Years of Menswear* (2009),

100 Years of Fashion (2012) (all pub. by Laurence King), *A Portrait of Fashion* with Prof. Aileen Ribeiro (2015, published by the National Portrait Gallery), *Fashion Central Saint Martins* with Hywel Davies (2019, published by Thames & Hudson), and contributed a chapter to *Les Couleurs de la Mode* (2023, published by the Palais Galliera, Paris Musées). She has lectured widely including at the National Portrait Gallery, the V&A, Sotheby's Institute, the Courtauld Institute, and the Royal Academy.

Her current research focuses mainly on the representation of fashion in the Lumière brothers' early twentieth century autochrome colour photographic process. Her latest book, *The Colour of Clothes: fashion and dress in autochromes 1907-1930*, was published by Thames & Hudson in March 2025.

DASHING TWEED

Guy will be taking to us about his fascinating career and his talk will be:

'Colour in menswear and the influence of sport on tailoring. Why wool makes the best sportswear and the rise of Dashing Tweeds'.

Fashion photographer Guy Hills launched British brand Dashing Tweeds in 2006 with the talented woven textiles designer Kirsty McDougall. Guy was looking to create a British, high quality, modern tweed which could be worn in the city. His passion was to combine traditional sportswear with new designs and technical yarns.

Guy and Kirsty set up their weave design studio in East London using the best mills in the country to weave their high luxury woven designs.

With the cloth's instant success amongst Savile Row tailors, the Dashing Tweeds Flagship store opened in 2014 in Mayfair, and then moved to Marylebone in 2018.



Diary Dates:

WECS Christmas Meeting November
15th 2pm – 4pm

Angela Dunsby from the John Moore Museum in Tewkesbury will talk about: Dressing the Tudors – Merchant Style

WECS AGM
February 14th 2026
Speaker and topic TBC

WECS Spring Study Day
March 21st 2026

Proposed Topic: African, Indian, Japanese contemporary culture and fashion.

WHERE WOULD MENSWEAR BE WITHOUT BLACK BRITISH DESIGNERS?

This talk will open up the question posed by i-D magazine in June 2020 about the importance of Black British designers to men's fashion in the UK and internationally by exploring the longer historical influence of Black style on menswear. This includes the tailors who emigrated to Britain from the Caribbean to designers such as Joe Casely-Hayford, Charlie Allen, Ozwald Boateng and the new wave of younger designers and labels including Samuel Ross and A-Cold-Wall, Wales Bonner, Martine Rose, Saul Nash, Labrum, Ahluwalia and Bianca Saunders.

Dr Danielle Sprecher, University of Westminster

Dr Danielle Sprecher is the curator of the Westminster Menswear Archive at the University of Westminster, London. Her PhD looked at men's fashion and the Leeds tailoring industry. She is a historian whose research focuses on the history of British menswear and men's fashion, exploring the industry from design to production and final consumption. As a curator, she has worked with several historical dress collections across the UK including Leeds Museums and Galleries, and Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service. Danielle has co-curated several notable exhibitions, including *Invisible Men: An Anthology* from the Westminster Menswear Archive (2019), *Undercover* (2021), and *Umbro 100: Sportswear x Fashion* (2024). She is the co-author of the book *Inside the Westminster Menswear Archive*, published by Bloomsbury in 2024.



Let's go Shopping

Until 13 September 2025

A nostalgic look at the Halifax shopping streets of yesteryear for the whole family to enjoy. Reminisce about some of your favourite shops and products, with a selection of photos and objects from the Museum collection and a pop-up mini market for children to enjoy.

Bankfield Museum
Akroyd Park
Boothtown Road
Halifax
HX3 6HG

Museums.calderdale.gov.uk



Costume Couture: 60 Years of Cosprop

From 26 September 2025 – 8 March 2026

Cosprop has changed the way that costume is designed and created. Founded by Oscar and BAFTA-winning costume designer John Bright in 1965, legendary London based Cosprop specialises in period costume for film, television and theatre. Through his work as a costume designer, a costumier, maker, advisor, collector and historian, Bright's intelligence and eye for detail is in thousands of film, television and stage productions.

This exhibition is a celebration of sixty years of Cosprop's creativity and a unique opportunity to see behind the scenes of this celebrated costume house. Through stunning costumes, accessories and sketches, the visitor will learn the design and making process from script to screen. Leading costume designers and actors will share their thoughts on favourite costumes, showing how Cosprop brought these magical moments to life.



This once-in-a-lifetime exhibition features many costumes never seen in public before. Helena Bonham Carter in *A Room with a View*, Meryl Streep in *Out of Africa*, Maggie Smith in *Downton Abbey*, Colin Firth as Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Leslie Manville in *Mrs Harris Goes to Paris*. Cosprop is synonymous with dressing iconic characters in award-winning films and television.

Fashion & Textile Museum
83 Bermondsey Street
London SE1 3XF

Fashiontextilemuseum.org

Birds of a Feather

Until 13 September 2025

The Fan Museum presents **Birds of a Feather**, which runs from until **13th September 2025**.

The exhibition showcases a variety of fans depicting and making use of birds from all around the world.

Fans on display depict familiar birds like swallows and ducks as well as birds like macaws and hummingbirds from faraway lands. In addition, the exhibition highlights the accomplished

skills of making a feather fan and the ethical implications of using birds for fashion. Some of our exhibition highlights include an Argus Pheasant feather fan, some colourful Ostrich feather fans, an 11th century Peruvian fan (**the oldest fan** in our collection), a selection of fixed fans with Hummingbirds and a male Pheasant courtesy of the Booth Museum of Natural History.

The Fan Museum
12 Crooms Hill,
Greenwich,
London, SE10 8ER
Thefanmuseum.org.uk



Costume at Claydon Exhibition

Until 20 October 2025

Claydon contains one of the most significant 17th to 19th Century family fashion collections in Britain.

Visit to explore the collection and learn about how the team cares for these pieces as part of our Costume at Claydon Exhibition, running from May until October.

Claydon House, Middle Claydon,
Near Buckingham,
Buckinghamshire, MK18 2EY
Nationaltrust.org.uk



Marie Antoinette Style - V&A South Kensington

20 September 2025 – 22 March 2026



Marie Antoinette, a name associated with the overthrow of the French monarchy and her infamous line 'Let them eat cake'. This year, however, it is fashion that is reigniting conversations around Marie Antoinette. As the V&A prepares to welcome a new exhibition to the stage, dissecting the fashion influence of Antoinette as one of history's most stylish royals. The notorious Queen, known for her Rococo clothing featuring pale fabrics

and ornate jewels, has continuously influenced fashion design over the past 250 years with her style. The collective from the V&A explores this influence through a range of mediums, and looks to explore why couture continues to channel the style legacy of France's most complex royal.

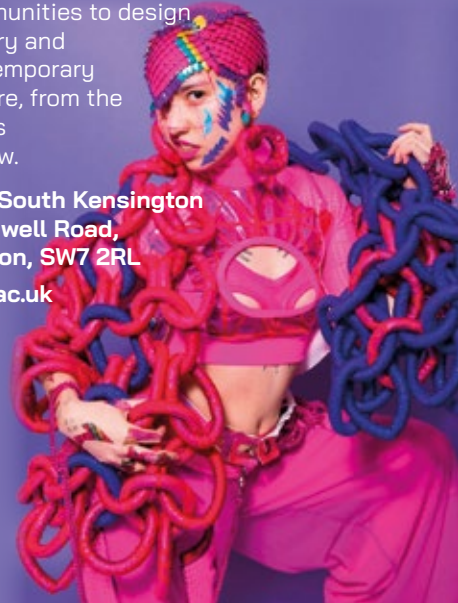
V&A South Kensington
Cromwell Road
London, SW7 2RL
vam.org.uk

Design & Disability

Until 15 February 2026

Both a celebration and a call to action, *Design and Disability* showcases the radical contributions of Disabled, Deaf, and neurodivergent people and communities to design history and contemporary culture, from the 1940s to now.

V&A South Kensington
Cromwell Road,
London, SW7 2RL
vam.ac.uk



Rough & Ready: A history of the Cowboy Boot

Until October 2026

The story of the cowboy boot is steeped in history and legend and is neither simple nor straightforward. Since their invention in the late nineteenth century, cowboy boots have embodied contradiction. They have symbolized labour and leisure, freedom and domination, tradition and reinvention. Cowboy boots were born out of industrialization yet refined through expert craftsmanship, they have been used to both celebrate

individualism and forge cultural cohesion. They were central to the closing of the West, yet endure as emblems of freedom and wide-open spaces. Over time, cowboy boots have signalled power and privilege as well as resistance and reclamation. Whether worn in the saddle, on screen, or in the streets, cowboy boots remain a cultural touchstone, embodying both tradition and transformation in a constantly changing world.



BATA Shoe Museum
327 Bloor St W,
Toronto, ON M5S 1W7,
Canada
Batashoemuseum.ca



William Morris Gallery

MORRIS MANIA

Until 21 September 2025

Showcasing the remarkable versatility and lasting influence of William Morris's designs in popular culture, both in Britain and abroad.

William Morris (1834-96) has gone viral. Today, we find his infinitely-reproduced botanical patterns on shower curtains, phone cases, on film and TV, and in all corners of our homes, dentist waiting rooms and shopping centres.

One of our greatest designers, Morris argued that beautiful objects could only be created through a responsible and close relationship with the natural world and enjoyable, creative working conditions. These principles continue to influence subsequent generations of designers, makers and consumers today.

Morris Mania explores a complicated legacy. Over 125 years since his death, Morris's work continues to grow in popularity. His patterns are now affordable, well-loved and



available to people across the globe, something he failed to achieve in his lifetime. However, this has been achieved in the context of mass-production, computer-generated design, global capitalism and

environmental crisis. Morris Mania considers the ongoing impact of Britain's most iconic designer in our increasingly cluttered and commodified world.

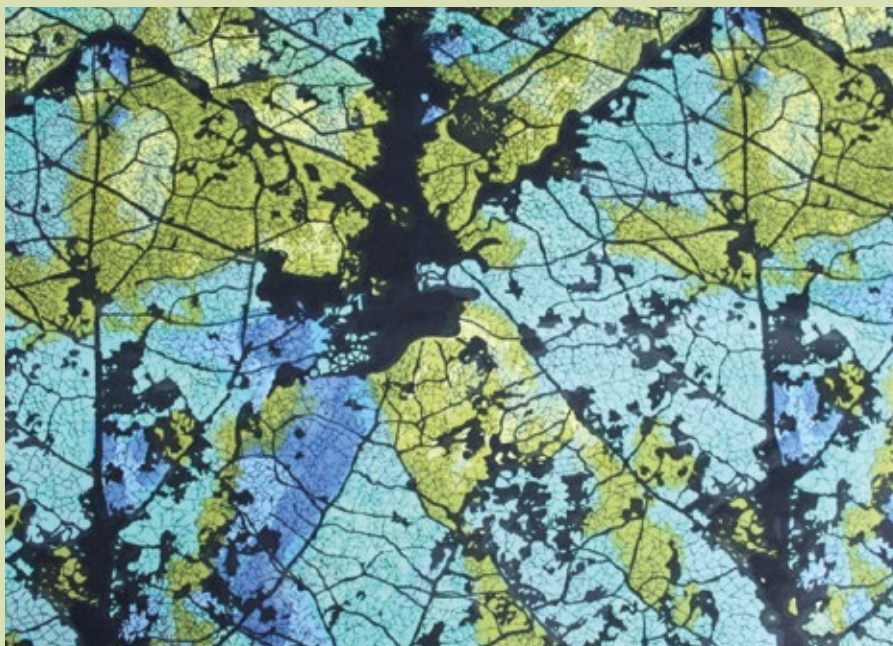
WOMEN IN PRINT: 150 YEARS OF LIBERTY TEXTILES

18 October 2025 – 21 June 2026

Coming this Autumn to William Morris Gallery. Exploring the evolving influence and status of women in textiles over the past 150 years.

This October, William Morris Gallery will present Women in Print: 150 Years of Liberty Textiles. Conceived in partnership with Liberty Fabrics on the occasion of the design house's 150th anniversary, this major exhibition will highlight the pivotal role and contributions of women textile designers.

Tracing the rich history of Liberty fabrics, the exhibition will survey the evolving influence and status of women in textiles over the past 150 years. Women in Print will bring



together iconic patterns by designers such as Althea McNish, Susan Collier and Sarah Campbell, and Lucienne Day, alongside previously overlooked names, celebrating how women have been – and continue to be – at the heart of Liberty's creative innovations and ongoing relevance today. It will

feature over 100 works, spanning garments, fabric, original designs, film and historic photographs.

**William Morris Gallery
Lloyd Park, Forest Road
Walthamstow, London E17 4PP
Wmgallery.org.uk**

Shoemakers Museum, Street

Shoemakers Museum is a new visitor experience opening to the public in September 2025. Celebrating 200 years of shoemaking history through the eyes of the shoemakers, telling the stories behind Clarks shoes in the place where it all began in Street, Somerset.

Discover a remarkable collection of over 100,000 objects, highlights of which will be on display in the museum's four galleries: Welcome to Street, Making Shoes, Selling and Buying, and Fossils.

Most people will have a memory of their favourite shoes and Shoemakers Museum is a new destination for visitors to meet the makers and celebrate and share their stories.

The Grange

Street

Somerset

BA16 0BQ

Shoemakersmuseum.org.uk

OPENING IN SEPTEMBER 2025



Hilarious!

These photos were taken by a member at Brockhampton Manor House in Herefordshire (National Trust) – a very different world!!!

Advice from a Singer sewing machine manual from 1949.

Prepare yourself mentally for sewing.
Think about what you are going to do.
Never approach sewing with a sigh or lackadaisicality.
Good results are difficult when indifference predominates.
Never try to sew with a sink full of dirty dishes or beds unmade.
When there are urgent housekeeping chores, do these first so your mind is free to enjoy your sewing.
When you sew, make yourself as attractive as possible.
Put on a clean dress and keep a little bag of French chalk near your sewing machine to dust your fingers at intervals.
Have your hair in order, powder and lipstick put on.
If you are constantly fearful that a visitor will drop in or your husband will come home and you will not look neatly put together, you will not enjoy your sewing.



Luton's Heritage — Hats off to Luton: a guide to the town's hat industry



The Luton Hat Trail



www.travelluton.co.uk

Luton

On Court: Bath and Tennis from Indoor to Outdoor!



**Museum of Bath at Work
June 12 - October 31, 2025**

I bet not everybody who visits the Museum of Bath at Work knows for what purpose the original building was built.

Turns out it was a sort of Georgian 'sports centre' as it housed both a 'Real' tennis court and a riding school.

Just the right place - I would say - to hold an exhibition on the enthusiasm for tennis in this city from Georgian times to the present day.

That is just what is planned from June 16th through to October 31st, when a wide range of displays will illustrate the development of the game from Real to Lawn tennis, including unique tennis trophies, early rackets, original costumes, tennis balls and manufacturing equipment, games and toys inspired by the sport, historic photographs and much more.

Here's the main press release:

The Museum of Bath at Work displays a series of authentically reconstructed workplaces, workshops and galleries illuminating the working life and communities of the City. Less well known is the fact that it is housed in a Georgian Real Tennis court, built in 1777 by Richard Scrace. It was run successfully as a Real Tennis court, alongside a riding school – the equivalent of an early sports centre – until 1809.

This summer, we will be highlighting its original use, and the exhibition will include a newly developed trail to help visitors to understand how the building was used for Real Tennis and the historical clues which remain.

The exhibition will explore the history of Real Tennis in Bath, look at how Lawn Tennis developed in the 1870s and quickly became hugely popular (especially among women), resulting in clubs springing up across the city.

Bath is the only UK City to have two early foundation Lawn Tennis clubs still surviving and flourishing today – the Bath Tennis Club (founded 1880) and the Lansdown Lawn Tennis and Squash Club (founded 1882).



Original post card of two female competitors in the West of England Lawn Tennis Tournament, played at the Lansdown Cricket Club, 1885/6, Private Collection

The photographer was F C Bird of 38, Milsom Street, Bath. The Bath Tennis Week included not only the major tournament but a local tennis tournament and these may well be local players. Note how close the spectators are to the players. This post card is on loan to the exhibition from a Private Collection.

In the mid-1880s, Bath became famous for the West of England Tournament, which was staged at the Lansdown Cricket Club from 1881 – 1895, part of the hugely popular Bath Tennis Week. This tournament was a pre-Wimbledon competition attracting some of the most famous Lawn Tennis players from home and abroad. Large crowds attended and there was a tournament for local players too.

It was one of the earliest competitions to allow women to participate. The young Lottie Dod, who went on to win Wimbledon 5 times, played and won in Bath in a memorable ladies' final in 1886, beating Maud Watson, the reigning Wimbledon champion.

We will have the iconic men's singles West of England trophy, dating from 1882, on display for the first time in many years. In 1883, this was won by James Dwight, the founder of modern American lawn tennis.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, people from all walks of life were playing in dozens of clubs across Bath from Combe Down to Southdown, Oldfield to Weston, and public courts were available in places such as Sydney Gardens, as well as at the Recreation Ground for practice and tournaments.

It was a far more progressive sport than we might imagine. Clubs were organised by local employers such as the department store Jollys, the engineering company Stothert and Pitt, churches, schools and political parties.

The changing fashions worn by women tennis players will be a particular focus of the exhibition, with displays of original costumes. These illustrate how in the 1880s women played in tight corsets, long skirts and tennis aprons, wearing hats and high heels. Skirts were shortened after World War I, with more loose-fitting outfits in the 1930s, flatter, more comfortable footwear and a growing enthusiasm for tennis jewellery.

Until the 1920s, women were expected to wear corsets under their long and cumbersome clothing, which restricted movement and sometimes even caused injury; we will have an example on display.

Charles Bayer & Co. Ltd. Corset manufacturer, was established in the late 19th century in Bath by a German immigrant. The 1892 red brick building still stands and claims to be England's first corset factory. Bayer made various sports corsets for riding, cycling and



Historic costumes lent to the Museum of Bath at Work for the exhibition.

tennis, which were slightly shorter and gave a little more freedom of movement than everyday corsets.

Price of Bath Heritage Tennis Ball Tubes
American companies first produced pressurized metal tubes to preserve the shelf life of tennis balls in the 1920s. The air pressure in the can was increased to equal the pressure in the ball. As long as the can was sealed no gas escaped, guaranteeing freshness. The idea soon spread to England and early tubes were opened by winding a thin metal strip on a key, like a tin of sardines. Some such examples can be seen here. A display of tubes will be lent to the exhibition by Price of Bath, the only surviving UK manufacturer of tennis balls, illustrating the many companies and tournaments they supplied tennis balls to over the years.

There is a long tradition of the manufacture of tennis balls in the area. Both Spencer Moulton and Rex Rubber

made tennis balls in nearby Bradford on Avon but neither company has survived. This tradition will be celebrated with loans, especially from Price of Bath, established in 1936, now the UK's only surviving tennis ball makers.

Displays will consider how tennis ball manufacture has developed over the years, their production today, and innovations developed at Price of Bath, such as the Mini Red Tennis Ball 75 for junior players.

The exhibition will be brought up to the present day with information about Team Bath Tennis at Bath University, its contributions during the 1990s, the opening of the LTA Tennis Academy by Tim Henman in 2003 and the hosting of the Fed Cup in 2019. It will conclude by looking at the rising popularity of Padel and Pickleball.

West of England Lawn Tennis Championships silver original Men's Trophy, 1881, courtesy Bath Tennis Club.

This is the first time it has been seen in public since the 1980s. The trophy was awarded to James Dwight (1852 – 1917) of Boston, in 1886, the famous player who is said to have been the Founding Father of American Lawn Tennis. His name can be seen engraved on the trophy along with many other famous players of the day. From 1932 it was used for the Bath Open. This silver



trophy is on loan to the exhibition from the Bath Tennis Club.

A programme of events will include lectures, in conversations, film screenings, a historic tennis match re-enactment, Heritage Day events with the tennis clubs, family activities including a children's tennis trail and a section of the exhibition dedicated to games inspired by tennis.

This exhibition has been supported by the Sporting Heritage Network, Price of Bath, and Wesport and is part of the Museum of Bath at Work Museum Making Project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Loans have been secured from Bristol Real Tennis Club, Bath Tennis Club, Lansdown Tennis Squash and Croquet Club, Bloomfield Tennis Club, Price of Bath and generous private collectors to whom we are most grateful.

The exhibition is down to Ann Sumner, who is a Trustee of the Museum of Bath at Work, an art historian, and Curator of Court on Canvas: Tennis in Art exhibition, Birmingham 2011 and curator of the current exhibition.

She told me:

"I have played tennis in Bath since I was seven years old, am a huge Lawn Tennis fan, and an art historian who specialises in tennis art. However, I was not aware of the breadth of tennis heritage in my home city until undertaking research with my colleagues June Hannam and Sara Frears, for this groundbreaking exhibition.

This show offers fascinating insights into who played the sport where in Bath, the popular tournaments hosted here, the large number of clubs which once flourished across the city and the role women played in the game.

You don't have to be a tennis enthusiast to enjoy the breadth of social history illustrated through original loans and insightful interpretation in this exhibition – there's something for everyone to enjoy in this fascinating hidden history of Bath.

'Trevor Turpin, who is Chair of the Museum Trustees, said:

"This exhibition puts our incredible Georgian building on the map, and we hope everyone will see it with new eyes as we explore the fascinating history of Real Tennis in Bath and how Lawn Tennis later flourished here too. Our thanks go to all our partners and collectors who have lent so generously to help us tell this fascinating story for the first time."

Article courtesy of Fiona Starkey



Photo: Ann Sumner

Bath Fashion Museum: Shaping the Future

Whilst visiting Bath recently I took the opportunity to call into the drop-in event showcasing the plans for the new Fashion Museum which is scheduled to open in The Old Post Office building in Bath in 2030.

This was one of a series of public consultation events taking place between mid-June and the end of July in a number of local areas. The event I attended was well organised with architect's plans of the museum and

also showing a proposed pedestrian area outside the venue together with storyboards encouraging the visitors to comment on, and add to, the vision for this new Museum.

Both this and previous events held had attracted many people with a wealth of ideas and comments about the proposed plans which also included interactive video screens, talks, workshops as well as innovative display equipment.



The team were wanting as many people as possible to join these events and if unable to attend were encouraged to fill out the online survey, see link below

<https://www.fashionmuseum.co.uk/have-your-say>

Another public consultation is planned for the Autumn which will primarily focus I believe, on the pedestrianised access, traffic routes, cycle lanes & disabled access.

Patricia Cooke



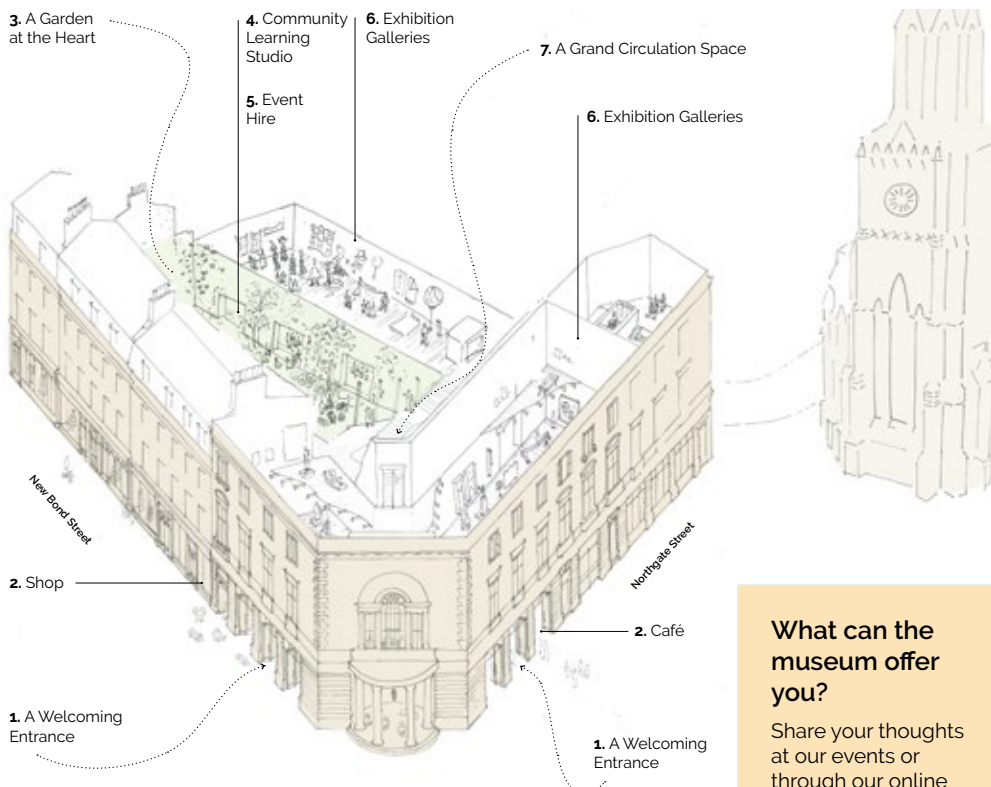
Editors Note: On 6th May 2025 it was announced that Development funding of £768,000 has been awarded by the Heritage Fund to help Fashion Museum Bath progress their plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant of £7.2million next year.



What will you discover?

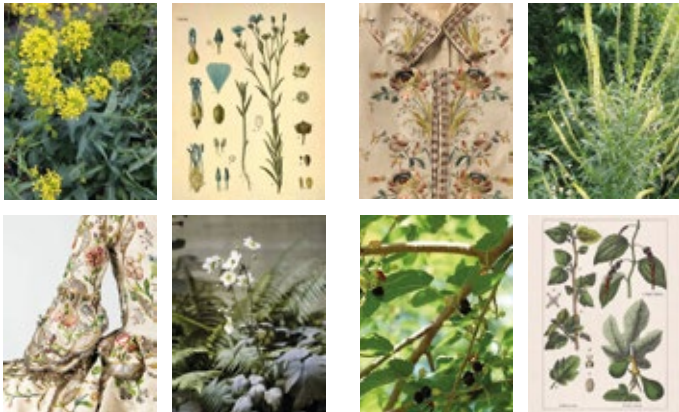
Here's what's currently being planned:

- 1 A Welcoming Entrance:**
New entrances will lead directly into a bright, open space that will make people want to explore more.
- 2 Café and Shop:**
A welcoming café and dedicated museum shop at street level.
- 3 A Garden at the Heart:**
The former Post Office yard will become a vibrant courtyard garden, bringing in natural light and fresh air. Free and open to all, it will explore the connections between fashion and nature such as agriculture, dyeing, biodiversity, and climate change.
- 4 A Community Learning Studio:**
A hands-on learning space for all ages and abilities to explore fashion and the industry through school sessions, workshops, talks, and skills development.
- 5 Event Hire:**
Spaces available for weddings, talks, and private events outside public hours.
- 6 Exhibition Galleries:**
Two floors of galleries will showcase more of the collection than ever before, alongside exciting exhibitions from other major museums.
- 7 A Grand Circulation Space:**
A sweeping staircase and spacious lift will connect all levels.
- 8 Visitor Facilities:**
Including a Changing Places toilet and quiet areas for reflection.



What can the museum offer you?

Share your thoughts at our events or through our online questionnaire.



The new garden will draw inspiration from the Collection

A Sustainable Future for Fashion Museum Bath

Fashion Museum Bath is being designed with sustainability at its core – creating an environmentally conscious space that reflects the values of the Council, collection and its audiences.

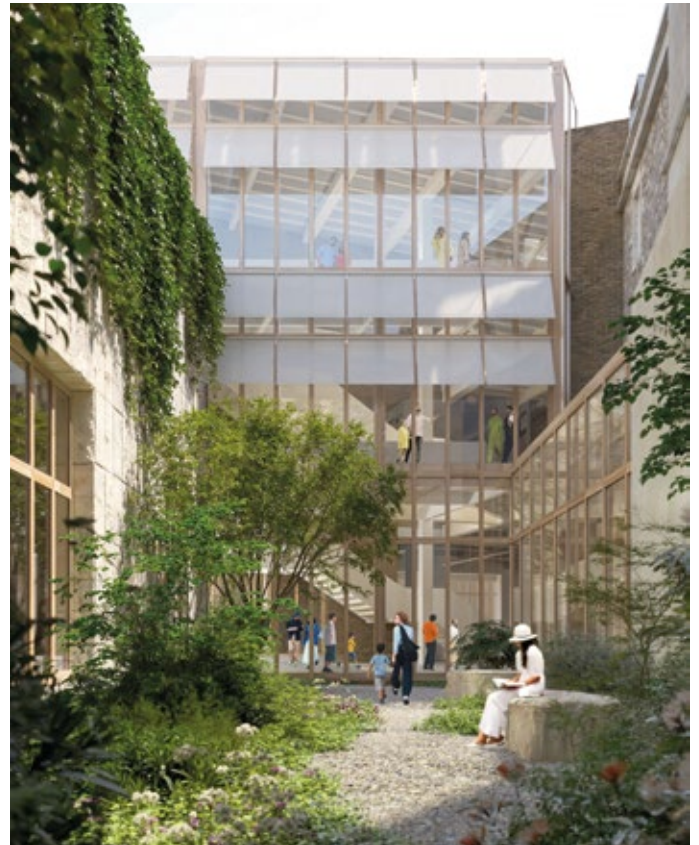
In the building design, we will:

- Reuse the building to as great an extent as possible, reusing its components and materials where demolished.
- Decarbonise the building to run on low-carbon and renewable technologies, such as air source heat pumps.
- Reduce energy loss by upgrading its insulation.
- Maximise passive measures to reduce mechanical systems.
- Where needed, adopt low energy technologies, such as air source heat pumps.
- Prioritise new materials with low embodied carbon, such as timber and Bath Stone.

- Minimise mechanical plant by installing external awnings on windows to reduce solar gain and energy use.
- Explore innovative ways to adjust environmental conditions for the collection using controlled ventilation, display case design, and natural moisture absorbing materials.
- Create a garden in the centre of the building, introducing natural light, fresh air and a courtyard space to enjoy. Its plants will connect fashion with topics such as agriculture, textile production, climate change, biodiversity, botanics, dyeing, and colour.

The museum programme will:

- Inspire and equip visitors to make more sustainable fashion choices through exhibitions, talks, workshops, and events that explore the environmental impact of fashion and promote more conscious consumer behaviour.



View of the courtyard and garden



View of the Old Post Office from Northgate Street



View of the Old Post Office from High Street



View of the Old Post Office from Broad Street

Share your views and help shape the future of Fashion Museum Bath

A new Fashion Museum will open in Bath's city centre and is expected to welcome 250,000 visitors each year. This is a rare opportunity, and your voice can help shape its future.

Fashion Museum Bath will be a welcoming and accessible space that invites everyone to explore the world of fashion. Its new home, the Grade II listed Old Post Office, will be carefully restored and reimagined as a 'Museum on the High Street' – the perfect setting to showcase the museum's internationally renowned collection.

The new museum will champion fashion's transformative power as a global industry and an expression of creativity, culture, and

identity. It will bring fashion to life for people locally and across the country, bring money into Bath, provide opportunities for local people, and support the creative industries through learning, skills development, and engagement programmes. It will be a hub for fashion lovers, culture seekers, local people, and future generations.

The Milsom Quarter Masterplan

Fashion Museum Bath is central to the Milsom Quarter Masterplan, which aims to transform the area into a destination for fashion, design, culture, and community. Public spaces will be improved to support walking, cycling, accessibility, and local businesses.

Have your say

Share your views on these early ideas and help shape the best possible future for the new Museum and its surroundings.



View from New Bond Street towards the Podium

Dress Codes at Kensington Palace

By Ann Brown with the help of section guides to the exhibition and web site.

The Exhibition "Dress Codes" is on at Kensington Palace until the end of November and well worth a visit if you are in London. It is divided into eight topics of dress codes with an introduction on writing the codes as follows: "Dress codes can be written – defined through laws, regulations or as instructions on an invitation".

Firstly, there were examples of clothes used for **Dressing for Ceremony** – Clothing is an important part of the magnificence of royal occasions, such as the State Opening of Parliament, coronations and royal weddings. When worn at royal events, uniforms emphasise the splendour of the occasion. Design, embellishments and colour show the wearer's position and rank.

Dressing for Politics – Diplomatic uniforms show the importance of an official role and give the wearer authority. In the early 1800s, European countries created uniforms for government officials based on royal court styles. The design and elaborate gold embroidery showed the diplomat's status.

Dressing for Court – Visiting a palace to attend the royal court has always required you to dress your best. In the 1700s, only people who could afford the correct style of clothes made from expensive fabrics could attend. During the 1800s rules became stricter, with written regulations published in a book called "Dress Worn at Court". Now court invitations specify the dress code: formal wear, national dress or uniform.

Dressing for Work – Staff uniforms in royal residences, parks, and palaces and on royal yachts follow strict designs, some of which go back centuries. In the 1900s and 2000s uniforms have evolved as traditions have changed, but often still feature royal emblems.

Dressing for Occasions – Between the 1700s and 1958, aristocratic and upper-class young women were presented at court as debutantes but now royal receptions and events support national industries, recognise achievement or promote international relations. Queen Victoria hosted three fancy dress balls between 1842 and 1851. By encouraging

orders of British-made clothes for these events, she showed support for East London's Spitalfields silk industry.

Dressing for Rites of Passage – Weddings, funerals, birthdays or graduations usually require us to dress in special clothes to mark the occasion. Many cultures have their own special dress codes for weddings with symbolic and cultural meanings. Queen Victoria's marriage in 1840 made white wedding dresses popular in Britain but rules can be broken to express your identity and values during these important life events.

Cracking the Codes – You have cracked the code once you know the rules of dress and how to make them work for your individual style. Members of the Royal family dress to communicate their official role, show respect to their hosts or to express what is important to them but like everyone they dress to express their taste and personality.

Risk Taking, Princess Margaret (1930 – 2002) – Margaret made Kensington Palace a place where creative people gathered. Her style showed her connections to this creative scene. Her bold and beautiful fashion choices were reported in the press and called "The Margaret Look".

The final room showcases clothing designed by the Young Producers, a team of 25 people aged between 14 and 17 created this section. Inspired by items from the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection they showed how dress codes can be reset and re-made for today. The partnership demonstrates how the collection is an important source of inspiration today, paving the way for a new generation of young people contributing to the arts and fashion industries. The works were created over a year-long collaboration between the Young Producers, fashion and music industry professionals and Historic Royal Palaces' experts, through a series of workshops and on-site tours of the historic collections. Some of the garments which inspired these young people were on display in the main exhibition as well as their work which is stunning.



Aziz Sheikh's Investiture Outfit 2023



Postillion's Ceremonial Uniform 1902



Court Dress



Views of Queen Alexandra's Dress



Diana, Princess of Wales Dress



Princess Margaret's Dress 1980



Young Producers' work

The Greensleeves Project Conference

by Mary Frost

The Greensleeves project was created by Tamsin Lewis, FSA, with a Janet Arnold award of £5000 from the Society and Antiquaries. The results were presented at a conference held at the Society of Antiquaries in London on 4th July 2025.



The project was focussed on interpreting the items described within the words of the poem/ballad "Greensleeves" which were given as gifts to a lady, and on recreating these articles. The final result was filmed and made available online (<https://greensleevesproject.uk/>).

The morning talks were focussed on the context of Greensleeves.

The first talk "And yet thou wouldest not love me" by Linda Grant, FSA, discussed whether it should be regarded as a poem or a ballad, and also set a date for it. In contradiction to the popular belief that it was written by Henry VIII, it was first included in the Stationers' record in 1580, long after Henry's time. It as included in a 1584 book "A Handefull of Pleasaunt Delities, containing sundry new Sonets and delectable Histories in divers kinds of Meeter" where it is called a sonnet, even though it does not conform to usual pattern of a sonnet. A sonnet is a type of poem that traditionally consists of 14 lines, written in a specific rhyme scheme and meter, whereas Greensleeves actually follows a ballad form with 18 verses of four lines each, followed by a four line chorus.

The second talk tried to interpret the gifts described as being given to the Lady Greensleeves against the sumptuary laws of the time (known in Tudor times as the Laws or Acts of Apparel), to consider where in society the Lady Greensleeves may have fitted. The conclusion was that unless the Lady Greensleeves was at least the daughter (or wife) of a knight, the gifts would break at least some of the sumptuary laws of the late Elizabethan period. For example, those of base birth were not allowed to regularly wear silks, velvets, damasks, taffeta and the like. Only those of baronial rank and above could wear gold embroidery. Though these laws were not always enforced, Elizabeth's Government did appoint watchers to look for those disobeying

the laws and required churches to preach sermons on the evils of not following the sumptuary laws.

The third talk, by Simon Smith, FSA, looked at how Greensleeves as a ballad/poem compared to other ballads/poems at the time.

The fourth talk by Ivan Day focussed on the food mentioned in the poem:

*For euerie moning when thou rose,
I sent thee dainties orderly
To cheare thy stomack from all woes*

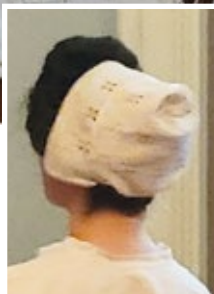
The talk considered what might be classed as "dainties" and what might be used to settle the stomach. He suggested sweet things, such as comfits and gingerbread, and then provided samples at the later reception. The gingerbread was delicious!

The afternoon started with music from Passamezzo, demonstrating other songs of the period where there was a song describing gifts, and the response of the recipient of those gifts.

This was followed by the part of the day which WECS reader may be most interested in – the clothing gifts and their reconstruction.



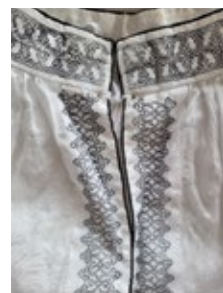
*I bought three
kerchers to thy
head,
that were wrought
fine and gallantly:*



In response to these lines, Sarah Thursfield discussed what a Kercher might mean in this context – for reproduction purposes she decided that a coif was appropriate. She then went on to discuss what was meant by "wrought fine and gallantly". She showed examples from the 16th Century of embroidered coifs with various forms and blackwork, whitework, coloured silk and coiling vines, cutwork and drawn thread work. Due to the constraints of time, she opted to make

a coif decorated with a combination of drawn thread and cutwork, embroidered with white linen thread, mostly in chain stitch. The coif was made from a single piece of linen, folded at the back of the head, and joined along the crown of the head, with a drawstring at the back of the head to fit the coif around the hair. Since the linen available in the 21st Century is not as fine of that in the past, Sarah used some antique linen that she already had in order to make this, and used linen threads usually supplied for lace-making. Sarah estimated that this took her about 110 hours to make.

*Thy smock of silk, both faire and
white,
with gold embrodered gorgeously:*



The making of the smock was discussed by Juliet Braidwood. The lines do not really give much detail about the embroidery, and, although there are examples where embroidery covers most of the fabric, a smock is a practical garment and needs to be robust enough to be washed. In addition, much of it is hidden by other clothes, and therefore not visible, so embroidery on the hidden parts is probably inappropriate. She elected to make a simple linen smock with gathered sleeves, where just the sleeves would be embroidered. The pattern for the embroidery was derived from other Elizabethan embroideries of flowers, and was embroidered in black silk using mostly chain stitch, with some gold filling. The embroidery took a long time! In fact, for the filming only one sleeve was complete, with the other being inked in with the pattern. Juliet's intention is still to complete the final sleeve, which she thinks will be done by October – it took about 15 minutes to do around 2.5" of embroidery. A rough estimate is that the first sleeve took 150 hours in total. Despite being embroidered in silk, the garment can stand up to the rigours of washing – I can attest to the robustness of such silk embroidery on linen, as I embroidered my husband a Tudor shirt 10 years ago, and much of

the embroidery is still intact, despite me putting it through the washing machine every time he wears it! The picture opposite shows the wear on the silk thread after multiple washes – most of the wear comes from the outer garments rubbing against the silk.

*I bought thee petticoates of the best,
the cloth so fine as might be:*

and in another verse

Thy petticoate of Sendall right:



Constance Mackenzie interpreted this to be a kirtle of fine fabric. Although kirtles could be of fine linen, they were often of fine wool, and this was what she chose to use, dyed with madder. She also decided to make the kirtle with no boning for stiffening, and there are descriptions of kirtles or petticoats where no boning is used. The front was stiffened with buckram, linen and wool flannel, lined with a linen/cotton mixed fabric (fustian). The buckram was made by putting layers of animal glue onto linen canvas, and four layers were used to give the bodice a suitable level of stiffness. She hand-sewed the whole garment, with the skirt being made separate to the bodice, and the two whip-stitched together at the end. The bodice was spiral laced down one side (see picture for an illustration of spiral lacing, for a garment I have made), with the eyelets offset to ensure that the top and bottom edges meet neatly.

Thy pumps as white as was the milk



Eva Burnett talked about her re-construction of suitable shoes. Her research started with an understanding of what was meant by

“pumps” in the 16th Century. From various sources she decided that this meant a turn-shoe, made of a soft leather, with a single thickness flexible sole. She also looked at extant examples of shoes, which led her to add

stamped decoration onto the leather. It was very difficult to get white leather using processes that would have been available within the 16th Century – an alum tanning process, rather than the usual vegetable tanning was needed, and this does not survive exposure to water, making these pumps a very impractical gift! A later verse within the poem describes a gift of servants to carry the Lady Greensleeves around, so her feet never touch the ground – presumably to keep her pumps dry....

*Thy garters fringed with the golde,
And siluer aglets hanging by*

Mally Ley discussed what could be used for the garters, especially what would be practical to re-create gold fringing along the end of the garters. She chose to make them as tablet woven bands using silk threads, with loops of gold thread along one edge. The silver aglets were interpreted as being at each end of the garter. She also discussed the role of silkwomen in the 15th and 16th Centuries, one of the few careers open to women, where they could run their own business independent of their husbands and could take on and train apprentices.

*Thy gown was of the grossie green,
thy sleeves of Satten hanging by:*

Also

*Thy girdle of gold so red,
with pearles bedecked sumptuously*



Finally, Ninja Mikhaila discussed the construction of the gown. She discussed the colour green as a gown colour, which was quite unusual in the 16th Century, with the analysis done for the “Typical Tudor” book showing that only 3% of 404 gowns where the colour was known were of a green colour. “Grossie” was interpreted as meaning “grassy”. The poem specifically mentions satin as the fabric of the gown, which is a weave, rather than a fibre, but silk was felt to an appropriate material. After failing to find a suitable fabric, in the right colour, Ninja was

lucky enough to find a suitable green silk satin in her local shop, for an amazingly cheap price of £7.99/m! She then used heated irons to “print” a pattern onto the silk. This did not give as strong an impression as printing does on velvet, and a recent discovery of an extant sleeve in Nottingham shows that silk fabric may have been treated in some way before printing. The silk was 54” wide, which was much wider than silk would have been within the 16th Century, where silk would have been 22” or less. In order to give the correct seaming, the fabric was cut into three across the width, meaning that the skirt was then pieced from twelve lengths of fabric. The style of the dress was based on various portraits and examples in Janet Arnold’s Patterns of Fashion. Ninja also made the girdle, which was stiffened fabric, with “ouches” (small jewelled items, around the size of a button) stitched on. It was shaped to sit over the gown and tied at the back.

*Thy purse and eke thy gay guilt
kniues*

*Thy crimson stockings all of silk,
with golde all wrought about the knee*



The final ensemble also included a blackworked purse, silk stockings and a ruff which were not discussed. The ruff is not explicitly mentioned in the words of the poem. No detail is given in the poem on what the purse may have looked like, but embroidered pouches or sweetbags have survived from this

period and are decorated in a number of different embroidery techniques. As well as blackwork, more elaborate silk embroidery combined with metallic threads was used – I have included a



picture of an example I made, based on Jacqui Carey’s interpretation of a sweetbag, in her book “Sweetbags”.

Just a Reminder

THESE EXHIBITIONS ARE STILL ON IF YOU HAVEN'T
MANAGED TO SEE THEM YET!

THE TEXTILE COLLECTION OF ELISABETH FRINK & OUR SPORTING HERITAGE

Blandford Fashion Museum
until November 2025

POWER DRESSING: 1770-1990

Blandford Fashion Museum
until November 2026

JOSEPHINE: A WOMAN OF TASTE AND FASHION

Bowes Museum
until 1 March 2026

CARTIER

V & A Kensington
until 16 November 2025

UNFLAPPABLE. FASHIONING THE 1920S

Killerton
until 2 November 2025

THE EDWARDIANS: AGE OF ELEGANCE

Kings Gallery
until 23 November 2025

TEXTILES: THE ART OF MANKIND

Fashion & Textile Museum
until 7 September 2025

ROCOCO REBOOT! FASHION 1750-1830

Modemuseum Hasselt, Belgium
until 22 February 2026

DRESS CODES: DECODING THE ROYAL CEREMONIAL DRESS COLLECTION

Kensington Palace
until 30 November 2025

THREAD MEMORY: EMBROIDERY FROM PALESTINE

V & A Dundee
until Spring 2026

GRAYSON PERRY: DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

The Wallace Collection
until 26 October 2025

Keep Wardrobe Full!

I'm sure you will all be visiting
wonderful exhibitions during the
summer - do let me know what
you have seen so that I can tell
everyone.

What have you been doing, reading, discovering online?

Write and tell me
so I can share it...

Copy for the next newsletter to
Caroline Bartlett by
26 October 2025 please to
editor@wofecostumesociety.org

WEC'S Members Sale Table

The members sale table is
proving very popular. ALL the
money made goes to WECS.

I propose to do one on our Janet
Arnold Study Day in October.

I have been asked if we could do
clothes as well. I will bring a clothes
rail in October and give that a try.

SO

Have a rummage and bring any
clothes, jewellery, scarves, fabric
etc, that you no longer require and
invest in some new things too!

We can sell as a donation to WECS
or on a 50/50 basis...whatever you
prefer.

Re-cycling at its best.

I look forward to seeing you on
October 4th in Bath.

Annie Rose

Bank Transfer is Best!

Convenient though it may be, paying for your booking or membership via
PayPal loses WECS the commission on each transaction. This means that for
your £25 membership fee, WECS loses just over £1 and for a booking at £40,
we lose about £1.50. This may not seem that much but it all adds up and we
do our level best to keep our margins tight to give you, our members, good
value for your money.

If at all possible, please consider paying by Bank Transfer or cheque. Even
better, for your membership you can arrange a Standing Order with your bank
and avoid having to remember to renew each year.

WECS Committee

CHAIR

Heather Gillard

07810 867155

chair@wofecostumesociety.org

heatherblgillard@gmail.com

TREASURER

Mary Frost

01454 260476

treasurer@wofecostumesociety.org

SECRETARY & WEBMASTER

Tony Cooper

01225 782711

secretary@wofecostumesociety.org

BOOKING SECRETARY

Ann Brown

29 Thompson Road, Wells, Somerset

BA5 1FB

01749 670557

bookings@wofecostumesociety.org

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Annie Rose

5 Clarendon Villas, Bath, BA2 6AG

07747 622481

membership@wofecostumesociety.org

WECS WARDROBE EDITOR

Caroline Bartlett

07811 297525

editor@wofecostumesociety.org

PROGRAMME SECRETARY

Andrea Bartlett

programmesec@wofecostumesociety.org

MEMBERS

Sarah Bartlett

01985 840624

sarah@tiramisu.co.uk

Janet Bailey

janet.bailey3@btinternet.com