

Yes

we have National Costumes

We are a small group researching and re-creating the National Costumes of England and the British Isles.

In an ever-shrinking world, our costume heritage is historically and culturally important.

Many other countries wear a range of regional costumes which are accepted as 'National'. We wish to show that we have a lot more than Morris Dancers and Pearly Kings & Queens: these are festival as well as regional costumes.

As part of the research involved in re-

creating a particular regional costume, it is impossible not to be fascinated by the working lives of the people of each community.



A Bondager of 1894

Our group has already re-created several costumes including:

• **BONDAGERS** – women field-workers in North Northumberland and the Scottish borders; employed under a yearly hiring system.

• **CULLERCOATS FISHWIFE** –

famous in America via the oil paintings of Winslow Homer

• **CANAL-BOAT PEOPLE** – the women wore a distinctive and elaborate bonnet, both for work and ‘Sunday best’. The Boatmen also had their own style of attire for Sunday’s.



The Cullercoats Fishwife



Canal-Boat costume of 1890

This is an on-going project and the following are some of those still being researched:

FISHERMEN & WOMEN OF ARAN AND GALWAY –

an Irish costume featuring footwear called “Pampooties”.

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND WRESTLERS –

the original ‘men in tights’ with embroidery.

FILEY FLITHER PICKERS –

to the delight of the local lads they ‘breeched’ their skirts to climb up and down the Yorkshire cliffs gathering bait.

NEWHAVEN

FISHWIVES – known

to King George IV and regarded by Queen Victoria on a visit to Leith, 3 miles east of Edinburgh; and not a scrap of tartan in sight.

STAITHES – the Yorkshire fishing village famous for bonnets, (women not men).

ST. KILDA – tiny islands 110 miles off the West coast of Scotland - inhabited for over a 1,000 years and evacuated in 1930.



Canal Boatman
in Sunday Best

TENBY PRAWN-SELLERS AND FISHWIVES -

a 'real' Welsh costume

TYNESIDE KEELMAN - another local costume with a 'blue-bonnet' to go with the dimple in the chin!

WIGAN PIT-BROW LASSIES - who actually went to London to show parliament their work dress was not unfeminine.

In 2004 we obtained a grant through the

'Bishop Auckland Area Small Project Fund' to make smaller versions of some costumes for children to wear on which we are currently working.

Talks, Demonstrations and Displays

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