



## BEYOND THE BICENTENNIAL – 1788-1838 EXPLORING 50 YEARS OF THE SLAVE TRADE

### *What would a well dressed Georgian lady wear?*

During this period the fashion of men and women's clothing changed significantly from the earlier eras.

Women's dresses were made up of several pieces, a tight fitting bodice often with flounced sleeves. The front of the dress was open to reveal the petticoat underneath. An open fronted bodice would be filled with a stiff decorated "stomacher". Towards the turn of the century it became fashionable to bunch up the sides or back of the dress. Hooped skirts also became fashionable. After 1800 the style of dress departed briefly into a more classically inspired "empire" line, with the gown flowing loosely from just below the bust.

Among middle- and upper-class women there was a basic distinction between "morning dress" (worn at home in the afternoons as well as mornings) and evening attire.

Generally the Georgians changed clothes for the evening meal and entertainments. Young ladies were advised to wear soft shades such as pinks or lilacs. The mature matron could wear deep colours such as purple or yellow.



Above: The empire line—popular for a while in the early 1800's.  
Left: typical "Georgian" style





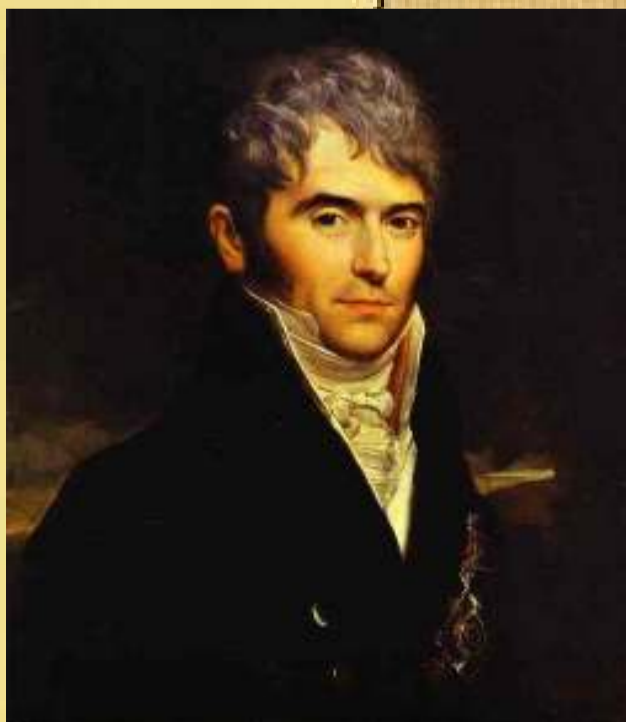
## BEYOND THE BICENTENNIAL – 1788-1838 EXPLORING 50 YEARS OF THE SLAVE TRADE

### *What would a well dressed Georgian man wear?*

During the early 1700's Georgian men often wore quite simple clothing for day time but more lavish and elaborate outfits for formal wear. By the early 1800's a plainer but well tailored style became more important than bright colour or ornamentation.

The main garment for men in the Georgian era was the frock coat. This tended to be tight fitting, flared out at the bottom and had large cuffs. The waistcoat was also popular and could be of varying lengths. Men also wore cravats around their necks. For the working class this was something like a bandanna and for the upper classes it was like intricately knotted neck cloth, perhaps decorated with lace.

This Georgian gentleman's outfit from the Museum's collections is made of wool and is quite heavy because it is decorated with fine silver metal thread embroidery. After some research the Museum staff think that the lace cuffs and neck ruffle were not originally part of the outfit but were added later, perhaps in Victorian times. Perhaps the outfit was adapted because it was used as Victorian theatre costume or at fancy dress party!



These portraits show Georgian gentlemen in typical outfits of the day.



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### *What would a well dressed Georgian man wear?*

In the early 1700's Georgian men loved elaborate clothing and wigs and even make-up for formal occasions.

As well as wearing long frock coats and waistcoats, Georgian gentleman also favoured long shirts, which were knee length and were regarded as undergarments. Working class men wore plain shirts, but those of the upper class often had ruffles on the front and on the cuffs as Georgian men often liked to make a flamboyant statement, especially in the evening.

The pants worn by men were called breeches. They came to just below the knee and were tight fitting on the thighs. Stockings came up to the knee and were held in place by leather garters worn under the breeches.

This gorgeous striped silk gentleman's outfit from the Museum's collection dates from 1795. The frock coat is cut away high at the waist which is typical of the elegant style of the period. Georgian men loved to wear colourful clothing like this for evening events. The frock coat is small and narrow across the shoulders, so was likely to have belonged to a young man.



These portraits show Georgians in typical outfits of the day.