

THE CLOTHES PRESS

SUMMER 2008

NO. 93

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR: KAREN PINSENT

There is lots of news to share – so I will just start in!

Annual General Meeting

We had a marvelous day at the Local Council of Women of Halifax Building! Well attended, lots of energy, new faces, great food, and a beautiful site! You'll find our new board of directors listed on page 10. *Please mark your calendar for next AGM, Saturday, April 4, 2009.*

As a focus in the coming months, CSNS will offer resources to the planners and participants of the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard in Halifax (1759 – 2009).

AGM speaker Jenny Stewart (resplendent in period costume, along with her 'assistant'

Jayar) informed AGM attendees of the details surrounding the grand re-enactment to be held in Halifax in July 2009. The Halifax waterfront will be turned back to the 18th century, in conjunction with the visit by the Tall Ships, a Long Boat Flotilla, and an evening soiree. Kelly Grant shared samples of her beautiful work as well with 18th century male costume, civilian and military. Congratulations to door prize winners: Denise Hansen; Charlotte McGill; Steve McLean; Kelly Grant; Jenny Stewart; Sally Erskine Doucette; and Laura Legere. Many thanks to door prize donors: Elaine McKay and Amos Pewter.

Below, photos from the AGM

Newsletter

The Society is truly fortunate that Sally Erskine Doucette and Anita Campbell have offered to continue their work with *The Clothes Press* as editor and desktop publisher, respectively. Welcome back!

Website

Soon, we will announce a new and beautiful CSNS website! The Society is grateful to Bonnie Elliott for coordinating this project and we look forward to the results. Stay tuned ... and in the meantime you can help to build the website content. Here is our wish list. Do you have any of these? *CSNS photos* of NS costume and CSNS programs and events (new and old, with dates, details, captions, photo credits).

Send via e-mail to:

Bonnie Elliott c/o randallhouse@ns.aliantzine.ca; or mail to CSNS. Please do not send original vintage photos through the mail, but if you have them, let us know.

Resources to list on website: recommendations are welcome from our members for building reproduction costume, particularly 18th century. Include a brief commentary if you wish. As noted above, the Society offers resources related to the 250th celebration in Halifax in 2009. Other events involving 18th century re-enactment are also on the horizon – Planters and Loyalists to name a couple. With this goal in mind, we are compiling a resource list for the new CSNS website, and already have a good start.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR: *CONT.*

For members who build costume or accessories and would like to be listed on the website – by all means let us know! Please forward your items to kpinsent@eastlink.ca

Yahoo Group

If you would like to be connected to the Society's e-mail group forum, and have not yet received an invitation to do so, please e-mail Meg at adaptamouse@hotmail.com. Likewise, please report any challenges you encounter with the Yahoo group to Meg .

Annapolis Regional Committee

In May, I shared a lovely afternoon with ladies from the Annapolis Committee. Many thanks for the invitation.

Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage (FNSH) Conference and AGM

The FNSH has a new name: The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM). A terrific program was offered in Shelburne in April, and congratulations are due to conference organizers. As well as a valuable connection to the Heritage Sector, the FNSH/ANSM is the postal address 'home' for the Costume Society. We wish them well with reorganization efforts ahead.

Membership Committee

A special *thank you* is extended to Linda Badcock for her work as Membership Chair. We greatly appreciate her attention to detail and responsiveness. However, Linda felt it was time for another to step in. We are very pleased to announce that Meg Wilcox will combine Membership with Yahoo Moderator – a very nice fit!

The Clothes Press is distributed to an ever-widening circle, beyond our membership. If you are interested in membership (\$15/year), we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact Meg Wilcox via e-mail:

adaptamouse@hotmail.com

Publication about Nova Scotia Costume

We are officially underway on this exciting project to bring the wonderful examples of period costume in Nova Scotia collections out into the light of day and share their stories. Again, thanks are due to Bonnie Elliott for her efforts.

Our initial meeting was held in May at Acadia University in the beautiful KC Irving Environmental Science Centre and Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens. Attending were Bonnie Elliott, Estelle Lalonde, Denise Hansen, Mary Humphries and Karen Pinsent.

First steps in this new and important project will be to contact museums, heritage organizations and costume related institutions to ask the question – “Do you have historically significant costume items in your collection?” Bonnie prepared a project outline that will accompany the “Call for Costume Checklist” to be distributed this summer. *Also of interest are costumes in private collections.* Perhaps you have items in your collection for consideration or know of someone - please let us know. Contact: Bonnie Elliott c/o randallhouse@ns.alianzine.ca or mail to CSNS. Once responses are compiled, the exciting work begins! Updates on the costume publication will be coming via Yahoo Group and this newsletter.

Halifax Programs 2008-2009

Our Program calendar is off to a great start with sign-up at the AGM! Your ideas are always welcome- perhaps you would like to offer a program talk yourself! We are not limited to the dates or venue listed ... why not a Saturday program 'on the road' somewhere wonderful? Contact me at kpinsent@eastlink.ca. CSNS is very grateful to the *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic*, which provides Monday evening event space.

2008

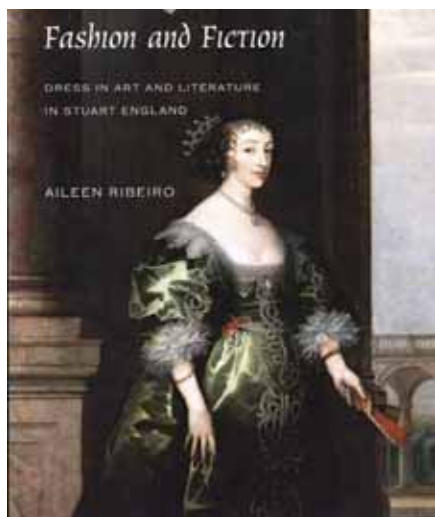
July 14	open
August 11	open
September 8	open
October 6	Tibetan / Shambala Dress
November 10	WWI Clothing / Military Dress
December 8	18 th Century 'Shoe & Tell'

2009

January 12	open
February 9	“What to Wear?” – 18 th c.
March 9	open

CSNS BOOK DONATION

By Sally Erskine Doucette



Costume Society of Nova Scotia proudly donated another fabulous costume volume to the Halifax Regional Library - Spring Garden Road Reference Collection. Reference Librarian Joanne McCarthy was pleased to accept the donation of **Fashion and Fiction: Costume in Art and Literature of Stuart England** by Aileen Ribeiro on the library's behalf. She mentioned how the costume book collection is a favourite with staff and how there is always a student sitting on the floor by the books avidly researching a school paper. The costume students have a wide age range, from university right down to junior high school (when they are given their own choice of topics!)

REPORT FROM NEW ORLEANS

By Anita Campbell



Costume Society of Nova Scotia members at Mardi Gras World in New Orleans, CSA Symposium

Left to right- Cynthia Cooper, Tina Bates, Elaine MacKay, Anita Campbell

Note Tina's maple leaf Mardi Gras beads!

I've just returned from the Costume Society of America conference in New Orleans and am finding it difficult to describe my experience. How can mere words do justice to strolling through the French Quarter at sunset, dancing the evening away in a warehouse full of Mardi Gras floats or sipping champagne at Saks Fifth Avenue while browsing through the Armani collection.

Equally memorable were the presentations- so much is happening in the field of costume/dress studies. The scholars' panel encompassed this. Three scholars, including Tina Bates from the CMA, debated the hot subject of object studies versus theory-based studies, then opened the floor to a very controversial and sometimes passionate dialogue. Not surprising neither side came out a clear winner.

It seems to me there is room for both approaches, and this was reflected by the symposium offerings, which included juried research papers as well as practical professional development sessions. The former included sessions on 'Revealing and Concealing', and 'Costume as a Matter of Faith'. In the latter I learned how to make a replica of a 19th century pelerine from paper and dollar store tools, and received a primer on 18th and 19th century block printed dress fabrics.

Where will I go for my next costume kick! After listening to Cynthia Cooper describe the exhibit she curated, 'Reveal or Conceal', currently on exhibit at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, I am determined to get to Montreal to see it. Anyone interested in a field trip?

NOVA SCOTIA COSTUME COLLECTIONS

RANDALL HOUSE MUSEUM- WOLFVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY (WHS)*by Bonnie Elliott*

Since the Randall House Museum first opened its doors in May 1949, it has been the depository for a substantial collection of artifacts accumulated mostly through donation. The **costume and textile collection** that presently totals approximately **600 + items**, is a combination of household textiles and dress artifacts; the latter includes an assortment of men's, women's and children's garments, outerwear, undergarments, uniforms, boots and shoes, and accessories including parasols and fans. The collection ranges in date from **c.1860 to 1980** with a couple of items that date to an earlier period. The **household textiles** include 35 quilts coverlets, and wool blankets some spun, woven and marked by a local maker.

The costume and textile collection used to be stored mainly in the attic in large steamer trunks until two years ago when the WHS took the initiative to secure off-site storage with a more controlled environment. Besides enhancing the conditions for preservation, this move allows for **year round access** to the collection when the museum itself is closed up for the winter.



Prevalent in the collection are decorative items with a pleasing aesthetic quality and once deemed too precious to throw out by the donors and their families. This explains the jewelled hatpins, silk and carved ivory parasols from 1850 to 1900's, sparkling beaded dresses from the 1920's and approximately 10 *mantelettes* (short capes) dripping with beads and jet that during the late 19th century were draped over coats to dress up the attire for an evening out. The oldest artefact is the top piece of an 18th century Crewel work pocket, probably of English origin. (pictured right)



The collection has inherited other peoples' collections such as the tortoiseshell hair combs and fans from well known local artist Annie Prat who was a life long friend of poet Bliss Carmen. One of the most precious items (because of its rarity and probably unique in this province) is a circa 1825 hand quilted cotton corset. [Shown left]

Certain artefacts come with detailed provenance and this expands the possibilities for interpreting and re-telling stories that are both personal in nature and reflect the wider Wolfville community. There is a hockey sweater worn by a member of the Shamrock hockey club of Wolfville, and Mr. Otis Eaton's brocaded vest worn for his marriage in 1867 in Windsor. [visit <http://daryl.chin.gc.ca> and arte-

facts Canada Website for picture of latter]. Likewise clothing once owned and kept in a 'tickle trunk' by Mrs. Patriquin, who was one of the previous occupants of the Randall House, has a very personal connection to the history of the building.

NOVA SCOTIA COSTUME COLLECTIONS

RANDALL HOUSE MUSEUM *CONT.*

Costume collections in most museums are typically over supplied with garments associated with *rites of passage*. For example one usually finds an abundance of Victorian black mourning items, christening gowns, men's tailcoats and formal wear, wedding dresses and children's 'first' shoes. For the WHS collection to some extent this is the case, but not in the numbers you might expect to find, except the christening gowns which total about 25.

The donation in 1978 of some clothes belonging to Mrs. Andrew Borden (née Eunice Laird), mother of Sir Robert Borden, has national significance. Within this acquisition is an almost complete mourning c.1890 outfit including a silk satin dress, black cotton petticoat, silk parasol, bonnets, black net 'mittens', and several black mantles, all in good condition.



Randall House Museum

Open June 15 to September 15

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, 1:30 - 5 p.m. Sundays

Admission: \$2.00 admission.

Children under 12 and Society members free of charge.

Randall House Museum - Wolfville Historical Society

259 Main Street, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, B4P 1C6

Telephone: 1-902-542-9775

E-mail: randallhouse@ns.aliantzinc.ca

MAY PROGRAM: "INSIDE THE WARDROBE OF AN 18TH CENTURY ORDINARY PERSON"

By Karen Pinsent



Again, **Jenny Stewart** opened her re-enacting closet and library to deliver the Costume Society's program in grand style on May 12. Through her talk, "*Inside the Wardrobe of an 18th Century Ordinary Person*", Jenny illustrated, with specific examples, the importance of research. Her message to put in your best effort to 'get the look right' and have some fun in the meantime was well received by the audience.

Perhaps you caught Jenny's interviews on May 12 broadcast on *Live at 5* and the CTV late night news.

Thanks Jenny (and Jayar), and staff of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. With the coming events in Nova Scotia, the CSNS continues to get the word out on dressing for 18th century re-enactment.

Contact: Jenny Stewart, M. Ed., SocioCostumologist, jennystewart@eastlink.ca

CONSERVATION SUPPLIES

THE CSNS MAINTAINS A SMALL INVENTORY OF CONSERVATION SUPPLIES SUITED TO TEXTILE CARE. THESE ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY CSNS MEMBERS.

Contact:
anita.campbell@pc.gc.ca

EXHIBITS:

HALIFAX VERSUS LOUISBOURG: THE FINAL SIEGE

MARITIME MUSEUM OF THE ATLANTIC, HALIFAX NS, OPENS JUNE 3—NOV. 2, 2008

Don't miss this compelling 250th anniversary exhibit which examines the major turning point in the tug-of-war for North America between England and France. One of the prize artifacts in the exhibit is General Wolfe's cloak, on special loan to the museum from the Royal Collection of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. <http://museum.gov.ns.ca/mma/index.html>

MRS. MILLETT'S HATS

THE SETTLERS MUSEUM, MAHONE BAY, OPENING MAY 31

The Settlers Museum opens for the season on May 31. Exhibits include a display from Millett's Millinery Shop, which opened its doors in Mahone Bay in 1880. Mrs. Millett designed and made some of the hats sold in her shop. This charming collection of hats was literally brought from the family attic into the light through a Heritage Fair project by her great, great granddaughter. www.settlersmuseum.ns.ca

WHEN SHE MARRIES/QUAND ELLE SE MARIE, ACADIAN WEDDING TEXTILES AND TRADITIONS, 1880-1930

MUSÉE ACADIEN DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONCTON, OPENING JUNE 18 - DECEMBER

Acadian costume historian Judith Rygiel honours Acadian women's work by preserving cultural traditions with their textiles. <http://www2.umoncton.ca/cfdocs/etudacad/maum/index.cfm?page=bienvenue§ion=0>

REVEAL OR CONCEAL?

MCCORD MUSEUM, FEBRUARY 22, 2008 - JANUARY 18, 2009

A well-turned ankle peeking out from under a long hoop skirt, an expanse of thigh in a miniskirt, an exposed midriff in low jeans - this McCord Museum exhibition looks at how revealing a woman's body has always been as much a part of Western fashion as concealing it. In spite of or because of their impact, shocking and tantalizing styles, like knee-length skirts in the 1920s, hot pants in 1971, and exposed thongs today, have become mainstream.

Some 200 objects from the McCord collection will illustrate how with each decade of the past century, clothing revealed more of the female body, and women seemed to gain ever greater physical comfort and social and sexual freedom. But did they really? This exhibition shows how revealed or concealed, the female body is contested terrain for changing social attitudes and practices. www.mccord-museum.qc.ca

YVES SAINT LAURENT

MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, JUNE 5 - SEPT. 28, 2008

This exhibition spotlights Yves Saint Laurent, whose unique style intertwines references from the art world with those of popular culture and the social revolution. This first retrospective, covering the forty years of the Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture house, highlights the innovative character of a work that has marked history and the present with its new definition of femininity and left a signature that transcends fashion. With some 150 accessorized designs belonging to the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent, the exhibition will also feature drawings, photographs and videos.

Organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, in collaboration with the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent, Paris. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts at www.mmfa.qc.ca/

EVENTS:

WOMEN'S HERITAGE CELEBRATION

MEMORY LANE HERITAGE VILLAGE, JULY 25, 2008

A tribute to the heritage of women in the rural Eastern Shore during the 1940s. Displays of domestic skills as well as women's work outside the home. Hands-on opportunities and planned expansion of the program for 2008 include demonstrations of 'making over' and repairing textiles. Memory Lane has examples of darning and elaborate repair in their textile collection.

If you have a particular textile interest or expertise to share in the planning of this event, please contact:

Thea Hammond-Wilson, Memory Lane Heritage Village, Lake Charlotte, Nova Scotia, (902) 845-1937 / 1-877-287-0697, email: info@heritagevillage.ca

PAINT MAHONE BAY- A TOWN THROUGH TIME,

MAHONE BAY, JULY 12-13

Presented by the Settlers Museum in support of its work in providing educational and recreational experiences that celebrate and preserve the history, culture and traditions of the Mahone Bay area.

Be part of the celebration this summer when artists come together to create works reflecting the timeless enchantment of one of Canada's oldest and most beautiful towns. Picture the street-scapes, seascapes, gardens, **models in reproduction costume**, still life arrangements of heritage furnishings, painting demonstrations and workshops as well as a stunning exhibition of both "wet" paintings (done during the festival) and "dry" paintings (previously done).

Stroll the waterfront, visit the shops, cafes and deli's. There could be an artist or a costumed model (or both!) around any corner, in any garden. Visit our head-
quarters at the Mahone Bay Centre, to pick up "Kids Paint" kits for the youngsters, have a lemonade, visit with the artists, and join in on one of our informative workshops.

For more information, to register as an artist or to reserve a "Kids Paint" kit call The Mahone Bay Settlers Museum 902-624-6263 or visit our website www.settlersmuseum.ns.ca



photo by Garry Woodcock

LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Costume Society of Nova Scotia donated its library collection to the Costume Studies Program at Dalhousie University. This costume reference library is available to members of CSNS by contacting Dianne Kristoffe @ 494-2178 dianne.kristoffe@dal.ca

The library collection is housed within the Costume Studies accommodations at 1515 Dresden Row, Suite 202 in the City Centre Atlantic. Please allow time for scheduling visits as the room is used for classes also. Books, journals and videos of Costume Studies fashion shows are available.

**THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF
NOVA SCOTIA**

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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 programming. 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 Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.



Kelly Grant's costumes on display at the AGM

CSNS Board of Directors:

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The Clothes Press

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