

Vintage ladies breathing new life into auld claes

Vintage dress but not vintage values is how one group of modern women sum up their fascination with fashions from bygone eras.

The members of The Auld Holyrood Club dress in classic clothes stretching through the last century and as far back as Victorian and Edwardian times, but that's where the poodle skirts, pedal pushers and petticoats stop.

To a woman, they would baulk at any suggestion that they subscribe to outdated notions which place women firmly in the home, while the dominant male figure acts as protector and provider.

An international blend of modern career women – sisters, daughters, mothers and grandmothers – their attention to detail and an eye for oh-so-cool garments which have lasted the test of time draws widespread admiration.

Former vet [Irene Guerrero](#), 32, originally from Cadiz in Andalusia, can sometimes be spotted on Portobello Promenade where often there is an atmosphere of times past. It was in making Edinburgh her home that she made the switch to vintage and reproduction clothes, in part because of easy access to a good range of shops which specialise in this merchandise.

Irene said: "The pin-up look is something I always wanted to try but I didn't have the confidence and it was only three

years ago that I bought my first reproduction dress. I felt so good in it and that is how it all started, but my style has evolved in time.

“I started buying some original vintage pieces and I treasure all of them, they’re a piece of history and I like to imagine who the person was who owned it and where they wore it to. It’s just wonderful to wear something so old and I can’t see any of my modern pieces being wearable in 70 years or more.

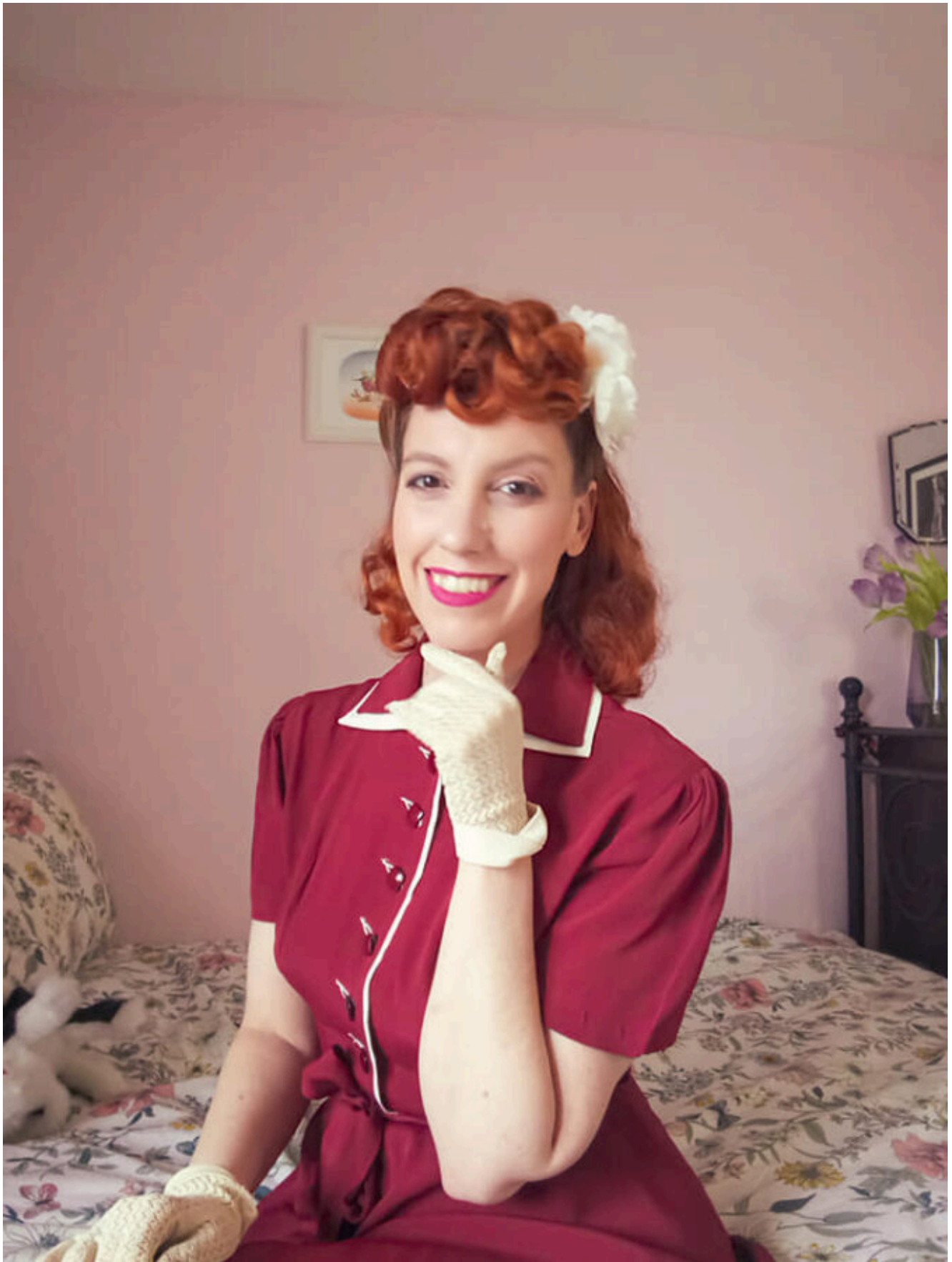


Vintage is a lifestyle choice for Irene Guerrero
“I started with the 1950s style because it’s easier to find affordable repro clothes, I love how feminine the style is and

I discovered the clothes really suited my body shape. I've never felt good in modern clothes and all my life I've been trying to change my body, when all I needed to do is change my style.

"I love 1940s style too and I move between the two eras, but I can't resist a full skirt and a petticoat. I really love the style but none of the group feels we were 'born in the wrong era' and our mantra is 'vintage style, not vintage values'."

For retail worker Irene, vintage has become a lifestyle choice. "Initially it was a weekend thing but now I dress vintage every day. Vintage style makes me feel more like myself, gives me more confidence and I also love vintage hairstyles which I think really brings the look together," she said.



Vintage clothes but not vintage ideals – Irene Guerrero
Irene collects ideas from social media and particularly [Instagram](#), and rather than imitating the classic looks of film star greats or period drama characters she prefers to follow

what regular women wore at the time.

“I follow many vintage style people on Instagram and that’s probably the main inspiration for my style to be honest, as you find so many different people in age, size, shapes, and it’s easier for me to relate to these women.

“When I am out people stare – a lot. I guess it’s hard for people to think this is your everyday style, but what I enjoy most is when older people tell you that you remind them of their youth and you can see that spark in their eyes, that really makes my day.

“For those who don’t know where to start, study the shapes for the era you like and try to find pieces in those shapes, even if they are modern the right shapes will work. Remember there are no rules, so mixing it up, being authentic, or giving it your own twist is totally okay.”

By day [Veronica Schreuder](#), 32, is an archivist at the National Records of Scotland, helping make our historic records available to the public and handling documents from the early 1100s to the present day. Her early fascination with how people lived in the past, what they wore, and the aesthetics of different time periods now manifests itself in how she dresses.

Veronica said: “When I was younger, I really enjoyed looking at pictures of my grandparents in the 40s and 50s. My gran looked so glamorous, both dressed up and in everyday life. She really loved it when I wore vintage dresses and it brought back memories for my granddad when they would go to dances at the Palais.



Veronica Schreuder's grandparents, Doris and William Mackay, were her inspiration to try vintage
"On reflection, I guess with my generation and how we dressed,

I just didn't find our clothes so aesthetically pleasing. I wanted to try and emulate what my grandma would have worn which was a quite feminine style, well put together and taking pride in your appearance."

While Veronica borrows ideas from social media and from television hits such as Mad Men, Call the Midwife and Netflix's glamour-fest Hollywood, like other vintage veterans she has no time for old-fashioned attitudes. "We are very much modern people and it is more about taking the aesthetics of that time period and wearing it in a modern world."

Veronica recommends those trying vintage for the first time should have patience: "When I started I decided I wanted vintage right way. There is nothing wrong with reproduction cloths but I went out and bought anything that I thought resembled vintage and ended up with a lot of stuff that I didn't love. Now, I save my money and look for things that really appeal to me, and I only buy special vintage buys every so often.



Archivist Veronica Schreuder putting on the style

"When you buy vintage clothes and put them on, there is a connection to the past. It makes you feel really good about yourself, you hold yourself differently, you feel done up. It's also an ethical thing, you are giving clothes a new life and a new home and there is a tangible connection to the past and you can't help wondering who wore them before you."

Growing up in the 1970s, [Anya Mackay](#) loved dressing up for weekend tea parties with her mum and granny and pulling on fake fur coats and hats had a lasting impact which developed as a teenager when she discovered the joy of second hand shops.



Anya Mackay discovered the joy of Edinburgh's vintage shops
Project manager Anya, 46, said: "I quite liked 60s style for a while with its shorter mini dresses, then I lost my way a bit and followed High Street fashions, but I didn't feel confident

in my body shape because it never matched what was available on the High Street.

“Later I moved to the east coast and on discovering there was great second hand and vintage shops in Edinburgh, a whole new world opened up to me. I realised that vintage clothing suited me a lot better, it was more body positive and I could celebrate my curves.”

One of Anya’s favourite stockists is [Carnivale Vintage](#) in Bread Street which hosts regular vintage events featuring different eras and where Auld Holyrood Club friendships were formed, and [Herman Brown](#) in West Port is another good option.



Anya Mackay – in tune with vintage heritage

“My favourite era at the moment is the 1940s, it is quite elegant and it’s something you can wear on a day-to-day basis. We bought an old Victorian property a few years ago and restored it, but once all the messy jobs were done I decided to bin all my old chinos and replace my wardrobe bit by bit, and now I dress vintage every day.

“Life is too short to have your nice items hidden up the back of a wardrobe being saved for a nice opportunity, and I am at the age now where I think ‘sod it, it makes me feel good’, so I might as well just wear it every day.”

With friends she has met in the vintage world Anya meets up with other enthusiasts at vintage fairs, picnics, Edinburgh Fringe shows, museum and lunch trips and even murder mystery events.

She said: "Our group has teenagers and pensioners and people from all walks of life. It is very international and we have people from Finland, Spain, the United States, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Germany, and it's nice to meet so many interesting people.

"My family and friends are very supportive, it is quite nice because lots of them are now handing stuff down which nobody else wants, but they know I will appreciate it. In a way we are rescuing old items from landfill, saving old treasures and hoping that someone else might be interested in them in the future. My nine-year-old daughter thinks it's great and loves 'olden clothes' as she calls them."

Fashion makeup artist, [Heidi Smith](#), 17, is one of the youngest members of the Auld Holyrood Club but has been dabbling in vintage 50s style since she was just 14.

She said: "When I first began my vintage style journey, my fascination was mostly centred around the elegance and femininity of the 1950s and the iconic women of old Hollywood who really made the looks their own. Marilyn Monroe was my biggest influence because I was so intrigued by how she had created an individual persona which epitomised glamour and allure, and this was something I was keen to replicate in my own wardrobe.



Heidi Smith's role models are Rita Hayworth and Marilyn Monroe "As my style has evolved, I've found myself really captivated by 1940s fashion and although my everyday style is mainly 40s with some 50s mixed in, I also enjoy dabbling in the 20s, 30s and 60s from time to time, especially when putting together creative looks for online.

"I also really admire Rita Hayworth and I definitely take a lot of 40s hair styling inspiration from her. I also find Gene Tierney and Ginger Rogers' style to be really beautiful and

the ways in which they styled their accessories always looked so sophisticated. All these women were so glamorous but they were also very talented and paved the way for their own careers through their own dedication and hard work, which is very inspiring to me.”

Heidi has also found that maintaining her vintage approach to life has been helpful during the Covid-19 crisis. “Before the pandemic began I was dressing vintage almost every day, with the off-day being most often on Sundays where I’m in my comfy clothes,” she said.



Heidi Smith – so dressed up – and probably heading to Tesco
“I dress vintage around three or four times a week and personally, I’ve found my passion for vintage and sharing my

own artistic content on social media has been really therapeutic during this time of uncertainty.

“I receive a lot of compliments, particularly from the older generation who seem to really appreciate it and find it brings back a lot of nostalgia and memories from their youth or of their parents. Sometimes people ask why I’m ‘so dressed up’ and if I’m going to an event, when in reality I’m just going to Tesco. I think the most important thing about your own self-expression is that if you’re not harming anyone else and it truly makes you happy – dress however you like!”

Instagram [@auldholyroodclub](#)

Both Portobello photographs courtesy of [Dash Photography](#)

Vintage Stockists

[Carnivale Vintage](#), 51 Bread Street, Edinburgh

[Herman Brown](#), 151 West Port, Edinburgh

[Martha’s Attic](#), 9 Brighton Place, Portobello

[Vintage Quine](#), High Street West, Falkland, Fife

[Godiva Boutique](#), 9 West Port, Edinburgh

[Fantouche Vintage](#) online



Members of the Auld Holyrood Club taking the sea air at Portobello – photograph courtesy of www.darja-bilyk.com