

PRESS RELEASE

27 March 2014

For immediate release

NEW EXHIBITION

A PASSION FOR FASHION:

Gorgeous Georgian Accessories revealed

*Some of the finest accessories of the 18th century go on display at Fairfax House in a major fashion exhibition, 'Head to Toe: Accessorising the Georgians', opening its doors on **Friday 28th March**. A sumptuous array of historic accessories dating from 1700 to 1820 and featuring exquisite shoes, fans, hats, waistcoats, garters, stockings buttons and gloves as well as other more exotic forms of accessories, will delight the eye in this exhibition which explores the 'fashioning' of Georgian Britain.*

PHOTOCALL OPPORTUNITY: Thursday 27th March, 12.00-2.00pm

Finishing touches are put on the exhibition as the final key pieces are put into place

'Head to Toe: Accessorising the Georgians' celebrates the visual splendour of Georgian Britain and reveals the beautiful, wide-ranging accessories that accompanied, ornamented, adorned and even sometimes underpinned the attire of fashionable eighteenth-century and Regency society. Encompassing accessories for both men and women, the exhibition reveals the potent consumer and fashion-conscious society that was at work seeking accessories that were not only functional but fashionable.

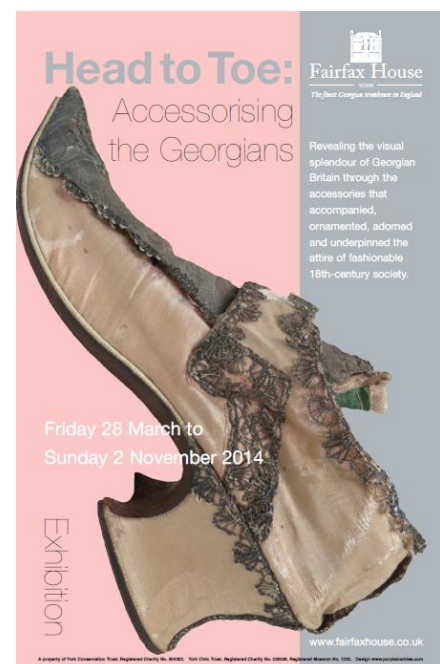
This exhibition showcases the accessories that were worn, quite literally, from top to bottom; from headwear such as bonnets, hats, caps and parasols right through to stockings, garters and extravagant shoes of all shapes, patterns and designs.



Fairfax House

YORK

The finest Georgian town house in England





The more discreet accessories that were normally hidden from sight are also revealed with the layers of underwear that combined to create the fashionable form; for women this meant corsets, hoops, tie-on pockets and chemises. Most conspicuous by their absence were of course the 'drawers', 'pantaloon' or even 'knickers' that only became an essential piece of underclothing into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Male accessories also form a key part of the exhibition revealing that vanity and the pursuit of fashion was not for the female realm alone. A pair of stockings for men with specially padded calves are amongst the more unusual forms of Georgian fashion accessory on display, clearly defining the fashionable taste for a well-shaped, muscular 'manly' leg in Georgian Britain!

Other key pieces include a rare set of eighteenth-century patches worn to conceal smallpox marks on the face, and even eyebrows made from mouse hair! Through these objects 'Head to Toe' explores the somewhat strange world of cosmetics and their burgeoning use as the ultimate form of 'accessorisation' for the face in the eighteenth century.

'Head to Toe' is the third in a series of fashion exhibitions at Fairfax House using costume, clothing and fashion to unlock the doors to understanding Georgian society. This exhibition is also part of celebrations marking the 300th anniversary of the Georgian age and the accession of George I to the throne of Britain in 1714.

Hannah Phillip Director of Fairfax House comments, *'Fashion has the ability to cross time and irrespective of which period it comes from has great resonance with modern society. 'Head to Toe' essentially shows that little has changed in the pursuit of 'fashionability' and that society's present fascination with creating and following trends is not new at all. Indeed the passion for the season's latest 'must-have heels' was as alive in the eighteenth century as it is now. Quite frankly you're never fully dressed without the right accessories!*

Clothes also have the power to tell us many unrecorded details about the people who wore them. The sartorial choices a person makes and most particularly the specific accessories that are selected to complement the wearer's look provide a conspicuous and visual statement of an individual's taste if not personality. In this way



'Head to Toe' provides a unique insight into the private world of people who lived 250 years ago'

Objects from over 20 museums around the country have been assembled to showcase the range of accessories available to a wealthy Georgian, particularly in a burgeoning and thriving hub such as York in the eighteenth century, and the sheer beauty, technical expertise and lavish detail given to the production of these pieces of Georgian finery. Lenders to the exhibition include The Science Museum, London, The Fan Museum Greenwich, Waddesdon Manor, The Platt Gallery, Manchester, Liverpool Museums, The Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Wedgwood Museum, and the National Trust to name just a few.

Head to Toe: Accessorising the Georgians will be opened officially on the evening of Thursday, 27th March with a reception preview at 6.30pm. The exhibition opens to the public on **FRIDAY 28 MARCH** and will run until **2 NOVEMBER 2014**.

For more information visit www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk

Ends

Press Contacts: Hannah Phillip, Director Tel: 01904 655543
Email: hannahphillip@yorkcivictrust.co.uk

