



Stays

Date

1846

Medium

Silk, wood

Description

Lady's stays of brownish silk (possibly originally purple), lined with green material known as sarcenet and trimmed in white. The garment has a very narrow waist and many flaring points around the bottom. The original Cuming catalogue calls these "stays", although the term isn't so common these days and we can sometimes be tempted to use "corset" and "stays" interchangeably. However there is a technical difference between stays and corsets. Stays are traditionally and originally, highly structured, boned body compressors and most common from the 13th to the 18th centuries, whereas "corsets" could be seen as their softer, modern versions. Although 19th century corsets

look restrictive to us, 18th century stays were often far tougher. Although covered in cloth, "stays" often referred to the actual boning within the garment. "Jumps" (tight under bodices without boning) and corsets did not have this complete structural compression. Tight compression fell out of favour in the early 20th century but corsets still have a place in modern "recreational" dressing.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 320 x 300 x 460 mm