



## Antrix Updates

[www.antrixcostumesmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.antrixcostumesmaidstone.co.uk)

The few months since our last update has seen us continuing to review our existing costume stock. We have had several modelling sessions, and updated the photo's of some of our costumes. These are gradually being added to the website.

Naturally, our main focus during the past few weeks was Halloween and Christmas. We updated our Halloween costume catalogue on the website, but unfortunately, had a quieter Halloween than anticipated. This was mainly due to our landline being down and us not noticing! We had received enquiries via email and facebook, but the phone had been extremely quiet.

The problem was fixed on 31 October, just in time for those last minute Halloween enquiries! Apologies if you did try to ring us during that period and it sounded as if we were not answering. If we are not around, it does normally go to voicemail, but obviously not if there is no dial tone.

When it comes to costumes & accessories, November tends to be one of the main 'Charity' months, (March and May being the other two). Naturally, there was *Children in Need* on 15 November, but we often also receive requests for costumes and Venetian style masks, for charity masked balls, plus requests for novelty and fun items for other Fund-raising activities.

One of the other factors to concentrate our minds over the past few months was the fact that our existing [antrixonline.co.uk](http://antrixonline.co.uk) website stopped uploading as from mid-November and the platform was no longer being supported by our website provider. Although we found a workaround for the issue and it gradually righted itself anyway, the situation forced us to take stock of our existing website resources and decide to start to transition items to the new website [www.antrixcostumesmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.antrixcostumesmaidstone.co.uk). This is still a work in progress, but we are getting there!

Christmas 2019 and the New Year period, saw fewer parties and celebrations taking place. Whether this was due to the dreaded 'B' word and having a December election, was difficult to ascertain. Speaking to others following the New Year celebrations, we think that last year was an extremely busy year for many people, which was not helped by all the political activities taking place. This resulted in most people just seeming to want a quiet, relaxing time spent with family and friends.

The New Year obviously is a time for reflection on the past one. Here at Antrix, December 2020 will mark our 30th Anniversary in the costume trade. During the time leading up to the anniversary we are no doubt going to be reflecting on the business and how much the industry has changed during that time.

Coming in the Spring Issue

Murder Mystery

>Ua Yg' 6 cbX

VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

## Newsletter 2020 THEMES

In the Autumn issue, we looked at some of the costumes from the various decades of the 20th century. Depending upon your viewpoint, December 2019 saw the end of the 'teen' years, with 31st December, ringing in the start of a new decade.

100 years ago, 1920 saw the dawn of a new era, which became known as the 'roaring twenties'. As we say on one of our badges *Nostalgia is a thing of the past* and the world has changed significantly from the last millennium, particularly so in the last twenty years. Whether you see the new decade starting at the beginning or end of this year, there is no doubt a general feeling of optimism about the next few years, compared to the last few.

In terms of themes for this year, it is always difficult to second-guess what people may come up with.

During 2019, party themes ranged from the traditional *Abba, Eighties, Heroes & Villains, Nineties, Seventies, Sixties, Storybook, Victorian, Wild West*, through to *Ancient Times, Christmas, Georgian, James Bond, Las Vegas, Murder Mystery* and *Witches/Wizards*, amongst others.

One of the notable trends over the past few years, has been the increased number of musical stars and tribute artists performing at local venues. Whereas at one stage, people wanted to dress up as the relevant star, these days it tends to be more about the music, rather than the spectacle.

During any given year, there are always the regular events where costumes may be required, such as Burns Night and Chinese New Year (which coincidentally were on the same day in 2020); St David's Day and World Book Day in March; Easter; Shakespeare's Birthday and St George's Day in April.

In 2020 and over the next few years, we believe the obvious 1920s theme, may be revisited several times, particularly around St Valentine's Day and where there are anniversaries of events 100 years ago. It's already noticeable in some recent fashion trends.

We think the other main theme of this year, will be 1940s, particularly as the early May Bank Holiday has been moved to Friday 8 May, in order to allow celebrations for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

We will be highlighting particular anniversaries in future newsletters, (which we hope to bring out towards the start of the quarter, rather than near the end) and blogs on our [website](http://website) and [facebook](http://facebook) pages.

# A-Z of Costumes

One popular theme area we are often asked for when it comes to parties, is Costumes beginning with the Letter...

This is primarily because the host/hosts decide to use the first letter of their name, for the party theme. The aim is usually to encourage a diverse range of costumes at their event. However, sometimes this can backfire, with several people coming up with the same idea. Naturally this all depends upon the letter(s) in question and the accessible costumes available. Obviously, some party-goers tend to try and do their own thing, from their existing wardrobe, but this is not always feasible.

On our website we have got photographs of the majority of our costumes which can be found under an alphabetical listing *Costumes A-Z*, or by themes, *Themes A-Z*. There is also an alphabetical list of all costumes, with sizes and prices, which can be viewed/downloaded from the foot of each page. As we gradually upgrade sections of the website, we have started adding prices/size info to individual pages to make the information more accessible.

Opposite are the most popular costumes under each of the letters (excluding X!). Whether any of these will be knocked off their perch, when we reach our 30th Anniversary in December 2020, remains to be seen.



## WORLD BOOK DAY

It is now time to prepare for World Book Day on or around 5th March (some schools 'celebrate' on different days according to timetabling/curriculum schedules).

The prime objective of Book Day is to encourage children to read, even involving the offer of free books sometimes, but exactly what constitutes a 'book' (for the purpose of dressing as a character) is becoming a grey area: Heroes and Heroines are as likely to come from comic books, action movies and video games rather than the printed page, and that can be a problem.

Often, schools are just keen to have the children getting involved, so don't get fussy on character origins. Others may channel the enthusiasm with relevant costume-creating during school time, and some side-step the issue completely - a local school in our area has previously had children dressing as different words!

With books and libraries to an extent becoming an endangered species, it is good that the World Book Day ethos still thrives. Reading is about stimulating the imagination as to how characters look and, sometimes, identifying with their highs and lows. Unfortunately, films and TV adaptations can often undermine the process by presenting the stories and characters fully formed or 'reimagined' with the story truncated or even altered for 'dramatic purpose'. That said, occasionally, seeing the film/TV series may lead to wanting to read the original book. Same with costumes - sometimes the client (adult or child) has a different vision of what a character should look like, and, of course, the customer is always right!

It is arguable whether the 'traditional' books of yesteryear hold the same interest nowadays: Whilst many children's stories have always had a dark side - *Grimm Fairy Tales* are an obvious example, and Roald Dahl's works follow this tradition. However, children of today have a more modern outlook, seeking stories to which they can relate, but with a quirky twist. David Walliams, the established new star of storytelling, has cornered this market with *The Demon Dentist*, *The Gangsta Granny* and *The Boy in the Dress*.

Also, recently 'rediscovered' is *Worzel Gummidge*, seen for a couple of TV specials during the Festive Period and potentially likely to return for a series. Those of a certain age will remember the Jon Pertwee/Una Stubbs TV version, but this new adaptation sticks closer to the original book characterisations and is very 'on message' on environmental issues. Whether the discerning young reader/viewer will warm to this new 'old hero' remains to be seen.