

## Costume and the changing facts of finding information

It is fifty years since the Costume Society was founded and, as Ann Saunders remarked in her editorial for the twenty fifth anniversary edition, the journal is eighteen months younger.<sup>1</sup> When the journal first appeared in 1967 there were very few publications in this subject area. *Costume no.4* (1970) contained a list entitled 'New Books', the introduction to which stated that, "From time to time, the Committee have been asked to supply a list of recent publications on costume. Here is such a list. The Editor would be most grateful to readers if they would supply additions, particularly references to articles in periodicals."<sup>2</sup> The list that followed contained eighteen books and thirteen articles. The articles were mainly from foreign publications, three were from the German journal *Waffen-und Kostümkunde*, two from the Dutch journal *Antiek*, others were from foreign museum yearbooks; only three were in English, from *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club*, *The Connoisseur*, and *Post-Medieval Archaeology*. Over the fifty years the New Books list was compiled by Anne Buck, Kay Staniland, Penelope Byrde, James Snowden (the longest serving compiler 1982-2011), and most recently Anna Buruma.

With *Costume no.9* (1975) the journal articles became a separate listing from New Books, and were compiled by Naomi Tarrant from then until 2008; Rebecca Arnold compiled 2009 and 10, and in 2011 I took over the compilation. The list of journal articles shows the growth of journals in the field. For many years the triumvirate of *Costume* (first published 1967), *Textile History* (first published 1970) and *Dress* (first published 1975) were the places to publish. Over the last thirty years this has grown with, *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* (1982), *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* (1997), *Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty* (2001), *Textile - The Journal of Cloth and Culture* (2003), *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* (2005). In the last two years there has been an outbreak of journals in the field: *Fashion, Style and Popular Culture* (2013), *International Journal of Fashion Studies* (2014), *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion* (2014) and *Clothing Cultures* (2014). The annual listing of selected articles also shows the growth of articles on clothing history in journals not

normally associated with the subject; the list in this issue contains articles from journals as diverse as the *Sea Kayaker*, *Journalism Studies* and the *Journal of Chinese Studies*.

In the early years of the Costume Society articles were found by members who subscribed to the journal the article was published in, or knew the author who had written it, and contacted *Costume* with this information. This still happens to a certain extent, and I am very grateful to Naomi Tarrant who provides me with information on articles she has heard about and thinks should be in the listing. Information technology and the rise of electronic databases has changed how we search for and find journal articles, especially within the academic sphere. For those outside academia there is Google Scholar which is an app within Google which searches for academic writing.<sup>3</sup>

Today most of the selected articles are chosen by constructing a search strategy which is run within a university's federated search engine. A federated search engine searches many, but not all, of the hundreds of databases to which the university subscribes. In the case of Bournemouth University the search engine is Ebsco Discovery, and it searches between eighty and one hundred databases in one go. A basic search in the subject fields of databases for clothing or costume or dress, in peer reviewed journals covering a one month period, can return over one hundred articles. The term 'fashion' is not used as it returns too many false hits. Additional terms and limiters can then be added to the search to try and remove false hits, and articles are then reviewed to decide whether they fit the criteria for inclusion here. An example of an article we have not included in the current list is:-

Josette R. McMichael et al, 'The social acceptability of handheld umbrellas for sun protection.' *Photodermatology, Photoimmunology and Photomedicine*. 30 (2014), 220-7

After going through the records there would probably be between half a dozen and a dozen articles suitable for inclusion in the list. Many of these would be from the journals mentioned above, but some would come from journals not associated with clothing, for example, *Classical Philology* has an

article by Andrew Gallia, 'The Vestal Habit', which is on the ritual costume of the Roman vestal virgins.<sup>4</sup>

The searches do include articles in languages other than English; most of these are excluded simply because of space constraints. An example of an article that could have been included in this issue but is not is:

Melda Özdemir, 'Kozluören Köyü (Manisa İli Soma İlçesi) Tahtaci Kadın Giyimi.' *Turkish Culture and Haci Bektas Veli Research Quarterly*, 69 (2014), 167-80. Tahtaci Women's Costume of Kozluoren Village (Soma Township, Province of Tanisa), in Turkish.

In the past many members of the public or researchers not accredited to any academic body could go into their local university library and read the print copy of journals. Today most universities have disposed of their print copies and have only online access which is limited to students and staff. If you are not accredited to an institution and wish to read the articles most will be behind paywalls, and you will need to pay for access. This is now changing, but only really for articles written within an academic setting.

Part of the change to the way research found in journal articles is communicated is the growth in academic repositories. Many universities and funders of research now insist that academics make their published research available on their institution's repository. When this is done for free, with the agreement of the publisher, this is known as green open access. The Finch report<sup>5</sup> was an enormous push towards open access, but emphasised gold open access, which is where the author pays the publisher for the right to make an article open access. The controversy around green versus gold open access has been considerable, and is too complex to go into here. Suffice it to say that the main funders of academic research (e.g. Research Councils UK, Wellcome Trust, etc.) insist that any published work which stems from their funding is made available as open access.

As part of this move to Open Access the funding body for universities HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) has introduced a policy which states, 'to be eligible for submission to the post-2014 REF (Research Excellence Framework), authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts must have been deposited in an institutional or subject repository on acceptance for publication. Deposited material should be discoverable, and free to read and download, for anyone with an internet connection.' This requirement will apply to all journal articles published after the 1 April 2016 but is already being put into place.<sup>6</sup> Publishers can place an embargo on this for Green Open Access, and for arts and humanities journals this is usually two years. So it will not be possible to access a free online copy of the article for two years after publication unless the author or his institution has paid for Gold Open Access. Many universities are now creating funds to cover these costs, or are building them into research funding bids.

This sounds as though most research conducted in the UK will end up free online however, like many others, *Costume* is a journal that accepts articles not only from UK academics but also from a wide range of other sources: foreign academics, museum professionals, independent researchers etc., so the effect of this policy may not be as Open Access as it sounds. An examination of *Costume*, vol. 48 no.1 (Jan 2014) shows five research articles. Marcus Harmes and Leyla Belkaïd, are academics based overseas. Miles Lambert is a museum professional and is Senior Curator at the Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester, which does not appear to have a repository. Sheila B. Shreeve is an independent researcher. The only UK academic is David Wilcox at the University of Edinburgh, his article is listed in the university's repository, but does not include the full text, only a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) linking to the article in Maney Online.<sup>7</sup> Gaining free access to the full text of articles in the selected articles listing therefore requires them to be in a repository, or to have been uploaded by the author to their own website, or to something like academia.edu or researchgate.net both of which are platforms where researchers can upload papers. It is possible to search using Google scholar but very few of the items will have a link to full text.

Beyond the articles published in peer reviewed journals there has also been a revolution in the amount of other types of information being placed on the web, via the web presence of organisations and individuals. Many, if not most, museums now have publicly available databases of their collections, good examples of these are the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum of London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.<sup>8</sup> Even museums in foreign non-English speaking countries may have their database searchable in English, for example the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.<sup>9</sup> As well as full records of objects these sites also offer further information and analysis, for example on the V&A's fashion hub.<sup>10</sup>

Blogs are another area where information is being disseminated. While many blogs are personal they can be academic, and research among UK academics shows that those whose work is in the humanities use blogs more often than those in other subjects.<sup>11</sup> Blogs are often provided by academic institutions; the London College of Fashion not only has a blog, but also runs a course entitled 'Introduction to Fashion Blogging'.<sup>12</sup> The Courtauld Institute of Art has a blog entitled 'Documenting Fashion', written by Rebecca Arnold, who runs the History of Dress department, and current postgraduate and research students of the history of dress courses.<sup>13</sup> The Costume Society has its own blog, as do many other organisations, for example the National Trust's 'Hidden Wardrobe' blog which covers the Charles Paget Wade costume collection stored at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire, and there are also blogs by individuals, for example the 'Fashion Historian' blog written by Katy Werlin.<sup>14</sup>

Facebook has also become a source of information for many - with societies, museums, publishers and even journals having a Facebook page. To give an idea of the breadth of this there are pages for various Costume Societies including the British one and its various associated regional societies, and those in America, Ontario, Sydney University (Australia). The Association of Dress Historians in the UK has a page, and there are pages for various fashion museums in Antwerp, Bath, Blandford, London and New Zealand; and for various specialist groups like the Knitting History

Forum, MEDATS, and the Friends of the Archaeological Textiles Review – the list will continue to grow.

The internet and the growth of social media, together with the push to provide open access for the general public to peer reviewed academic articles, are changing how people find and interact with academic information. Costume still supplies an annual listing of some of the articles published in the last year, but it is only a tiny percentage of the information that is now available.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ann Saunders, 'Editorial', *Costume*, 24 (1990). ?

<sup>2</sup> 'New books', *Costume*, 4 (1970), 60-1

<sup>3</sup> Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.co.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Gallia, 'The Vestal Habit', *Classical Philology*, 109:3 (2014), 222-40.

<sup>5</sup> Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications: Report of the Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings, <http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Finch-Group-report-FINAL-VERSION.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> HEFCE, Policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/#d.en.86771>

<sup>7</sup> David Wilcox, 'A Suit of Silver: the Underdress of a Knight of the Garter in the Late Seventeenth Century', <http://www.research.ed.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/a-suit-of-silver-the-underdress-of-a-knight-of-the-garter-in-the-late-seventeenth-century%286c82528e-36f1-488f-bd75-ab457ae5bcc0%29.html>

<sup>8</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum collection is at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>, the Museum of London at <http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/Online/>, the Metropolitan Museum of Art New York at <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online>.

<sup>9</sup> Rijksmuseum <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search>

<sup>10</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum Fashion Hub <http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/f/fashion/>

<sup>11</sup> Annie M. Hughes, 'Academics in the UK Use Social Media to Enhance Traditional Scholarly Reading', *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice*. 8: 4 (2013), 145-7.

<sup>12</sup> The London College of Fashion blog is at <http://blogs.arts.ac.uk/fashion/>, information on the course is available from <http://www.arts.ac.uk/fashion/courses/short-courses/browse-short-courses/by-subject/marketing-communications/fashion-blogging/>

<sup>13</sup> Courtauld Institute of Art Documenting Fashion blog is at <http://blog.courtauld.ac.uk/documentingfashion/>

<sup>14</sup> Costume Society blog is at <http://costumesociety.org.uk/blog>, the Hidden Wardrobe blog is at <http://historicalcostume.wordpress.com/>, and the Fashion Historian blog is at <http://www.thefashionhistorian.com/>