

# Bellingham's Bodices

by *The Mantua Maker*

## JOANNA BELLINGHAM

Master Tailor  
b. 1685

Joanna Bellingham was born in her family home above her mother's textile shop in Stonegate yard. Having always admired her mother's work, Joanna grew to be ambitious and enterprising. After her mother's passing of an infectious disease, Joanna sought out to continue her mother's legacy as a female entrepreneur in a time when there were very little opportunity for women. Bellingham apprenticed for seven years before finally becoming a Merchant Taylor. In 1726, she rose to success and became known as "The Mantua Maker"; even taking on seven apprentices from 1721 to 1728. Tragically, she died in 1725 at the home where she was born.

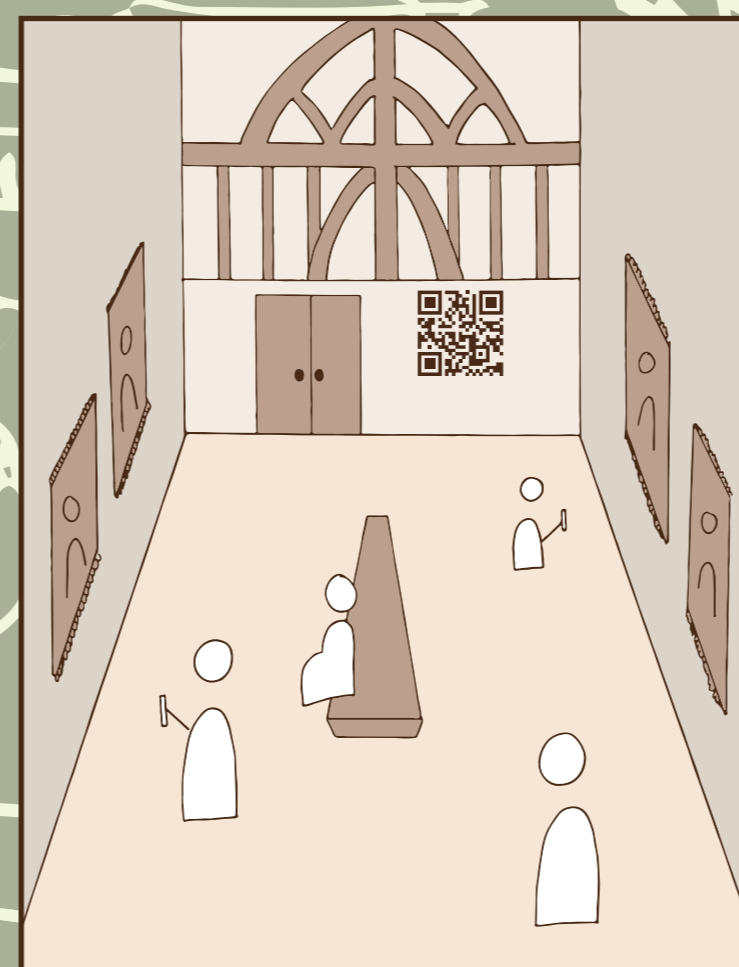
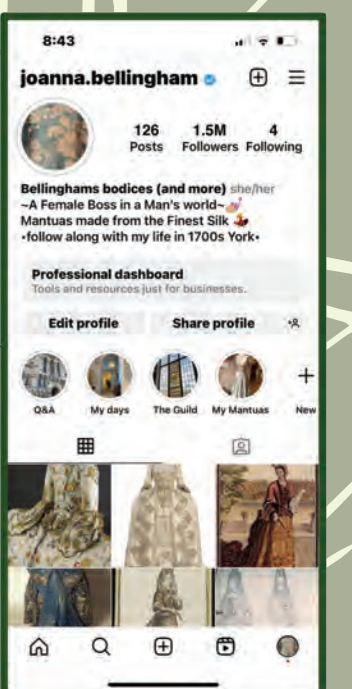


**mantua:** a complex article of women's clothing worn in the late 17th century and 18th century. Made from a single length of silk, mantua dresses were a very popular style of women's attire characterized as a loose flowing silhouette and elaborate decorations. These gowns featured wide skirts, often pleated or draped at the back, and used luxurious fabrics, embroidery, and lace trimmings. They took a high degree of skill to create.



### Befriend Bellingham - \$\$\$

Befriend Bellingham. Visitors can walk through an exhibit of living portraits. Interviews from Joanna's mother, husband, apprentice, and "The Mantua Maker" herself help to paint a portrait of her life. Through a QR code conveniently placed at the exit, visitors can learn more about Joanna Bellingham via her Instagram account. By showing the audience Joanna's daily life in the 1700s, with a 21st-century twist, viewers can get to know the Mantua Maker on a more personal level. Daily posts will bring her to life and Q&A lives or stories will allow viewers to interact with her.



### Joanna's Mantua - \$

Step into Joanna's Mantua. Audiences will be able to try on a dress that Joanna would have made at the peak of her career. Through interaction with a lifesize cutout of one of Joanna's mantuas, people can see what they might have looked like while wearing the latest fashion of the time.

