

## NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH A BATA SHOE MUSEUM DOCENT

Thank you to our dedicated docents for another great year of guided tours and the enthusiasm they bring to our visitors. In this issue of our newsletter, we've interviewed our docent extraordinaire, Ruby Glass.



*What are some of your favourite shoes in the collection?*

At the top of my list would be a pair from our permanent collection, the Chestnut Crushing Shoe. From France in the 1800's, they were made of wood, forged iron, leather, and worn for crushing chestnuts. My favourite era for shoes is from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and include button boots worn by the suffragettes and the dainty, gold strappy shoes worn by flappers.



*If you had to be a shoe, what shoe would you be?*

I would choose a pair of Promenade Boots from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They combine frivolity with function. The black lace up boot features Francoise Pinet's signature curved heel and exquisite floral embroidery in green, white, and yellow. These shoes would be much too narrow toed to be wearable today, but I still admire the craftsmanship and originality.

*How long have you been volunteering?*

In 2015, I started volunteering at the Bata Shoe Museum. My first job was a greeter and after six months, I put in my application for the docent program. I've been guiding tours for almost three years – I still dream of trying on some of them. Maybe one day I'll sneak into the vault.

*What interested you into joining the docent program?*

As I learned more about the Museum's collections, I became fascinated by the stories told by shoes and the people who wore them – shoes evolved with women's roles in society and women's right to vote. Culturally speaking, shoes spoke volumes about the status of women, from the materials used in their construction to how restrictive they were for the wearer. Basically, I'm "head over heels" for the architecture of shoes and their structural elements.

*What tips would you give to aspiring docents?*

View the exhibits in detail, start with a list of shoes that interest you, learn about their context, and write a script that will engage your audience. Your enthusiasm for the shoes will be tangible and will keep your audience interested.

Interested? Join the **Docent Training Program**.