

WHY DO YOU LOVE COSTUMES? - CSNS MEMBERS' PROFILES

This is your chance to tell other NSCS members about yourself!

Answer some or all of these six questions and you could be featured in our next issue.

1. Why are you interested in costumes?
2. How did you educate yourself about costumes?
3. How is your work related to costumes?
4. What is your favourite costume, and where is it?
5. Who is your costume mentor / Fairy God Mother?
6. What is your dream costume job?



Cl

Charlene Roberts

1. I grew up with a mother that sewed . I went from high school to Delouchery Boutique on Argyle Street, Halifax where we made and sold modern clothing and did alterations. This ended for me when I moved to Ontario. Since a small girl growing up in Aylesford, Nova Scotia, I have loved historic costume. Not until very late in life when I became a historic reenactor did I start to use my sewing skills to create costumes to wear for personal use. This evolved into doing fashion displays and fashion shows. Love of costume deepened. My skills quickly came to the attention of reenactors and I began sewing for those in the hobby. A couple of years ago I was approached by Military

Heritage to sew for them and now my reproduction military uniforms are in various historic sites, including Signal Hill, Newfoundland, Citadel Hill, Halifax, Fort Niagara, Fort York etc. etc.

I look forward to returning to Halifax this summer to see some of the uniforms I have sewed being worn by staff at Citadel Hill(as well as reenactors coming to the event). We will be camped at the Citadel--just a couple of blocks up from Argyle street where I sewed so many years ago.

2. On-line chat rooms, BOOKS, visiting museums, courses-on-line and those I travel to etc.
3. Costuming is my full time job/passion.
4. I love them all but particularly enjoy the Era of the Hoop.
5. I would not be where I am today in regards to what I know about costuming if it were not for the MANY icons of costuming who so generously share their knowledge through on-line chat groups. I owe so much to the Internet.
6. I like making reproduction costume for small museums. I have volunteered at Ottawa House Museum and Age of Sail Museum, bringing a display of my reproduction clothing to Age of Sail for the past few years. This year, with the help of a grant, I completed a woman's outfit for the Age of Sail that will be this summer's display. I did Bustle period for Ottawa House.

I love learning new things. When I needed something for the hobby, I set about learning how to make/create it. This includes underpinnings, millinery, parasol making, men's clothing, women's , children's. I have only found time to touch on shoe making and would love more time to pursue this. I do many different kinds of needlework . Next week I take a Tambour course which I am looking forward to.



Sheila Strong

1. My interest started when I started sewing my own clothing in my late teens. I became interested in current fashion, and then earlier fashions. I started my textile collection at an auction in my last year of high school.
2. I educate myself by adding to my costume library, reading a lot, attending CSNS presentations and others, attending museums with costume collections, and talking with others who know more than I do.
3. My job is not at all costume-related.
4. I have several favourite costumes; one of them is the Sorbet gown by Paul Poiret at the V&A. Today the favourite costume from my collection is a long-sleeved silvery silk blouse with scallop edging by Callot Soeurs; my favourite changes from day to day.
5. I have no one mentor, but several members of the CSNS have helped me and taught me.
6. My dream job would be to own a private costume museum with a focus on turn of the century (16th to 17th, 17th to 18th, 18th to 19th, 19th to 20th, and 20th to 21st) costumes.



Valerie Davies

1. I am interested in costumes because I enjoy dressing up in different periods
2. I went to special classes put on by the 400th Anniversary Society in Annapolis Royal for 5 years. During this time with my mentor, Ken Nye I learned how to construct costume reminiscent of the different historical periods - from 1600 through to the 1900's.
4. My favourite costume is the first one I created with the help of Ken Nye. It is the period of 1760's - to match the uniform of my husband the Town Crier of Annapolis Royal. I really enjoy sewing by hand. It is much more relaxing than with a machine.

Elaine MacKay

1. I love costume on three equal levels.

i) Firstly, I love the technical craft of costume construction and cutting. There is so much to learn and so much skill to be appreciated in the seemingly simple task of clothing construction. It is a constant challenge and is almost always rewarding.

ii) Secondly, the artistry of colour, form, cut, texture, and movement is limitless and profound.

iii) Thirdly, it is the best and most honest means of historically connecting with people. We can all relate to clothing because it touches us so intimately. Moreover, what better connection to artists and technicians of the past than through the fabric and garments that was molded in their hands.



2. I first loved embroidery and collected any number of embroidery books and worked to perfect the stitches. I think the first time I thought of clothing as art was in the early '70s when I bought an inexpensive copy of *Inventive Paris Clothes 1909-1939 A Photographic Essay* by Irving Penn with text by Diana Vreeland. This is still a favourite. My formal training at Dalhousie was key to expanding my horizons. I continue to educate myself by attending exhibits and going to conferences. I seem to be having a bit of a problem reading these day - don't know why. I have five or six beautiful books that have been in their wrappers for the last year or so. I hope I get back to that joy eventually.

3. Since graduating from Dalhousie, all of my main work has been costume related.

4. This is constantly changing depending upon what costume I'm working on. I think you have to be in love with the one you're involved with at the time to do it justice. Presently I am in love with the King James II wedding suit at the V & A because I did a lot of work on it and am giving a paper about it at the upcoming CSA region 3 symposium in October.

5. Not sure. Over the years there have been a number but now since I'm on my own most of the time I don't have that contact.

6. I think I've had it. I have been so incredibly lucky in my work. I've worked with some of the best, most inspirational designers in theatre. I've worked at the V & A with some spectacular garments. I've curated my own costume exhibition. And I've had some great teaching experiences. I mean really, could I have asked for more? My current job has its challenges and rewards but do I miss the spectacular. And I was sure impressed with Mary Westerman Bulgorella who was the conservator who worked on the Medici Burial Costumes. Wow.

Fashion Blogs

If you haven't already discovered these fashion-filled and fun blogs, here are some links members recommend

<http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/>

<http://advancedstyle.blogspot.com/>

**THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF
NOVA SCOTIA**

c/o Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage
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THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

The Society encourages interest in the history, development and conservation of Nova Scotian costume and personal adornment, and offers learning opportunities through workshops and hands-on programs. The Society's membership is diverse, including collectors, museum professionals, designers, costumers, reenactors, researchers, historians, and students.

CSNS was founded in 1981 and is a member of the Costume Society of America, the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

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The Clothes Press encourages content from its readers. Send articles, reviews, and letters to the Editor, costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca or Costume Society of Nova Scotia, c/o FNSH, 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax, NS B3H 4P7. The Clothes Press is published quarterly by the Costume Society of Nova Scotia, a registered charitable organization. Views expressed in The Clothes Press are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent CSNS or its supporters.