

# WECS Wardrobe

Autumn issue 2014

£5.50: Free to members

**weecs**  
west of england  
costume society

www.  
wofecostumesociety.org

## Calendar

### Blitz! and AGM

7 February 2015

■ Bath Bowling Club

### Study Day: Georgians

21 March 2015

■ The Pavilion, Bristol

### Leeds visit

13-17 May 2015

■ Leeds

### Janet Arnold Study Day: Beetles Feathers and Furs

3 October 2015

■ Bath Cricket Club



An Alexander McQueen Plato's Atlantis collection snakeskin printed organza dress

Main image

New Skins

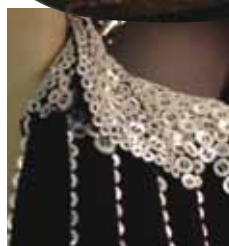
The beauty of vintage Page 13



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Study Day Page 11



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Clarks visit Page 8



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JP Gaultier Page 17



Record breakers  
Regency prom Page 18



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Book reviews Page 19

With this Autumn issue of the magazine you should have:

Membership renewal form  
Standing order form  
(WECS banking details have changed)

Booking forms for  
- Blitz and AGM  
- March Study Day  
- Pittards visit

2014 AGM Minutes and the  
2013 accounts, both for the  
AGM 7 February 2015

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# WECS events

## Blitz Magazine 1980-91 and AGM

7 February 2015 14.00-16.30

■ Bath Bowling Club, Pulteney Road, Bath BA2 4EZ  
Speaker Iain R. Webb

Although to many of us the 1980s do not seem to fall into the category of 'fashion history', looking back it was a very distinctive period. The magazine *Blitz*, a fashion and pop culture magazine, founded in 1980 by university students Carey Labovitch and Simon Tesler was one of a trio of British "style" magazines which established a broad following internationally. It was very much a magazine of its time and the recent exhibition at the V&A *From Club to Catwalk* showed the influence club culture (which the magazine drew on) exerted on the fashion scene.

Iain R Webb, studied fashion design at St Martin's School of Art (now Central Saint Martins), graduating in 1980. During his career he has been fashion editor/director of *Blitz*, *The Evening Standard*, *Harpers & Queen*, *The Times* and *Elle*, while contributing to various publications including *New Musical Express*, *Saturday Telegraph*, *The Independent* and *Vogue*. He won the Fashion Journalist of The Year Award two years running in 1995 and '96. A respected fashion writer, he is the author of *Bill Gibb, Fashion and Fantasy*; *Foale and Tuffin: The Sixties. A Decade in Fashion*, and *Postcards From the Edge of the Catwalk*. His latest book, *As seen In Blitz: Fashioning '80s Style*, was published in 2013. He acts as a consultant at the Fashion Museum in Bath and is Professor of Fashion at Royal College of Art.

WECS is privileged to have such a prestigious fashion journalist to talk to us and we are so grateful for his stepping in at such short notice.

*Before this event there will be the West of England Costume Society's AGM: the record for this is 25 minutes...*



**AGM Agenda**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 1st February 2014
3. Matters Arising
4. Reports: Chairman's  
Treasurer's  
Membership Secretary  
WECS Wardrobe
5. Programme for 2015
6. Any other business
7. Date of next AGM - 6 February 2016
8. Speaker

## Visit: Pittards Factory

Tuesday 5 May 2015 and Tuesday 2 June 2015 meet at 10.30

■ Pittards plc, Sherborne Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 5BA  
01935 474321  
www.pittards.com

On this 'Get Yourself There' trip we will be visiting the Pittards leather factory at Yeovil. Numbers will be limited to ten people on each tour, so it's 'members only' in May and open to non-members for the June tour. Price £5.00 per head to include coffee.



## Study Day: The Georgians

Saturday 21 March 2015 9.30-16.30

**new venue**  
 ■ The Pavilion, 1 Hannover Quay,  
 Harbourside, Bristol BS1 5JE

2014 has been a feast of exhibitions celebrating the three hundredth anniversary of the start of the Hanoverian Dynasty. Starting with the British Library Exhibition *Georgians Revealed* which looked at how the Georgians lived, then *The First Georgians: Art and Monarchy* at Buckingham Palace, followed by *The Glorious Georges* which was spread around the palaces with George I at Hampton Court Palace, George II at Kensington Palace and George III at Kew Palace.

It is no wonder Lucy Worsley, curator at the Royal Palace, was heard to remark that she was tired of the Georgians.

### Programme

- 9.30 Registration with coffee  
 10.15 Rosemary Harden – **Georgians** - dress for polite society  
 11.15 Coffee  
 11.45 Rosie Taylor-Davies – **It is all in the detail: narratives discovered through the study of eighteenth-century embroidery.**  
 12.45 Lunch  
 14.15 David Wilcox – **Thomas Coutts** : a Georgian case study  
 15.15 Tea/Coffee  
 15.45 Althea Mackenzie – **Fashion and Style: 18th century Hats and Bonnets**  
 16.45 Close

**Sales Table:** Embroidered items and equipment, fabric suitable for embroidery, anything connected with stitching and the Georgians.

Please mark items with your name, price required and proportion to go to WECS. Items accepted on a strictly Sale or return' basis. Unsold, uncollected items will be donated to charity.



The Pavilion, Harbourside is a new venue for WECS: directions for getting there on [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)



Hopefully WECS members will not have tired of the glorious dresses of the period that still survive in museum collections and our day will start with:

### Rosemary Harden - Georgians Dress for Polite Society

Fashion was one of the cornerstones of gracious living in the 18th century and this lecture by Rosemary, curator of the Fashion Museum in Bath, will showcase some of the beautiful and interesting surviving examples of women's dress from this fascinating period in dress history. Rosemary will draw on the Fashion Museum's current exhibition *Georgians*, and will also suggest new insights into who may have worn one of the grand court dresses on display in the exhibition.

Rosemary is well known to WECS members having previously been the society's chair as well as giving many insightful lectures into the history of fashion. She is the author of *Fashion Museum: Treasures*, and *Floral Frocks*.

To gain further understanding of how these dresses were decorated we then meet:

### Rosie Taylor-Davies - It is all in the detail: narratives discovered through the study of eighteenth-century embroidery.

The eighteenth-century embroiderer used the services of many other skilled craftsmen in order to be able to work his magic on the sumptuous cloth available in England at this time. This paper will not only look at the work of the embroiderer and how to identify different hands, the design style, the threads used and the popular stitch techniques, but will also give a glimpse into the work practices of the Pattern Drawer, the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawer and the silk specialists, among others associated with this prestigious trade.

Rosie has worked in costume for theatre, film and television, and also commercial and bespoke garment-production. Her specialism is history of dress with a particular interest in embroidery. She studied embroidery and conservation at the Royal School of Needlework, Hampton Court Palace where she was formerly Head of the Commercial Studio and she is currently engaged in doctoral studies concerning the 18th century embroidery trade in England.

Male dress, particularly court dress, was equally flamboyant during this century but the rapid expansion of the world of business marked the change towards the practical clothing of the business-man by the beginning of the next century.

### David Wilcox will tell us the fascinating story of: Thomas Coutts: a Georgian case study

When the banker Thomas Coutts died in 1822, his relatively young widow stored his clothes in camphor, perhaps in memory of her late husband. Unusually, Harriot Coutts packed away what seems to have been the majority of his wardrobe, rather than simply a few items of sentimental value. Why she stored such a large collection is unclear and perhaps time and re-marriage dissolved her original purpose. It was not until 1907 that this time capsule was disturbed, when Coutts' great-grandson offered a loan of the clothes to the Victoria and Albert Museum. The V&A's acceptance of the initial loan led to a further offer of almost the entire collection as a gift.

Thus began the preservation of Coutts' wardrobe in the museum system, but also the widespread distribution of the clothes to the USA, to Canada and to museums around Britain. This talk will examine the contents and history of Thomas Coutts' wardrobe, looking at its relationship to men's fashionable



Above: Brocade dress from the Fashion Museum's current Georgians exhibition

Below: 1750s waistcoat from Worthing Museum stores

Inset below: Thomas Coutts 1735-1822 by William Beechey. City of Edinburgh council collection.



clothing of the early 19th century and what it tells us of Coutts' personal life. David Wilcox teaches on the Performance Costume Design course at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. His area of research interest is the cut and construction of European men's clothing across the period 1600-1850. He has examined and recorded the cut of surviving garments in many costume collections, both national and local, and has published essays on some of these studies in *Costume journal*.

From the sober world of Thomas Coutts we return to the fripperies of the Georgian lady. A lady's outfit would be incomplete without accessories and so we welcome



fashion plate from 1786

**Althea MacKenzie** to talk on **Fashion and Style: 18th century Hats and Bonnets.**

Althea is a curator for the National Trust with responsibility for the care of the Charles Wade Paget Collection or what is sometimes called The Snowhill Collection housed at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire. Charles Paget championed the Arts and Crafts Movement and avidly collected 18th and 19th century costume of which there are some exquisite pieces in the collection. With limited space for display many of these pieces are rarely seen and

Althea will guide us through the wonderful range of hats and bonnets that reflect the 18th Century. Author of two delightful books *Hats and Bonnets* and *Shoes and Slippers* that are now collectors' items, Althea has recorded some of the collection's most beautiful pieces. Althea is also curator of the Hereford Museum textile collection.

**Leeds**

Wednesday 13 May - Sunday 17 May 2015

■ Leeds

A residential visit has been arranged to Leeds staying at the Met Hotel in Kings Street in the heart of the city. We hope to visit various textile and costume collections including the Marks and Spencer archive, the University of Leeds textile archive, the Discovery Centre, Armley Mills Museum and a guided walk around the centre of Leeds.

The price is expected to be in the region of £225 per person sharing, £320 for singles, which will include bed and breakfast at the Met and entry to the various visits. Not included is travel to and from Leeds, meals except breakfast and any buses in Leeds to get to the various venues, though most are within walking distance.

If you would like further information, please contact Sarah Bartlett either by email

sarah@tiramisu.co.uk or send a stamped addressed envelope to 4 Cotley Place, Heytesbury, Warminster, Wilts BA12 0HT.

*For your diary:*

**Janet Arnold Study Day: Practicality or a Flight of Fancy? - Beetles, Feathers and Furs.**

3 October 2015

■ Bath Cricket Club



**Waterloo**

STUDY DAY IN BATH

SATURDAY 9 MAY 2015

*WECS members save £10 on the Study Day!*



1811 Parisien Ball dress  
Belle Assemblée

To celebrate the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the Costume Society is holding the first of their Jubilee Year Study Days in Bath next year.

**The morning** will have **Uniformly Splendid: Dress and Death on the field of Waterloo.** Nigel Arch, former Director of Kensington Palace and a military dress historian, will be considering the Battle of Waterloo, fought on Sunday 18 June 1815, as the last great encounter between European armies wearing the superb uniforms of the eighteenth century.

Rosemary Harden, Manager of the Fashion Museum, will be discussing **A Brilliant Affair: Dress and Fashion at the Waterloo Ball**, looking at some of the dresses worn at the Duchess of Richmond's famous ball held in Brussels on 15 June 1815 just before the Battle of Waterloo. Two of these dresses are now in the collection at Bath.

**In the afternoon** there will be a 'dressing' of two of Bath's (WECS!) residents in outfits of the period from their linens out.

**To get you in the mood...**

You are invited (encouraged!) to come in costume - rest assured that you will not be alone! But you might need a bit of time to arrange an outfit. Some members have agreed to join in with advice and possible hands-on help. If you'd like to help (with or without professional charges), can provide advice or even an outfit, please contact Fiona Starkey: email [membership@costumesociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@costumesociety.org.uk) who is compiling a list of the willing and the wanting.

And if you really want to push the boat out - the Jane Austen dancers are holding their Waterloo ball in the Assembly Rooms, Bath on the same evening. [www.janeaustendancersbath.co.uk](http://www.janeaustendancersbath.co.uk) for details.

The cost of the day is £25.00 for Costume Society and WECS members, £35.00 for non members and £10.00 for students. A buffet lunch will be available. Full details and booking will be available shortly on the Costume Society website [www.costumesociety.org.uk](http://www.costumesociety.org.uk)

**Associated Societies**

**Costume Society UK**

[www.CostumeSociety.org.uk](http://www.CostumeSociety.org.uk) for more details and booking information

**Waterloo**

9 May 2015 ■ Bath (see item, left)

**Symposium: The Power of Gold**

3-5 July 2015 ■ London

**Southern Counties Costume Society**

[www.sccostumesociety.org.uk](http://www.sccostumesociety.org.uk) for more details and booking information

**Knitwear - Chanel to Westwood**

12 November 2014 ■ London

**Muskets and Muslin**

28 February 2015 ■ Winchester

**Alexander McQueen - Savage Beauty**

21 March 2015 ■ V&A, London

## Out & About

All items in 'Out and About' are published in good faith. WECS Wardrobe cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions. Please check details before making a special journey.



### Knitwear - Chanel to Westwood

until 18 January 2015

■ Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF 020 7407 8664 [www.ftmlondon.org](http://www.ftmlondon.org)  
Inspirational vintage fashion knitwear with highlights including a 1920s Chanel jersey, 1930s woollen swimwear, 1970s Bill Gibb and garments from 1980s and 90s designers Comme des Garçons, Vivienne Westwood and Julien MacDonald. An exciting combination of famous names and visually exciting pieces, the exhibition charts the influence of art movements Pop, Punk and Deconstruction alongside new knitwear technologies and design innovation. Adults £8.80, Concs £6.60, Students £5.50 Closed Mondays. See 'Granny's day out' article on page 16



### Fashion statements

until September 2015

■ Chertsey Museum, 33 Windsor Street, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 8AT [www.chertseymuseum.org.uk](http://www.chertseymuseum.org.uk) 01932 565764

A themed exhibition which draws on the rich resources of the Olive Matthews Collection with garments epitomising romantic, outrageous and classic style, described as a wonderfully diverse and inspiring range of pieces dating from the C18th to the late 1980s.

The Fashion Accessories gallery also features hats, shoes, fans bags, parasols, lace, shoe buckles and jewellery with items from C17th to the present day. Special item? Look for the beautiful linen cap from 1700-1720 which features exquisite blackwork embroidery.



Salmon pink stretch satin corset dress by Jean Paul Gaultier c1988. Photo: John Chase

### Drawing Museum Lace - an unexpected Look

until 7 February 2015

■ Salisbury Museum, The King's House, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN

[www.salisburymuseum.org.uk](http://www.salisburymuseum.org.uk) 01722 332151

Teresa Whitfield's highly detailed lace drawings occupy an unusual space between reality and fiction. Characterised by a close resemblance to real fabric, the work references a time before the industrial revolution when hand-made textiles were part of everyday domestic life for women.

Using white ink on paper, the painstaking drawing process she uses bears a striking resemblance to the process of using thread so that the drawings are more like a re-enactment of lace-making than simply a likeness of the object itself.

*Drawing Museum Lace* is the outcome of two years' research by Whitfield into the Downton Lace collection at The Salisbury Museum. The collection represents a once-thriving industry that has now all but vanished in the face of modern invention. The drawings will be displayed alongside the lace patterns that inspired them.



Modesty with Downton Idiot Lace (2014). Detail, ink on paper. Copyright Teresa Whitfield

### Othello's Island

20-22 March 2015

■ Nicosia, Cyprus [www.othelloisland.org](http://www.othelloisland.org)

A major interdisciplinary annual meeting of academics and members of the public interested in medieval Byzantine, Mediaeval and Renaissance history. Talks from experts in literature, architectural history, art history, social and linguistic history.



A 1745 cook: Germanisches Museum

### Occupational Dress

February 2015

■ The British Museum, London [www.medats.org](http://www.medats.org)  
The call is out for papers for this event. Contact Mediaeval Dress and Textile Society on their website.



■ V&A Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

### Shoes: Pleasure and Pain

13 June 2015 - 31 January 2016

This exhibition will look at the extremes of footwear from around the globe, presenting around 200 pairs of shoes ranging from a sandal decorated in pure gold leaf originating from ancient Egypt to the most elaborate designs by contemporary makers. It will consider the cultural significance and transformative capacity of shoes and will examine the latest developments in footwear technology creating the possibility of ever higher heels and dramatic shapes. Examples from famous shoe wearers and collectors will be shown alongside a dazzling range of historic shoes, many of which have not been displayed before.



Chopines, around 1600 ©V&A

### The Fabric of India

until 10 January 2016

The highlight of the V&A's India Season, this will be the first major exhibition to explore the dynamic and multifaceted world of handmade textiles from India from the 3rd to the 21st century. It will include a spectacular 18th-century tent belonging to Tipu Sultan, a stunning range of historic costume, highly prized textiles made for trade, and fashion by contemporary Indian designers such as Manish Arora and Rajesh Pratap Singh.

Over 200 objects will illustrate the skills, variety and adaptability of Indian textile makers and the enduring nature of techniques for dyeing, weaving and embroidery across India. Examples of textiles made for religious and courtly use will be shown alongside the finest pieces made for export to Europe, the Middle East and South-East Asia. The use of textiles and dress as a political tool of the Independence Movement and their relevance to Indian cultural identity will be explored, as will the impact of mass-production on handmade textiles.



### Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty

Spring 2015

"London's where I was brought up. It's where my heart is and where I get my inspiration." Alexander McQueen, Jan 2000

The first and largest retrospective of the late designer's work to be presented in Europe, the exhibition will showcase McQueen's visionary body of work. Spanning his 1992 MA graduate collection to his unfinished AAW 2010 collection.

The original version of *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2011 was organised by the Costume Institute and became one of the Museum's top 10 most visited exhibitions.

Swarovski partners the V&A bringing this exhibition to London. The crystal house and Alexander McQueen share a rich history, beginning in the 1990s when Isabella Blow introduced the young maverick designer to Nadja Swarovski. Swarovski went on to support McQueen's Spring/Summer 1999 collection, beginning the tradition of close collaboration between Swarovski and haute couture that remains to this day.

*Out and About continued on next page, first column*

continued from previous page

## Designing the 20th century: Life and work of Abram Games

until 4 January 2015

■ The Jewish Museum, Raymond Burton House, Albert Street, London NW1 7NB  
020 7284 7384

www.jewishmuseum.org.uk

Abram Games was one of the most important and influential figures of 20th century graphic design.

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth, this exhibition will explore his immigrant roots, his Jewish background and his enormous contribution to British design.



He started his career as a freelance artist, producing posters for clients such as London Transport, before becoming an official war poster artist during World War II, designing 100 posters.

His iconic posters for campaigns such as ATS recruitment and wartime safety used simple and often stark images and clear typography to convey strong messages, and to create images which remain powerful today.

His post-war career was hugely successful – designing posters and emblems for an array of important British institutions, commercial companies and charities including the BBC and the Olympic Games, and the logo for the Festival of Britain.

## The 1718 Silk patchwork coverlet

until 13 December 2014

■ Quilt Museum and Gallery, St Anthony's Hall, Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PW

www.quiltmuseum.org.uk

The oldest dated patchwork coverlet in Britain will be on exhibition for four months this autumn together with a meticulously reconstructed replica made by members of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles.



The 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet has survived almost 300 years and is an exceptional record of patchwork form the early 18th century consisting of 69 individual blocks constructed using mosaic patchwork. Silk would not have been readily available to all levels of society and the design motifs chosen would certainly have been influenced by the maker's surroundings and the social and historical context in which they lived.

A book entitled *The 1718 Coverlet* is being published by David & Charles to coincide with the Exhibition. Susan Briscoe deconstructs the coverlet and the 69 blocks giving techniques and templates allowing readers to replicate the Coverlet using the original mosaic piecing technique, as well as more accessible modern techniques.



■ Fashion Museum, Assembly Rooms, Bennett Street, Bath BA1 2QH

01225 477789

www.museumofcostume.co.uk

## A Life in Fashion Belville Sassoon Lorcan Mullany

until 1 January 2015

In 2011 British fashion designer David Sassoon donated his archive of hundreds of fashion drawings from the late 1950s to the 2000s to the Fashion Museum in Bath. This generous gift charts the history of the firm Bellville Sassoon Lorcan Mullany as one of London's top couturiers, and represents an unparalleled record of a life in fashion.

Three years later in 2014 this special display at the Fashion Museum celebrates both the gift of the archive to the museum, and the three extraordinary designers - Belinda Belville, David Sassoon, and Lorcan Mullany - who together have run this uniquely British fashion house for over fifty years. Twenty five choice evening dresses have been assembled by Mr Sassoon, each one lovingly kept across the years by Bellville Sassoon's loyal clientele, and now borrowed back especially for the display at the Fashion Museum in Bath.

"We specialise in a very British brand of grand chic", said Mr Sassoon, and the display will include the pink taffeta evening dress decorated with pleated frills worn by Lady Beatty at the Proust Edwardian Ball in 1971, as well as a steel blue satin embroidered dress from the late 1990s and a mocha silk embroidered dress, inspired by a Chinese shawl.

A centrepiece of the display in Bath will be three ensembles designed by Bellville Sassoon for Diana, Princess of Wales, including the cantaloupe melon silk 'going-away' outfit, that she wore as a young bride in July 1981



## The Georgians: Dress for polite society

until 1 January 2016

We thought it was nearly the last chance to see this lovely exhibition - but it's been extended for another year!

The Fashion Museum's special exhibition *Georgians*, celebrates the museum's situation in the Georgian Assembly Rooms in Bath.



exhibition extended

This fashion doll's mantua is yellow and silver woven brocaded silk from about 1760 and was used to carry the latest Paris fashions to the aristocrats of Europe. There are accounts of perfectly coiffured, fully dressed fashion dolls travelling as far as Constantinople and St Petersburg.

## Tulsi Christmas Bazaar A special selling exhibition

28 Nov - 2 Dec 10.00-16.30

■ Tulsi Travel, Weavers Cottage, 33 Sturford Lane, Temple, Corsley, Wilts BA12 7QR

01373 832856

www.tulsi.uk.com

Pie will be returning from India at the beginning of November with bags and boxes bursting with treasures from the East.

Superb cold weather clothes from Anokhi, bags scarves, shawls slippers - jewellery paintings textiles quilts. Come along for mince pies and mulled wine - bring your friends!

■ Harris Museum and Art Gallery

## Marian Clayden: A Dyer's Journey through art and fashion

until 29 November 2014

From dyeing fabrics for costumes and hangings for touring productions of the musical *Hair* in 1970 to producing an atelier collection of hand-dyed garments and accessories under her own label from 1981-2005, this exhibition showcases Preston-born Marian Clayden's unique and luxurious designs.

## Behind the scenes: the secret life of clothes

until 15 June 2015

See how the Harris' costume and textile collection is cared for in their exhibition in the fashion and textile gallery. This celebrates all the people who help - from local volunteers and students to researchers from far and wide.

The variety of treasures in the museum stores range from elegant ball gowns to funky platform shoes.

Check out the *what's on* page for details of workshops, talks and tours to complement the exhibition or download the *Behind the Scenes* leaflet.





## Imagine: Lace at Waddesdon

■ Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP18 0JH

Report by Helen Montague-Smith

**Red steps became a necklace; an aviary a birdcage; a birdcage a stole; a vase a tiara....these amazing transformations were achieved by Lace 21, a group of contemporary lace makers and tatters who were inspired by the home of the Rothschild family. They gathered ideas for their new lace work from the building itself, as well as the contents - not just from textiles but also porcelain, automata, panelling and even the facade of the aviary. The group's creations are displayed, where possible, next to the items which inspired them. We were given a special guided tour by Rachel Boak, Senior Curator, and WECS member. Many people went back for a second look later!**

All the pieces displayed fantastic workmanship using a wide range of threads, techniques and colours. The viewer was drawn to look more closely at both the original object and its new form. Rachel explained how she had displayed the items and was able to point out details to us which would have been difficult to see, with low light levels, as normal visitors.

Highlighting just a few of these displays will be difficult but I particularly liked the 'Skyline' of the Manor, a reversed silhouette worked in white bobbin lace on a black ground. The delightful 'Elephant on a Casket' also caught the eye. It was made in silk to show off a variety of decorative lacework, based, of course, on the magnificent elephant automaton in the East Gallery. The little black dress was transformed by the exquisite wired bobbin lace leaves which swirled around it. The beautiful little bird escaping from its cage in the conservatory was not only a link to the Rothschild Mynah birds, which had been released into the wild but also the trapped feeling which some of the women of the late 19th century must have felt about their lives in a gilded cage.

Also well displayed in a showcase was the unfinished work 'In Progress', as a length of metal lace is being created on a pillow. This was inspired by a baby cap, worked in coloured silks and silver thread and embellished with silver bobbin lace collected by Baroness Edmond de Rothschild.

Many members of the Ring of Tatters had contributed medallions, inspired by the button collections on display nearby, which had been assembled to form a band of decoration on an evening dress and stole.

### Work in progress

Our afternoon visit, again led by Rachel, took us behind the scenes into the extensive stores on the second floor of the Manor. The Baroness was an inveterate collector of costume, accessories, French and Middle Eastern fabrics and any decorative 'bits' that caught her eye! We were able to examine in detail several 18th century costumes laid out and explained by Rachel. She told us that her collection contains about 4,000 items which she is in the process of documenting, photographing and storing archivally. This is in addition to all the family textiles on display in the house! Her carpet store was amazing and included two more carpets from the Louvre, made for Louis XIV and never used as he moved to Versailles! The Apollo carpet is in use downstairs in the house!!

Rachel had also created a fantastic display, specially for us, from the Rothschild collections, which included wonderful lace, small bags and purses, fans and even a pair of Russian boots. She particularly pointed out the small square pincushion made by, or for, Dorothy de Rothschild which the latter used to keep her badges safe. Most notable was a parasol cover of incredibly fine *point de gaze* needle lace, 1850-1875 from Brussels - it had never been used hence its pristine condition.

### And finally

The rest of the house and grounds were then available for members to explore. The temporary exhibition in the Stables was well worth a visit, entitled *Predators and Prey*: a Roman Mosaic from Lod, Israel is an almost complete mosaic discovered during road works near Tel Aviv, in 1996 and over 1,700 years old. It depicts animals and fish in a very realistic manner and shows just how skilled these 'early' craftsman were. See the website [www.waddesdon.org.uk/collection/exhibitions/mosaic](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk/collection/exhibitions/mosaic) if you have missed the exhibition.

Helen Montague-Smith

(former museum curator and very envious of all the storage facilities in Waddesdon!)



*Above:* a link to the Rothschild Mynah birds escaping the cage, behind the scenes in the stores  
*Photos:* Helen Montague Smith and Vibeke Ormerod

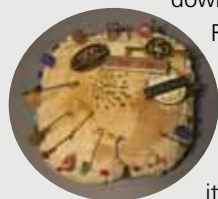
*Top:* Nicole Valsesia-Lair, Skyline, 2014; 1500 x 375mm © Nicole Valsesia-Lair. Photo: Mike Fear  
*Far left:* Pin cushion, 1920s-1980s; England; cotton, silk, glass, brass and other metal; 96 x

50mm; Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust); acc. 5.2000.

*Above:* Isis Lacemakers, Elephant on a Casket of Summer Lace Flowers, 2014; 320 x 355 x 253mm. © Isis Lacemakers. Photo: Mike Fear

*Below:* Hubert Martinet, Musical Automaton, 1768-1772; chased bronze, with gilt-bronze, patinated bronze, and polychrome oil paint, ornamented with white, red, green, blue and yellow paste, mother of pearl and glass covers, carved oak base. Bequest of James de Rothschild, 1957; acc. 2202. Photo: Andrew Peppard

All these images are © The National Trust Waddesdon



## WECS Reports



### John Boyd Horsehair factory visit

21 May 2014

■ Castle Cary

Report by Tony Cooper

It was a perfect opportunity to show off one's summer wardrobe - a glorious, sunny, late spring morning in Castle Cary when all the "just in case" clothing could be left in the car.

The meeting point on the factory site was a fair way from the gates, taking us past buildings of various dates and sizes - a display of what the architects are pleased to call "organic" development. The nearby bucolic peace was now broken by the muffled rhythmic sound of looms inside.

Anna was there to greet us and offered each of us a polythene bag of what looked like Edinburgh rock. "Take two" she urged. These proved to be earplugs for our subsequent visit to the loom house.

Horsehair weaving was already an established cottage industry in Castle Cary when John Boyd, a travelling textile merchant from Scotland, came to the town. He, too, began weaving at home, gradually expanding before moving to a purpose-built factory in 1851.

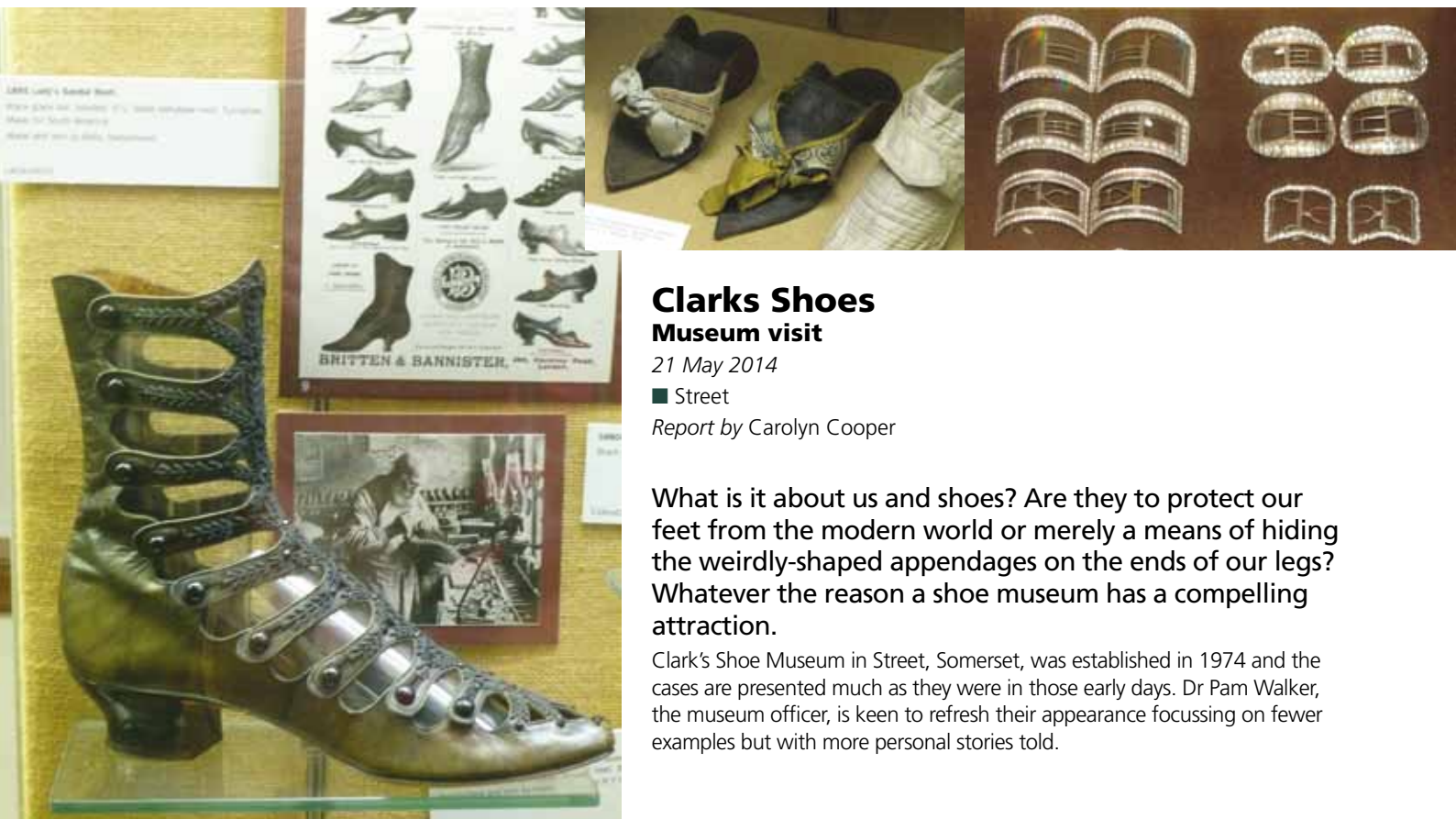
The site itself was quite a complex; in addition to John Boyd's factory there was a rope walk and one of the several linen and flour mills along the valley.

After the mandatory health and safety briefing we were split into two groups and went our separate ways. Our group started

at the warp winding room where cotton, silk or linen yarn is taken from cones, through a tension device and wound onto a large drum. This is done in sections of forty or eighty threads across the drum until the desired width (about 2,000 threads) is achieved at a standard length of 50m. We had to forget our notions of broadcloth; the width was governed by the length of a horse's tail hair - much more on the scale of domestic weaving. (I had to mention my Huguenot silk weaving ancestry of course.) The threads are then transferred to a warp beam, which is later placed at the back of the loom.

The cotton warp used is an unusual 3-ply Egyptian cotton thread dyed in Huddersfield according to Boyd's colour requirements - Boyd's blue, Boyd's yellow and so on.

Next we were shown a room where horsehair was prepared. It arrives - cleaned - in bundles of white and black and has to be combed through a vicious-looking hackle of



### Clarks Shoes Museum visit

21 May 2014

■ Street

Report by Carolyn Cooper

What is it about us and shoes? Are they to protect our feet from the modern world or merely a means of hiding the weirdly-shaped appendages on the ends of our legs? Whatever the reason a shoe museum has a compelling attraction.

Clark's Shoe Museum in Street, Somerset, was established in 1974 and the cases are presented much as they were in those early days. Dr Pam Walker, the museum officer, is keen to refresh their appearance focussing on fewer examples but with more personal stories told.





vertical spikes.

Seeing the white hair conjured up an image of the beautiful wild horses of the Camargue thundering through the surf with stubby little tails but it turns out that the hair comes from Mongolia and the far east. It is important that the hair comes from live animals; hair from dead horses is too brittle to weave.

In its natural state the colour of the hair changes along its length. Although reasonably black at the root end the effect of ammonia from urine has a bleaching effect causing it to fade to a brownish-grey at the other. As a result black hair is dyed black to achieve an even colour. White hair goes from whitish to rather yellowish and is used for dyeing in other colours.

We were then taken to the dyeing house where the horse hair itself is dyed. Mention was made of the gentleman who cooks up secret recipes of the raw blue, red and yellow dyes and I imagined the room hot

and thick with steam and the alchemist, white bearded and wild-eyed, stirring a cauldron. But on the day the room was cool and airy.

The hair is first scoured to remove any remaining grease and to improve its dyeing quality. Batches of 50 to a 100 kilos are dyed at a time, the tails being hung in the steam-heated liquor, which is circulated around the hair for up to a week. At the end of this almost all the dye has been taken up by the hair and the liquor is virtually clear. This means that very little expensive dye is wasted and the used liquor can go down the drain. And, as any good coiffeuse would

recommend, the hair is conditioned to make it easier to hackle again.

Now was the time for the earplugs as we were taken into the three-story building smelling strongly of machine oil where about twenty of the thirty looms were busy working and making the floors vibrate.

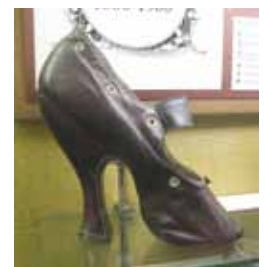
When it was a cottage industry a weaver would stand at a loom all day being passed

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*Left to right: Higher flax mills, guide for the site Anna, an original horsehair weaving loom, natural white horsehair hackle, dyed tails on the factory steps and the loading doors above the entrance.*



*Left to right: 1895 Lady's sandal boot, C18th Clogs and overshoes, C18th buckles, pre war Adonis poster, early C20th decorated heels, the Tor brand cabinet and early C19th fetish heels. Inset: 1922 silk brocade ankle strap shoe, lent by Bally*



Each case represents a historical period from Roman sandals, found at nearby Langport, up to the sandals we all wore as children in the 1950s and beyond.

There were just so many shoes that the beautiful and the odd stand out; slippers covered in mother of pearl worn in Turkish baths, 'concealed shoes' from the roof spaces of Georgian houses, a snow boot made from thick felt, a late Victorian 'sandal' boot with more holes than leather, wooden soled shoes from the 1940's and what can only be described as a sculpture by Tracy Emin of a pair of fabric legs ending in dainty button-bar slippers.

Other manufacturers such as Bally have donated shoes but the final gallery

concentrates on examples by Clarks themselves. There is also a replica interior of a



shoemaker's cottage and a room charting the history of Clarks, who began by making slippers from sheepskin offcuts and progressed to employing 1400 people in 1902, through the big factory of the 1930s to today's incarnation whose products are made in Vietnam.

The C18 'clogs' or 'overshoes' attracted much attention and discussion. Strictly

speaking these were more 'undershoes'; made of leather and probably wood, it appeared that one would slip one's delicate matching indoor shoes into them and be ready to promenade along paved streets.

Bling was in plentiful supply in the form of beautiful C18 shoe buckles and 1920s decorative heels.

If we thought that fetish objects were a modern phenomenon we were disabused of that by a Victorian exhibit with a precipitously high heel and a most un-foot-friendly vamp. The mind boggled at when and where one would expect to wear such an item (and for how long!).

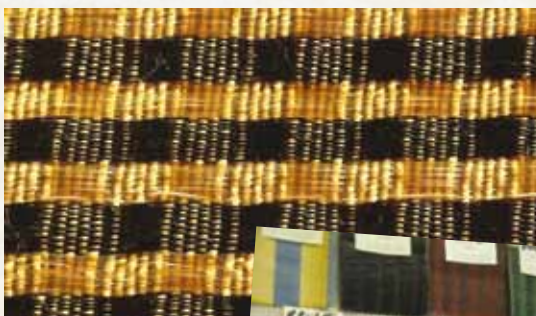
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individual hairs picked from the horse tail by a child. Complex textures and patterns also required a child – a draw boy - to pull strings in concert with the weaver.

The Education Act of 1870, ensuring that all children went to school, put a stop to this practice and led to the development of the automated looms patented by John Boyd. These include a mechanical picker, which is able to tease a single hair from a tail.

The thickness of a hair on a horse's tail tapers from fattest at the root to thinnest at the tip. This means that if a fabric was woven with all the hairs going in the same direction it would have an uneven density. To even things out each loom has two tails – one with the thick ends offered to the picker and the other the thin ends. The picker alternately takes a hair from each. The tails are kept in a water trough to keep them flexible and elastic. The dexterity of the picker was hypnotic to watch but not 100% successful; sometimes it would miss a hair. I was told that the machine could detect this but I was dragged away before I could work out the actual mechanism.

Many of the looms in use were said to be dobby looms on which patterned fabrics were being woven. The looms included a chain of wooden bars with pegs in to control the sets of warp threads to be lifted as each hair is drawn into place. For the etymology geeks amongst you, "dobby" is a corruption



Horsehair close up of the weave, annotated fabric samples and the WECS serum!

of "draw boy" (and nothing to do with Harry Potter).

Each loom can turn out between two and three metres of fabric a day, meaning that a full 50m length takes about a month.

Once the fabric is removed from the loom it is taken to the top floor to be finished. The ragged edges are trimmed and it is ready to be pressed. Rectangular boards are preheated in an oven and the fabric is wrapped – concertina fashion – between a stack of boards. The sandwich is then put into what looks like a cider press and left for a day or so until it is smooth and has a subtle shine. It is then ready for dispatch.

So what happens to it and what's it used for? Well it is extremely durable, stain-resistant and meets modern fire regulations but at about £5,000 a roll you probably won't find it on the shelves at John Lewis.

About 70% goes overseas, much of it to the USA, the Middle East and Far East. Closer to home, though, the dining chairs at the Bath Pump Rooms are upholstered in John Boyd horsehair fabric, the Locanda Locatelli restaurant in London is not alone in using it on the walls, Vivian Westwood has used it on handbags and Manolo Blahnik on shoes. It also has remarkable acoustic properties and has been used for loudspeaker cabinets.

At the end of our tour, Anna produced a box of samples and many of us went into January sales mode – elbows out and grabbing what we could. And clutching our spoils we bade farewell to one of the last horsehair weavers in the world.



Left: Storage box from the library, Party dress from the stores, with shoes ordered to match - either made with the same fabric as in this case, or on occasion dyed specially. Right: 1941 Two tone court shoes, with display case showing component parts.



Many of the shoes displayed could grace the catwalks and high streets today but, from the 'oohs' and 'aahs' I heard around me, the 1920's cabinet of beautifully designed, fine leather shoes was a clear favourite.

Returning past examples of those X ray machines which gave glimpses of your internal workings (I wonder if they 'did' things to your feet?), we walked to the Grange, the home of Clark's Archive, where the archivist – Charlotte Berry – had laid out one or two items of interest and explained the origins of the archive.

The Clarks family were Quakers who then, as now, looked after their workforce and the town where they lived.

Alice Clark, the first finance Director was a supporter of the Suffragette movement

and built an open air swimming pool for the female workers, which was being used by the people of Street on the day of our visit.

On the table in the reading room was a child's bridesmaid/party outfit from the first half of the C20 consisting of an apple green short velvet dress with matching satin shoes, a fabric blossom hair circlet and long white lace mittens. Alongside this was a shoe catalogue of similar vintage showing said satin shoes, which could be dyed to match any outfit.

Charlotte showed us the library where she had opened a box of Desert Boots, which

stirred memories for your WECS Chairman of his teenage years, and examples of 'Chuplees' or Indian sandals which Clarks had reproduced.

There was also a book of superb water colour plates showing shoe designs; forget the real things, this was a delight for the eye.

We were then taken to the strong rooms, a newly-built facility, partly underground, which is a high tech space with rolling shelf units, containing examples of advertising material and some items of Quaker costume not yet conserved; a good reason for a future visit when it isn't all about the shoes.

# Janet Arnold Study Day

4 October 2014

## Second Time Around

□ BRLSI, Bath



### A La Pompadour: The History and Evolution of an Image

Speaker Anthea Jarvis

Report by Jill Hazell



Anthea began her talk with the beautiful image of Madame de Pompadour painted by Francois Boucher in 1759. Her proposal was that the extraordinary elegance, prettiness and grace of this image became, consciously and unconsciously, an ideal of feminine beauty that lasted through the 19th century with elements surviving until the 21st century.

*Above:* Francois Boucher's original portrait of Madame de Pompadour. Norma Shearer in the 1938 film of Marie Antoinette (from *Hollywood Costume* edited by Deborah Nadoolman Landis).  
*Inset:* Costume of the Duchess of St Albans, Buckingham Palace Ball, 1845. Illustrated London News 1836-7

There is a universal tendency, she told us, to romanticise the past and think its fashions, customs and way of life (carefully edited) to be preferable to those of the present day. However, she warned, it is not easy actually to re-create the past in the eyes of the present. To prove her point, she put up a beautiful image of Norma Shearer dressed as Marie Antoinette which remains entirely a product of 1930s Hollywood (with 1930s makeup included).



However, accuracy has never stopped the rich dressing up in past fashions to try to re-create a particular style. During the mid 18th century, people of taste and fashion loved to dress for masquerades in costumes taken from the 17th century portraits by Van Dyke. By the end of the 18th century until the 1840s, the most popular modes of dress for masquerades and fancy dress balls were oriental (using costumes brought back by travellers); peasant costumes from Europe, or most popular of all, characters from novels and poems, and royalty such as Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth 1 and the Earl of Leicester.



#### Costume Balls

But by the late 1830s, there was a new and more serious approach to fancy dress. Queen Victoria's aunt, Queen Louise of the Belgians had held costume balls in Brussels in 1836 and 37 and had dressed as Queens of France from the 15th and 16th centuries. Queen Victoria wished to join the fashion and held her first costume ball in 1842. Guests were requested to wear strictly accurate historical costumes of any period or country but although the ball was a great success there was criticism that there had been too great a mixture of dates and styles of costumes worn. So when the next costume ball was planned in 1845, guests were asked to wear costumes from 1745 – a century earlier. This was the first occasion when 18th century fashions featured significantly in fancy dress and it stimulated much research into how the costumes should be accurately recreated. Evidence that some guests may have re-used the beautiful brocaded silk dresses of their ancestors can be seen in museums today as so many survive that have been altered, mainly by re-arranging the pleating

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of the skirt and adding darts and boning to the bodice.

Further costume balls were held after the success of the royal ones. In one at the French Embassy in London in 1854, guests dressed as named characters for the first time including several as from the 'Court of Louis XV'. No one actually dared say they were impersonating Madame de Pompadour as her position as the King's mistress made her very much a non-person.

However, in 1869, a correspondent in The Queen wrote: *Then those Pompadour dresses... their variety is endless... Bright-coloured petticoats most people wear, but I have seen a pretty print look well; over the petticoat a bright chintz very much bunched up, or a figured silk, the body made square and open in front, the hair powdered, and generally arranged much as the fancy of the wearer dictates.*

By this time the 18th century is being viewed at several removes from the original fashions and costumes are based on china figurines and other sources which were themselves re-interpretations.

In 1895, the Countess of Warwick gave a lavish ball at Warwick castle, stipulating that all her guests wear costumes from the courts of Louis XV and XVI and it was in a report about it that Anthea found the first mention of one of the guests actually impersonating the Marquise de Pompadour. (Presumably as the hostess and several of the guests were known or rumoured to have had affairs with the Prince of Wales, La Pompadour's career would no longer have been seen as all that shocking!).

### Changing times

In the decade leading up to WW1, there were many fundraising fancy dress balls held to support hospitals and other welfare charities including at least two held at the Royal Albert Hall. But after the war, although fancy dress was as popular as before, people no longer wanted to reverently re-create the past – they were more inclined to mock and parody it.

In the second half of the 20th century dressing up on a lavish scale went completely out of fashion although elements of La Pompadour's exquisite outfits have survived in skirts and overskirts, hoop petticoats and frills and flounces. There was a brief revival in the 1980s when brides copied Princess Diana's 'fairy tale' wedding dress and even today, pantomime Cinderellas, Disney princesses and Gypsy wedding dresses try to re-create the Pompadour look with yards of polyester satin, crystal nylon and millions of Swarovski crystals.

Anthea concluded her talk with another look at the original image of the Marquise de Pompadour saying that it's difficult to imagine that it will not, in some form, continue to appeal to and inspire wearers and designers of fashion in the future.

A fascinating talk.



Top left: Fancy Dress Ball at Marlborough House given by the Prince and Princess of Wales, 1874. Illustrated London News

Above: Fashion plate of 18th century woman plus French guardsman: Le Follet, 1831\*.

Left: Countess of Warwick as Marie Antoinette at her Bal Poudré, 1895. The Queen,

Below: Fashion plate\* 18th century lady with children: Travestissements, Petit

Courrier des Dames, 1858.

\*Image credit: Gallery of Costume, Manchester Art Galleries.



## Passion for Fashion

Collecting and investing in Vintage

Speaker Kerry Taylor

Report by Vibeke Ormerod

**Kerry Taylor gave us a wonderfully inspiring talk about her life of collecting and selling vintage. Her enthusiasm and knowledge combined with a structured, yet easy and clear delivery, made sure we had a most interesting talk. She came creatively attired in a Hermes scarf refashioned into a shirt.**

Kerry is a specialist in antique vintage fashion and textiles. Her business *Kerry Taylor Auctions* was set up in 2003 but she has collected for 35 years, having worked at Sotheby's for 24 years before starting the auction rooms.

So imagine her at the reception at Sotheby's as a young 19 year old taking in a ravishing French beaded dress, late 1920s! Such a sight! That and growing up with black and white films and seeing Margaret Layton's bodice at the V&A as a child and the portrait of Layton wearing the same (ca. 1620) inspired Kerry to pursue her interest in fashion. The history of a garment, its wearer, its beauty and the cut are aesthetic and emotive values that make us interested in fashion.

How does Kerry get hold of these wonderful pieces, **who sells** them? Anywhere from council houses to castles, she said and told us that she was contacted by the gardener of an elderly lady who had just passed away. He explained that he had started to throw her belongings in the skip, but when he came across some dresses, he had been advised to contact Kerry. What she found was a beautiful ball gown from the late 1950s made by Owen Hyde Clark from the House of Worth. That dress is now in the V&A as part of the *Golden Age of Haute Couture* exhibition.

From a castle came a Schiaparelli dress, 1936, a fine black velvet ball gown, a

My interest is most often to do with fashion 200 years or older but Kerry had me hooked and when I spotted her book: *Vintage Fashion and Couture* at T K Maxx at half price, I snapped it up.  
<http://www.waterstones.com/waterstonesweb/products/kerry+taylor/vintage+age+fashion+26+couture/9829541>



skin tight dress with plastic zips at the side and wrists. A dress with attitude like its owner.

Further dresses were a very rare Chanel, a printed lace cocktail dress, 1928. The lady owner needed a new bathroom, and as the dress sold for £20,000, Kerry said she could splash out on gold taps! A student working at a recycling centre arrived with a dress that sold for £2,600.

As to **who would buy** vintage or couture fashion, Kerry related that her clients ranged from private individuals looking for something exceptional to wear, to collectors, fashion designers, museums and galleries. Several Fashion Houses also buy back their dresses. Some private collectors have specific wishes and might just like one designer or one colour. There can also be an emotional reason for buying, the dresses that once belonged to Princess Diana being a case in point.

When dealing with such rare and expensive items, provenance is of the utmost importance. Kerry said that she tends not to buy from her own auctions as she does not want to compete with her clients. She only buys a few wearables and occasionally wears vintage but cautioned us not to come undone like herself at a valuation, where the seams of a vintage dress she wore went one by one, the dress was literally falling apart! One thing she did admit to collecting is sailors' embroideries.

**What to buy/collect** is the question. To help those who might be interested in collecting vintage, Kerry gave a few tips and told us what was up and down in vintage fashion at the moment. Any garment from 1900 to WWII makes very little money at the auction and would be affordable to start a collection. An example was an Edwardian gown, which sold for £150.00. The utility fashion of the 1940s is also relatively cheap to buy and it is nice to wear and well made. At the other end of the scale is Lanvin, whose gowns are in vogue at the moment, typically *robe de style* like this one, right.

**The market** has moved up a lot in recent years. A Montana silk dress which sold for £2,000 previously fetched £27,000 in 2011 and a Vionnet gown from 1921 sold in 2007 for £6,500. Yet another Vionnet from 1925 sold in 2012 for £50,000.



From the sublime to the affordable. Above: Important Pierre Balmain ball gown and matching evening coat, Autumn/winter 1955 sold in December 2001 for £27,000

Left: A rare Jeanne Lanvin evening gown with side panniers 1945 sold April 2012 for £6,000 and a group of Edwardian summer gowns sold in October 2011 for £150.

The front cover of *Wardrobe* shows Alexander McQueen Plato's Atlantis collection snakeskin printed organza dress, Spring-Summer, 2010 - sold in June 2012 for £11,000  
Photos: Kerry Taylor Auctions

Purchasing dresses for speculation seems therefore straightforward, but the time has to be right. Some Galliano designs do not fetch nearly as much as previously. There is also a big difference in prices between for example Dior Paris and Dior London, New York.

One very exciting auction item has been Schiaparelli's Zodiac jacket, 1938-9. It was sold last year for £111,000.

**How would Kerry describe vintage?** It is to do with design, aesthetics, age and often ground breaking design that defines an era. YSL from the 1960s is highly collectable as are men's garments from that time because of their rarity. Vivienne Westwood, Biba, Zandra Rhodes, Valentino, Thierry Mugler and Alexander McQueen to mention a few are all very desirable. Some of these garments are works of art. So if you have one in the wardrobe that you don't use or want, get in touch with Kerry Taylor!



## Conquering Fashions

How fashion met the challenge of war

Speaker Dr Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas

Report by Caroline Levett



The third talk of the day was **Conquering Fashions – How Fashion met the Challenge of War** given by Dr Natascha Radclyffe-Thomas, Course Leader for BA Fashion Marketing for the London College of Fashion. She clearly relished an opportunity to share with us her passion for history, not currently popular in Fashion Education.

Her interest in *Make do and Mend* was sparked by a chance find in a Greenwich junk shop: a folder of instructions for fashioning silk underwear without coupons from your parachute and hints by Mrs Sew and Sew on how to make your corsets wear longer, and 'keep your children tidy underneath'.

The Government campaigns of which Mrs Sew and Sew was a part were aimed at keeping up appearances to boost morale, when modest wardrobes

had to be maintained with minimal, rationed, materials. Factories that used to produce clothes were diverted to war production.

The late 30s sleek hour glass figure of luxury and glamour gave way to austere, boxy, military styles, practical for the working woman. Women were exhorted to wear their clothes 'to the last gasp', impervious to the lure of fashion – with four year wardrobe plans, and advice to eliminate flabby flesh so as not to waste rubber and steel on corsets.

Leaflets, classes, and advice centres taught the practical skills: how to launder, darn and repair clothes. By 1940 *Vogue* pointed out that only brides and babies had new wardrobes. With men absent, their pyjamas could be girl's dresses – their suits boys' coats. Net curtains and baby blankets became

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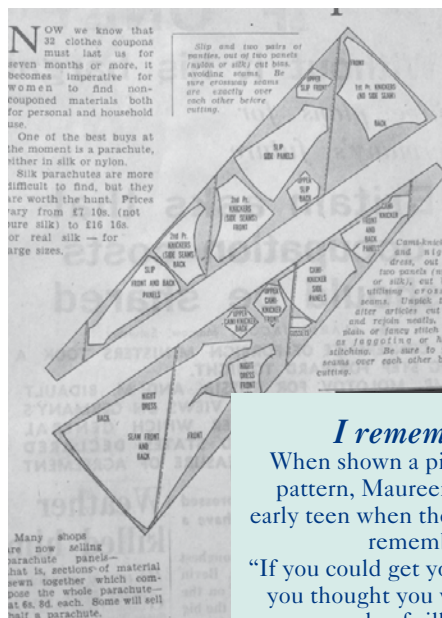
scarves and shawls. Knitting groups in palaces and homes provided stockings and gloves for troops. When wool was rationed from 1942, stripes became popular, and old socks and balls of string were incorporated in more or less stylish accessories. As the war drew to a close and troops returned, there was advice on making dresses from saris, belts from Arab headdresses, and a recommendation to greet your returning husband wearing his clothes, recycled.



The fashion magazines, constrained by war-time printing regulations, carried the message – with some stylish images. Making women feel good was critical to the war effort. Elizabeth Arden proclaimed that 'beauty was your duty'. Eye make up was not felt appropriate with uniform – but the right shade of lipstick certainly was. With cosmetics virtually unavailable, resourcefulness was the key: vinegar could be used for washing hands; flour and water to shape eyebrows; sugar water made a setting lotion and pipe cleaners could be used as curlers. One magazine even suggested that sand mixed with water could be a substitute for nylon stockings.



Recent television programmes such as the 40's House and the War Time Farm hint at the difficulties that people faced. Exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum and elsewhere help to make us aware of the extraordinary government managed machine aimed at helping people to cope – to Make Do and Mend.



From the top: a baby blanket made into jigger coat (Janet Arnold of Kent Costume Society was the baby); Mrs Sew & Sew Board of Trade leaflets; advice for making lingerie from silk parachute panels Right: Victorian shawls dyed and made into dressing gowns  
Photos: Dr Natascha Radclyffe Thomas

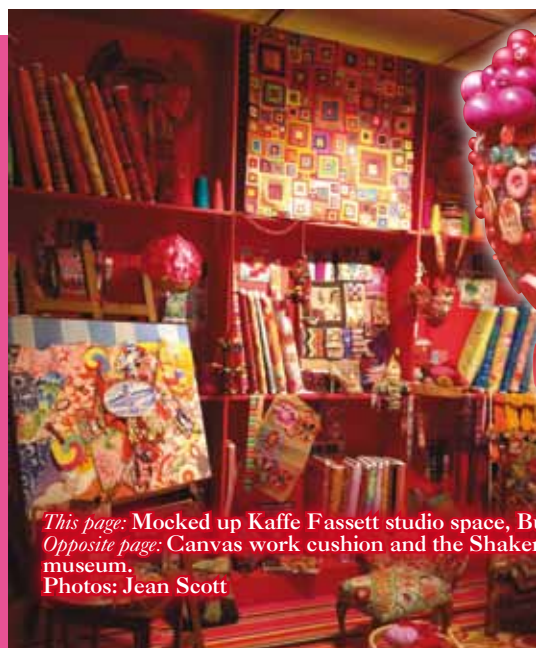
***I remember those!!!***

When shown a picture of the parachute pattern, Maureen Starkey, who was an early teen when the war ended, said: "Yes I remember these!!!"

"If you could get your hands on a parachute you thought you were in heaven as they were made of silk which was in no way available ... but it was wonderful for making blouses and to have silk underwear was the really posh thing to have and everyone envied you... We had to manage with the patterns from pre-war. Paper (patterns) of any sort were like gold dust. When we cleared out my mother's house I found, folded neatly, a real treasure in the guise of paper patterns for dresses, slips, knickers blouses etc. All had been kept as you may be glad of them one day!!! Who knows when a bit of parachute might come your way.

Magazines like the *Peoples Friend*, *My Weekly* etc were always full of how to make do and mend and they usually had diagrams of patterns which you could copy and enlarge. Naturally cloth and clothing of any sort was rationed. If you were getting married you were allowed an extra number of coupons towards setting up a home - for sheets, blankets towels etc. and it was then that every bride was willing to pay through the nose for a bit of a parachute to make a wedding dress, underwear and a posh nightdress. They were really very inventive and nobody would have guessed they were from a parachute. This was where the black market came into its own. Where these wide boys got the stuff from nobody knew, but it was graciously received.

No one asked and nobody told because after all "Careless talk cost lives!"



This page: Mocked up Kaffe Fassett studio space, Button hat  
Opposite page: Canvas work cushion and the Shaker room in the main museum.  
Photos: Jean Scott



**American Museum WECS Visit**

24 August 2014 ■ The American Museum, Bath  
Report by: Jean Scott

A select little group of sixteen WECS members entered the Colourful World of Kaffe Fassett on the 24th August at the American Museum in Bath, and it certainly was a colourful world. Fiona Starkey's review of the exhibition in WECS Wardrobe Spring 2014 didn't really prepare you for the experience and although the decorated tree outside the exhibition hall had lost some of its brilliant colour, the decorated lampposts were still remarkably fresh. Inside, the exhibition celebrated the 50 years of Kaffe Fassett's association with the museum and we recognised many of his knitting and patchwork designs as well as the later canvas work panels and cushions. The 'Button Hats' were however, quite a

## Historical Re-Fashioning and its application to the craft of contemporary dressmaking

Speaker Matilda Aspinnall

Report by Liz Coatsworth



The last speaker of the day was Matilda Aspinnall. A busy mother of teenagers, and co-owner of Sean O'Flynn Bespoke Shirtmakers, juggling these jobs with research for her doctoral thesis for the Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Graduate School. She is half way through her course and gave us details of the garments she intends to remodel for her two case studies.

Matilda told us about much of her research investigating historical re-fashioning skills in order to re-interpret past techniques for use in contemporary clothing design and construction.

Matilda showed us her study of Mrs Guiney's gown. Officially known in The Museum of London as "Queen Charlotte's dress", the gown is now in its third incarnation having been re-designed in a princess line circa 1880. It was originally constructed in the 1780s for Queen Charlotte but given to Nancy Pawsey as a gift for embroidering bed hangings for Queen Charlotte's new bed at Windsor Castle.

She showed how the 18th century bodice, made from silk brocade lined with linen had been remodelled. The outer silk brocade had been removed but some of the robing with the decorative fly fringing remained in place. Then in the 1840s Nancy's daughter-in-law adapted the bodice again. The original fabric was robust, thick, very expensive silk from Spitalfields and made to last... which it obviously did! The most interesting discovery was the reuse of the 18th century bodice on the sleeves on the 1880s dress. Matilda decided to use this idea in her case study. *"By analysing this garment and its saved remnants I was inspired to design and create a garment that like its historic sister, the design of the second garment was preconceived and embedded, in the first garment. My idea was to create a garment that through a process of unpicking and refashioning could be transformed into another style."*

Matilda has chosen to work with a thick, silk satin crêpe de chine, the pattern is a digitally printed silk and cotton. Through the use of collage, photographic images and digital software she has created an alternative decorative pattern with an organic, naturalistic print. The drawings for her re-modelled gown were interesting - if only she had had time to complete more of the sewing to show us the actual garments.

Her second case study was centred around a late 19th century redingote found in the stores of the Galliera in Paris. A beautiful garment in very poor condition, the lining is shot and brittle but due to its condition one is able to see how it has been re-fashioned. The coat has been adapted altering the back to create two shaping seams either side of the centre back and shaping in the waist. The



Matilda's modern refashioning of the same garment.  
Photos: Matilda Aspinnall

Matilda Aspinnall is a third year PhD candidate at Chelsea School of Art and Design. The title of her practice led, doctoral research is Historical Re-Fashioning and its Application to the Craft of Contemporary Dressmaking. She completed her master's degree in fashion curation at London College of Fashion and studied for a BA in fine art at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her work focuses on the historical skill of re-fashioning and how it was utilised for both cultural and economic reasons to lengthen the life of a garment. She is a senior partner at Sean O'Flynn Shirt-makers, where she designs and oversees the construction of the ladies' bespoke shirts.

back has been lowered; pleated darts have been added on either side of the shoulders to accommodate a bust, this man's coat has been adapted for a feminine shape.

Matilda had difficulty in finding a similar suitable contemporary garment to remake herself. She found an officer's redundant formal military jacket which she showed us; also her working drawings to transform it to fit a feminine shape. She is experimenting with the idea of laser cutting another fabric and appliquéing it onto the jacket fabric or possibly drawing into the wool with a soldering iron. The laser cut design will be resonant of the 18th century embroidery.

It was so interesting to hear about the use of modern technology to aid the re-fashioning of clothing. A far cry from the bands of gingham that my mother used to lengthen my summer dresses!



surprise. The 'mock shop', which greeted you at the end of the astonishing 'Kaffe patchwork design' floor-covering left you with the distinct feeling you would not be leaving without buying something. His creative use of colour leaves you quite breathless but also with a warm and joyous feeling and you wonder why we insist on so much black and neutral colour in our contemporary day-to-day dress.

The group then had a conducted tour of the main museum where we spent some time among the fabulous collection of American quilts learning about the techniques and symbolic patterns. We then followed the trail through the various rooms laid out with furniture and textiles of periods in American history. Our excellent guides added much to the experience and if you have not visited the museum recently you will find the presentation and interactive information stations very useful.

As if the temptation to buy in the exhibition and museum shops was not enough there was a Textile Fair in the stables in the grounds. The stalls were mainly embroidery suppliers and craftspeople and a number of WECS members found them particularly useful for either purchases or information.

Our thanks go to Helen Haydon of the museum for organising the day and the catering staff who provided us with coffee and American cookies.

## The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier

### From the sidewalk to the catwalk

9 April - 25 August 2014

■ The Barbican London

Review by: Jean Scott

John Paul Gaultier, who is now after 38 years bowing out of creating ready to wear fashion presented his final prêt-à-porter show in Paris in September this year. Gaultier became known as the 'enfant terrible' because of his irreverent take on fashion and he broke taboos with his provocative, innovative, and sexy clothes. When this collection hits the stores in the spring they will be collectors items. He has already made fashion history and will probably continue to do so but from now on he will just be designing for the two haute couture shows a year, with prices in the tens of thousands of dollars for one made-to-measure garment.



'Garbage dress', 'tea ball', 'scouring pad' and 'tin can' jewellery; 'ashtray bag'. High tech collection, Women's prêt-à-porter autumn winter 1980-81  
Photos: Jean Scott

This is the first exhibition of his work, which came to the Barbican from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MOMA) and will have its final showing in Paris in April 2015. Nothing prepares you for the way this exhibition is presented. Gaultier's ready-to-wear and couture designs are all represented showing his fascination with cultures and counter-cultures and his daring designs celebrate difference as well as eroding the differences between the sexes. He created a new kind of fashion in the way it was worn and made.

Like his clothes the exhibition is about performance and you are taken aback when suddenly the mannequins follow you with their eyes and then another will suddenly speak to you directly. John Paul is in fact there himself, dressed in his

iconic Breton shirt, a kilt and Bover boots, welcoming you to the performance. The audiovisual element is the work of UBU/Compagnie de création of Montreal and the custom-made mannequins are by Jolicoeur International of Quebec. Facial visuals are projected onto the blank mannequins faces but the whole thing is so cleverly done it takes some time to work out what is happening. Once you have recovered from the shock, which was clearly what was intended, the 165 items afford an amazing representation of Gaultier's work. The infamous conical

bra and corsets Madonna wore during her 1990 *Blonde Ambition* World Tour are showcased alongside stage costumes designed for Kylie Minogue. One could almost risk wearing the fascinating pearly button dress or the feather affair, both exquisitely made, although I am not quite so sure about the 'Garbage bag dress'. From androgenous denim and Breton inspired T-shirts through leather biker jackets and tartan grunge John Paul Gaultier has left his mark on the fashion world.

## Chanel to Westwood

### Knitwear exhibition

until 18 January 2015

■ The Fashion and Textile Museum, Bermondsey Street, London

Report by: Ann Brown



Another chance to visit an exhibition in London while on a break from granny duties, so it was off to the Fashion and Textile Museum to see the exhibition Knitwear, Chanel to Westwood (on until 18 January and for other grannies and granddads they do a very good concessionary rate). I chose to go on a Wednesday at 1pm, but could have chosen a Friday when they do a guided tour of the exhibition: the guide goes into details of the history of the garments, makers and designers which you would not necessarily gather from just going round on your own.

The examples on display are taken predominantly from the private collection of Mark and Cleo Butterfield whose passion for knitted garments co-exists with their work as some of the country's most important collectors of vintage clothing and accessories. The Butterfields' love affair with knitting began in 1960s with a jumper knitted by the teenager Cleo from

a 1940s pattern, on display in the entrance to the museum and although she mastered the Fair Isle pattern it was roughly sewn together, unlike one later in the exhibition which was beautifully knitted and put together but without the buttons which she was too exhausted to put on having spent so much time on the knitting! Also in the entrance is a classic example of an early Chanel casual outfit suitable for golf or other activities of the early part of the 20th century. It is not until later in the exhibition that we see the examples of Vivien Westwood knitted punk style garments.

When you walk into the main ground floor area of the museum you are confronted with giant wooden packing crates, stacked as if ready to be put into a storage







## Brands Re-interpreted

■ Trowbridge Museum, The Shires, Court Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8AT

www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk

Report by Sarah Jane Kenyon, AMA



Quirky textile art (soft sculptures) produced by twenty six second year, A Level Fashion and Textiles students at New College, Swindon was on display this autumn at Trowbridge Museum.

The students explored everyday objects through soft sculpture, hand and machine embroidery, appliqué and reverse appliqué.



They researched a range of textile and fine artists, gathering source materials and imagery especially Holly Levell's range of everyday food packaging created through the medium of soft sculpture.

From six everyday items, from the brightly coloured packets of *Skittles* to tubes of *Colgate* toothpaste, they analysed the typography, use of colour, scale, proportion, form, texture and developed 2D networks and patterns of the 3D forms accurately measuring and deconstructing the objects and their packaging.

The attention to detail on each sculpture reflects the quality and talent of the emerging students attending New College, Swindon.

Photos: Sarah Jane Kenyon

container. Each one beautifully displays an era or theme of knitted garments well lit with easy to read descriptions of each garment and an explanation of the theme of the "crate". Highlights of these displays to me were; *Les Sportives* with some wonderful 20s and 30s knitted swimwear; *Artistic Afternoons* with 20s and 30s glamorous, sophisticated dresses made in rayon silk; *Make do and Mend* with real examples of people's ingenuity during the war to reknit colourful garments from a variety of old ones and one I could relate to was *Crochet your way* from when crochet experienced a renaissance in the



## Horst: Photographer of Style

until January 2015

■ V&A, London

Review by Vibeke Ormerod

Horst P Horst was one of the leading photographers of the 20th century. During his 60 creative years he was not only involved with fashion photography but also with the world of art, theatre and high society. Many of his images are familiar to us and he created countless covers for *American Vogue*. His fashion photography shows audacity and allure and he led the way for a bold and modernist vision of couture.

Horst Paul Albert Bohrmann (later Host P Horst and finally Horst) was born in Sachsen-Anhalt in Weissenfels-an-der-Saale but he longed to move away and arrived in Paris, the artists' mecca. As a young and ambitious 24 year old, his good looks would open many interesting doors to him in 1930s Paris. He moved in creative circles among avant-garde artists in theatre, dance, painting and photography. Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, Christian Berard, Luchino Visconti, Noel Coward, Vicomte de Noailles, Gertrude Stein, Dali and Gertrude Flanner and many others were some of his many friends and associates and he no doubt benefitted from moving in these artistic and aristocratic circles.

The exhibition led a trail from most of his early black and white work to his later highly colourful and often fun images, most of them for *American Vogue*. Much as these bright and bold photographs capture one's attention, the older black and white images are not to be overlooked. One can tell that Horst loved to play with light and shadow, the chiaroscuro effects are characteristic of his compositions. The contrasting colours and middling hues were used both to reveal and obscure at the same time. It was said that museums should learn from his excellent way of using light and shade on the body, so they could display their sculptures to best advantage.



After he moved to an apartment in Manhattan, overlooking the river where the light flooded his apartment, new directions appeared in his work. Colour was now used to great effect in his very carefully staged, yet believable images. Horst knew exactly how to create a sense of quality, to convey luxury and glamour. He was extremely prolific in his 60 year career and only had to stop as his sight failed him.

I very much enjoyed this exhibition. It is worth visiting, especially as it can easily be combined with one of the V&A's larger events.

*From the top of the article:* Muriel Maxwell, *American Vogue*, 1939; Dress by Hattie Carnegie, 1939; Summer Fashions, *American Vogue* Cover, 1941; Marlene Dietrich, *New York*, 1942; Salvador Dali's costumes for Leonid Massine's ballet *Bacchanale*, 1939; Corset by Detolle for Mainbocher, 1939. Copyright on all these images: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

1960s and 70s which included the white crochet suit as modelled by Twiggy on the front of the *Twilley's Quick to crochet* pattern.

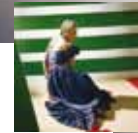
On the staircase, where you go up to displays from the 1970s to the present day, and around the exhibition are knitwear fashion photographs by Norman Parkinson and Terrance Donovan. You leave behind the wooden crates and more traditionally displayed are garments by designers such as Vivien Westwood and Zandra Rhodes, the founder of the museum; an amazing knitted, interracial patterned tunic pullover, pantaloons and scarf set by Bill Gibb and his partner Kaffe Fassett; a dress by Biba and a pullover by Ossie Clark to name just a few. Finally you come to a display of knitted garments using unorthodox materials such as silver foil and Perspex by Julien Mc Donald. You learn things along the way such as the word knitwear did not come into being

until the 1930s up until then it was known as hosiery with examples from famous department stores.

Our guide asked us to save the first room called *Visionary Knitwear* until last as it contained knitted garments by designers that have recently studied for a degree or a masters, curated by Sandy Black. One piece that caught my attention was knitted tags that can be read with a Microsoft tag reader app to play a video of the garment! Sadly I do not have this kind of technology but I felt it really did bring us back to the present day. An exhibition well worth a visit if you are in London and in an area that takes you back to London of old.

Quotes from the official guide from the Fashion and Textile Museum

Illustrations from postcards from the Fashion and Textile Museum





### Regency record breakers!

On 13 September 2014 Bath took back the world record for the most number of persons dressed in Georgian costume in one place at the same time... presumably since the Georgians, ousting the previous record holders in the States (491).

Organised as the start of the Jane Austen Festival week and filmed by a rather bemused Japanese television film crew, 550 people collected in the Assembly Rooms and it must have felt very similar to the original gatherings as we were all hotly crowded together, there was a dearth of eligible men, refreshments were in short supply and the noise was deafening!

Who came? Infants to octogenarians - ladies of all shapes, sizes and social station, many gentlemen favouring the military and with more gold braid than you could shake a stick at.

Some of the outfits were detailed to museum standards of authenticity (one matron had her spectacles ground to the correct prescription in period style), with the soldiers in particular being turned out to a nicety. There was a contingent from the rebellious American states present, but nobody took umbrage.

While the counting was being done the crowd was addressed in great good humour by Adrian Lukis (Mr Wickham from the BBC's 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*) who took a bit of heckling for being the only gent present dressed in C21st suit.

Once the formalities were complete and the announcement made, a cheer went up and the whole assembly then promenaded through the streets of Bath to the accompaniment of a military drummer plus *padré* and beadle, one small troop of redcoats and a lot of highly entertained spectators.

It was a lovely light hearted day with lots of laughter and total strangers making contact to comment on the apparel and ask questions.

A bit like any WECS meeting really. In fact, several WECS members were to be seen in the crowd...

Photos: Inset image of the whole group from the Jane Austen website ([www.janeausten.co.uk](http://www.janeausten.co.uk) to see more). Others by various members of the cast!



### Getting the point

*Hiroshimabari* (*bari*: needle) production goes back over 300 years to

when the ruling Asano clan of Hiroshima domain spread the practice as piecework for low-ranking samurai to support themselves.

Kake region is 50 kilometres upstream from Hiroshima Bay along the Otagawa river in the heart of the Chugoku mountains. During the Edo period Kake was known as the centre for the *tatara* method of iron-making rivalling Izumo which is also part of the Chugoku Mountains' iron sand producing region.

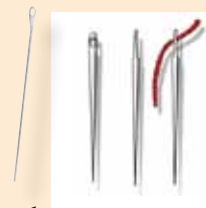
The river meant iron produced in Kake was easily sent downstream to be processed into needles and the Hiroshima domain had a monopoly on the iron so the production of sewing needles developed into a local industry. Today Hiroshima is the largest sewing needle production centre in Japan, producing over 90% of the country's needles and pins.

The samurai skills of metal working downsized to needles

gives excellent though not necessarily cheap needles. A handmade needle will set you back about £8-£10, but should last a lifetime. The steel has strength and flexibility and the eye end is traditionally flattened with one strike and drilled before the shaft is sharpened and polished. Drilling leaves smoother internal edges in the eye - less wear and tear on your thread. Finally, the steel is polished lengthwise which gives smooth fabric piercing and the flexibility means that they are comfortable to use - though even samurai steel can bend if gripped too tightly.

They're not stainless steel, so when not in use are properly kept in a needle felt made from wool with a residue of oil left in it to stop them rusting. Spots of rust can be rubbed off with very fine sandpaper.

You might think hand made needles would be a bit on the chunky side - especially if you have to drill the eye by hand too, but look at the photo. The white thread is standard Güterman's sewing thread and the gold is no 4 - about .5mm.



For more information, contact [fiona@bathdesigncentre.com](mailto:fiona@bathdesigncentre.com)

## WECS Book reviews

### V&A Pattern Spitalfields Silks

Author: Moira Thunder

V&A Publishing

ISBN 9781851776351 £7.99

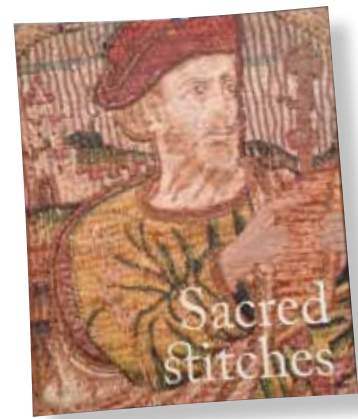
Review by: Fiona Starkey

This is a lovely little hardback (185mm x 140mm) with a short introduction to a portfolio of 66 images - designs, drawings and fabrics from Spitalfields held in the V&A collection.

The images themselves are a delight and comparing the watercolour designs with woven fabrics really interesting, especially when there are different colourways.

As an added extra, there's a CD tucked in at the back of the book with digital images and instructions for tracing and tiling the patterns for further study and personal use. Commercial use would need permission.

This is one of a series of books in which the V&A makes patterns in its collections more readily available. Other titles include wallpapers, novelty prints, Chinese textiles and garden florals, some presented in boxsets making them cheaper than individual books.



### Sacred Stitches - Ecclesiastical textiles in the Rothschild collection at Waddesdon Manor

Author: Rachel Boak

ISBN 9780954731038 RRP £15.00 (£10 on the Waddesdon site)

The exhibition catalogue has an introductory essay the history of the use of textiles in church interiors and as vestments, with summaries of the interests of the members of the Rothschild family who acquired the spectacular woven and embroidered textiles

now in the collection at Waddesdon.



The different types of objects in the exhibition

are discussed in detail in chapters on altar frontals, banners, cushions, hangings and pictures, furniture, fragments and accessories, and image robes. The catalogue includes a lot of colour photographs of the textiles with comparative images from the collection at Waddesdon and museums in France, the United Kingdom and the USA which add depth and interest. Some of the close up photos show where the threads have disintegrated and give information on the way the textiles were produced, later mended and give a hint of the original colours.

One particularly interesting part of the book for those interested in costume comes in the last chapter on image robes - small, doll-like 'clothing' made to be worn by statues of the virgin and saints. They're just as lavishly stitched as the larger items and somehow the scale and the tiny stitching makes them seem more intimate than the huge tapestries and banners.

### Fashion in Focus 1600 - 2009 - Treasures from the Olive Matthews collection

Author: Grace Evans

Miss Olive Matthews put together her costume collection during the early and middle parts of the 20th century. Now housed at Chertsey Museum, it consists of over six thousand items of men's, women's and children's fashionable dress and accessories dating from the 1600s to the present day. The quality and richness of many of the garments rivals those found in much larger institutions and the collection has been described by the V&A as nationally significant. In order to build upon public interest and maximise educational potential, the Museum has produced this substantial catalogue written by Grace Evans, Keeper of Costume. It explores the most important pieces from the Olive Matthews Collection and begins with details about Olive Matthews and a history of how the collection was put together. Following chapters look at key pieces by century, starting with the C17th and finishing with the C20th. The book has photographs of full garments and detail shots by photographer John Chase. This publication is a useful starting point for students wishing to learn more about the research possibilities offered by the collection and those with a general interest in costume will also find the book an informative read.

Available from Chertsey museum shop or online from [www.chertseymuseum.org.uk](http://www.chertseymuseum.org.uk)



Opinions in the book reviews are the individual reviewer's; WECS takes no responsibility for your ultimate enjoyment!

If you've come across any books you think other members might appreciate, do please let the editor know. They don't have to be newly published, or even current.

# WECS Pinboard



Coming to a computer near you!

## WECS's new look website

Our new website is up and running and we hope that you like its new logo, colour scheme and fresher, cleaner look. Never fear though, all the features that you are familiar with are still there.



The website can now also be used on the plethora of mobile and touch-screen devices currently out there. If you use bookmarks or other markers, your browser may go looking for old data which may cause the new site to be displayed strangely. We suggest that you go to the 'delete history' option and start again: [www.wofecostumesociety.org](http://www.wofecostumesociety.org)

### Membership

The "join us" header menu item has been renamed "membership".

When applying for, or renewing your membership online you will be asked about your interests exactly as you are on the existing paper membership form. If you do have specific interests or experience we'd love you to tell us as it will help us organise future events.

### Small Print

The small print in the terms and conditions and the privacy statement is now not quite so small.

### My Account

On the home page's header menu is a new option - "my account" - which means you can create your own WECS account. If you do, we will email you a unique PIN which you will need when you log in. In future, when you're logged in to your account there will be no need to re-enter your contact details when booking, applying for or renewing your membership.

If any of your personal details change then you can update your account.

You will also be able to review all the transactions (bookings and membership subscriptions) you've done via the website.

### Payment Guide

A "payment guide" has been added to the footer menu. This is intended to explain your payment options in greater detail.

It'll also give you access to a printable Standing Order mandate form.

### Gallery

Clicking on any of the images on the right-hand side of the page will display a larger version of the image. If the image is associated with an event, the title of the event will be displayed together with two buttons: "write up" and "gallery". Click on the buttons for more details.



### Facebook

WECS now has a Facebook page, so if you "do" Facebook please come along and "Like" us. Either a search for WECS will find us, or go direct to [www.facebook.com/wofccostumesociety](http://www.facebook.com/wofccostumesociety)

We plan to put up information about our meetings and links to events and exhibitions that might be of interest, so if you know of anything happening before the next magazine is due out - that's the place to post it!

### Missing person?

#### Angela Martin

We've been receiving a Standing order payment from Angela Martin for some time now, but have had no reply to any attempted contact

Does anyone know this member? Please let the membership secretary have any information you may have!

**Images** As you'll appreciate, a lot of the images in *Wardrobe* are on loan and we've tried to credit appropriately as we go. The uncredited ones are have mostly been photographed or supplied by members - too numerous (or modest) to mention. Please excuse us where we've unintentionally got it wrong!

**Copy for the next newsletter to Vibeke Ormerod by 28 March please  
Contact details for WECS committee on Page 2**

## Dear WECS members

I am currently researching a history of the company for **Alexandra Workwear**. The company began in the mid 19th century and traded under various names including *The Alexandra Company*, *Alexandra Drapery* and, later, *Alexandra Overalls*.

I am hoping you may have something that will add to our knowledge. Any surviving items of clothing would be of great interest, but we also need documentary material.

The Alexandra Company began in the 1850s as a drapery shop in Bristol. We have some good documentation, with illustrated catalogues, from the late 19th century and a good archive post 1960, but very little for the years 1914-1960.

Would you please let me know if there is anything in you are aware of that you think might assist our research?

**Jenny Dunford**  
Researcher

Contact [patpoppy@aol.com](mailto:patpoppy@aol.com)



### Janet Arnold Mantua dress update

Avril Lines at the Ludlow Museum is delighted to have been given the mantua dress from the WECS Janet Arnold Day 2013. The original mantua and our reproduction will both

be on display in their *History of Dress* exhibition. They are also having a pattern cutting course in 2015 and will use it for that as well.

So thank you to WECS and well done the mantua group!

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*March 2015*

Tour of Kurseong, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kolkata  
*November 2015*

Heritage Tour of Kerala and the Malabar Coast  
*November 2015*

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