

# Industry moves on

## 1800 to 1900

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## **1 - Stockings**

Marked 'Agnes Kelly 1872'

Donated to the museum by a member of the Kelly family of Ottery St Mary. Stockings were amongst the first garments to be produced mechanically, on a frame knitting machine. They would have been worn gartered around the knee. White cotton was generally preferred for hot summer days. Black dyes had the terrible reputation of staining the feet.

## **2 - Petticoat**

1889

Victorian women's dress concealed layer upon layer of underwear. By the late 19th century this was usually made of washable, undyed cotton fabrics discreetly trimmed with 'broderie anglaise' and simple embroidery.

Many who could afford it purchased 'a dozen of everything' and clothing was worn in rotation. The family wash took up to a week. White linen and cotton underwear was subjected to three main processes on laundry day: soaking, scrubbing and boiling.

### **3 - Cotton combinations**

About 1890

Made by Aertex

Aertex is the brand name of a cotton fabric with an open weave. Today it is more often associated with sportswear. The company was started in Manchester in 1888.

Its innovative fabric trapped air within warp and weft, forming a barrier between warm skin and chilly atmosphere. By 1891 Aertex was firmly established within the English middle classes. Combination garments replaced many separate bulky layers.

### **4 - Combinations**

1870s-1880s

S.P. & Co.

From the late 1870s onwards, a fashionably narrow silhouette demanded less bulky underwear. Chemilettes or combination garments solved the problem, uniting drawers with chemise to create tighter fitting underwear. These became increasingly decorative throughout the 1880s, with the addition of lace, ribbons, and embroidery. Ireland was the source of much readymade underwear. This pair is labelled 'Erin Go Bragh' which translates as 'Ireland forever'.

## **5 - Photograph of Mrs Marian Heath of Exeter**

Owen Angel (probably 1821-1909)

Mid to late 1870s

A crystoleum photograph on convex glass in plush covered frame. Owen Angel was a well known Exeter photographer, with a studio at 11 High Street. He experimented with various forms of photography, perfecting his own 'crystoleum' process of printing onto the back of a piece of convex glass, of which this portrait of his daughter is an example.

## **6 - Photograph of Mrs Marian Heath of Exeter**

Owen Angel (probably 1821-1909)

Mid to late 1870s

A crystoleum photograph on convex glass in plush covered frame. Owen Angel was born in Totnes and first moved to Exeter in the 1840s. At one time Angel was photographer to the Exeter School of Art and the Cornwall Photographic Society. This is a photograph of his daughter Marian, who died in 1883, aged 39.

## **7 - 'The Midget' tournure or bustle**

About 1883-1888

Made from metal, glazed cotton and cotton tape, this was worn around the waist, beneath a petticoat. This cage-like structure supported the skirt at the back, creating a high-set bustle shape.

Punch magazine mocked these foundations as 'wire fencing'. At first a stylish necessity, by the middle of the 1880s the bustle was no longer regarded as elegant.

By 1888 one magazine reported that: "Well-dressed women wear scarcely any tournure".

## **8 - Evening dress**

About 1881

Made by Mrs J.T. Tucker & Sons, Exeter

Cotton organdiew, silk ribbon and machine lace.

Fashionably kilted at the hem, this gown echoes Tudor-revival style with a ruff and slash, and pulled sleeve decorations.

Elizabeth Tucker's husband was a local jeweller and goldsmith. Elizabeth's business appears in the local press from the 1850s onwards. The dressmaking workshop was staffed by the Tucker's two daughters.

This gown may have been worn for a wedding dress before it was adapted for evening wear, as was often the case.

## **9 - Waistcoat**

1839

Silk satin damask, twilled silk back, cotton lining.

A wedding was an opportunity for snappy dressing. White silk waistcoats became part of the standard wardrobe for elegant middle class weddings during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The tiny floral pattern woven in silk thread was carefully chosen to reflect bridal fashions. The fit of the waistcoat is adjusted by laces at the back.

Worn by a grandfather of Reverend E.A. Chorley of Sylvan Road, Exeter.

## **10 - Mourning locket**

Mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century

Made from jet, glass and human hair. There was a tradition of mourning jewellery dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Plain lockets preserved photographs or, as here, a lock of hair of the departed loved one. Many examples survive from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when sentimental mourning jewellery was popular.

“Hair is at once the most delicate and lasting of our materials and survives us like love” said one women’s magazine.

## **11 - Necklace**

Mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century

Made from multi-coloured 'harlequin' glass with yellow metal links. The glass stones represent various gems. The first letter of each spells 'D' for diamond, 'E' for emerald, and so on. Together they spell out the word 'Dearest'.

Jewellery carrying sentimental or symbolic messages became increasingly popular towards the middle of the Victorian period. Long chain necklaces were worn throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **12 - Necklace**

Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a vogue for hair jewellery. This one is created from plaited hair with pendant cross and gold fittings. Not all hair jewellery was necessarily made for mourning wear. While instructions were available for making up at home from the hair of the deceased, there were also manufacturers who specialised in fine designs in human hair: a similar technique to lace-making used weights as bobbins. The hair was then boiled, dried and finished with shellac.



### **13 - Mourning brooch**

1853

Enamelled metal and glass, containing a lock of woven human hair. This brooch commemorates a deceased relative. Her name and date, 'Anne Pearse 27th February 1853' is inscribed on the back.

In the same year, the Family Friend magazine published a series of articles on how to make hair jewellery at home. It is more likely that Anne's hair was made up and mounted by a professional jeweller.

### **14 - Carved jet brooch**

1860s

During the first stage of deep mourning, women wore no jewellery at all. During the second stage, etiquette allowed only black or white – carved jet fitted the bill perfectly. Jet ornaments were made and sold throughout England at this time. The centre of the industry was at Whitby, Yorkshire, where jet, a fossilised wood, was mined.

## **15 - Wedding dress**

1882

Made from shot silk taffeta with a woven stripe, silk satin and machine made lace. Probably stitched by an amateur country dressmaker.

The bride, a wheelwrights' daughter, was 40 years old. Sarah Ann Clear married John Whiddon Foale, her sister's widowed brother in law, at St Mary's Church Dartington in 1882, becoming stepmother to his four children.

## **16 - Mourning bonnet**

About 1882

A wired arcade shaped bonnet, covered with black silk, trimmed with a broad silk ribbon bow. Ribbon strings would have secured the bonnet under the chin. Made for Lottie Semple, aged two, to wear when in the first stage of mourning for her sister. Poor Lottie later died of meningitis in 1891.

## **17 - Wedding bonnet**

1896

Made by Mrs J.T. Tucker & Sons, Exeter

Velvet and broad silk ribbon over a wired bonnet shape.

Trimmed with a spray of artificial lilac, made of silk and paper, with gutta percha (rubber) stems.

The original milliner's box also survives. By the time this bonnet was ordered, Mrs J.T. Tucker & Sons was established at 243 and 244 High Street Exeter. The shop had both a millinery department and dressmaking workshop.

Slightly out of date for 1896, this bonnet may have been made for an older person.

## **18 - Pair of slippers**

1868

Crocheted woollen yarn uppers with leather sole. These form part of a collection of garments all worn by the donor and made by the donor's mother.

Inexpensive monthly pattern magazines, such as Weldon's Practical Knitter priced at two pence, held instructions on how to make simple clothes, shoes, hats and gloves.

## **19 - Baby cap**

1868

Presented to the museum in 1935, this delicate outer cap is from a group of garments said to have been made by the donor's grandmother and worn by the donor as a young baby. It is made from Carrickmacross lace-muslin motifs applied to cotton net, bobbin lace and silk ribbon.

The outer cap was worn over a plainsilk cap, and beneath a bonnet of more substantial fabric when outdoors.

## **20 - Christening robe**

About 1870-1890

A baby's long robe, with princess line front. It is made from cotton with embroidered cotton muslin insertion.

Used by four generations of the same family during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was last worn by the Exeter donor, and her brother, before the First World War.

## **21 - Barra or under petticoat**

1868

A bleached cotton calico petticoat made by a mother for her expected child. A laundry mark stitched in red thread shows that there were six of these garments in the layette. The letter 'A' in fine cross stitch stands for the Aviolet family.

A child's clothing collection, or 'layette', could include up to 58 garments, some finely embroidered or trimmed with lace. The under petticoat was pinned around the child and was related to swaddling.