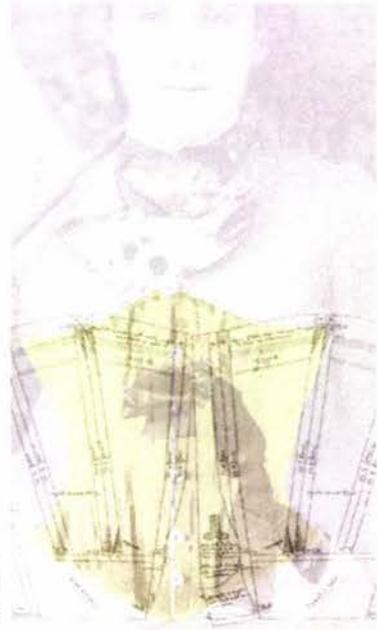


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Disclosure



*The Development of a Classification System Describing the
Historical Design Elements of Women's Corsets (1870-1911)
in the Absence of an Exhibition*

Kylie Merrick

*A Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Design (Fashion)
Massey University Wellington
2006*



Figure 1 Mrs Basier at Norris Photography Studio Princess Street, Dunedin, c 1895- 1899



The Victorian and Edwardian corset is a significant historical design object. It is unique for its sophistication of the cut, the design, the combination of materials, complex construction techniques, elaborate and purposeful decoration and the integrated use of typography. This research develops a model for detailing comprehensive design knowledge of corsets that focusing on intensifying the understanding of corset design through written and visual composition by the development of a classification system to describe and record the historical design elements. Six New Zealand museum collections were selected for the material culture-based investigation using corsets made between 1870 - 1911.

The evolving number of corset styles, vast range of materials, construction techniques, array of embellishment details, and specific terminology, have been correlated together to form a highly descriptive historical record. The research data, presented in an illustrative and detailed narrative catalogue model, has been presented to allow public access to the largely unseen historical artefacts in the absence of an exhibition.

This work increases the knowledge of the design elements of historical corsets and supports the conducted into the under documented area of the dress history of Pakeha women in Victorian and Edwardian New Zealand. The research model and system of identifying, classifying and cataloguing is not exclusive to corset research, it could be modified and applied to other design-based research involving historic dress, in and outside of New Zealand.



Enhance the charm of your physique

Madam, and be healthier with the new D & A Directoire Corset, rather than discount it and injure your health with ill-fitting and old-fashioned Corsets.

Madam, you cannot rival the "Chic" and "Svelte" appearance of French and American women unless you wear a corset that shapes gracefully and fits comfortably.

At Paris the fountain head of styles, and wherever good styles reign, our designer has sought most carefully before, after many experiments, we perfected on living models our wonderful new D & A Directoire Corset. The result is a corset giving just that "Chic" and "Svelte" appear-

ance which the most fashionable French, American and Canadian women seek. Moreover, by holding the body in shape without compressing unduly at any point, the D & A Directoire is more healthful for you than any other Corset. ● For sale by all leading drapers.

A-1

THE DOMINION CORSET COMPANY, QUEBEC, CANADA.



Figure 2 D&A Directoire Corset advertisement, *The Evening Post*, Wednesday 21 September, 1910, p10



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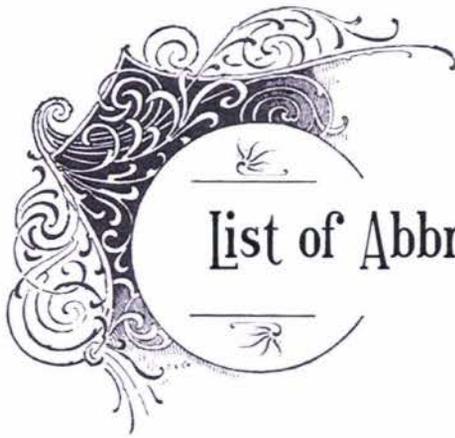
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List of Abbreviations

ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
CT	Christchurch Times
EC	Collection code Canterbury Museum, Christchurch
G	Collection code Otago Museum Dunedin
HBM	Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, Napier
MU	Maker Unknown
NZGLJ	New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal
NPM	Nelson Provincial Museum and Tasman Bays Heritage Trust
NZF	New Zealand Freelance, Newspaper
OSM	Collection code Otago Settler Museum, Dunedin
PC	Collection code Museum of New Zealand Te Papa, Wellington
TEP	The Evening Post, Newspaper, Wellington
TWR	The White Ribbon,
UNBHGS	University of New Brunswick History Graduates Seminar
WRM	Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, Wanganui

1

Introduction





Underwear by its very name relates to hidden garments, worn under garments which are publicly displayed. Women's underwear for the greater part of the last 500 years has been concealed from the public gaze and even though publicly viewed in fine art, illustration and sculpture, it has often been regarded as immoral and a taboo topic of conversation. Simon (1995) held that the depiction of a woman dressing or being in a state of undress in visual art demonstrated the lack of respect for the social rules of the day. She went on to state it exhibited a move towards realism and showed a woman in her "sphere of feminine intimacy" (Simon, 1995, p 22). Displayed in exhibitions and retained in collections at important museums (Auckland War Memorial, 1996; Bath Costume, 2005; Fashion Institute of Technology New York, 2001; Victoria and Albert, 2002), corsets have become more than an unseen and unspoken visual aesthetic of art and social history, and in some cases they have taken on a new role as an artefact that has merit in terms of its historical design significance.

The Victorian and Edwardian corset is not a new phenomenon in the history of dress as items in various forms have constricted the torso of women for several hundreds of years. What makes the late Victorian and early Edwardian corset unique is its sophistication of cut, the combination of everyday materials, the complex construction and elaborate decoration. The textile and fashion industry has caused the evolution of women's underwear to change at such a rapid pace, that the design, materials and construction of one generation's lingerie is not carried through to the next. Barbier and Boucher (2004) state the "textile industry has made great progress leading to the manufacturer of more comfortable, more attractive and more practical underwear...[manufacturers] have begun to design

with body shape, ease of movement and the feel of the fabric in mind” (Barbier and Boucher, 2004, p 259).

Over time society has become less restrictive with the etiquette of female appearance, dress and silhouette, than it was in the Victorian and Edwardian era. Rigidly boned and firmly laced materials have been superseded, along with techniques and processes of corset design, materials and construction. Cumming (2004) outlines the importance of artefact research and how evidence can be gained about “fabrics...decoration with embroidery, braid and other techniques, all of which relate to specific crafts and skills...construction offers an important element...” (Cumming, 2004, p 131).

Malthus (1996) supports the idea that New Zealand European Pakeha immigrants, unlike their sisters of the American Frontier, clung to and resisted the desire to adapt their dress to their new surroundings. New Zealand women settlers were enslaved to the traditions and modes of their original motherland. The corset was deeply embedded into their fashion and dress etiquette until well after World War I, and as Thesainder (1997) points out, it was considered fashionable to wear sophisticated clothes under one’s dress. Often impractical for the new landscape and the physical challenges the majority of women faced, the corset was believed to be indispensable, as no fashion of the day could be worn without its aid.

The corsets during the Victorian and Edwardian timeframe were made in part from common material elements seen in all aspects of a Pakeha woman’s experience. Lace, steel, silk satin, cotton and eyelets were used in other facets of female dress and in a range of readily available everyday household furnishings. However, women’s corsets are characteristic in specific details by way of silhouettes, design components, combination of materials, construction techniques and terminology that is not used or seen in other areas of dress. Flossing at the top of bone casing, centre front busks, elastic belting and lacing hooks are not used in other items of women’s dress and are unique to Victorian and Edwardian corsets structure.

The detailing, identification, cataloguing and referencing of these historical components that constitute the make-up of a corset has often been neglected in museums. Existing systems of cataloguing and classification of design objects are often unclear and loaded with inconsistencies, such as material types, vague dating, and style and design referencing. Taylor (2002) notes that cataloguing

dress history and artefacts is a professional practice and it centres on patiently acquired interpretative methods and skills. It is a process that is continually evolving as it is often rare to have multiple garments which are the same being held in one collection.

Classification of a collection and classification systems can produce a great deal of information, but often it is unorganised and not standardised, which renders the information useless for analysis or comparison from a design perspective. A range of historians and scholars have made reference to the fact that most classification systems traditionally rely on the broad expertise of the historian and their ability to compare the artefact with relevant written descriptions from primary and secondary sources (Arnold, 1973; Cumming, 2004; Cunningham, 1988; Loverin and Pedersen, 1989; Rowold and Schlick, 1983; Taylor 2002).

The complex and time-consuming nature of identification, compilation and applying descriptions to articles of historic dress can be reduced. Using an organised 'formula' to retrieve information from artefacts efficiently and reliably is essential. "Items of dress cannot last indefinitely" (Cumming, 2004, p 131) and using a detailed organised system will help preserve the knowledge of dress and in this research case, corsets. The classification system my research has developed is based on information formed through interaction with the primary object. Steele (1998) outlines the importance of engaging with an artefact in a sensory manner by touching and lifting. Engagement and interaction is undertaken at the same time as identification and this is established by observation and analysis, and applying material culture theory and practices to the corset in its physical form. This information can be further interpreted and compared to secondary sources of other similar objects and written material. This enables conclusions to be drawn and a clear classification of the object to be developed that demonstrates consistent and reliable evidence that "offers tangible results of benefit" (Cumming 2004, p 132).

Having classification systems that enable the production of a descriptive catalogue to show artefacts in a design perspective is an important area of research. A descriptive catalogue would give an account and explain the design-orientated elements that combine to constitute a corset. Detailing the different characteristics of these elements for individual corsets and showing relationships to other corsets by grouping artefacts in decades rather than by manufacturing allows for a

comprehensive and an accurate range of information to be relayed to an audience.

The temporary corset exhibitions viewed in museums (Bath Costume Museum, (2004); Victoria and Albert Museum, (2002); Auckland War Memorial Museum, (1997); Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, (2001)) do not show multiple artefacts from multiple museum collections. They do not show artefacts that are the same or similar in the same design and style elements; or rarely from the same manufacture or place of origin or donor. These exhibitions and others have typically shown corsets that are the most suitable for display and are often considered, as Summers (2001B) discusses, the artefacts in the best condition, and the ones that are usually the most aesthetically appealing.

Exhibition catalogues that accompany and in general support exhibitions, rely on being in the presence of the corsets and lack expanding information. Viewing an exhibition or collection through a range of photographs, and or ephemera with minimal accompanying written descriptions has primarily been associated with the traditional museum exhibition publication. These are often shallow, contain limited details and relate specifically to what is on display at the time and exclude other items in the collection that are not on display. Cumming (2004) outlines Davenport's (1972) conclusions and echoes the importance of colour pictures, contemporary documentation and further information. These elements combine for a successful publication. To be able to produce an item that contains these elements there is an essential need for a descriptive catalogue system that contains a high content of pictorial and explanatory information.

The descriptive catalogue system that I have developed departs from the general customary worldwide museum tradition that has been well established by major British institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum. The developed catalogue will allow access to multiple museum collections and artefacts that have not been previously exhibited. It will give in-depth information in the absence of an exhibition to a wider audience outside of museum staff. The working elements of my system form the basis for describing, contextualising, comparing, and detailing of individual aspects of a corsets design, function, materials, and construction. Some speculation as to why certain aspects are present in specific designs occurs due to dealing with historic artefacts and incomplete information and evidence. The speculation that occurs is based on reasoning and what is known about dress design and society during the time period that is under investigation.



1.2 Research Aim & Context

The last fifty years have seen social etiquette and western cultural attitudes radically change with museum collections, photographers and couture designers breaking down barriers of what was once concealed from sight and primarily viewed in fine art. Dress scholars, historians and museum curators have approached the nineteenth century corset and its examination in a number of different ways.

Museum artefact acquisition registers, for example, generally rely heavily on being in the presence of the object and, at their extreme, include only details of dates, donors and an inventory of the object's significant particulars. These types of registers depend on the knowledge of the curator or collections manager for information and classification of the artefact, do not allow for differentiation outside of the listed generic categories and are often incomplete. This incomplete identification of an artefact can be caused through lack of knowledge. Taylor (2002) argues identification requires a wide range of specific skills and a sound historical object based knowledge. Often museum curators, collection managers and those who catalogue and identify artefacts are not specialists in the area of dress history. This is also echoed by Arnold (1973), Baclawski (1995) and Cumming (2004).

Other catalogues, books and documented research also generally lack depth of information that is design orientated, and are too often focused toward an exhibition where artefacts can be viewed and observed extensively. The information found in these types of catalogues can be viewed as generalised and aimed towards a generic public audience whose dress-history knowledge and literacy is presumed to be limited.

Historical and contextual theory amply generated by historians and scholars (Finch, 1991; Shep, 1993; Steele, 2001; Summers, 2001) rarely considers the tangible characteristics of the corset in a design perspective. There has been ample research conducted into corsetry over the last two decades. However, the characteristics and main elements that constitute the physical artefact are rarely reflected on. Mostly the focus has been on the significant meanings that are interwoven in the corset's social construction and history. Sexuality, identity, femininity and repression have all been written about in connection with the Victorian corset.

The corset, in its physical state, has been rarely viewed within these areas of work, and only written social history resources have been used to document and relay information and theories. Summers (2001) outlines her opinion that the "current corset discourse is for the most part theoretically inadequate" (Summers, 2001, p 7). She goes on to comment that so little material exists specifically on the corset; it is discussed, but not in relation to its design: rather, the actual artefact is buried in the broader relationship of it being an item of clothing that has cultural meaning and significance. Considering Summers (2001) view and the multiple readings reviewed, this most common approach to corset dialogue has caused a general lack of, and loss of, detailed knowledge on the physical artefact, its composition, identification of materials, related design elements, specific terminology, functions and meanings. As Taylor (1998) states in relation to the lack of artefact examination, "without precise analysis of 'every flounce', where would the historian find the information ..." (Taylor, 1998, p348).

No published work has been conducted on corsets in New Zealand from 1870 - 1911; though some other areas of women's dress which have connections to corsets have been researched using material culture methods and treat artefacts as the primary source (Cumming, 2005; Malthus, 1996). Cumming has focused her work on the characteristics and styles of dress worn for specified sporting pursuits within 1880 - 1912 in New Zealand. Looking at dress through photographs from New Zealand archives and museums, her work shows connection to the fashionable dress of the period, what was worn when partaking in sporting pursuits, and illustrates connections to restrictive clothing around the torso that impinged on physical activity. Malthus's work looks at immigrant women's fashion in the timeframe of 1828 - 1914. Using physical artefacts, dresses held in

museums, her work discusses dress conformity, and the lack of dress adaptation to the surroundings of the new colonial New Zealand landscape. Connections are made within her work to the continuation of English dress etiquette and unwritten rules, and the size of waistlines and the continuation of wearing corsets.

The focus of my work is to figuratively dissect and narrate the design, materials and construction of corsets from the period 1870 - 1911 held in six New Zealand museums. This narration will be presented through the medium of a descriptive catalogue that will have some attributes that have been remarked upon by other scholars (Davenport, 1972; Cumming 2004). The corset as an article of historical dress that is important within the evolution of historical women's dress design and this work will help build on existing knowledge.

My investigation focuses on the corset as both artefact and design object, one that has significant connections to the Pakeha European New Zealand female body and immigrants' experience. The corsets held in the selected museum collections that have been gifted or purchased within New Zealand will be the primary source to generate design-based evidence. "...because so little material exists which dwells specifically on the corset...any considered research of the garment necessitates a multi-disciplinary investigation" (Summers, 2001, p 7). Newspapers, Ladies Journals, photographs, and ephemera that is relevant will enable a secondary source information to develop and support evidence generated from the physical artefacts in this material culture based research study.

The time frame of 1870–1911 was selected as it was a period when the evolution of corset design was at its height. Steele (1989) considers the nineteenth century as the great epoch of underwear, whereas Baclawski (1995) has stated that corsetry knowledge reached the highest point in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Additionally this period complements the timeframes of unpublished theses that detail other areas of New Zealand women's dress. It was a time, which Malthus and Bricknell (2003) support, when New Zealand was established in the importation of corsets and items of dress that were sold through drapery and department stores such as James Smiths in Wellington and Ballantynes in Christchurch. This aspect of importing and selling corsets in New Zealand is notable and has relevance with links to styles and brands that were available to the general population.

The descriptive catalogue will be produced using the developed

classification system that has been based on material culture. It will clarify and show elements that make up the corset that collectively forge together to produce a heavy and often elaborately decorated artefact. As with a large number of museum artefacts, the corsets in the New Zealand museum collections are rarely on display. Problems involving poor condition of the artefact, unsuitable mounts and conservation issues often prevent their public outings in exhibitions. One aspect of this research will endeavour to overcome this, enabling a wider audience to view the corsets in the absence of an exhibition through a range of images and written descriptions seen in the catalogue. The concept of having a publication that does not accompany an exhibition and shows artefacts from multiple museum collections is new within New Zealand museum culture. Having some attributes of a book, the descriptive catalogue will grant access to the largely unseen corsets, and bring them to a wider public audience outside of the regional museums where they are currently housed.

To be able to meet the intention of viewing the corsets in the absence of an exhibition, an objective will be to expand and discuss in depth the countless lengths of whalebone, innovation of the eyelet, the vast array of materials and the number of shapes that evolved: aspects that other researchers have barely touched upon (Finch, 1991; Shep, 1993; Steele, 2001; Summers, 2001). A catalogue will facilitate documentation and in-depth discussion on the New Zealand corsets. Along with general information the catalogue will endeavour to contain a range of accompanying pictorial references, specific visual corset glossary, written corset glossary, corset appendix, and a general synopsis on the three main areas of corset design.

Research into the use of typography on physical artefacts of historic dress is an area that has not been covered in other corset research. Makers' garment labels, garment names, typefaces, and boxes will be included as part of the physical attributes that make up the corset. Some discussion by Steele (2001) has been opened with links between images on advertising and Victorian women wearing corsets. This has been connected to women's sexuality and suppression within the time period but does not look at the aspects of typography in a design perspective, and as part of the overall design of the artefact. Typography associated with the corset and seen through logos, boxes, labels, branding and marks will be included as an aspect of the classification system and will be presented as part of the design

narrative in the chronicle.

Another aspect of the research involves placing the corset as an item of dress into context of value by demonstrating its worth within New Zealand society. These links of value between the museum corset seen as design artefact, and the corset as a part of every day female dress history, will be shown through the connection of the women who wore them and the social etiquette that surrounded femininity within the emerging English-dominated colony. The corset interacted with the woman who wore it, and evidence of it being placed on her body remains through perspiration marks, crease lines, alterations, hand stitching and the occasional bloodstain.

The alterations, mending and extreme wear and tear will be considered as signs of the corset's value. This worth will be connected to the corset in the context of the owner's wardrobe, and how without wearing this specific item of dress, a fashionable and respectable image could not be projected. These elements will be described and recorded as part of the classification system. Historical context and acquaintance will be used to link the largely under-documented fragments of New Zealand women's nineteenth-century lives, to the weight, the movement, the cloth, the embellishment, and the corset's general physical attributes.



Figure 3 Unknown woman posing with a shapely torso probably accredited to wearing a corset under her dress in W.J. Harding Photography Studio, Wanganui, c.1880s (Collection ATL 7112 1/4 Harding)

2

Literature Review





2.1 Historical Aspects & Society

Corsets over time have developed and remained 'largely a western practice' of female dress and have not been a threat to traditional indigenous dress (Bardey, 2001; Steele, 1999; Summers, 2001). Victorian fashion reflected society's ideals of the feminine characteristics of delicacy, weakness, inactivity, submissiveness and frivolity. Women's devotion to fashion in dress was considered a natural weakness, something they could not help (Hollander, 1980). Female dress, as Hollander details, was outwardly expressive, almost literary, and was deliberately decorative and noticeable.

Dress defined a woman and embedded her identity and spheres. The deportment of a woman was displayed by the dress that inhibited activity. Roberts (1977) discusses how a delicate nature was accentuated by a tiny waist measurement; submissiveness was defined by a woman's silhouette and constricting clothing, with her frivolous nature displayed through light pastel colours, bows, and ribbons. Aspects of Robert's viewpoint can be connected to the corset worn during this time by means of its design, the materials used, the decoration and the intended purpose.

Women in the Victorian and Edwardian periods had a separate sphere to that of their male counterparts. Women were designated the role that was predisposed by their female gender, an ascribed identity. As Kaiser (1998) outlines, the Victorian woman's ascribed identity was assigned to the private sphere of the house, domestic duties, and the social world of church work. Wife, mother and homemaker were accepted and unquestioned as the subordinate role. This was the main career for the mass majority of European women who immigrated to New

Zealand as census documents from this period demonstrate. A woman also had a public sphere of continuity within society's expectation as promoting moral virtue and social beauty. As Kaiser discusses, this was shown through a woman's appearance and the dress she wore in public.

Appearance in Victorian times was a highly valued commodity. A woman's image became a valued asset and a strong symbol and communicator. A woman's role, community morals, class, social status, and her husband's wealth were all directly reflected in the visual nature of her dress and appearance. Dress styles in New Zealand from the 1870s through to the 1890s overlapped and often some women were dressed in a fusion of fashions of the decades. Malthus (1996) discusses the aspects of propriety, respectability and conformity and how these were powerful motivators for women to maintain a certain level of fashion.

"...it was important that dress be decorous, but not overly decorated, that it be fashionable but not fast, that it comply with community standards rather than be eccentric or old-fashioned, and that it be appropriate to one's position in society..." (Malthus, 1996, p 290)

The corset was an article of dress within the fashion system, and as Crane (2000) discusses, it was included among a woman's most valued possessions during the Victorian time period. This valued acquisition became important as it helped to sculpt a woman's natural form into the fashionable ideal and silhouette that was outwardly perceived by society as moral and respectable.

Women were conscious of their dress and appearance. If a woman had the economic means and skills, she could afford to purchase new fabrics to make dresses that were current with the ever-changing fashions, or hire a dressmaker to do so. Other women who did not have the means, but were skilled enough, were able to remake and remodel to incorporate the current trends. This established them as acceptably dressed, and at the same time got the most out of an item of dress that was too good to discard.

The waist was a focal point in female fashion throughout the Victorian and early Edwardian periods and it was "difficult to wear the fashions of the day without a corset" (Coney, 1993, p115). The corset was a vital piece of dress for all women. It was the singularly most important item that helped a women shape her

body to a feminine ideal and project an image of decency. Barbier and Boucher believe the corset accentuated the woman's body characteristics, and that the corset "was what made the woman wearing a certain dress fashionable" (Barbier and Boucher, 2004, p 21). They do not reflect on any connection to the dress that was worn over the corset and that the design features of this dress and its silhouette, were also an aspect of a woman's projection of fashionable appearance.

Corsets are not a new phenomenon in the history of dress. Various structures have been worn by women for centuries, with their main purpose and function to sculpt and shape a woman's body to the ideal of the times. However, the Victorian and Edwardian corset must be considered to be one of the most important and influential. The corset "is potentially the most illuminating icon of the Victorian era" (Summers, 2001, p1). Not only was it a piece of dress, it was a symbol of womanhood, respectability and sexuality all outlined and discussed in bodies of work by Summers (2001), Steel (1999), and Kunzle (1982).

Women in the 1880s and early 1890s tended to appear to be very stiff in the torso, an image that directly resulted from the wearing of a firmly laced and boned corset. Female members of the Blick Family (figure 4) show all the elements of ascribed female attire suited to the 1890s: firmly shaped torsos that have corsets worn beneath the shaped and fitted bodices, ornamented ruffles, frills, high collars,



Figure 4 Anne Stubbs and Blick Family, showing the two women on the right with tight and straight torsos that would have been achieved with the aid of a corset beneath their fashionable dress, C1890s (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2 154587)

raised sleeve heads, tight sleeve cuffs, and accompanied with full-length skirts that have decorative flouncing and edging at the hem. The Brink women link back to Roberts (1977) theories on visual appearance signifiers.

A woman's dress was physically restrictive and heavy. The multiple layers and weight of outfits combined with the shape, and structural elements of boning, and bustles, made doing the simplest task cumbersome. A woman's ascribed identity dictated a passive and delicate nature that her appearance and dress styles reinforced. Bodices and jackets were so firmly fitted, button hooks were used to aid dressing without the help of another person. Outer clothing made from either wool, cotton or silk, concealed the tangle of underclothing and supportive structures, layers of flannel and cotton petticoats, a cotton chemise, a pair of cotton drawers, a horse hair bustle, a coutil corset, and a cotton camisole or corset cover.

Dinesen (1934) highlights with exaggeration and in a poetic manner, aspects of reality within women's dress and the effects corsets had. Her fictional work evokes images of the ascribed Victorian and Edwardian women. Ribeiro (1998) reasons that historic literary sources give researchers information on how people felt about their clothes. Sources such as this can like anything else, be embedded with biases, be coloured by emotion, reflection and nostalgia, and can be often anecdotal. Dinesen may have sensationalised aspects of women's dress and undergarments through her writing as the truth of discomfort and additional weight may have been her own reality of the Victorian and Edwardian era.

"Out of a tremendous froth of trains, pleatings, lace and flounces which waved and undulated, ...at every moment of the bearer, the waist would shoot up like the chalice of a flower, carrying the bust, high and rounded as a rose, but imprisoned in whalebone up to the shoulder. Imagine now how different life must have appeared and felt to creatures living in those tight corsets within which they could just manage to breathe, and in those fathoms of clothes which they dragged along with them wherever they walked or sat..." (Dinesen, 1934, p 81)

The corset highlighted the differences between the sexes. Roberts (1977) discusses how women's constrictive dress reflected a woman's true nature and gave an outward perception of the symbols of an ascribed femininity. They were

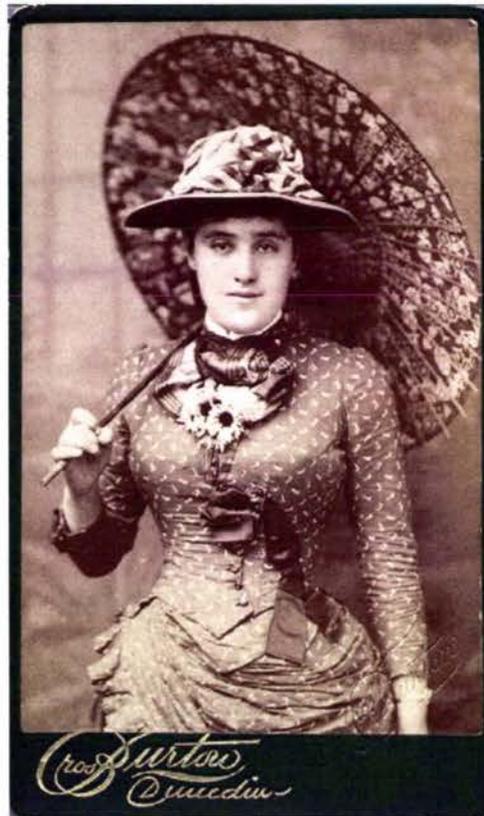


Figure 5 Mrs Coleman of Dunedin, c 1895 (Collection, Otago Settlers Museum, photographic archives)

illustrated within a woman's appearance and dress with the use of delicate floral prints, frills, laces, restrictive and weighty dress, and a tiny waist measurement. Mrs Coleman (figure 5) displays in this studio portrait by the Burton Brothers photographers of Dunedin, typical features mentioned by Roberts, and clearly shows her sex by the emphasised shape of her bust, waist and hip, that was created through the wearing of a corset and petticoat. Beauty and personal appearance were strongly linked to ascribed femininity and all things that symbolised womanhood. Being beautiful was a woman's duty and she was strongly encouraged by society to maintain this desirable characteristic at all costs, including while in a state of employment.

Single women embarked on career paths that focused their attention on the private sphere of the home. Life in domestic service was seen as a good grounding and initial career path that gave women opportunity for learning skills that prepared them for marriage and the lifetime career of homemaker, wife and

mother. Household chores and domestic duties were no mean feat in Victorian New Zealand and were hampered by the restricted movement that the corset and the dress being worn created. Being encased in a corset and numerous other layers while undertaking domestic duties confirmed a woman's loyalty to dress etiquette and her appearance.

Maria Wigley, a domestic servant in Wellington during 1886, possibly a housekeeper to the Prime Minister's wife, Mary Vogel, wrote in a letter to a friend, "everything is quite right with the exception of Agnes who was doing something to her corsets yesterday with a hatchet and all but cut off her finger..."(Wigley, 1886, p181). Agnes, most likely another domestic servant in the household, upheld her image and appearance by wearing a corset to conform to fashion convention, even if it caused her discomfort while she performed her household duties.

It was not uncommon for domestic servants and working-class women to take it upon themselves to alter their corsets. The shortening or complete removal of bones and steels, predominantly from the side area, that had snapped and broken under stress and wear and caused pain, bruising, abrasion, or puncture wounds was the most common. Existing corsets from the Victorian period that are held in museum collections show careful removal of these bones by means of a little slash, generally on the inside or in the bone casing, either at the top or bottom



Figure 6 Woman in Glasshouse at the residence of Louis P. Christenson, Wellington, c 1890s, (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library 1/2 062480)

of the corset. Soiled artefacts show stains of perspiration and blood, illustrating the discomfort the diligent woman had to endure in wearing corsets under a variety of circumstances and activities. Summers (2000_A) reflected upon Victorian women's soiled garments, how the tears in corsets were sharp, and the jabbing pain the occupant would have experienced along with the tortured moments of public humiliation if blood seeped through to her outer clothing.

Steele (1999) and Summers (2000_A; 2000_B) have commented that often the silhouette of a smaller waist gives enough evidence to confirm corsets were worn by working-class women. Like Agnes and Maria Wigley, the unidentified woman in domestic service who attends to the glasshouse (figure 6) presents herself wearing dress that was typical for the 1890s; a fitted bodice with large leg of mutton sleeves and tight cuffs that conceal a corset and chemise that would have been worn beneath. The new industrial developments of the nineteenth century presented technological advances and changes in machinery, mass production, economic status and social mobility. All these factors influenced female dress in a variety of forms.

The inventions of the metal eyelet, machine-made lace, the 'explosion of female magazines' (Craik, 1994) and mass production of ready-to-wear dress affected the majority of females in the civilised world. During the second half of the nineteenth century, between the period of 1860 to 1899, mechanisation of the corset industry grew dramatically, with large factories able to produce corsets in abundant quantities. A range of historians reflect upon the impact this mass production had on ready to wear dress such as corsets and the new availability that it gave those women who had previously only been able to afford to make their own (Ashelford, 1996; Malthus et al., 2003; Steele, 2001; Stewart et al. 2001, Summers, 2000_{AB}, 2001, 2002). Ewing (1978) states that British corset manufacturers produced three million corsets in 1868. Ewing's work does not detail if all these corsets were sold in England or if this total also included corsets that were exported to British Colonies, such as New Zealand.

No published research or literature on corset imports into New Zealand has been found. Evidence through numerous newspaper advertisements confirm corsets were imported into New Zealand by the use of the terms "imported" and "latest shipment", but quantities of these imports are unable to be determined. Doyle (1997) compiled a historical review of corsets from the Royal Worcester

Factory (Massachusetts, America) and the Symington Collection (Leicester Museum, England). One advertisement proudly announces Royal Worcester corsets were worn all over the world and included New Zealand within the list of countries that covered both hemispheres.

Doyle's work follows on from Waugh's (1956) earlier publication on the recreation of historic period corsets and includes other social aspects. Doyle has included pictorial evidence of advertising by the Royal Worcester Factory. The American manufacturer produced a wide range of corsets under many brand names. The general history of the corset is covered in Doyle's work along with details of patterns for theatre re-creation, historical patents and construction specifications that show a broad range of corset styles available from the Worcester and Symington factories. The drawings throughout the publication would not have been used to advertise the corset styles, as they are complex, and to the uneducated in pattern construction, do not clearly show what the finished corset would look like.

It has been discussed that Pakeha European women in established New Zealand settlements were able to purchase skirts, corsets, and other underclothing ready to wear from drapery stores, but much had to be ordered (Malthus and Brickell, 2003). Privately owned local businesses and manufacturers used advertising in local newspapers to promote the latest fashions to a wider audience. Advertising was used as a format to communicate and heighten awareness of specific products. Local drapery stores and merchants relied on this format to announce to the community the latest fashionable items of dress that were in stock. To invite attention to the advertisement, drawn images were used of feminine corseted figures. Summers (2001) suggests the advertisements were generally placed either in the classified sections that were surrounded by masculine advertisements or placed in general notices or in the section devoted strictly to women's affairs of house, family and beauty.

Photographic imagery was still an innovation for newspapers. No evidence can be found in the literature of New Zealand showing photographs of female models wearing corsets in the time frame of 1870 - 1911. Line drawings were used rather than photographs to communicate the latest style of corsets available for acquisition, with the line drawings displayed in a modest manner becoming to a civilised society. The *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* shows corset

advertisements were generally placed in the ladies' section and often in and around the middle of women's fashion features. Being positioned alongside fashion plates and articles the corset advertisements were commonly the most prominent features on the page in proportion to other illustrations (figure 7).

Fashion illustrations in the *NZGLJ* represented women wearing the latest fashions for every occasion with the obvious undertone of a corset being worn beneath. Victorian and Edwardian garments had a range of areas to lavishly display embellishments and the graphic illustrations paid great attention to detail with the fabrics' weight, pattern and texture, lace, drape of fabric, cut of the outfit, decorative design and nature of the dress. All with an elegant and demure appearance and stance of a Lady, the illustrations simulated and suggested the social ideal.

The graphic illustrations visually portrayed women wearing the latest fashions, with a small delicate waist, pouted breasts, and full smooth hips (figure 8). The majority of the fashion plates in New Zealand publications were driven by English and Parisian illustration styles, and showed that a corset was needed to achieve the desired look and that "dress forms and shapes dictated movement of the body, as well as symbolizing the expected roles and behaviours of the



Figure 7 "The World of Fashion", *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* April 21 1906, p62-63.

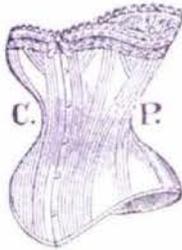
wearer” (Malthus, 1996, p7). These features did not show or take into account the impracticality of the latest fashions in the New Zealand environment. As Ebbett (1977) summarised, these fashions were quite unsuitable to the dense bush, one room huts, dirt tracks, and physical manual labour that considerable numbers of women were experiencing.

Though corsets were not openly discussed outwardly, they were often seen in newspaper and in mail order catalogues in a stylised line drawing format. R. L. Shep (1993) compiled from American publications, newspapers and mail order catalogues, a chronological history of corset line drawing advertisements (figure 9). Ranging throughout the Victorian period of 1837 - 1901 and Edwardian period of 1901 -1910, Shep focused purely on images and no textual information regarding publications or corset history accompanies the advertisements. Analysis of the advertisements in Shep’s publication allows for the corsets to be categorised. The categories demonstrate the relationships of society and class exclusion, sexualised images of the female form, design and structure of corsets, and corsets that had a medical function. Sexualized imagery of the female form, design and structure of corsets, and medical functions will be expanded on further under separate headings.

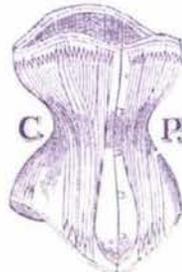


Figure 8 Fashion Illustration, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* Saturday March 29, 1902, p620

CORSET DEPARTMENT. 1891



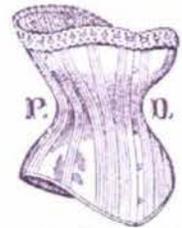
253. Fine French couille, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.75
 254. In white, light blue or pink satin, fine quality. \$1.75
 255. Same, in black. \$2.00



256. Fine imported couille, cut in white bonded, or cut in white, white or drab, 18 to 20 in., \$1.75



257. "All in a separate" of English satin, Venise back, in white, drab and black, size, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.50



258. Fine French couille, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.75
 259. Better quality, white, drab or black. \$1.50
 260. Very best quality couille, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$2.00



261. "C B a la mode" imported couille, extra strong, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.50

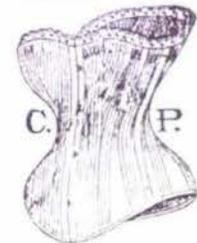


The "Elvira" Corset.

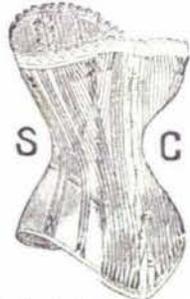
The "Elvira" is what nine-tenths of the women want—a perfect though moderate-priced corset. The result of years of close study and patient experimentation, it is considered to-day to be the most satisfactory corset that woman has ever worn. It is an aid to grace and comfort.

Give every other corset its full measure of credit, and is there one among them that combines these three important features?

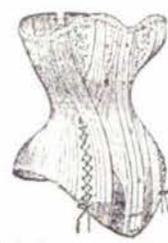
It is very fine couille, with extra-heavy bones, high bust and back, and is the only corset that will improve the figure without injurious or uncomfortable tight-lacing.



262. "C B a la mode" imported couille, black or white, 18 to 20 inches. \$2.00
 263. In extra fine couille, white or drab. \$1.50
 264. In white, heavy black satin. \$2.50



272. Fine hand-made extra-street, Secret French seam, body, heavily boned, long waist, and the hidden concealed zip fastener. White, \$1.50
 273. Black, same style. \$1.50



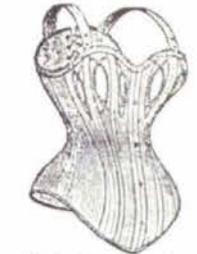
278. Dr. Warner's abdominal, Elastic wires, which combine the support of the corset with the comfort and freedom of movement of a corset of ordinary length. It is adapted to all ladies who like a long corset, whether of about or slight figure.
 279. 20 to 24 in., white or drab. \$1.50
 280. 24 to 30 inch. \$1.75



266. Quality B, fine couille, white or drab, 18 to 20 in. \$1.25
 267. Same, 21 to 26 inches. 1.50
 268. Quality E, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.50
 269. Black. \$1.75



274. Imported couille, long waisted, white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.25
 275. Same quality. 1.50



270. Dr. Warner's health, cut in white or drab, 18 to 20 inches. \$1.75
 271. Same style, drab or blue, black, white. \$2.00



276. Thompson's abdominal corset, white or drab, 20 to 24 in. \$1.50
 277. 24 to 30 inches. \$1.75

WHEN ORDERING, STATE WAIST MEASURE.

Figure 9 sample of advertisements for 1890 (Shep, 1993)

Victorian society was deeply concerned with class and social status. The sexual demeanour of the corset empowered a woman's ascribed identity as child bearer, home maker, and barometer of moral virtue (Kaiser, 1999). Summers (2000) enters into discussion of the negotiation and unwritten rules that were mandatory to 'protect one's femininity' and to consolidate one's position in society. Her later work (2002) contradicts earlier ideas of women being victims to their corsets and suggests that women were in fact integral to corset production. Furthermore, she argues that women were not 'hapless victims' as often made out to be, but vigorous consumers of corsets, as corset sales after 1880 in England show. The number and frequency of corset advertisements in New Zealand publications would support the idea that women in the colony like their English sisters were also steadfast consumers of corsets. Women were involved in constructing the complex and prudish characteristics of the period, where the corset heightened the physical differences between the sexes and their different roles in society, and the diversity between the social classes. A woman's appearance came to be viewed as a highly valued asset.

Prior to departing on the voyage to the Southern Hemisphere, immigrants were given guidelines and handbooks that recommended provisions that they should take with them. Each handbook and guide list differed depending on the writer and their own experience of the settlement. G. B. Earp's (Earp, c.1849) Handbook published in 1849, is merely a guide and gives insight into the divisions of society and class. It is useful to see the separate but detailed lists for a labouring family and a gentleman's family, suggesting something of the Victorian social class structures from which some immigrants were seeking to escape. This guide also allows insight into the trousseau a woman brought with her. However, as Malthus and Brickell (2003) suggest, the size and contents of a woman's trousseau depended on the wealth of individual women and their families.

The labourers' wife's dress list (figure 10) was based on utility, and suggested she was able to do needle craft with listing of flannel and calico, needles, cotton, and other sewing materials. No supporting foundation structures or corsets were listed but it is presumed a labourer's wife would have owned one, as fashion silhouettes of the day were difficult to achieve without the aid of a corset. In comparison, the dress requirements for a 'lady' of means were far more extensive and contained a high quantity of items that covered a variety of

Outfits for intending settlers

Labouring Man's Wife	Lady (clothing items only)
18 calico chemises	48 calico or cambric chemises
6 petticoats	36 calico nightdresses
3 flannel petticoats	36 nightcaps
4 flannel waistcoats	24 cambric slips
24 pairs cotton stockings	24 calico middle petticoats
4 pairs shoes	3 flannel petticoats
2 pairs boots	1 horsehair petticoat
4 cotton dresses	24 fine flannel petticoats
2 bonnets	24 pair cambric trousers
1 cloak	48 pocket handkerchiefs
12 yards flannel	24 pairs fine cotton stockings
20 yards strong calico	14 pairs thread stockings
6 towels	12 pairs white silk hose
tapes needles cotton etc.	2 pairs black silk hose
clothes bag	1 coloured or white flannel dressing gown, warm
	2 coloured dressing gowns
	8 white muslin dressing gowns
	4 coloured morning dresses
	8 muslin dresses
	4 dinner dresses
	2 silk dresses, and 1 satin dress is also desirable
	2 muslin-de-laine or chalise dresses
	• 3 pairs of stays •
	1 cloak
	8 pairs of shoes
	2 bonnets
	shawls
	fancy handkerchiefs
	12 pairs white kid gloves
	19 pairs coloured gloves
	long white kid gloves
	24 pairs thread or silk gloves
	12 pairs thread or lace gloves
	long lace mittens
	fancy aprons,
	12 capes, collars etc.

Figure 10 Labour's Wife Dress List, G. H. Earp, c. 1849

occasions and activities. It was recommended for a lady to take at least three pairs of stays with her along with 52 petticoats made from a range of materials and a broad range of other dress necessities.

A small group of dress reformers and medical professionals within Victorian New Zealand society did not conform to the beliefs of the majority or to the etiquette of corseting. This small group strove to promote awareness of healthier corset free waists through pamphlets and by outlining the benefits of releasing the manipulated and laced torso. The Walker and Wilkinson (1893) New Zealand handbook of dress reform would have caused some controversy when it was published as not all of society agreed with dress reform ideals. It was perceived at the time that a Victorian woman of virtue was loose and morally

negligent if she was seen to be un-corseted. Finch (1991) pointed out that prostitutes and working-class women scandalized society with an unlaced waist and were regarded as a vessel of sin. For the majority of the morally conscientious New Zealand society, discarding a corset could have been socially disastrous. New Zealand Victorian women did their utmost to ensure they were able to obtain a new corset and maintain their appearance by either personally shopping at a local drapery store or requesting it via mail. Mr E. Bibby, a draper in Waipawa, often would receive letters from customers who lived out of the small Hawkes Bay settlement and who were unable to travel and personally shop at his store (figure 11).

"Mr Bibby,

Sir will you oblige by sending over a pair of ladies stays the width of them around the middle is the length of this tape by the first opportunity will oblige

Yours respectfully"

(Ebbett, 1977, p24-25)



Figure 11 Mr E. Bibby Drapers Shop, Waipawa, c. 1890 (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library 2-045058)

The New Zealand environment and experiences were challenging and as previously stated were often “unsuited to the fashion of the times” (Ebbett, 1977, p2), with dress and appearance being the most defining characteristics of Victorian and Edwardian women. Through the majority of situations, New Zealand European Pahakea women settlers tried to emulate the feminine idea of the period, whether it be in the populated larger towns or in the smallest of settlements, and a vital component to achieve this was the corset. Malthus (1996) supports this idea within her work, and gives mention to women’s continuation of corset wearing and appearance management.

The majority of New Zealand women chose to cling to their ascribed identity that was steeped in English customs and social etiquette. They let their dress visually dictate their predisposed gender. Their corseted waist reinforced sexuality and the conventional roles that society deemed suitable.

In contrast to a woman’s ascribed selfhood, a small minority of women in New Zealand decided to follow their own desires rather than suppress them and strove to achieve their own identity. These women strove to emancipate themselves from rigid social, political and legal restrictions, choosing to challenge the boundaries for women, and to venture outside the accepted prescribed sphere of home, church, family, and being the caretaker of society’s morals. Questioning society, and seeking a life of achievement through a range of standings within the general public was a perilous endeavour as noted by Coney (1993).

Women striving to create their own *achieved* identity were still aware of appearance and dress rituals, and how these were used as symbols which reflected the role they chose. The corset was deeply embedded as part symbol and ritual of women's dress, and the materials, function and design were integrated within this. Within the period of 1870 - 1911 dress provided major indications to the “social construction of identity” (Crane, 2000, p1). Dress was the first symbol for identification in public places and differentiated between the female and male spheres. Dress was an important key visual factor for identification and association to both groups of women: those who maintained their ascribed identity, and those who achieved their own identity.

Tennis was a physical activity accepted by the majority of society and women were active and social participants within cultivated cities and in the rural communities. New Zealand women often gained an achieved identity through

sporting and outdoor accomplishments by winning tournaments in New Zealand and overseas. Some historians touch upon women's interest in sport and how this "necessitated adapting existing outfits...to meet the demands for freedom of movement, while maintaining in line with the proper values and morality of the times" (Barbier and Boucher, 2004, p 133).

Constructing an image of modesty and not revealing the womanly body beneath while playing tennis, would have created a challenge for the best tennis players. The unidentified woman playing tennis (figure 12), wears similar dress to that seen in everyday fashions. Being dressed in a full length skirt that conceals petticoats and legs covered in stockings, with a fitted high collared long sleeved blouse, belt and neck tie, would have lessened the ability to move freely about the court. It is problematic to establish if women tennis players wore corsets under their blouses, if they were the everyday style, or an athletic sports style referred to as a ribbon corset, or if they used another form of foundation garment for support. Corsets advertised in the *NZLGJ* showed they were designed for a range of athletic sports, including tennis.



Figure 12 Unknown women playing tennis, c 1910 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-5626-26)

"Despite being handicapped by the dress requirement of the day, she [Nunneley] was an energetic competitor who enjoyed playing and practicing regularly against men." (Hammer, 1996)

Kathleen Nunneley was an independent woman and an acclaimed tennis player, never marrying; she went on to hold a range of tennis titles and championships within New Zealand, and had success overseas. She was able to achieve distinctiveness and a known profile even though she conformed to the expected Victorian dress and appearance expectations on the tennis court. Hammer (1996) writes with depth about Nunneley, but does not outline her tennis ensemble though there is some certainty that she would have worn a form of under structure to hold her feminine shape.

Tennis was seen to be more civilised than some other forms of outdoor activities for women. The diverse and unique New Zealand landscape lent itself to the pursuit of mountaineering as an activity. Forrestina Ross, May Kinsley, Constance Barnicoat and Freda Du Faur were women who pursued this and challenged the conventions of Victorian and Edwardian women's dress. Though not active dress reformers, they made public comment upon their dress and what they wore when pursuing activity in the wilds of the country side and mountain ranges.

Forrestina (also known as Forrest or Bessie) Ross was a teacher, journalist, writer and the first woman member of the New Zealand Alpine Club. In 1890 Ross went on a trip to the Tasman Glacier, and was the first woman to climb it being bestowed the honour of having it named after her. Her reporting of the event informed the reader of her newspaper article how her womanly Victorian dress was quite unsuitable to wear and she altered it accordingly. Though there was no mention of a corset in her described account it does detail her *"heavy boots with nails, and a very short serge skirt. The skirt was very abbreviated, ...I felt shy about my ankles [being seen]...even though my skirt was short, I found it liable to hook on to a rock at the back as I took a step forward"* (Hargreaves, 1998, p275). Two years later, Forrest and a party of seven women walking the Milford Track had difficulties with the dresses being frequently caught on the *"prickly kind of shrubs, with disastrous results... the whole track is so well marked by portions of female wearing apparel as to be unmistakable"* (Hargreaves, 1998, p275-276). Photographs do provide some insight

into a small waist silhouette which possibly was achieved by the wearing of a corset and support the notion that she was hesitant to dispense with her corset.

Like Ross, May Kinsey climbed in distinctly feminine apparel. Kinsey, at her alpine camp in the Southern Alps in 1895 (figure 13), poses for the camera wearing her mountaineering outfit which consisted of a fitted jacket with contrasting lapel and large leg of mutton sleeves, high collared blouse, gloves, full skirt cut above the ankles, puttees, leather boots, and a small brimmed hat. May's physical movement would have been hindered by the tight fitted sleeves and fullness of the skirt, though like Forrest she was still able to accomplish climbing an ice face on the Tasman Glacier (figure 14). This picture provides evidence of a small waist and it could be argued that Kinsey wore a type of corset.

Akin to Forrest Ross, Constance Barnicoat, secretary, interpreter and journalist, helped popularize woman's mountaineering through lively descriptions of her travels in newspaper articles. She wrote a commentary for the *World Wide*



Figure 13 May Kinsey dressed for climbing at her campsite, Southern Alps, c1895 (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, OPA1-Q137-05-3)



Figure 14 May Kinsey climbing an ice face on the Tasman Glacier, c 1895 (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library OPA1-Q137-20-2)

Magazine, published in March 1904, outlining her Copland Pass to West Coast expedition in April 1903. Her detailed article outlines having to prove her fitness level to the male guide before she undertook the climb. It continued to discuss her training in the mountains in masculine items of dress (figure 15) and the freedom this created, the appropriate nature of reform costume, and how she rode a man's saddle and man's bicycle. Barnicoat neglects to mention corsets or any form of foundation support that she wore. This may have been deliberate on her part, due to the inappropriate nature of discussion of one's under garments, or for the fact she may have not worn one.

"Skirts, even the shortest, are almost impractical in such places....I promptly sent for proper boy's boots, the heaviest procurable, with very thick soles, ... I generally rigged myself out as much like a boy as possible with white wool 'sweater', knickers, and puttees to my knees....I wonder if anyone realizes, until they try it, the freedom of being without tempestuous petticoats?..." (Barnicoat, 1904)



Figure 15 Constance Barnicoat (far left) in her boy's outfit, April 1903 (Collection, Canterbury Museum, WAK-203-12321)

Barnicoat's achievement for women's emancipation in outdoor pursuits and dress led the way for others to follow. The photograph of her (figure 16) details a shapeless female silhouette which contrasts the typical shaped corseted figure of the time. In 1910 Freda Du Faur, an Australian by birth, was the first solo woman to climb Mount Cook with a single male guide and male porter. Edwardian social customs imposed upon her the disadvantages of being an unmarried woman in a 'man's world', and often reluctantly, with pressure of social etiquette, Du Faur compromised to preserve her reputation.

Cumming (2005) discusses how Barnicoat was able to climb in male dress in relative isolation from society due to the Hermitage not being populated by tourists. Du Faur (figure 16) on the other hand, under the watchful eye of vacationers seven years later, wore distinctive Edwardian feminine dress with a high collared blouse with brooch, buttoned woollen jacket, hat and veil (not seen in photograph), knickerbockers and puttees covered with a knee length skirt, belt and leather boots. The feminine attributes of the skirt, blouse, brooch and occasional decoration of edelweiss on her hat, concealed the practicality of the knickerbockers worn beneath.

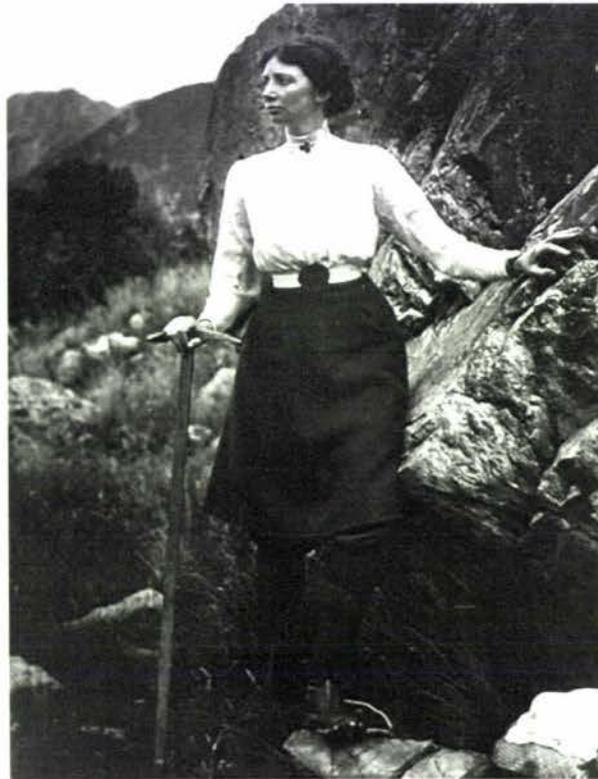


Figure 16 Freda Du Faur dressed in her mountaineering outfit 1909 (<http://www.dnz.govt.nz>)

Du Faur revelled in not being a stereotypical feminist, enjoyed clothes that combined beauty with utility, and was *"perfectly well aware that the average person's idea of a woman capable of real mountaineering or any sport demanding physical fitness and good staying power, is a masculine-looking female with short hair...Consequently, I strolled out to dinner immaculate in my prettiest frock..."* (Dawson, 2001, p183). To achieve the immaculate feminine evening figure it could be presumed Du Faur wore a range of petticoats and a foundation garment such as a ribbon corset, beneath her 'prettiest' evening dress.

By 1911 in New Zealand's bustling domesticated cities, women's spheres, roles and behaviours were expanding rapidly and more women were gaining their achieved identity outside of their husband and family. This is supported by the work of Coney (1993) whose documents a wide selection of historical women's accomplishments. Women were becoming active in not only sporting pursuits, they were venturing into businesses, representing districts as Mayors, and becoming successful educators and doctors. With this, aspects of their dress and appearance began to change in moderation and with society's acceptance, though this is only occasionally mentioned by Coney.

More women began to relinquish layers of underclothes and release their constricted bodies from tightly laced corsets to allow for active movement. Social pressure still remained within the code of woman's appearance, and what silhouette was deemed appropriate, and what under structures of dress could be worn to help create this ideal. It is apparent that women in New Zealand were well aware of dress expectations, and the work of Cumming (2005) and Malthus (1996) support this. Images that were placed in local ladies' journals, newspapers, and those from overseas publications were an instrument of this consciousness.



2.2 Female Impressions & Romanticized Sexuality

The fundamental design of the nineteenth century corset deliberately highlighted a woman's body parts, making it a piece of dress that was, as outlined by Craik (1994) calculated to display fashionable contours of the female form. Unlike any previous century, a woman's corseted body not only highlighted the silhouette, it also displayed sexual overtones, romanticizing and manipulating the natural female form in an idealized erotic manner. Women in the late Victorian era were often shown as delicate beauties who were weak, submissive, frivolous and gentle, all elements of a women's ascribed identity and predisposed gender. A number of authors have summarised that English Victorian and Edwardian social customs and ideas greatly influenced Pakeha New Zealand women settlers and their dress well into the twentieth century (Ebbett, 1977; Harper, 1980; Macdonald et al. 1990, 1991, 1992, 1996; Malthus, 1996; Millen, 1984; Woods, 1974).

Costume and history scholars have described the nineteenth century as 'the great epoch of underwear and déshabillé' (Steele, 1989). As noted by Barbier and Boucher (2004), a huge collection of illustrative material on corsets exists during the Victorian and Edwardian era. The illustrative matter showed corseted women often viewed in a state of undress, creating a complex social situation in a prudish society that strongly upheld moral virtue and principles. Ashelford (1996) and Summers (2000^s) suggest the corset in the Victorian and Edwardian periods not only controlled the female body shape; it also helped to assemble women's sexual assets in a precise manner. To attract an appropriate husband, the corset helped to demonstrate virtues of a tiny waist and childbearing hips. Corseted women were desirable sexual curiosities and attractive to the opposite sex. Neither Ashelford nor Summers mention how the design of the corset was a factor in the bringing

together and manipulation of a women's body to her sexual epitome.

Sexual suggestions were not only attached to the physical female form, they were also seen in a range of formats. Outside the influence of ladies' journals' and newspapers with fashion spreads, the world of art and print media influenced the styles of dress that women wore and had an effect on how women were represented and perceived in reality. The repressed nature of Victorian society helped to create and embed a woman's sexuality as a mysterious facet which her dress did its utmost to disguise. Print media and fine art represented women in provocative poses and in various states of undress which gave overtones of women being sexual objects. Martin and Koda (1993) discuss how the visual nature of art distinguished dress and the parts of undress and all the layers that could be seen in between.

Women's nudity and various states of dress and undress have been accepted viewing subject matter for fine artists throughout the centuries, but were seen in a different perspective in the underwear-obsessed popular art of the late nineteenth century. Underwear, specifically the corset, was used to imply being in a state of undress and intimacy, with the female nude "emerging from lacey undergarments" (Hollander, 1980, p213). It was often connected with pornographic imagery as the unlaced waist was regarded as immoral and indecorous, being linked with prostitution and acts of sin, aspects that a woman of good character did not want to be associated with.

Barbier and Boucher (2004) suggest that the image of unlacing and unhooking a corset could be viewed as a metaphor for a woman's deflowering. Popular artists of the nineteenth century, Henri de Toulouse Lautrec (figure 17), Edouard Manet (figure 18), and Edgar Degas, all reinforced images of the ideal woman and her corset. All three artists made deliberate connections to women's dishevelment, romantic subject matter and women as sexual objects, who were being watched by a gentleman onlooker. With exaggerated fabric folds, firmly constricted and molded waists, pastel colours, soft delicate lace, arched backs and outthrust behinds, the female subjects were clearly displayed with an undertone of sexual euphoria.

Concealed from everyday sight, women's underwear, lace and frills were usually a woman's private area of interest. The articles of dress, primarily the corset, bemused the male gender and gave strong symbolic connotations to the



Figure 17 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Conquête de Passage*, c. 1896 (Collection Musée de Augustins, France)



Figure 18 Edouard Manet, *Nana*, 1877 (Collection Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany)

hidden and intimate womanly body disguised beneath. Between public and private view, undergarments became subject to aesthetic and erotic romantic notions and as Steele (1985) shows, the 1890s became the epitome of women's déshabillé. Dinesen (1934) makes connection to the image of a woman and her underwear and gives a clear picture of this in her fictional composition:

"...underneath all this... herself breathe and moved, to be indeed a revelation to us every time she stepped out of her disguise, with her waist still delicately marked by the stays, as with a girdle of rose petals..."

(Dinesen, 1934, p 81).

Female dishevelment was not only viewed in fine art, it was also seen in advertisements printed in newspapers, ladies' journals, manufacturers' trade cards and in some photographic compositions seen in ladies' departments in drapery stores. Floating representations of corsets drawn in a three-dimensional manner suggested sexual undertones. The sexual power of the advertisements and the use of props helped form a romantic notion of female sexuality (Steele, 1999; Hollander, 1980). Mirrors, fully dressed women standing alongside sylphs, women



in a state of déshabillé with hair down, and peeping toms were used in the advertisements to show the curiosity and, as Steele (1999) suggests, the seductive ideal of feminine beauty.

It is apparent women were represented in trade cards and ephemera in a voyeuristic manner, being seen in the private sphere of the boudoir (figure 19). Some historians have commented upon the symbolism that is embedded into a range of corset advertisements (Steele, 1999; Summers 2001). Standing in front of a mirror represented a woman's vanity

Figure 19 Warner's Trade card, (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Ephemera scrapbook)

and being surrounded with pretty and delicate flowers symbolized her beauty. Flowers, being the sex organs of plants, related slyly to women's sexuality and the female attribute of child bearer. Wearing of the hair down and holding the arms above the head revealed an intimate image of a woman, where as the use of cupids, angels, putti and babies helped to reveal woman's dreams of youth, beauty, love, happiness, and purity. All these helped to reinforce a women's ascribed identity. Such advertisements supported the benefits of firmly laced corsets and outweighed the widely publicised medical risks and, as Summers (2000) points out, helped construct gender expectations. It is apparent that if the term 'corsets' were not incorporated into these forms of advertisements, the point of promotion of the article of dress could be lost on the viewer due to the overwhelming nature and romanticized images that were being portrayed.

This Victorian and Edwardian style of fashion illustration is embedded with symbolism. Corset advertisements subtly scattered throughout the NZGLJ were reminders that women's bodies in their natural state were not ideal compared to the romanticized woman that the popular artists portrayed. The corset would help real New Zealand women to achieve and conform to the fashionable epitome. Ebbett (1977), Macdonald et al. (1996), and Malthus and Brickell (2003) endorse the suggestion that, however impractical it may have been



Figure 20 Corset Advertisements, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, Saturday June 22, 1901, p1176



Figure 21 The Celebrated Daydream Corset Box (Collection, Canterbury EC179.91)

to the southern hemisphere's conditions and environment, the corset was deeply valued within a woman's personal possessions. Illustrations that showed a woman's hands held over her head and with hair ruffled and dishevelled (figure 20) turns the pose into an erotic image with breasts being lifted, augmenting their volume; this was a feature that was dynamically advertised within the print media of some New Zealand newspapers.

The corset names and imagery on the boxes were also used to manipulate and show fantasy. 'The Celebrated Daydream' (figure 21) constructed the notion of strength, flexibility and the perfect figure. A woman in the state of *déshabillé* holding the corset box over her head with the perfect corseted figure surrounded by soft beds of pink flowers sold beauty, strength and comfort. As Steele (1999) mentions, females could be sexual in a moment of time that was ruled by tightly constructed social etiquette and narrow social attitudes.

Representations in both print media and in fine art reinforced stereotypical ascribed identities of women and the ideal social expectations. Illustrations were not the only things that influenced New Zealand women to continue to wear

ANNOUNCEMENT.



Miss Fryer, an Expert Corsetiere, will be in attendance at the Corset-fitting Room of The New House, Cuba Street, from Monday, 7th Sept., to Saturday, 12th Sept. (both days inclusive), for the special purpose of fitting and demonstrating the merits of

The "W.B." Erect Form Corsets

...and...

The "La Vida" Corsets.

Engagements will be made in the same order as applications are received for appointments—first come, first served. Those ladies who are not prepared to make purchases next week need not hesitate to take advantage of Miss Fryer's services, as one of the principal objects of her attending at The New House, is to advise customers as to the correct style of corset to be worn. Miss Fryer is thoroughly qualified, and her services are given free of charge.

*James Smith and Sons,
The New House,
Cuba Street.*

Figure 22 James Smith and Sons, The New House advertisement, September 12, 1910 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smith Ephemera scrapbook)

CORSETS

WORTH

WEARING !

THE value to you of a good corset is not the money you pay for it, but the comfort and style in the corset. The corset is practically the foundation of the figure; it is over the corset that the gown is fitted. If the corset is a misfit the gown will be wanting in that poise and completeness which should be its pre-eminent charms.

THE W.B. CORSETS

Are built to suit the figure. You are not expected to squeeze your figure into the corset. The W.B. CORSET that will fit your figure like a glove is at

THE NEW HOUSE!
THE NEW HOUSE!

And the prices are strictly moderate. You pay for the corsets alone and not for any make. Get a pair of W.B. CORSETS. We have them at 6s 6d, 7s 11d, 9s 6d, 11s 6d to 21s a pair.

THE LA VIDA CORSETS,

Another splendid corset, furnished by America, at 17s 6d, 21s, 25s, to 42s a pair.

THE NEW HOUSE DRESSMAKING is distinguished for sweetness and charm of style, for poise and cleverness of composition. MISS ARCHER, who presides over our dressmaking rooms, is an artist of exceptional taste. The NEW HOUSE dresses give satisfaction.

JAMES SMITH & SONS,
THE NEW HOUSE.

Figure 23 James Smiths and Sons. The New House advertisement, September 24 1903 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Ephemera scrapbook)

corsets and impractical items of dress. Department stores vigorously advertised their ranges of the latest fashionable dress and corsets available. James Smith & Sons corset advertisements informed readers not only of the latest styles available in the ladies undergarments section, but also advertised visiting corsetieres (figure 22) available for instore fitting services. Some of their advertisements went as far as to state that the "corset is practically the foundation of the figure" (figure 23) and that no dress would ever fit correctly or look charming if the corset beneath was a misfit.

Department stores took it for granted that women were educated enough to read their advertisements, as generally no diagrammatic illustration

accompanied the text. Written text reinforced the powerful visual message that most corset and fashion illustrations conveyed. Newspapers published a section dedicated to advertisements, formatted in a manner similar to the classified section of a modern day equivalent. The cost of making an image to accompany an advertisement was high and, as the fashions were not always static, a vast majority of corset advertisements in New Zealand publications are imageless. For economic reasons, images were often repeated and used in more than one publication.

Not all representations in newspapers and ladies' journals were focused on the unrealistic illustrative feminine figure. Towards the turn of the century more advanced technology was evolving in printing and photography. Images of women became less idealized as the unrealistic stylized illustration was superseded by more photographic images. Contrasting with the ingrained beliefs of women's appearance rituals and etiquette in Victorian society, photographic images of dress reformers and upper class women in the latest fashionable dress (figure 24) were often published in local newspapers.



Figure 24 Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Windsor, New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, Saturday 15 June, 1901, p 1120

Fashion features and ladies' sections were not the only places in newspapers and journals where opinions of women's dress, and more specifically corsets, were mentioned. The death and public notices, entertainment and social commentary columns also reinforced opinion relating to women's fashions and dress, and corsets. Cartoons often sent up women's unrelenting dedication to fashion much to the amusement of male society, whereas death notices reinforced dress reformers' and medical professionals' opinions of corsets and tight restrictive and heavy clothing.

"...an actress collapsed in the wings and was found to have had a heart attack from tight lacing..."

(Unknown, 1895, Christchurch Times, p5)

"...at the inquest today on the body of Jessie Menzies, who died suddenly last night, a syncope, caused by stooping with her garments fastened rather tightly round her waist. ...He said the public ought to know that tight-lacing while stooping was sufficient to cause death..."

(Unknown, 1888, The Evening Post, p2)

STARTLING OCCURRENCE IN A TEA-ROOM.

TWO WOMEN AND A REVOLVER.

THREE SHOTS FIRED.

**ONE ADVANTAGE OF WEARING
CORSETS.**

Figure 25 Startling Occurrence in a Tea-room, The Evening Post, Friday October 28, 1898, p 5

Sporadically articles would appear in newspapers informing readers of sensational stories of women and their clothing, none more sensational than a startling occurrence in 1898 in the Kirkcaldie & Stains tearoom (figure 25). In 1898, on Thursday October 27th at 4.30pm, Mrs Ellen Dick was shot by Mrs Annie McWilliam, in the *Kirkcaldie and Stains* tearooms where Mrs Dick worked as the tearoom manager. Had Mrs Dick followed the advice of dress reformers not to wear corsets, she would have been dead. Fired at close range, the bullet left the revolver and penetrated the left side of the torso near Mrs Dick's heart, and continued through the numerous layers of garments encasing her. She was saved from death only because the bullet could not penetrate her under foundation, her corset. Doctor Henry who attended to the victim at the scene confirmed this. He told the local newspapers *The Evening Post* and *The New Zealand Times*, "had that bullet struck a man where it struck Mrs Dick, it would have killed him" (Unknown, October 1898, *The Evening Post*, p 5). The articles surrounding this incident do not detail if the bullet was stopped by a corset steel, which does bring reflection on other factors relating to bullet velocity, distance the bullet had to travel, and that as it was a sensational unusual incident it was exaggerated when reported.

Nineteenth century women were not always the passive, submissive and pure creatures that popular representations and media idealizations created, but neither were they ever completely free from this stereotype. From an early age small girls learnt about body image and the importance of appearance and their dress. This education came from their toy dolls that emulated the dress that the real women in their lives wore, they saw what their mothers and governesses wore, and learnt how to shape and transform their own bodies with corsets and petticoats and all the dress layers between private and public view (figure 26).

"...you will be grieved to hear she has not discard her philistine style of dress. She does not wear a dressing gown in the day time and her waist is distressingly small. While I am here I shall endeavour to induce her to discard those odious stays but doubt whether I shall succeed."

(Richmond, 1882)



Figure 26 Unknown woman wearing fashionable dress, c1880s at W.J Harding Photography studio, Wanganui (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library 7116 1/4 Harding)



2.3 Medical Woes & Concerns

Fitted and laced in early childhood and worn until death, the corset and its precursors were an integral part of a woman's existence. The corset was used to maintain a vulnerable femininity (Summers, 2000), within a limited and ascribed sphere in Victorian and Edwardian society. Health and beauty knowledge was also included within the woman's sphere.

Medical science was a strongly male dominated area of study with few female medical professionals practising in the nineteenth century. Woods (1974) reveals, general practitioners were relatively ignorant of the female body and related problems. Firmly laced corsets compressed the internal organs, limited the expansion of the lungs, and inhibited normal oxygen intake. It is suggested by Bordo (1993), that women could barely stoop or sit as their dress and social customs physically imprisoned them in the Victorian and Edwardian era, despite the well publicised ideas of feminists and dress reformers. Compression of the body by the corset caused the complaints of fainting, eating disorders, weight loss, a pale complexion, nausea, constipation, breathlessness, headaches and uterine displacement. Doctors viewed such complaints as a natural element of a woman's frailty (Davies, 1982). The Accidents and Fatalities column of New Zealand newspaper *The Evening Post* (Unknown, 1888) occasionally had small articles regarding women dying from tight lacing (figure 27).

Women's health was an area of concern for some medical professionals. A number of nineteenth century British and American medical journals voiced opinions about women wearing firmly laced corsets, and some publications criticized the corset and described the morbid effects on the female body. Dr Alice

B. Stockham (1889) was bold enough to publish her own book which focused on women's health and well being. The publication discussed sensible women's dress, and voiced Stockham's opinion on corsets and their relationship to ill health.



Figure 27 Death from Tight Lacing, *The Evening Post*, Saturday October 27, 1888, p2

Victorian culture, as previously stated, considered an un-corseted woman to have loose morals and to be a reflection of poor social behaviour. A large part of a woman's world in the late nineteenth century was often known about but rarely openly discussed or written down as discretion and modesty were embedded into social etiquette. This is obvious from reading Macdonald et al's (1996) collection of letters and journal entries. Women's knowledge regarding personal beauty, health and etiquette was handed down through the generations and learnt by example from mothers, mistresses of the house, governesses and other older females who had social and moral character.

Standards of decency were highly valued and the concealment of pregnancy was firmly embedded within these unwritten rules. Being referenced as her 'condition', a married woman wore a corset during pregnancy to conceal her expanding body from public view and, as Summers (2001) states, to maintain a womanly innocence despite the evidence of sexual experience. It was undesirable to be seen in any other state than displaying the tiny waist measurement that New Zealand society had deemed appropriate. Maternity corsets were available and

were advertised in a discrete manner often having bylines informing how they could be used in various conditions of the body in the single and married state (Summers, 2000).

Like many Victorian women living in New Zealand trying to conceal and minimize their outwardly natural and emergent female childbearing appearance, Ellen Maher (figure 28) and Elizabeth Shewry wore their corsets during their pregnancies. Elizabeth Shewry (figure 29), posed for the photographer when she was nearly nine months pregnant with her eleventh child.

"[Ellen Maher] ... was a dignified person and held herself well, whatever her 'condition', and she always appeared to be able to reveal an 'hour glass' figure. Her manner of dress did not seem to alter – an ankle length dress of black shiny satin with a white, lacy, frilly fichu at the throat, and a train which could be hooked up to the waist revealing a voluminous black petticoat... "

(Harper, 1980, p134-135)



Figure 28 Ellen Maher at Panama Hotel bar, Wellington, c1895



Figure 29 Mrs Elizabeth Matilda Shewry, Taranaki, c. 1894 (Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library F151314 1/2)

It is evident from Summers (2001) and Shep (1993) that corsets were designed specifically to expand with the body during pregnancy and still help a woman to maintain a fashionable silhouette. No evidence from advertisements or ephemera can be found within the literature of New Zealand to confirm that nursing and abdominal corsets were imported, sold, and purchased during the researched time period. Styles illustrated in Shep's (1993) collection of advertisements show that these specifically designed corsets contrasted with those that were normally advertised. The illustrations show a design that is lacking in feminine aesthetics, and do not have elements of beauty or ascribed symbols of femininity. There appears to be no frills, decorative flossing or delicate laces, all of which Webster (2004) outlines, are highly regarded as part of normal everyday decoration and are symbols strongly linked to female identity. Instead, abdominal and nursing corsets were practical utilitarian items that were specifically designed to shape, support and extend where and when the body required it. Flaps, buckles, buttons and extra lacings were distributed in the appropriate and most needed areas. They opposed the common elements of feminine beauty and from analysis of advertisements and of the design, they would have added additional weight to the body and restricted movement more than that of a normal corset.

Women determined when they were pregnant and generally did not go to doctors to discuss their state as this impinged on society's standards of decency. Firm lacing was the 'chief cause of infantile mortality' (Stockham, 1889) as women used corsets as a legal form of abortion and miscarriage. The firmly laced corset hid the foetus development. Months of lapsed menstruation then bleeding was considered a case of cleared obstruction (Summers, 2000) rather than miscarriage. Consciously or unconsciously, this allowed a woman to convince herself that no pregnancy had occurred.

Dress reformers understood the medical ramifications of corsets being worn during pregnancy and considered the practice as contemptible pride and prudish vanity (Summers, 2001). Dress reformers and reform handbooks directly linked women's declining health woes to the wearing of a corset. New Zealand dress reformer Kate Walker and her husband J R Wilkinson (Walker and Wilkinson, c1893) published a dress reform handbook in the nineteenth century in New Zealand. The handbook outlines issues with the corset, related health consequences, and alternative forms of dress for women.

Medical professionals' articles and books were quoted in Walker and Wilkinson's work to reinforce the authors' viewpoints and give authenticity to the publication. Stockham is directly quoted stating, "*if women had common sense instead of fashion sense the corset would not exist. There are no words in the English language to express my convictions on the subject. The corset, more than any one thing is responsible for women being the victim of disease and doctors*" (Walker and Wilkinson, c1893, p13). To reinforce Stockham's view of the corset being the cause of ill health, Dr Trevers is quoted from his work on Physical Education. Trevers strongly writes, "*the corset is an abomination... and indeed, also referring to the ordinary clothes of our girls he says they are probably a collection of hygienic errors*" (Walker and Wilkinson, c1893, p13).

The pamphlet outlined the benefits of lighter and warmer undergarments, divided skirts, having the weight of clothing coming from the shoulders rather than the waist, and how to revive and extend weakened muscles at the waist and back apparent from corset wearing and tight compression from clothing. Comparison was also made between Victorian dress, the restrictive physical movement it created and women's repressed indoor existence, and the ancient art of Chinese foot-binding and that culture's ideal image of femininity and beauty.

Isabel May, the Superintendent of the Hygiene Department of the Canterbury Women's Institute, wrote an introduction to Walker and Wilkinson's pamphlet. May recommended the handbook and hoped that 'its sound principles and useful suggestions will take root and spread far and wide'. The introduction gave a general brief overview of how a woman's sphere was widening and discussed how physical out-door activities were developing and becoming tasteful within the new world of New Zealand Victorian colonial society. Corsets that were not as firmly laced and restrictive as those previously seen in the 1890s showed there was some influence from the rational dress movement in the Edwardian era of New Zealand, though this was often concealed by the blouses that subtly ballooned over the skirt waistline.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U) published the magazine, *The White Ribbon*, in which a column called 'Cycling Notes' was a regular feature. What one should wear and other aspects of dress were a topical characteristic within the 'Cycling Notes' column. Women were advised on health corsets, how to fasten these correctly to the body so the weight hangs from the shoulders rather than the waist, and the duty of every woman to look as nice as she could while riding. *The White Ribbon* was committed to subjects that only affected women, educating them, widening their spheres and broadening their knowledge on women's rights, and home life. Being an advocate for women to openly discuss matters of concern, other columns were dedicated to the home, women's health, political issues, legal positions, and reforms.

'The Home' column, written by a collection of married women who strove to have an achieved identity outside of their marriage, repeatedly discussed the intrinsic worth of fashions of the day, and the wearing of corsets. The articles continually discussed and related to corsets by connection to areas of women's health, the comfort and proportions of the body, advice on suitable exercise to strengthen the torso, how to develop 'nature's corset' [*the waist muscles*], and how to have a neat appearance without the aid of bones and stays. Doctors' theories and opinions reinforced the knowledge of the writers, and gave authority to the issues of restrictive clothing, weighty dress and women's medical complaints that were caused by the fashions of the day such as firmly laced corsets.

"...I should like to impress on our readers that "the women who wears tight clothing when cycling, is courting certain death". These are not my own words, though I am quite of the opinion of the celebrated doctor who uttered them in the columns of one of our leading cycling publications, and when I hear of some of our women having to give up cycling, I say to myself, "No wonder, with such a wasp-like waist". The act of cycling quickens the respiration, expands the lungs etc., and how is this possible when the organs of the body are so confined in a tight corset that breathing with comfort, even when not riding, is an impossibility? If possible, leave them off altogether, many substitutes can be found... Another reason is that the corsets retain the heat, and it will be found impossible to get cool after a long ride with them on, and last, but almost most important of all, they often give a chill to the body around the waist, and are the cause of many illnesses..."

(Unknown, *The White Ribbon*, January 1898, p4)

Dress reform and rational design of garments became a highly publicized topic of conversation. Full page articles, featured in *The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* during July 1893, displayed dress reformers to the women of the colony (figure 30). The dress reform movement helped to change what some women were courageous enough to publicly wear, both as everyday dress outfits and for sporting activities. By the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the Edwardian era, physical activity and sports were introduced into girls schools and women were "venturing to escape the kitchen, parlor, and the garden" (MacDonald and Porter, 1996, p421). This escapism created changes in aspects of the design of the corset and in general dress, which often brought patronizing regard from male dominated society. Non corset wearers and the Christchurch School of Physical Culture (figure 31) helped women to break out of their closed inactive ascribed spheres, and to begin to achieve their own identities. Displaying their bodies with ease of movement, they did not rely on being firmly encased in a baleen and coutil corset, and rebuffed the desire to manipulate their bodies to society's ideal shape.



Figure 30 Kate Walker and James Wilkinson wedding, with Alice Burn, c 1894. *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, March 3, p 193)



Figure 31 Group of non-corset wearers at Christchurch School of Physical Culture, 1904



2.4 Architecture & Construction

Unlike their American frontier sisters, the majority of Pakeha European New Zealand women did not adapt their dress as openly or readily to accommodate their new circumstances as “conformity to fashion was more important than adaptation to surroundings” (Malthus, 1996, pii). Victorian modesty and decorum decreed that skirts be of a certain length, and these fared badly with the mud, dirt, and tracks that were used for travelling. Women maintained their appearance and beauty rituals even while doing household and domestic duties. Cleaning the muddy and dirty clothes with a wooden washboard and boiling them in an iron pot or copper over an open fire, as Angela Jacob (figure 32) did, was a demanding physical chore for women.

The extra weight and copious layers of dress got in the way and hampered the vigorous physical movement that was required for the chore. Ebbett (1977) alludes to health and safety being an issue as long skirts, petticoats and aprons were in danger of catching fire near open boiling coppers and cooking ranges, while bones in corsets and dress bodices could break when bending and penetrate the torso. To help, small adjustments occurred in dress such as hemlines being raised just enough to clear the feet so the rough and undeveloped terrain and rustic home environment could be negotiated with a little less hardship to dress hemlines and petticoat frills. Malthus (1996) supports the small adaptations of dress, and highlights the continuation of corsets being worn by women throughout the country.

The advancements in design, materials, and construction techniques from 1870 onwards saw major and rapid changes to women’s dress. Corsets, part of



Figure 32 Angela Jacob washing clothes. Apiti, c.1890 (Collection, *Te Papa*, B16404)

this advancement, became complex and sophisticated and lost all simplicity until 1907-1909. Homemade corsets, as discussed by Malthus and Bricknell, (2003); Summers, (2001); and Waugh (1956), were superseded by the more reliable and stronger corsets manufactured by large companies. It had become the fashion to wear sophisticated undergarments beneath one's dress, thus the grand epoch of lingerie in the true sense of the word was beginning to evolve (Steele, 2001).

There is no evidence to suggest corsets were mass produced in New Zealand during the time period 1870 - 1911; they were primarily imported from established and reputable overseas manufacturers. Predominately mass manufactured in England, France, Belgium, Germany and America, they were exported to all corners of the globe, including the English colony, New Zealand, as evidence in newspaper advertisements supports.

Being able to mould the body to the ideal shape, with gussets, multiple panels and a range of boning and stiffening techniques was unachievable without the correct knowledge and equipment. Summers (2001) points out that the cost of manufactured corsets was often a barrier to some working class women. Furthermore Summers suggests that women continued to make their own corsets with the readily available corset materials from haberdasheries, and gained knowledge from detailed dress making 'how-to-do' books. It is possible that confident needlewomen and dressmakers did make made-to-measure corsets in areas of New Zealand, advertising in local newspapers and drapery stores to

generate clientele. Summers (2002) supports the theory that the appearance, materials and finish on dressmakers corsets would have been different to the mass produced corsets that had originated from factories, due to the inability to access specialised machinery.

Multi-needled machines and steam moulding metal maidens were major advancements in corset manufacturing. Waugh (1956) and Doyle (1997) give a generalized historical overview on corset manufacturing and the range of advancements that occurred over the decades leading up to the turn of the twentieth century. The aim of their work outside the historical context is to recreate period corsets for the modern day costumer and performer. Their work goes on to further outline details of metal eyelets, whalebone and substitutes for boning, though still in a context referring to re-creation. Taylor (2002) has stated that "fashion plates...frequently came with useful descriptions of fabric, trimmings, and details..." (Taylor, 2002, p 135). The supporting pictorial material in Doyle's and Waugh's work not only enhances the written content, but the historical patterns and excerpts from ladies' journals provide additional design information.

The introduction of the front closure metal spoon busk that was to hold the abdomen, and a vast range of stiffening techniques from corded quilting to spiral steel, helped to shape, mould, restrain, and regulate the natural female body (Baclawski, 1995; Ewing, 1978; Steele, 2001; Waugh, 1956). Patents introduced by manufacturers were seen to protect designs and innovations in the industry, including refinements of existing processes and of corsets that were claimed to retain their shape, prevent sweating, and the breaking of bones. Some authors in their historical and social examination have touched upon the improved and refined processes that manufacturers Izods and Symington developed, patented, and used to create the ideal feminine corset shape by the use of moulding, seaming and starching (Doyle, 1997; Summers, 2001; Warren, 2001). This method was eventually widely used by the majority of corset manufacturers even though women feared their corsets would loose shape and structure if they cleaned them. *Mrs Beaton's Book of Household Management* (Beaton, c.1861) contained helpful hints on laundering and claimed that taking stale bread and rubbing it on corsets would remove dirt and that washing was not required.

Outside the innovation and advancement of production and manufacturing equipment and techniques, corsets were changing in their design. By the 1890s

W.B.
AMERICA'S LEADING
Corsets
CYCLIST'S
STYLE.
 Made with Cut-
 away hips and
 Elastic gores
 combining
PERFECT
FREEDOM
 WITH THE ...
SHAPE AND
GRACEFULNESS
 of all W.B. Corsets
Designed for all Athletic Purposes
 and for ladies with large hip develop-
 ment Made in Sateen Coutil and

Figure 33 WB corset advertisement for cycling, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, December 1897, 23

women used bicycles for transportation as well as recreation. Women's sport had become more popular and more accepted within society, though the attitudes to dress and what one should wear when participating had not been so open to change and acceptance. Tennis, cycling, golf, mountaineering and horseback riding saw women start to participate in activities that required active movement and freedom from the weight and rigid nature of their dress. This did bring some change within the corset structure, construction and materials. Manufacturers began to modify the design (figure 33) by replacing steel and baleen with corded quilting, wide ribbon, knitted 'elastic' banding, and fabrics that they claimed could ventilate. Luxurious colourful materials and surface decoration in woven cloth were desirable elements of a feminine corset from the late 1880s onwards. Heavily decorated with "pastel ribbons and unlimited yardage of frothy lace" (Payne, 1965), corsets became pretty, appealing and attractive as Payne outlines, and feminine as never before.

The most expensive corsets were made from coloured silks, satin, brocades and were heavily decorated and embellished with ribbon, lace, and flossing. Flowers, botanical motifs and birds were popular surface decorations and often were mimicked in the modesty lace pattern at the bust edge. Summers (2001) and Steele (1999, 2001) support the theory that the majority of women wore white, drab or black coutil corsets as the cost rose when more luxurious fabrics were added. This theory can be supported by the prices of corsets listed in advertisements in New Zealand newspapers. Using cording and a range of baleen substitutes helped to cut down the costs. Summers makes further reference to the inexpensive corset that the majority of women wore which still had the attractive feminine features of lace and ribbon, though may have been less dazzling than the styles on the more expensive corsets.

Corsets most likely worn by the middle classes had all the same processes of manufacturer, design elements and terminology associated with them as the more expensive ones. Vita Sackville West (1930) vividly and with slight exaggeration but with some underlying truth, describes in her fictional work, corset design elements that relate to Victorian and Edwardian corsets.

"...her mother would rise, and, standing in her chemise, would allow the maid to fit the long stays of pink coutil, heavily boned, around her hips and slender figure, fastening the busk down the front, after many adjustments; then the suspenders would be clipped to the stockings; then the lacing would follow, beginning at the waist and traveling gradually up and down, until the necessary proportions had been achieved. The silk laces and their tags would fly out, under the maid's deft fingers, with the flick of a skilled worker mending a net. Then the pads of pink satin would be brought, and fastened into place on the hips and under the arms, still further to accentuate the smallness of the waist".

(Sackville West, 1930, p39-40.)

Pink coutil, heavily boned, busk, and tags are a part of dress design language that relate to Victorian and Edwardian corsetry. As seen in the work of many scholars and researchers (Doyle, 1997; Warren, 2001; Waugh, 1958), corset terminology often appears in the form of a glossary with brief definitions, and is

not always comprehensive as it only details what is deemed appropriate for the publication.

With subtle style differences, manufacturers boasted their styles were superior to their competitors. Going to great lengths to convince women that the steels, bones and busks would not break, tear or pierce them, the beauty and embellishments of the corset were promoted and outweighed the reputed dangers (Summers, 2001). The 1890s saw embellishment and the tiny waist at its extreme, with a vast array of materials and boning styles and techniques to manipulate and shape the body.

As dress silhouettes changed, so did the corset, as this was the primary article that shaped the body to the small waist or 's bend'. Baclawski (1995), Doyle (1997) Warren (2001) and Waugh (1956), all comment on the complex and sophisticated shaping, pattern pieces, and extensive use of boning that occurred in corset styles from 1870 to 1911 that created the ideal silhouette. Generally it is documented that numerous curved pieces – up to 20 shaped pieces and a dozen whalebone in the 1880s, and between 20-30 shaped pieces and gussets in the 1890s – were used in a corset pair to enable the creation of the correct shape.

A limited historical range of corset style patterns can be seen in Doyle and Waugh's work. With focus on re-creation for theatrical productions they do not detail the scale or all the construction details that would be required in making the corset true to the historic version. To an uneducated person, unfamiliar with patterncutting it would be difficult to understand and interpret the design on the face cloth and lining side. Baclawski and Warren focus on a general introduction to the corset and follow with very brief descriptions relating to museum artefacts. They do not detail the corset attributes in depth, though do have some photographic images to relate to some part of the text. However, this is not enough information for re-creation and has a focus more on identification and possible date classification.

It is apparent from the work of Doyle, Shep, Warren and Waugh, that complexity in corset design and materials continued until 1907. From this point on the shape of dress lost its curved moulded silhouette and the torso became straighter. Simply designed corsets became fashionable with fewer pattern pieces, materials, and simple unobtrusive modesty lace remained to show feminine attributes of beauty. The introduction of elastic gussets inserted at the bottom edge

gave ease of movement, a practical feature that had not been incorporated into the designs of the previous periods (Waugh, 1956). The styles of corsets (figure 34) from 1907 - 1911 continued to simplify with the onset of World War I. The construction and range of materials changed as did the style and silhouette of fashionable dress; the epoch of elaborate corset design had come to an end.

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There is one Corset that will give you entire and absolute satisfaction in one and all of these things—that is an Izod's. There's a style for every type of figure and the special values we are offering in our new shipment will interest you.

Every Pair will Wash & Wear



S4—Double Skirt Late model for the average full figure, medium height bust, long fitting, treble boning, long fitting. Sizes 23-26.
PRICE 18 9

S1—For the slender type of figure, low bust, long fitting, treble boning, with free hip and reinforced gore. Sizes 22-27.
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S2—Model for average figures, medium height bust, long fitting, treble boning and wedge back. Sizes 22-26.
PRICE 16 6

S7—As illustrated, world Reducing Model for stout heavy figures, long skirt, treble boning, low bust. Sizes 23-28.
PRICE 27 6



S3—Extra ribbed, made with extra strong material, low bust, long fitting, reinforced gore. Sizes 22-26.
PRICE 15 9

S5—In fine quality silk spot finish for average figures, low bust, long skirt, treble boning, free hip with reinforced stitching and reinforced at base of back. Sizes 22-26.
PRICE 21 6

S6—For the average full figure, medium height bust, treble boning and reinforced gores, long fitting, strong wedge back. Sizes 22-26.
PRICE 21 6

S7—For average figures, low bust, long skirt, well boned, hip slightly free, reinforced front section. Sizes 22-26.
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Break, Rust or Tear**

Inspect these Fashionable Models in Snow's Corset Section.

Izod Styles are specially designed to suit the Australian figure and provide the Australian woman with a corset suitable for the climate—light in weight yet strong, with fabrics that will wash and not tear, boning that is proof against rusting or breaking. Izod's last twice as long as other corsets and never lose their shape.

SEE OUR SPECIAL WINDOW AND SHOWROOM DISPLAY.

Figure 34 Izod's Advertisement, c1915. (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Ephemera scrapbook)

3

Methodology





3.1 Methodological Approaches

Dress is a “multi faceted subject and in some ways can be seen to relate to almost every area of design” (Breward, 1998, p302). This statement is reinforced by the work of other researchers and historians (Pearce, 1998; Ribeiro, 1998; Steele, 1998; Styles, 1998), and in the last few decades the study of dress has embraced a wide ranging discourse where divisions have become apparent. As Styles outlines, there is a divide between those who study dress in museums and those who research it through the mediums of words and pictures.

It is noted that dress is a complex field of study, and requires a range of sources and techniques to be adopted to enable a fuller story to be told. Material culture methodology is one research approach that is able to generate substantial knowledge about a single artefact. Using a combination of attributes from anthropology and historical research methods, material culture allows for multi-layered information to be gathered from a broad range of sources that directly relates to the artefact under inquiry. Taylor (1998) maintains the “fusion of multi-disciplinary approaches and methods help us towards a finer appreciation of dress” (Taylor, 1998, p 355).

Fashion researchers and historians in the past have preferred to rely on written sources and visual representations as primary origins for information gathering. This has, as Steele (1998) discussed, allowed for common assumptions and myths to occur about the physical artefact which have been unchallenged for a great length of time. Material culture methodology allows for primary information to be taken directly from the artefact under investigation with secondary information from written, pictorial, and oral sources to support rather than direct

the research content. The material culture approach can break down perceptions that written sources in the past have typically stated as general fact, and allows for significant research of the artefact design to occur with unprejudiced and tangible evidence.

Steele (1998) is a strong advocate of material culture methodology. Within her work she has remarked that *"...object based research provides unique insights into the historic and aesthetic development of fashion. Unfortunately, relatively few historians of dress seem to be aware of the specific methodology devised by Prown"* (Steele, 1998, p 329). Fleming (1973) and Prown (1982) have been leaders in the study of artefacts and the advancement of material culture methodology, having developed approaches to break down the sections of an artefact, and to identify, classify, analyze and interpret the generated data. Using the artefact, in this case corsets, to generate the primary and main source of evidence is appropriate as long as it is clear what the artefact is. Therefore identification, classification, analysis and interpretation of the corset need to be considered and clarified.

Fleming's data collection method involves two stages: properties and operations. The first stage deals specifically with the physical components of the artefact's design, construction, materials, function, and history. The second stage focuses directly on identification, evaluation, cultural analysis and interpretation of the raw data. Prown, following on from Fleming's method, developed a system where three stages, description, deduction and speculation, were completed in sequence to collect primary evidence from an artefact. Description enabled evidence such as physical depiction and analysis to be recorded directly from the object. Deduction allowed for interpretation and interaction between the object and viewer, bringing forth engagement and leading into the third stage of speculation, making it possible to frame questions to lead from the object such as what it does and how it does it.

Building on Fleming and Prown's earlier work, the University of New Brunswick History Graduates Seminar (UNBHGS) (Anon, 1985) developed a third model (Table 7) that is able to generate substantial design orientated research data. Using a matrix analysis procedure, the information is broken down so the artefact's components can be sorted into relevant sections of material, construction, function, provenance and value. Further cross referencing can be undertaken and each category can be evaluated against observational data from the examined object,

comparative data with similar objects and supplementary data from other relevant sources. This matrix method allows for easy in-depth cross referencing and for individual artefacts to be examined thoroughly, extracting a range of detailed raw data. Taking a logical approach with each category shows the flexible nature of the model and the room for individual distinctive characteristics to emerge. The value of data generated from each matrix category does not rely on the previous or subsequent category, therefore all areas under investigation are able to work independently within the overall retrieval and analysis procedures.

Using secondary evidence to supplement data generated from the physical artefact helps to build a bigger picture and tends to produce relevant and more in-depth conclusions that have reliable end results. Using material culture methodology for this study of corsets will produce a wide variety of data that can provide evidence and conclusions that add to our understanding of female Pakeha European New Zealand colonial culture, the period the corsets were worn in, and the corset wearers themselves. Research into historical artefacts informs us about the past and can be complicated and problematic. It is important to acknowledge that not all questions and inquiries can be answered with depth and accuracy and at times only conjecture can be offered.



3.2 Biases & Problems with Artefacts & Sources

Inevitably, when dealing with artefacts and evidence that is over 100 years old, there are inbuilt problems and biases. Inbuilt biases can be viewed in a variety of forms where preferences and prejudices of the creator are often embedded, along with the etiquettes, politics and prejudices of the day. This is commonly viewed in illustration and painting. There will also be gaps that cannot be filled, even with the use of a broad range of sources. These gaps may appear due to New Zealand's evolving structure during the time period of 1870-1911, and the value and worth placed on artefacts at the time.

Corsets were a practical object of dress and, like other everyday items of dress, were not considered culturally valuable or significant, unless associated with an important person or event in the history of New Zealand. Using a multi-layered collection method to generate a holistic insight that recognises some aspects will remain unanswered, will help to produce more than just a basic artefact history. Material culture studies provide knowledge and reason rather than actual undistorted historical accounts. Speculation can be a useful tool when it is based upon some evidence and knowledge of the topic and the artefact history. Using this when necessary can help build a bigger picture of the artefact and give possible reasons and suggestions why specific things may have occurred in the artefact's lifespan.

The corsets examined from the six New Zealand museums, along with the Victorian and Edwardian written, pictorial and oral artefacts, will each have their own biases and problems attached. In recognition of this, certain questions need to be considered when viewing and taking evidence from the artefacts (Table 1). A

major problem will be a lack of information that museum acquisition registers hold. Without physically viewing the artefact in advance it is difficult to determine if the item listed is eligible for inclusion into the study time frame and if the artefact is a corset rather than a back or shoulder brace, both of which have some similar characteristics to nineteenth century corsets.

Some artefacts listed on museum acquisition registers did not have any estimated date and had vague design elements, such as back-lacing, listed under description. Other information listed under the headings of 'general notes' made reference to other artefacts that had come from the same donor but were not corset related. Upon viewing, it was immediately evident, by identification of use of materials and the design elements, that these corsets were in the time frame or from later twentieth century periods of corset history. Having a pre-selected list from the museum registers of artefacts to analyze prior to museum visits became an initial guide. When in a museum other problems arose: some artefacts were unable to be located; artefact numbers did not correspond to the physical corset; and boxes that were used for storage often contained other corsets that were suitable for inclusion in the study but were not listed on the register.

A problem that recurred throughout the initial data retrieval process was one that was generated by not viewing each corset on a mount or female form. Being unable to ascertain the correct silhouette of each corset created problems with some artefacts and made it difficult to place them within a specific time period. As a guide, the design details, materials and construction techniques were used to ascertain specific links to a certain decade to determine a date. Other biases and problems were evident with the primary information but did not affect the research gathering process. Incomplete or absent histories of the individual corsets that were examined made it difficult to determine if they were from a working class, middle class or upper class woman. The decoration and material type was used as a guide and helped to gauge if the corset was ordinary or an example of an expensive corset that would be more likely to have been found in an upper class woman's wardrobe. This was supported by secondary information from newspapers and ladies' journals.

The secondary information used came from a broad range of sources, such as *The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* and the James Smith's department store, also known as Te Aro House, Ephemera Collection. With any written,

pictorial, or photographic information, the facts and story relayed can be distorted and not detail true facts or events of the time. An aspect of the written and pictorial sources relate to the fashion illustrations and style of advertisements. These were used to gauge available fashions and determine if the corsets in the museum were ordinary or rare examples. Fashion illustration styles varied depending on the illustrator and the publication, and questions needed to be considered as to what bias was embedded and what was omitted.

Inbuilt biases reflected in the publication's printing policies, narrow social etiquette of the region and general Pakeha European New Zealand society, needed to be considered when viewing newspapers and ladies' journals for corset style comparisons and additional information to the actual museum artefact. As corsets and women's underwear were generally a topic that was not openly talked about, viewpoints, and social and political agendas, had to be taken into consideration and questions needed to be asked on what was omitted.

Having naturally occurring and inbuilt biases and problems with historical artefacts is an aspect that material culture methodology tolerates. Flexibility within the research collection gives enough scope to incorporate evidence that has questions that cannot be answered to the fullest. Acknowledging and being aware of these problems prior to information collection gave an out-in-the-open approach towards what data could be retrieved from the corsets, what could be cross referenced and what conclusions could be made.



3.3 Research Method, Design & Data Collection

The University of New Brunswick History Graduates Seminar (UNBHGS) was chosen as the most appropriate model to use for research into the design, materials and construction of corsets from 1870-1911. This research model allows my chosen focus on corset design to be addressed, and as Arnold outlined "... many factors need to be taken into consideration; the fabric, the embroidery, the details of stitching and trimming, the cut, and construction methods used and the shape" (Arnold, 1973, pp129-146). Having an area dedicated to each of the components that make up the corset produces depth and knowledge previously not seen in other published research. Elliot et al. (1994) noted that this research "...model might itself develop further through discussion and testing ... and anticipated a slower, more controlled evolution to the interpretive aspect of artefact analysis" (Elliot et al., 1994, p 110). Elliot made mention that design was omitted as it was believed that it was sufficient that it could be incorporated into the construction category. With dress, design and function are two components that are inter-connected and form the fundamental purpose behind the artefact. Therefore, development of the original UNBHGS model has occurred within my research with design being introduced into the function category.

Rearranging the UNBHGS categories was necessary to enable systematic data retrieval, to make it logical, and bring the new order into line with the design process and the way the corset, and any design orientated object, would have been originally created. Function and design became the leading matrix category, with materials, construction, provenance and value following (Table 2). The provenance category was not seen to be as vital in the data collection stage as the

other categories. It was used as a reference tool to compare where brand names were located and the location where the corsets were manufactured. The comparison category and complementary data steps were retained as they often overlapped with information and helped connect aspects that otherwise would have been difficult to establish.

Comparison with similar objects was important within the research as it allowed room to determine if the examined artefact was ordinary or extraordinary. Additionally it gave the opportunity for information to be taken into account such as finding out if the corset examined was a good representative example of the type of corsets that were available in the timeframe. Comparing the corsets with other physical artefacts and information gathered in the complementary category helped to establish and approximate manufacturing dates. Complementary data helped to determine whether the corset was authentic by comparing styles and designs published in newspapers and ladies' journals and with other physical artefacts viewed online from the Bath and Symington Museums in England.

Examination of an object using step one of the analysis procedure, observational data, generates a large amount of detailed descriptive information within the materials and construction categories. Not only does it allow for the artefact to be measured, it can also produce information relating specifically to manufacturing and maker's signature techniques, innovations and trademarks. Steele (1998) makes reference to the quantity of information that can be generated from a material culture study. She asserts it is "...one of the hardest things to judge how much detail to include in one's description ..." (Steele, 1998, p 329), and goes on to discuss if the description is too 'skimpy', there is too little detail to work with, and if there is too much detail such as 'endless measurements' it can cause a loss of focus on the object.

Comparison of artefacts within and outside New Zealand was important to establish any regional differentiation. As previous research into corsetry design has been universally limited, comparative analysis through brief descriptions completed by Baclawski (1995) and Warren (2001) were used and supported by pictorial comparisons from Shep's (1993) chronological documentation of corset style advertisements, and the Bath and Symington Museums' online collections.

Using specifically developed questions (Table 3) to prompt data retrieval under each category ensured each artefact was extensively scrutinized and the

maximum appropriate information could be gathered. Though not all questions in each category were necessarily answered, this does not lessen the significance or value of information gained. As the corsets were to be examined individually and were understood to contain differing details, a design, materials and assembly checklist was developed to extract the primary information. Outlining the basic elements such as design details of panels, seams and steels, it created a systematic approach and consistent detailed data. The checklist (Table 4) allowed for details to be inserted when an unusual aspect of design was seen and helped to compare and group common corset elements. Once all raw data was generated using the matrix system, individual conclusions regarding each artefact were established.

Prior to undertaking an initial trial, a glossary and a series of questions were formulated to help familiarize and prompt observations when in the presence of the physical artefacts. To summarise Taylor (2002), when researching artefacts clues can be found in surviving garments and these are essential within the process of identification, and analysis of construction techniques help to pin down dating. Shep's chronological pictorial history of American corsetry advertisements and Warren's detailed descriptions were used to assemble a list of terms and materials and help form a basis for approximating dates. The American advertisements helped form components of a historical corset terminology, styles and visual glossary that is not seen in modern publications. The American advertisements were compared with what was printed in New Zealand newspapers from the same period of time, ensuring similar associations in the use of materials, silhouette, and styles of design.

My system, matrix, and developed questions focus on detailing, describing, contextualising and comparing, and allow for the inclusion of speculation if necessary. The use of a developed glossary and a systematic method to extract design orientated data produced a focused and specifically dress design investigation. It is more detailed than the UNBHGS method and relates to dress and textile orientated artefacts. A trial was undertaken on one corset to determine if enough information could be generated and to establish if the model of data collection and processing was workable. Observational data was retrieved by using the tools of a magnifying glass, metric-imperial tape measure, and a 35mm film camera with the aid of a macro lens that used colour film to document details of the facing cloth (outside) and lining (inside) and other particular features of

individuality. Quick sketches were used to apply measurements that related to centre front lengths, widths of lace, and steels. Panel lines were also added to the sketches as these were not evident in the photographs due to either concealment from bone casings, or how the corset was laid on the table top. After the initial trial which ascertained that the method was appropriate to gather research information, two main and four regional museums in both the North and the South Island were selected, giving a range of provenance, donors, and artefacts to view.

To meet the criteria for selection each corset needed to be in the period of 1870 - 1911. Being either gifted or purchased within New Zealand ensured it had some heritage, even if the donor was unknown or unable to be disclosed by the museum, a provenance could be established. Each corset had the same information gathering and documentation procedure applied to it, by way of detailed photographs, diagrams with measurements, and recorded audio tape observations of construction techniques and materials that I was witnessing in the artefact that I was interacting with. Time to document corsets was limited and information was taken from different museums at different stages over a year. It was important the gathered information stayed consistent, as the option to access the collections a number of times was not viable, or economical with research time. Using the matrix, category prompting questions and design assembly check list (Table 2, 3, 4) guaranteed that nothing was overlooked and ensured uniformity with information collection.

The conditions for documenting the corsets were all relatively similar, viewing them under fluorescent lighting, some dimmer than others, and on a flat surface, in store rooms or staff work areas. These conditions were multipurpose but did create difficulties with background noise in the recorded oral observations and with some photographic images. Some pictures take on a foreshortened appearance due to the angle taken, with others being underexposed or slightly blurry, as no flash was used in accordance with museum policy. This could also be partly attributed to lack of experience with taking photographs in a museum setting, and often the lack of space and height in the working environment.

All corsets were viewed flat with the exception of two that had specially made torso mounts. Viewing the corsets flat on the table meant that they took on a different persona which was initially expected. Having little or no shape with the

absence of the human body created unique problems with determining the date solely by the silhouette. Some corsets had been flattened in the storage boxes and had lost their original manufactured starched shape by the sheer weight of other corsets that had been placed on top. Some had been never worn therefore having no traces of human moulding to them, and were single not laced. These factors meant that the design style, length, boning and decoration were used as a guide alongside the silhouette to help establish an approximate date, with cross referencing made to New Zealand newspapers' advertisements and Shep's (1993) publication. The majority of corsets that were analysed have been dated within a specific period which has been either attributed to an appropriate decade, or more specifically to the first half or second half of an appropriate decade.

Once all the raw data had been collected, the corsets were regrouped into common re-occurring categories that became evident after a number of corsets had been analyzed. These new common sub-groupings came from the original matrix question categories of design, materials and construction and did not alter the original intention of the collected research outcome. General design and materials, decoration, and the use of typography were used to reshape the raw data and enable further ease of classification and sorting. The information at this stage was ready to be used to start the formation of the research outcome, the descriptive

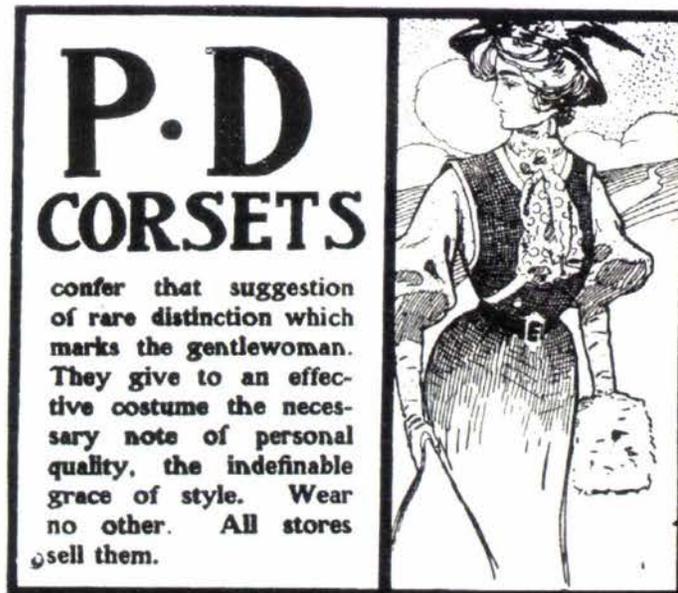


Figure 35 PD Corset Advertisement, *New Zealand Freelance*, Saturday 27 February, 1909, p10



3.4 Descriptive Cataloguing

The absence of an exhibition to relate the research information to is irrelevant to the developed research method. The concept of producing a detailed written description and pictorial based catalogue as an exhibition appears to be unique. The term catalogue has been used rather than the term booklet or brochure. The general definition of a catalogue is a directory, a record, an inventory or a brochure. The definition for the descriptive catalogue I have developed is a detailed account and explanation of characteristics of elements that constitute a particular item or items that have common relationships that are viewed through written and visual formats. To formulate the research data into a descriptive catalogue that had the attributes of a book and reference guide, publications dealing with museum artefacts were investigated as a developmental starting point.

Two approaches towards cataloguing were looked at: the museum artefact catalogue and exhibition based catalogues. Examination of museum artefact catalogues proved that they are often unclear and loaded with inconsistencies. They depend heavily on being in the presence of the artefact for depth and detail. The processes involved with this form of cataloguing are time-consuming and too often rely on a detailed and complex knowledge of dress history, design, materials and construction methods. Arnold (1973) made reference to these reoccurring problems and how many museum catalogues are incomplete and do not give an accurate summary of the artefact or collection. It was important to consider the fact that multiple collections from a range of museums had been used in this study and there was a range of styles of acquisition registers with limited common features.

After the museum acquisition catalogue was determined not to be a viable starting point, careful analysis was undertaken of design orientated exhibition based artefact catalogues and publications from a range of museums and galleries including the Powerhouse Museum (Mitchell, 1997), Kyoto Costume Institute (2003), New Zealand National Art Gallery (n.d.) and Usher Gallery Museum of Lincolnshire (n.d.). This analysis is not referred to as an aspect of the literature review as it connected to the overall presentation of my research information. Examples showed that catalogues are generally produced to accompany an exhibition and have, as a focus, reproduction of object criteria and/or a brief history relating to the object that can be read while viewing it. A broad range of shapes, sizes and quantity of book design existed within the sample; however, a few common problems were established. The majority of the catalogues had reference numbers and museum or gallery collection codes relating to the exhibition or acquisition registers. These would have been used to accompany the artefact on display in the exhibition and the mounted information that would have been placed alongside.

Imagery was another area that the catalogues tended to disregard as a significant component. Cumming (2004) has commented upon the importance of imagery in publications and then makes note that the sheer expense of paying for illustrations would prohibit the end result. In the catalogues examined imagery was often separated from the main body of the text, or was treated as an appendix. The majority of catalogues had limited or no imagery which meant the reader needed to be in the presence of the artefact or exhibition to fully comprehend the written content that had relation to the object. This made for a visually unappealing catalogue that had sterile written descriptions, and a life span limited to the duration of the exhibition.

Two museums' approaches to exhibition catalogues stood out: Usher Gallery and Museum (Lincolnshire), and the Powerhouse Museum (Sydney). The catalogue, *Frocks and Fripperies* (Usher Gallery Museum, n.d.), presented visually appealing content that was enriched with information that could be used outside of the exhibition. It contained some coloured images that were surrounded by complementary text that was informative and used language that was appropriate to the subject. Having a semi-introduction helped to put the catalogue into the context of how the exhibition had come into being. The Powerhouse Museum

catalogues have a standardized appearance and work with a comparable formula making them all easy to read, user friendly and designed with an aspect to have a longer lifespan beyond the initial exhibition timeframe. Having extra information such as biographical designer extracts, relevant historical information and a combination of photographic and line drawn images also created a worthy, valuable and informative read outside of the exhibition.

Investigating outside of museum and exhibition catalogues brought me to Baclawski's (1995) book which has a mixture of content and style simulating a dictionary with a catalogue. *The Guide to Historic Costume* is a reference publication that is organised alphabetically in a dictionary format. At the beginning of each item of costume there is a introduction relating to the history and a brief description detailing the design and its evolution over time. Some photographs of artefacts are placed amongst the text and have short descriptions relating to these museum objects. Additional brief descriptions of other artefacts available for viewing at museums are also listed. However, these prove to be of little value without the supportive imagery. The descriptions listed alongside the photographs, and some aspects of the presentation and layout are similar to what can be seen in the more recent publication by Warren (2001). Furthermore Warren uses some of the same museum artefacts in his work but with slightly more detailed descriptions and colour images.

From resources available it was established that a catalogue containing information from multiple museum collections in New Zealand, in absence of an exhibition and with focus purely on design elements, had not been produced. Taking the positive aspects seen in *Frocks and Fripperies*, the Powerhouse Museum publications and the approach Baclawski and Warren had, I decided a descriptive corset catalogue would need to contain a large quantity of images integrated with the corresponding text, and include introductions, a glossary, and other detailed relevant corset design information that had evolved from the secondary sources and would form an appendix.

As the corset information is collected from a range of museum sources around the country and does not support an exhibition, it is important the imagery was valued as highly as the written content it supported. This allows for the descriptive catalogue to have a long life span, making it useful to the audience of other researchers, dress historians, museum collection managers and curators,

costume designers and design students.

The make-up of the catalogue sections transpired as common elements occurred repeatedly throughout the examination of the corsets. These elements were initially sorted into the categories of general design style, materials used, construction techniques, decoration, manufacturers' brand names and the use of labels and identifying marks. The initial categories helped to reconfigure the sections of the catalogue into the three areas that are based upon the interconnected parts that make up the corset: architecture and engineering, frippery and garnishing, and typography. The three new categories lead the way to develop and show information that was generated from the various museum collections in an organized manner.

The first category, architecture and engineering, has the interior focus on aspects of design, materials and construction, the three main elements that make the corset a physical wearable object. These are not exclusive to corsets or dress and are the fundamental elements that constitute the make-up of all design orientated objects. Frippery and garnishing is focused on embellishment and decoration, two aspects that gave the corset its style, individuality and femininity. Typography is an area that has not been mentioned in the relationship to the actual design of a corset or article of dress within current research and publications. The focus on typography in my work looks specifically at aspects of markings on the corset. This will be seen through the manufacturers' logos, trademarks, boxes, various printed advertisements, and the correlation this has to the overall corset design by style of typeface, colour, pictures, and manufacturers' seals.

With any outcome dealing with multiple sources, collections and systems, obstacles in streamlining information arose. A logical system for naming was developed to lessen confusion from various museum acquisition register numbering systems. Creating a personal name for each of the fifty-eight corsets that were to be used in the catalogue became an important aspect as it individualised each corset as a design object rather than a nondescript museum artefact. For the audience's ease of use, it is beneficial that the catalogue's detailed discussion is interlinked to the images in a 'personal' manner.

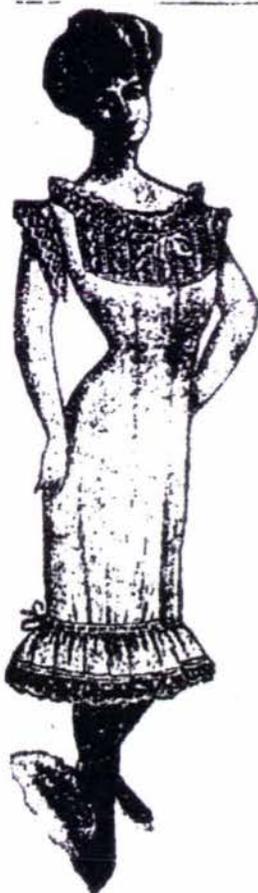
Having the descriptive catalogue system as one of the major research outcomes helps to clarify and document the raw data into a logical, useful end product. It also builds upon and complements existing work by Baclawski (1995),

Doyle (1997), Warren (2001), and Waugh (1956). Giving a comprehensive insight into what made the corset what it was, the catalogue narrative shows how the design, pattern, materials and construction influence it to be a physically restrictive item of historical dress. It enables detailed and in-depth discussion on a range of corsets and the elements that make it a distinctive design object. It further details and establishes evidence of differential aspects of social hierarchy through the use of corset styles, materials used and the detailed ornamentation.

Photographs (figure 36, 37), fine art, newspaper advertisements and other printed material are used to pictorially reinforce and exemplar the close connection corsets and other aspects of dress had on women's lives. Each one of these areas has a relationship to the corset worn, the cost, the cloth, the physical movement, the weight, drag and the woman's body that it would be eventually worn on. Without the historical context, the catalogue outlines artefacts seen in a museum setting and lacks personalization of the history of the artefact and its provenance. Additional ephemera helps to create value, making it more than just the sum of the material item, it enhances the personal alterations and the remaining traces of the women who once wore the corsets.



Figure 36 Group of women from Wanganui region wearing fashionable evening dress which displays shaped torsos aided by the wearing of a corset, c 1895-99 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library G24374 1/1)



DAINTY LINGERIE.

Every lady's desire for dainty Underclothing can be gratified in our Show Rooms. We make a special feature of this Department, and all tastes and purses are catered for—all qualities, from the useful calico to the finest Long-cloth, Muslin, etc., beautifully Trimmed with Embroidery, Torchon, Val. and Maltese Lace. We also have Hand-made Garments or Machine made. We respectfully invite an inspection of No. 1 Window and our Showroom for New and Dainty Examples. Out-size Garments stocked.

NIGHT DRESSES, 3/11 to 75/-.
KNICKERS, 1/6 to 29/6.
CAMISOLES, 1/11 to 26/9.

CHEMISES, 1/11 to 30/-.
COMBS, 4/6 to 30/6.
UNDER SKIRTS, 3/11 to 79/6.

Our Underskirt Section is especially big, in all qualities.

A CHARMING VARIETY OF SILK UNDERSKIRTS ALWAYS IN STOCK.

CORSETS.

WE STOCK THE CELEBRATED W.B.'s, P.D., and DR. SCALES. Sizes from 19 to 40. Prices from 3/11 to 42/-.

J. PAUL & CO.,

DRAPERS, CLOTHIERS, &c.,

Victoria Avenue,
WANGANUI.

Figure 37 J. Paul & Co. Drapers corset advertisement, Wanganui Herald, Saturday 27 November 1909, p 7

4

Research Outcomes





4.1 The Descriptive Catalogue System

The focus on the descriptive catalogue system allows to figuratively dissect and narrate the design, materials and construction of corsets from 1870-1911, with the integrated use of images to visually support the written content. The underlining working elements of the system are based on detailing, description, contextualising and comparison, with the addition of speculation if necessary that is based on knowledge of design and components of dress relating to the time frame.

During the data collection stage three categories of Architecture and Engineering [design, materials, assembly], Frippery and Garnishing [decoration], and Typography [logos, trademarks, boxes] were formed to group the corset information. This enabled detailed design orientated descriptive dialogue to occur under each of the headings. Initially the categories were treated separately, as not all corsets had information that could be classified into all of the three areas. The merging of these categories occurred in the middle stage of the catalogue, though the emphasis of the three areas is still evident. Photographs are used and integrated into the discussion to clearly illustrate the points that are made in all of the three merged areas. This use of imagery also enhances comprehension in the absence of viewing the physical artefact, and means the catalogue can be used anywhere as a reference and information guide. The reader is able to focus on the main aspects of what makes up the corset in terms of design, and can use the information to help guide identification and classification of other corsets in collections that have not been examined both nationally and possibly internationally.

After the categories were established, three steps occurred in the classification system: renaming the corsets, organizing which corsets presented the most complete information for which category, and compiling the category information to flow from one corset to another. The first step in the classification system was the renaming of the corsets. The naming system developed helped to retain consistency between multiple corsets from the same manufacturer, and lessened confusion that could occur if the various museum numbers were retained. This was an aspect that was seen in Baclawski's (1995) publication where multiple museum numbering systems were retained and modified and added to a list of numbered bullet pointed descriptions that either related to the image within the publication or to an artefact that could be viewed at a museum. The overall outcome of Baclawski's system was confusing for the reader, an aspect that I did not want to re-create in the naming system that I developed.

The naming system was broken down into components: the manufacturer name/brand name, then style name or number, or if the maker was unknown, design elements were used to form a name (refer to Table 5). The acknowledgement of the unknown manufacturer was termed using the code MU, which was placed before the design element name. To enable ease of use and for future research and reference the new corset names were cross-referenced against the museum acquisition number in the museum artefact guide (Table 5A) and in the information that accompanies each image.

Once the naming system had been established, the second step was to compile the corset information into the categories and ensure that the catalogue was consistent with each individual artefact. As there was a large sample of corsets, fifty-eight in total, that presented similar details, the photographic images that were taken helped to determine which corsets would be discussed in detail. Using the raw research data, the transcribed oral observations and sketches, notes were elaborated on and related to the images that accompany the catalogue. Other images, for example figures 38 and 39, from newspapers and ephemera collections were grouped alongside the images of the examined corsets to add to the story being relayed. In addition significant information as to the design, style, materials and construction are included in the appendix. The corset glossary and visual corset glossary are considered a vital aspect to enhance reader comprehension and are also part of the catalogue compilation.

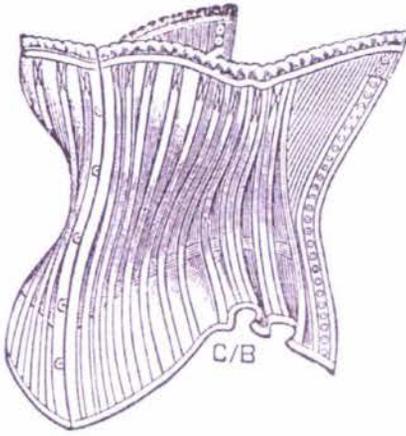


Figure 38 CB Corset illustration c. 1891 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Scrapbook ephemera)

Figure 39 Y & N Corset advertisement, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, Saturday June 22 1901, p 1196



Thirdly, to facilitate the catalogue flow and ease of use as a reference work, common links between corsets were made with use of materials, styles, decoration and manufacturers. These common links occurred and assisted in grouping the corsets into decades rather than by brand names or the museums where they were held. This generated a clearer sense of design for each decade and the significant 'identifiers' that help to date corsets. With these decisions in mind, the audience will be able to form a greater understanding and be able to create links to the corsets that were seen in museums but were not discussed in detail in the catalogue. For corsets being examined outside of this research study by curators and collection managers, the catalogue decades and corset descriptions will help to facilitate identification, analysis and comparison.

The descriptive catalogue has three main decades: 1880-1890, 1890-1900, 1900-1911. Included in this exegesis is an example of the classification system at work, which shows the raw data collection information taken and having the descriptive catalogue system applied. The categories of architecture and engineering, frippery and garnishing, and typography have been amalgamated and have pictures integrated to accompany the detailed corset descriptions. Additional information and pictures have been included with reference to items in

the appendix such as the Izod's Corset finishing method, which is located in the appendix of this document. Clarification of corset terminology, visual and written, can be found in the glossaries located in this research and will aid the readers' comprehension of corset design, materials, and specific historical terminology used throughout the descriptive text.

It was important that the catalogue was cross referenced back to the museum details for future research and for ease of use. The original name and details from the museums (Table 5a) are listed to show how the new naming system has been used to generate individual corset identities. The corsets are referred to throughout the catalogue by their new names rather than their museum codes, and have the museum reference acquisition number listed alongside the figure information. The museum number and the new name are cross referenced in the museum artefact guide that is located in the corset appendix in this document.

These references and comparisons show links in style, colour, design, materials and construction to corsets in the same decade, which may or may not follow each descriptive account. In general each corset has its own corset description and is placed in the decade that relates to the date of its manufacture. Interlinking information in the form of reference and comparison to other corsets in that decade, or by manufacturer, is also included. The corsets are not grouped by brands, rather they are presented in a chronological order and by similarities in design and materials. This was done specifically so the reader can see clear identifiers of each decade and links to other corsets that are in museums that are not currently analysed.

The three decade sections are a sample of the catalogue system at work and are not the entire catalogue. Other components that would be included in the catalogue are the glossary, visual glossary, corset appendix and the three main summative areas of corset design. These three summative areas are listed in this research and referred to as the artefact design synopsis. This synopsis that follows the three decades of descriptive corset cataloguing summarises the design aspects of the three original groups of architecture and engineering, frippery and garnishing, and typography. They can be used without the descriptive catalogue by museum curators and collection managers to help identify, classify, describe and date other corsets held in collections that have not been included as part of this investigation. These sections can be used outside of New Zealand as they cover

corset design in a general manner and are not exclusive to any specific country or manufacturer.

Not all corsets examined are presented and those that do not have an in-depth descriptive discussion are listed in the museum artefact guide with a star next to their museum acquisition number. The reason for some corsets' exclusion is due to not having appropriate supportive visual material to accompany the description. Some photographic evidence that is presented alongside the individual corsets in the descriptive catalogue decades may not be true in colour to the original artefact. This does not lessen the value of the images, details can still be viewed and support the written description, and furthermore they aid in comprehension of design elements of the individual corsets. Some whites and drab colours are slightly darker due to the photographs being taken in a range of environments and under museum conditions where no flash can be used.



THE ARD HOUSE
WELLINGTON

Corset
Design Elements

1880 - 1890

JAMES SMITH
Wholesale & Retail Draper & Clothier

The Meckpah Bodice
c. 1880 onwards



Figure 40 Meckpah Bodice front. (Collection Canterbury EC179.94)

The Meckpah Bodice was used by young adolescents and children from 1880 onwards, and continued to be used well into the early part of the twentieth century. It is considered a training corset and has all the design, materials and construction elements that constitute a woman's adult corset. The Meckpah Bodice, a brand name, was also known by other brand names such as a Child's Corded Bodice, a Liberty Bodice, or a Child's Waist. No information is present on the Meckpah Bodice to identify its place of origin or who the manufacturer was.

The Meckpah Bodice is constructed from a dove grey sateen facing cloth with white sateen cotton as the lining. It is a simple pattern consisting of two main pieces for the body with two gussets and a truss. The grain of the sateen has been utilized in a variety of ways as demonstrated by the sheen direction that the



Figure 41 Meckpah Bodice back,
(Collection Canterbury EC179.94)



Figure 42 Meckpah Bodice lining side
detail of side, gusset, truss and
modesty lace. (Collection Canterbury
EC179.94)

gussets and truss display. A combination of construction elements have been used to create a firm torso shape. Boning 5mm in width is placed at the side seams, either side of the centre back eyelets, and next to the bound buttonholes at the centre front. Clusters of six corded quilted lines run adjacent to the centre front, side seam and centre back, and add to the firmness and weight of the overall bodice. The bones and corded quilted lines emulate the positioning of bones and areas that require support, manipulation and sculpting on adult women's corsets.

The recognition of a child's and adolescent's developing body is apparent with the design details of the truss, the adjustable buttons, and the gusset. The truss helped to create good posture and train ladylike poise, as well as allowing for the balanced weight of clothes to come from the shoulder rather than the waist. The truss has four bound buttonholes incorporated into the strap, allowing for the growing and lengthening torso. Other adjustable buttons are placed at the side seam, where petticoats, drawers, stockings, and other undergarments could be attached. The bust and side back hip gussets show allowances for the developing

child's rectangular body into an adolescent's that has some curviness. These multiple adjustable sizing features allowed for the longevity of the bodice and the ability to fit a wide size range of female children.

Buttons have been used at the centre front instead of the adult hook and stud busk. The seven bone buttons are evenly spaced and attached to the bodice by a thin cotton tape. The centre back has eleven dark coloured metal eyelets that are evenly spaced, with the exception of two eyelets that are placed closer together at the waist area. As with adult corsets, eyelets placed closer together at the waist were used to train, control the shape, and help create the desired fashionable curved waist. The Meckpah Bodice's purpose was to not only give warmth to the torso and create good posture; it was also used to train the young female's shape in

Figure 43 Meckpah Bodice bust gusset and button detail, (Collection Canterbury EC179.94)



Figure 44 Meckpah Bodice side front bottom button detail, (Collection Canterbury EC179.94)



Figure 45 Meckpah Bodice front lying flat on table, (Collection Canterbury EC179.94)

preparation for an adult corset. A feminine feature of modesty lace has been placed around the top edge of the bodice, starting at the centre front and finishing at the arm scye. The modesty lace is a simple circular pattern and is very subtle in the overall design of the Meckpah Bodice.

Typography is present on the lining of the Meckpah Bodice. The style brand name is printed in black ink on the right lining side near the centre front. The 'Meckpah' stands out, as the uppercase serif is bold against the stark white lining. Pencil markings have been placed about it and may indicate the price that it was sold for at the drapery or department store. The overall condition of the Meckpah Bodice is reasonably good and it is difficult to determine if it has been worn. Absence of dye transfer, stitching wear and tear, sweat and crease marks, and eyelet stress indicate it was either never worn or only worn once or twice. Small areas of foxing are apparent on the facing cloth around the gusset and around the buttons on the side. One bone on the right side back shows patches of rust transfer onto the facing cloth from where the metal tip of the paper-covered steel would be lying beneath.



Figure 46 Meckpah Bodice, lining side lying flat on a table, detail of typography on lower bottom right, (Collection Canterbury EC179.94)



Figure 47 Children's Bodice pattern (Collection Symington Corset Collection, England)



No. 339 — Young
ladies. 7 to 12 years.
laced back, button
front. Sizes: 21 to
27

Figure 48 Children's Bodice Advertisement (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Ephemera Scrapbook collection)

S & S VESTINATM BODICE

HYGIENIC WAISTS

Childrens	-	-	3s 6d
Girls	-	-	3s 6d
Maid's	-	-	3s 6d
Young Ladies	-	-	4s 6d

☀ Grey and White.

Kirkcaldie AND Stains
LIMITED

Figure 49 Kirkcaldie and Stains Limited advertisement for hygienic waists for young ladies, girls, and children (The Freelance, Saturday November 24, 1900)



Figure 50 An unknown child, c 1880s (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, 58338 1.2)

B G Corset No. 57 Whalebone
c. 1880-1885



Figure 51 B G Corset No. 57 Whalebone front (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)

The B G Corset No 57 was made in England c. 1880-1885. Made from a single layer of dove grey coutil it has been machine sewn with flat felled seams with cream coloured thread. The initial appearance of the corset when flat on a surface shows a lack of shape, however, upon closer inspection the busk and panels are curvaceously shaped, and when placed on a woman's torso, the corset would be very shapely.

Twenty-four bones in total are used in the overall design, which is a large number of bones. All 7mm in width, excluding the two side back bones that are 1.5cm wide, the B G style of boning shows common features of corsets from this

decade. There is a tight concentration of bones placed towards the front of the corset with some waist bones positioned alongside each other. Unlike steel-boned corsets, the BG is made with baleen, this being confirmed by the label placed at the centre front busk, and by the weight of the corset

The bone casings positioned on the facing cloth are made from the same fabric as the shell. Brown silk thread flossing is positioned at the top and the bottom of each casing to securely hold the baleen in place. All flossing has been done by machine with the wide 1.5cm bones having an 'x' configuration with the 7mm casings having a triangle design. All bones are in their original position and have not moved or worn through the casings, or been removed by the wearer. The centre back has 19 brass coloured eyelets placed evenly either side of the waist area. A cluster of four eyelets at the waist region are closely grouped to allow for a concentration and secure fit. Like similar single layer corsets, the centre back facing is an extension of the front facing cloth and functions to neaten the edge,



Figure 52 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone back (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)

Figure 53 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone detail of bust edge with flossing, broderie anglaise and busk hook, (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)



and be a casing for the centre back bones. A lace is threaded through the eyelets, but it appears not to be the original as it looks too modern and does not have any metal tags on the ends or marks made from the eyelets through being laced and worn.

The centre front has a busk with five hooks and studs. Some of the hooks are bent out of shape and no longer attach easily to the corresponding stud. The centre front edge has a machine sewn facing with small slits where the hooks fit through. This was not seen on any other corsets and could possibly be a technique specific to the company that produced the B G corset. The top edge has been finished with a row of binding with a white broderie anglaise placed on top that functions the same as modesty lace. It has a small row of embroidered featherstitch pattern in a brown silk thread. The bottom edge of the corset has been finished with a similar white binding which neatens the edge and the bone casings. The inside of the B G corset is plain, with the white waist tape made from a twill weave



Figure 54 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone centre front label detail (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)



Figure 55 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone detail of waist tape typography on the right side (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)



Figure 56 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone detail of waist tape typography on the left side (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/9)

that has the manufacturer details on it. The white bobbin thread that is used for the stitching of the seams and bone casings is clearly visible.

Typography has been used on both sides of the waist tape and on the label attached to the front busk. Combinations of typefaces are used with uppercase and lowercase bold serif, serif and script. The manufacturer's brand name is boldly and decoratively printed in black onto the white left side waist tape. It has an appearance of an etching with shading that creates the illusion the ribbon border is floating and free. This contrasts with the intention and purpose of the 1880s corset that was to control and restrict movement. The ribbon design extends along the majority of the waist tape and maximises the width and length available. The bold large manufacturer's brand name stands out and is the first aspect the eye is drawn to when the corset is opened. The use of typography on the lining creates decoration as well as communicating the name and the whalebone information. The use of script on the 'No 57 Whalebone' is feminine, delicate and subtle, and is modest in comparison to the corresponding side of the waist tape.

The typography label that extends from the right centre front busk is silk and clearly states the use of whalebone in the corset. Positioned near the waist area just above the third hook, it is constructed from a satin weave and is doubled over so the floating threads from the typeface are not seen. The ground colour is beige with a deep bordeaux red used for the square border and the uppercase typeface. The bordeaux colour introduces a third colour to the corset. From other corsets seen, colours used in areas of decoration have matched; however, the B G corset has not used this principle. No other corsets viewed had labels coming from the front busk area. It is difficult to determine if this was a common feature on B G corsets as this was the only example viewed from this manufacturer.

Generally, the B G corset is in good condition though it does have some signs of wear and tear. Modified, possibly by the owner, it has some small tucks made at the bust edge to create a tighter and more controlled fit. There are signs of discolouration on the broderie anglaise at the underarm, showing the effects of perspiration. When viewed open and flat on the table, there are subtle lines evident at the waist area where other garments have chafed against it and transferred the dye. On the inside, at the top and bottom of some bone casings, small rust marks have appeared where the baleen's metal tip cover would be. This problem is not isolated to the B G corset and can be seen in other corsets such as the Izods.

MU Drab Corded Quilted Corset
c. 1880 · 1885



Figure 57 Drab Corded Quilted Corset front (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)

The Drab Corded Quilted Corset is unique for its design and construction. It does not have any identifying manufacturing details, country of origin, maker's logo, or brand name and is classified as maker unknown or MU. The use of corded quilting and the shape indicate the manufacturing took place between 1880-1885; however, it may be as late as c. 1899. Corded quilted lines were an alternative to the expensive baleen prior to the introduction of the variety of steels that were available from 1890 onwards. Made from two layers of coutil, the facing cloth is a

drab khaki colour with the lining a white colour.

The design of the corset is intriguing as there are only two 7mm bones used throughout, being positioned at the centre back either side of the eyelets. Multiple panelled directional corded quilted lines are used to control the remainder of the corset shape. The extensive use of quilting makes the corset unique, and when flat on the table it shows aspects of a 3-dimensional womanly torso emerging at the bust and hips. Corded quilting was used in the absence of baleen and was predominately used at the bust and hip areas to help control shape. Strands of twisted or woven threads or fibres were dipped into a glue-like solution and then stitched between the facing cloth and lining layers.

The design of the Drab Corded Quilted Corset consists of multiple panels to create an ideal shape. The top of the corset has five half panels, with four shorter panels at the bottom, and one full length panel situated at the side seam. The seams for each panel are concealed by the placement of a twill cotton tape in a matching drab khaki colour. The white cotton lining echoes the design on the front with the corded quilted lines and cotton tape. The corded quilting stitching is consistent and constructed using multiple needled machines. The stitching thread colour is cream and stands out against the drab khaki coutil facing cloth, though is less obvious on the white lining side. The top and bottom edges of the corset have been neatly finished with a 5mm binding. The quilting has been used effectively and in multiple directions to create extra support. The grain of the facing cloth cannot be easily identified due to the surface having a corrugated effect from the quilting. The amount of corded quilting creates a heavy corset that would be unforgiving when worn on the body, making it difficult to bend over and move easily.

Thirteen eyelets run down the centre back and have two laces with tags threaded through them. The eyelets are different from the standard metal eyelets seen in other corsets and have a brass-coloured centre piece with a wider outer rim of silver. No other corsets seen had eyelets like this and this design feature may be attributed to the ability to give extra strength in an area that was prone to stress and weakness of the cloth, and being pulled away from the eyelet. The centre front has a straight front busk with five hooks and studs. The stud side of the centre front busk has an additional support under the busk that acts like a fly front and is called a safety front busk. The busk hooks are ornate with an embossed leaf design



Figure 58 Drab Corded Quilted Corset centre back laced lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)



Figure 59 Drab Corded Quilted Corset detail of corded quilting at bust and modesty lace (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)

that echoes the shape of the hook curve. The bust edge has a subtle feminine feature of modesty laces and is made from a thick cotton thread. Baby ribbon is absent from the modesty lace; however, the design has integrated eyelets and it is presumed the baby ribbon has been removed at some point or never originally inserted.

The overall condition of the corset is good. There is little evidence that it has been worn a number of times. No perspiration, crease marks or wear and tear can be found. The stitching is firmly constructed and there are no loose threads or discoloration on the facing cloth. The Drab Corded Quilted corset has similar design elements to the Kirby Peckirbia and Kirby New Peckirbia corsets with the style of the modesty lace, the drab colour, the use of corded quilting and the safety front busk.

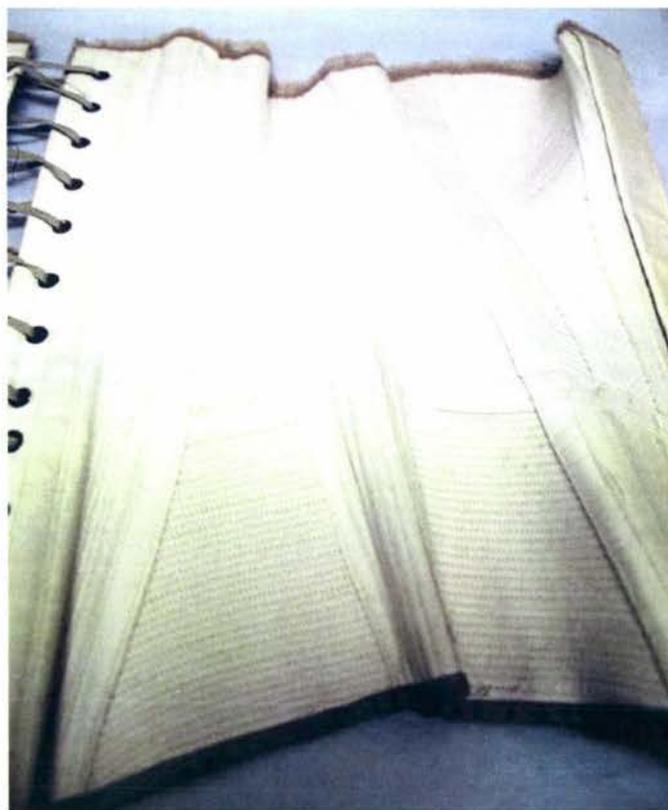


Figure 60 Drab Corded Quilted Corset detail of lining side (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)



Figure 61 CB Corset lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.100)

The CB Corset is made in England and presents design and material characteristics that indicate a manufacturing date between c. 1885-1890. It is made from a combination of peach coutil and a white silk satin that gives an additional contrast. Due to the contrast of the satin lustre, the decorative shaped panel that runs in alignment to the waist area gives the illusion of a more elaborate and intricately constructed corset than does its straightforward design. Six panels run in alignment to the centre front and centre back and are used to create the main shell of the corset.

A total of eighteen 7mm, and four 1.5cm wide steels are used in the overall CB design. A concentration of five steels positioned closely together towards the centre front area is used to help give control and manipulate the front of the wearer's body. Two 1.5cm wide steels have been used at the side front and side back, with the remainder of the 7mm steels being positioned singly around the back of the corset and alongside the centre back eyelets. All steel casings are made



Figure 62 *CB Corset detail of modesty lace and flossing (Collection Canterbury EC179.100)*

from a silk satin and are placed on the facing cloth side with the decorative waist panel beneath. Flossing in an 'x' configuration is placed at the top and bottom of each casing. The flossing is longer in length than what has been seen in other corsets that have this style applied to them. The single 7mm steels placed either side of the eyelets are flossed at the bottom with a chain stitch that curves around the end of the steel cap. This flossing style is repeated at the centre front, at the end of the busk.

The straight front busk has five evenly spaced hooks and studs, with the hooks having an embossed **CB** stamped into them. The typeface used on the hooks is an uppercase serif that clearly displays the brand and informs the customer of the corset's authenticity. Modesty lace with a finished width of 5cm has been placed at the bust edge for femininity, and has a blue silk ribbon threaded through. The ribbon has a zig zag pattern to it, and is seen to be unique as no other corsets viewed have had baby ribbon that is patterned. The blue contrasts with the otherwise monochromatic colour scheme.

The modesty lace wraps around the centre front to the lining side, which is not a common technique. The wrapping of the modesty lace towards the centre front to the lining side, the absence of consistent length basting stitches to hold the lace and stop it curling, and the contrast ribbon that does not co-ordinate, cause authenticity of this design feature to be questioned. The lace may be original and

could have been altered by having the baby ribbon replaced, or it may be recycled from another corset.

The lining side of the CB is plain and has a wide white waist tape. The left side has the brand star logo, brand name and trademark. The black print typography is styled using uppercase serif typeface and contrasts with the white waist tape. The style of typeface matches that seen on the centre front busk hooks. Twenty brass-coloured eyelets run down the centre back and are evenly spaced with two laces, one peach and one white, threaded through them. It is possible that the white lace is not original to the CB, as it is of a circular construction where the peach lace is flat and matches the tone of the peach coutil and has tags on the ends.

The overall condition of the CB is relatively good with no evidence of fraying, wear or tear, perspiration marks or stitch slippage. Foxing is visible and scattered on both facing cloths, the coutil and the silk, and can be seen on both sides of the corset. The likelihood of the paper covered steels being rusted beneath

the casings is high as the lining side shows prominent stripes where the steels are positioned. Some areas of the silk baby ribbon that is threaded through the modesty lace have disintegrated, leaving gaps that are obvious. Some flossing is loose and has been left floating on the facing cloth, where other flossing threads have worn away, leaving thinner 'x' flossing decoration.



Figure 63 CB Corset detail of centre front busk and foxing on satin steel casings (Collection Canterbury EC179.100)

P & S Qual Z17 Zairoid Corset
c. 1885-1890



Figure 64 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid front (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

The P & S Qual Z 17 Zairoid corset was made in England between c. 1885-1890, and has similar design lines to the CB Corset from the same period of manufacture. A single layer of white coutil has been used to create the seven panels of the main corset shell. An additional waist panel that has a concaved shape at the side waist functions to create a firmer and more supportive waist.

All bone casings are sewn on the facing cloth side. Twenty-four 7mm steels are placed singularly around the corset, with a heavy cluster of four steels being placed close to the centre front busk. Other 7mm steels are used alongside the two 1.5cm wide steels at the side front and side back, and either side of the centre back eyelets. Flossing has been used in an 'x' configuration on some of the steel casings. The front 7mm steels, the 1.5cm side steels and the single 7mm steel that runs in



Figure 65 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid detail of centre back eyelets, flossing, bound top edge, modesty lace and ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

Figure 66 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid detail of centre front busk hooks (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

alignment to the centre back have pink silk flossing at the top and bottom of each casing. The flossing used on the 7mm casings is slim with fewer stitches being used than the wider and thicker flossing 1.5cm casings. Two other styles of flossing have been used for the centre back steels and the centre front busk. The centre back steels that run alongside the fifteen brass-coloured eyelets have a running stitch at the top that creates a scalloped line, which echoes the shape of the steels. The bottom of the centre back and front busk have a feather stitch used to decorate and hold the steels and busk in place.

The centre front busk has five evenly spaced hooks and studs as a front closure. The hooks have a **P & S** stamped into them with the addition of the star logo. Modesty lace is attached at the bust edge, which enhances the feminine visual aesthetics and characteristics of the corset. The top edge is scalloped; however, with time it has curled back towards the corset and in some places reveals the bound edge that finishes the top of the coutil beneath. Baby pink 5mm silk ribbon is used and is threaded through the modesty lace. The lace does not extend to the centre back eyelets, rather finishing before the centre back steels and leaving the remainder of the top of the corset exposed. This is seen to be slightly

unusual as the majority of modesty lace seen has started at the centre front edge and has finished at the centre back and often conceals or is secured by the first few eyelets. The modesty lace may not be original to the P & S Qual Zairoid which would explain the difference in finish if it had come from another corset.

The lining side of the P & S Qual Zairoid corset is simple with the 3cm waist tape contrasting the coutil. Both sides of the waist tape have been used for typography. The waist tape has been pre-printed with a dark blue ink and the stitching from the steel casings has gone through the printed design and typeface. The phrases, *BRITISH MANUFACTURE* and *PERFECTION OF SHAPE* are carefully integrated in a way to display a banner that floats round two art nouveau styled women on the left side. The design is highly ornate, feminine and artistic. The right side waist tape has the style name Qual Z17 Zairoid and **warranted not to rust** with a small P & S logo. A combination of lower case serif and a script based typeface have been used, and all appear in a bold manner that uses the maximum width of the waist tape.

The Z 17 may in fact be 2 17, but is difficult to positively establish due to the style of script typeface that is used and no supporting evidence through paper labels, manufacturer's corset box, or corresponding paperwork. The use of bold and a large typeface illustrate the manufacturer's desire to clearly inform the



Figure 67 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid detail of modesty lace at bust edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)



Figure 68 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid facing cloth detail of flossing at the bottom back from centre front to centre back (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

customer about the corset. The practical information contrasts the decorative, feminine and artistic logo that makes links to the corset's function and the feminine decoration and beautification that is seen on the facing cloth side.

The P& S Qual Zairoid is in relatively good condition. The facing cloth has signs of foxing which has occurred with age and small dots of rust are visible on some steel casings where the paper covered steels have rusted beneath. One eyelet just above the waist tape has come away from the coutil, where its opposite corresponding eyelet is still firmly attached. Some of the flossing has loosened and single loose threads float on the facing cloth. The modesty lace has come away near the centre back and hangs loosely on the facing cloth side.

Pencil markings are scattered on the lining side and have been added after manufacturing by a range of different people as the typography style is different for each one. Two of these markings are on the hook side of the bust and relate to size and price. The other two handwritten markings appear to have no direct relation to the corset as one is 4, and the other is a series of numbers, 070020. It is uncertain what these numbers relate to, and may have connection to drapery store stock records, or the corset style reordering code.



Figure 69 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid lining side detail of typography from left side of waist tape (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)



Figure 70 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid lining side detail of typography from right side of waist tape details (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

The Celebrated Daydream
c. 1885-1890



Figure 71 The Celebrated Daydream front (Collection Canterbury EC 179.91)

The Celebrated Daydream was made in England with the timeframe of 1885-1890. The design characteristics of the Daydream are similar to the CB Corset and the P&S Qual Z 17 Zairoid, which are both in the same manufacturing timeframe. It is believed the Daydream has not been worn and is still accompanied by its original box and paper label.

The Daydream is made from a single layer of white coutil and a white silk satin. The coutil is used for the main body of the facing cloth with the satin utilised for a waist panel and bone casings, which are all placed on the facing cloth side. Sixteen 7mm and six 1.5cm baleen bones have been positioned around the corset. The 7mm bones are placed in alignment with the centre front and flank either side of the centre back eyelets. The 1.5cm bones are placed at the side seam and move around to the centre back.



Figure 72 The Celebrated Daydream lying flat on table with centre back laced and showing the additional panel under casings at the waist (Collection Canterbury EC 179.91)



Figure 73 The Celebrated Daydream detail of modesty lace and ribbon concealing eyelets at the centre back (Collection Canterbury EC 179.91)

Pink silk flossing in an 'x' configuration is placed at the bottom of the six front 7mm bones. A running stitch flossing style has been used around the bottom of the 1.5cm bones and curves echoing the shape of the bone beneath. Eighteen dark coloured metal eyelets run down the centre back and have two laces with metal tags threaded through them. A straight front busk with five hooks and studs has been used as the main centre front closure. The bust edge is decorated by a floral influenced design, modesty lace with a width of 5cm, and threaded with pink silk baby ribbon. The modesty lace conceals the first two centre back eyelets and the 5mm binding used to finish the top edge. Large basting stitches can be seen on the lining side and are used to hold the lace down to stop it from curling or moving about.

The lining side of the Daydream has bold white cotton waist tape that contrasts the discoloured coutil. The waist tape displays blue printed typography and informs the purchaser of the name, **DAYDREAM**, in a bold uppercase serif



Figure 74 The Celebrated Daydream lining side flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC 179.91)



Figure 75 The Celebrated Daydream typography on the left side waist tape (Collection Canterbury EC179.91)



Figure 76 The Celebrated Daydream paper label near right side bust edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.91)

typeface on the left side. Beneath the brand name the phrase REGISTERED is placed in small uppercase sans serif typeface. The term *Dual 10* is to the right of this and displays feminine connections by the use of a script typeface. The dual 10 makes connection to the quantity of bones that each side of the corset has. A pencil marking of *5/6* is also present and correlates to a drapery store price or stock quantities code.

The right side of the waist tape uses uppercase serif typeface and boldly states the Daydream has **WARRANTED BONE**. The upper right side lining displays another feature, the manufacturer's paper label. The paper label reinforces and reiterates information seen on the waist tape and accompanying box. The label is simple in design being printed in black ink on a white background with a black straight line border. A combination of script, serif, and sans serif typeface has been used, with two curved arrangements amongst the standard straight printed layout. Handwriting is present on the label and fills in specific information under the generic headings of dual and size, with the remaining heading of price left blank. The label is not in pristine condition and has been slightly torn and is coming away from the coutil. The overall condition of the Daydream displays discolouration of the coutil with extensive foxing that contrasts with the sheen of the satin used for the casings and waist panel.

The Daydream box accompanies the corset and shows evidence of age and deterioration with one end missing and the edges of the lid showing abrasion and wear. The box lid is highly decorative and fits into the illustration style seen in the more elaborate women's journals and fashion newspapers prior to the introduction of the Edwardian Gibson Girl style of illustration. Multiple colours have been used in the design. The word **DAYDREAM** is in bold red and stands out amongst the floral pastel background. The phrases *CELEBRATED* and *REGISTERED* are intertwined into the elaborate border decoration and discreetly positioned not to overshadow the Daydream brand name.

An art nouveau stereotypical idealised woman is seen in a state of slight *déshabillé* wearing her hair down and in a Daydream Corset. Her arms held above her head, holding the Celebrated Daydream box, allude to showing her strength, and the comfort and flexibility she has while wearing the corset. Displaying undertones of erotic sexuality and the ideal feminine figure of splendour, she is in contrast to the strait-laced Victorian New Zealand society,

which upheld strong moral virtues and principles that surrounded a woman's dress and appearance. Similar images of women would have been seen in newspapers, ladies' journals, trading cards displayed in drapery stores, and on other corset boxes like the ABC Universal.



*Figure 77 The Celebrated Daydream box
(Collection Canterbury EC179.91)*

B & C Belted Corset
c. 1890-1895



Figure 78 B&C Belted Corset No. 3800 front (Collection Te Papa , GH007871, Negative no. L002570)

The B & C Corset No 3800 was made in England and shows characteristics of manufacture between 1885 and 1890, though it may be as late as c. 1895. It has been difficult to determine the date just by the corset silhouette and design style. The spoon busk and corded quilted lines that are present were common features of the early to mid 1880s corsets, where the wide band of elastic belting at the hem presents characteristics that were commonly featured later in the mid to late 1890s. The large size waist offers little help to define a silhouette and relate the corset to a more definite time of manufacturer.



Figure 79 B&C Belted Corset No. 3800 centre back (Collection Te Papa , GH007871, Negative no. I.002570)



Figure 80 B&C Belted Corset No. 3800 detail of corded quilting at bust edge (Collection Te Papa , GH007871, Negative no. I.002570)

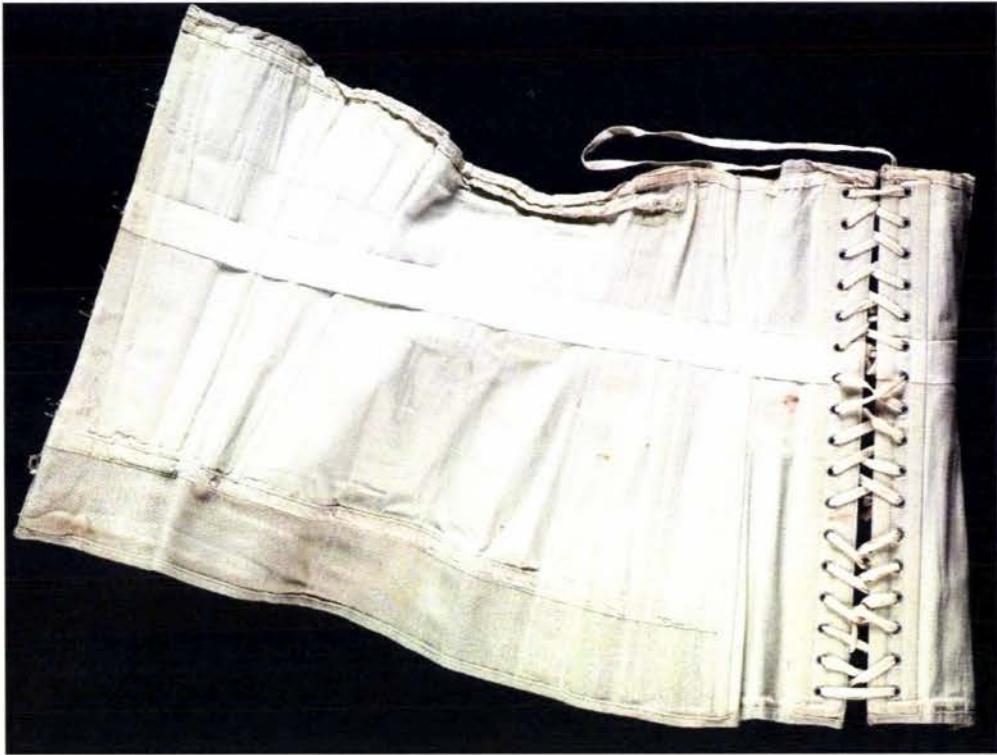


Figure 81 B&C Belted Corset No. 3800 detail of right lining side flat on table (Collection Te Papa , GH007871, Negative no. L002570)

The single layer of coutil, originally white in colour, has been used for the main shell of the corset and the steel casings. The design is complex, having six panel seams, elastic belting, corded quilted lines, steels, flossing, broderie anglaise and a spoon busk. The seams are concealed by the steel casings and are placed on the facing cloth side. The steel casings that are positioned between the side front and side back are sewn over the elastic belting. Four 7mm single steels at the front finish where the elastic belting begins and are placed in a fan like formation to give support to the abdomen and the bust. The bust area has additional support in the form of horizontal corded quilted lines that are placed in a thirteen row cluster, and give extra control, support and manipulation to the bust.

One 7mm steel runs alongside the centre back eyelets and creates a firm straight area that would encourage good posture when worn. Two groups of 7mm paired steels run in alignment to the centre back eyelets. These steels are the length of the corset, as are the three 1.5cm steels positioned at the side. The top of each steel has flossing in an 'x' configuration, and uses the same colour silk thread as

the coutil. The wearer, possibly for reasons of comfort, ease of movement and bending, has removed the three 1.5cm wide steels positioned at the side. Small slits are evident on the inside of the corset near the elastic belting and show how the steels have been separated from the casing without being revealed on the facing cloth side. Seventeen metal eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and are threaded with two laces that have two metal tags remaining. The tags and eyelet's have tarnish marks on them and have a dull grey and brown-black tone to them.

The centre front busk is spoon shaped and has five hooks and studs with the bottom two hooks and studs placed closer together. The busk is sewn over the elastic belting at the centre front. Tape is used to conceal the raw edge of the coutil where it meets the elastic belting. Binding with a 5mm finished width has been used on the top and bottom edge of the coutil to give it a neat and tidy finish. Broderie anglaise is used for modesty at the bust edge with the embroidery completed in a white thread, which is very subtle and similar to the flossing. It conceals the top edge binding and shows the cotton base of the broderie anglaise to be an open weave which is unlike others seen. Overall the broderie anglaise gives the B & C corset No 3800 a subtle feminine attribute.

Waist tape is sewn from the centre front edge to the centre back edge on the lining side. It is held in place by the topstitching of the steel casings and the eyelet panels at the centre back. The left side of the waist tape has manufacturers details printed on it. Handwriting is seen on the inside right bust with a 38 and a 7/8- marked in pencil. These have been presumably placed on the corset by the drapery store and relate to price and size.

The overall condition of the B & C Corset No 3800 is very good. This may be partly due to having some museum conservation work done on it. There are spots of rust visible on the lining side at the centre back between some eyelets and on the panel seams. A small amount of foxing is visible down the centre front busk and around the waist, however it is very subtle. Discoloration at the underarm is evident from perspiration, along with crease lines where it has become relaxed after the bones were removed and dye has transferred from outer layers of dress.

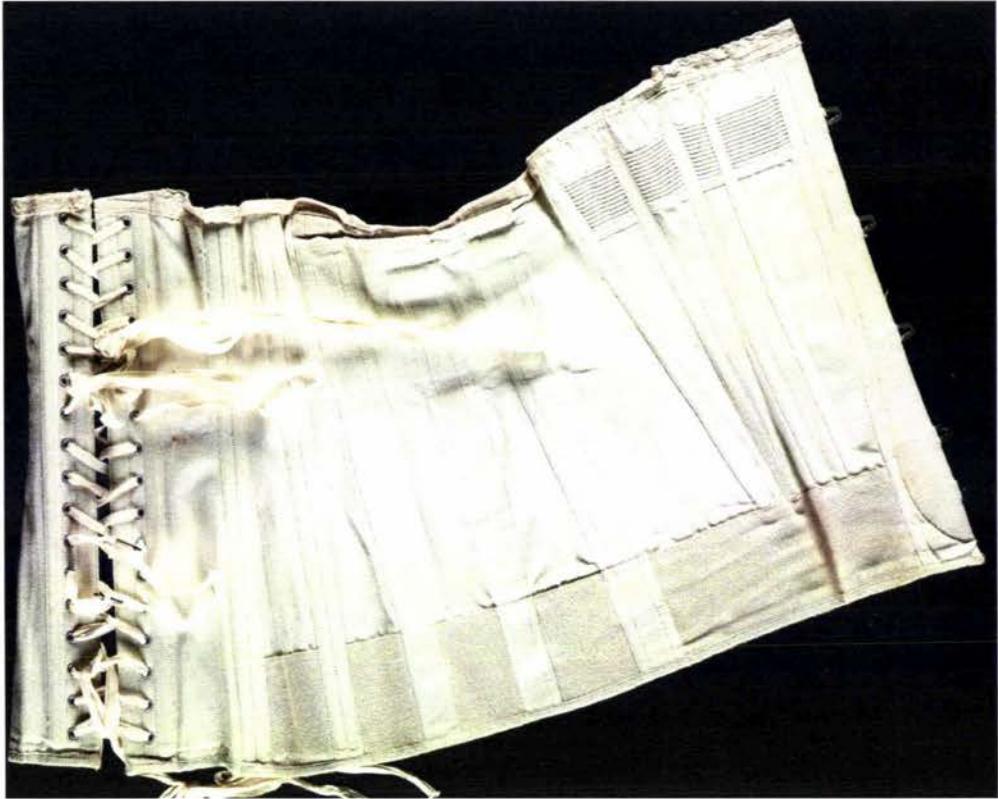
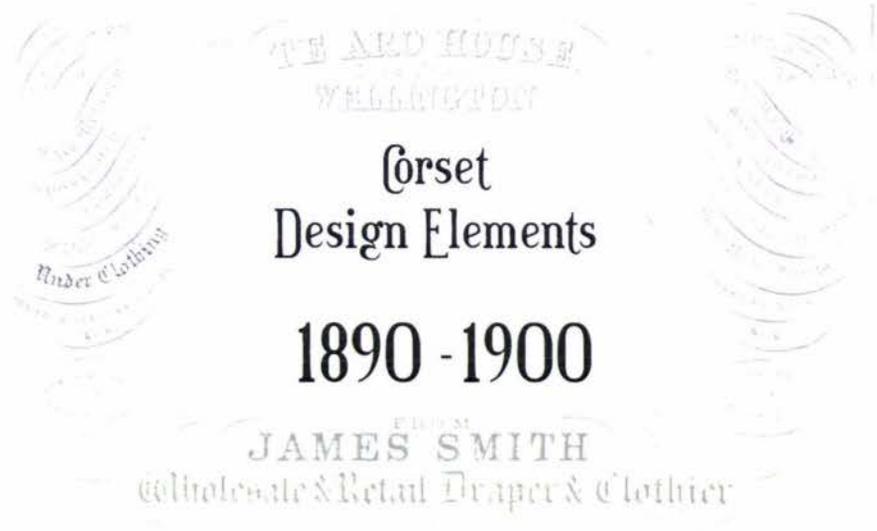


Figure 82 B&C Belted Corset No. 3800 detail of right facing cloth side flat on table (Collection Te Papa , GH007871, Negative no. I.002570)



THE ARD HOUSE
WELLSINGTON

Corset
Design Elements

1890 - 1900

FROM
JAMES SMITH
Wholesale & Retail Draper & Clothier

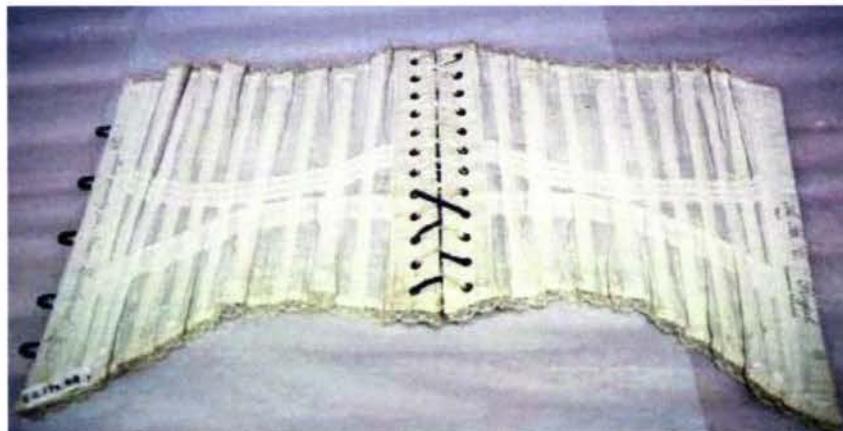


Figure 83 ABC Regal lining side laying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88G)

The ABC Regal is a unique corset in comparison to the other ABC corsets and to all the other corsets viewed in this catalogue. It is made in England for New Zealand, but is not made from the standard coutil cloth, instead, it has been constructed from a fine white lawn. The design suggests the 20 inch waist ABC Regal may have been intended as a summer corset, with the choice of fabric being lighter in overall weight, and the delicate appearance. The nature of the corset design and fabric choice would enable it to ventilate when worn against the body. It may have been advertised as a health corset or one to wear when partaking in sporting pursuits.

A heavier white cotton cloth has been used for the bone casings that are sewn to the facing side of the corset. A combination of eleven 7mm and two 1.5 cm bones have been used in each side of the corset, with the two wider bones placed at the side and side back area. Extra support tape has been placed around the waist and has been positioned beneath the bone casings. Two clusters of three rows of white tape, which has a binding appearance, have been placed in a curved

configuration and run from the centre back to the centre front. The bones and casings run the full length of the corset and no flossing has been used to hold them in place with the ends being concealed by the modesty lace.

Modesty lace that was originally white in colour, with a width of 4cm, has been placed at the top and bottom edges of the corset. The lace is delicate in design with scalloped edges and has provision for baby ribbon to be threaded through the incorporated eyelets. Beneath the modesty lace 5mm wide binding can be seen and is used to finish and give a neat appearance at the top and bottom edges. The ABC Regal has been made by machine, though hand stitching appears in the form of large basting stitches that can be seen on the lining side used to hold the lace in place to stop it curling and moving.

Twelve eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and two laces are threaded through them. Both laces are different and it is presumed they are not the original laces that would have come with the ABC Regal. One lace is black and the other is white, and one has a circular appearance and this differs from the standard flat laces that have been seen in the majority of corsets. The centre front has a straight front busk with five hooks and studs that are evenly spaced except for the bottom two, which are closer together.

The busk facings reveal the ABC manufacturer's typography. The main script typeface uses a combination of size to communicate the ABC Regal has been specially made for the New Zealand woman. The brand, style name and New Zealand are all the same size and style of typeface, and this emphasizes and

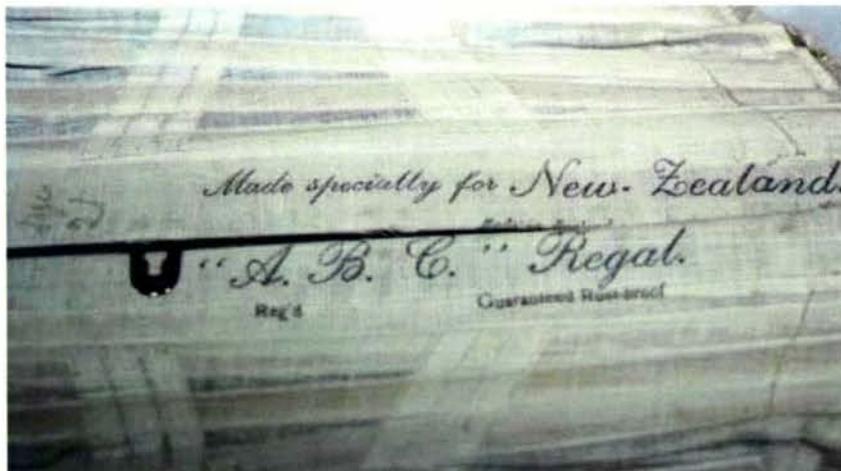


Figure 84 ABC Regal lining side detail of typography down centre front busk facing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88G)

decorates an otherwise plain lining. Standard details of GUARANTEED RUSTPROOF and REGISTERED are in a small uppercase serif typeface and have less emphasis in comparison to the rest of the information communicated due to the choice of letter size. The black ink on the white lawn background stands out and creates an illusion of delicacy by using fine lines that complement and add to the ABC Regal feminine design attributes.

The overall condition of the ABC Regal suggests it has not been worn on a body as there are no crease lines present at the waist. As the facing cloth is lightweight and delicate, stress would be seen with stitch and weave slippage at prominent areas such as the waist, however, there are no signs of stress in any of the areas typically known for deterioration. There are spots of rust along some of the steel casings, and patches of foxing scattered over the entire corset. The steel casings have a darker fawn appearance and the paper-covered steels can be seen below due to the fine nature of the facing cloth used.

PD Royal Z368
c. 1890s



Figure 85 PD Royal Z368 front (Collection Otago G 85.530)

Made in Belgium, the PD Royal Z368 Corset is sturdy and practical looking. The design of the corset is simple, consisting of one layer of hard-wearing dove grey coutil that is made into six panels that run in alignment to the centre back. The seams are concealed by the steel casings that are positioned on the outside of the corset, and are made from the same fabric as the main corset shell. White twill fabric has been used for the centre back eyelet facing instead of the dove grey coutil.

Seventeen eyelets are spaced evenly down the centre back and are a grey colour and have been threaded with one lace that still has its tags attached. Some eyelets show signs of tarnishing and age and have taken on a green appearance. The centre front spoon busk has five hooks and studs and has two additional brass hooks at the hem as the busk does not run the full length of the centre front. The brass hooks close in the opposite direction to the busk hooks and stud closure.

Combinations of 7mm and 1.5cm wide steels have been used. It is presumed the corset is stiffened with steel rather than baleen due to its weight and

the thinness of the casings. Five 7mm steels are closely concentrated in the front area alongside the spoon busk and run the full length of the corset. The side seam and side back are stiffened with two 1.5cm wide steels and have single 7mm steels positioned between them. The remainder of the back and either side of the eyelets are supported with six 7mm steels. A band of 7.5cm wide elastic webbing has been used at the bottom of the corset, with some of the bone casings sewn over this. Double topstitching is used to hold down the 1.5cm wide steels. The casing sits tightly over the steel and shows an embossed detail of the metal caps that are used to finish the bottom of the steel.



Figure 86 PD Royal Z368 detail of steel casing over the belting at the side area (Collection Otago G 85.530)

The corset has been assembled by sewing machines with hand stitching seen on the front edge where the facing attaches to the front around the busk. Basting is also seen on the lining side and functions to hold the modesty lace in place. The basting is inconsistent in size and a little messy aesthetically and it may not be the original manufacturer's basting. The hand stitching on the front edge is coming apart slightly and is loose, enabling the spoon busk to be seen and revealing the paper that creates a shield between the steel and the coutil. Manufacturers believed paper would stop the rust occurring and being transferred to the fabric if this procedure was done.

White twill tape has been used to bind and give a 5mm finish to the top edge of the corset. The inside of the corset has a white 2.5cm wide waist tape with a 1cm wide white tape being used to conceal and finish the top edge of the elastic webbing. Like other PD Corsets, the PD Royal Z368 has the same approach to

typography. The information is presented in blue ink on the white waist tape on the lining of the corset and uses both the right and left side. The PD crest is used with a combination of typeface, uppercase serif and script, and divides the information: the PD was manufactured in Paris and in Brussels. On the other side of the waist tape the PD name stands out in a bold manner and is easily seen on the plain lining. The statement of the corset being rustless would confirm that paper steels were used. Additional typography is located at the centre back lacing, towards the bust edge. Simply stamped in a blue ink, the style number of Z 368 can be clearly seen. The same typeface and manner and style of communication of brandname can be seen in the PD Royal 3296.



Figure 87 PD Royal Z368 lining side detail centre back eyelets facing and style number (Collection Otago G 85.530)



Figure 88 PD Royal Z368 detail of modesty lace at bust edge (Collection Otago G 85.530)

Figure 89 PD Royal Z368 detail of waist tape on lining side showing manufacturers details and crest (Collection Otago G 85.530)



Figure 90 PD Royal Z368 detail of waist tape on lining side showing manufacturers details and rustless corset statement (Collection Otago G 85.530)



PD Royal 3296
c. 1890s



Figure 91 PD Royal 3296 flat on table facing cloth side (Collection Otago G85.529)

The PD Royal 3296 Corset is constructed from a single layer of white coutil with the steel casings and centre back eyelet facings made from the same coutil fabric. The design of the corset is straightforward with five panels that are machine sewn and concealed by the steel casings that are positioned on the facing cloth side. The only sign of hand sewing is on the inside of the corset where large basting stitches hold the modesty lace down.

Eleven 7mm steels are placed around the corset with two 1.5cm steels on the side seam and side back. The first three steels near the centre front are on a diagonal running toward the end of the busk. The remainder of the steels are in alignment to the centre back. The front steels and busk finish above the bottom edge of the corset as the centre front is long in length.

The busk has five silver hook-and-stud fastenings, with no signs of rust or tarnishing. Fourteen metal eyelets are down the centre back and have two white laces threaded through them. The laces have no tags, and are probably not original to the PD. The top and bottom edges of the corset have been finished with a 5mm white binding tape with the top binding being concealed by the modesty lace. The



Figure 92 PD Royal 3296 detail of casings where the end of the steel finishes above the hem and centre front busk hooks with PD initials (Collection Otago G85.529)



Figure 93 PD Royal 3296 detail of modesty lace and centre back eyelets (Collection Otago G85.529)

lining of the PD Royal 3296 shows the manufacturer's details that are the same as what is seen in other PD corsets such as the New PD Corset, and the PD Royal Z368. The same typeface and colour ink is used for all of the main aspects. The PD crest is placed in a central position with the Brussels and Paris information flanking either side. The size of the crest is slightly smaller than that seen in some of the other PD corsets and the lower line of information is not interrupted. The crest is the same seen in printed advertisements that appeared in a range of New Zealand newspapers and ladies' journals. The manufacturing style code *3296* is placed to the right of the main PD details on the left side rather than being positioned at the centre back near the lacing as seen in PD Royal Z368. The

typeface used for this is slightly different and has more of a script based style than that of a sans serif or serif. The centre front busk hooks also have the PD trademark stamped into them, as what is seen in the New PD Corset.

Generally the PD Royal 3296 is in good condition. Foxing is evident on the coutil, and random discoloration is apparent on some steel casings resulting from the steels beneath being rusty. Faint lines are visible around the waist area on the facing cloth side show where the coutil has dye transfer from other garments being worn.



Figure 94 PD Royal 3296 detail of waist tape right side showing PD manufacturing details (Collection Otago G85.529)



Figure 95 PD Royal 3296 detail of waist tape from left side showing PD manufacturing details (Collection Otago G85.529)

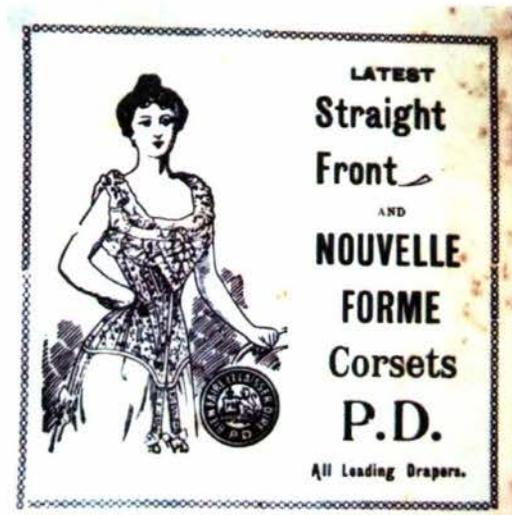


Figure 96 PD Corset advertisement that contains the PD crest, NZGLJ, Saturday August 27 1904, p 63

Fitu Dual Z 105
c. 1890s



Figure 97 Fitu Dual Z 105 front (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)

A single layer of cotton coutil with a sateen finish has been used to construct the Fitu Dual Z 105. Probably originally white in colour, it now has a pale fawn-green tone to the facing cloth. It is formed from six panels that are different lengths, and are incorporated into the wide elastic belting at the bottom edge. As with the majority of other corsets, the seams on the Fitu are flat felled, and in this particular corset are concealed by the bone casings that have been placed on the facing cloth side.

Two 1.5cm wide baleen bones have been used in conjunction with twenty-eight 7mm baleen bones. The majority of the 7mm bones have been paired



Figure 98 Fitu Dual Z 105 detail of spoon busk, wide steel casing, flossing and belting (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)



Figure 99 Fitu Dual Z 105 bottom hook detail at base of spoon busk (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)



Figure 100 Fitu Dual Z 105 detail of flossing at bust edge and broderie anglaise (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)

together, with two single ones being placed alongside the wider 1.5cm bones that are located at the side and side back. Single 7mm bones flank either side of the eyelets at the centre back which is a standardized construction method seen in a broad range of other corsets. The paired 7mm bones run in alignment to the centre front and stop where the elastic belting begins. The bones at the side back and centre back run the full length of the Fitu Dual Z and are placed over the elastic belting to give extra support and to stop it rising or rolling upwards when worn.

All of the baleen bones have metal tips that have caused a slight raised surface area on the bone casings. The single bones have flossing in a triangle configuration at the top and bottom, bar the ones that run full length. The 1.5cm wide bones have flossing at the top in the form of an 'x' style and have a running stitch styled flossing placed at the bottom of the casing in a shape that mimics the end of the metal-capped baleen bone. All flossing is in a pink silk thread and matches the pink broderie anglaise placed at the bust edge. The broderie anglaise replaces the more commonly seen modesty lace and baby ribbon, and enhances the Fitu Dual Z with feminine characteristics and beautification. The design on the broderie anglaise has a repetitive geometric element to it as well as a delicate floral pattern. A solid scalloped bottom edge is mimicked by three rows of satin stitch in pink silk thread that creates a monochromatic colour way.

Nineteen brass coloured eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back. Two laces, one white and one pink are threaded through the eyelets, and though it cannot be easily seen from the way the laces have been tied, tags are on the ends. Both laces appear to look original to the Fitu and match the design by manner of colours. The centre front closure is a spoon busk that has five evenly spaced hooks and studs. Two additional hooks and eyes are located below the busk to ensure it remains closed and does not come undone when worn. The front panel runs the



Figure 101 Fitu Dual Z 105 centre back (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)



Figure 102 Fitu Dual Z 105 lining side flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)

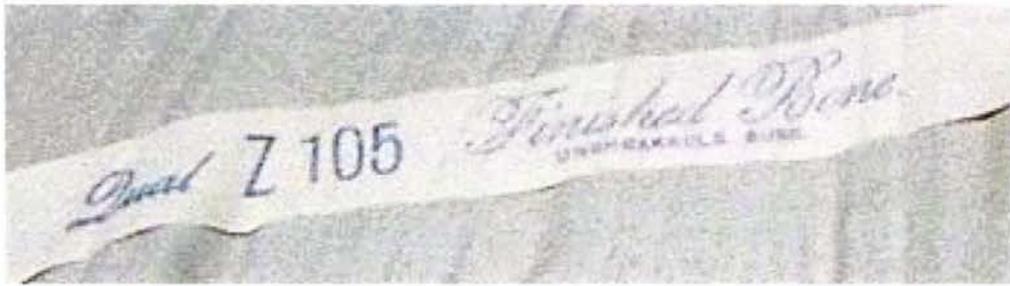


Figure 103 Fitu Dual Z 105 detail typography on waist tape on lining side (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)



Figure 104 Fitu Dual Z 105 detail typography on waist tape on lining side (Collection Canterbury EC179.95)

full length of the corset, and is stitched over the elastic belting.

The lining side reveals a 2.5cm wide cotton waist tape that runs from the centre front to the centre back. The manufacturer's details are printed along the tape in blue ink and detail other features of the corset outside of the standard brand name. The left side appears bolder than the right by the differentiation of the size, use of bold typeface, the introduction of images, and the three different typefaces. The customer is clearly informed about the *world-renowned Fitu* corset and that it is a trademark garment. The right side of the Fitu reinforces the brand's style number, and that the corset is made from finished bones and has an unbreakable busk. Finished bone is a term used to refer to the steel caps that are used on the ends of the baleen to stop them wearing through the coutil.

The condition of the Fitu shows it has hardly been worn, as there are no repetitive crease marks around the waist. Small watermarks are evident around the underarm area on the right hand side, though this could be from perspiration or from sustaining water damage while having a steam moulded finish applied at the factory, or damage occurred while at the drapery store. Foxing can also be seen on the facing cloth and has occurred over time and with age.

ABC Favorite
c. 1890-1905



Figure 105 ABC Favorite facing cloth side lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)

The ABC Favorite has similar design, construction and functional features as the ABC Treasure and the ABC Gaiety. All three corsets are classified as ribbon corsets or tape girdles and show they would have been manufactured between are c. 1890-1907. Ribbon corsets were introduced to promote good health, were advocated for sports wear, and were presented as summer corsets for the colonies with the theory that air moved through the ribbons. Being favourable for golf, tennis and other outdoor sports, they were also often advertised to be desirable for evening wear. Being designed shorter at the sides and having only the side waist area boned, the ribbon corset created less restriction on the torso. In general the construction of this style of corset is relatively simple in contrast to other corsets, having less reinforcing of steels and bones, and is smaller in proportion, thus using

less materials, and has little or no panels and requires less seaming.

The ABC Favorite gives an appearance of a sophisticated corset that is made from expensive materials that contrast with those of the other two ribbon corsets. These characteristics suggest that it may have been worn for evening wear rather than for sporting pursuits. It is constructed from blue and white striped silk ribbon and white silk satin cloth that is used for the busk, centre back lacing and to encase the nine steels at the side area. Five ribbons come from the centre front bust and unfurl and overlap to fit into the side panel boned area. The side panel consists of five steels that are the same in length and grouped alongside each other tightly which creates a rigid side area. The panel is constructed from white silk satin and is self lined.

The back comprises of four ribbons that are the same width as the front, and are positioned and attached in the same manner as seen on the front. The ribbon merges into three steels grouped tightly together that run alongside the centre back eyelets. These steels like all the others used in the ABC Favorite are all the same width and length. Twelve dark coloured metal eyelets are placed evenly down the centre back, have no lace threaded through, and are larger than the eyelets seen in other corsets. This eyelet size may be specifically used for ribbon



Figure 106 ABC Favorite detail of side panel of steels (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)



Figure 107 ABC Favorite detail of centre front busk bow (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)



Figure 108 ABC Favorite detail of silk ribbon, white silk satin and stitching at front hem (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)

corsets as the ABC Treasure and the ABC Gaiety have the same size feature.

The centre front busk is long and decoratively shaped with a fluted appearance which overshadows the five hooks and studs that are evenly placed down the centre front. The top of the busk is simply decorated with a bow made from the ribbon used in the corset. The bow is simply attached to the hook side of the busk by a few hand stitches. Two hose supporters are positioned at the bottom of the centre front busk, which creates an illusion of extra length to the centre front that contrasts the sides that appear shorter than other ribbon corsets. The brand identification and style name are simply printed in blue ink on the side steel casing on the lining side. Unlike the other ABC corsets, the ABC Favorite does not state it was specially made for New Zealand. It is in relatively good condition and has no major wear or tear. It may have not had any wear as there is no evidence of the silk ribbon having creases or folds which would come with wearing it on the body.



Figure 109 ABC Favorite lining side flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)



ABC Gaiety
 c. 1890-1905



Figure 110 ABC Gaiety facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88R)



Figure 111 ABC Gaiety lining side laying flat on table with manufacturing brand name on the right panel of side steels (Collection Canterbury EC179.88R)

The ABC Gaiety uses colourful and decorative floral embroidery for a feminine aesthetic on a cotton weave ribbon. Unlike the striped silk ribbon used in the ABC Favorite, this ribbon corset does not have an expensive quality to it, and is made from cotton. The ABC Gaiety lacks an initial striking appearance, though it does have a feminine aesthetic in the way the floral design colours of pale blues and greens have been incorporated subtly against the white background. It may have been used for an evening corset like the ABC Favorite due to the decorative nature of the ribbon and displaying the identical pattern and construction methods applied.



Figure 112 ABC Gaiety detail of facing cloth side panel, ribbon and front busk (Collection Canterbury EC179.88R)

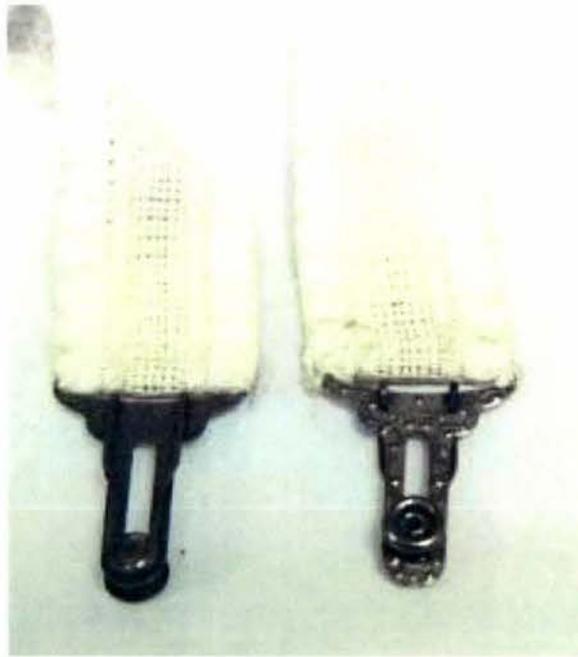


Figure 113 ABC Gaiety detail of hose supporter ribbon and clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.88R)

ABC Treasure
c. 1890-1905



Figure 114 ABC Treasure facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88Q)

The ABC Treasure is constructed from a strong white cotton twilled tape that has an appearance of webbing, but it has no elastic properties to it. Unusually the tape used on the bottom and top of the corset has an overcast stitch on the edges which appears to prevent fraying and possibly adds strength and avoid stretching. A different cotton twilled cloth and tape has been used for the busk and the bone casings. Like the ABC Favorite, five tapes come from the centre front busk and overlap each other to merge into the single steel casing at the side seam area. Three tapes measuring the same width as the front, make up the side back and are sewn into the eyelet and steeled centre back. The lining side of the casings display the makers name and style printed in blue ink. The typography assures the purchaser that the corset was specially made for New Zealand. Nine dark coloured metal eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and have a lace threaded through with two metal tags on the ends.

Five silver coloured metal hooks and studs are evenly spaced down the centre straight front busk. Two hose supporters similar to the ABC Favorite are attached at the bottom of the busk and create the same illusion adding extra length. Generally the corset is in good condition but does have some foxing on the tapes. The metal lace tags, centre front hooks and the hose supporter clips have small aspects of tarnishing, which has occurred over time and with age. The ABC Treasure may not have been worn, as there are no crease or fold marks on the tape that would indicate movement or bending from being worn on the body.

All the reinforcing in the casings in the ABC Treasure are steel that has paper covers and metal tips. This is evident from the weight of the corset and how the steel can be seen at the bottom of the steel casing. The steels are able to be removed from the lower edge of the casing at the side area. Creating a more flexible and comfortable fit, the ABC Treasure has characteristics similar to demi-corsets, and may have been worn during the day when completing household tasks or while playing sport.



Figure 115 ABC Treasure detail of steel casing, paper covered steel with metal cap, and (Collection Canterbury EC179.88Q)



Figure 116 ABC Treasure lining side lying flat on table with centre back laced. Typography details can be seen on the side steel casings (Collection Canterbury EC179.88Q)



Figure 117 ABC Treasure detail of hose supporter ribbon and clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.88Q)

Ladies' & Children's Underclothing.

Children's Cotton Blouses, each	...	3/11	4/11	5/11	1 8	and	1 11
Ladies' and Children's Sun Bonnets	...	3/11	4/11		1		
River Hats, white and coloured, each	...	4/11	5/11		1 11	and	2 11
Ladies' White, Pink and Natural Combinations	...				2 11		
Ladies' Cotton Ribbed Combinations, per pair	...				2 3		
Girls' White Cotton Combinations, per pair	...				1 9	and	1 11
Ladies' Zephyr and Cotton Bloomers, per pair	...				2 8		
Ladies' Ribbed Wool Vests, 2 for	...				1 11		
Ladies' Ribbed Cotton Vests, 2 for	...				1/-		
Children's Wool Vests, 2 for	...				1 6		
Ladies' Longcloth Nightdresses, trimmed embroidery	...				3 3		
Ladies' Longcloth Chemises, trimmed embroidery	...				2 3		
Ladies' Longcloth Knickers, trimmed embroidery	...				2 3		
Ladies' White Skirts, daintily trimmed embroidery	...				2 11		
Ladies' Camisoles, trimmed lace, each	...				2 3		
Girls' Cream Coats, handsomely trimmed embroidery	...	15/6	16	25/-	8 11	7 11	8 11
Girls' Coloured Coats	...	16/6	13/6	17/6	4 11	6 11	8 11
Ribbon Corsets, white and coloured	...				2 9		
A special lot of P.D. Sample Corsets, new shapes, per pair	...				3 11	to	12 6
A very good line of Grey Corsets, straight fronts, per pair	...				2 11		
A special line in Broche for	...				2 11		
Ladies' White Smocked Knee Combinations (very good value)	...				4 11		
Fascinators, in several shades, each	...				1 6		
Bathing Dresses, ladies' and children's, all sizes (woven)	...				1 11		

Figure 118 Ballantynes Department Store advertisement detail for ribbon corsets, white and coloured, (The Press, Christchurch, Tuesday 17th January 1905)

B & C Belted Corset
c. 1890-1895



Figure 119 B & C Belted Corset front (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 73/220)

The B & C Belted corset is made in England and displays characteristics to place it in a manufacturing timeframe of c. 1890-1895, though it may be as late as c. 1899. The corset is constructed from a single layer of white coutil and incorporates the design feature of wide elastic belting at the hemline. A combination of single 7mm steels and 1.5cm wide steels are used in the overall design. The single 7mm steels are placed at the front and stop where the elastic belting begins, with the centre back single steels running full length alongside the eyelets. The 1.5cm wide steels also run the full length of the corset and are positioned at the side and side back. All casings are made from the same coutil that makes up the corset's main shell and are flossed using a pale blue silk thread that forms an 'x' formation flossing style.

The centre front of the B & C Belted corset has a spoon busk with four

hooks and studs. This is seen to be unusual as all busks seen, straight or spoon, had five hooks and studs. An additional metal hook and eye is positioned at the bottom edge of the centre front and gives extra security. Modesty lace is placed at the centre front bust and has two rows of blue 5mm baby ribbon threaded through. The lace is slightly different from others seen as the floral design is positioned at the bottom of the lace with the top having the baby ribbon threaded through. The majority of other modesty laces show this in the reverse order. The modesty lace is quite wide and extends down the centre front and finishes between the first and second hook and stud. The stud pokes through the lace and is overshadowed by the detail within the lace design. The wide modesty lace, the ribbon, flossing and spoon busk gives the corset a very subtle feminine aesthetic and quality.

The lining of the B & C Belted corset is plain and holds no decoration aside from the white cotton waist tape and typography. It is simply identified by the



Figure 120 B & C Belted Corset detail of modesty lace inserted with blue baby ribbon at centre front (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 73/220)



Figure 121 B & C Belted Corset detail of typography on the waist tape (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 73/220)

bold black ink typography that contrasts the white waist tape. Being printed in script similar to other corsets, it highlights and harmonises the curves created when worn on the body. The name and style are on the left side and are larger than the country it was manufactured in. The manufacturer's logo is the one aspect that stands out in an otherwise plain white lining.

The overall condition of the B & C Belted corset is very good and though there are patches of foxing, there is no wear or tear, dye transfer, waist creasing, or evidence to support it was a corset that was worn on a daily basis. Moisture has caused some effect over time on the steels as the casings have a darker appearance than the rest of the coutil and suggest the paper covered steels that lie beneath are rusted.

Business Advertisements.



**R. H. White and Co's
CORSET**
AND
Underclothing Department

is fully stocked with Seasonable Goods,
imported direct from the manufacturers.

R. H. WHITE & CO'S CORSETS
are the best value in the trade,
being marked at the Lowest Possible Price
for Cash only.

Health Corsets, 5/6,
The Special, 5/6
C.B. Corsets (model as above), 4/6,
4/11, 5/8, 5/6, 7/6, 8/9, and 10/6.
Colours—Drab, Olivegreen, White,
etc., etc.
P.D. Corsets, all colours, 5/6, 5/11,
5/11, 7/6, 9/6, 10/6
Belted Corsets, 8/11, 9/11, 10/6
Thompson's and other regular makes
also kept in stock
Ladies' Naps, Cardinal, and Duck-
laminated Blouses, 3/6, 4/6, etc.
Knitted Vests, 1/6, 1/8, 1/6
Combinations, 8/6, 7/6, 9/11, 10/6
CASH ONLY.

Figure 122 Advertisement for Belted corsets, PD Corsets and CB corsets at R.H. White and Co. Clothing store in Wanganui (The Wanganui Herald Thursday 21 June 1900, front page)

The New PD Corset
c. 1890-1895

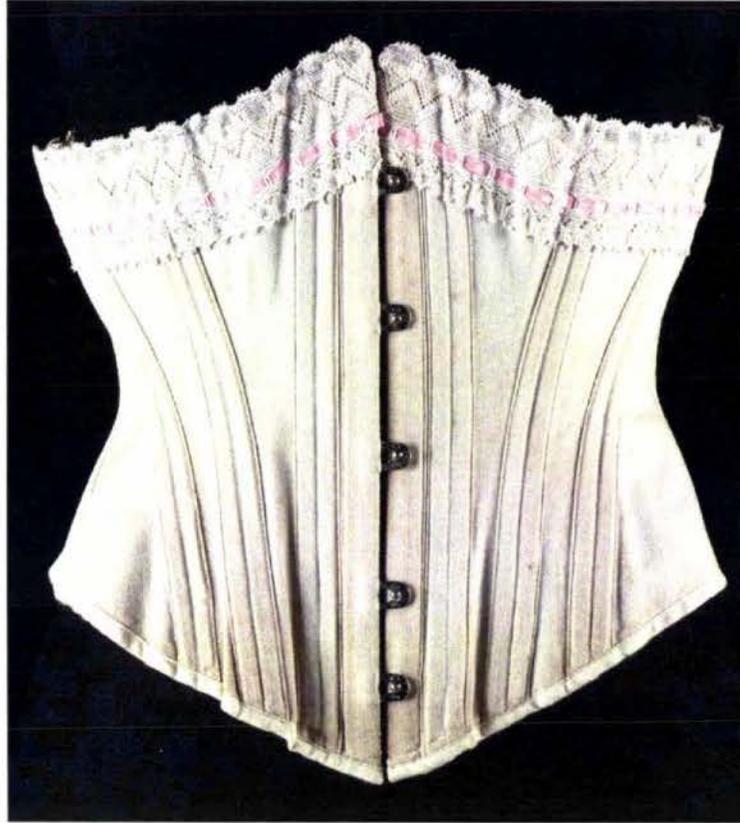


Figure 123 New PD Corset front (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. L002571)

This New PD Corset has been conserved by the museum and has been used in displays and exhibitions with a specially made torso mount. It has had a vacuum and a wash treatment applied, with some minor hand stitching down the centre front busk to hold the hook side in place. The New PD is made in Belgium and shows characteristics that place a manufacturing date between the years of c. 1890-1895. It is made from a single layer of heavy weight plain weave cotton that was probably originally white. The design is straight forward, consisting of five



Figure 124 New PD Corset back (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. I.002571)

panels with the steel casings made from the same coutil as the main corset shell. Placed on the facing cloth side and sewn over the seams, the steel casings are stitched in a thicker thread with a larger stitch length than the rest of the corset. This may be accountable to the manufacturing system in place with piece sewing and different machinery being used for different construction processes.

Two 5mm steels are placed in pairs over the seams and run alongside the centre back eyelets. The centre front busk has five hooks and studs with the bottom two hooks and studs placed closer together. The New PD corset like other PD corsets has the makers initials stamped into the hooks on the centre front, which brings authenticity to the corset, and reinforces the typographic details that are present on the lining side. The corset has been assembled using a sewing machine and like other corsets uses hand overcast stitch to enclose the front busk edge to the front facing. Binding has been used to finish the top and bottom edges of the corset and has a finished width of 5mm.

Modesty lace adorns the top edge of the New PD corset and uses a geometric based pattern that is clearly visible over the 5cm wide ornamentation.

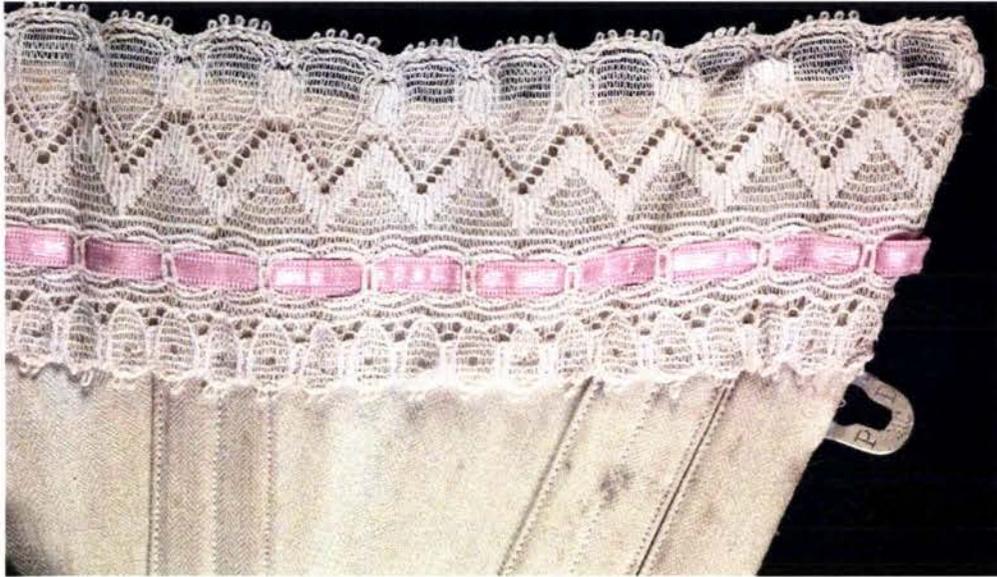


Figure 125 New PD Corset detail of modesty lace and pink baby ribbon (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. I.002571)



Figure 126 New PD Corset busk hook detail with PD initials (Collection Te Papa PC 00311, Negative no. I.002571)

The lace is heavy with the top and bottom edges showing a slightly scalloped design. Baby pink silk satin ribbon is threaded through the lace adding to the femininity of the decoration. Basting holds the modesty lace in place to stop it curling and is visible on the lining side. The original colour of the lace would have been white; however, with age it has discoloured and some areas now take on a brown tone that can not be removed unless bleached, which would go against museum conservation techniques.

Waist tape 2.5cm wide is secured on the inside by the bone casings stitching and has the manufacturer's name, company logo, country of origin and style name printed on it. The PD Company tries to create emphasis of difference from other brands and places a crest to show their superior quality. The typeface used for the

style name, **P.D.**, stands out from the general information as it is stamped in a bold serif style. The phrase, *The New Corset*, surrounds the PD initials in a script typeface and links to the feminine attributes seen on the facing cloth side. Below this, the country of manufacture, **BELGIUM**, is positioned in a small uppercase sans serif typeface.

Thirteen evenly spaced brass eyelets are laced at the centre back and are threaded with a lace. The lace does not look like the original as there are no metal tags attached and it appears thicker than other laces viewed on corsets placed in the same time frame which have been established as original. The overall condition of The New PD Corset is excellent compared to others. This may be attributed to the museum conservation methods and techniques applied to it. A few dots of rust are apparent at the end of the bones at the centre back where metal caps are on the end of the steels. There are some brown patches over the corset where foxing has begun to appear or stained the surface cloth. The material down the either side of the centre back eyelets and the centre front busk appear darker and have a brown tone to them compared to the majority of the corset facing cloth. This may be where the steels have transferred rust through their paper covers onto the coutil.

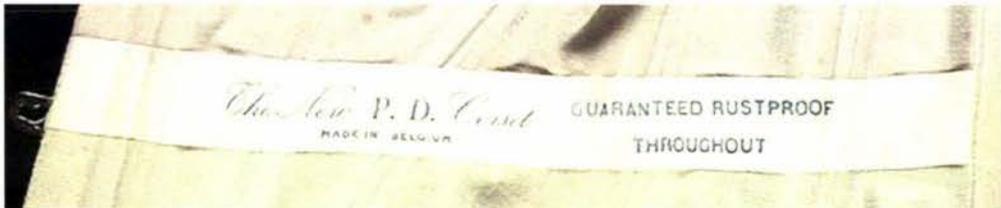


Figure 127 New PD Corset typography on waist tape on right side (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. I.002571)



Figure 128 New PD Corset typography on waist tape on right side (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. I.002571)



Figure 129 New PD Corset lining side lying flat on the table (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. I.002571)



P.D.
Correct Form
CORSETS.

Obtainable in the
WORLD'S LATEST
FASHION,

... THE ...
NEW STRAIGHT FRONT.

FROM ALL LEADING DRAPERS
 EVERYWHERE.

P.D. ACME OF . . .
PERFECTION.

Figure 130 PD Corset Advertisement (*The Fre lance*, Saturday 20 September, 1902, p10)

ABC Queen
c. 1895-1900



Figure 142 ABC Queen facing cloth side lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88P)

Made between 1895 and 1900, the ABC Queen has the standard markings seen on other corsets from the same manufacturer. The lining reveals it is a registered style, is made in England and specially produced for the New Zealand marketplace. A single layer of coutil, once white in colour, has been used to construct the main shell of the corset. The ABC Queen is different to other ABC corsets made from a single layer of cloth as the design, construction, and materials are more complex and labour intensive.

Flat felled seams have been used on this 20-inch waist corset, with the steel casings made from the same fabric as the facing cloth and placed on the outside of the corset. There is a heavy concentration of steels at the centre front, with two groups of three 7mm steels that align to the centre front spoon busk. Single 7mm steels are placed alongside the centre back eyelets and the 1.5cm wide steels that

are located at the front and back side area. The two wider side steels run the full length of the corset and are the only steels to go over the wide elastic belting at the bottom edge. White silk flossing in an 'x' configuration is used at the top and bottom of each casing. Using the 'x' style of flossing on all the single bones makes this a distinctive feature, as it was not seen on any other corset in the ABC range. This subtle use of using white in the decoration rather than a bold colour, is continued through to the broderie anglaise that is used at the bust edge in replacement of the more commonly seen modesty lace. The broderie anglaise has flowers and a botanical influence that most other corsets' modesty lace has.

Eighteen eyelets run evenly down the centre back and are a dull brass colour. Two laces, that appear original, are threaded through the eyelets and have metal tags on all the ends. They are tied with the excess lace in two bundles that are positioned in a common way and meet at the waist area. A spoon busk is used at the centre front and has five hooks and studs evenly spaced that finish above the bottom edge. An additional double hook and eye is placed at the very bottom of the centre front, and functions to help secure and close the bottom edge.



Figure 132 ABC Queen detail of wide side steels, flossing and belting at front hemline (Collection Canterbury EC179.88P)



Figure 133 ABC Queen facing cloth side detail of flossing and broderie anglaise (Collection Canterbury EC179.88P)



Figure 134 ABC Queen lining side flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88P)

The lining side of the ABC Queen continues to demonstrate differentiation from other ABC corsets. The waist tape has the typography printed along it due to the casings being placed on the facing cloth side. Having the same typography details as the majority of the other ABC corsets informs us that it is made specially for New Zealand, has the style name and states it is a registered design. Pencil markings are present on the left side below the waist tape and have been placed there at a later date than manufacture. A white herringbone woven cotton tape runs in alignment to the waist tape at the lower edge concealing the elastic webbing and the coutil edges.

The overall condition of the ABC Queen shows it has been worn as some eyelets down the centre back are coming away from the coutil, which has been caused by being laced tightly. Foxing is present and is scattered over the facing cloth, and along steel casings. Spots of rust appear around the bottom eyelets at the centre back and it is probable the steels have rusted beneath the casings as they show a darker colour than the facing cloth even though they are both constructed from the same coutil. Some of the flossing has come unravelled and threads float across the facing cloth surface. An important aspect to note about the ABC Queen is that the museum collection where it is stored has two corsets listed under the same acquisition number of the ABC Queen, and at first glance they appear the same. However, subtle differences with the brass hook at the centre front make the two corsets become different styles.

Izod Corset
c. 1895-1899



Figure 135 Izod Corset front (Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)

The approximate date of the Izod corset is between the years c.1895 and 1899 according to the use of colour, decoration, and shape. The design of the corset appears elaborate due to the decoration and colour contrast; however, its design and construction are relatively simple. Viewing the corset flat on the tabletop, the sides of the corset are short in length. This gives emphasis on the overall proportion, creating elongation that makes it appear bigger than a 20-inch waist.

Being constructed by sewing machine, the corset consists of six panels that run in alignment to the centre front busk. It has been cut to form a very shapely garment, with emphasis on a curvaceous waist and smooth hips. Thirteen brass eyelets are placed down each side of the centre back, and are laced with two laces that have four metal tags attached. It is presumed these laces are original, as they match the corset in colour and the length is appropriate to the centre back length.



Figure 136 Izod Corset facing cloth side lying flat on table laced at centre back (Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)

The eyelets towards the waist region are spaced closer together, giving concentration of tightness when laced on the body. They are shiny and show no effect of age or tarnishing, but there are beginning signs of stress. The eyelets located at the waist have begun to come away from the fabric, this being caused by the stress of being tightly laced.

The bones at the centre back are directly sewn between the lining and the facing cloth material. Being encased either side of the eyelets, this gives extra stiffness and support to the centre back. The centre front busk has four silver coloured hook and stud closures, that run the majority of the length of the corset. They show no discolouration or signs of rust, and are straight and not bent out of shape. The left centre front edge that has the studs, is sewn by machine to the lining, whereas the right edge has been sewn by hand using an overcast stitch. This stitch holds the bust hook strip in place and allows gaps for the hooks to protrude through.

The Izod corset has a high level of visual ornamentation, with the bold colour contrast between the decoration and facing cloth fabric. Modesty lace adorns the bust edge and is 4.5 cm wide with a single row of silk fuchsia coloured baby ribbon threaded through. The ribbon has a herringbone surface weave effect and is 5mm in width. The galloon lace pattern is easy to see and was once originally black in colour; however, with age the lace has taken on a brown black tone. The eyelets are punched through the lace, securing it to the centre back and unlike the majority of corsets, there are no basting stitches holding the modesty lace down. Basting may have been removed at some stage or it may not have had any as the lace is reasonably heavy in weight and does not appear to have a



Figure 137 Izod Corset detail of flossing at front bust edge and modesty lace with fuchsia silk baby ribbon (Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)



Figure 138 Izod Corset detail of hem of front bust with flossing and where the silk thread of the facing cloth has worn, and patches of foxing are present (Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)

tendency to curl along the bottom scalloped edge.

Black silk satin has been used for the facing cloth with white sateen material for the lining. With age and environment exposure, the inside and facing cloth fabrics have evidence of foxing. The black satin has mildew scattered over the surface, while the lining has an all over pattern of brown spots. Some surface yarns of the black silk satin have deteriorated with abrasion, and warp threads are visible. The affected areas are down parts of the bust, some small patches on the edges of the bone casings at the waist and areas along the bottom edge.

The black silk panels have been constructed using flat felled seams. Bone casings are placed on the facing cloth side and are distributed between the panels, with some overlapping the seams. Combinations of single and double bones have been used, with the double bones placed from the side seam going around to the centre back. The thread colour used on the facing cloth has a brown-black tone to

it, and is easily visible against the black silk fabric. Victorian thread dyeing techniques and age are factors that can be associated with the difference in colour between thread and fabric.

All of the bone casings at the top and bottom are flossed with fuchsia-coloured silk thread. The flossing is done by machine, with the bobbin thread being white linen. The tension is a little loose and at some points the bobbin thread can be seen from the outside. The style of flossing is in an 'x' formation with a large floating stitch and small cross stitches facing each other. The pattern on the bottom edge has a similar stylistic design to the New Zealand flax plant when in flower. This is not an intentional design relationship as the corset is a standard English one, and does not state specially made for New Zealand.

The lining has plain seams that are enclosed between the facing cloth and lining fabric layers. There are large needle holes in the lining fabric, a result that relates to the technology and manufacture of machine needles, the nature of the sateen weave, and having the black fabric behind. Binding, the same colour as the lining, is used on the top and bottom edges to give a tidy finish and secure both layers together. The bottom edge binding is wider and rolls over to the front by 2mm, creating a visible contrast edge between the lining and the facing cloth.

Small rust marks are visible on the inside of the corset at the top edge along the bone casings. This is a common recurring problem as metal tips would be placed on the top of the bones to stop them tearing through the fabric. As there are no other signs of rust marks down the bone casings, it is probable the corset was constructed using whalebone with metal tips rather than paper covered steels. On



Figure 139 Izod Corset lining side flat on table (Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)



Figure 140 Izod Corset lining side detail of typography
(Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)



Figure 142 Izod's crest and anchor trademark logo
(Collection ATL, James Smiths Scrapbook collection ephemera)



Figure 141 Izod Corset facing cloth side detail of where the stamp on lining side has worn the black silk satin threads
(Collection Otago Settlers Museum, OSM, 1980/132/1)

the side back along the bottom, warp threads are visible where an embossed manufacturer's seal of authenticity has been placed. The seal stamped into the lining is very difficult to translate, as with the pressure of applying the seal, wear of the corset and age, the weft threads have worn away on the facing cloth.

An identification trademark logo and an embossed seal of authenticity appears on the Izod's corset. The trademark confirms that it was pre-printed prior to construction as the stamp has white stitches from the casings floating over it. Directly opposite on the bottom lower left-hand side, Izod's have stamped a seal of authenticity. Having no ink, it is difficult to read. It is circular in shape and has a combination of typeface on the circumference with a picture in the centre, a possible pictorial company logo similar to the anchor that is in the trademark logo.

As there was only one Izod's corset in the museum collections viewed, it is difficult to determine if the typography seen in the Izod's Corset is a standardized form. The anchor and seal of authenticity are two Izod trademarks that appear in their advertisements and support the apparent concern of other manufacturers

producing identical items that would be mistaken for an authentic Izod. The stamp of authenticity is a unique use of typography, as it is subtle in design and similar to a watermark and not seen on any other corset. The placement of Izod's manufacturer logos and trademarks is different from other corsets seen due to the design where there is no waist tape or bone casings on the lining side of the corset.

Izod's corsets were finished with a steam and heat moulding process to set the corset into a hard shell-like shape. This corset has had this finishing treatment as the manufacturer's stamp on the lining authenticates. This technique of finishing was a patented method invented by Izod, and was a major advancement in stiffening the corset. Further details of Izod's finishing method can be found in the corset appendix. Similar material and construction characteristics to the Izod's Corset can be seen in two other corsets from the c.1890-1900 period: the Madame Jeann and the ABC Preferential.

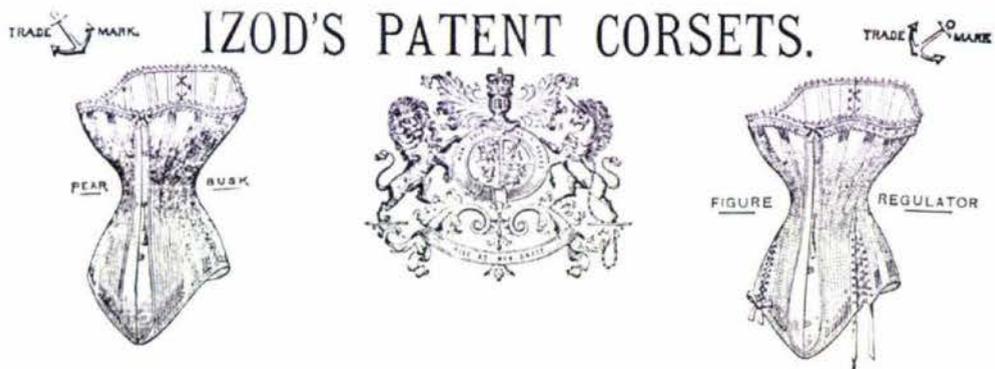


Figure 143 Izod's crest and anchor trademark logo (Collection ATL, James Smiths Scrapbook collection ephemera)

Madame Jeann
c. 1895-1900



Figure 144 Madame Jeann flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)

The Madame Jeann is aesthetically feminine in appearance with the contrast between the black silk satin facing cloth and the colourful embellishments. It presents characteristics and features that place it in a period of manufacture between c. 1895 and 1900. It is relatively simple in design and construction, consisting of five panels that are made from a black silk satin. There is an additional waist panel that is incorporated into the design and stitched on the facing cloth side between the main shell and the steel casings. This design feature is subtle as the panel is made from the same black silk satin as the main corset shell.

The Madame Jeann steels are unusually wide compared to other corsets viewed, and may be an attribute of the watchspring steel that is used. The steels are positioned in alignment to the centre front busk and cover the front three panels, and two side back steels placed in alignment to the centre back. All steel casings are made from the same silk as the corset shell, are stitched on the facing cloth side, and have flossing at the top and bottom of each casing. The Madame Jeann has similarities to the Izod's Corset with its high visual aesthetic created by the contrast of the flossing and the broderie anglaise against the black silk facing cloth. Similar to the Izod's, some of the Madame Jeann flossing has a floral

influence and has a stylized silhouette to that of a bouquet of flowers.

Cornflower yellow and cream silk thread has been used to floss the top and bottom bone casings with an 'x' configuration flossing stitch. An extra cream stitch at the bottom of the x is used and this style of flossing has not been seen in any other corsets and may be unique to the Madame Jeann brand name. The flossing stitches completed in cream silk thread and the small yellow feather stitches that are on the back of the bone casings have an appearance that suggests they may have been completed by hand. Some of the threads of the top front flossing appear loose or have broken and have been left floating across the facing cloth.

Twenty brass coloured metal eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and have single steels flanking them on either side. These steels like the ones used elsewhere are also unusually wide and measure a width of 1cm. One lace is threaded through the eyelets and has one tag attached, however, this lace may not be original to the Madame Jeann. The centre back facing traditionally the same colour as the lining is constructed from the black silk satin facing cloth. This stops the white lining showing on the facing cloth side and also finishes the centre back edge neatly. The waist areas of corsets are prone to abrasions from petticoats and skirts rubbing against them and, given the nature of silk satin, it would have a high risk of wearing quickly and becoming fragile in this area. With this in mind, the extra panel at the waist has been placed for additional support and strength.

The centre front has a straight front busk with five hooks and studs that are evenly spaced. The bust area has reinforcing with corded quilted lines and a single



Figure 145 Madame Jeann detail of flossing at hem at the front with the extra stitch (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)

steel that runs through the centre of the bust cup. Black broderie anglaise has been used at the bust instead of the more commonly seen modesty lace and baby ribbon. The broderie anglaise has a satin stitched scalloped edge and is subtle in design as it blends easily into the facing cloth colour. The vibrant turquoise embroidered silk flowers contrast with the understated black embroidered floral design and the main base colour. The silk thread colours used on the broderie anglaise do not coordinate with the other silk threads used on the Madame Jeann. This is unlike the colour co-ordination that can be seen on other corsets between the modesty lace or broderie anglaise and the flossing. There is no evidence to suggest the co-ordination was a standardized procedure for corset decoration, and relates more to an aspect of consistency within the overall design and aesthetics of a corset.



Figure 146 Madame Jeann detail of flossing styles at top of steel casings and broderie anglaise (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)



Figure 147 Madame Jeann lining side detail of corded quilting at bust with aspects of the broderie anglaise stitching being seen (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)

The white sateen lining contrasts the black silk used for the facing cloth. Similar to other corsets the Madame Jeann has the manufacturer's logo and style name located at the waist. There is no waist tape for the blue typography to be printed on, instead it has been placed onto a narrow panel of the white sateen fabric and then sewn to the lining at the waist tape position. The right side displays the style name in a script typeface at either end of the ornate manufacturer's logo. The logo is unable to be clearly identified and has become faded through wear and age, and contact with moisture has caused it to be blurred. The typography on this side is spread out along the waist panel and is carefully centred between the two rows of stitching that attach the panel to the lining. The left side clearly informs the customer the Madame Jeann has been constructed from watchspring steel. Written in a bold script typeface it stands out and is the first detail the eye is drawn to when the corset lining is opened. It gives an illusion of being more expensive than other competitors corsets. A black binding has been used to finish the bottom edge and this also conceals the white lining.

The overall condition of the Madame Jeann shows little wear and tear or abrasion against the silk satin and it is questionable that it was worn more than a handful of times. Slight foxing is evident on the white lining and may also be on the facing cloth but is concealed by the silk's shade of black.



Figure 148 Madame Jeann lining side flat on table (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)

Figure 149 Madame Jeann detail of typography on the waist tape (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum, HBM, 56/63/1)



ABC Preferential
c. 1890-1900



Figure 150 ABC Preferential facing cloth side lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88T)

The ABC Preferential like the Madam Jeann and the Izod's corset is made from black silk satin with a white sateen lining. Other common features are machine needle holes evident on the lining side, and the thread used on the facing cloth has a brown tone rather than black. The major design difference between the three corsets is the ABC Preferential has a belt located at the bottom of the busk, and elastic webbing.

Having two rows of brass eyelets and a range of adjustment sizes, the belt is a bold utilitarian feature, contrasting the feminine use of broderie anglaise at the bust, and flossing on the steel casings. One of the belt's functions was to secure the bottom of the corset and adjust the size with the elastic webbing. The lining side presents an interesting feature of the elastic webbing: on the facing cloth it appears black in colour, but on the lining side it is unmistakably cream coloured. A woven



Figure 151 ABC Preferential detail of lining side front hem belting, centre front belt and hem binding and elastic webbing (Collection Canterbury EC179.887)

herringbone binding is used on the hem to neaten the edge around the corset and encase the facing cloth and lining cloth together. The binding stops at either side of the elastic webbing.

Like other black cloth corsets, the contrasting silk flossing and addition of any form of embellishment creates a striking visual design feature. The ABC Preferential uses a bold turquoise colour silk thread and has standard flossing styles of triangular and 'x' configuration stitching to hold the steels in place. The flossing stitching appears less concentrated and single threads can be seen in the formation of the style, which is not evident in other corsets viewed. This could be more obvious due to the black facing cloth and possible differences in machinery used at different manufacturing factories. The centre back steels placed either side of the centre back eyelets have flossing at the hem. A small running stitch is used to hold the steels in place and echoes the curved shape of the end of the steel. Broderie anglaise features at the bust edge rather than modesty lace. A bold scalloped satin stitch is used on the edge and has a straightforward design in comparison to the more elaborate broderie anglaise seen in the Madame Jeann.

The lining of the corsets presents typographic details seen in other ABC corsets including those specially made for New Zealand, and has links to New Zealand being sold in local drapery stores and ownership by women in surrounding parts of New Zealand. This is an aspect the Madame Jeann Corset and the Izod's Corset do not have .



Figure 152 ABC Preferential facing cloth side detail of flossing at bust edge and broderie anglaise (Collection Canterbury EC179.88T)

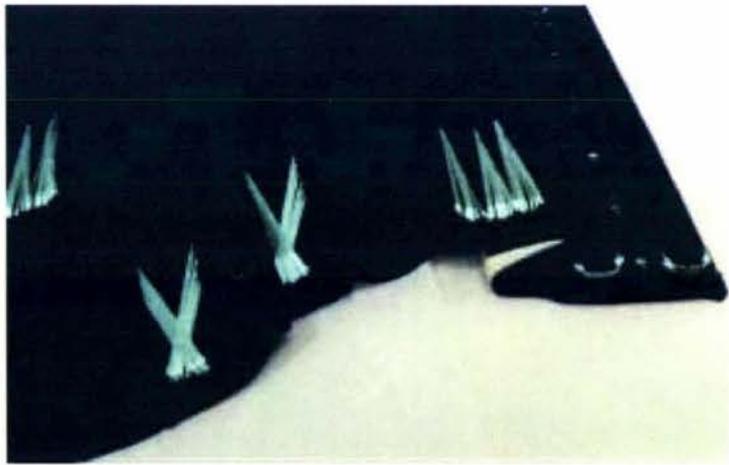


Figure 153 ABC Preferential facing cloth side detail of flossing styles at hem near centre back (Collection Canterbury EC179.88T)

PD Straight Front
c. 1895-1900



Figure 154 PD Straight Front front (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)



Figure 155 PD Straight Front back (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)

The PD Straight Front corset was made from a single layer of medium weight drab coutil. It has characteristics that place the time of manufacture between 1895 and 1900, though it may be as late at 1905. Diagonal seaming has been used with a combination of gussets positioned at the bust and hip area. These design details help to create the curvaceous and desirable fashionable silhouette when the corset was worn on the body.

A combination of 7mm single, paired and clustered steels have been used with a single 1.5cm steel placed at the side back area. A small group of diagonal steels run into the centre back and give additional support. The steel casings are stitched on the lining side and positioned in alignment to the centre front, which has a straight front busk with five hooks and studs. The centre back has eyelets

that are evenly spaced with two single 7mm steels alongside them. Femininity is added to the PD Straight Front corset in the form of modesty lace positioned at the bust edge, which has an extra row of lace at the bottom edge.

The lace is quite different to those seen on other PD corsets. Possibly originally white, it has scalloped edges on both sides and has been referred to as galloon lace in a range of corset advertisements. It has two rows of 5mm baby silk ribbon running through the lace at the bust edge, with a large pink silk grosgrain ribbon bow at the centre front. With environment conditions and the ravages of time, the silk grosgrain ribbon has deteriorated, is delicate and falling apart. The lace at the bottom edge is the same in design as that used at the bust edge. Originally the lace had two rows of baby silk ribbon threaded through it, as very small remnants near the centre back eyelets remain. Large basting stitches are visible on the lining side at the top and bottom of the corset and are used to hold the lace in place and stop it curling.



Figure 156 PD Straight Front detail of on side flat on table (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)

Figure 157 PD Straight Front detail of lace at hem, diagonal seams and gussets (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)





Figure 159 PD Straight Front lining side lying flat on table (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)



Figure 160 PD Straight Front detail of PD crest and typography on steel casings (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)

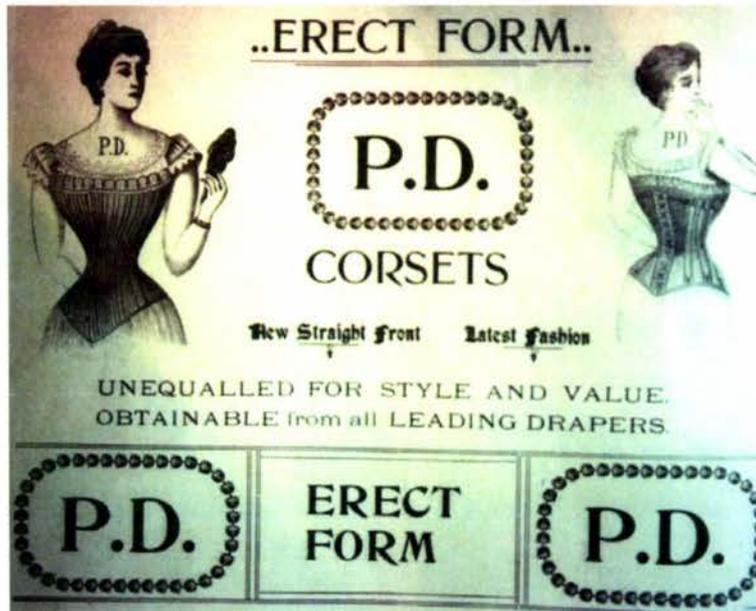


Figure 161 PD Corset advertisement (New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, Christmas Number, December 1901 p 30)



Figure 158 PD Straight Front detail of centre front bow, modesty lace and busk hooks (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, W, 1978/58/2)

The PD Straight Front corset has the same typography information seen in other PD corsets; however, rather than the blue ink printed on the waist tape, it is on the two large bone casings located near the centre side back eyelets. The *Made in Belgium* is not near the logo, but placed alongside the style name, and written in a script typeface that contrasts the uppercase roman serif type of the style name. A small portion of the PD paper label positioned towards the diagonal boning on the left centre back remains. The size is still visible and the other small portions of the label reflect the same image and design as seen on the PD No 1589 Corset.

The overall condition of the PD Straight Front corset shows extensive foxing on the facing cloth and steel casings. Patches of rust are also evident along the white cotton steel casings and the centre front busk where paper covered steels lie beneath. Some of the stitching down the centre front busk between the hooks has come loose and reveals the paper covered metal beneath the coutil.

Kirby New Peckirbia
c. 1895-1900



Figure 162 Kirby New Peckirbia front (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)

The Kirby New Peckirbia corset was made in England between the timeframe of c.1895 and 1900 and is constructed from a single layer of white coutil. Six panels are used to create the main shell of the corset with the steel casings placed on the facing cloth side where they conceal the seams. A combination of 7mm and 1.5cm steels have been used throughout the design. The front has single 7mm steels positioned close to the centre front busk. The side seam and the side back have two pairs of 7mm steels placed either side of the 1.5cm wide steels. The 1.5cm wide steels have two single 7mm steels running either side. The centre back has twelve eyelets that are evenly spaced and made from a dark coloured metal, and have two single 7mm steels running either side of them. The eyelets have no laces accompanying them, and appear larger than other eyelets seen on corsets.

The centre front of the Kirby New Peckirbia has a straight front busk with five hooks and studs evenly spaced with the exception of the bottom two, which are placed closer together. There are four additional eyelets running in alignment either side of the centre front with topstitched tabs extending from the eyelet to the centre front seam. The tabs have no function outside of decoration as they are stitched down in place and do not extend around the busk to the facing side. The left side of the corset front that holds the studs has a safety front busk, which is a similar feature to the one seen in the Drab Corded Quilted corset.

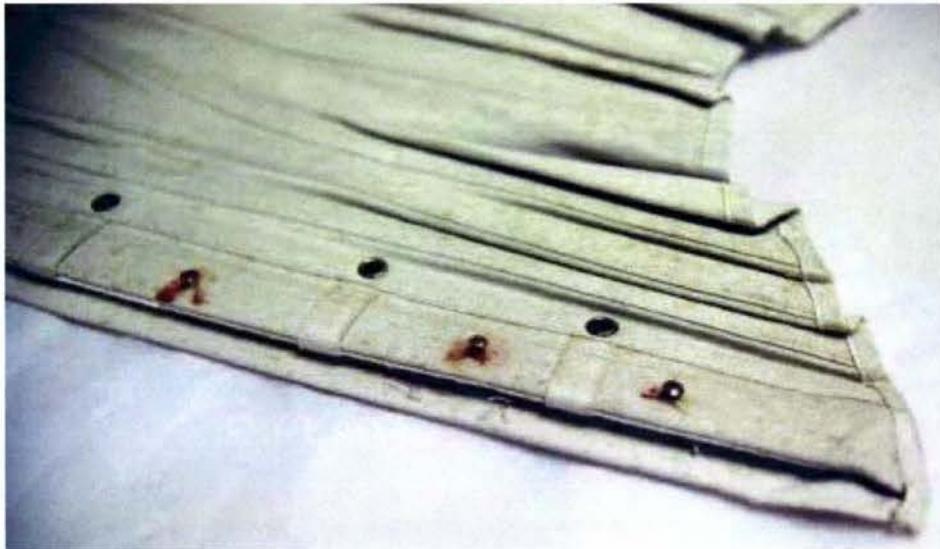


Figure 163 Kirby New Peckirbia left front detailing safety busk front under studs (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)



Figure 164 Kirby New Peckirbia right front detailing busk hooks and eyelets (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)



Figure 165 Kirby New Peckirbia detail of modesty lace and ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)

The top edge is adorned with a wide modesty lace. The lace is fine in construction and has a floral influence incorporated into the overall design. White 1cm wide silk ribbon is threaded through the lace and utilises the eyelet holes that are inbuilt into the general design. The use of 1cm wide ribbon is seen to be unusual as the majority of ribbon threaded through modesty lace is 5m in width. The centre front of the modesty lace extends down and finishes between the middle of the first and second hooks and studs on the busk. The lace is held down at the centre back by the first eyelet and has basting stitches at the lower edge to stop it curling. The top and bottom edges of the corset are neatly finished by a cotton binding that is 5mm in width. The top binding is concealed on the facing cloth side by the modesty lace.

The lining of the Kirby New Peckirbia is plain and simple. A white cotton waist tape runs the full width of the corset on the right side, and finishes at the safety busk on the left side. The waist tape on the left side has typographic details that harmonise with the straightforward design that the corset presents. The name, **THE NEW PECKIRBIA CORSET**, uses an uppercase serif typeface and has the brand New Peckirbia in larger letters. The size of the typeface and use of black ink on the white ground produces a bold effect that the eye automatically is drawn to. Beneath this main typography in a smaller serif uppercase and lowercase typeface is other essential information. The customer is also informed the corset is made in England, is a registered style, has a patent number of 13334, and has a patented

safety busk front. There are no feminine attributes to the typography and it merely presents information in a direct and straightforward manner.

The Kirby New Peckirbia presents a subtle femininity with the monochromatic modesty lace and tends towards attributes of utility and practicality. The overall condition shows it has hardly been worn, if at all, as there is no transfer of dye from other clothing, tears in the steel casings, crease lines at the waist or perspiration stains. Rust is apparent at the centre front hooks and studs along the front busk, and some rust has transferred onto the modesty lace and coutil where the fronts have been hooked together. The facing cloth has foxing scattered over it and a few spots of rust are visible along some steel casing. These are two conditions that have come to the Kirby New Peckirbia with age rather than through wear.

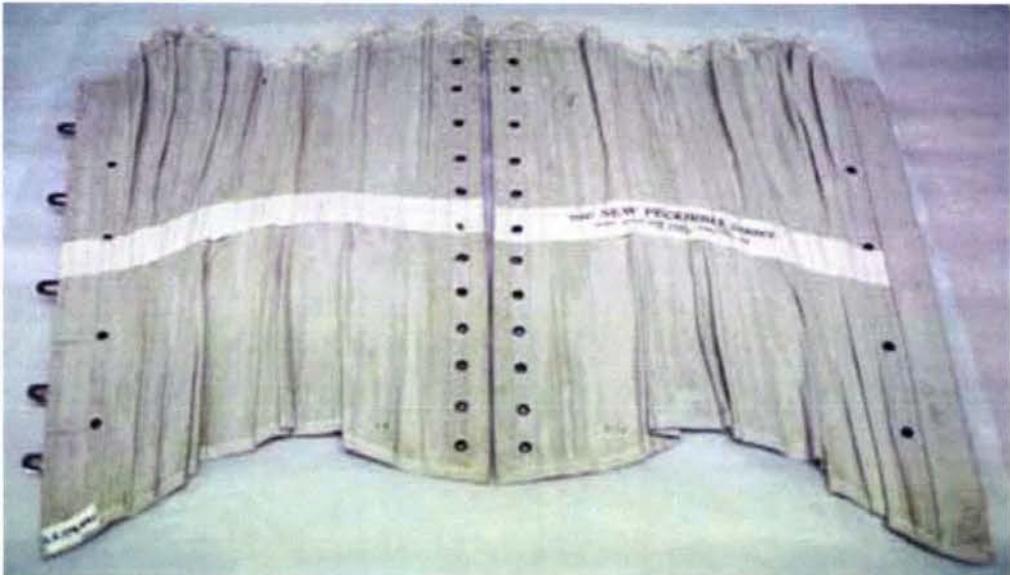


Figure 166 Kirby New Peckirbia lining side laying flat on the table (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)



Figure 167 Kirby New Peckirbia detail of the typography on the waist tape on the lining side of the corset (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)

ABC Royalty
c. 1895-1900



Figure 168 ABC Royalty facing cloth side flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)

The ABC Royalty like all the ABC corsets was made in England with the style indicating a date of manufacturer between c.1895 and 1900. Made from a single layer of dove grey coutil it has some complex design and construction aspects. Consisting of four main panels that curve around the body, inserts and gussets of different shapes and sizes have been used to help create the curvaceous silhouette. Focusing on the main areas of the body that had fullness and allowed for a woman to show her curves, one gusset is at the bust, one at the side hip and the other is at the side back. The side back curves deeply over the hip to create a smooth controlled shape when worn on the body, helping to mould the female form.

Small even stitches throughout the ABC Royalty indicate it was made by sewing machine. It is neatly finished at the top and bottom edges with binding.

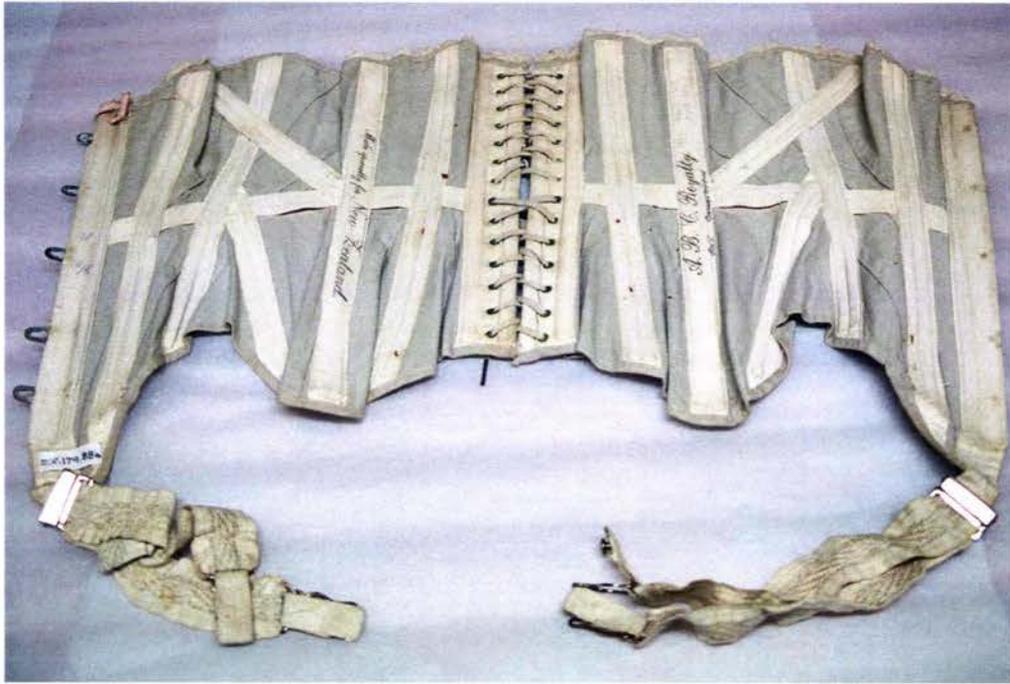


Figure 169 ABC Royalty lining side lying flat on the table exposing the casings for the steels (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)

As with the majority of all corsets, the seams are flat felled, and are visible on the outside of the corset. The steel casings are made from the same material as the waist tape, are positioned on the lining side, and cross over the seams.

The placement of the steels is complex with 28 being used in the overall design. Steels 7mm in width are used throughout the corset, with a steel of 1.5cm wide positioned at the side. All the 7mm steels are placed in pairs, excluding the ones alongside the eyelets. Some steels cross over each other on the side area and are placed on a diagonal, with the remainder of the steels aligned to the centre front and centre back. The 1.5cm side steel casings have the manufacturer's details printed clearly and present details seen in the other ABC corsets. Pink silk flossing appears at the end of the bone casings and the busk and uses a running stitch to help secure the bones in place. Flossing is also used at the gusset points to neaten their appearance and strengthen the weak point. A buttonhole stitch is used at these areas, and it appears it may have been hand done as there are no bobbin threads seen on the lining side.

The waist tape has been placed underneath the bone casings and runs from the centre back eyelet facing to the front busk facing. Fourteen white enamel eyelets are placed evenly down the centre back, and have a lace with two tags



Figure 170 ABC Royalty facing cloth side detail of flossing at gusset seam (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)



Figure 171 ABC Royalty facing cloth side detail of centre front lacing hook (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)

threaded through them, and it is highly probable the lace is original. Five hooks and studs are down the centre front busk, with the last two hooks spaced closer together. The right front has an extra hook sewn just below the waist areas on the outside on top of the busk strip. The function of this hook was part of the corset lacing technique. Generally seen on more expensive corsets the hook helped the wearer adjust the tightness of the corset throughout the day. A detailed outline of how this technique was done can be accessed in the appendix.

The ABC Royalty is simply decorated with flossing, modesty lace with ribbon, and hose supporters. The modesty lace is a galloon style with scalloping seen on both edges. The lace is very decorative and shaped to echo the line of the bottom edge, thus dipping lower at the centre front, side front and centre back. The modesty lace is extended down to the second hook on the centre front busk and has a single row of 5mm baby pink silk ribbon threaded through at the top edge of the lace.

A second row of ribbon may have been inserted on the bottom edge of the lace as eyelets holes are incorporated into the lace design and are symmetrical to

the ones at the top. The lace is not basted down and has curled up at the bottom edge. The top edge lace sits slightly higher than the top edge of the binding and having no support it has also curled over. The lace may have been removed from the ABC Royalty at some point for cleaning and starching, which would explain the high top edge placement, the lack of basting and the missing bottom edge ribbon.



Figure 172 ABC Royalty detail of modesty lace and pink baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)

The two hose supporters create length to the centre front making it seem longer than it is, causing the side front that is high cut to look shorter. The hose supporters on the ABC Royalty are decorative in contrast to the plain dove grey coutil, having silver coloured metal filigree styled adjustable clips. These clips add to the overall weight of the corset and stand out against the delicate open work styled 3cm wide ribbon they are attached to. The openwork styled ribbon has a feminine aesthetic with the outer edges of the ribbon having a frill. When the hose supporters are fully extended they measure a length of 34cm which further emphasizes the centre front corset length. The small and practical hose clips are attached to the ribbon by means of lightweight cotton webbing that unifies into the overall design of the supporters. The condition of the adjustable filigree clips show no signs of rust, wear and tear or ageing where the hose clips do. Some of the rust marks from the hose clips have transferred to the webbing and some spots are apparent on the open work styled ribbon.



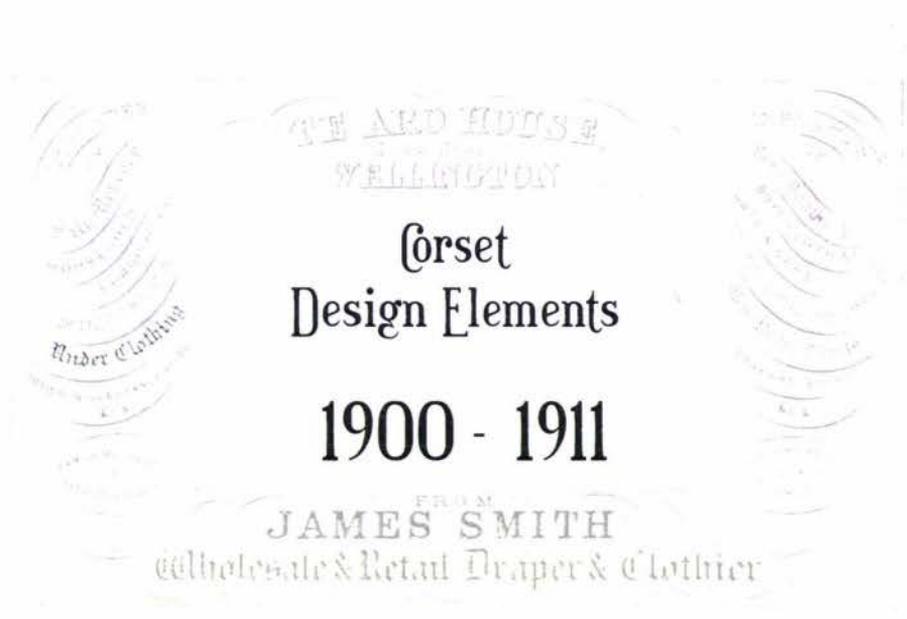
Figure 173 ABC Royalty detail of hose supporter adjustable length clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)



Figure 174 ABC Royalty detail of the hose supporter clips and open weave ribbon with a slight frilled edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)

The overall condition of the ABC Royalty indicates it may have not been worn, and is generally very good. Moisture and age have had some affect on the materials however. The most visible sign of age on the outside of the corset is the hooks and studs on the front busk. The hooks and studs have tarnished and once silver in colour they now have a dull green hue. Ironically the lacing hook alongside the busk hooks has no sign of age and is still shiny and silver in colour. The studs have made a rubbed impression onto the back of the front facing, creating small evenly spaced dots on the reverse side. Small signs of foxing are just visible and are scattered over the coutil facing cloth. The bone casings also have signs of age and have spots of rust from the paper covered steels that lie beneath.

The ABC Royalty has common elements to other ABC branded corsets. Single layer of coutil, bone casings on the inside, a structured system of boning, and the use of gussets can be seen on the ABC Marchioness, ABC Imperatrice, and the ABC Qualite.



THE ARD HOUSE
WELINGTON

Corset
Design Elements

1900 - 1911

FROM
JAMES SMITH
Wholesale & Retail Draper & Clothier

Under Clothing

Under Clothing

ABC Society
c. 1900-1905



Figure 175 ABC Society front (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)

ABC Society is feminine and decorative with the use of a blue floral jacquard weave as the facing cloth, modesty lace with baby ribbon, and blue hose supporters. The shape and materials place the manufacturing date between c.1900 and 1905. The lining is a white cotton plain weave cloth, and this is also used for the bone casings that are placed on the inside of the corset.

Having complex panel lines with flat felled seams that are on the outside of the corset, the ABC Society has a combination of thirty-four steels throughout the design. This with the combination of the diagonal seaming would present an extremely curvaceous silhouette when worn on the body. Like other corsets the ABC Society has a combination of steel sizes. Steels 7mm wide are positioned around the corset in pairs and sets of threes, with two single steels

placed near the centre front. A small short group of four diagonal steels are positioned above the waistline at the centre back and offers extra support for the back and the wearer's posture. The side back steels are 1.5cm wide and have the manufacturer's details printed on the casings on the lining side along with the phrase "guaranteed rustproof". This phrase printed on one casing indicates that paper covered steels are lying beneath the casings rather than baleen. Though baleen was still available for corset use during this time period, it was often too expensive to use and the quality of steel and the range of width sizes made it more economical as stiffening and aided in lowering the cost of the corset.

Fourteen eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and have a light blue enamel paint finish to them. They are laced with two laces that have tags and are tied at the middle of the waist. They appear to be new and have no impressions of having been drawn against the eyelets. The waist tape, made from a cotton twill weave tape similar to other waist tapes but slightly wider, has been placed beneath the steel casings and lies on the inside of the corset.

The centre front has a straight front busk with five hook-and-stud closures that are evenly spaced, with the bottom two positioned closer together. The bottom and top edges of the corset is neatened by binding being formed from a twilled cotton tape in blue to match the corsets original colour. Showing slight difference from other corsets seen from the same time period, the ABC Society has the design feature of grown on tabs at the hip. These do not have any steels or



Figure 176 ABC Society lining lying flat on the table (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)



Figure 177 ABC Society facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)



Figure 178 ABC Society detail of modesty lace with pale blue baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)

supports, having the function to create length at the side area, to aid in giving a smooth line over the hip, and to attach the hose supporters in the correct place.

The decoration on the ABC Society excluding the surface cloth is primarily confined to two features of modesty lace with silk ribbon, and the hose supporters. The modesty lace is wide and finishes past the first hook and eye having added decoration by a pale blue 5mm wide silk ribbon threaded through. It displays similar design characteristics to the other ABC corsets' fine modesty lace. The hose supporters are very decorative and complement the overall design and decoration of the corset.

Four hose supporters are used and positioned at the centre front and side seam area. Each supporter is made from a blue braid frilled edge ribbon tape and has decorative silver coloured metal filigree styled adjustable clips. Two rows of cream running stitch are in the middle of the tape and have no other purpose than decoration. The silver coloured metal hose clips are attached by a blue webbed tape and harmonize with the overall design and colour scheme. When the supporters are extended, they measure twice their length and give the perception that the clips would be uncomfortable if they were sat on. Some deterioration can be seen with patches of the braid tape fading, and there are signs of foxing and spots of rust being transferred from the hose clip.

Handwritten numbers are positioned in the lining on the hook side of the busk, and presumably indicate the size and the original price set at 17/6- being reduced down to 15/6-. The centre back near the eyelets has a paper label with the size of 22 on it and corresponds with the handwritten 22" seen on the busk. Some



Figure 179 ABC Society detail of the hose supporter adjustable clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)



Figure 180 ABC Society detail of the hose supporter clip and ribbon with running stitch embroidery frilled edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)

small tears are apparent where the corset has ripped along seams and where the steel casings have been stitched. The centre front busk hooks and studs have some tarnishing and have an appearance of a black-brown tone to them. The lining shows patches of foxing which is most prominently seen towards the centre back waist and under the arms and bust. It is hard to determine if the ABC Society was ever worn on the body. It is suspected the ABC Society may have been used as a display model in the ladies' section of a drapery store which would account for the dramatic fading and the absence of creases at the waist line.

The ABC Society's condition has deteriorated with age and the floral jacquard which once was a bold blue has dramatically faded to a blotchy off white fawn colour. Some patches of faded blue remain, but are not the original hue. The silk ribbon threaded through the modesty lace and the blue twill cotton tape used for the bound top and bottom edges have also faded dramatically, but not as severely as the main facing cloth. In contrast the blue hose supporters have not faded to the same extent and retain a colour close to the original hue.

ABC Marchioness
c. 1900-1905



Figure 181 ABC Marchioness front (Collection Canterbury EC179.88B)

The ABC Marchioness would create the characteristic 's' bend silhouette for the period of c. 1900 - 1905. Being made from a single layer of dove grey coutil, it has a number of panels that curve around the body and has similar pattern lines to the ABC Royalty, but with the addition of side hip gussets that help to create and manipulate the woman's body into the ideal Edwardian shape. The Marchioness has interesting panelled gussets at the hip area and this is a feature that has not been seen in other ABC corsets. This extra panel in the gusset runs in alignment to the centre front and helps to create extra shaping to the hip area.

Similar to the ABC Fay steels, the Marchioness has 7mm steels alongside the busk and positioned around the front area. Wider 1.5cm steels are placed at the side and back and have two short diagonal steels that run from the waist tape

Figure 182 ABC
Marchioness
facing cloth lying
flat on table with
centre back laced
(Collection
Canterbury
EC179.88B)



Figure 183 ABC
Marchioness
lining side laying
flat on the table
showing steel
casings and
typography
(Collection
Canterbury
EC179.88B)

at the centre back meeting at the top edge next to the first wide steel. Two single 7mm bones run in alignment to the centre back eyelets, which is a technique that is used in the majority of corset styles. Like the ABC Fay, the ABC Marchioness steels do not run the full length of the corset. White cotton cloth has been used for the bone casings that run the full length of the corset. The waist tape on the lining side starts at the side front and finishes at the centre back, and is held in place by the casings that are sewn over it. At the end of each steel, flossing is present to hold it in place. Single 7mm steels and the short diagonal steels have the standardized triangle flossing, with the wide 1.5cm steels having the 'x' flossing structure.

The manufacturer's brand name and details are printed clearly in black on the 1.5cm wide casing closest to the centre back. A similar script typeface to that seen on other ABC corsets has been used; however, the direction of the information opposes each other, which is unusual. Other ABC corsets show details printed on bone casings facing each other and placed in the same direction, making it easy to read. This difference on the ABC Marchioness may be accidental and not considered damaging to the overall purpose of the corset, as it is still able to



Figure 184 ABC Marchioness details of handwriting price and size on the centre front busk facing, typography details down wide steel casings, and paper label at centre back eyelet facing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88B)

function, thus still being able to be purchased by a consumer. Quality control tolerances may have not been in place to counteract a detail such as this, or it may have been sold at a reduced price as a second quality item.

Fifteen blue enamel eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back of the corset, and have two white laces with tags threaded through them. Keeping with consistency in the overall design, the eyelets are the same colour as the flossing on the bone casings, the flossing at the gusset points, and the modesty lace baby ribbon. The centre front has a straight front busk that has five hook and studs, and runs the full length of the corset. The hook and studs are evenly spaced except for the last two, as these are placed closer together. The steel casing's fabric is used for the centre front and centre back facing and the centre front tab lining. These centre front tabs help create an illusion of length to the centre front and do not appear to have a purpose other than this. It is possible that buttons were once attached to them and functioned as an attachment for hose supporters or attaching other layers of underclothes such as petticoats. This design feature and shape has been seen in other corsets particularly the ABC Imperatrice and S & S Corset. The facing of the busk hooks shows the waist size of the ABC Marchioness is 19 inches and the various prices that the drapery store has had it at. All these marks have



Figure A185 BC Marchioness detail of front hem area with flossing, flat felled seams, and busk hooks and studs. (Collection Canterbury EC179.88B)



Figure 186 ABC Marchioness detail of centre back eyelets and modesty lace with rows of baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.88B)

been made in pencil and stand out against the white cotton cloth.

Fine white modesty lace decorates the top edge of the ABC Marchioness and has three rows of baby silk ribbon evenly threaded through it due to the absence of an overall pattern incorporated into it. The design of the modesty lace is very plain and the majority of it is a net pattern with a small oval and scalloped edge border. Large hand basting stitches hold the lace down and can be seen on the lining side of the corset. To stop it from curling further, the lace has been joined into the centre front and centre back, which causes the lace to conceal two of the eyelets and have the centre back lacing poking through the modesty lace so it can be done up. As with all the corsets constructed from a single layer of coutil, the top and the bottom edges have been finished by a small row of cotton binding.

The overall condition of the ABC Marchioness indicates it has not been worn on a body. No crease marks are apparent at the waist area, and the paper ABC label is still attached on the lining side at the top right next to the eyelets. Foxing is apparent all over the facing cloth side of the dove grey coutil, with this occurring through moisture and age. When placed on the body, the ABC Marchioness would have a defining shape characteristic of the period it has been placed in. However, due to the storage conditions over its lifespan, it has become very flat and has lost any shape it once retained from the steam moulding process given by the ABC manufacturer.

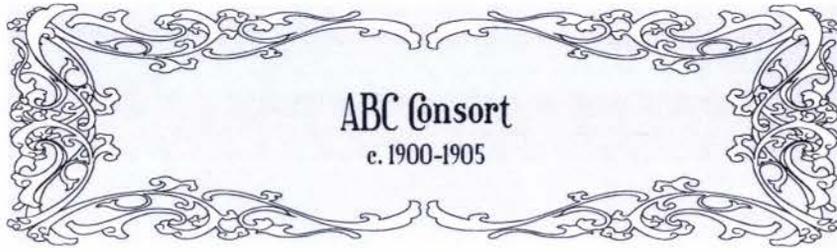


Figure 187 ABC Consort facing cloth side lying flat on the table (Collection Canterbury EC179.880)

The ABC Consort has characteristics that place its manufacture in the time period of c.1900 - 1905. Like the other ABC corsets, it has specially been produced in England for New Zealand, and sold in the Direct Importing Company (D.I.C) department stores. Made from a single layer of drab grey coutil, it has typical Edwardian styled diagonal seaming, sewn on tabs, and a long line over the hips. These design aspects forge together to help create the typical 's' bend silhouette when worn on the body.

The steel casings are placed on the lining side of the ABC Consort and run in alignment to the centre front. A combination of 7mm and 1.5cm wide steels have been used with the wider steel casings decorated with the manufacturers typography. The typography has the same details, uses the same style of typeface and ink as the other ABC corsets viewed. The centre front has a standard five hook and stud straight front busk with the centre back having dark colour metal eyelets evenly spaced. One eyelet near the waist tape on the right side is out of alignment to the rest of the row, and is obvious when it is unlaced. Handwritten pencil and

ink markings are present on the lining hook side of the busk facing, and display the size of 20", and the reduction in price.

The ABC Consort has no other form of stitched ornamentation on the facing cloth side outside of the modesty lace at the bust edge. The absence of other decoration makes the lace a prominent feature on the corset and gives a more striking aesthetic at first glance. The lace has a circular geometric repetitive design that helps to form a scalloped bottom edge and echoes the eyelet holes that are incorporated into the lower edge of the lace. Three rows of 5mm baby ribbon have been threaded through the lace eyelets in a stepped manner to create a basket weave effect. The lace reaches below the first hook and stud at the centre front and creates a curved line at the bust. The overall condition of the lace is good but it has

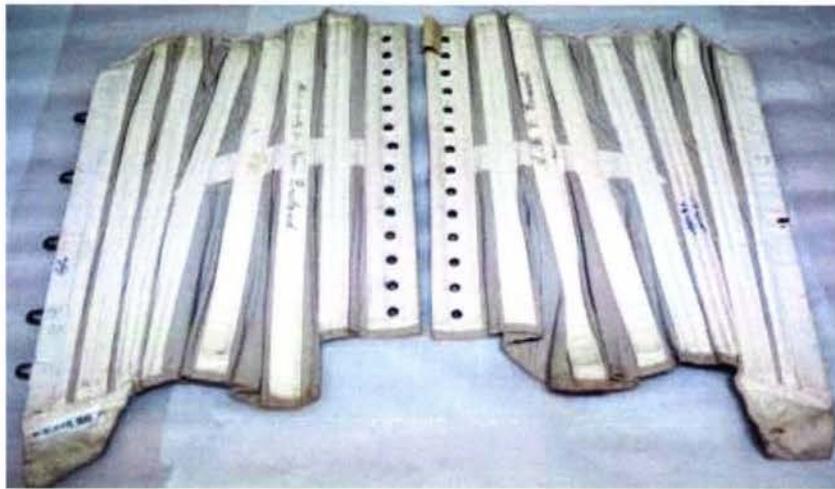


Figure 188 ABC Consort lining side lying flat on the table showing steel casings and typography (Collection Canterbury EC179.880)



Figure 189 ABC Consort facing cloth side lying flat on the table showing detail of modesty lace, baby ribbon and hook and stud front closure (Collection Canterbury EC179.880)

browned with foxing and has taken on a dull fawn colour in appearance that contrasts its once white colour. Areas of the baby silk ribbon have deteriorated with parts becoming unthreaded at the centre back near the eyelets due to the silk ribbon threads breaking.

Though the ABC Consort looks unworn its condition shows signs of age with foxing scattered over the facing cloth, watermarks on some steel casings and rust around the centre front studs, with the modesty lace curling in places where the basting has become unthreaded. What makes the Consort unusual and stand out is the concentrated rows of pink baby ribbon that is inserted through the modesty lace, as the eye is drawn to this on an otherwise very plain corset.

ABC Universal
c. 1900-1905



Figure 190 ABC Universal facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

Decoration and feminine aesthetics increased throughout the late 1890s and well into the first part of the Edwardian era. Modesty lace, ribbon, hose supporters, flossing and jacquard weave fabrics were used in a range of combinations to visually enhance a garment that was rarely publicly viewed. Undergarments now took on a sense of beauty and became pretty unlike previous decades. The ABC Universal uses a combination of these design attributes in the form of hose supporters flossing, ribbon, and lace. What makes this corset stand out is the use of colour, choice of lace and the way it has been applied in the overall design.

Manufactured between c.1900 and 1905, the ABC Universal has typical early Edwardian features of a straight front with longer controlled panels and reinforcing. Curved panels twisting towards the back shape the corset to enable it to manipulate the body and help assist in shaping the body into the fashionable ideal 's' bend. A gusset has been included at the bust to further aid and shape the womanly figure. Flat felled seams have been used as the seaming technique for the single layered corset and are placed on the facing cloth side. Twenty-six steels



Figure 191 ABC Universal lining side lying flat on table showing steel casings, typography and paper label (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

have been used throughout the design, using a combination of widths of 7mm and 1.5cm that run in alignment to the centre front and centre back.

All steels run the full length of the ABC Universal with the exception of the pair closest to the centre front as these stagger in length and finish a good 5cm above the hem. All 7mm steels are paired excluding the one steel alongside the centre front busk and the two single steels that run alongside the centre back lacing. The side back has two 1.5cm wide steels and like other ABC corsets the casings of these steels have the manufacturer's brand name and details printed on them. All steel casings are placed on the inside and are made from white cotton twilled cloth. The bone casings have been stitched on top of the waist tape, which appears to be a common construction method with all the ABC corsets.

The centre front has the standard five hook and stud busk closure and like the ABC Society the last two hooks are placed closer together. The ABC Universal has a high contrast of decoration and uses all three main ornamental elements of modesty lace with baby ribbon, flossing and hose supporters. It presents the unusual features of black silk flossing at the bottom of the bone casings, the gusset at the bust and at the end of the straight front busk. The flossing used on the bone casings varies depending on the width of the bone used, with the single bones having a triangle shape and the double bones having an 'x' shape. The flossing at the bottom of the busk and at the gusset is an overcast stitch and is used to reinforce these two areas and stops the busk moving about.

Modesty lace is placed at the bust edge and is constructed from a fine net with scalloped edges at the top and bottom and would be classified as a galloon



Figure 192 ABC Universal detail of modesty lace with black baby ribbon and pink centre back laces (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

styled lace. Butterflies, one large and one small, are incorporated in two rows in the middle of the lace design. The larger butterflies are accentuated with a running stitch in black silk thread around the silhouette. A single row of black 5mm baby ribbon is threaded through the top edge of the lace, this feature as with the butterfly silhouette draws attention to the bust area due to the high contrast of the black on the white lace. The lace extends down to the third hook and stud on the centre front busk, which creates an illusion of additional length at the centre front and is further emphasized by the hose supporters.

The bottom centre front has two adjustable hose supporters that add extra weight to the overall corset. The adjusters silver coloured metal clips have an art nouveau chasing finish to them, where in contrast the hose clips are plain and have no decorative aspects to them. The tape that has been used for the hose supporters has tightly woven edges and an open weave in the middle that creates a striped effect.

Fifteen white enamel coated eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and have a pink lace that has tags threaded through. The lace appears to be brand



Figure 193 ABC Universal detail of hose supporter adjustable clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)



Figure 194 ABC Universal detail of hose supporter ribbon and hose clip (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

new and may not be the original that initially came with the corset. As this is the only pink element in the overall design of the ABC Universal, it differentiates from the commonly used formula of maintaining the same colour throughout for all the decoration and features.

In general, the overall condition of the ABC Universal is interesting. Though it appears not to have been worn on a body there is damage at the centre front and centre back to suggest otherwise. There are no marks or creasing at the waistline to indicate a body has been tightly encased. The waist tape is very white in contrast to the bone casings that have spots of rust from the paper steels and metal-ended tips that lie beneath. Foxing has occurred and is scattered all over the ABC Universal along the steel casings on the lining as well as large patches on the facing cloth at the centre back.

The centre back eyelets show signs of strain as some have come away becoming loose from the coutil, have fallen out or have frayed edges. The hooks and studs have discoloured having a dull tone to them unlike the originally shiny silver they would have been. The centre front busk has areas around the hooks where the stitching joining the front to the facing has come away, exposing the paper covered busk beneath. It is possible the ABC Universal was used as a display model in a drapery or department store as it came with its original box. The exposure to light, sun and atmosphere on a daily basis while on display could have caused the discoloration over time, and answer the question posed by the different coloured centre back lace.

Unlike other ABC corsets, the ABC Universals box survives. Initially the overall appearance of the box is striking as it is a dark red colour and has an ornate



Figure 195 ABC Universal detail of centre back eyelets wear and tear (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)



Figure 196 ABC Universal detail of centre front stitching revealing busk (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

paper label on the lid and a more practical informative paper label on one end. Numerous colours have been used with a combination of typeface and images to create the art nouveau styled lid. The boarder patterns used, and the floral decoration that is integrated and entwined in the design radiates femininity and the ideal ABC Universal woman. The use of borders and silhouettes of the flowers connects to the modesty lace on the corset. The brand name ABC is bold in red, and stands out with its proportion of size and the sans serif art nouveau styled typeface. The brand name is linked to the words perfect form that is in a white typeface with a red background. The terms CELEBRATED and REGISTERED are incorporated into the lid design and are emphasized by the use of uppercase black serif typeface on a pale green background.

An illustration of a stereo typical womanly silhouette of 1900 - 1905 is used, and reinforces the ideal 's' bend shape of the period. This presents and demonstrates the illusion of the perfect form that will be obtained by the celebrated ABC Universal when worn. The style name, UNIVERSAL, is placed on the end of the box and is surrounded with a decorative art nouveau border that has flowers and a range of colours. Quality, colour and size details are placed below and are in a smaller typeface. All the typeface used on the end of the box label is in uppercase and a combination of colour, size and typeface styles have been used. The overall choice and colour of the box is intriguing as no red has been used on the corset itself, and the colour red has been associated with Victorian and Edwardian women from lower social class positions who held undesirable jobs in bordellos. Purchasers of a corset in a red box may have felt daring and defiant of social etiquette that was becoming to a respectable women in New Zealand society.



Figure 197 ABC Universal box lid (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

Figure 198 ABC Universal box end (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)



S & S Corset
c. 1900-1905



Figure 199 S&S Corset front (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)



Figure 200 S&S Corset facing cloth detail at centre front (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

The S & S Corset is made in Wurtemberg, Germany and manufactured between the time period of c.1900 and 1905. The single layer of blue and white floral silk jacquard cloth is striking in colour and design. The detailed nature of the woven floral cloth helps to camouflage the complex and numerous curved panels and gussets incorporated into the overall design. All seams are flat felled and completed by machine, but it has been altered after manufacture as additional darts are placed at the lower side hip area, and an additional seam that runs the full length of the corset can be seen. The new alterations are machine sewn and edge stitched, but have a different appearance in width and stitch style than the factory sewing. The alterations may have been done on request of the purchaser to

acquire a superior fit, by the drapery store sewing department, or by a dressmaker or the corset owner herself. These changes do not affect the function of the S & S and when placed on the body the corset would still mould and form an 's' silhouette typical of the period.

An intricate combination of 7mm and 1.5cm wide steels are used in the overall design. It is presumed paper covered steels are beneath the casings as some areas are bent into a specific curved shape, and others showing small rust spots can be seen on the casings. The casings are made from white cotton, the same as the bust improver, and the centre back and front facings. The casings are placed on the lining side of the corset and do not run over the seams, but are placed in alignment to the centre front and centre back or on a diagonal. Two 7mm steels are placed diagonally, running from the bust to the waist tape. Another two groups of double 7mm steels, one pair diagonal and the other straight, run the full length of the corset. These are positioned at the side front and side seam areas with the



Figure 201 S&S Corset facing cloth side half lying flat on table showing panel lines and shape (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

diagonal steels finishing at the end of the busk and being stitched into place to stop movement. Two single 1.5cm steels are placed at the side back with four 7mm steels positioned close by. These steels are on a diagonal that runs from the top edge to the centre back waist tape, and have a function to support the back and aid in the promotion of good posture. The last two single 7mm steels run alongside the centre back eyelets.

Seventeen metal eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and have two white laces with tags threaded through them. The centre front closure has a straight front bust with five hooks and studs. The busk does not run the full length of the corset and stops above the falling front hemline. The hooks have the initials S & S stamped into them and use the same typeface as seen on the lining. At the bottom of the centre front, a single shell button is fixed in place. It is presumed the function of this button is to attach hose supporters, or for attaching the corset to petticoats and other undergarments such as a corset cover or draws.

The top and bottom edges have been finished with a binding technique that is seen to be a standard practice for corset making. The bindings are different from each other and are hand sewn in some places, and though it can not be confirmed, it is very possible that one of the bindings is not original to the S & S. Modesty lace is used at the bust edge and is sewn into the top binding. The lace is fine and



Figure 202 S&S Corset lining side lying flat on table showing steel casings, waist tape and bust improvers (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

highly decorative having scalloped edges and would be classified as a galloon styled lace. The lace dips down at the centre front and extends past the second hook and stud. No baby ribbon has been used in the modesty lace and no eyelets have been incorporated into the lace design to allow for modesty lace to be inserted at a later date.

The lining side of the S & S reveals a bust improver, the only one seen within the museum corsets catalogued. The bust improver, a quilted pad placed at the gusset breast area, is used to uplift and add fullness to the bust. It also helped to either create the false impression of a smaller waist by a bigger bust or by aiding a woman who was not well endowed to have an illusion she was. The 3cm wide waist tape reveals the S & S corsets alterations more clearly. The typography printed on the waist tape shows letters and aspects of the main logo removed and concealed by the new seams. The dark blue printed ink stands out against the white background of the tape. The left side has the style, place of origin, and states



Figure 203 S&S Corset lining side showing typography detail and bust improver (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

Figure 204 S&S Corset detail of typography and new seam that goes through the logo (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)



it is registered and trademarked with the official logo. Serif typeface is used in a bold manner with the **S & S** standing out, being larger than the rest of the wording. The logo image has similarities to that of the French made American owned Statue of Liberty. A stylized classical Roman woman holding a torch, draped in a toga with an elaborate Roman hairstyle stretches along the waist tape, but has the new seam interrupting the image. The right side simply states *straight front*, but has letters missing in the word straight where the new seam has been taken. The style of typeface is a script that harmonizes with the curves of the corset, the delicate style of modesty lace, and the floral jacquard that together make the S & S a particularly elaborate and feminine corset.

The overall condition of the S & S corset is relatively good. Some foxing can be seen scattered over the plain weave lightweight cotton that is used for the steel casings and the bust improver. The centre back laces have discoloration where they have been threaded through the eyelets and rubbed against the metal. The laces being pulled tightly and the abrasion that occurs while the corset is being worn have combined to cause this irreversible discoloration. Spots of rust are evident along areas of the centre front busk facing that is made from the white cotton, and reveals where the paper covered steel lies beneath. No rust appears on the reverse side of the facing cloth due to the thickness of the silk jacquard. The modesty lace has yellowed under the arm area through exposure to perspiration and body oils. No dye transfer around the waist from other materials is evident nor any wear or tear, seam slippage or loose threads. The S & S Corset is a neatly preserved design artefact that has a higher visual aesthetic and appeal than the majority of corsets catalogued, and would have sold at the higher end of the corset market.



The Correct Corsets for the Season.

THE fit, the poise, and the very class of the gown depend upon the Corsets, and the best dressed women of Paris, London, and Wellington take particular care to possess the correct Corsets. If you don't know the Corsets you require, put yourself in the hands of our skilled corsetiere, and she will see that you are correctly fitted.

REDFERN CORSET—This is one of the newest and most perfect fitting of models; in white mercerised tulle, artistically boned with whalebone, cut moderately low at bust, with deep extended hips, suspenders attached. Suitable for medium or stout figures. At 42/-.

W.B. REDUSO—This model is designed specially for stout figures; cut very low at bust, and comes well down over hips at back; two sets of suspenders, front and back. In grey and white Coutille. At 19/6.

W.B.—A perfect fitting model for the average figure. The hip is deep, and the added apron produces the straight effect. In white Coutille. At 11/6.

LA VIDA.—In white Coutille. A perfect model with extended hips. Suitable for slight or medium figures. At 18/6.

S & S.—This is a dainty model, cut moderately low at bust, with extended hips. Suitable for slight or medium figures. At 25/6.

OUR OWN SPECIALITY.—In white and grey Coutille, nicely boned with Greenland whalebone. Suitable for slight or medium figures. At 10/6, 12/6, 25/6.

P.D. CORSET.—In black satin. A nice model, with extended hips, suitable for stout or medium figures. At 16/6.



KIRKCALDIE & STAINS, LIMITED.

Figure 205 Kirkcaldie and Stains corset advertisement, *New Zealand Freeland*, Saturday 26 June 1909, p14.

ABC Imperatrice
c.1900-1907



Figure 206 ABC Imperatrice facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)

The ABC Imperatrice is made in England specially for New Zealand. The characteristics of style, materials and construction place it in a time period of manufacturer between c.1900 and 1907. Made from a single layer of white coutil it has similar design, materials and construction techniques to the other ABC corsets from the same time frame.

The ABC Imperatrice style features show the use of diagonal seams and gussets that are typical to help create the 's' bend silhouette of the early Edwardian period. A combination of 7mm and 1.5cm wide steels are used with a straight front busk that has five hooks and studs. The centre back has fifteen eyelets evenly spaced that are threaded with two laces with tags that are rusted with age. Subtle femininity has been included within the design by the means of cream coloured silk flossing placed at the end of the steel casings, modesty lace with cream baby silk ribbon and typography on the lining. The modesty lace displays a floral influenced design and is delicate in contrast to other laces seen on

the ABC branded corsets. Flossing is used to reinforce the gussets and is placed at the bottom of the steel casings.

The ABC Imperatrice, like the majority of ABC branded corsets has used the same typeface for the brand name and style name, and has printed the information down the steel casings. Black ink has been used with a curvaceous script that balances the femininity seen in the other design elements of the corset, and adds ornamentation to an otherwise stark lining. The ABC Imperatrice has the made specially for New Zealand in the same typeface as the brand and style. The terms registered and guaranteed rustproof are in a small roman serif typeface and are overshadowed by the size of the brand and style typography.

The centre back steels and eyelets on one side are obscured at the top by the paper label. Unlike other manufacturers' paper labels seen, the ABC brand is simple in design, has minimal information and has no decorative details. With a white background, the blue ink contrasts the bold sans serif typeface. The double circle border on the square label frames the brand name and corset size neatly. Corsets were sold unlaced with the paper label normally being removed prior to wearing as the eyelets were unable to be threaded without tearing it. As the ABC Imperatrice has the label entirely intact and is not fully laced, it is probable it was never worn and was used as part of a display in a drapery store or never sold, with the laces partially threaded at a later date to avoid them being lost.



Figure 207 ABC Imperatrice lining side lying flat on table showing steel casings (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)



Figure 208 ABC Imperatrice detail of fan flossing at gusset point (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)



Figure 209 ABC Imperatrice detail of modesty lace with cream baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)

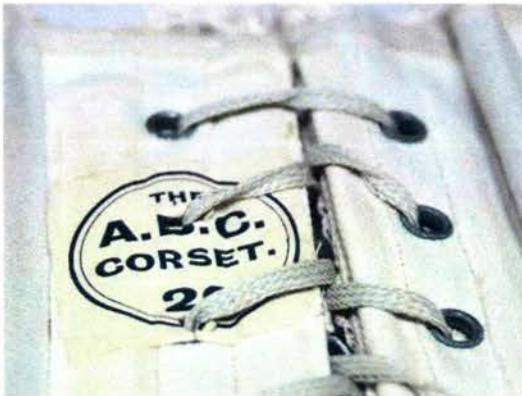


Figure 210 ABC Imperatrice detail of lining side showing paper label at centre back eyelet facing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)



Figure 211 ABC Imperatrice detail of steel casing showing typography of style name (Collection Canterbury EC179.88D)

ABC Princess
c. 1900-1907



Figure 212 ABC Princess facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)

Similar to other ABC Corsets, the ABC Princess was specially made for New Zealand, is registered and guaranteed rustproof. The design details and shape indicate a manufacturer's date of c.1900 – 1907. A single layer of drab coutil has been used for the main corset shell. The ABC Princess has been constructed by machine and has standard flat felled seams joining the panels together. The steel casings are placed on the lining side of the corset and have double 7mm steels throughout with the exclusion of the two single 1.5cm wide steels that are located at the side back.

A diagonal cluster of four steels placed at the centre back running from the waist to the top edge, and two rows of short length steels at the underarm, make the ABC Princess different from other ABC styles. The functions of the steels at the underarm for support, additional bust suppression and manipulation. The steel casings are sewn over the waist tape, which has remained a brighter hue of white than that of the casings twilled cloth. Though all casings run the full length of the corset, some finish above the hem as seen at the centre front and at the side hip



Figure 213 ABC Princess lining side flat on table showing steel casings and typography (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)



Figure 214 ABC Princess detail of lining side diagonal steel casings at centre back (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)

Figure 215 ABC Princess detail of lining side horizontal steels at bust edge, and hasting stitches that hold down the modesty lace (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)



area. This is purely for function, comfort and practicality of design as the centre front and side hip length extend longer to create a smooth shape, a typical feature of corsets from this era. Flossing has been used to hold the various length steels in place and as a bold facing cloth decoration.

Sixteen eyelets in white enamel are evenly spaced down the centre back and have four laces with tags threaded through. The ABC Princess is the only corset to have four laces and it can not be ascertained if this was a standard practice to have a spare pair included when a corset was purchased. The facing cloth wraps around to the lining side and is used at the centre back as a facing that encases the two steels that are placed either side of the eyelets. The centre front

has a straight busk with five hook and eyes that are evenly spaced apart from the last hook which is positioned closer. The hemline dips and has a curved contour from the centre front and moves around to the side front and the side back hip area. Gussets are inserted at the hip area to assist the creation of a smooth curved silhouette when placed on the body. All gussets have overcast stitching placed at the point firstly to reinforce the weak area and secondly as a form of beautification.

Binding with a finished width of 5mm has been used to neaten the top and bottom edges of the corset. The top edge is concealed by the modesty lace that has been basted in place to stop it curling. Flossing is used to hold steels in place and is mainly seen at the hem. The short cluster of diagonal steels at the centre back has flossing running down the centre back steel. The shorter steels that run and converge into this cluster are aligned to the centre back and have flossing at the top and the bottom. The silk flossing thread colour is the same as the modesty lace baby ribbon and the hose supporters. The flossing design on the single bones is in the common triangle shape, with the 'x' configuration flossing on the wider 1.5cm single bones. The centre front busk has flossing at the base holding it in place with a small running stitch.



Figure 216 ABC Princess facing cloth side lying detail of flossing on the short bones next to the centre back near the bust edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)



Figure 217 ABC Princess facing cloth side lying detail of flossing on the short bones next to the centre back near the hem (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)



Figure 218 ABC Princess detail modesty lace design and blue baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.88M)

The modesty lace on the ABC Princess has a delicate botanical influence within the overall design. The lace is a galloon style, with the top and bottom edges having a scalloped finished. Three rows of 5mm blue baby ribbon are threaded through the wide lace, which finishes below the first hook on the centre front and conceals the first three centre back eyelets. The first row of ribbon is threaded through at intermittent intervals to allow aspects of the floral pattern to be seen. The two bottom rows of ribbon are inserted in a standardized and consistent manner with every eyelet being used along the bottom edge. Attention is drawn to the bust area of the ABC Princess corset by the width of the modesty lace, and this reinforces the design characteristics that were typical of corset embellishments of the 1900 - 1907 period.

The ABC Princess once had four blue hose supporters attached to the bottom edge, being placed at the centre front and the side back seam area. At some point these have been cut back to the binding edge, and only a small piece of blue webbed tape remains stitched to the inside binding edge. A few small rust marks are seen randomly over bone casings where paper covered steels lie beneath. Moisture has affected the coutil and patches of foxing scatter the surface, with the areas that do not have boning having more significant damage. The overall condition of the corset shows no creases at the waist therefore it is assumed the ABC Princess has not been worn like the majority of the other ABC corsets.

ABC Regency
c. 1900-1907



Figure 219 ABC Regency facing cloth lying flat on table (Collection EC179.88N)

The ABC Regency has design details that place it in a manufacturing timeframe between c.1900 and 1907. Like other ABC corsets it is made in England specially for New Zealand, is a registered style, and guaranteed rustproof. The design of the corset is in keeping with the majority of ABC corsets seen, with the method of using a single layer of coutil as the main cloth, with a white cotton cloth for the bone casings. The dove grey coutil colour is prevalent on the lining side of the corset that contrasts the white bone casings.

The ABC Regency has a waist size of 19 inches and is made by machine with flat felled seams that are apparent on the facing cloth side. It has large gussets incorporated into the design at the side hip area and at the bust, helping to shape and control the curves of the body into the fashionable 's' bend silhouette that is typical of the Edwardian period. Flossing in a fan like configuration can be seen at the gusset points to aid in strengthening this weak area as well as adding decoration. A combination of twenty two steels run the full length of the corset

with 7mm steels placed in pairs, and a single 1.5cm wide steel placed at each side area. The single 1.5cm wide steels do not run the full length of the corset. They run through the middle of the side gusset stopping at the lower hip area, and are held in place by flossing in an 'x' formation. The steel casings are on the inside of the corset and are sewn over the waist tape. The two side casings have the manufacturer's details, style information, guarantee, and registered marks printed on them.

The centre front has a straight front busk with five hook and stud fastenings, with the last two being placed closer together and finishing above the hemline. The front dips down lower than the sides and is shaped into a point. Fifteen brass coloured eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and show no signs of stress or deterioration from excessive wear. There is no lace threaded through the eyelets, though it would have come with two laces at the time of being purchased. Binding has been used to finish the top and bottom edges and enclose the steel casings. The top binding is concealed by the 7 cm wide modesty lace, which has two rows of baby ribbon inserted. The lace is fine and has small

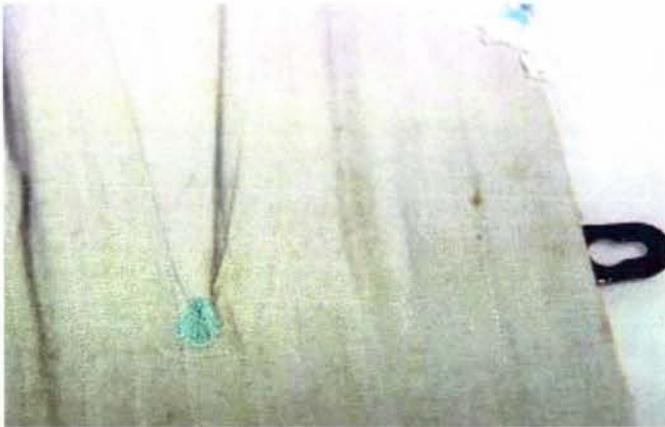


Figure 220 ABC Regency detail of fan flossing at bust gusset , and spots of foxing on the coutil facing cloth (Collection EC179.88N)



Figure 221 ABC Regency detail of modesty lace with blue baby ribbon at centre back (Collection EC179.88N)

scalloped edges along the top and bottom and would be classified as galloon style lace. Towards the centre front the lace extends down the busk and past the first hook and stud. Large basting stitches are apparent on the lining side, and are used to hold the modesty lace down and stop it from curling.

The lining side shows a standard style of typography being placed along the steel casings. This like the majority of the other ABC corsets states it was specially made for New Zealand, and gives the other details of the style name and it being guaranteed rust proof. The same style of typeface has been used as previously seen in other ABC corsets. Like so many other corsets, pencil markings of price and size are positioned along the front busk hook facing and have been added to the corset when it has been on sale in the drapery store.

It appears the ABC Regency may have been worn, though not often, as subtle crease marks can be seen around the waist area. The overall condition of the ABC Regency shows extensive foxing has occurred over the entire facing cloth area, with the coutil taking on a fawn tone. Rust marks are evident along areas of the steel casings, some areas of the front, the facing side of the busk hook and studs, and along some of the centre back eyelets. One row of the baby silk ribbon has deteriorated over time, with only partial sections remaining. It is possible a third row of ribbon may have originally been present as holes where ribbon could be inserted are incorporated into the modesty lace design. Two hose supporters have been cut off from the centre front, with fractions of blue ribbon the same colour as the flossing, remaining attached to the bottom bound edge.

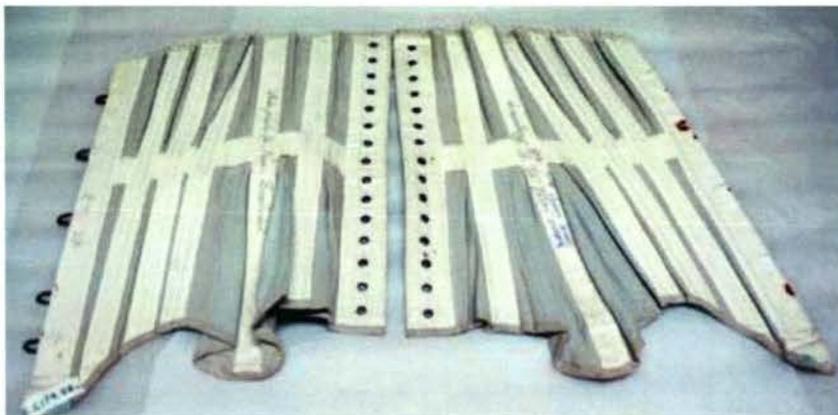


Figure 222 ABC Regency lining side lying flat on table (Collection EC179.88N)

Warner's 700 Corset
c. 1905-1911



Figure 223 Warner's 700 Corset lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

The Warner's 700 corset is made in America and has characteristic details that date a time of manufacturer between c. 1905-1911. A single layer of drab coutil has been used with a white cotton fabric for the steel casings. Three panels are used to create the main shell of the corset and have an addition of three gussets at the bust and hips allowing to help create the typical 's' bend elongated slimming silhouette of the period. The seams are diagonal and twist around towards the back of the corset assisting to thrust the hips in the direction of the back of the torso.

The centre front has a straight front busk with five hook and studs spaced evenly except for the last two, which are closer together. The centre back has twelve dark coloured metal eyelets and is laced with two laces that have tags on the ends. A combination of 7mm steels have been used and positioned in pairs



Figure 224 Warner's 700 Corset lining side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)



Figure 225 Warner's 700 Corset detail of faint typography on steel casings on lining side of corset (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

with two single 1.5cm steels placed at the side back. Not all steels run the full length of the corset as the sides and front extend further down the torso and over the hip. The steel casings are placed on the lining side and are sewn on top of the waist tape.

The Warner's company logo and style number are printed on the wide side back casing. The name is printed in a typeface that combines attributes of script curves with the easy to read serif singular letters. This typeface links to that seen on the accompanying box. Other details are provided with the customer being told the Warner's corset is a registered US patented design, is boned with rustproof steels, and every pair is guaranteed. The typography is easy to read, simply printed in one colour, has an understated feminine tone, and uses the width of the waist tape but not the length.

The bust edge has modesty lace with a single white silk baby ribbon threaded through it. The lace wraps around the centre front and centre back edges and it is questionable if it is original to the Warner's 700. However, it may be original, and been removed and reattached, thus the lace not being fastened in the standardised manner. Four adjustable hose supporters are positioned at the

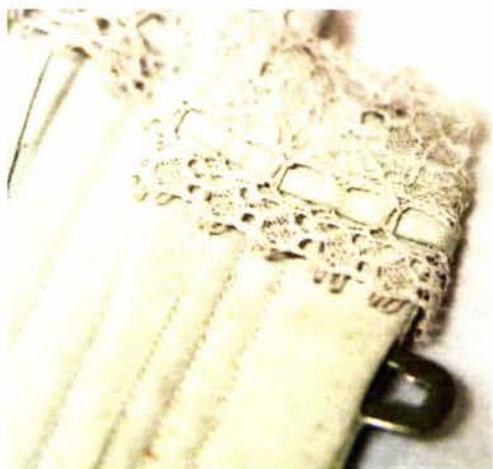


Figure 226 Warner's 700 Corset detail of modesty lace and ribbon (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)



Figure 227 Warner's 700 Corset detail hose supporters clips and elastic webbing (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

centre front and the sides. Made from an elastic weave cotton tape, they appear to have no stretch recovery, as the edges have become rippled over time. They feature adjustable silver coloured metal clips that have a simple die stamped geometric decoration. The hose clips are of a standard design and are attached to the supporters by narrower cotton tape.

The overall condition of the Warner's 700 shows it has been worn on the body with the presence of crease marks at the waist. There are areas of concentrated foxing on the facing cloth side at the centre front bust and small patches of foxing scattered over the facing surface and along the steel casings. The left side casings are darker than those on the right with patches of foxing mingling with dots of rust. This discoloration could indicate rusted paper covered steels beneath. The hose supporters show signs of the elastic weave deteriorating and have spots of rust inconsistently scattered all over them though the clips are not rusted, and this would appear to have been transferred from another item.

Accompanying the Warner's 700 corset is the original box. Like the corset it is a simple white colour and lacks overt ornamentation and feminine characteristics. The top and one end of the box reinforce the typographic information and typeface details seen on the steel casings of the corset. The Warner's logo on the box lid uses the same typeface as on the lining casing and is

accompanied by the term rustproof. It is a simple outlined type with the two phrases being large in proportion and using the majority of space on the lid. The phrase REGISTERED US PATENT OFFICE is positioned on the top of the lid, the side of the lid, and on the end of the box in a small sans serif typeface. It is unassuming and blends into the overall design.

Lacking in specific detail the lid suggests it was a standardised design and used on a range of Warner's styles and boxes. The end of the box uses a simplistic line border to group details together and reiterates the Warner's logo in the same typeface, but in a solid filled black colour rather than just a narrow border outline. The size details are added to the box end in the form of a white printed sticker, which boldly displays 20, that details the 20 inch waist of the Warner's 700. The use of a sticker suggests versatility within the manufacturing, ordering, and packaging and distribution process. The colour of fabric DRAB COUTIL is written in sans serif on the side of the box and complements the overall design, practical balance and understated femininity that harmonises with the corset that is held



Figure 228 Warner's 700 Corset box lid (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

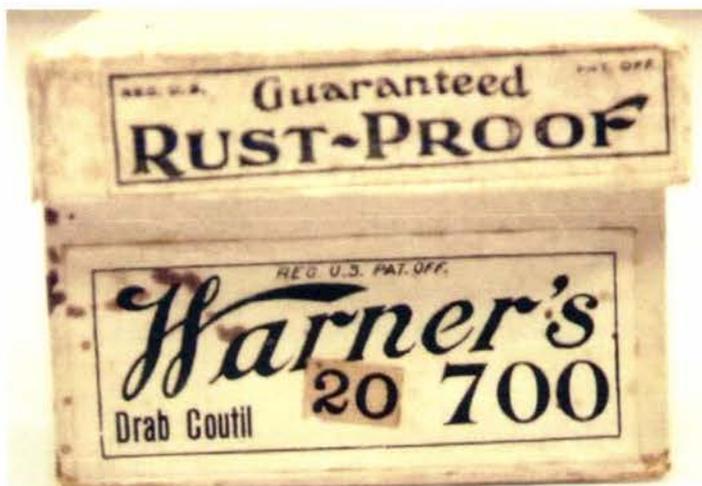


Figure 229 Warner's 700 Corset box end (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

A Warner's Corset

FOR THE TAILOR-MADE.



The smooth fit over the bust and the trimness of the hips is due entirely to the Warner's Corset that was the body foundation for the work of the modiste.

No matter what her figure, there is no reason why every woman should not be well corseted.

There is a large range of styles in Warner's Rust-proof Corsets, and a little thought in selection will give you entire satisfaction.

EVERY PAIR GUARANTEED.

IN ALL FITTINGS FROM ALL DRAPERS.

Figure 230 Warner's Corset advertisement (The Evening Post, Wednesday 25th August, 1909, p 9)



*Warner's
Rust-Proof*

Price 5/9

For the girlish, slender figure. In White or Drab.

PERFECT FITTING.

WARNER'S

RUST-PROOF

CORSETS

These are the only Corsets that the maker guarantees to us.

ABSOLUTELY PERFECT IN EVERY WAY!

**PERFECT FITTING!
PERFECT WEARING!**

We make a specialty of Warner's Corsets, as we know of no other models that are so well fitting or so strongly guaranteed.

WELLINGTON DRAPERS



*Warner's
Rust-Proof*

Price 6/6

An inexpensive Corset of splendid design, for the average figure. In Drab or White.

PERFECT WEARING.



Price 11/6

One of the best designs for medium stout figures.



*Warner's
Rust-Proof
Corsets*

Price 14/-

A very beautiful model for the tall, dignified form; of high-grade quality.



Price 11/6

A popular model, curving the hips slightly and defining the waist. Strongly recommended. Drab or White.

Figure 231 Warner's Corset advertisement (The Evening Post, August 26, 1911, p 6)

PD Marvella
c. 1905-1911



Figure 232 PD Marvella back (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. 1.0003052)



Figure 234 PD Marvella front (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. 1.0003052)

The PD Marvella corset is made in Belgium and would have been manufactured between the years c. 1905-1911. The design of the corset is simple consisting of five panels with flat felled seams sewn on the facing cloth. The steel casings are sewn over the seams on the inside, and run in alignment to the centre front and back. A single layer of white cotton has been used for the main shell with the steel casings and waist tape constructed from cotton tape. Twenty 5mm steels are placed around the corset, and vary in length with the first front steels being shorter than those at the centre back. All steels finish around the upper hip

area, with the hips and bottom controlled by the extended unstructured area which creates a smooth long and slender silhouette.

The centre front busk is fastened with five hook and studs with the centre back laced with 22 metal eyelets that are evenly spaced. The eyelets have been randomly threaded with an original lace that has four tags. The eyelets show tarnishing and have a dull white grey appearance to them and have transferred marks onto the lace. The top and bottom edges are finished with a 7mm cotton tape that has been used as a binding, with the modesty lace sewn on top of this on the facing cloth side. The 5mm modesty lace is lost in the overall visual proportion of the style of the corset, and has signs of deterioration with the right front missing a section, and discoloration on the inside edge where it would have been placed against the body. It is used to add some femininity to an otherwise very plain corset which has a utilitarian and practical appearance.

Four adjustable length hose supporters are attached to the PD Marvella. All supporters are made from a 2cm wide webbing but differ in length. The two front 18cm supporters add length and create an illusion to compensate the shorter centre front of the corset, whereas the side back supporters are 16cm in length. The webbing has spots of rust transferred from the metal clips. Adjustable clips are attached to the supporters and have a decorative die stamped design on them. Cotton herringbone tape has been used to attach the hook and stud of the closure



Figure 235 PD Marvella lining side lying flat on table (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. I.0003053)

to the adjustable clip. One clip has been removed at some stage with the three remaining decorative clips condition showing deterioration and being badly affected with rust, making it difficult to see clearly the die stamped design.

The PD Marvella steel casings are sewn over the waist tape on the inside of the corset. The waist tape is positioned higher than the actual waist as this is evident by the crease lines that are around the corset around the natural waist. This possibly could be attributed to the corset wearer not placing the corset in the correct position on the body as it was intended by the manufacturer. The side back left casing has the manufacturer's name, corset brand, the rustproof guarantee, fibre content of cotton and place of manufacturer. The PD Marvella is different to other PD branded corsets viewed as it does not have the PD crested trademark stamp and has the addition of the fibre content printed on the casing.

Being assembled by sewing machine and hand stitched at the centre front busk edge, it is obvious where the owner has repaired, overcast, patched and stitched the front, as the stitching is uneven and inconsistent with the factory machine stitches. The corset has had no conservation work done to it and the condition shows the rips and tears, stains and rust that have occurred through wear. Rips and tears are evident at the centre front, with the stud side of the paper covered steel busk poking through a tear at the bottom. Some areas along steel casings and seams have ripped where it has been machine stitched. The light weight cotton and the small machine stitching combination have contributed to this and the possibility of the corset being put under a considerable amount of

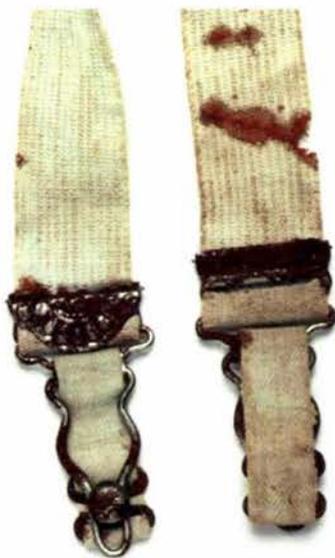


Figure 236 PD Marvella detail of hose supporter clips and adjustable clips (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. 1.0003056)

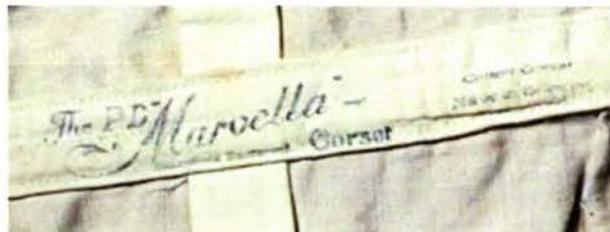


Figure 237 PD Marvella detail of typography on steel casings (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. 1.0003053)



Figure 238 PD Marvella facing cloth side lying flat on table (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. I.0003054)



Figure 239 PD Marvella detail centre front busk deterioration (Collection Te Papa, PC000658, Negative no. I.0003055)

strain when worn on the body. Sections of the busk have rusted and have caused large dark rust marks on the coutil, this is most evident on the facing cloth at the centre front and at the bust edge of a couple of steels on the front.

Like other corsets viewed and discussed there is evidence of the corset being worn on a body around the waist and underarms. Crease lines around the waist and at the bottom below the bones show prominent signs of wear. The original colour of the PD Marvella would have been white but with age and the transfer of dyes from clothing worn on top it now has a blue tone to it. This is most noticeable at the waist and on the seams where it is thicker with multiple layers of fabric.

To-day Fashion aims to
achieve the Directoire
style note. The new

P.D. CORSETS

enable every woman to
attain the slight, grace-
ful, hipless effect that
marked those exquisite
dames who ruled in the
gay days of the French
Directorate.



Figure 240 PD Corset advertisement, *New Zealand Freelance*, Saturday 26 June 1909, p 8

Domino Qual C
c. 1905-1911



Figure 241 Domino Qual C front (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)

The Domino Qual C corset has design, construction and material characteristics that place its time of manufacturer in the period of c. 1905 - 1911. The materials of dove grey coutil, modesty lace with white silk satin ribbon, and white frilled edge lace supporters are fitting to the time period. The design characteristics show a long straight centre front with a complex combination of eight panels, ventilating side areas and extensive steels. The steel casings have been placed on top, and near the panel seams that have been constructed using flat felled seaming.

Thirteen 7mm steels and two 1.5cm steels are used on each side of the Domino Qual C. A diagonal cluster of three 7mm steels are placed near the centre

front bust area with two groups of three 7mm steels placed at the side front. All steels run the full length of the corset except for the steels placed at the side areas, as these finish above the longer line of the extended hip area. Single 7mm steels are placed alongside the paired 1.5cm steels at the side. Flossing can be seen at the bottom of some of the sets of steels at the front and the side seam.

The side area of the Domino Qual C has an interesting design detail of ventilating side panels. Placed between the clusters of steels, three 5cm wide strips of dove grey coutil are positioned in an overlapping fan configuration. The edges of the coutil have been finished to prevent fraying by using a stitch similar to a modern day domestic sewing machine vari-lock. This stitch has also been seen to finish edges of the ABC Treasure ribbon corset. The white silk thread that has been used to finish the edges continues the colour co-ordination with the flossing and the 3cm wide silk satin ribbon that is placed at the bust edge. Extending from the ribbon is a 4cm wide, fine white lace. The lace is held down by large basting stitches that can be seen on the lining side. It extends below the first three centre back eyelets and the first hook and eye at the centre front.

The centre back has a total of seventeen evenly spaced dark coloured metal eyelets down each side. Two white laces with tags are threaded through the eyelets and appear to be the original to the Domino Qual C. The centre front has a straight



Figure 242 Domino Qual C facing cloth side detail of ventilating sides (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)



Figure 243 Domino Qual C lining side lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)

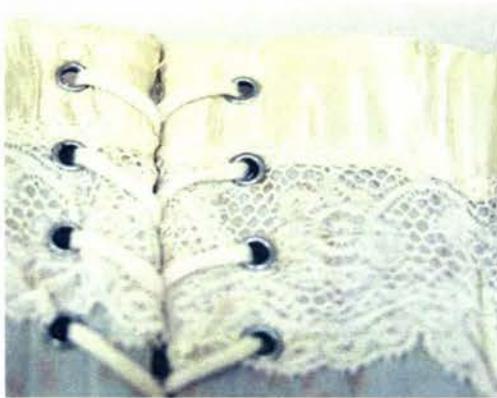


Figure 244 Domino Qual C facing cloth side detail of centre back eyelets and sating binding at bust edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)



Figure 245 Domino Qual C facing detail of hose supporter clips and open weave ribbon. (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)

front busk with five hook and stud closures. The busk finishes above the centre front, as the hemline contours down to a point where a hose supporter is attached. Another hose supporter is positioned at the side area. The additional length of the fixed hose supporters makes the Domino Qual C appear very elongated. A 5mm binding has been used to finish the top and bottom edges. A cotton binding has been used on the bottom edge with the silk satin ribbon at the top edge having the additional function as the top edge binding.

The brand and style name is printed on the left side of the large steel casings and can be seen on the lining side of the corset. Ink with a blue tone has been used to apply the Domino brand name and the Qual C. Images of three

dominos are in a logo format and incorporate the name, DOMINO, in an uppercase sans serif typeface. The combination of logo and typeface are enclosed into a thin lined square border. The QUAL C is styled in an uppercase sans serif typeface and placed alongside the Domino logo. When the lining side is opened out, the large proportion of the printed typography, though subtle in colour against the coutil, it draws the eye and stands out on an otherwise plain lining. This typography has a practical appearance and compliments the overall practical design and style of the corset.

The overall condition of the Domino Qual C shows extensive foxing. Some spots of rust are seen down the steel casings and on the tape that attach the clips to the hose supporters. Some eyelets around the waist area have come away from the coutil, a factor that occurs with stress and wear when placed on the body frequently. This is contradictory to the lack of support from crease lines at the waist area created through continued wear and bending. Additionally there is no supplementary evidence of perspiration, stitch slippage or dye transfer from other items of clothing, thus the corset suggests it has not been worn frequently.



Figure 246 Domino Qual C facing detail typography on lining side (Collection Canterbury EC179.97)

CB Corset No. 8839
c. 1907-1911



Figure 247 CB Corset No. 8839 facing cloth side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Te Papa PC000290, Negative no. L002568)

The CB Corset No. 8839 is made in England. The design of the corset is long in line, suggesting a manufacturing date between the years of c.1907-1911. A single layer of lightweight coutil has been used for the corset, with white cotton cloth for the inside bone casings. The original colour of the corset would have been white.

The CB No. 8839 has seven panels that curve around the body and appear to be cut on the bias. The panel seams are flat felled and machine stitched with a small close stitch. The steel casings run vertical to the centre front and cross over multiple panels. It is presumed steel has been used for stiffening as sections at the top and bottom of some bone casings, and at the waist have holes where you are able to see paper covered steel that has white painted tips. Combinations of

twenty-two 7mm wide and four 1.5cm wide steels have been used throughout to give the corset its structure and shape. The 1.5cm wide steels are placed at the side and side back. The steel casings run the full length of the corset, however, the steels do not. The steels are various lengths depending on their position around the corset, with the shorter steels placed at the sides.

CB No. 8839 is laced down the centre back with twenty-nine evenly spaced metal eyelets. Original laces are partially laced through the eyelets and do not have any tags on them. The centre front is cut higher than the side front and back of the corset and is fastened with a five hook-and-stud straight front busk. An additional metal hook and eye closure found below the busk at the bottom of the front is used for extra security. The top and bottom edges of the corset are bound to create a neat finish with the top edge also having a centre front lace tie to tighten and secure the bust position. The wearer of the CB No. 8839 has adjusted it to give a better fit by adding small hand sewn darts around the underarms.

The six hose supporters are of a simple construction and complement the absence of decoration within the overall corset design. Being made from 3.5cm wide elastic webbing,



Figure 248 CB Corset No. 8839 detail of hose supporter clip, adjustable clip and elastic webbing (Collection Te Papa PC000290, Negative no. 1.002568)



Figure 249 CB Corset No. 8839 lining side lying flat on table with centre back laced (Collection Te Papa PC000290, Negative no. 1.002568)

they give an appearance of little or no stretch recovery. They are plain and have no decorative features on them. The metal clips have tarnished and some have patches of rust on them, in contrast to the embossed guarantee on the back of the clips of being rustproof.

Waist tape supports the corset, with the stitching from the steel casings holding it down. The manufactures trademark, brand name and style number have been printed in blue ink on the 1.5cm wide bone casings that are on the side back. Signs of discoloration are evident. The waist region and the hip region have crease and faint folded lines where dye from other garments has been transferred. The upper centre back has an overall brown tone to it, with the outside being a darker colour to the inside. This discoloration could be a result from perspiration, age, body oils, dirt, and lack of washing. There was a theory that if you washed your corset all the starch would come out and the corset would loose its shape, therefore women tended not to wash their corsets. The hooks and studs on the centre front busk, and the centre back eyelets have tarnished. A few rust spots appear on the busk, areas around the waist, and down a couple of steel casings on both inside

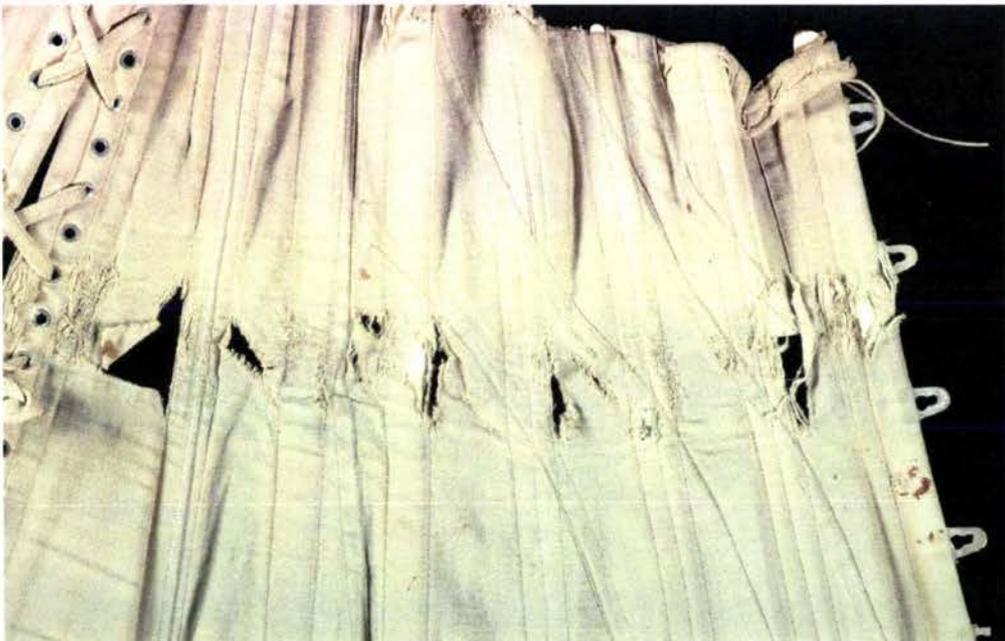


Figure 250 CB Corset No. 8839 detail of deterioration at waist area on the facing cloth side (Collection Te Papa PC000290, Negative no. 1.002568)

and outside of the corset. The makers guarantee the corset to be rust proof as printed on the inside bone casing.

CB No. 8839 has had no conservation work done on it. The coutil has worn through, torn and ripped around the waist area. The predominantly affected areas are down the steels and the seams. Some parts have been repaired and stitched in a similar manner to darning. Rips have run down the bone casings and seams, and have also ripped across the panels to form an 'L' shaped tear. This is right across the waist region and includes the front busk and is generally positioned below the waist tape. The end of the metal busk has worn through the coutil and holes reveal the paper covered steel beneath. Some of the eyelet holes, the top and bottom of some of the steels, and the underarms areas are also worn through, in holes, or partially thread bare.

Being made from a lightweight coutil the corset may have been used as a summer corset or it may have been an economical version of more luxurious corsets, unaffordable to the lower classes. The owner may have discarded the corset as it is missing a hose supporter clip, and has multiple hand-sewn repairs.



Figure 251 CB Corset No. 8839 detail of the paper covered steels poking through the bottom of the casings on the facing cloth side (Collection Te Papa PC000290, Negative no. 1.002568)

ABC Fay
c. 1907-1911



Figure 252 ABC Fay front (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

The ABC Fay shows characteristics of being manufactured between the period of c.1907 and 1911. The overall design of the corset shows a silhouette that is long in line and would control and manipulate the body into a slender shape predominantly shown in fashions of pre-World War I. Manufactured specially for New Zealand women, the ABC Fay is made from a single layer of dove grey coutil with flat felled seams apparent on the facing cloth side.

A combination of 7mm and 1.5cm wide steels have been used with a single 7mm steel being placed in alignment to the centre front busk, and two groups of double 7mm steels positioned at the front and side front. Four single 1.5cm wide steels start at the side area, and are placed at intervals around to the centre back lacing. All steels finish above the bottom edge of the corset and are stepped in



Figure 253 ABC Fay back (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

length. The busk and the clusters of 7mm steels at the front are the same length, with the wider steels increasing and finishing at a length comparable to the lower hip area. One unusual feature not seen on other corsets from this period, is the small cluster of two 7mm bones that are placed alongside the bottom five eyelets. This gives support to the area, but is thought to have been uncomfortable when sitting down; however, it is a design feature that is included to aid in keeping the bottom of the corset firm against the body.

The overall combination of steel length and the lower area of the corset being steel free worked together to help shape and create a smooth long hip and thigh silhouette. This would have worked with the outwear design to limit the length of stride a woman could take and help create the hobble styled walk that was fashionable at the time. The steel casings are all made from a white herringbone tape that creates contrast to the dove grey coutil. They are sewn over the waist tape and run the full length of the corset, with some steel casings placed directly over the flat felled panel seams, and others crossing over them. This creates a mixture of rows and stitching on the facing cloth side.

The two steel casings second from the centre back have the ABC brand



Figure 254 ABC Fay lining side flat on table, showing steel casings, waist tape and positioning of the typography (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

name, style, and other regular information. The unusual use of blue printing is seen in the ABC Fay, and this was the only ABC corset to present this colour ink. The manufacturing details are subtle on the bone casing in comparison to other corsets, and are dwarfed by the proportion and length of the corset. White silk flossing in a triangle formation can be seen at the bottom of the two double 7mm steels to hold them in place. No other flossing is present within the design and style of the ABC Fay.

The centre back has twenty three brass eyelets that run from the top to the bottom edge. They are evenly spaced apart excluding five eyelets at the waist that have been positioned closely together. This positioning allows the corset to be laced tightly around the body and to alleviate stress that can occur in this area, and preventing the eyelets coming away from the coutil. The centre front has a straight front busk with five hook and studs. The busk, as with the steels, finishes above the bottom of the corset. A single hook and eye is located below the busk and helps secure it and prevents it from becoming unhooked during wear. The front is cut higher than the rest of the corset and has a concaved square straight design line at the bottom of the busk. The ABC Fay does not have any modesty lace and departs from this feminine decoration by using a wide silk ribbon in the same off white colour as the flossing. It is placed at the top edge of the corset and functions as a binding to neatly finish the raw coutil edge, and forms a small bow at the front

busk on the hook side. The bottom edge is neatened with a 5mm grey twill binding. From this edge come six wide adjustable hose supporters made from elastic webbing. Simple adjustable silver colour clips that have a row of dots applied with a chasing technique are on each supporter. The hose supporters are heavy and add weight to the overall corset design.



Figure 255 ABC Fay detail of centre front busk, satin ribbon binding and bow (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

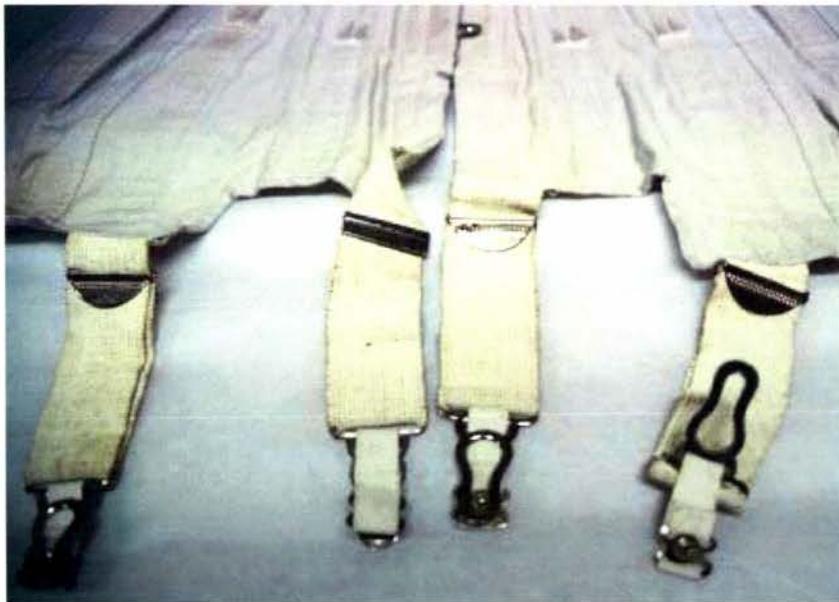


Figure 256 ABC Fay detail hose supporters, adjustable clips, hose clips and elastic webbing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

WB 21577 Corset
c. 1907-1911



Figure 257 WB 21577 Corset front (Collection Te Papa, PC000291, Negative no. I.002569)

The WB 21577 Corset was manufactured in America at the Weingarten Brothers Corset Company. It has similar design and construction techniques to the CB No8839 Corset that was made in England, and manufactured in the same time frame of 1907-1911. A single layer of light weight white coutil has been used to construct the corset shell, with twill cotton being used for the steel casings. Showing a longer silhouette it is typical of corsets produced in the middle period of the Edwardian era where the corset extends down over the hips to create a lean figure.



Figure 258 WB 21577 Corset back (Collection Te Papa, PC000291, Negative no. 1,002569)

A combination of 7mm steels run in alignment to the centre front and centre back, and are to be found in pairs. Though the steel casings run the entire length of the corset, the steels do not. Crease lines are evident around the lower section of the WB 21577 and show where the steels have stopped and the graduation of the steels length. The top and the bottom of the casings are sandwiched between a 5mm binding that finishes the top and bottom edges of the corset.

Twenty-one dark coloured evenly spaced metal eyelets have been used at the centre back and have two white laces with tags threaded through them. The eyelets and tags have tarnished with time and now take on a green and white appearance, and have a slightly raised surface texture. The centre front has a straight front busk with a five hook-and-stud fastening. Three of the hooks and studs are evenly spaced with the last two positioned closer together.



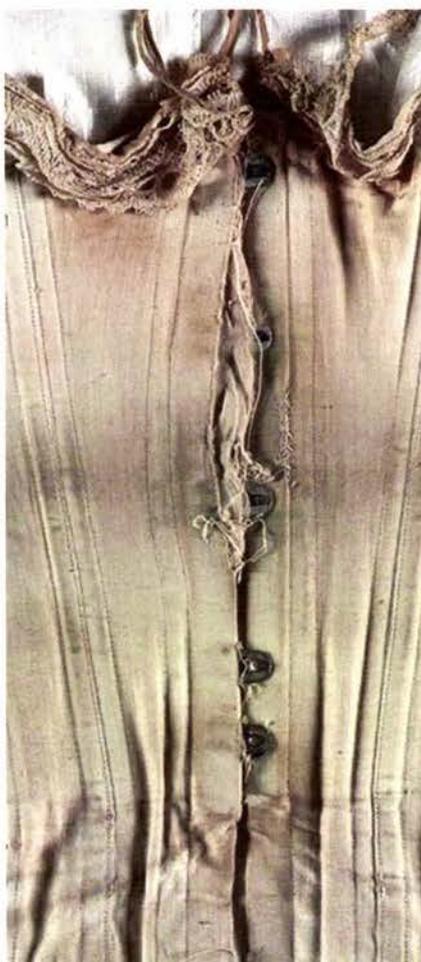
Figure 259 WB 21577 Corset detail of modesty lace staining at underarm point (Collection Te Papa, PC000291, Negative no. 1.002569)

Fine modesty lace decorates and feminises the WB no.21577 corset. The 7cm wide lace is constructed from a fine net ground and shows subtle geometric influenced designs. Eyelet holes have been incorporated into the lace design and fragments of a white 5mm silk baby ribbon remain threaded through at the centre back and side back area. The lace conceals the first centre front hook and the first two centre back eyelets. The top edge of the centre front displays a thick cord that is attached to the binding, but concealed by the modesty lace. The cord is presumably used to tie the two edges of the front together. Small hand sewn darts are located near the centre back eyelets where the modesty lace would have concealed the alteration had it been stitched in place with basting.

Signs of wear and tear are apparent at the underarms, at the centre back, and at the centre front where the lace is ripped and discoloured. It is badly curled, creased, and moved in places from its original position due to the basting stitches no longer holding it down. Brown stains caused through perspiration and the transfer of body oils have caused the modesty lace to disintegrate and rip.

The busk hook facing has a **24** boldly printed in black ink in a style using serif typeface. This stands out on an otherwise plain lining that lacks typographic detail, and makes reference to the waist size of 24 inches. The lining side bottom binding shows the removal of four hose supporters that were positioned at the centre front, and side areas. Remnants of the hose supporter tape remain and have frayed through wear and abrasion.

Figure 260 WB 21577 Corset detail of centre front busk deterioration
(Collection Te Papa, PC000291, Negative no. I.002569)



The overall condition of the WB 21577 is very poor with evidence showing it was a well-worn corset. The modesty lace has obvious signs of wear and tear and there is considerable dye transfer down the steel casings, at the waist and at the lower bottom section. Significant crease marks are present and in this area there are small rips and tears in the facing cloth where steels have broken and worn through, and where stitching has torn the lightweight coutil cloth. The centre back laces have worn and broken, and knots are now present to hold them together, which makes them impractical to use or lace correctly. The left side front shows hand stitched repairs by the owner, with a row of cross-stitch that mends a rip that runs in alignment to the busk.

The centre front busk shows significant signs of deterioration where the hand stitching holding the hook side of the busk in place has come undone, revealing the paper covered steel beneath. Foxing, perspiration stains and stripes of tarnish where paper covered steels have rusted beneath are scattered all over the facing cloth surface. It is quite possible the WB 21577 was never washed due to the fear of the manufacturer's starching and finishing processes being lost, thus explaining the overall well worn condition. Other explanations such as it being a corset worn by a woman in domestic service, or the only corset the owner had, could have also impacted on the overall condition.

WB Nuform 51
c. 1909-1911



Figure 261 WB Nuform 51 front (Collection Canterbury, EC179.93)

The WB Nuform 51 is made by the Weingarten Brothers Corset Company in America. It presents design details characteristic of corsets manufactured in the period of c. 1909 - 1911. It is long in line with the total centre front length of 43cm and centre back of 47cm, and this would create a slender silhouette when placed on the body. Made from a single layer of dove grey coutil, it presents a simple design consisting of six panels and a gusset for the bust.

A combination of 7mm and 1.5cm steels have been used with the 7mm steels being placed in pairs around the corset and alongside the centre back eyelets. The 1.5cm single steel is positioned at the side back and this has the manufacturer's details printed in blue on the right steel casing. The casings are placed on the lining side, and run the full length of the corset. Being made from a white cotton



Figure 262 WB Nuform 51 lining side of one half laying flat on table (Collection Canterbury, EC179.93)

cloth they contrast the dove grey coutil. The waist tape has been placed under the steel casings and is held in place by the casing stitching. The steels do not run the full length of the corset, and like other long line corsets, the steels range in length with the front double groups of being the same length as the busk. From the side area the steels increase in length, with the centre back ones being the same length as the last eyelet. The length echoes the design line of the hem as this contours down in a convex curve towards the centre back.

The WB Nuform 51 has typography printed along the right side 1.5cm wide steel casing that is positioned near the centre back. Simply printed in blue ink it displays the minimal information of company details, style, place of origin and fibre content. The WB is printed in an uppercase serif typeface with the style Nuform shown with more flair in an uppercase typeface that has elements of an art nouveau style. COTTON CORSET and MADE IN U.S.A are positioned to the right of the style number 51 and do not detract from the other information as they are small in size and subtle. Like the exterior of the WB Nuform 51 the typography details are understated and not overtly decorative. There is no strong links to femininity within the typographic design as it lacks the use of script typeface that has a connection to modesty lace and the curves that are created when the corset is worn on a body. The information is presented in a practical manner and harmonises with the practical nature of the corset.



Figure 263 WB Nuform 51 typography detail along one steel casing (Collection Canterbury, EC179.93)

The same white cotton cloth used for the casings has been used for the eyelet facing at the centre back. Twenty-one dark grey metal eyelets are evenly spaced down the centre back and start in from the top and bottom edges and have no lace threaded through them. The centre front has a straight front busk with five hook and stud fastenings, with the last two being spaced closer than the others. At the bottom of the busk there are two metal eyelets and a single hook. It is probable that this design feature, not seen on any other corsets examined, is part of an additional fastening used as a security feature to ensure the busk did not become unhooked when worn. It may also relate to how the corset was fastened and the ability to release the lacing during different activities and periods of the day.

The centre front busk is faced with the same coutil used for the facing cloth. Next to the bottom eyelet near the hook facing, a printed group of numbers, 34219, that correspond to the WB Nuform 51 patent number, is present. Presumably printed after the corset has been manufactured, but prior to it being eyeleted, the small typeface stands out as it is printed in red. This appears to be unusual as other WB corsets do not use red printing ink.

The top and bottom edges are bound in the dove grey coutil and create a neat subtle finish. The top edge binding is concealed by the 6cm wide modesty lace, which is the only feminine feature of the corset. The white lace has a single row of white silk 5mm baby ribbon threaded through it and is fine in detail having a main design that is based on a repeating arch shape. Large hand-basting stitches hold the modesty lace down and can be seen on the lining side. Two 5mm cotton tapes are attached at the centre front at the top edge, and are used to close the edges of the corset and secure it. The overall condition of the WB Nuform 51 suggests it has not been worn. There are no crease lines around the waist or any evidence of dye transfer from other garments worn on top. Other areas that would

be stressed when worn on the body, such as the eyelets, have no deterioration. Foxing is scattered all over the coutil, steel casings and modesty lace. Traces of the webbing remain on top of the binding at the centre front and side area where four hose supporters have been cut off.



Figure 264 WB Nuform 51 detail of modesty lace and baby ribbon at bust (Collection Canterbury, EC179.93)

The "W.B." Erect Form Corsets

...and...

The "La Vida" Corsets.

Engagements will be made in the same order as applications are received for appointments first come, first served. Those ladies who are not prepared to make purchases next week need not hesitate to take advantage of Miss Fryer's services, as one of the principal objects of her attending at The New House, is to advise customers as to the correct style of corset to be worn. Miss Fryer is thoroughly qualified, and her services are given free of charge.

*James Smith and Sons,
The New House,
Cuba Street.*

Figure 265 Te Aro House, WB Corset fitting circular, 12 September 1910 (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths Ephemera scrap book collection)

WEINGARTEN'S
 CELEBRATED AMERICAN
W. B.
Erect Form
 AND
La Vida
 CORSETS

MURPHY'S
 212 N. EIGHTH ST. PHILA. PA. U.S.A.

July 1911

Dear Mr. Weingarten
 New York

I've had much pleasure in
 saying that the *La Vida*
 Corsets are the most
hygienic corsets possible
 to produce & wear.

Yours faithfully
 Will. R. Dawson

Sydney
 Australia

Erect Form
 CORSETS

Figure 266 WB Corset advertisement, Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, James Smiths ephemera scrapbook



4.2 Architecture & Engineering Design Synopsis:

Corset Design, Materials & Construction

The overall expectations for a corset in the Victorian and Edwardian period of 1870-1911 were to be durable, to support, control, and mould the woman's body to create the ideal fashionable silhouette. This was achieved by the corsets design, the materials used, and the corsets manufacturing and assembly methods. Common materials were used to construct corsets with cotton, lace, ribbon, embroidery, bones, hooks and studs all being seen in other items of women's dress.

All corsets in the timeframe were manufactured using mass production techniques and were made outside New Zealand, in England, Belgium, America and Germany. Some corsets have no identifying marks on them and cannot be geographically placed, though indications suggest they have been produced in a factory rather than by a dressmaker. Having similar assembly characteristics to those with makers' names, the unmarked corsets may have originated from other manufacturing countries such as France or Australia. Some advertisements in New Zealand newspapers show corset makers from Australia were touting for clientele (figure 267). No evidence suggests corsets were being mass produced in factories in New Zealand during the time period. However, single made to measure corsets may have been produced by skilled dressmakers. Corsets made in this manner would present a different appearance in sewing techniques and overall finish due to the differences in the domestic sewing machinery available and the inability to apply and recreate the corset steam moulding finishing process.

MRS CRONE,
MAKER OF FRENCH CORSETS.

(Twelve years with Madame Sonlle De Courtet). - Fit and
Style Guaranteed. None but First-class work Executed.
Self-measurement Cards forwarded on application.

191, COLLINS-STREET, MELBOURNE.
(NEXT 'HERALD' OFFICE.)

CORRESPONDENCE INVITED.

Figure 267 Mrs Crone corset maker, New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, 1905, p 429

Corsets were imported into New Zealand (figure 268) and some were specifically manufactured for the New Zealand corset wearing market. The majority of the brand ABC corsets have specific links to New Zealand with a direct passage for sale and ownership. Printing on the lining or bone casing states they were 'specially made for New Zealand'. No other corsets viewed displayed this, which made the ABC corsets more distinguishable and interesting to find out if they had been designed to suit the environment that differed greatly from the English place of origin and manufacturer. After comparison to other corsets that did not state they were made for the Pakeha European New Zealand women, it was established the ABC corsets did not contain any differential design characters and were considered to be of a general design that could be sold in any colony.

Generally all corsets viewed were in a good condition with most having been worn at some time. There were a few corsets from the Canterbury collection that had not been worn and did not have any evidence of recreation and appear to be authentic. The unworn ABC corset's history was detailed in a story from the museum and relates to the D.I.C. Department Store stock room, the theft of a large box of goods, and an anonymous donation by means of the box being left at the museum doorway a considerable length of time later. Despite the fact that there was an absence of signs of wear on the corset, some corsets that had been placed on a body still retained traces of the woman who had worn them (figure 269).



The La Vida is the finest type of straight-fronted Corset constructed. Each pair is hand-wrought from the finest possible materials, filled throughout with whalebone, full gored and bias cut. They reduce the abdomen without pressure, give a beautiful curve in the back, and are the only Corsets specially recommended by physicians, and worn exclusively by the fashionable world.

NELLIE STEWART says: "The most exquisite corset possible to produce and wear."

The above model retailed from 18.6 up. Stocked by all the leading drapers in Australia and New Zealand.

WEINGARTEN BROTHERS, Makers,
 377-379 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Figure 268 WB Corset advertisement and detail, outlining construction and material details for the style La Vida, New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, Saturday March 29, 1902, p621

Perspiration and blood stains were evident around the underarms, dye had transferred from garments worn on top and crease lines were seen at the waist. Others showed hand stitched alterations, removal of bones, and hose supporters being cut off, clumsy hand stitched patches and general ongoing repairs. Women would wear their corsets until they no longer could be worn (figure 269), repaired or altered to accommodate the changing fashions. Economic means probably only made it possible to purchase a new one to replace that which was defeated. Working-class women had to hold their clothing in high regard, and probably regarded corsets as treasured possessions, and often the only possession of worth.

It is important to acknowledge the isolation in some parts of New Zealand, where some communities would have had women wearing an assortment of dress styles and corsets when they were no longer in fashion or held the shape of the current printed and illustrated fashionable ideal. The corsets examined have been dated by their design and materials rather than when they were worn by the New Zealand woman. The majority of corsets have been dated within a five year period with reference to a specific decade. However, a few corsets were difficult to determine precise time frames of manufacture and have been dated to a general decade, rather than a specific five year timeline. The dates were determined by looking at all the elements that made up each individual corset; the overall style, decoration, boning, length and silhouette.

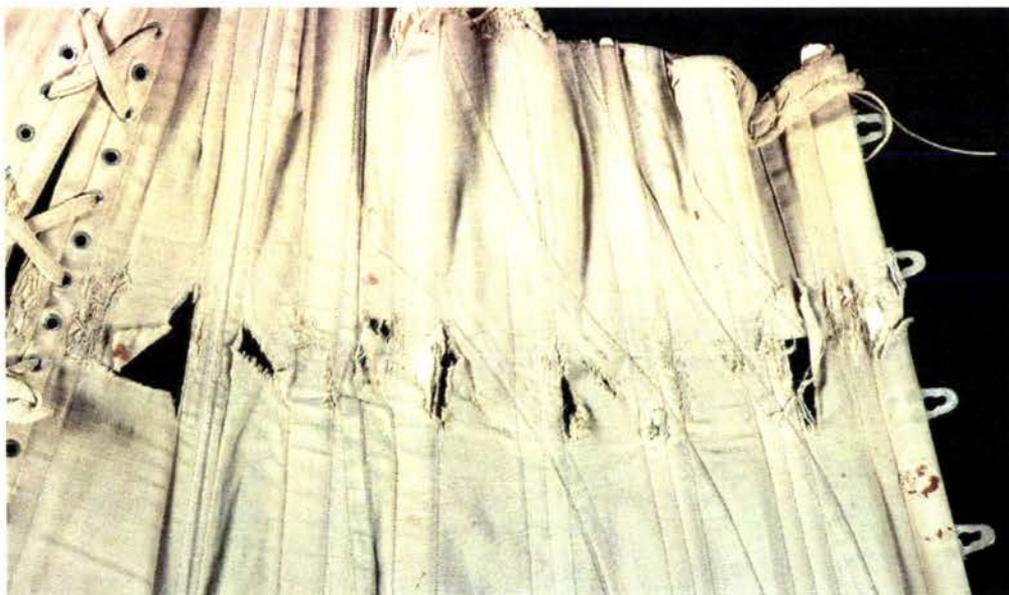


Figure 269 CB Corset No. 8839, c. 1907-1911, facing cloth side ripped and repaired by small stitches around the waist line (Collection, Te Papa, PC 00290, Negative no. 1 002568)

There were a wide range of styles, cuts, quality of materials and brand names, and no two corsets were completely alike. This was an interesting point considering that New Zealand was a small colony with limited shipping resources and the same corset styles and brands continually appeared in newspapers throughout the regions (figures 270, 271, 272, 273). It was initially anticipated that more than one of each style would have been seen from the six regional museums collections. Factors such as the corset's value, where it had been worn to death, and museums' collections and acquisition policies may also attribute to the lack of identical items. However, a small group of brand names, ABC Corsets, PD Corsets and B & C Corsets, did appear a number of times throughout the range of artefacts viewed.



Figure 270 PD Corset advertisement, Wanganui Herald, Saturday November 27, 1909, p6

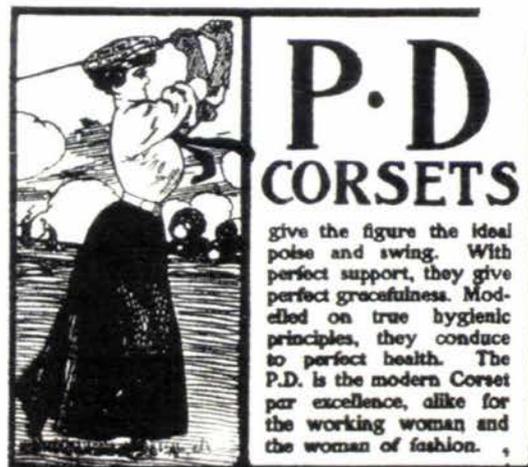


Figure 271 PD Corset Advertisement, New Zealand Freelance, Saturday November 27, 1909, p20

Exquisite Models. Perfect Fit. Guaranteed Wear.

The **Y & N** Diagonal Seam

Will not split in the seams, nor tear in the Fabric.

Made in White, Black, and all the Fashionable Colours and Shades in Italian Cloth, Satin, and Coutil, at popular prices.

Three Gold Medals.
 "The best make of Corsets is the Y & N."—*Gentlewoman.*

Caution.—See that the Registered Trade Mark—**'Y & N Diagonal Seam'** is imprinted on every corset and box. No others are genuine. Sold by the principal Stores.

Figure 272 Y & N Corset advertisement that was published in a number of newspapers around New Zealand, including the Otago Witness, (November 2, 1899, p 64) and the New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal (Saturday 22 June, 1901, p 1196)

S.L. DONNA
PRIMA DONNA
 Corsets.

REGISTERED

PERFECT
 SHAPE
 COMFORT
 & STYLE

THE MOST PERFECT LONG-WAISTED CORSET.

OBTAINABLE AT ALL THE LEADING WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DRAPERS IN THE COLONY.

Sole Agent for Manufacturers:
H. ISAACS,
MORAY PLACE, DUNEDIN.

Figure 273 S.L. Prima Donna Corsets advertisement that was published in a number of newspapers around New Zealand including the Otago Witness (March 6, 1901, p 5) and the New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal (Saturday 22 June, 1901, p 1176)

The majority of corsets can be placed into the 1880-1911 time period. Two corsets, one from Canterbury c. 1820, and one from Otago Early Settler Museum c. 1850, are before the period and though they were not used as part of the in-depth descriptions in the descriptive catalogue, they are listed in the Museum Artefact Guide section. Some corsets may exist in museums that are not included in the study and could be placed in the time period of 1870 - 1890. This may have occurred due to items not being listed on the museum registers or not stored with corsets that were examined. For this reason, brief outlines of corset features for these decades have been included along with styles of dress to demonstrate silhouettes to help establish more accurate dates of manufacture.

Each decade exhibited differences within the design, silhouette, and introduction of materials. Descriptions primarily focus on corsets between 1880-1911 as this is when the majority of artefacts examined were defined to be manufactured in. However, some museums outside of the initial research cluster may have corsets that display characteristics of the 1870s. Corsets from the 1870s had attributes of a lengthened and reduced waist with an apparent bust shape and were typically heavy. Boned extensively using baleen with decorative triangular flossing at the top and bottom of the bone casing, they often had the addition of corded quilted lines at the hips and bust to give extra control and help shape the body. A straight front steel busk with hook-and-stud fastening was common with the lacing being placed at the centre back. On occasion and depending on the manufacturer, the corsets in the 1870s had an extra layer of lining made from a light hessian cloth concealed between the facing cloth and the white lining. This extra layer was primarily used to help give a semi-permanent shape to the corset in the starching and moulding process. A centre front spoon busk was introduced as a common detail towards the later part of the decade. Feminine details of modesty lace threaded with baby ribbon and broderie anglaise were a standard feature decoration at the top of the corset.

The 1880s corset (figures 274, 275, 277), typically had a 'v' point at the bottom of the centre front and a raised bust and shortened waist at the back and sides. Other attributes were similar to those of the 1870s with extensive boning and flossing (figure 274), the use of corded quilting (figure 277) placed at the top of the corset and a spoon busk. The use of the additional layer of hessian lining was replaced by the advanced technique of steam moulding on copper maidens. The

supply of baleen was unreliable and with price fluctuation it became uneconomical for the cheaper mass produced corsets. Paper covered steels, cane, horn, twisted paper and featherbone became widely used as a substitute for baleen throughout the decade. Advancements in sewing machines meant featherbone and cane could be sewn over which made the production of corsets easier and faster. The last few years of the 1880s decade saw the introduction of hose supporters permanently fixed at the bottom on the front and sides on some models. Awareness of design, manufacturing, guaranteed wear, adaptability and patents were common concerns for manufacturers and this is reinforced by their advertisements (figure 278). Though concealed the corset of the 1880s helped to display the ideal fashionable image with a smooth curved line from the bust to the hips as Mrs Henderson models (figure 279).



Figure 274 B&G Corset No. 57 Whalebone, c 1880-1885, (Collection, Whanganui Regional Museum, 1978/58/9)

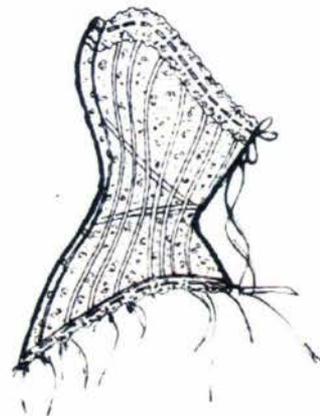


Figure 275 Corset illustration for 1880s (Corset Trade Ball Souvenir September 1963)



Figure 277 Drab Corded Quilted Corset front bust detail, c.1880-1885 (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)

Figure 278 Y & N Corset advertisement, London Illustrated News, August 11, 1883, p 151



THE Y & N
PATENT DIAGONAL SEAM CORSET.
 NEWEST INVENTION. EXQUISITE MODEL. UNIQUE DESIGN.
 PERFECT COMFORT. GUARANTEED WEAR. UNIVERSAL ADAPTABILITY.
 FREE FROM COMPLICATION.

ADVANTAGES OVER ANY OTHER MAKE OF CORSET.
THIS CORSET has been invented to supply what was really wanted - viz, a Corset which would not be split in the seams, at the same time combining every excellence required in a lady's corset. All the parts are arranged diagonally instead of the ordinary upright pieces, the seams being on the bias, and yields to the figure where required (avoiding the utmost strain in wear tearing the fabric). The speciality of construction gives the finest adaptability to the figure, making it unrivalled in its graceful proportions, and meeting the requirements of the latest fashions without any compromise. To be had of all high-class Drapers and Ladies' Outfitters; through the principal Wholesale Houses. This Corset has gained the Gold Medal at the New Zealand Exhibition.



Figure 279 Mrs Henderson in the London Portrait Rooms, Dunedin wearing fashionable dress with a small waist c.1880s. (Collection Otago Settlers Museum archives)

London Portrait Rooms, Princes St Dunedin.

By the 1890s corsets were technically complicated to make, with complex cutting and shaping of numerous grainlines, curved panels and gussets (figures 280, 281, 282). The silhouette showed the bodice firmly constricted at the ribs and waist. The expression 'wasp waist' evolved along with extremes in tight lacing. A quantity of widths, weights and styles of bones and steels could be used within a single corset. Materials for the facing cloth covered a broad spectrum including silk, coutil, jacquard, ribbon, webbing, and lace (figures 283, 284, 285). Silk and satin corsets were highly decorative and considered to be at the upper end of the consumer market as they generally had a lining, compared to the majority of corsets that were made from a single layer of cloth.

The use of flossing was not restricted to the ends of the casings and was placed in a range of places around the corset as a design feature that had a purpose of additional support. It became intricate in design and complex as advancements in machinery helped produce a range of patterns quickly and consistently. Modesty lace evolved into finer and more detailed patterns of greater width. Hose supporters were commonly seen at the front and side or side back areas, and had a tendency to be decorative and complement the colours seen in the ribbon and flossing. Towards the end of the decade padded bust improvers were available and claims were made of steel being rustproof and unbreakable. Ribbon and ventilating corsets were widely introduced and promoted for evening wear, sport, health, dress reform, and as corsets suitable for hotter countries.



Figure 280 PD Straight Front, front and back, c. 1895-1900 (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, 1978/58/2)

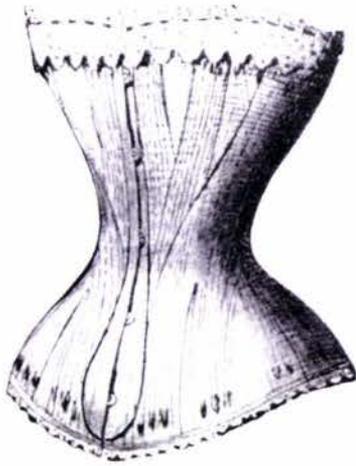


Figure 281 Corset illustration for early 1890s (Corset Trade Ball Souvenir September 1963)

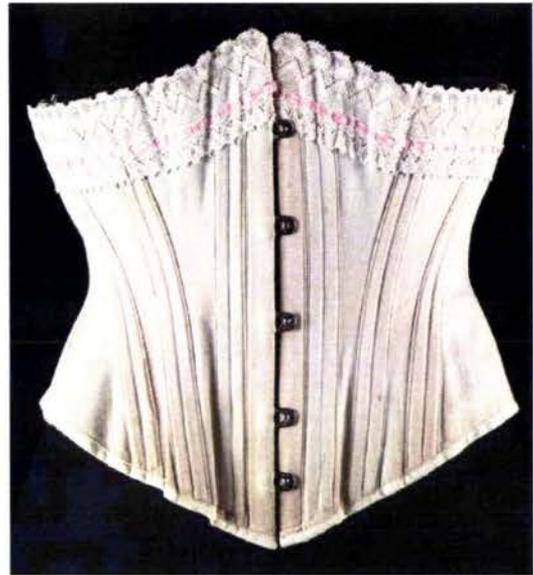


Figure 2832 New PD Corset front, c. 1890-1895 (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. 1.002571)

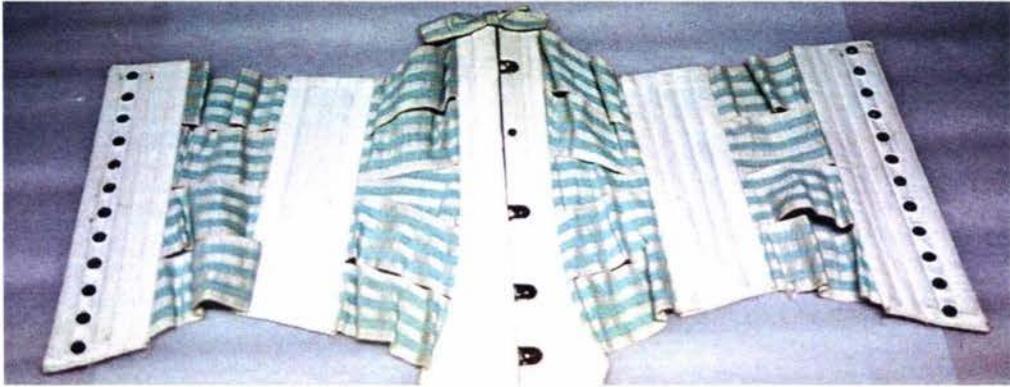


Figure 283 ABC Favorite ribbon corset, c.1890-1905, facing cloth side lying flat on table (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)



Figure 284 ABC Society front, c. 1895-1900 (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)



Figure 285 S&S Corset front, c. 1900-1905 (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

Newspaper features displaying the latest fashions in the 1890s (figure 285) reinforced a small waist was an essential item of dress and appearance and the corset was a vital component of achieving this look in real life (figure 287). Manufacturers continued to show awareness of corset's shape, construction, strength and durability and the perfect fit (figure 278) and publicized these in newspaper advertisements that were scattered between the fashion and ladies sections of newspaper and journals.



Figure 286 Fashion illustration that accompanies article 'The Folly and Wickedness of tight lacing', *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, April 1, 1893, p. 309



Figure 287 Unknown woman wearing fashionable dress displaying a shaped torso that was considered a desirable fashion ideal and influenced by fashion illustrations seen in newspapers and ladies' journals c.1890s, (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, 70420 1-2)

The wasp waist continued into the early 1900s and developed into the pigeon chested full bust, 's-bend' silhouette (figure 289). Being fitted lower at the bust, it shaped the waist, hips and bottom to give them the appearance of being pushed backwards. Cut from fewer pieces they were still extensively reinforced with steels, but had fewer steels overall. The length increased and stretched over the hips and across the bottom, being extremely fitted to give a smooth line and extra control. By 1905, hose supporters were common with the front of the corset curving deeply at the centre front by the end of the decade. Other universally featured styles were made from a single layer of fabric with bone casings on the face cloth and wide galloon type modesty lace as a feature decoration finishing deeply down the centre front busk. As the decade progressed the length increased and stretched over the hips and around the bottom to create a fitted and smooth line that gave extra control (figure 288). Manufacturers claimed to be conscious of women's health and used the finest materials and reduced the size of the waist without pressure (figure 268). Ribbon and sports corsets continued to be produced with a combination of materials being used and becoming more advanced with a higher cut at the sides, lighter weight and having more flexibility.

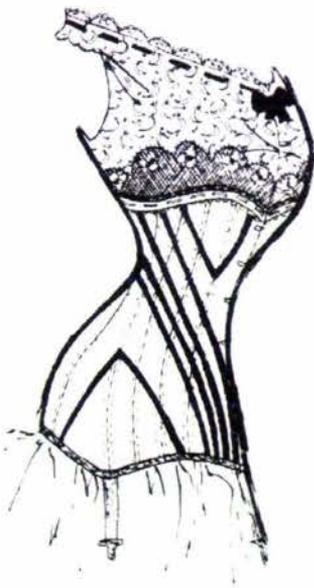


Figure 288 Corset illustration for 1900-1905 (Corset Trade Ball Souvenir September 1963)



Figure 289 Latest fashion illustrations, New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, Saturday March 29, 1902, p 620

By 1909-1910 the silhouette became long and slender (figure 292) and the corset took on a shapeless slender appearance (figure 291). Having characteristics of a low fit at the bust with a flat straight front busk, it extended over the hips with hose supporters extending at the front and sides creating an illusion of a very long corset that was out of proportion (figure 290). Going into the pre-war years the decoration simplified in comparison to the previous two decades with some delicate lace or broderie anglaise trimming placed at the bust. The style became a lighter corset being made from a single layer of cloth with simpler cutting having fewer shaped panels with directional boning finishing just below the waist.



Figure 290 WB Nuform 51, c. 1909-1911 front (Collection Canterbury, EC179.93)

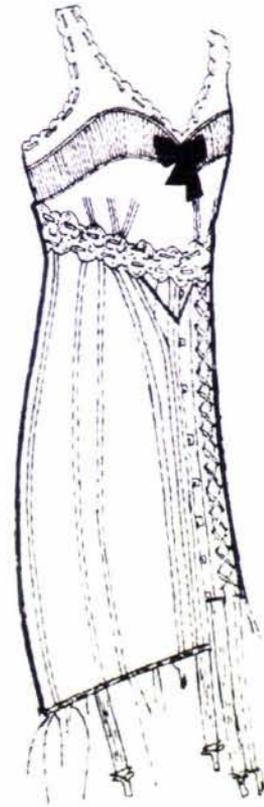
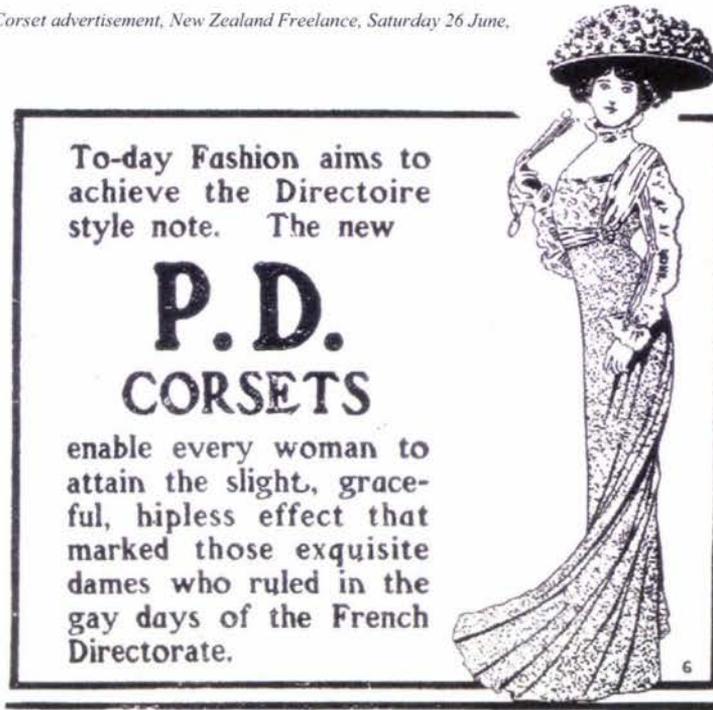


Figure 291 Corset illustration for 1910 (Corset Trade Ball Souvenir September 1963)



Figure 292 Miss Burns c.1910 wearing fashionable dress that would have required a lighter corset that had a shapeless appearance (Collection Nelson, NPM, 63074-3 3/4)

Figure 293 PD Corset advertisement, *New Zealand Freelance*, Saturday 26 June, 1909, p.8



To-day Fashion aims to achieve the Directoire style note. The new

P.D. CORSETS

enable every woman to attain the slight, graceful, hipless effect that marked those exquisite dames who ruled in the gay days of the French Directorate.

6

In general, most corsets displayed strong characteristics and elements of single or multiple features for a specific decade. Some corsets were complex and had conflicting signals which led to questioning whether they were indeed in the time frame or not. For conclusive date authentication the corsets under question would need to be viewed on a body or mount, and compared to other artefacts held in overseas museum collections for which accurate dating had been previously completed. This could be the next step beyond this first study.

An initial line of enquiry was to discover what made the corset a unique item of dress. However, this cannot be simply answered as a combination of factors combined to forge and make the corset what it was. One aspect comes down to ordinary materials united and placed in a specific configuration and tightly worn against the body. Another facet is the weight of the materials and how it added to the overall wearers' lack of ability for active movement. Though it may have been a beautiful aesthetic item, this did not outweigh the physical discomfort women went through when the corset was placed on the body. Completing physical chores or bending in a corset that had baleen or steel which had little flexible movement when placed tightly on the body would have been easier said than done.



4.3 Frippery & Garnishing Design Synopsis:

Corset Embellishment & Decoration

Decoration and embellishment were common features in all areas of feminine women's dress during the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Contrasting fabrics, embroidery, lace, ribbon, floral jacquard cloth and metal filigree fasteners and buckles were extensively used within a single ensemble. The use of decoration in corsets had two purposes: firstly to add beauty, and secondly to meet a specific practical function within the design. The amount of embellishment varied greatly depending on the style of the corset, the manufacturer, the decade it was manufactured in, and the amount it would retail for. Even the plainest corset had some form of embellishment though often unobtrusive in the overall design.

The 1870s saw newly developed sewing machines take over the decorative work that had previously been done by hand. Lace making, flossing and embroidery used in corsets became more complex and consistent in quality with the use of machinery. However, there is little evidence to suggest the visual nature of the decoration made up for the discomfort that could occur when the corset was worn. All corsets viewed in the museum collections had some form of decoration. Following the theory of Steele and Summers (Steele, 2001; Summers, 2001) that working and middle class women wore plain corsets that were not overly flamboyant in use of materials and decoration, it could be established that the majority of corsets analyzed were from these two groups of New Zealand society. The majority of the Pakeha European settlers to New Zealand were from these two societal classes, so it is not surprising there were so many corsets attributed to working and middle-class women.

Most corsets had a combination of flossing and modesty lace that was

inserted with single or multiple rows of baby ribbon (figures 296, 298). Broderie anglaise with embroidered patterns in coloured silk thread was the second most common and was substituted where the modesty lace was normally positioned (figures 294, 295). Modesty lace was predominately white with a range of floral patterns (figures 296–299), weight of yarns and gauge of needles used to create it. Large diagonal basting stitches were used to hold the lace in place and stop it curling up; it is presumed as the stitch lengths are not consistent that this finishing was completed by a needlewoman rather than by machine. A range of silk baby ribbons were inserted through the lace, generally one row was placed towards the bottom edge of the lace, though some corsets, using the brand name ABC, did have up to three rows evenly spaced.

The historical theory taken from Victorian newspaper corset advertisements of the baby ribbon being able to draw in the top of the corset so it fitted the wearer's bust better cannot be proved or disproved. In the corsets scrutinized it did not appear that the ribbons inserted through the modesty lace were adjustable, and in general were sewed firmly in place at the centre front busk edge and at the centre back. Ribbon sections had been removed at some stage in some corsets' history (figure 299) and there was evidence of deterioration at the underarm point where perspiration had affected the silk fibres, causing disintegration and discoloration.



Figure 294 ABC Preferential facing cloth side detail of broderie anglaise and flossing (Collection, Canterbury, EC179.88T)



Figure 295 Madame Jeann facing cloth side detail of broderie anglaise and flossing styles (Collection, HBM 56/63/1)



Figure 296 New PD Corset modesty lace and ribbon (Collection Te Papa, PC003611, Negative no.1.002571)



Figure 297 ABC Universal detail of modesty lace with black baby ribbon and pink centre back laces (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)



Figure 298 ABC Regency modesty lace and baby ribbon, (Collection Canterbury EC 179.88N)



Figure 299 Drab Corded Quilted Corset detail of modesty lace without baby ribbon (Collection Canterbury, EC179.89S)



Figure 96 ABC Universal corset lying flat on table showing flossing matching the colour of the ribbon and embroidery on the modesty lace (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)

Co-ordination of the embellishment colours appears principally with the baby ribbon and the silk flossing on bone casings and gussets (figure 300). The colours of the ribbon and the flossing were bold, contrasting with the predominantly white, black or drab colour of the corset facing cloth. The flossing function was more than pure beauty; it was used to hold bones in place so they did not move in the casings, and can be seen placed at the top and the bottom of the bone casings. Emulating a range of hand embroidery stitches that women were able to do, the flossing was applied by a range of machines that were developed from 1870 onwards. The machine was able to make the flossing consistent, speed up the production process and reduce labour costs. The two most common flossing styles were a triangle and an 'x' configuration using a satin stitch, so the silk thread is exposed on the facing cloth surface with a white linen thread on the bobbin, so visible on the lining side in a subtle manner. Other common stitch styles used were chain, fishbone, feather, looped braid and a chevron stitch that was used down the entire bone casing. Flossing was also used for strength and reinforcing of the weak areas of gusset points at the hip and bust.

The addition of hose supporters became an aspect of embellishment from late 1890s onwards. Initially plain, purely functional and adding extra weight to the corset, hose supporters began to take on decorative elements such as metal

work on the clips, and different styles of lace and ribbon (figures 301, 302). Metal engraving, fret work and filigree were popular techniques seen on the clips that were used to hold the hose or adjust the length of the supporter. Delicate patterns were generally based around intricate curved and scrolled symmetrical border patterns that can be found in art nouveau designs, furniture and items of silverware. For the more expensive corsets that used a range of materials, the hose supporters were very elaborate, with the ribbon and lace often duplicating colours that were used in the baby ribbon and flossing.



Figure 301 ABC Royalty detail of the adjustable length clip and hose supporter clips with open weave ribbon edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.88A)



Figure 302 ABC Society detail of the hose supporter adjustable clip and hose clip and ribbon with running stitch embroidery and a frilled edge. The colours match the facing cloth (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)



Fig 303 ABC Society lying flat on the table with the facing cloth in a brocade that has extensively faded and once had blue in the design to match the hose supporters colour (Collection Canterbury EC179.881)

Decoration on corsets reached its height during the 1890s and some continued to have extreme aspects of embellishment until 1905. The use of brocades as the facing cloth (figure 303) had declined around this time and from this point onwards decoration simplified and often took on a more subtle role within the overall design of the corset. It was considered fashionable to wear beautiful clothes under one's dress (Thesainder, 1997) and the use of embellishment helped to achieve this, as without decoration, the corset is a utilitarian item that has no feminine characteristics until it is placed onto a woman's body (figure 304).



*Figure 304 PD Marvella
(Collection Te Papa,
PC000658, Negative no. 1.
0003052)*



4.4 Typography Design Synopsis:

Corset Logos, Labels, Branding, Boxes & Marks

There are two main areas where typography is used within a corset; the first specifically relates to the corset as a physical object, and the second focuses on representations seen in items such as the corset box and newspaper advertisements. Typography is strongly used in the overall design of the physical artefact with the brand name, style name, trademark logos, size and price paper tag, and the box in which it was packaged. All these aspects played an important part within the overall design and association of the corset brand and style, and had the functional purpose of communicating information.

There are consistent links between all the corsets viewed as manufacturers appear to have used the same formula in 'how' and 'where' to place their markings. Generally, placing brand and or style names on waist tape (figure 305) or on the inside bone casings (figure 306) ensured the customer was getting an authentic product. There are a couple of corsets that do not follow this general practice and have placed printed information down the lining of the centre front busk (figure 307), or directly onto the lining side of the facing cloth at various areas.

Black or blue ink appear to be the standard colours of choice that are used as there were no corsets analyzed that differentiated from this range. This may be due to the cost of printing ink, the tendency of other colours to run when the corset was subjected to the steam moulding process, or worn by the wearer, and the lack of colour fastness in the ink formula. It is difficult to determine if all labels were pre-printed or if they were printed after the corset was assembled. Following the Symington factory process of manufacture as outlined by Warren (Warren, 2001) and viewed in the appendix, it would appear that the corsets produced by

Symington were printed after they had been assembled and had quality standards checked. Other manufacturers, such as Izod's, appear to have pre-printed some authenticity trademark stamps on the lining prior to manufacture as needle marks have gone through the printed typeface and surface stitches go over the ink design (figure 308).

The overall typeface used in the interior labeling on the corset is a combination of script, serif and sans serif. Having the brand name, and/or style name, in a large uppercase typeface with curved facets in a script style added to the femininity of the design characteristics seen in areas on the facing cloth side. Some styles are easier to read than others; however there is no evidence to suggest this did or did not influence the overall decision to purchase the corset. Important information such as trade marks and patent numbers are printed using a small sans serif typeface, with company insignia and royal crests printed alongside and incorporated into the design layout (figure 306).



Figure 305 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone detail of waist tape typography on the left side (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, 1978/58/9)



Figure 306 PD Straight Front detail of PD crest and typography on steel casings on the lining side (Collection Wanganui Regional Museum, 1978/58/2)

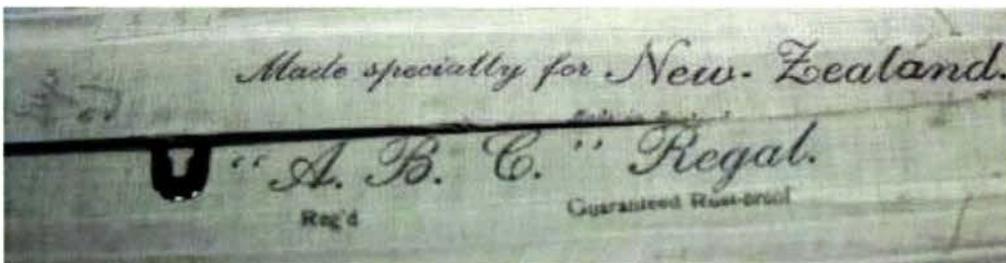


Figure 307 ABC Regal lining side detail of typography down centre front busk facing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88G)



Figure 308 P&S Qual Z17 Zairoid, typography as seen on the waist tape on the lining side (Collection, Canterbury EC179.101)

The majority of the corsets brand identification along the bone casings or waist tape use the overall design, colour and space in an effective manner. Both sides of the corset pair were used and this helped to create a subtle lining, not detracting from the exterior facing cloth design and embellishment. One corset from the 1880s (figure 305) did not abide by this, and used the branding on the inside in a bold and striking manner, so it is the first thing the eye is attracted to upon opening it up. Using wide waist tape, rather than the standard width, the brand name is printed in a large serif typeface and by incorporating the use of shading using a cross hatching technique, the border design emulates a wide ribbon blowing in the breeze. Compared to other corset typography this is an unusual feature and it is the most striking feature on an otherwise plain, utilitarian and unembellished corset.

Paper labels are an additional feature, temporary and functional, and can be seen predominately at the centre back near the lacing area (figures 309–311). These labels have predetermined information on them, such as brand name, maker's logo and corset size, and have space available to have individually specific details added by hand, such as price and style code. Most paper labels were one colour, easy to read and had an overall simple design. Corsets that were more elaborate in material decoration and design were seen to have paper labels that had up to three colours on them and incorporated broader designs influenced by

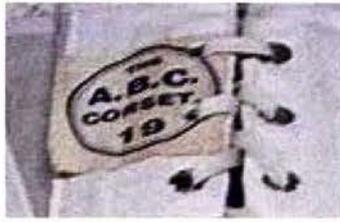


Figure 309 ABC Marchioness paper label positioned on the centre back lacing facing (Collection Canterbury EC179.88B)



Figure 310 The Celebrated Daydream paper label near right side bust edge (Collection Canterbury EC179.91)

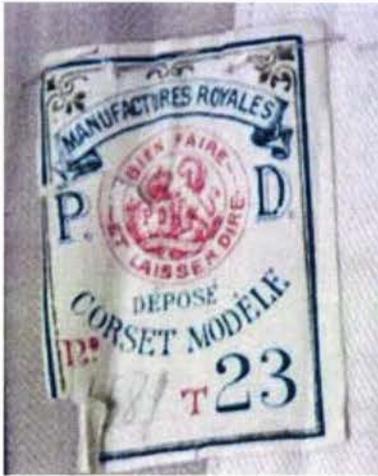


Figure 311 PD Corset No.1589 paper label (Collection Hawkes Bay Museum 56/63/2)

the art nouveau style that was popular at the time. Multiple colours printed on paper labels would have increased manufacturing costs and influenced the final retail cost of the corset. Not all corsets had paper labels, however it is presumed that on those that had been worn they would have been removed and that those where the paper label remained had not been worn.

Some manufacturers went to great lengths to reinforce their brand name and authenticity of their products by applying branding and identification of materials to the exterior of the corset (figure 313). Using the space available down the centre front busk, stamped initials can be seen on the hooks when the corset is on and off the body (figure 312). One brand stood out for this, PD Corsets, and showed branding on the hooks on a range of styles using an uppercase serif typeface and including a small curved design. It is difficult to ascertain if all styles and price ranges of the PD Corset brand had this feature, or if it was strictly limited to corsets in the higher price range.

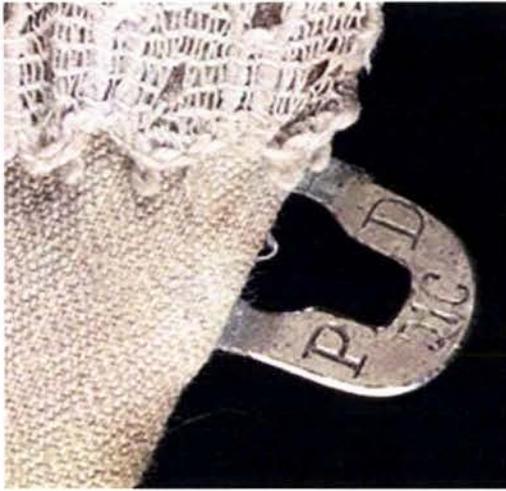


Figure 312 New PD Corset busk hook detail with PD initials (Collection Te Papa PC00311, Negative no. 1.002571)



Figure 313 BG Corset No. 57 Whalebone centre front label detail (Collection Whanganui Regional Museum, 1978/58/9)

The packaging, the corset box, is also an important area of typography. Some manufacturers invested a great deal of money into the design and printing. Comparison between the boxes shows Warner's (figure 314) uses of strong bold uppercase serif based typeface to emphasize the brand or style name. It relies on typeface to reinforce its brand name and show information such as size and style number; being plain and not ostentatious, it emulates the corset style it holds.

The corset brand boxes that moved away from simpler designs tended to incorporate a range of colours and include images to promote and reinforce the corset contents (figure 315). The images and colours used relate to females, as discussed by Roberts (Roberts, 1977) such as lemon, red, and pink, and had dreamy idyllic scenes. It could be suggested that the manufacturers were aiming to seduce women into purchasing their brand by the use of feminine colours, and promoting a sought-after image on the box which could be considered women's unspoken dreams and desires.

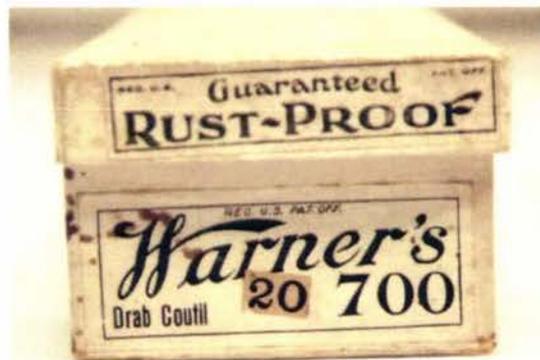


Figure 314 Warner's 700 Corset box lid and end (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)



Figure 315 ABC Universal box lid (Collection Canterbury EC179.88L)



Figure 314 Warner's 700 Corset box lid and end (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)

An area that supports the decorative corset box is newspaper advertisements. The advertisements reinforce images and messages seen on corset boxes by way of strong language, pictures and various size of typeface. The advertisements placed by drapery and department stores and by manufacturers show links to design by use of images and the mention of patents, seaming and desirable fashion figures silhouettes. Placed in local and national newspapers and Ladies' Journals, the advertisements stand out on the page. Line drawings and illustration techniques are used to create floating images of corsets to show how they would look when placed on a woman's figure. Women's roles and femininity were seen through subtle symbolism with the use of mirrors, appearing beautiful with an elegant figure and expressing a desired sexuality (figure 316). Other images of females show women the latest styles and rely on the desire of women to emulate and adhere to what was considered fashionable dress, all of which was achieved by wearing a corset as a foundation under structure.

Strong adjectives in larger typeface draw in the reader; "*Shape, Elegance, Durability*" (figure 317) summarize the PD Corset manufacturer's beliefs of

women's desires, to have the perfect fit, be feminine and beautiful with an item that will last a long time in a range of environments. Language seen in other manufacturers' advertisements, uses similar devices to create a desire and need to purchase. Dispelling myths and common knowledge of poor quality, rusting and the associated health risks, manufacturers reinforced their products' superiority and value over their competitors' styles (figures 318 - 320).

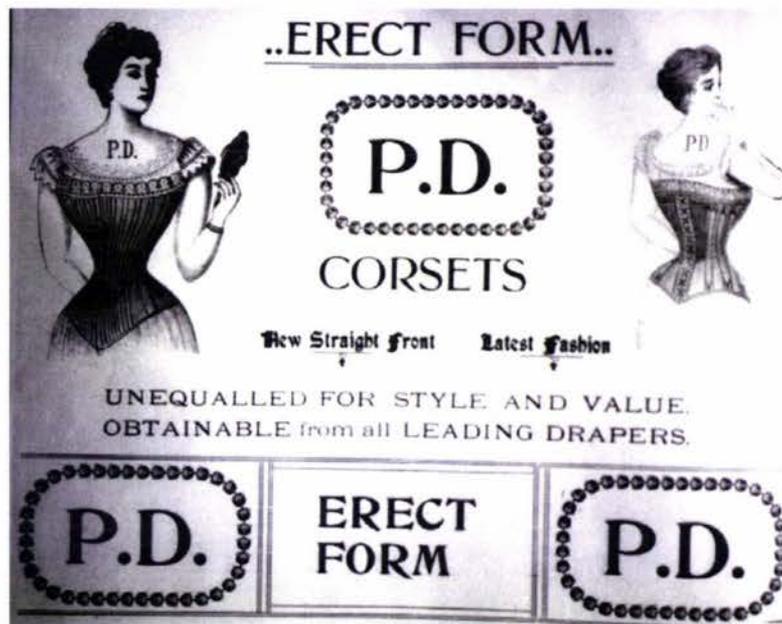


Figure 316 PD Corset advertisement, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, Christmas Number, December 1901, p 30



Figure 317 PD Corset advertisement, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, Christmas Number, December 1900, p 8

WOB

Erect Form
CORSETS

AMERICA'S LEADING CORSET.

The American "Erect Form" Corset is a triumphant combination of common sense and exquisite style. It has the ease and comfort of a ribbon girdle and combines every hygienic principle that can be applied to Corset building. There is an **ERECT FORM** for every figure. These Corsets are full of life and luxurious comfort. They are not stiff, unyielding pieces of armour, but give and bend with every give and bend of the body. In White Coutille or Black Italian, 5/6, 6/11, 8/11, 21/-, 30/-, 35/-, 42/-, to 5 guineas.

TO BE HAD FROM ALL LEADING DRAPERS.

Sargood, Son & Ewen,
SOLE AGENTS FOR AUCKLAND.

Figure 318 WB corset advertisement, *New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal*, Saturday 29 March, 1902, p 618

WHY should any woman look dowdy and frumpy, why should she court ill health in the old fashioned corset when she can so easily secure the fashionable, easy flowing lines by the newest and latest corset and enjoy the best of good health as well?

How can you show the latest figure, the long graceful lines, exacted by the recent Paris styles, when you are wearing old fashioned corsets with their unnatural and unhealthy abrupt break at the waist line? The fault is not in your figure. Try our D & A Directoire — designed after a close study of Parisian styles at Long-champs, in the tea rooms Rue de Rivoli, and at the famous dress-makers of Rue de la Paix.

“D&A” Directoire Corset

This corset will give you the most fashionable effect, absolutely beyond criticism—yet will be more comfortable and more healthful, since it supports and does not compress, than any other corset you ever put on. For Sale by all leading drapers. A-2

THE DOMINION CORSET COMPANY, QUEBEC, CANADA.



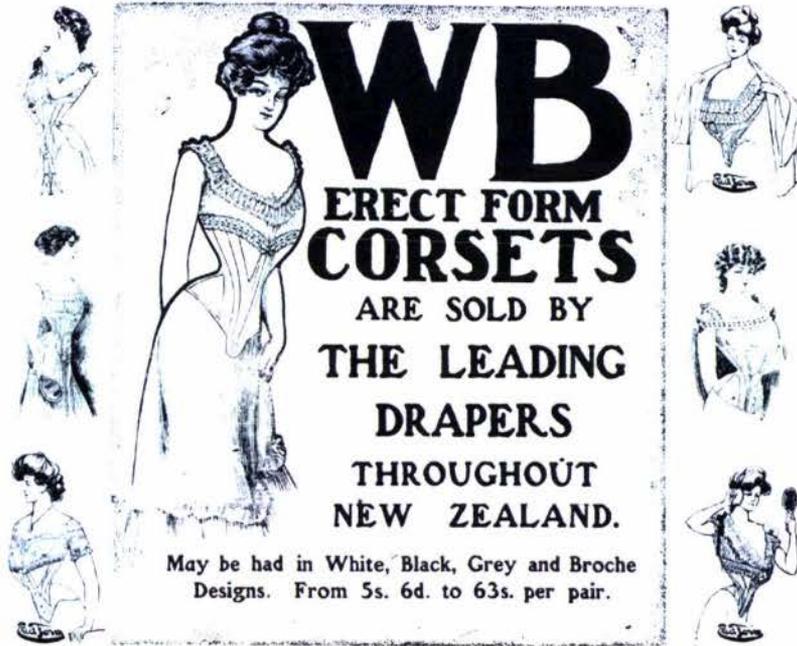

Figure 319 D&A Directoire Corset advertisement, *The Evening Post*, Saturday 3 September, 1910, p 11

WEINGARTEN'S

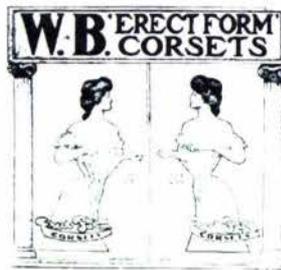


WB
ERECT FORM
CORSETS
ARE SOLD BY
THE LEADING
DRAPERS
THROUGHOUT
NEW ZEALAND.

May be had in White, Black, Grey and Broche Designs. From 5s. 6d. to 63s. per pair.



W.B.



Erect Form
AND
La Vida.

CORSETS,
BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.

Figure 320 Weingarten's WB Erect Form Corsets advertisement for C. Smith's Great summer sale, in the New Zealand Times Calendar, Saturday 21 January 1905. (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library Eph-E-retail 1905-01-01)

5

Conclusion



A decorative flourish consisting of intricate, swirling scrollwork and floral patterns, framing the section header.

5. Disclosure Conclusion

“...the corset makers had to alter radically the whole mechanism of their business; the actual materials of which corsets were made changed completely as satins, brocades, busks, bones and laces were discarded...the great day of underwear was coming to an end...”

(Garland, 1970, p 21-35)

The Victorian and Edwardian corset is a significant design object that has recently been brought into the public sphere through exhibitions at established and well-regarded museums, and through a range of scholarly research. Looking at the corset in New Zealand during the time of 1870-1911 with a design perspective, it can be perceived to be unusual and viewed as a distinctive Pakeha European artefact. In addition, it is seen to be unique for its sophistication of cut, the design, the combination of materials, complex construction techniques, elaborate and purposeful decoration, and the integrated use of typography.

Historical and contextual theories generated by historians and scholars (Finch, 1991; Shep, 1993, Summers 2001) rarely consider the tangible characteristics of the corset in a design perspective. Not setting out to disprove previous research or develop new theories, this corset examination has built on the work by Baclawski (1995), Doyle (1997), Warren (2001) and Waugh (1956). This research

has developed an approach to identifying, classifying and cataloguing the corset between the timeframe of 1870-1911. Furthermore, it has expanded on the countless lengths of baleen, vast array of materials and the evolved number of shapes that have been in most cases overlooked.

This study has been done in two parts: interacting with the corset and collecting and processing relevant data; and the compilation and formation of the data into a catalogue. A number of stages have occurred in the first part of this design orientated investigation. The initial stage was adapting a matrix system based on material culture methodology. This was applied to retrieve relevant design orientated data in a systematic manner from the primary artefacts, the corsets, which are held in six New Zealand museums. Secondary sources of written and pictorial information were used in a support and clarification role, and have a social and historical influence rather than one of pure design. During this stage some interpretation and conjecture occurred with some museum corsets, pictorial and written material. This took place due to the nature of dealing with artefacts that are over a hundred years old, and the lack of supportive evidence for a topic that, during the timeframe, had certain social etiquette rules associated with it, and was in some contexts considered a topic of social taboo.

Interaction at the data retrieval stage found the corsets could be individually characterised in specific details by way of silhouette, combination of design components and use of materials. Recurring elements emerged and covered the aspects of design, materials, construction [architecture and engineering], decoration and embellishment [frippery and garnishing], and typography. These three groups covered all aspects that constructed the corset into the practical, feminine and controlled item of dress that it was. Not all corsets contained exemplary evidence that could be documented in detail for each group, though there was enough evidence to aid in a conclusion at the identification and classification stages. Identification led to classifying the corset into specific decades of manufacture, and in some cases further classifying to a narrower timeframe within five years. This helped to group corset styles together and let overlapping common design features become more evident. At the classification stage, new names were formed and evolved from brand and style names which followed through into the second part of the study, the descriptive catalogue. The new names were an important aspect as they gave the corsets individual identities

outside of their museum acquisition numbers, and additionally lessened the confusion from the different museum acquisition number systems.

Upon inspection of the corsets, it was evident they retained connection to the women who wore them in the form of marks that have been left behind. Traces remain in the appearance of sweat, blood, personal alterations, repairs, and crease lines around the waist area. These small aspects link the museum artefact to the historical context of when and how it was worn. The value of individual corsets could be seen through repairs and wear marks around the waist that had been left by the woman who wore it. The corset as an item that was valued within the dress system of Victorian and Edwardian women can be connected to the historical reading and literature. The corset design facilitated the restriction of active movement, and added weight to the body of the wearer.

The overall purpose, expectation and rationale of the corset between 1870 and 1911, was durability, support, and manipulation of the body into a fashionable ideal. To be able to achieve this, all aspects that made up the corset combined together and interacted with each other. Thus, no single element can be attributed to the corset being a restrictive article of dress. A combination of design, materials and construction techniques created a garment that added weight to a woman's outfit, and when placed firmly on the torso, it did not allow for active and free ability of movement.

The second part of the study; the compiling and formation of data into a catalogue, has taken on the attributes of a book and in itself acts as an exhibition in the absence of one. After analysis of a range of catalogues and publications it was decided individual in-depth descriptions of corsets, with a selection of photographs that visually support the written dialogue, would help the reader to comprehend the design, materials and construction of the rarely viewed museum artefacts. The three recurring groups from part one of the data retrieval stage: architecture and engineering, frippery and garnishing, and typography were merged. The corsets were regrouped into the decade of manufacture rather than from which museum they were connected to. This allowed for the dialogue to occur and show common design details and styles between different brands, and reinforce the ability of a reader to make their own identification.

Images are an important aspect and one that is often under-utilised by other catalogues. As a catalogue is normally used when in the presence of the

artefacts and/or exhibition, photographs are often absent. Therefore, photographs were valued as highly in this catalogue as the written descriptions. Information that had been generated to help in the retrieval of the design data from the museum artefacts was included in the form of an appendix. The specific corset and relevant dress orientated glossary and the visual corset glossary became important components of cataloguing and a useful tool to aid in the comprehension of the corset descriptions.

In general terms, the museum corsets examined and discussed with depth in the descriptive catalogue, demonstrate conclusions that they were mass produced and predominantly made by machines, being manufactured outside of New Zealand. There is evidence that one brand, ABC, was specifically made for New Zealand women as printed on the inside casings and waist tapes. The range of corsets examined that had the ABC brand showed a diverse selection of styles, materials and sizes available. It did not appear that these corsets that were made for and sold in New Zealand, were different to those sold overseas as comparisons made to other corsets examined in the study, Warren's (2002) publication, and online museum collections can confirm.

The main combination of materials that combined to make the corset were seen in other areas of women's dress and did not stand out to be extraordinary. However, when combined to make the corset they did produce a distinctive Pakeha European garment. The different combination of materials and ornamentation show class hierarchy and unite beautification with practical and purposeful design. Most corsets were not ostentatious or overly decorative and appear to be aimed at the working and middle-class European New Zealand women, who made up the majority of the female population at the time. The contrast of silk thread to the predominantly used white coutil facing cloth is an aspect which makes the corset visually striking. Without the decoration, the corset is a plain utilitarian item of dress that has no feminine characteristics until placed on a woman's body.

Typography was used in a subtle and feminine manner by the selection of font and how it was utilized to convey information of brand, style, trademarks, sizes and authenticity. It can also be considered a form of decoration and embellishment that was applied to an otherwise plain steel or bone casings, facings, or waist tape. The box the corset came in helped to convey an impression

by means of reinforcing the essence of what the corset was about through language and or pictures. Advertisements in ladies' journals, newspapers, and drapery store trading cards additionally reinforced the essence of the corset during the timeframe and were embedded and linked to part of the design through phrases such as being rustproof, unbreakable and superior quality.

The research method, classification system and descriptive cataloguing components could be used in other disciplines of dress and textiles. The underlining aspects of design and function, materials, construction and components, value and providence work with all design artefacts and are not strictly an aspect related to corsets. The open nature of the data retrieval system and establishing common categories to classify information can be applied to other areas of design orientated research outside of the discipline of dress. The catalogue system, format and balance enables it to have a long lifespan and become a valuable tool for museum curators, collection managers, costume designers and design students in New Zealand and overseas. Further work with analysis and cross classification of the New Zealand museum corsets to those held in overseas museum collections could be the next step after this first research examination.



Figure 321 A group of women dated late 1890s early 1900, who would have corsets under their dresses to achieve a fashionable silhouette of the period (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library , 70194 -1/2 , Denton)

6

Reference



**Achieved Identity**

Social construction of identity when people earn or create their own - linked to abilities, accomplishments, social life, politics - contexts. (Kaiser, 1998, p187)

Art Nouveau

Exaggerated decorative art style seen in the last two decades of the 19th century and early Edwardian era. Designs had whiplash curves, tendrils, plant stems, flames, waves, and flowing hair of stylised female figures.

Ascribed Identity

Social construction of identity when it is assigned and attributed to an individual by a society based on sex and role within society (e.g. a woman - child bearer, homemaker) (Kaiser, 1998, p187)

Baby Ribbon

5mm wide silk satin ribbon used and inserted through modesty lace.

Baleen (Baleine)

French word for whalebone. Strips of bone from the under jaw of the whale, known as baleen, were used to stiffen corsets. Also known as whalebone or bone.

Basting

Long loose stitching used to hold fabric in place until final sewing, or to prevent layers of fabrics slipping.

Batiste

White cotton lining used in corsets from 1900.

Binding

To enclose an edge in a bias binding or band. Used for decoration, extra strength, protection, or to create a neat finish. (Picken, 1999, p21)

Bone

Strip of stiff substance in a corset. Whalebone, featherbone, steel, and cane covered or uncovered was used for stiffening in corsets.

Bone casing

A strip of cloth on the inside or outside of the corset. The bone sat between the casing and the corset.

Bone Tongue

Under tongue at busk, placed below hooks to ensure support at centre front and complete closure.

Braid

General term to describe narrow fabrics which have been woven (Miller, p16).

Bright cutting

A type of faceted engraving, seen on some hose supporter clips.

Broché

French term used in corset advertisements meaning woven embossed or figured cloth.

Broderie Anglaise

Embroidery of fine linen/cotton, eyelet embroidery consisting of floral or conventional design of eyelets punched or cut then overcast. Also known as Swiss embroidery, Madeira (Picken, 1999, p114).

Busk

Steel in front of corset to hold the front erect. The busk of the 19th Century corset shaped and controlled the abdomen, with a steel hook and stud fastening for closure. Different types of busks were used such as the spoon busk or the straight front busk.

Bust Improver

Designed to fill out a deficient bust and figure. Pads made of fabric stuffed with cotton were placed at bust and hips. Commonly used in the 1890s.

Cane

Used as substitute for whalebone in corsets, extremely fine round or flat strips of cane used in corsets and petticoats until end 19C. (Doyle, 1997, p 230) Advantages over bone and steel as cane could be sewn over with decorative embroidery.

Chasing/embossing

A method of decorating silver and other metals by creating a raised design or pattern using a hammer or punch tool. Seen on some hose supporter clips.

Clothing

A tangible or material object connected to the human body. (Kaiser, 1998, p187)

Cord, Cording, corded quilted lines

Strands of twisted or woven threads/fibres from the Mexican plant Ixtle dipped into a glue like solution and then stitched between two layers of material for stiffening, and support. Used around areas of the bust and hips, and often used instead of boning. (Doyle, 1997, p 230)

Corded Waists

Refer **Corset Waists**

Costume

A style of clothes belonging to a particular historical context.

Corset

Formerly known as stays. Worn by women for support and figure moulding. Originally made in two pieces, and laced together at front or back (thus pair of stays, or sold as a pair). Smoothly fitted undergarment extending from or below the bust down over the hipline. Often stiffened by strips of steel or whalebone. (Picken, 1999, p83)

Corset Waists

Children's bodice worn by girls used between the ages of 4-12 to train and shape the torso. This was worn in preparation for their first corset.

Coutil (Coutille, Coutelle)

A twilled or figured cotton weave fabric. Firm and stable fabric. French word for describing the fabrics drill, ticking, and jean. (Picken, 1999, p 85)

Demi-corset

A corset that is 8-10 inches in length and has light whalebones. Generally worn when performing household tasks during the day.

Die Stamping

Stamped metal patterned by pressing solid metal moulds together on either side of sheet metal. The technique made it relatively inexpensive to mass-produce elaborate decoration and was used in 19th century. Commonly used for silver items. Seen on some hose supporter clips.

Dimity

Corded or cross barrelled fine lightweight cotton, specially produced for lingerie. (Picken, 1999, p97)

Déshabillé

(French) A state of undress or negligent attire. (Picken, 1999, p98)

Drab

Dull light brown-grey colour. Thick cloth usually used for uniforms and outer garments. From French word meaning cloth. (Picken, 1999, p 100)

Dress

Verb: the act of altering appearance; noun: the total arrangement of all outwardly detectable modification of the body itself and all material object added to it. (Kaiser, 1998, p 4)

Edwardian

A time characteristic of the reign of Edward VII (1901-1910)

Elastic

Woven fabric made stretchable by interwoven thread of India Rubber. Used for suspenders, bands, belts. (Picken, 1999, p110)

Elastic Belting

Refer to **Elastic Weave**

Elastic Webbing

Refer to **Elastic Weave**

Elastic Weave

Fine threads of rubber wrapped with silk or cotton and woven into a webbing like cloth. Use from 1836 onwards in corsets and boots. Frequently used for inserts in corsets. (Doyle, 1997, p231)

Electroplate

Technique of applying a thin layer of silver over a nickel or alloy base. It was developed in the mid nineteenth century. Electroplate is susceptible to wear and it is easy to see where the silver has worn thin, and shows the base metal. (www.bbc.co.uk/antiques/glossary/)

Eton Collar

Large turned over collar of white fabric (Pickens, 1999, p 72)

Eyelet

A hole punched into fabric or leather and edged with hand stitching or fixed with a metal ring. Metal rings were invented in 1828 and replaced hand-stitched eyelets on corsets from 1850 onwards.

Edwardian

Characteristic of King Edward VII (1901-10)

Facing cloth

Term used to describe the outside material of the corset (Warren 2001)

Fanning

Refer to **Flossing**

Term used to describe the decorative stitching used to keep bones in place (Summers, 2002, p72)

Fashion

Style in clothes, hairstyles, behaviour, etc, that is popular at a particular time. A dynamic social process by which new styles are created, introduced to a consuming public, and popularly accepted by that public.

- As object: a style accepted by a large group of people at a particular time (Kaiser, 1998, p4)
- Featherbone**
Replacement for baleen and used for stiffening corsets. Thick steams of feathers were stripped and bound together tightly and used as a cheap alternative like **horn, cane, steel.**
- Filigree**
Ornamental work of fine wire formed into delicate tracery, fine metal openwork; anything delicate resembling this. (Oxford, p389)
Seen on some hose supporter clips.
- Finished Bone**
Metal caps placed on the end of baleen and used as boning in corsets. The metal cap prevented the sharp edges of the baleen breaking through the facing cloth or bone casing.
- Flat felled seams**
Flat seam so made that the raw edges are turned in and face each other. The seam has two rows of stitching. The seam appears similar on both right and wrong sides. (Picken, 1999, p287)
- Flossing (fanning)**
Fine silk embroidery thread used to hold bones in place at top and bottom of casing. It was also used as a decorative function, with a variety of stitches being used. (Doyle, 1997, p 232)
- Foxing (Foxy, Fox)**
Damage caused by mildew, which causes a reddish brown pattern of spots and discoloration. (See: Oxford, 1976, p418)
- Galloon Lace (Galoon)**
Any lace that is scalloped on both sides. Used to finish the tops and bottoms of corsets, and generally had silk ribbon or thread embedded in the lace for a drawstring effect. (Doyle, 1997, p 232)
- Gibson Girl**
Term phrased from 1890s as a fashionable characteristic displayed in women's silhouette and style of dress. Term developed by Charles Dana Gibson who illustrated fashion drawings.
- Gore**
See **Gusset**
- Grograin**
Plain weave cloth with prominent rib effect, made from silk, cotton. (Doyle, 1997, p 232)
- Gusset**
Triangular piece of material inserted in a garment to give extra width and more rounded contours. Often placed at bust and hips in corsets. (Waugh, 1956, p171)
- Herringbone weave**
Irregular twill weave in which the direction of the twill is alternated, giving a zig-zag effect. Also known as broken twill, chevron. (Picken, 1999, p371)
- Hook and Stud fastening**
Refer to **Busk**
- Hose supporters (stocking supporters)**
Attachments sewn to corsets which stockings are fastened too.
- Horn**
American substitute for baleen. Taken from American Buffalos, horn was used from the 1870s onwards.
- Jacquard weave**
Jacquard weave fabric with interwoven all over designs of raised figures or flowers. French word - 'to ornament' (derived meaning). Emphasized pattern with contrasting surfaces or colours. It was expensive to produce as complex machinery was required and it was costly to build along with complicated to operate. (Joseph, 1986, p 410)
- Japanning**
Term used to describe the operation involving the application of black lacquer to coat the strips of metal used for the steels. (Summers, 2002, p71)
This coating was thought to protect the steels from rust .
- Lace**
A variety of ornamental open work fabrics formed by looping, plaiting, twisting, or knotting of the threads of flax, silk, gold, cotton, silver, mohair or aloe. It is constructed by hand or machine. (Earnshaw, 1980)
- Lawn**
A lightweight, sheer, fine cotton or linen fabric, which can be given a soft or crisp finish. It is sized and calendered to produce a soft, lustrous appearance. Lawn in used for lingerie. (Joseph, 1986, p 415)
- Leg-of-Mutton Sleeve**
Sleeve shaped like a leg of mutton with full, loose rounded sleeve head narrowing at the elbow to become fitted at the wrist.
- Lining**
Term used to describe the cloth used on the inside of the corset. (Warren 2001)
- Metal Maiden**
A beaten, seamless copper boiler in the shape of a women's corseted body. Corsets were sprayed with starch prior to being put on iron maiden, then live and hot steam was forced through it giving the corset a final and finished shape. (Doyle, 1997, p233)
- Military Braid**
Flat braid of diagonal twill weave in various widths and colours, used for binding and trimmings. (Pickens, 1999, p33)

Modesty Lace (modesty piece)

Strip of lace stitched to the upper and or lower edge of the corset. A narrow strip of ribbon was often threaded through it. It often provided a drawstring effect that caused the corset top to fit the contour of the top of the bosom, preventing the bosom being seen in wearing. Most 19th century modesty laces were machine made from cotton or silk. Embroidered nets and 'imitation' laces were also used. (Doyle, 1997, p233)

Mofit

A decorative detail, often repeated to form a pattern. Seen in textiles, metal wear, silverware and furniture.

Open Work

Embroidery with open spaces forming part of the design. Made by drawing, pulling and cutting threads of fabric. (Picken, 1999, p114)

Puttee

Strip of cloth or leather worn around the leg by winding in a spiral formation from ankle to knee to give protection. Often seen as part of military uniforms. (Oxford, 1976, p905)

Satin

Silk satin weave fabric with a smooth finish. Double faced cloth with a high gloss on the face and a dull back. (Picken, 1999, p 283)

Sateen

Cotton fabric in close satin weave with lustrous, smooth satin-like finish. (Picken, 1999, p 283)

Shirred Supporters

Decorative ribbon with ruffled edges used as part of hose supporters.

Spiral Steel, 'spirella'

Spiral steel used from 1900 onwards and replaced baleen and other materials used for stiffening. It had advantages of being very flexible and was able to move sideways and back and forward. Used in sports corsets.

Steel

Thin strip of steel covered in paper and used for stiffening, a cheaper alternative replacing baleen in corsets.

Style

A distinctive characteristic or way of expression; style in clothing describes the lines that distinguish one form or shape from another. (Kaiser, 1998, p4)

Tag (tagge)

Metal wrapped around the end of a lace, to enable it to be easily threaded through the eyelet. (Waugh, 1956, p172)

Truss

Shoulder straps of corset. (Waugh, 1956, p172)

Tricot

Most common and simplest soft wrap knitted fabric with a rib appearance. Sometimes knitted to give effects and patterns e.g. mesh look. Made by machine in various fabric widths and strips. (Picken, 1999, p356)

Victorian

Characteristic of the reign of Queen Victoria. (1837-1901)

Wabone

Substitute for baleen in corsets.

Wasp Waist

Term used for small slender waists created by tight lacing, seen in 1775, 1820, late nineteenth century, 1950s.



Visual Corset Glossary

Figure 322 ABC Fay (Collection Canterbury EC 179.88H)

Straight front busk with hook and stud closure



Triangle flossing at the end of double steel casings

Hose clip

Hose supporter adjustable clips and webbing

Figure 323 S & S Corset (Collection Canterbury EC179.98)

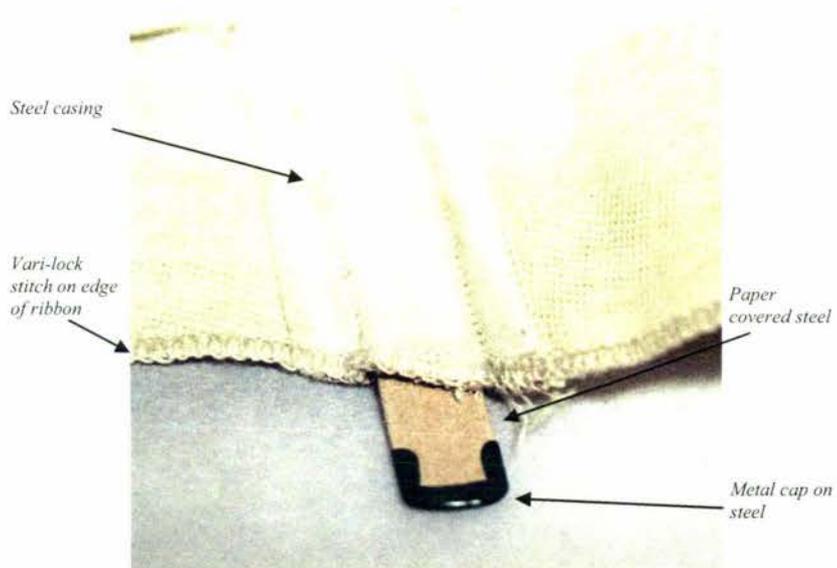
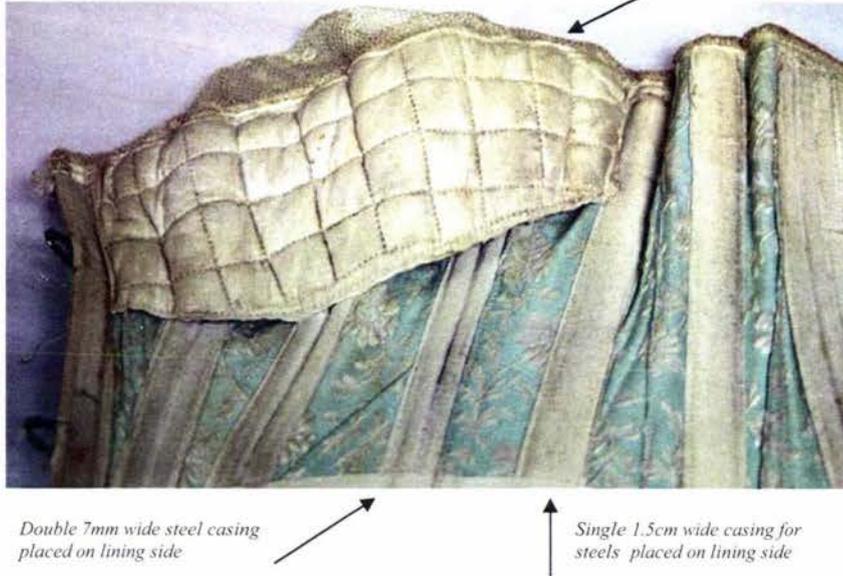
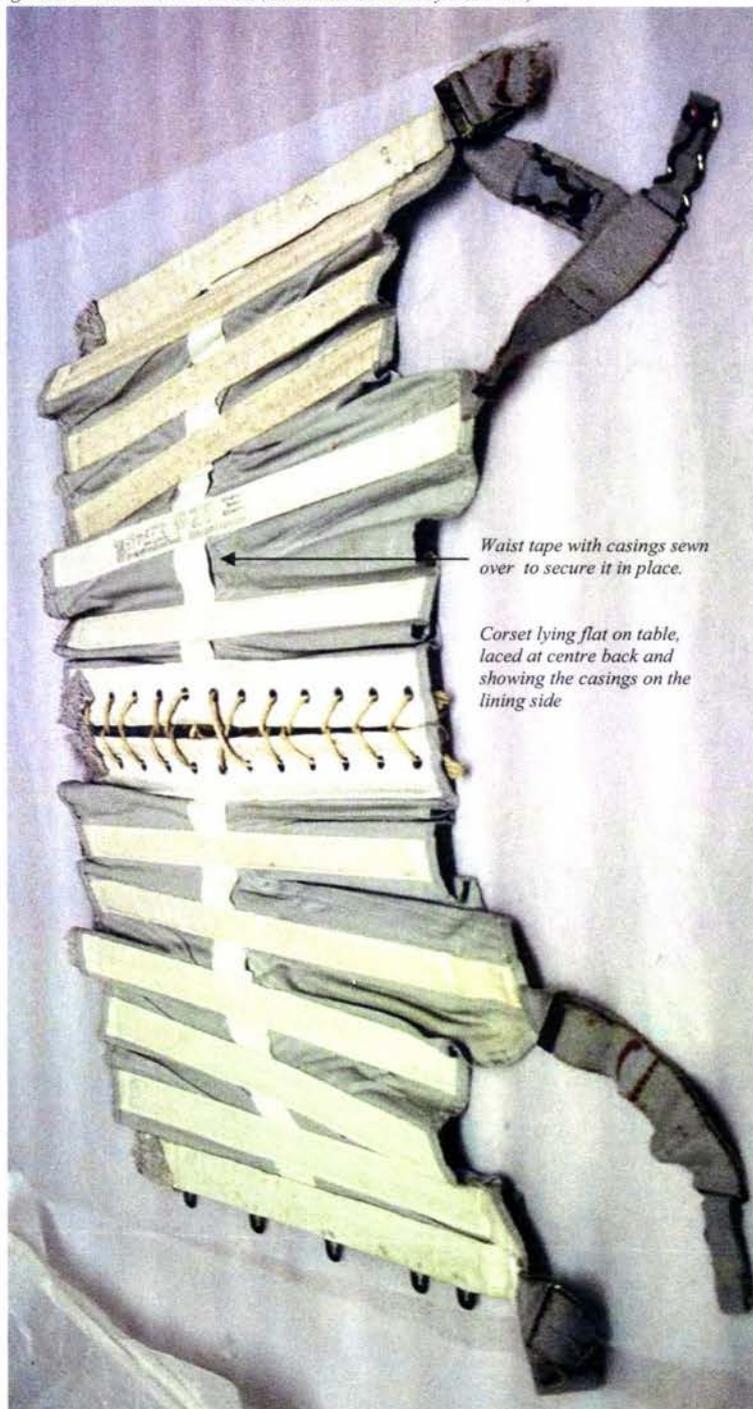


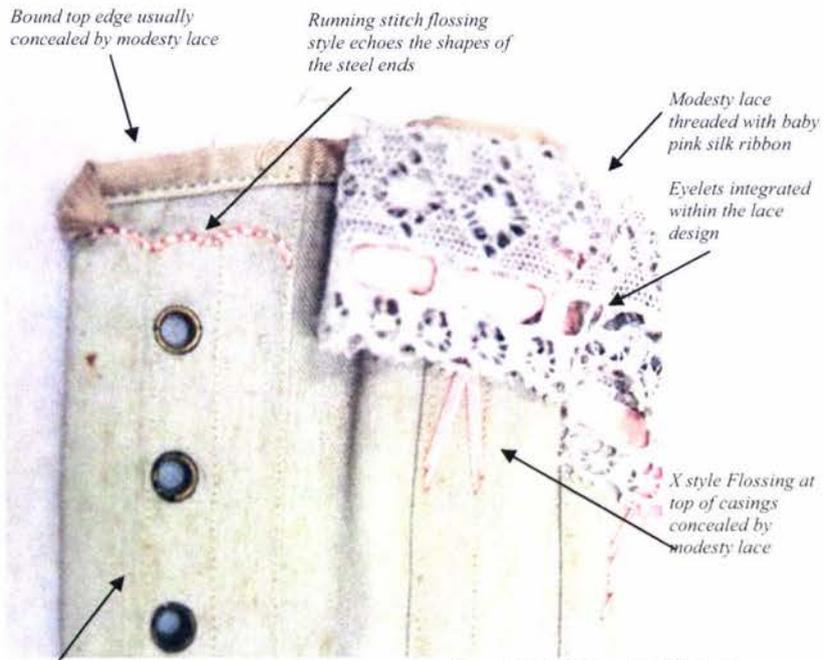
Figure 324 ABC Treasure (Collection Canterbury EC179.88Q)

Figure 235 Warner's 700 Corset (Collection Canterbury EC179.90)



Waist tape with casings sewn over to secure it in place.

Corset lying flat on table, laced at centre back and showing the casings on the lining side



Brass coloured metal eyelets at centre back encased by steels running either side

Figure 326 P & S Qual Z 17 Zairoid (Collection Canterbury EC179.101)

Figure 327 ABC Qualite (Collection Canterbury EC179.88F)

Eyelets concealed by the modesty lace

Centre back pair of laces with metal tags that are laced from top and bottom to meet at the waist

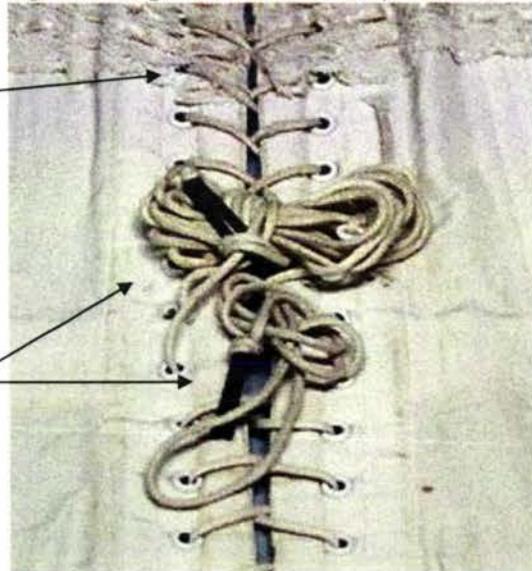


Figure 328 MU Pink Chervion Corset
(Collection Canterbury EC179.102A)

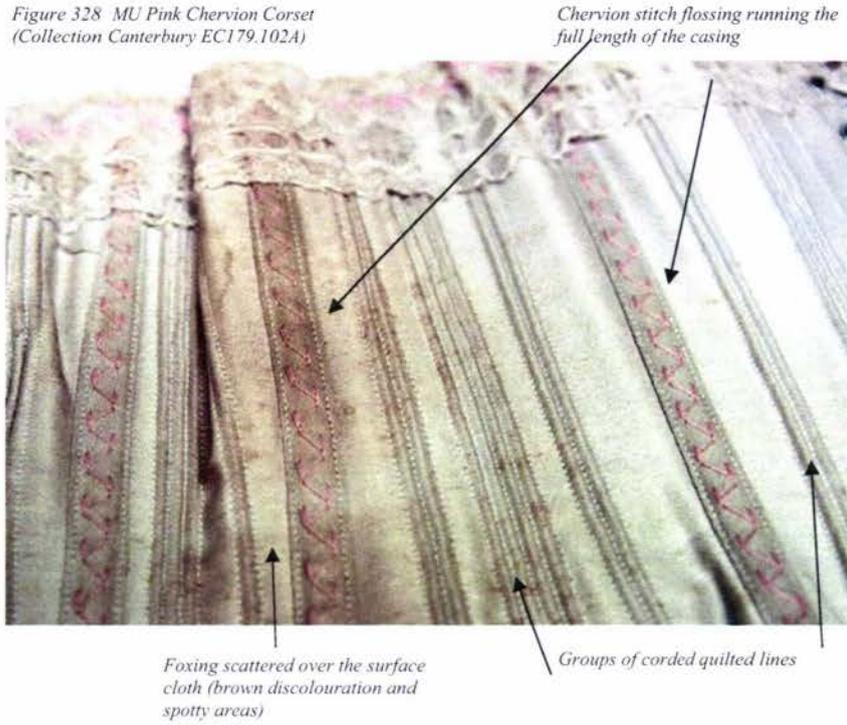


Figure 329 ABC Society
(Collection Canterbury
EC179.881)

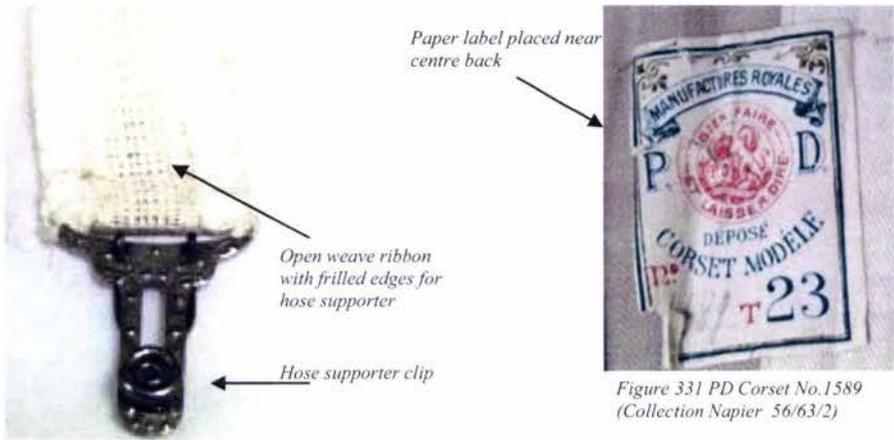


Figure 330 Kirby Tailorette Belted Corset (Collection Canterbury EC179.89E)

Figure 331 PD Corset No. 1589 (Collection Napier 56/63/2)



Figure 332 ABC Favorite (Collection Canterbury EC179.88C)

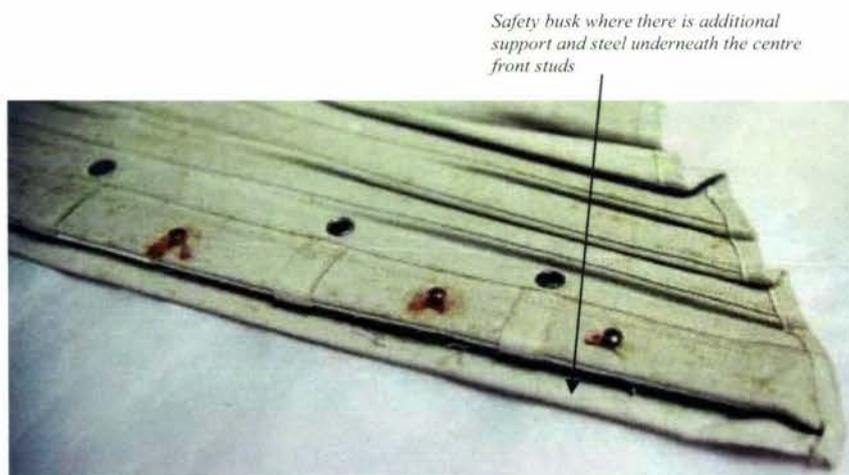


Figure 333 Kirby New Peckirbia (Collection Canterbury EC179.89F)

Figure 334 Fitu Dual Z 105 (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H)

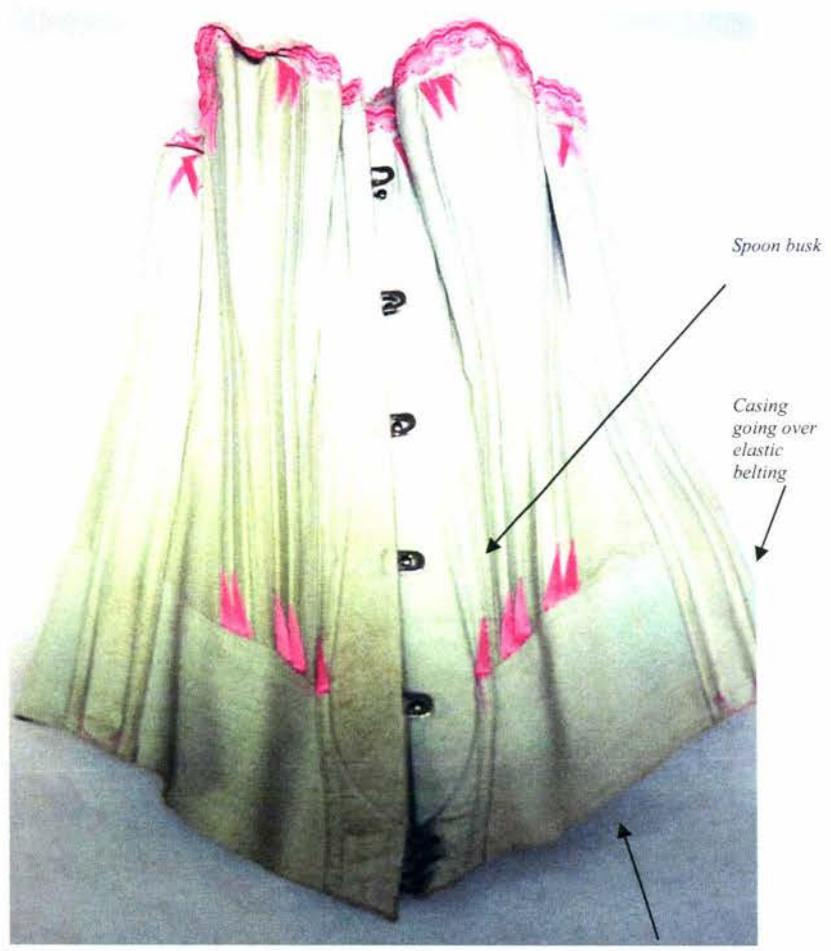
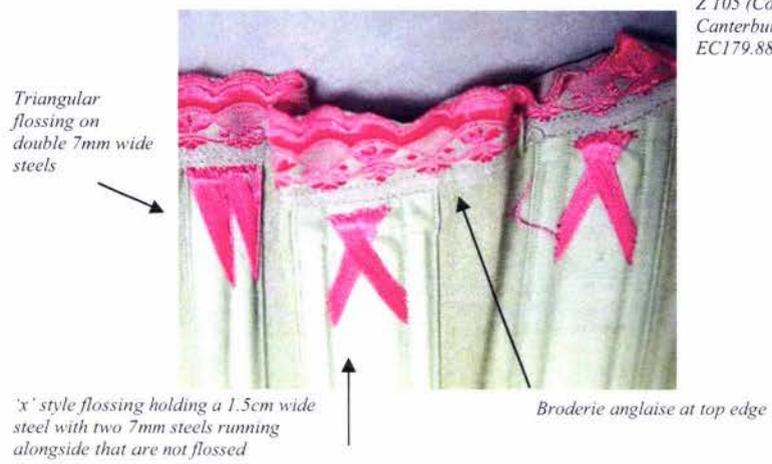


Figure 335 Fitu Dual Z 105 (Collection Canterbury EC179.88H) Elastic Belting

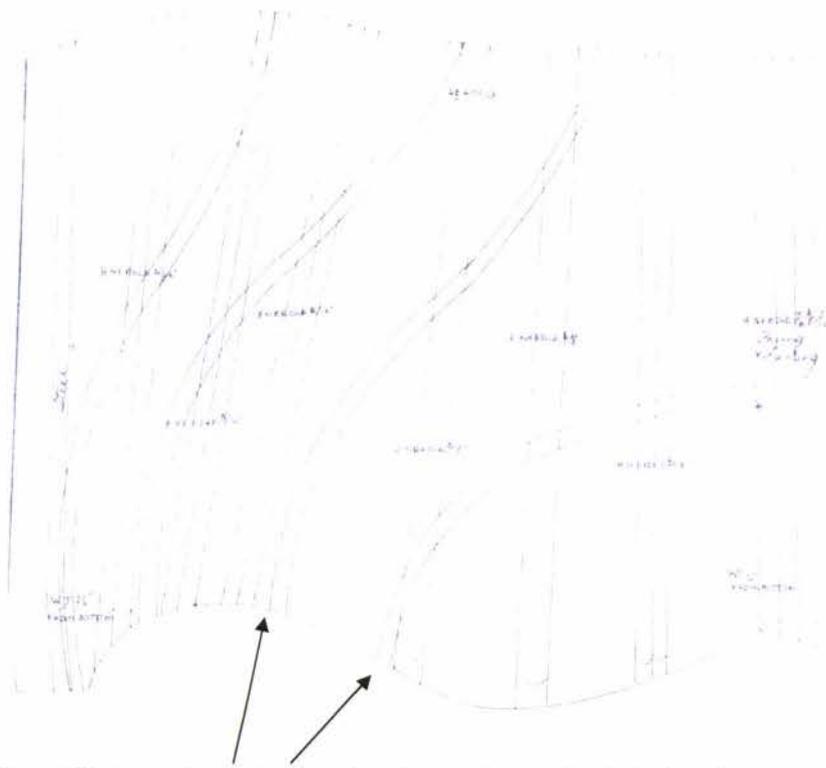


Figure 336 Corset pattern showing diagonal seaming that twists around the body. A prominent design pattern style during the first part of the 1900's (Collection, Symington Corset Collection England)

6.3 Corset Appendix

Centre Front Lacing Hook

A hook placed on the outside of the corset on top of the right busk, just below the waist, was part of the corset lacing technique. The hook was sewn onto the outside shell of the corset, and may have some flossing to add extra decoration to it. Generally the hook was only seen on more expensive and decorative corsets. A corset was laced from the top and the bottom to the middle. This created two large loops at the centre back waist. The two loops were then crossed over one another, or one slid through the other loop, and they were then pulled around to the front. Being knotted together at the front, the lace was then pulled slightly downward so the knot was caught under the hook and held securely.

This technique allowed the wearer to conveniently adjust the tightness or looseness of the corset at the waistline. With this technique the women could put the corset on in the morning and tighten it after half an hour if she desired, or on the contrary, if she wanted to relax, she could loosen it. The same technique could be used on corsets that did not have a hook, as the lace and knot could be caught under one corner at the front busk bottom opening. This technique did not guarantee the same security as the hook did.

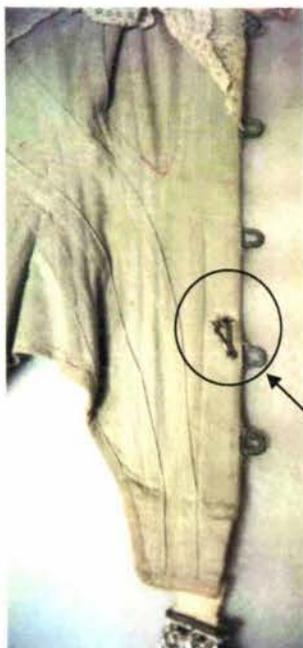


Fig 337 ABC Royalty, corset lacing hook detail (Collection, Canterbury EC179.88A)

HOW TO LACE A CORSET.

NOW-A-DAYS, we are supposed to be rational and sensible and to despise corsets. But as there are still some foolish corset-wearers, I must tell them of the latest idea.

Those clever Frenchwomen have discovered a new way of lacing their corsets, or rather they have adopted it from the the Russians.

Of course it is horrid to lace tight, but if you will do it this new way is the only way that won't hurt, because it calls for three pieces of lacings, and there isn't the old torturing uniform pressure above and below the waist.

You put the first lacing at the top down in the usual way on each side until you reach two eyelet holes above the waist. Do the same thing with the second, lacing from the bottom, leaving two eyelet holes free below the waist. In these four eyelets—four on each side—you now put the third lace, that which is to be drawn.

Don't you see you can leave the upper and lower parts as loose as you choose, tying each to your comfort. After that you can draw in your waist with the middle lacing quite independently.

A woman lacing her corset this way once will never lace it differently. No matter how loose she wears it this is the only proper method.

Fig 338 New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal, 1 July 1893, p 622

Izod's Finishing Method

This method involved the corset being dipped into a solution of glue and starch mixture and then fitted over a metal maiden, where steam was forced through copper pipes that were inside the moulds. The corset was set into a shell-like shape as the heat baked the glue starch solution into the fabric fibres. This moulding process could be one reason women were cautious of washing their corsets, as the corset would lose shape when water is absorbed into the fibres during the cleaning process.

Izod's Finishing Method

1. Corset pieces cut from two or three fabrics
 - i. facing cloth
 - ii. hessian interlining (prior to 1880)
 - iii. lining
2. Corset panel pieces sewn together
3. Bone casings stitched onto corset
4. Boning stitched into casings
5. Decorative flossing applied to bone casings
6. Busk fastening at centre front
7. Eyelets punched at centre back
8. Binding stitched at top and bottom
9. Trimming of lace and ribbon attached
10. Hand finishing applied e.g. closing edge of centre front busk
11. Cold wet starch brushed on and steam moulding process applied
12. Examining room
13. Printing department and end labels, paper labels, size labels
14. Boxing up ready for customer order

Refer to Warren (Warren, 2001)

Corset Brand Names & Origins

Table 6

ABC Corsets	England
B & C Corsets	Brush and Co., Toronto, Canada
B & G Corsets	England
Bonton Corsets	Royal Worcester, America
CB Corset	Charles Bayer, London, England
Celebrated RG Testit	Maker and place of origin unknown
D & A Corset	Dominion Corset Company, Quebec, Canada
Domino Qual C	Maker and place of origin unknown
Fitu	Maker and place of origin unknown
G D Corsets	Gage Downs Company, America
Izods Corset	England
Kirby Corsets	England
La Vida Corsets	Weingarten Brothers, America
PD Corsets	Belgium
Royal Worcester	Royal Worcester, America
S & S	Germany
Thomsons Corset	England
WB Corsets	Weingarten Brothers, America
Warner's	Warner and Co., America

This list was created by using the information gained during the primary investigation and interaction with the museum corsets and while making comparison to secondary sources such as newspaper advertisements. This list relates to manufacturer and place of origin.



6.4 Museum Details & Artefact Guide

North Island

Hawkes Bay Museum Napier

PO Box 248, Napier
Phone (06) 8357781
Fax (06) 835 3984
www.hawkesbaymuseum.co.nz
info@hbct.co.nz

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Wellington

PO Box 467, Wellington
Phone (04) 381 7000
Fax (04) 381 7070
www.tepapa.govt.nz
mail@tepapa.govt.nz

Whanganui Regional Museum Wanganui

PO Box 352, Wanganui
Phone (06) 345 7443
Fax (06) 347 6512
www.wanganui-museum.org.nz
info@museum.queenspark.org.nz

South Island

Canterbury Museum Christchurch

Rolleston Avenue, Christchurch
Phone (03) 366 5000
Fax (03) 366 5622
www.canterburymuseum.com
info@canterburymuseum.com

Otago Settlers Museum Dunedin

PO Box 566, Dunedin
Phone (03) 477 4000
Fax (03) 474 2727
www.otago.settlers.museum.govt.nz
osmmail@dcc.govt.nz

Otago Museum Dunedin

PO Box 6202, Dunedin
Phone (03) 474 7474
Fax (03) 477 5993
www.otagomuseum.govt.nz
mail@otagomuseum.govt.nz

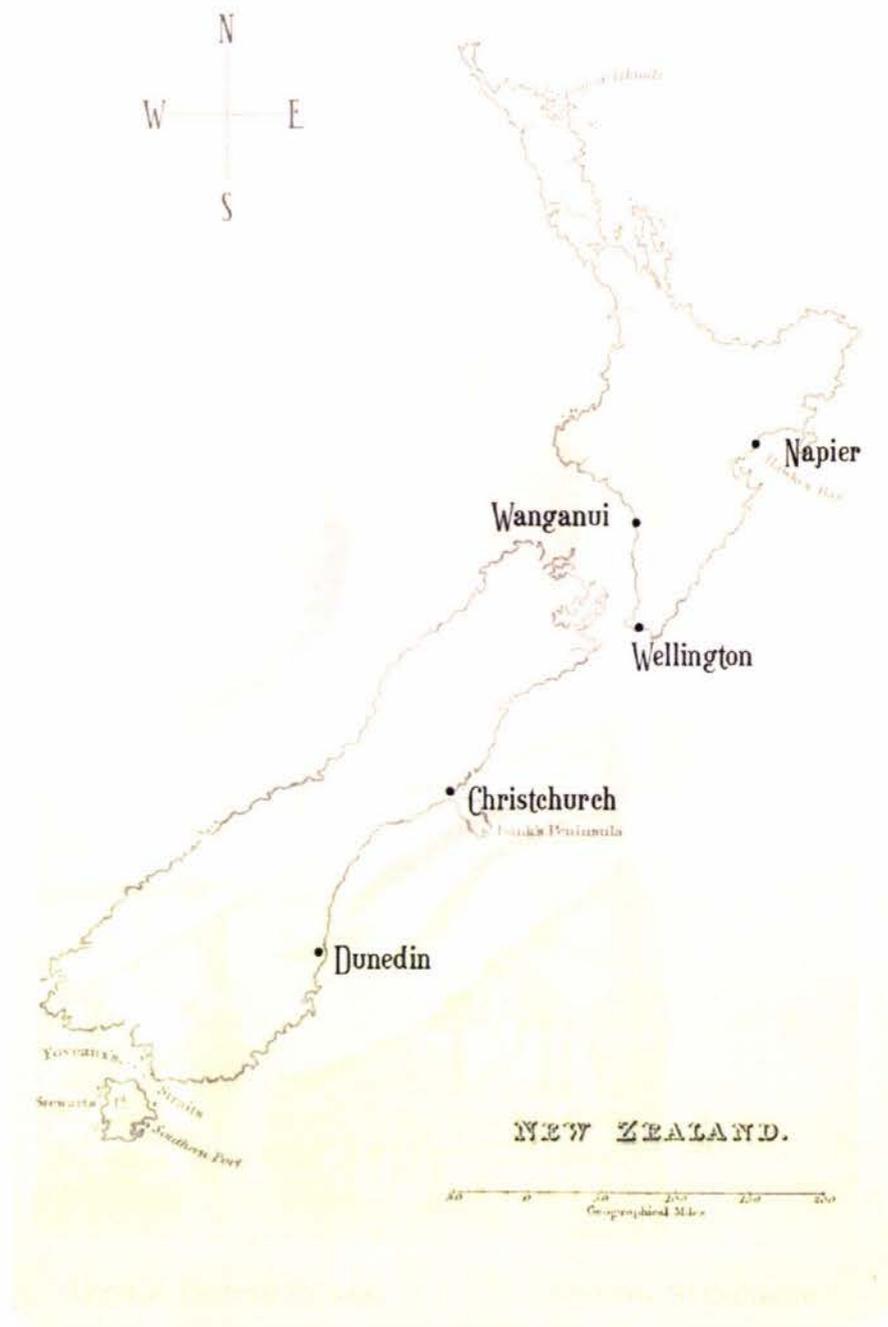


Fig 339 Mrs Henderson in the London Portrait Rooms, Princess Street, Dunedin, c 1880s, and Map of New Zealand c. 1870-1880 overprinted

Museum Artefact Guide

A short summary of each of the corsets viewed in the museum collections has been detailed as follows. The artefacts that are marked with stars alongside their museum acquisition number are not detailed in the descriptive catalogue.

Hawkes Bay Museum Napier

56/63/1

Brand: MU 'Madame Jeann'
Date: c.1895-1900
Origin Unknown
black silk, white coutil lining, black and turquoise broderie anglaise, yellow and white decorative flossing, corded quilted lines, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, watch spring steel, manufactures trademark.

*56/63/2

Brand: PD Corset No. 1589
Date: c.1895-1905
Made in Belgium for N R Farmers Co-Op stores
single layer coutil, white cotton bone casing, modesty lace with silk ribbon, blue silk ribbon centre front bow, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening with embossed initials, manufactures trademark, paper label

73/220

Brand: B & C Belted Corset
Date: c. 1890-1895
Made in England
single layer white coutil, modesty lace with two rows of blue silk ribbon, white flossing, centre back lacing, 4 hook and stud centre front fastening, hook and eye at bottom centre front, elastic webbing belting, manufactures trademark

*98/37

Brand: MU Childs back and shoulder trainer
Date: c.1870-1911
Origin Unknown
white coutil, elastic webbing, centre back lacing, padded truss, buckles, steel bones

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Wellington

PC000290

Brand: CB Corset No. 8839
Date: c. 1907-1911
Made in England
single layer coutil, white cotton bone casings, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, six fixed length hose supporters, elastic webbing, manufactures trademark

PC000291

Brand: W. B Corset No. 21577
Date: c. 1907-1911
Made in America
single layer coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace with white silk ribbon remnants, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures patent

PC000658

Brand: PD Marvella Corset
Date: c. 1905-1911
Made in Belgium
single layer of white coutil, white cotton bone casing, lace, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, four fixed length hose supporters, manufactures trademark

*PC000659

Brand: MU White Belted Corded Corset
Date: c. 1885-1895
Origin Unknown
white coutil with white coutil lining, corded quilted lines, white flossing chevron pattern, centre back lacing, 4 hook and stud centre front fastening, wide elastic webbing belting

PC003611

Brand: The New PD Corset
Date: c. 1890-1995
Made in Belgium
single layer of coutil, modesty lace with pink silk ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures trademark

GH007871 (Guard)

Brand: B & C Corset, No. 3800
Date: c. 1885-1890
Made in England
single layer of white coutil, white broderie anglaise, white flossing, corded quilted lines, bones, elastic belted webbing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, spoon busk, manufactures trademark

Whanganui Regional Museum Wanganui

1978/58/2

Brand: PD Straight Front Corset
Date: c. 1895-1900
Made in Belgium
Single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace at top and bottom with two rows of pink silk ribbon, silk ribbon centre front

bow, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening with embossed initials, gores, manufactures trademarks

1978/58/9

Brand: B & G Corset No. 57 Whalebone

Date: c. 1880-1885

Made in England

single layer dove grey coutil, white and brown broderie anglaise, brown flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures trademark, label

Canterbury Museum Christchurch

*EC 160.353

Brand: Thomsons Glove Fitting Corset Qual D 173

Date: c. 1905-1911

Made in England

single layer of cotton, broderie anglaise, centre back lacing, 4 front hook and stud fastening, makers trademark, design, materials,

*EC 163.128

Brand: MU Blue Silk Stays

Date: c. 1820s

Origin Unknown

hand stitched blue silk stays, centre back lacing with hand sewn eyelets, front busk, combination of corded quilted lines and gores, sewn on truss

EC 179.100

Brand: C B Corset

Date: c. 1885-1890

Made in England

single layer coutil with sateen bone casings, modesty lace with blue silk ribbon, white flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud fastenings at centre front, manufactures logo

EC 179.101

Brand: P&S Qual Z 17 Zairoid Corset

Date: c.1885-1890

Made in England

single layer of coutil, centre back lacing, 5 hook and studs at centre front, modesty lace with pink silk ribbon, pink flossing, manufactures trademark

*EC 179.102A

Brand: MU Pink Chervion Flossed Corset

Date: c. 1890-1895

Origin Unknown

White coutil and sateen lined, modesty lace with pink silk ribbon, pink chervion flossing full length of bone casing, combination of corded quilted lines and bones, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening

*EC 179.102C

Brand: MU Blue Bow Jacquard Corset

Date: c. 1890-1900

Origin Unknown

Blue and white jacquard with bow design, modesty lace with white silk ribbon remnants, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, 4 adjustable length hose supporters

*EC 179.102D

Brand: MU Dove Grey Sateen Corset

Date: c. 1890-1900

Origin Unknown

Single layer of dove grey sateen, modesty lace at bust and hem, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud

centre front fastenings, 2 fixed length hose supporters

*EC 179.102E

Brand: MU Ribbon Tricot Ventilating Corset

Date: c. 1895-1905

Origin Unknown

Ribbon with interwoven open design, silk satin bone casings, mesh tricot knit, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, fine modesty lace with silk ribbon, large centre front bow, 2 fixed length hose supporters

*EC 179.102F

Brand: MU White Floral Flossed Corset

Date: c. 1890s

Origin Unknown

dove grey coutil, white cotton lining, modesty lace with silk ribbon, centre back lacing, 4 hook and stud centre front fastenings, white floral design flossing

*EC 179.102G

Brand: MU Satin Broderie Anglaise Corset

Date: c. 1890s

Origin Unknown

White silk satin, white broderie anglaise at bust and hem, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, combination of bones and corded quilted lines

*EC 179.102I

Brand: MU blue satin ribbon Corset

Date: c. 1890s

Origin Unknown

single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, silk satin ribbon binding on bust edge, modesty lace with silk ribbon, blue flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening,

EC 179.88A

Brand: ABC Royalty

Date: c. 1895-1905

Made in England, specially made for New Zealand single layer of dove grey coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace with pink silk ribbon, pink flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, 2 adjustable hose supporters

EC179.88B

Brand: ABC Marchioness

Date: c.1900-1905

Made in England, specially made for New Zealand single layer of dove grey coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace with three rows of blue ribbon, blue eyelets, blue flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, brand names, paper labels,

EC179.88C

Brand: ABC Favorite

Date: c. 1890-1905

Made in England

Silk blue and white striped ribbon, silk for bone casings, centre back lacing, 5 hook and studs centre front fastening, centre front ribbon bow, 2 fixed length hose supporters

EC179.88D

Brand: ABC Imperatrice

Date: c. 1900-1907

Made in England, specially for New Zealand single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, modesty lace with white ribbon, white flossing, brand name, paper labels

*EC179.88F

Brand: ABC Qualite

Made: c. 1895-1905

Made in England, specially for New Zealand

- single layer white coutil, white cotton for bone casings, modesty lace with 3 rows of white ribbon, centre back lacing, white eyelets, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, brand names
- EC179.88G**
Brand: ABC Regal
Date: c. 1890s
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
Single layer of white lawn, white cotton for bone casings, modesty lace, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, makers brand name
- EC179.88H**
Brand: ABC Fay
Date: c. 1907-1911
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
Single layer dove grey coutil, white cotton bone casings, white satin ribbon trim, satin ribbon bow, white flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, 6 adjustable hose supporters, no centre back lace,
- EC179.88I**
Brand: ABC Society
Date: c. 1900-1905
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
blue floral jacquard, lined with white cotton, modesty lace with blue ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, four decorative adjustable hose supporters, brand names, paper label,
- *EC179.88J**
Brand: ABC Fashion
Date: c. 1890's
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
cream floral jacquard, lined with white cotton, bone casings white coutil, modesty lace with two rows of white ribbon, centre back lacing, white eyelets, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, white flossing, brand name, paper label
- EC179.88L**
Brand: ABC Universal
Date: c. 1900-1905
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
single layer white coutil, bone casings white coutil, centre back lacing, white eyelets, pink lace, modesty lace with black and white appliquéd motifs with one row of black ribbon, black flossing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, 2 adjustable hose supporters, brand name, paper label, box
- EC179.88M**
Brand: ABC Princess
Date: c. 1900-1907
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
single layer white coutil, white cotton bone casings, diagonal and horizontal boning, modesty lace with two rows of blue ribbon, blue flossing, white eyelets, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, gores, manufactures brand name,
- EC 179.88N**
Brand: ABC Regency
Date: c. 1900-1907
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace with two rows of blue ribbon, flossing, gores, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures brand name
- EC179.88O**
Brand: ABC Consort
Date: c. 1900-1905
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
- single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, modesty lace with three rows of pink ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures brand name, paper label
- EC 179.88P**
Brand: ABC Queen
Date: c. 1895-1900
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
single layer of white coutil, broderie anglaise, white flossing, elastic, centre back lacing, spoon busk, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, two hook and eyes, manufactures brand name
- EC179.88Q**
Brand: ABC Treasure
Date: c. 1890-1905
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
white twill weave cotton ribbon, white sateen bone casings, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, two fixed length hose supporters, manufactures brand name
- EC179.88R**
Brand: ABC Gaiety
Date: c. 1890-1905
Made in England
green floral machine embroidery on white ribbon, white sateen bone casings and busk, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, two fixed length hose supporters, manufactures brand name
- EC179.88S**
Brand: ABC Preferential
Date: c. 1895-1900
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
single layer white coutil, broderie anglaise with pink ribbon, pink flossing, white elastic gores, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastenings, centre front belt, manufacturers brand name, paper label
- EC179.88T**
Brand: ABC Preferential
Date: c. 1895-1900
Made in England, specially for New Zealand
black sateen, white cotton lining, blue and black broderie anglaise, blue flossing, black eyelets, centre back lacing, black elastic gores, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, centre front belt, manufactures brand name,
- *EC179.89B**
Brand: Kirkby Peckirbia
Date: c. 1885-1890
Made in England
drab and khaki coutil, drab cotton lace, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, safety busk front, corded quilted lines, bones, ventilation eyelets, manufactures brand name
- *EC179.89E**
Brand : Kirkby Tailorette
Date: c. 1895-1905
Made in England
single layer of white coutil, broderie anglaise with white satin embroidery, white flossing, white elastic, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, safety busk front, two fixed length hose supporters, manufactures brand name
- EC179.89F**
Brand: Kirkby New Peckirbia
Date: c. 1895-1900
Made in England
single layer of white coutil, modesty lace with white ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre

- front fastening, ventilating eyelets, safety busk front, manufactures brand name
- EC179.89 (S) (G?)**
 Brand: MU Drab Corded Quilted Corset
 Date: c 1880-1885
 Origin Unknown
 drab coutil, white cotton lining, drab cotton lace, combination of vertical, horizontal, diagonal corded quilted lines, centre back boning either side of eyelet, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, safety busk front,
- EC179.90**
 Brand: Warners 700 Corset
 Date: c. 1905-1911
 Made in America
 Back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, 4 adjustable elastic webbing hose supporters, manufactures brand name and box
- EC179.91**
 Brand: MU The Celebrated Day Dream
 Date: c. 1885-1890
 Made in England
 single layer of coutil, sateen bone casings and waist support, modesty lace with pink ribbon, pink flossing, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures brand name, paper label, box
- *EC179.92**
 Brand: WB (Weingarten Brothers) Erect Form 974
 Date: c. 1890s
 Made in America
 single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, white modesty lace with two rows of white ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, manufactures brand name, patent 48966
- EC179.93**
 Brand: WB (Weingarten Brothers) Nuform 51
 Date: c. 1909-1911
 Made in America
 single layer of coutil, white cotton bone casings, white modesty lace with one row of white ribbon, centre back lacing, 5 hook and stud centre front fastening, centre front hook and eye closure, manufactures brand name, patent 34219
- EC179.94**
 Brand: MU The Meckpah Bodice
 Date: in use from 1880 onwards
 Origin Unknown
 corset waist for children, blue grey sateen, white cotton lining, white lace at centre front and around underarm, truss, 7 bone buttons down centre front, two at side seam, and for one for each truss, gores, corded quilted lines, centre back lacing, manufactures brand name
- EC 179.95**
 Brand: Fitu Dual Z 105 Corset
 Date: c. 1890's
 Origin Unknown
 single layer white coutil, white cotton bone casings, two tone pink boride anglaise, spoon busk with 5 hook and studs, two hook and eyes below busk, centre back brass eyelets, pink and white lacing with tags, elastic belting, manufactures trademarks and brand name
- *EC179.96**
 Brand: RG Testit Dual 65 Straight Front Corset
 Date: c. 1895-1900
 Made in England
 single layer of drab coutil, white cotton bone casings, fine white modesty lace, two rows of white baby ribbon, straight front bust, 5 hooks and eyes,
- white flossing, centre back lacing, laces and metal tags, manufacturers brand name and trademark
- EC179.97**
 Brand: Domino Qual C
 Date: c. 1905-1911
 Origin Unknown
 single layer dove grey coutil, wide satin ribbon binding, modesty lace, centre front straight busk, 5 hook and studs, centre back lacing with lace with tags, ventilating sides, 4 adjustable hose supporters, brand name,
- EC 179.98**
 Brand: S&S Corset
 Date: c. 1900-1905
 Made in Germany
 single layer of turquoise and white jacquard weave, white cotton bone casings, fine modesty lace, straight front busk, 5 hooks and studs, centre back lacing with white laces and tags, gussets at bust and hip, quilted bust improvers, shell buttons at end of centre front, manufactures branding and trade marks

Otago Settlers Museum Dunedin

OSM 1980/132/1

Brand: Izods Corset
 Date: c. 1895-1899
 Made in England
 black silk satin whalebone corset, pink flossing, white lining with makers logos, modesty lace on the bust edge with two rows of silk ribbon

*OSM 1984/333/1

Brand: MU Handmade White Silk
 Date: c. 1850-70
 Origin Unknown
 hand sewn white silk satin corset, centre back lacing with truss and a combination of gores and corded quilted lines

Otago Museum Dunedin

G 85.529

Brand: PD Royal 3296 Corset
 Date: c. 1890s
 Made in Belgium
 single layer of dove grey coutil, modesty lace with blue silk ribbon, busk with 5 hook and studs

G 85.530

Brand: PD Royal Z368 Corset
 Date: c. 1890s
 Made in Belgium
 single layer of dove grey coutil, modesty lace, spoon busk with 5 hook and studs, two brass hooks at bottom of busk, elastic webbing



Notes on the tables evolution and use

Table 1 · Issues to consider with artefacts and sources

The issues and biases were used to create awareness in the preliminary stages while looking at the primary museum artefact acquisition registers and looking at secondary sources. It enabled me to establish the availability of relevant information for the timeframe that was going to be researched. This list of questions created awareness of possible inbuilt prejudices and made me question sources be questioned for such things as authenticity and relevance.

Table 2 · Raw data collection matrix

This matrix was developed from the UNBHGS Analysis method (Table 7) and was used when examining artefacts in the museum setting. The question categories were changed around to be in line with the design process and manufacturing of an item. The UNBHGS analysis steps were retained as these broke each category down and helped to provide detailed information.

Table 3 · Category prompting questions

This table of questions was used in conjunction with Table 2 and helped to extract a range of information and question all aspects of the artefact under investigation.

Table 4 · Design, materials and assembly checklist

This checklist was used to help maintain reliable and consistent data retrieval. It was developed after the raw data collection matrix and category prompting questions. It was established and required because not all corsets were to be examined at the same time. The raw data being retrieved from numerous museums over a period of year needed some logical sequencing and consistency.

Table 5 · Descriptive catalogue corset naming system

Table 5a · Descriptive catalogue museum artefact guide names

The renaming of the museum artefacts occurred after all raw data was retrieved from the museum collections. This system was developed to help create a simple name when discussing each artefact in the descriptive catalogue. The system helped to personally identify corsets, yet still have connection to their individual museum acquisition register codes. The museum artefact guide section was developed to complement the naming system. This also cross references all details of each artefact, and includes the newly developed catalogue name, along with a brief list of the corset design attributes, origin, and estimated date of manufacturer.

Table 7

This analysis method is the original material culture based matrix developed by the UNBHGS and was initially chosen and further developed into my raw data collection matrix (table 2)

TABLE 1

ISSUES TO CONSIDER WITH ARTEFACTS & SOURCES

<i>CORSETS</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ No history or incomplete history of the individual corset examined makes it difficult to determine what class of woman in society wore it.✗ Corsets unable to be placed into a specific time period due to not being placed on a mount or form in order to have design details closely observed.✗ Not enough corset examples in museums that are similar, or from the specified time period to compare design details and manufacturing techniques.✗ Exceptional and/or rare examples of corsets worn in the time frame that cannot be compared or grouped together as no others have similar characteristics.✗ Not enough corsets that were the same to compare details to.✗ Unable to determine if specific corsets were for special occasions such as mourning, training as lack of secondary historical information to compare with.✗ Museum collection policies need to be considered e.g. why has this corset been kept in the collection.✗ Determining if the corsets that have survived were ornate, pretty versions and exclusive to certain sectors in society, or everyday corsets worn by all.
<i>NEWSPAPERS, JOURNALS, LETTERS, AND PICTORIAL</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Newspapers, journals and local written publications were conservative and had political affiliations associated with the region and with the important members of society.✗ Newspapers reported upon a narrow range of colonial society with the focus on the wealthy and important community members, so what is absent?✗ Editorial policies and ownership restrictions influence the publication.✗ Individual written documentation has bias, and is not true to the event or timeframe, the artefact, or occurrence, as can have personal interpretation.✗ Written information can be distorted and inaccurate depending on province, other publications of event, interpretation of the occurrence or artefact.✗ Narrow range of people, events and companies that were reported upon and had money to advertise in written material.✗ Corsets being a topic that is not often mentioned publicly as considered not social etiquette, so the information is vaguely alluded to.
<i>QUESTIONS TO USE WITH WRITTEN, 3-D AND PICTORIAL SOURCES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Why was this source produced in this manner or format?✗ How has the style of illustration, photography, composition influenced the information?✗ Who produced this?✗ What is omitted?✗ Does it exaggerate colonial culture and/or misrepresent it?✗ What is not shown?✗ Is this misleading, an exceptional, rare or common example?✗ What provincial bias is there?

(Merrick, 2002)

TABLE 2**RAW DATA COLLECTION MATRIX**

ANALYSIS PROCEDURE	QUESTION CATEGORIES				
	Function & Design	Materials	Construction & Composition	Region, Museum, Origin	Value, Condition
STEP 1. Observable information (examine object)					
STEP 2. Object Comparison (with similar objects)					
STEP 3. Supplementary data					
STEP 4. CONCLUSIONS					

(Merrick, 2002)

The three main analysis steps in the procedure of data collection, excluding step four, are defined by **UNBHGS** as:

Step 1. Observational data

- ✘ Any information obtained through interaction with the artefact, looking at function and design, material, construction and composition, region and value.
- ✘ Measuring the item, descriptive detailed information on aspects such as how materials have been used, construction techniques etc.
- ✘ Sketches and photographs to document artefact

Step 2. Comparative data

- ✘ Any information obtained through comparison to similar artefacts produced by same manufacturer/maker or during the same time frame
- ✘ Any information from similar artefacts prior or post the time frame made by the same manufacturer/maker
- ✘ Any information for similar artefacts by any other maker

Step 3. Supplementary data

- ✘ Any written, oral, printed, or pictorial information that relates to the artefact, but is not part of the direct history of the examined artefact

(UNBHGS, 1985)

TABLE 3

CATEGORY PROMPTING QUESTIONS (to work with collection matrix and focused on corsets)

1. FUNCTION AND DESIGN CATEGORY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can the corset be dated by its design?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any features in the design that make it stand out?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How does the design of the corset compare to other corsets? Is this a rare example or a common one?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How did the corset perform its function?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the design, use of material and construction affect/aid in the corset function of suppressing and shaping the female body?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the corset's design and function reveal anything about its manufacturer – maker?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the corset provide any unintended functions for the wearer?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this corset display evidence it was used as an everyday piece of dress, rather than being kept for special or specific occasions? (e.g. mourning corset, cycling, maternity etc)
2. MATERIALS CATEGORY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Give a detailed description of the materials used in the corset; including texture, weight, weave, colour, ornamentation design, attachments and closures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	What qualities of materials were used?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Were these materials commonly used in corsets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Were the materials specially produced for this corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there any visible ornamentation on the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If so, how does the ornamentation affect the overall appearance of the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is this a common or an extraordinary example of materials used in a 19 th century Victorian corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is this corset made from authentic materials from the Victorian time period or has it be replicated using materials which were fabricated at a later date than the items design?
3. CONSTRUCTION CATEGORY	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any manufacturer's / maker's names or inscriptions visible?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Give a detailed description of the corset design, pattern, shape, and dimensions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	What construction techniques have been used to form and finish the corset? Give a detailed description of these techniques.
<input type="checkbox"/>	What construction tools would have been used to produce the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any parts of the corset that have been influenced by the construction techniques to make it a physically restrictive garment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it possible to determine which direction the grain of the material is going through each pattern segment of the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the grain of the material influence the corset to be restrictive or flexible?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How has the ornamentation (if any) been constructed and attached to the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this ornamentation influence the restrictive nature of the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the construction of this corset differ greatly from similar items of the same time period, including those not made by the same manufacturer?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there any evidence of alteration, wear and repair to the corset?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does this corset display any unique characteristics?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is this corset authentic or a replica and produced at a later date but mimicking an original?

4. PROVENANCE CATEGORY

- ✂ Where and when was the corset produced?
- ✂ Who was the corset manufacturer – maker?
- ✂ Who was the original owner of the corset?
- ✂ When and where did the original owner of the corset live?
- ✂ What was the original owner's social status, trade, and employment?
- ✂ Was this a common corset for the area the owner lived in, or a rare example?
- ✂ Were there any subsequent owners of the corset?
- ✂ Any other relevant history in relation to this corset?
- ✂ What are the similarities of other corsets to this one with similar history? (area, social status, manufacturer etc)
- ✂ Would this corset have been publicly advertised in the local drapery and department stores, newspapers, ladies' journals etc? Why / why not?

5. VALUE CATEGORY

- ✂ What value would this corset have had to the wearer?
- ✂ Does the corset reflect the owner's economic status and place in society?
- ✂ How was the corset valued in Victorian New Zealand society?
- ✂ What cultural values of colonial New Zealand does it represent?
- ✂ What monetary worth has the corset compared to other pieces of dress?
- ✂ Does this corset meet the criteria of Victorian femininity and shape for the time period it is dated to?

(Merrick, 2002)

TABLE 4**DESIGN, MATERIALS & ASSEMBLY CHECKLIST**

NAME	Manufacturer's details Country Approximate date
MATERIALS	Facing cloth type Lining cloth type Colour
DESIGN	Panels Seams Bones/steel number and size and placement Bone/steel casings inside-outside Eyelets and centre back lacing Centre front- hook and studs, busk, extra details
FEATURES	Flossing style and colour Webbing Waist tape Manufacturers' details, typography, Modesty lace, broderie anglaise, style and colour Hose supporters, style and colour Additional individual features
ASSEMBLY	Machine made Busk Basting Hand alterations Hand stitching
CONDITION	Conserved by museum Foxing Rust marks Rips, tears Running repairs Missing bones, flossing, hose supporters Stains Other markings

(Merrick, 2002)

TABLE 5**DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE CORSET NAMING SYSTEM***(six examples of how the system work)*

ORIGINAL MUSEUM CODES		NEW CORSET NAME FOR CATALOGUE	
Museum	Acquisition Number	Known Maker	Style Name/ Number
<i>Christchurch</i>	<i>EC 179.88 A</i>	ABC	Royalty
<i>Hawke's Bay</i>	<i>56/63/2</i>	PD	No. 1589
<i>Otago Settlers Museum</i>	<i>OSM 1980/132/1</i>	Izod's	Corset
Museum	Acquisition Number	Maker Unknown	Design Elements
<i>Christchurch</i>	<i>EC 179.102 E</i>	MU	Ribbon Tricot Ventilating Corset
<i>Christchurch</i>	<i>EC 179.102 F</i>	MU	White Floral Flossed Corset
<i>Te Papa</i>	<i>PC 000659</i>	MU	White Belted Corset

(Merrick, 2004)

TABLE 5A

*Naming system at work in the Catalogue Museum Artefact Guide
(example The Izod's Corset)*

Original Museum Acquisition Register Information	Descriptive Catalogue Museum Artefact Guide
<p>Otago Settlers Museum 1980/132/1 Black Corset c.1895-8 Donor: Mrs E Bennet Note: Part of larger collection of gifted clothing relating to John and Elizabeth White Family</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Otago Settlers Museum Dunedin</p> <p>OSM 1980/132/1 ← <i>Museum acquisition number</i> Brand: Izods Corset ← <i>Descriptive catalogue new name</i> Date: c. 1895-1899 ← <i>Place of manufacturer</i> Made in England black silk satin whalebone corset, pink flossing, white lining with makers logos, modesty lace on the bust edge with two rows of silk ribbon ← <i>Description of design attributes</i></p> <p>*OSM 1984/333/1 Brand: MU Handmade White Silk Date: c. 1850-70 Origin Unknown hand sewn white silk satin corset, centre back lacing with truss and a combination of gores and corded quilted lines</p>

** next to museum acquisition number indicates the corset has not been described in detail within the catalogue*

TABLE 7

THE ANALYSIS METHOD (University of New Brunswick History Graduates Seminar)

<i>ANALYSIS PROCEDURE</i>	<i>QUESTION CATEGORIES</i>				
	Material	Construction	Function	Providence	Value
<u>STEP 1.</u> Observation					
<u>STEP 2.</u> Comparison					
<u>STEP 3.</u> Complementary data					
<u>STEP 4.</u> CONCLUSIONS					

The three main analysis steps in the procedure of data collection, excluding step four, are defined as:

(UNBHGS, 1985)

Step 1. Observational data

- ✘ Any information obtained through interaction with the artefact, looking at function and design, material, construction and composition, region and value.
- ✘ Measuring the item, descriptive detailed information on aspects such as how materials have been used, construction techniques etc.
- ✘ Sketches and photographs to document artefact

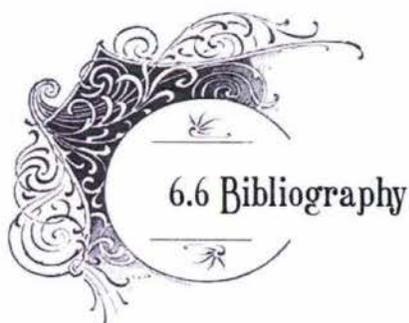
Step 2. Comparative data

- ✘ Any information obtained through comparison to similar artefacts produced by same manufacturer/maker or during the same time frame
- ✘ Any information from similar artefacts prior or post the time frame made by the same manufacturer/maker
- ✘ Any information for similar artefacts by any other maker

Step 3. Supplementary data

- ✘ Any written, oral, printed, or pictorial information that relates to the artefact, but is not part of the direct history of the examined artefact

(UNBHGS, 1985)



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Figure 340 Unknown women posing for a photo in the Denton Photographic studio wearing fashionable dress of the c1890s and displaying a small waist and firm torso which would have been aided by the wearing of a corset (Collection Alexander Turnbull Library, 70411 1/2 Denton)



Dedicated to Harold



DECLARATION

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