

# WECS Wardrobe

£5.50: Free to members

**wecs**  
west of england  
costume society

**Bumper  
Autumn  
issue  
24 pages**

www.  
wofecostumesociety.org

## Calendar

### AGM and History of Performance Costume

Saturday 6 February 2016  
■ Bath Cricket Club

### Study Day: Fabrics of Fashion

Saturday 19 March 2016  
■ BAWA, Bristol

### Visit: Priest's House and Fashion Museum

Saturday 7 May 2016  
■ Wimborne and Blandford

### Janet Arnold Study Day: Structure and Artifice

Saturday 1 October 2016  
■ Bath Cricket Club

Main image

Teasing history  
Leeds visit Page 10



**Beetle mania**  
Recreation or restoration? Page 17



**All of a Flutter**  
Fur and feathers Page 14



**Muslin**  
Treats to come Page 3



**Shake 'n' vac**  
Hiding talents Page 7



**Suits you?**  
Nigerian outfitting Page 11

## WECS events



### History of Performance Costume and AGM

Saturday 6 February 2016,  
14.00 - 16.00

■ Bath Cricket Club, North Parade Bridge Road, Bath BA2 4EX  
Speaker Deirdre Clancy

**We have so many talented people who have made their home in the West of England and it is always wonderful to discover someone new.**

Deirdre Clancy lives in Wiltshire and is the holder of two of the highest honours in British drama, the Olivier Award for Best Stage Costume Design and the BAFTA for Best Film Costume Design (*Mrs Brown* 1996). She has worked on over 150 theatre, opera and ballet productions in Europe, North America, Japan and Australia. In 2007 she was invited to design historically informed costumes for new productions of the classic nineteenth century Danish ballet *Napoli* in both Prague and Moscow. Alongside her amazing career working with the Royal National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Metropolitan Opera New York to name but a few she has also written a number of costume books the most recent being *Costume since 1945* (pub. 2015) and *Designing Costume for Stage and Screen* (pub. 2014).

Clancy will tell us of her life as a costume designer and bring along some of her designs. This will be an amazing opportunity to meet a renowned figure in the world of theatre costume design.

This talk, **A History of Performance Costume** covers the stage wear of all sorts of performers from C6th BC Greek drama up to the C20th. Many illustrations take us via Medieval Mystery plays, the *Commedia dell'arte*, the plays of Shakespeare, royal masques, the Progresses of the French and English courts, Restoration drama and Victorian realism up to the glorious fantasies of the Ballet Russe. More of the C20th will be examined if time permits.

Clancy will look at period fashion in costume and times when contemporary clothes were worn on stage, also examining such ideas as realism, naturalism and 'period costume' and think about what it is actually intended to express.

The few images of actual costumes are charming reminders of the difference between intention and reality.

*If you require special access when parking, please advise when booking.*



**If you know any young people who have ambitions to design costume bring them along to be inspired.**

**WECS is offering £5.00 entrance to students for this talk.**

## Fabrics of Fashion

Saturday 19 March 2016

9.30 - 16.45

■ BAWA, Bristol

**There is often some confusion between fabrics and fibres. Cotton, wool, silk and linen are classified as natural fibres and come from an animal or vegetable source, whilst nylon, polyester, acrylic, elastomeric and many others are artificially created starting from a chemical reaction of petroleum sourced chemicals, and are called synthetic fibres. Other synthetic fibres, artificially made from naturally occurring substances like cellulose and protein are called regenerated fibres and these include acetate, triacetate and casein.**

So what are fabrics? Fabrics are made from fibres and it is weight, weave, texture and pattern which give them distinct characteristics. Today's fabrics are even further complicated by the fact that a number of fibres can be mixed together making the recycling process almost impossible.

The designer will often start with the fabric as the drape, texture and weight will directly affect the style to be created but durability, warmth and comfort may also play a part. And then of course there is FASHION!

Who would have thought that a flimsy almost transparent fabric like muslin could have dominated fashionable dress in Regency England when there was no central heating?

### Not quite a free lunch

Because BAWA is a longish walk from the nearest lunch and there are no provisions to eat your own at the site, WECS is subsidising the buffet on this occasion so you can stay and socialise.

At £7.00 it's a pretty good deal, so tuck in!







### **Sonia Ashmore: *Muslin* 'thirty shillings a yard ... and only the shadow of a commodity'**

Muslin is a cotton textile of fabulous reputation, sometimes so fine as to be almost invisible. In India it was worn by both men and women and was prized by the Mughal Courts. It became a key commodity and vehicle of social and economic control for the British East India Company in Bengal where the finest muslin was produced by hand. Muslin became highly fashionable as a dress material in the west, suiting the neoclassical dress styles of the Napoleonic and Regency periods – very popular in Bath. Although muslin continued to be worn throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, once it was imitated in British and French factories, Indian muslin production declined. Besides discussing the history of this wonderful fabric, this talk will try to convey its beauty and variety.

Dr Sonia Ashmore has spent several years researching and helping to catalogue the Victoria and Albert Museum's Indian textile collections. She has published widely and contributed to a number of books, including *British Asian Style* (V&A 2010) and *The Fabric of India* (V&A 2015). Her book, *Muslin* was published by the V&A in 2012.

And then there is the fabric which carries with it multiple meanings!

### **Fabrics of Fashion**

9.30 Registration with coffee

10.15 Sonia Ashmore:  
*Muslin: 'thirty shillings a yard ... and only the shadow of a commodity'*

11.15 Coffee

11.45 Jonathan Faiers -  
*Branding the Global Body: Tartan and Beyond*

12.45 Lunch

14.15 Helen Taylor: *Bernat Klein: An Eye for Colour*

15.15 Tea/coffee

15.45 Dr Christine Boydell -  
*Horrockses Fashions and cotton ready-to-wear 1946 -1960*

16.45 Close

*This study day will only touch on the history of fabrics and their cultural influence*

### **Jonathan Faiers**

#### ***Branding the Global Body: Tartan and Beyond***

Taking the initial history of the globalisation of tartan, and how it was either introduced as the textile 'messenger' of the invader, occupier, and in some cases owner of the colonised body, the talk will then investigate how the legacy of colonisation is transformed into new vestimentary signs of cultural commodification.

Using tartan and its various adaptations in approximations of "Highland" dress, the ability of textiles and dress to mark the body of the wearer, to attest to its allegiances and loyalties and ultimately to brand the body will be explored.

Tartan's contemporary global dissemination via new colonising forms such as the fashion and "heritage" industries, have meant that according to which aspect of its complicated history is emphasised, tartan is now understood as the cloth of both tradition and conformity as well as expressing subversion and revolution.

The talk will be illustrated with examples taken from tartan's complex history and related popular, contemporary representations that demonstrate the emergence of tartan as a global super brand.

Dr Jonathan Faiers is Reader in Fashion Theory, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton and his research examines the interface between popular culture, textiles and dress. His publications include *Tartan* (Berg, 2008) and *Dressing Dangerously: Dysfunctional Fashion in Film* (Yale University Press, 2013). Recently he has written essays for *Alexander McQueen* (V&A 2015), *Developing Dress History: New Directions in Method and Practice* (Bloomsbury, Nov. 2015), *London Couture 1923-1975: British Luxury* (V&A, Nov. 2015) and *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design and Media* (Edinburgh University Press, March 2016) In 2014 Jonathan launched *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption* (Taylor & Francis Routledge); the first peer-reviewed, academic journal to investigate this globally contested term. He lectures widely on textiles and dress and is a founding member of the Winchester Luxury Research Group and the Advisory Committee for the Costume Colloquium, Florence.

The speakers for the afternoon may bring back memories for some members and for others it may mean *vintage fashion* but colour and pattern feature throughout.





WECS Study Day continued from previous page

## Helen Taylor

### **Bernat Klein: An Eye for Colour**

The textile designer and artist Bernat Klein was born in Senta, formally in Yugoslavia, in 1922, and his career spanned five decades from the 1950s until his retirement in 1992. Based in the Scottish Borders, his visionary use of colour blending and texture had a massive impact both nationally and internationally. Klein had success in selling his designs to *British Home Stores*, but in 1963 Chanel used his mohair tweed fabric in the Spring collection and this led to sales to other designers such as Christian Dior, Hardy Amies and Balenciaga. The talk will explore the early influences on Bernat's career, his holistic approach to textile design and his continuing influence.

Helen Taylor is the Archivist at Heriot-Watt University and manages the archive collections at both Edinburgh and Scottish Border campuses. She has an MA in History from Edinburgh University and an MA in Archives and Records Management from Western Washington University, USA.



Bernat Klein, Dovecot Gallery

## Dr Christine Boydell

### **Horrockses Fashions and cotton ready-to-wear 1946 -1960**

*Horrockses Fashions* was one of the most well respected ready-to-wear labels of the late 1940s and the 1950s. It was established in 1946 as a subsidiary of Horrockses, Crewdson & Company Limited. The Preston-based cotton manufacturer produced women's day and evening wear, beach clothes and housecoats from high quality cotton cloth, using fashionable styling and custom-designed fabrics.



The paper explores the strategies adopted by Horrockses Fashions to transform the fortunes of cotton as a fashion fabric. The decision to focus on good quality ready-to-wear with attention paid to fashionable styling, fabric design and finish was designed to help elevate the status of cotton and in turn increase the parent company's sales of cotton piece goods to clothing manufacturers. Crucial to the success of the venture was a promotional campaign that played down the true mass produced nature of Horrockses Fashions but emphasised exclusivity, fabric design and quality cloth.

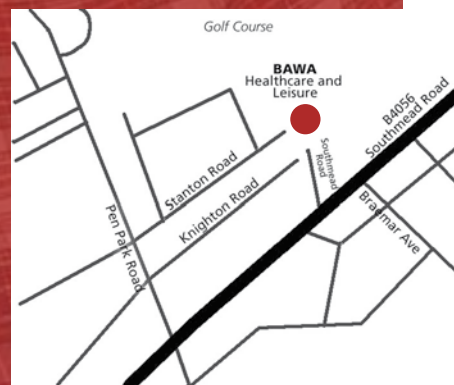
Dr. Christine Boydell, De Montfort University, Leicester is a design historian, writer and curator. She has taught in universities for 33 years. Her book *Horrockses Fashions: Off the Peg Style in the 40s and 50s* was published in 2010 to accompany the exhibition at the Fashion and Textile Museum. She has written extensively on twentieth century fashion and textiles. Her most recent project has been as curator of the exhibition '*Riviera Style: resort and swimwear since 1900*' (May-Sept 2015, Fashion & Textile Museum).

## Study Day Asides

**Sales Table -  
Interesting fabrics!  
Bring, buy, donate.**

**To members – wear  
your floral cotton  
frock or your colourful  
tweed or family tartan  
depending on the  
weather!!!**

**A Buffet Lunch  
will be available at this  
event (£8.00, see booking  
form). If bringing your  
own lunch, please be  
aware that there are no  
facilities at the venue.**



## Visit: Priest's House Museum and Fashion Museum, Blandford

Saturday 7 May 2016

■ Priest's House Museum, Wimborne and Fashion Museum, Blandford

[www.priest-house.co.uk](http://www.priest-house.co.uk)

[www.theblandfordfashionmuseum.com](http://www.theblandfordfashionmuseum.com)

Join WECS for a "get yourself there" visit to these two museums in Dorset.

Details of how to get there and the location of pay and display car parking will be sent on booking.

£15.00 for members

£25.00 for non-members

Booking form with this newsletter.



**10.00-12.00** The morning will be spent at Wimborne, which has a small costume collection. There will be coffee/tea provided on arrival. We will be given a talk on their clothing and textile collections and a tour of their recently built store, as well as time to explore the museum.

**12.00-14.00** Plenty of time to have lunch in either town or bring your own. The drive to Blandford takes just 20 minutes.

**14.00-16.00** In the afternoon at Blandford we will have a talk on the collection, which started life at *Mrs Penny's Costume Cavalcade* and is now an accredited museum, followed by time to explore its ten rooms of costume dating from the C18th to the late C20th.

## 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.

### Dressed by Angels

until 3 January 2016



Old Truman Brewery, Loading Bay, Ely's Yard, 15 Hanbury Street, London, E1 6QR  
www.dressedbyangels.co.uk  
0203 773 8995

This exhibition features costumes from film, TV and theatre. *Angels Costumiers* has been dressing the world for 175 years, including Oscar and BAFTA Award winning films. Over seven generations of one family, Angels has become the premiere costumier to the world. This is their story - in costumes. From *Lawrence of Arabia* to *Titanic*, from Dickens to Lillie Langtry, and from Military to Royalty: you know it, Angels has dressed it. Visitors will get exclusive access to costumes from films including *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Star Wars*, *The Iron Lady* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*; TV shows *Morecombe and Wise*, *Dr Who*, 2015's *Poldark* and *Downton Abbey*; and blockbuster musical *Wicked*. Over 100 costumes have been carefully selected from Angel's illustrious back catalogue for display. Visitors will see bespoke costumes made for Fred Astaire, Noel Coward, Laurence Olivier, Tom Baker, Judi Dench, Cate Blanchett and Meryl Streep, to name just a few. Alongside the costumes will be photographs and fascinating letters and artefacts, providing an insight into showbiz history.

### Masters of the Everyday

#### Dutch artists in the age of Vermeer

13 November 2015 - 14 February 2016

The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London  
www.royalcollection.org.uk  
020 7766 7301

27 of the finest C17th and C18th Dutch paintings in the Royal Collection, including Vermeer's *The Music Lesson* and masterpieces by Gerrit Dou, Pieter de Hoch and Jan Steen. While not specifically a costume exhibition, the detail in these paintings provides a valuable reference on what and how clothes were worn at the period. Paintings depict ordinary scenes of everyday life in extraordinary detail.



### Liberty in Fashion

until 28 February 2016

Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF  
www.ftmlondon.org/ftm-exhibitions/liberty-in-fashion/

"I was determined not to follow existing fashion but to create new ones." Arthur Lasenby, *Liberty Liberty* has been at the cutting edge of design and the decorative arts since 1875. The exhibition explores Liberty's impact on British fashion, from Orientalism and Aesthetic dress in the 19th century, through Art Nouveau and Art Deco in the early 20th century, and the revival of these styles since the 1950s. *Liberty Art Fabrics* and the textile design studio take centre stage as the internationally recognised leader in floral, paisley and patterned prints and dress fabrics.

*Liberty in Fashion* celebrates the 140th anniversary of the company. The exhibition charts *Liberty's* history as 'the' fashionable place to shop as well as its role as the source and originator of key trends in fashion history. Over 150 garments, textiles and objects demonstrate *Liberty's* strong relationships with designers since 1875, from Arthur Silver of *Silver Studio* to collaborations with Jean Muir, Cacharel, Yves Saint Laurent and Vivienne Westwood.

Tickets can be booked in advance for one of two sessions a day.



V&A Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL  
www.vam.ac.uk

### Shoes: Pleasure and Pain

until 31 January 2016

Exhibition: Explore the transformative power of footwear from around the world with this exhibition of over 200 pairs of the most extreme shoes from the last 2000 years.



### The Fabric of India

until 10 January 2016

The highlight of the V&A India Festival, this is the first major exhibition to explore the dynamic and multifaceted world of handmade textiles from India.

Fuller descriptions of both these exhibitions on the V&A website and in the Spring 2015 issue of *Wardrobe*.



### 50 Years of Fashion

until 3 September 2016

Chertsey Museum, 33 Windsor Street, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 8AT  
www.chertseymuseum.org.uk  
01932 565764

It is fifty years since Chertsey Museum first opened its doors in 1965. To celebrate, their new fashion display features fashionable women's wear dating from the 1960s to the present days selected from the Olive Matthews collection.

The display takes you from the tight waists and full skirts of the early 1960s right through to the darkly imaginative designs of Alexander McQueen in the 2000s. On the

way, explore the futuristic styles of the mid 60s, the flowing skirts of the hippie era and power dressing from the 1980s. Assiduous collecting of key designers' work from the second half of the C20th has been undertaken in recent years by the Olive Matthews Collection trustees which means inclusion

Evening gown of purple and green shot silk by Jean-Louis Scherrer, mid 1980s.  
Photograph: John Chase.

of important pieces by André Courrèges, Thierry Mugler, Jean-Louis Scherrere, Ossie Clark and Issey Miyake just for starters.

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



### Fashion Rules: Dress from the collection of HM The Queen, Princess Margaret and Diana, Princess of Wales

Continuing exhibition. NB Closed between 4 January and 11 February 2016

■ Kensington Palace, London  
www.hrp.org.uk/Kensington Palace

*Shown here:* Formal gown in oyster coloured duchesse silk satin with beaded embroidery by Norman Hartnell in 1963 for HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Norman Hartnell was renowned for his intricately detailed beading and this gown demonstrates all the skill of his fashion house. The bodice is embroidered with pearls, beads, diamanté and sequins in a striking diamond pattern, with bugle beads forming tassel drops, alternately in silver and gold. The scissor cut skirt creates fullness and reveals further embroidery underneath.

'Fashion Rules' cover: William Hustler Georgina Hustler, National Portrait Gallery



■ Fashion Museum,  
Assembly Rooms,  
Bennett Street, Bath  
BA1 2QH  
01225 477789  
www.fashionmuseum.  
co.uk

### Georgians

until 3 January 2016  
Last chance to see...



### Behind the Scenes

until 6 November 2016

This display showcases 100 years of fashion, from the snowy white embroidered muslins of Regency times through to silks and satins of the later Edwardian period.



*Behind the Scenes* blurs the traditional museum boundaries between collections on display and those held in store.

The gallery is - in fact - the museum store, and the original fashions are presented against a backdrop of collection storage boxes.

## Associated Societies

### Costume Society UK

www.costumesociety.org.uk for more details and booking information



#### Annual Conference: Fashion and Democracy?

8 - 10 July 2016 ■ Whitworth Art Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6ER

Keynote speakers are Professor John Styles, Senior Research Fellow at the V&A on *Fashion to a Timetable: re-scheduling European Fashion in an era of expanding markets, 1500-1800*, Dr Philip Sykas from Manchester University on *Maintaining a distance: fashion in the wake of Manchester's calicos* and Lucy Worsley, Chief curator of the Historic Royal Palaces.

With visits to the Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Elizabeth Gaskell's House and the Textile Conservation Centre and new *Soapbox Sessions*: your chance to share experience and learn from other members.

There is a student bursary for this event. Details on the website.

### Southern Counties Costume Society

www.sccostumesociety.org.uk for more details and booking information

#### Parisian Chic: Its influence on British Fashion

27 February 2016 ■ Avington Park and Itchen Abbas, Hampshire

Keynote speakers: Amy de la Haye and Jenny Sundheim

#### Visit to Carisbrooke Castle

16 March 2016 ■ Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight

Costume collection includes 1780 items including lace pieces, yachting costumes, Redfern costume etc.



Platt Hall display, on the itinerary for the Costume Society Conference in July, Image courtesy of Manchester Art Galleries

### Textile Society

www.textilesociety.org.uk for more details and booking information

atf@textilesociety.org.uk



#### Antique Textile Fair

6 March 2016 ■ Manchester

For enthusiasts interested in buying antique and vintage costumes and textiles to collect, wear or discover. The selection is vast with 130 stands selling Oriental & Eastern European costumes & textiles; English costumes & textiles, fans, lace and linens as well as plenty of vintage clothes & textiles.

## Dressing Mrs Dunch

11 February 2016 13.30 - 16.00

■ Avebury Manor, near Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1RF

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury)

"Dressing Mrs Dunch" is the title of the forthcoming exhibition at Avebury Manor in Wiltshire. A dedicated volunteer sewing group at Avebury have been working on recreating a Tudor gown, c.1560, led by the House Assistant who has researched and produced the patterns for the gown. At the preview lecture you have a chance to see the exhibition and enjoy a talk about the Tudor gown, learn about the work and also the techniques used to create this wonderful piece of work.



Above: Mrs Dunch in progress

Cream Tea in the Avebury Manor tearoom is included.

Adult £28.00 To book : [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury/things-to-see-and-do/events](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/avebury/things-to-see-and-do/events)

## Schiaparelli and Thirties Fashion

October 2015 onwards

■ Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester M14 5LL

[www.manchestergalleries.org](http://www.manchestergalleries.org)  
016661 245 7245

## Tailored A very British Fashion

until January 2016

■ Leeds City Museum, Millennium Square, Leeds LS2 8BH

[www.leeds.gov.uk/tailored](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/tailored)  
0113 224 3732



## The F-word

until December 2015

■ Killerton House, Broadclyst, Exeter, EX5 3LE

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Killerton](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Killerton)  
01392 881345

From a 150-year-old crinoline to a 60s mini, garments have shaped not only their owners but also the face of fashion. *The F-Word* explores how fashion has responded to the latest innovations and made its mark across the centuries.

Fuller information on the website.



## WECS Reports

### Pittards Visit

May, June and August 2015

■ Yeovil

Report by Tony Cooper

Upon arrival at the Pittards shop our jaws dropped at the range and colours of items for sale. Of course we wanted to trawl the wares but Sarah insisted on business first; we had to sign in and be labelled up as "Factory Tour Visitor" or some such.

A little later Richard – our guide – welcomed us and suggested we partake of the coffee and cakes laid out for us in the café while he went and got his things. No sooner had we worked out how to use the pump pot of coffee than he returned with armfuls of skins and gloves, surmounted by a solitary camouflaged military boot.

### Early Days

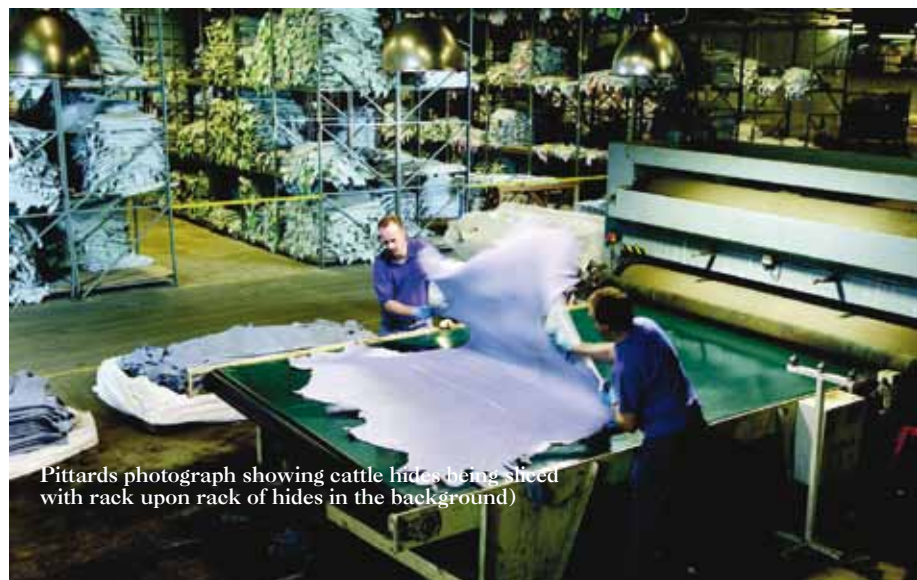
Pittards started in 1826 and supplied fine glove leather to the scores of glove making factories in the Yeovil area and beyond. They also processed goatskin, sheepskin and cowhide. Early last century the company began to experiment with other skins and hides, importing Cabretta or 'Hairsheep' skins from Ethiopia to make a beautifully soft yet strong leather. These animals could easily be mistaken for goats but Richard gave us a useful tip if you're in any doubt; goats' tails stick up whereas sheep's tails hang down.

Until the late '70s hairsheep skins were imported "raw". This meant that they still had the hair on and were simply preserved in salt. (Had I worked at Pittards at that time I doubt I would have had an appetite come lunchtime.) Now the skins arrive "crust" - hairless and chrome tanned with a distinct blue hue – but substantial processing is still required to produce the desired leather.

Visual inspection plays a great part at every stage in the processing. No two skins are the same; even if they are unblemished they vary in surface texture, thickness etc.

In Ethiopia the hairsheep are principally reared for meat; the skins – once just a by-product – are now valuable. The skins can be said to reflect the life experiences of the animal; thorn scratches, fly strike and the blows of the stick the herdsman used to goad the animal. It is even possible that the ribs leave their mark too.

*continued on next page*



Pittards photograph showing cattle hides being sliced with rack upon rack of hides in the background)





The Drum used to impregnate the skins with the dyes and other chemicals.

It is important for Pittards profitability to find a use for every skin – even these blemished ones. If the blemish is simply discolouration then dyeing a dark colour may be an option. Minor damage to the surface can be disguised by texturing where the leather is placed in a hydraulic press with an embossed textured plate on top. The indented pattern then appears in the surface of the leather. It is also possible to use an indented plate such that the leather has a pattern of pimples on it. These can then be shaved off giving an interesting texture.

Ordinary (wool) sheepskin is thick and spongy by comparison; it is bulky and apt to tear at the seams and is wholly unsuitable for fine fashion gloves. (I can vouch for that as we several times have had to repair the seams of our sheepskin mitts.)

For glove leather it is desirable that there be stretch across the palm for a good fit but not along the fingers. Otherwise, every time the gloves are pulled off (by the finger stalls) they'd get longer and longer.

Leather for garments needs different characteristics – after all, having your new leather trousers “seated” and “knead” after the first wearing wouldn't be a good look.

### **Ethiopian links**

Pittards were asked by the Ethiopian government to manage a state run tannery for about 5 years with a view to putting it up for sale. This was so successful that Pittards bought it to secure its supply of hairsheep skins. They now have four factories in Ethiopia producing leather, garments, industrial and fashion gloves.

At one time the Ethiopian government had vets visiting farms seeing to the welfare of the animals. This is no longer the case and Pittards have noticed a distinct deterioration in the quality of the skins they import. In an attempt to reverse this trend Pittards have set up a farm in Ethiopia where hairsheep are reared to the highest welfare standards. This cannot supply the company with the number of skins it needs (about 3 million) but is intended as a demonstration of best practice to indigenous farmers.

### **Added value**

As is the way of things leather goods can be made cheaper in the Far East and Africa so Pittards in the UK has stayed competitive in the global market by concentrating on adding value – in particular developing specialist leathers. For example there is the pilot's glove. Apparently the hands of combat pilots perspire heavily and ordinary leather gloves can get very soggy during a mission. To overcome this, Pittards developed a special leather that “wicked” moisture from the hand to evaporate on the outside. This has been a highly successful product for several decades.

From this technology, leather for golfing gloves was developed with superior grip and stay dry characteristics. I wonder how many golfers have spent more than they should on something like this in the fervent hope that it'll finally cure their slice.

Another military application was for the Canadian army who wanted camouflaged gloves (and possibly boots) with a particular infrared signature. Sadly after the product was successfully developed the order never materialised. However, Richard was sanguine about it; they know exactly how to do it now and somebody will want something like that someday.

On the fashion side Pittards produce jackets and holdalls for Jaguar – yes, the car maker – and can supply limited edition leathers featuring designer logos, etc. Of course, security has to be strict because product piracy is an on-going problem. What woman wouldn't be tempted to slap a bit of *Louis Vuitton* leather on her *Primark* handbag?

Pittards has its own designer range of leather accessories – handbags, wallets, etc, which are produced when customer orders are quiet, but taking account of



the season. For example, fashion gloves are typically ordered in the autumn worn in the winter and have to be made during summer. Fortunately the demand for sportswear is in summer meaning that it is made in winter.

### Processing

So far Richard had imparted this knowledge in the relative quiet of the shop's cafeteria knowing that communication would become more difficult once we got into the factory itself. It certainly was noisy and put me in mind of a film set (think *Mad Max* meets *Metropolis*) - everything huge and grey and dwarfing us mere mortals. Dominating one area were several drums like enormous washing machine drums (see photo, left) used to impregnate the skins with the dyes and other chemicals. Pittards have become so adept at ensuring these chemicals go into the skins and are not discarded in the waste water that they are permitted to drain directly into the town sewage works - in fact the site of the present factory was selected in the 1960s to be adjacent to the sewage works.

The wet skins are unloaded from the drums into wheeled tubs to be taken to the vacuum dryer. Here they are laid out onto a polished metal plate the size of about four double beds, which is heated to about 40°C. A cover is then brought down and the vacuum applied. Anyone who has had a cup of tea at a hostelry some way up a mountain will know how odd it tastes. This is partly because the air pressure is low and water boils at a lower temperature. Take this to an extreme and water can be (and is) rapidly evaporated from the skins even at only forty degrees.

It surprised me that the hide from beef cattle could be up to a centimetre thick. This too arrives chrome tanned and in yet another vast machine it is sliced into a number of layers - the inside layer is used for suede, the middle, slab layer(s) for shoe soles, etc. and the outside, grain layer for shoes, garments, bags and so on. The slab layers can also be processed (but not by Pittards) to give the appearance of grain leather at a fraction of the cost - this may account for the seemingly endless TV adverts for sale price leather sofas.

Samples of processed leather are taken at various stages and they are laboratory tested to ensure the quality of the final product. Not much in the way of Bunsen burners, bubbling liquids, beakers and retorts but through the window we could see a machine for automatically flexing leather samples thousands of times to see when they failed.

Next in the process was stretching; several men (displaying their tattoos) each of whom stood in front of a strange machine with an arm reciprocating briskly towards and away from him. This arm was actually more like an oversized tuning fork with the upper and lower prongs carrying interlocking rollers. The operatives slipped a skin between the rollers and stretched the skin and in so doing made it more supple. This is a tedious but skilled task - every skin is a different shape and the idea is to get as much usable area from each.

Despite there being several operatives on the stretching machines there was but one poor soul on polishing. He would take a skin, lay it over a large, motor-driven felt roller and buff it to a nice sheen. The pressure of the leather on the roller was all down to his hands and forearms and his skill was to get an even polish all over the skin.

The thickness of the final leather is important and another machine - not far removed from that used to finish heavy woollen fabrics and which inspired the lawn mower - can be used to shave the underside of the skin to even it out and to bring it to the required thickness.

Final inspection inevitably weeds out substandard product and these skins go into store on floor-to-ceiling racks in the corner of the factory. Considerable investment has gone into these skins and whilst they may not be acceptable to the high-end customer there is always a market - theatrical, film and television costumiers, re-enactors, craftspeople and so on.

As we left my eye fell on a label that read *Misty Brindle*. A nice girl, I'm sure. So with echoes of Keats' *Ode to Autumn* in my head we were bade farewell - at least as far as the shop!

Thank you Sarah for organising not one but these three fascinating visits to Pittards.



Vac drying: hides laid out and heated to 40°C  
Images courtesy of Pittards

### Postscript

In my neighbouring village, Holt, there is what has always been called "the glove factory" - closed now but I still have memories of a characteristic whiff that periodically engulfed the village. I never got to see inside but photos of the factory, courtesy of Bradford-on-Avon museum, showed it to be a pretty ancient and cramped environment.

One photo showed the ladies machine stitching gloves seated shoulder to shoulder with little elbow room. I guess if your stitching went awry you could always blame your neighbour for jogging you.

Why tell you this? Well it just so happens that in its bicentennial year, 1970, it was taken over by Pittards.

# Leeds Visit

13 - 17 May  
2015

## Leeds city centre



### Leeds First Day

Report by Jeanne Evans, Judy Horton and Brenda Clarke

#### 10.00am M&S Company Archive, The Michael Marks Building, Leeds University

Catherine Chorley welcomed us to the beautiful new M&S archive, which was opened to the public in 2012. Following the 100th birthday of M&S in 1984, it was decided to collect historical items reflecting the history of the company and since then the archive team has collected, catalogued and made available for use, a comprehensive record of the company's past. Today the archive contains over 70,000 items from the last 128 years. She began with a short history of the beginnings of M&S....

In 1884 Michael Marks, a Jewish immigrant from Belarus, came to Leeds. With little money and poor English, he began as a pedlar and sold everything at one price with the slogan "don't ask the price, it's a penny". Selling everyday household items, stationery and haberdashery, he was successful because he sold a wide variety of goods at a low price. Soon he had a stall in Kirkgate Market, going on to open more penny market stalls in other towns – and then his first shop in Manchester. He developed a house style with red and gold signage, goods on open display for customers to browse - and an offer of free admission, not because other

shops charged, but as a marketing strategy to entice customers into his shops! In 1894 Tom Spencer became his partner when he bought a half share in the company for £300. He brought experience and financial expertise to Michael's vision, and under their partnership the company prospered and soon they had a chain of penny bazaars across the country, serviced by their own warehouse in Manchester. But Spencer

wanted to retire from the business and in 1916 Michael's son, Simon, took over the company and then his close friend Israel Seiff joined the board. They became family as well as friends when they married each other's sisters. The rest, as they say, is history! The company continued to flourish, with more stores opening across the country and a flagship store in Oxford Street, London. Marks visited America and imported new retail ideas; incorporating wider aisles, good lighting and enticing displays. In-store cafes were opened in the 40s – which were very successful as no ration



### Leeds Thursday 14

coupons were needed! Self-service food was introduced in 1948 – which of course has now become one of M&S' most famous lines – culminating in the 'Simply Food' campaign in 2000.

We were then shown through the displays, which reflected the different periods and developments of the company's retail strategy, particularly emphasising their window displays. The archive now is of national historical importance, and as a record of retail history, is now widely used by today's designers as inspiration for the designs/fashions of the future. It was a fascinating insight into a ground-breaking period of retail history.

#### 13.30 University of Leeds International Textile Archive, St Wilfred's Chapel, Leeds University

After lunch in the University Café we met up again at ULITA. This collection is housed in St Winifred's Chapel, which is actually attached to the Business school, but was once the chapel of the old Boys Grammar School, originally on this site. It has been beautifully and sympathetically converted and the curator, Jill Winder, welcomed us and gave us a short illustrated history of the founding of the

archive. In 1880 a Textile College was opened to support the local cloth-based industries of Leeds. John and Robert Beaumont, the first professors, began to collect fabric samples and pattern books to use as teaching resources for students of woven textile design. In 1892 the collection had increased so much in size and importance that a donation by the Clothworkers' Company gave provision for a Museum. Local textiles firms started to give samples and working models, and the museum then widened their scope to encompass world textiles. It now holds collections of Chinese and Japanese embroideries, Kashmiri shawls, block printed cottons from Pakistan, Javanese batiks and ikats and a range of Greek and Turkish embroideries. The on-line catalogue can be viewed at: <http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/search-the-catalogue/>

We were given free time to browse the fascinating displays ourselves and were then taken into the work rooms in the upper part of the chapel and shown some beautiful examples from the collection. This wonderful archive is the only museum of its kind in the country, with the exception of the V&A.

#### 15.00 Yorkshire Fashion Archive – Clothworkers Building– Leeds University

We were met by Claire Watson, whom many of us remembered from our Study Day in 2012, when she spoke on 'The Dress of Ordinary People'. The concept of a local archive was started in 1999, with the aim of documenting and researching clothing and accessories from the Yorkshire region. The idea was that the clothes themselves have a great story to tell about class and history - through the identity of their wearers. Claire emphasised that this is not a museum, but an archive available for research, with the first exhibition held locally at Salts Mill in Saltaire, Bradford. Claire had put a number of items out on display for us and illustrated their histories with slides, audio and film footage of their previous owners. She emphasized the importance of the stories connected to the clothes and the social history of local fashion. We also heard about the famous local department stores *Marshall & Snelgrove*, *Schofields*, *Busbies* and *Brown & Muffs* –and how they all catered to slightly different social groups. The best folk were shopping at *Marshall & Snelgroves*, and the poorer sort finding their fashions 'on the market'. All of us got very excited when items we could remember were mentioned: tights and miniskirts, first 'grown-up' dresses etc. It was very much a trip down memory lane for many of us!





②



③



④



⑤



⑥



⑧

## Discovery Centre

Report by Pat Macmillan, Jo Turner and Pat Sims

**The Museum Service in Leeds was founded by the Philosophical and Literary Society in 1820 The Discovery Centre is just one of nine museum sites spread across the city and its surroundings.**

We met two curators, **Antonia**<sup>1</sup> who has responsibility for the many items of World Culture and **Natalie**<sup>1</sup> who cares for Costume and Textiles. The collection extends from the sixteenth century to modern times.

Antonia gave us a brief overview of the centre before Natalie talked about her department in which she hopes particularly to have some concentration on items from Leeds. There have been generous donors of whole collections like the Sanderson collection.

## Leeds Friday 15

We have tried to select highlights since there were so many things to delight us.

In the sixteenth century all men had to cover their heads and in Leeds there is an original knitted cap from this time.

Some readers may recall a speaker at a study day who had been faced with the task of knitting such a cap for a film. She could not of course find a modern pattern. We were told the end result was successful and the Leeds cap confirms this.

To contrast with this workaday item we saw some prettily embroidered **eighteenth century shoes**<sup>2</sup> which looked very small.

The High Street tailor Burton's developed their business in Leeds, initially because of the availability of woollen cloth. However with the demand for "de-mob" suits tailoring rapidly took over manufacturing in the city. Now the Burton Archive is held here.

From the World Culture department we saw amazing embroidery with **moose hair from Canada**<sup>3</sup> and then a **masquerade costume from Nigeria**<sup>4</sup>. It was a complete body suit in a geometric pattern of red and yellow and black with very obvious breasts.

Human hair was used for another pair of small shoes and what a contrast these were to the enormous boots and **fur coat from Canada**<sup>5</sup>. We did not realize that the Inuits were so large. Fur presents major storage problems because it needs to be stored at much lower temperatures than other things and is at much greater risk of infestation.

The final item in the morning was a beautiful wedding dress made from alpaca, dated 1850. The green seemed to shimmer across many shades. At the center back waist was a little bow. This dress was a present to the bride from her employers. She must have been a very valued servant because the dress was obviously expensive.

The afternoon started with a splendid **dragon robe from China**<sup>6</sup> embroidered in gold, purple and blue. It completely overshadowed a painted robe for an actor on stage.

Then a rather dull storage box appeared. From it emerged tiny shoes of embroidered silk. These were far too precious to tread the streets for they were worn by Chinese women whose feet had been bound when they were very young so that they did not grow but developed into a claw like shape.

Natalie followed with what Western women must have found almost as uncomfortable - corsets with whalebone to keep the corset stiff and the woman caged upright. These ranged from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century with the common feature of whale bone and laces for pulling in the shape. Most were rather dull but one was especially pretty in a **floral fabric with green ribbons**<sup>7</sup> instead of "grey" laces.

To enter the temperature controlled area in the afternoon we had to assemble in an air locked space before the inner doors were opened.

After passing large taxidermy, which was originally intended to hang on the walls but it was found the walls were not strong enough, we came to the interesting items. There were many firmly closed metal cupboards which **housed costumes both old**<sup>8</sup> and very modern such as Alexander McQueen and Vivienne Westwood. The cupboards protected the contents from atmospheric damage.

The service continues to collect but now feels the need for provenance and some connection with Leeds which makes the object more interesting and enhances its value to history.



①



⑦



# Armley Mill

Report by Caroline Levett

**We walked to Armley Mills after an already eventful morning (fire alarm) through a vaulted crisscross arcading which not only carries Leeds station above, but has four separate channels of the River Aire tumbling below. Even Dickens said it was a bleak place.**

The tow path took us past warehouses with arches to let barges into the building for dry loading and past Italianate chimneys, modelled on San Geminiano, which were built to extract dust from Harding's needle making factory. On the skyline, Marshalls mills, with a building modelled on the Temple of Horus at Edfu, complete with grazing sheep on its roof, until one fell through a sky-light and mangled a spinning machine below.

For some two miles we passed the skeletons of mills going back more than 200 years, dye works, and cleared sites. The scale of the enterprises was daunting. Finally, into Armley Mills. Corn and fulling mills flourished here in the 1500's, spanning the River Aire. By 1788 there were five water wheels just for fulling. A local clothier acquired the site, and built the largest textile mill in the world, with its upper floors alongside the newly finished Leeds Liverpool canal. Just as it was being acquired by a new owner in 1805 it caught fire, and only the basement and the Georgian manager's house were left. From the

ashes was constructed the earliest surviving fireproof building. In spite of fires destroying the roof, the rest of the mill itself remains as it was built.

It is a museum of everything - corn milling, locomotives, engines big and small, the film industry (first film made in Leeds) ... After looking briefly into the well-appointed Managers' houses, we met Barry, who led us round the

textile exhibits with tales of dark satanic mills. We were shown early carding tools and an arm-ripping early carding machine; then spinning tools

from wheels through to the spinning Jenny, and its hybrid offspring the mule, whose rising spindles could (and did) take fingers off when threads snapped. The mule at Armley Mills is still used by Hainsworth - a piece of their baize for a billiard table would set you back £3,000. So to the looms, with flying shuttles, and a sad story of a young worker who had lost concentration while positioning a shuttle, which had flown off the loom into her friend 's temple, killing her.

Apparently sucking was the only way to get the thread through the porcelain eye, and was known as kissing the shuttle; the fibres taken into the lungs were a cause of cancer. There were two fine Jacquard looms too which had been in use less than 30 years ago. Next came the nap raiser, with row upon row of French teasels, and finally the finishers shears, which we could not lift, and the mechanical version.

Downstairs there was a fascinating display on the clothing industry with examples of early cutting tools and sewing machines. Ready to wear clothing dominated local employment in the 20th Century, when Leeds, through *Burton and Hepworths* (now *Next*) dressed half the men in Britain.

We returned to the origins of the site in the basement of the mill, which houses fulling stocks, used for hundreds of years to pound finished cloth in a mixture of urine and animal excrement - subsequently replaced with fuller 's earth. A fascinating finishing point to a canter through five hundred years of fabric manufacture.



## Leeds Saturday 18



**A Proud Moment for Hainsworth**

The Royal Wedding was one of the most momentous days the world has seen this decade and one of the proudest moments for Hainsworth.

Much anticipation surrounded the unveiling of the bride's dress, however many of the employees at Hainsworth were eagerly anticipating the groom's attire.

Anticipation turned to pure delight when Prince William appeared from Clarence House wearing his Scarlet Uniform of Colonel of the Irish Guards. Both Prince William and Prince Harry's exquisite uniforms were made from Hainsworth cloth, as were many of the other ceremonial uniforms worn, including the two page boys.

**HAINSWORTH**  
QUALITY IN TEXTILES SINCE 1787

*Major's uniform of the British & Portuguese*



The City of Leeds was known for many years as the centre of the clothing industry. This was powered by a very skilled trade in which clothing was handmade by crafts people living and working in cramped and insanitary conditions called tenements.

Up to these conditions led due to the lack of ventilation of the mill, made worse by the smoke of the steam engines.

These conditions led to a high death rate of children, and many of the children who survived were stunted and weak.

The textile of general circulation were made with wool from the west of England and the cotton from the United States. The wool was brought to Leeds from the west of England and the cotton from the United States.





## Walk around Leeds

Report by Anne Brown

**Our weekend finished with a walking tour by Ken Gore, who had accompanied us to Armley Mills Industrial museum the previous day.**

A fount of knowledge regarding the history of Leeds and its industrial past. We tried hard to keep him focused on the cloth industry but many of the other industries were related in some way or another so could not be left out.

It was most appropriate that we were staying at the Hotel Metropole as this was built on the site of the 4th white cloth hall to replace the 3rd white cloth hall in 1868. The building did not last long, due to the decline in cloth manufacturing in Leeds. It was never fully used, and was demolished in 1895. Only the cupola survives, incorporated onto the hotel roof. The first cloth hall was built in 1711 on Kirkgate for the sale of white (undyed) cloth.

Ken introduced us to Marshalls Temple Flax Mills by means of reading us a poem "The House that Jack built" humbly dedicated to Mr John Marshall, Flax spinner 1765 - 1845, Holbeck. Copies supplied on request! It sums up the dour conditions in the 18th & 19th centuries but despite this he was considered one of the most liberal of factory owners and encouraged education with his child workers and contributed to many educational institutions in Leeds as well.

Our walk started by heading towards Park Square where Ken pointed out a baroque style building which was the first ever ready to wear clothing factory set up in 1876 by John Barran who had applied new technology to the industry, introducing Singer sewing machines and a new type of band knife, able to cut through several layers of cloth at once and Leeds then grew into a world manufacturing centre for clothing.

Walking back towards the old Post office in City Square Ken told us about the statues in front of the building in particular Dr Walter Hook who became vicar of Leeds in 1837 -1859 and had a great influence on education and working hours at the height of the industrial revolution. Continuing along Boar Lane having had the site of the first department store *The Grand Pygmalion* now *Burger King* pointed out, we stopped at The Bourse, a small side street, where John Barran first started cutting out garments before moving to his new factory on Park Square.

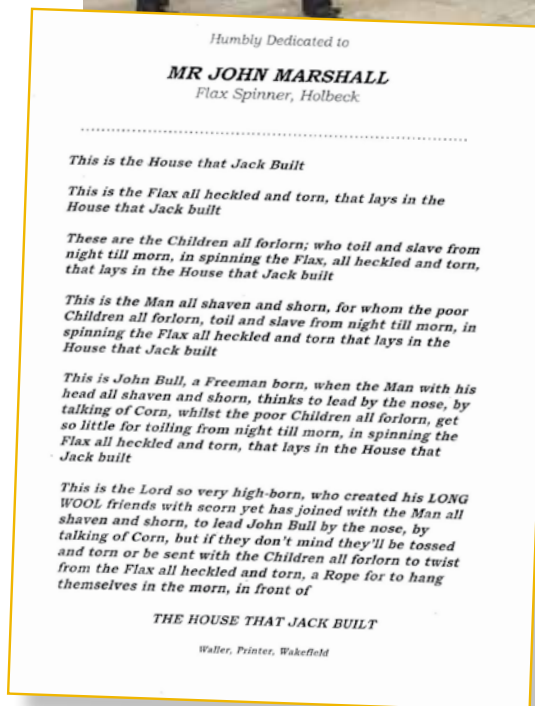
We continued on down Lower Briggate and turned into Queen's Court which is fronted by an eight bayed woollen cloth house built in 1714 and contains the merchant's cloth finishing shops and warehouses with a bell that rings at the start and finishing of trading.

Before we crossed the river Aire over Leeds Bridge we were able to spot a few landmarks which included the first university building built in 1887, the Flat Iron building which inspired the one in New York and the towers in the distance of the Marshall Temple Flax Mills. Our next stop was at Brewery Wharf, now a redeveloped area into modern apartments but it was once the area for dyeing and washing the

cloth due to the soft water beck which was needed for this process. From here we could see the converted building of an old Flax Mill owned by Hives and Atkinson who had a bad reputation for their treatment of child workers, one of whom it was reported died for not being able to go to the toilet.

As we crossed back into the centre of Leeds over Crown Point Bridge we could see the original Burton's factory which originated in Leeds, now Hotel Ibis. We turned into The Calls (no one knows the origin of this name) and past Leeds Paris church and then on the corner of Harper Street and Kirkgate was the building owned by Isaac Dewhurst, wholesale haberdasher and manufacturer of hosiery etc. which was where Michael Marks carefully chose his items for his "Penny Bazaar" and where he met Tom Spencer and in 1894 formed their famous partnership.

Our next stop was on Crown Street to see the 3rd White cloth hall, now Pizza Express, with its original frontage preserved, having first passed what looked like a building site on Kirkgate, the site of the 1st white cloth hall. We were standing right by the Corn Exchange where we could not resist



## Leeds Sunday 17

taking a look at the magnificent domed roof and wrought iron interior. From here we went on into the famous Arcades, a complex of covered glass corridors, decorated with ornate stained glass which now houses some of the most famous names in retailing, Harvey Nicholls, Vivien Westwood and Mulberry just to name a few. It was hard to believe that in 1845 this area was comprised of rows of hovels to house Irish immigrants arriving to escape the potato famine.

This area was just too much for Ken and too tempting for us to leave so it was here we parted company, thanking him for a fascinating tour of Leeds centre and it's industrial heritage especially connected to the cloth industry.

**An extra visit made while killing time before catching my train home, with thanks to Jill Saunders.**

*If anyone is in Leeds and is interested in embroidery a visit to the Library is a must to see The Leeds Tapestry. It consists of 15 large embroidered panels depicting all aspects of life in Leeds. The project was started in 1992 and the last stitch was completed in 2002 by hundreds of people with a great variety of skills.*



# Janet Arnold Study Day

3 October 2015

## Practicality or flight of fancy? Beetles, Feathers and Furs.

□ Bath Cricket Club, North Parade Bridge Road, Bath BA2 4EX



### Pampilion, poots and purfles: furs in the Henrician Great Wardrobe accounts

Speaker Caroline Johnson

Report by Pat Poppy

One of six footman in 1510, wearing the tawny medley gown lined with Irish lamb, black velvet doublet, crimson velvet jacket, kersey hose, double-soled shoes, hat and gathered embroidered shirt provided for him in November at a cost of £6 9s.4d. Illustration from *The King's Servants*. See below.



Caroline Johnson, gave a fascinating talk intriguingly entitled "*Pampilion, poots and purfles*": furs in the Henrician Great Wardrobe accounts. I now know that *pampilion* is a type of black lambskin, *poots* are furs made from foxes' feet, and *purfles* are the trimmings at the edges of a gown.

The period that Caroline was looking at was from about 1490 to about 1520, so most of the reign of Henry VII and the early part of Henry VIII's. Caroline started by examining what evidence the Great Wardrobe Accounts can give to the costume historian. Firstly there are the warrants, orders from the King, usually in English, saying that he wants individuals or groups of people to be provided with a garment or a range of clothes. As the clothes were made the Great Wardrobe wrote account books, in which they set down what went into making the clothes, and how much it cost. Caroline said that some of these

were in Latin, though when the accountant couldn't think of the right term, he might stick in an English word instead.

#### Furry types

There were six main types of fur in use: fox, rabbit, lamb, squirrel, martin and mustela. It was the skinner who prepared

Relevant to this talk, Caroline Johnson has written a couple of books edited by Jane Malcolm-Davies and Ninya Mikhaila: *The King's Servants* (ISBN 978-0-9562674-0-5) and *The Queen's Servants*. (ISBN 978-0-9562674-1-2). Both published by Fat Goose Press.



# Barrington Court

■ Barrington Court, Barrington, near Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0NQ  
baww.nationaltrust.org.uk/barrington-court

Left to right: Henry VII, Cardinal Wolsey, Henry again, Duke of Norfolk's sleeve and Anne Boleyn's rather splendid spotted sleeves. I'd say letys, but looks more like cheetah...

At Barrington Hall this summer, there was a display of costumes made for the BBC's *Wolf Hall*. It didn't strike me particularly at the time (being interested in the whole exhibition and blown away by the house), but haven't the designers had fun with the fur? Fiona Starkey



the skins, selecting them and stitching together the pelts to form a consistent whole, the whole being known a fur. Furs were used both to line and to trim gowns, and enormous numbers of skins might be used, for example in 1498 Lady Katherine Gordon had a gown lined with 440 skins.

For fox furs the northern European fox was preferred. Caroline stated that De La Pole, a Yorkist claimant to the throne imprisoned in the Tower, was provided with two woollen gowns lined with fox fur, involving 5 fox furs at 20 shillings each and 1½ fox furs at 14 shillings each. Poots, the darker fur of fox feet, was used for ladies' gowns and were cheaper at 12 shillings each.

Rabbit was referred to as coney, and rabbit furs usually contained nine skins. Relatively small amounts were used at court, and for items like lining ladies' boots.

Lambskins were used more widely, especially in men's wear, and could be referred to as budge or pampilion. One wedding gown, which contained five yards of tawny cloth, was lined with 79 lamb skins at 3d each. Generally facings were of a better quality fur than the lining. Legs of lamb were cheaper, and were sold in tavelons, or bundles, or shanks at 1d a tavelon. They were used to trim ladies' gowns at the collar, cuffs and the purfle, which is the hem.

The northern European squirrel coat turns darker in the winter, to a greyer colour with a white front, and it was only the winter pelts, often from the Baltic, that were used.

Mustela is the family that includes weasels, stoats and minks, and therefore ermine. Letys is the white fur from a weasel and from each pelt the area of fur used is small, about 2½ inches long by 3½ inches wide. Powder letys has little black dots all over it, and these are made by inserting a different black fur through little slots made in the skins. Stoat pelts were larger, and if the white winter coat is used, then that is ermine. The final fur that Caroline mentioned is from the marten, and that is called sable. Sables were used by Henry VIII himself, every Maunday Thursday he had a purple gown lined with sables.

One comment to be made in conclusion is that Caroline dealt brilliantly with the endless questions about what various terms meant, even when as with a glaudkyn, she had to say we don't really know, but possibly a long, loose gown from the amount of fabric used in the making.



*Clockwise from the top: Regency last minute check, early C20th debutantes souvenir photo, the court of St James, Mrs Simpson's memorable photo and inset the 1937 'Bible' of Do's and Dont's for presentation at court.*

## A Waving Field of Feathers: Dressing the Head for presentation at the English court 1700-1939

Speaker Joanna Marschner

Report by Vibeke Ormerod

**"It is quite true! One little feather may easily become five hens"! I am sure that this quote from Hans Christian Andersen could be used to illustrate the exaggerated tales told of Drawing Rooms at court but also here to stress how a simple accessory like a feather head dress could become an important symbol and indication of status at the English Court and how an elegant ostrich feather evolved into enormous plumes.**

Joanna led us straight into a Drawing Room at St James, 1809 with an engraving by Rowlandson and AC Pugin for Ackermann's Microcosm of London where the elegant ladies all wore feathers and the gentlemen still wore wigs and the ladies hoops. Though wigs and hoops were going out in general by this time they were still used at court where strict guidelines had to be adhered to. It was not until 1820 when George IV became king that the hooped dresses were abandoned. In their stead were feathers and court trains.

Feathers however were in evidence at court right up to 1939 (when the last court levée/ Drawing Room was held at St James) and beyond. Richard Rush, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America wrote in early C18th: No lady was without her plume, the whole was a waving field of feathers! The waving feathers might to some extent be due to the fact that there were no chairs in the drawing room, the assembly usually formed a standing circle so the royals could move around within and admire the "ornaments of society", the ladies, in all their finery, but trying to stand like that for two hours in a very heavy hoop would certainly make my feathers wave!

Queen Anne formalized the practice of having young girls presented to her and the

*See page 22 for a dip into the language of fans*

*continued on next page*

*continued from previous page*

Drawing Room became a regular occasion. Similar occasions at St James were the king's birthday and levées. There was a steady introduction of feathers to be worn on the head

from the 1750s with blond lace (lappets) and the question was how many should one wear? Married women usually wore three feathers and young girls two. In the 1770s hardly any lady wore less than



three, many trying to replicate the three feathers of the royal crest, the Prince of Wales' plume. A room was usually set aside at court for ladies to put on their feathers as there was insufficient head height for them to be worn in the carriages. The lappets were the precursor for the feathers and veil head dresses of the C19th and C20th. Regulations for coloured feathers changed, they were at one time prohibited. Black feathers were worn with court mourning dress. The feathers were usually wired to a tiara to make them stay on the head and young girls could attend classes to learn court etiquette. The feather fan became a favourite accessory from 1870s and remained so well into the C20th.

The afternoon Drawing Room at St James was abandoned in favour of Evening Courts in 1901 much to the delight of the participants as it was keenly felt that all but the very young looked better in the softer evening light than in the stark light of day. In the 1937 edition of "Dress and Insignia Worn at Court" Lord Chamberlain declared: "ostrich feathers will be worn on the head"! The young ladies, from a world of elegance and privilege, presented at court in 1939 with their feathers and fans, had to follow strict guidelines for dress and behaviour but after WWII the tradition of court dress was slowly consigned to the history books. The last presentation of young debutantes to the Queen took place in 1958.



Jayne Shrimpton



### Following Fashion Feathers and Furs in Family photographs, 1860-1950

Speaker Jayne Shrimpton

Report by Vibeke Ormerod

**I really liked Jayne Shrimpton's talk as it is not so often one gets an insight into the fashions of the less well off but Jayne presented us with photographs from the 1860s to the end of the Second World War, explaining the prevalence of feathers and furs in family photos from all walks of life, both high and low from ordinary working people to the more affluent.**

Photographs earlier than 1860 are hard to come by so we began by looking at the *cartes de visite*, very fashionable in the early 1860s, a production of which started in 1859. These could depict any number of people from a single individual to a family or a group.

Hats were in again during the mid C19th and 1830-60s the pork pie hat was especially favoured. This was worn by all classes and adorned by feathers, either with a plume of ostrich, or with a modest feather or two. A photo of a shooting party from 1860s showed all the ladies wearing feathers in their hats, some had fur muffs and coats edged with fur, this being a winter shooting scene and a wealthy family. The kind of fur chosen would depend on the colour of the jacket, for example dark brown fur was teamed with black velvet. Some later photos showed ladies with very tall hats, fur round their necks and fur edging down the middle of the coat.

Ostrich feathers were very popular and to meet demand ostrich farms started up in 1860 and now hats could be liberally decorated. Towards the end of the 1860s the new raised hairstyle came in so hats changed accordingly and so did the feathers, one example being an egret plume.

One photo 1778-80 showed two ladies in shoulder capes with deep fur trim, possibly sable, which was most prized at this time. Fur hats were also in evidence (1870-80) worn by young girls from Canada and Scotland respectively, both from colder climes, where not only the well-to-do wore fur but also the lower and middling classes. The Hudson Bay Company was now well established for fur trading.





## Beetle wings and Crochet loops: the re-conservation of Ellen Terry's Beetle wing dress

Speaker Natalia Zagorska-Thomas

Report by  
Meg Tillotson-Pohl

### The Conservation of Ellen Terry's costume worn by her when playing Lady Macbeth.

A portrait of Ellen Terry in the beetle wing dress painted by John Singer

Sargent is in the Tate. The dress is housed at her home at Smallhythe Place, Kent, a purpose made model of Ellen in theatrical pose (as the portrait) in its own revolving showcase.

Some of our members had seen it and said it was beautifully lit and looked stunning.

The National Trust owns the property so it was an appropriate place for it to be on permanent display.

Reasons for the reconstruction of the dress:

- In respect of Ellen Terry as a famous actress
- As the portrait is so famous and by such an important artist
- An iconic stage costume worn by Ellen.

Most stage artists had their costume made by Theatre Workshops, but Ellen being who she was insisted on using her own favourite people to design and make her clothes. The costume was designed by Alice Comyns-Carr and was made by Ada Nettleship. Therefore there were no theatre wardrobe records for research.

Thirteen pieces of the original dress remained, two bodice parts, two sleeve parts, one scabbard, some sections of the bodice and skirt panels, some

*continued on next page*

Men were naturally also wearing fur, first we saw a sailor 1880-90 who had a wonderful overcoat with fur collar and cuffs. Astrakhan fur was mainly associated with men, often used as trim on big lapels and it still features hugely in men's dress in Uzbekistan. Women are seen wearing more fur during the time when ladies' clothing became more masculine.

1900-02 introduces a "new" feature, the feather boa and it was very fashionable until WWI. It was also popular earlier during the Regency years and was then called a snake, not quite as dramatic as a boa! A Lady from 1906 had donned a feather boa along with a very wide hat as hats had become very large. Big hats decorated with lots of feathers lasted until 1922. During the end of WWI some hats were quite plain and barely had any feathers, only little tufts. Hats could be straw or felt and were wide brimmed.

Amongst the photos were a couple of wedding scenes, one showing the use of swans' down on a white wedding costume for a lady of middle or upper class status, the jacket trimmed with swans' down, another showing the bridesmaids wearing dyed feathers in their head dress.

Jayne then showed us a lady in an actual fur coat and a wonderful hat creation, suspecting that this lady might be an early motorist as an actual fur coat was not yet very common. 1910-18 however, was the heyday of the full-length fur coat as they really took off during WWI not only for adults but for children as well. The big fur collar and fur stole went on into the 20s, 30s and 40s. Monkey fur is a hit in the 20s as well as fox, silver white, red and black and beaver lamb. At festive occasions it still meant all furs came out right up till the end of WWII. And older ladies carried on wearing their finery beyond that.

A very illuminating talk that makes me want to go through my own family photos.



**We were in the fortunate position of having two excellent reports for the Beetlewing dress presentation. As each has a very different flavour, we're printing both.**



The Cricket club was a new venue for WEGS and seems to have gone down well. We managed to fit in several sales tables and a space for the brilliant raffle prizes. Thank you to everyone who helped on the day.



Detail image showing the belt links.  
continued from previous page

scraps of silk linings in different colours. Some parts of the bodice were knitted and crocheted mesh formed the foundation of the skirt panels. The foundation of the bodice was knitted.

It took a mammoth amount of time to make any sense of the tiny amount of scraps from which the conservation team had to work. The recreation entailed trial crochet and knitting in different yarns, replicating colours by dyeing and careful recording of all findings.

The final dress was mounted on net.

A toile was made of the dress to send to the model maker so they could make an accurate model with the arms raised as in the portrait.

The beetle wings were sourced from Thailand – home of the sternocera beetle. They shed their wings once a year. A tiny hole has to be drilled into each wing for stitching onto the dress. These were stitched at random all over the dress but

in a more formal arrangement on the sleeve hems. These were an important feature of the costume in the portrait and the showcase.



Co-incidentally I was watching Pixar's 'Brave' when these reports came in and couldn't help noticing Queen Elinor's dress. Do you think the Pixar chaps are in on this project?  
Fiona Starkey

## Beetle wings and Crochet loops: the re-conservation of Ellen Terry's Beetle wing dress

Report by Anne Dye

### Conservation of the Ellen Terry Lady Macbeth costume

This talk was given by Natalia Zagorska-Thomas. The conservation company Natalia works for was asked by the National Trust to conserve the dress that Ellen Terry had commissioned for her to wear in the role of Lady MacBeth in 1888. This dress is now kept at Smallhythe Place, now owned by the National Trust. This was an enormous responsibility as there is a painting by Singer Sargent portraying Ellen Terry wearing this dress in her role as Lady MacBeth so there was a pre-conceived idea of what the dress should look like. Helpfully there was also a contemporary photograph as well.

In the early 1980s the dress had been conserved to enable it to go on display, however the time had come to look at it again. It must be remembered that this was a stage costume designed to look good on stage under limelight and would have been altered and changed to fit the needs at the time

### Preservation or re-creation?

The decision was made to preserve what was there and not to make any irreversible changes so that future conservationists could see what was original and what had been done to conserve it. The skirt was made in crochet triangular panels in a black cotton made by several different people and decorated with thousands of iridescent green beetle wings, many of which had fallen off. The bodice was knitted in a black wool. The dress was lined with green silk throughout.

The dress was taken apart and it was discovered that there was probably two costumes as there were two bodices. In conserving it, the holes in the bodice were filled by knitted pieces in a different thread so they would be identified as conservation but would not be detected on display. The sleeves, when laid out, looked as if they had been altered by making them narrower and not as long as shown in the photograph. To pursue this theory the central seam was unpicked and immediately the material relaxed and assumed the shape shown in the photograph, so a replacement piece was crocheted and put into the space supported with silk and net.

The skirt was repaired using stranded cotton with crocheted triangles and the whole skirt was supported using dyed conservation net. It was evident in the deconstruction that the skirt had been much fuller from the amount of material present in the lining. In fact when the dress was assembled and put on the dummy to recreate the sweeping hemline, for which the dress was famous, it had disappeared. So taking a lesson from the bodice the central back seam was seen not to be sitting properly so it was undone and the skirt relaxed and the sweeping hemline re-appeared. Clearly there had been a piece removed, so again a piece was crocheted and dyed net used to fill the gap. The beetle wings that decorated the skirt and glowed so beautifully in the limelight in the painting are from a male beetle who dies immediately after mating so they can be swept up from the jungle floor. A neighbour who had travelled to Thailand returned with a bag full. These were then drilled and sewn on. Those original wings which were useable but damaged were reinforced with Japanese tissue and re-attached.

The dress was then placed on a custom made mannequin in the stance shown in the painting and displayed on a rotating turntable. All the spare pieces like the second bodice and pieces of crocheted strips have been very carefully stored for the future. Natalia gave a very lively talk about her work and showed the detail to which conservationists have to go and also demonstrated what a journey costumes go through in their lives.



Beetle wings being used in the creation of clothes out of the limelight- this C19th example from India in the collection of the Fashion Museum, Bath





## Magna Carta

(An Embroidery) at the British Library

Jill Hazell



It's almost exactly a year ago that I first heard about a new embroidery being created to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta which was going to be displayed in the British Library in London. Designed by the British artist Cornelia Parker, it was to be a 13 metre replica of the entire Wikipedia page on Magna Carta which regularly attracts more than 150,000 page views each month and is constantly being amended by users of the website as the debate about Magna Carta and its legacy ebbs and flows.

Parker described her artwork as a snapshot of where the debate is right now, echoing the communal activity that resulted in the Bayeux Tapestry, but on this occasion placing more emphasis on the word rather than the image. *'I want to create an artwork that is a contemporary interpretation of Magna Carta.'*

The whole page was to be divided into 87 sections and most of the text would be stitched by prisoners under the supervision of *Fine Cell Work*, apart from odd words and

phrases which were to be worked by judges, barristers, civil liberties campaigners, barons, historians, musicians and others. Twelve detailed pictures, emblems and logos were to be stitched by members of the Embroiderers' Guild, the Royal School of Needlework and the embroidery company *Hand and Lock*. Once all the sections were completed, members of the Royal School of Needlework would join them all together again.

Members of the Embroiderers' Guild around Great Britain were invited to submit a piece of their work, plus any relevant qualifications and experience they had, for the chance to embroider one of the panels for it. I liked the idea of taking part in a huge national project, so with not much expectation of being chosen, I sent in an image of one of my embroideries – the original set and costumes of the Ballet Russes 1913 production of *Petrushka* - and several weeks later I received an email telling me I was invited to represent the South West Embroiderers' Guild if I would still like to take part.

I have to admit to a certain sense of panic when in mid-September, my piece arrived in the post. It was a photo of Magna Carta Place in Canberra, Australia measuring 15 x 19 cms - which had to be completely covered in hand stitching, with 3 lines of text underneath. I had until the beginning of January to complete it and I knew it would be a stretch to get it done in time.

I began by choosing my colours and buying the ones I didn't have. I used DMC 6-strand cotton embroidery floss and worked the whole thing in random long and short stitch using single strands worked over and over each other until I had reached the desired effect to match the photograph. I always find it exciting that a slightly different angle in the way one stitch sits along side another can reflect the light differently, making the colour of the two stitches look completely different even if the colour of the thread in the needle is exactly the same. The really exciting thing about this way of stitching is that you have no idea what it is going to look like until you try it - and if it looks wrong, you can simply go over it again trying different colours and angles until you have the effect you are looking for! I feel that you get much more depth of light and colour with this way of stitching (rather like painting in oils) and of course, you get more texture and an almost 3D effect. For instance, when I was embroidering the sky, I had six needles with different coloured threads going at any one time, all of which went in at different angles and depths. So when I say I use random long and short stitch, it is actually much more experimental and time consuming and not at all random in the end. The total stitching time was 140 hours and I finally sent the completed work in at the beginning of December.

It seemed an age to wait before seeing the completed work, but in May I was invited to the launch of the artwork at the British Library. It was great to meet Cornelia Parker and some of the other stitchers and seeing the full 13 metre length stretched out on a huge table with my bit back in its original place.



**The British Library exhibition finished in July 2015 and went on to the Bodleian Library, Oxford in the autumn. It will tour several cathedrals in Britain during 2016.**

## Riviera style

5 March - 31 August 2015

■ Fashion and Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF

www.ftmlondon.org

Report by Ann Brown

**A little walk from London Bridge station and down Bermondsey Street you find the terracotta painted building of the Fashion and Textile Museum. The exhibition was "Riviera Style – Resort & Swimwear since 1900" which even if you have never been to the Riviera conjures up many memories of family holidays and days at the local swimming pool.**

On entering the museum there is a side room which held a display of Rayne shoes from their conception to the present day including shoes worn by Ginger Rodgers, which is one reason the display is called *Shoes for Stars*.

The main display area, which is very open plan, is set in chronological order starting with *Bathing Beauties* 1895 – 1919 with examples of the bathing dress that completely covered the body, bloomers, an overdress, stockings and headgear. All that was needed was the bathing machine behind the displays! The main ground floor area is called *Cling, bag, Stretch* 1920 – 1936 with some very glamorous leisure wear.

### Increasing exposure

The 1920s and 30s saw increasing exposures of the body at the swimming pool, lido and the beach and this was the response to the fashion for a suntan. On display was not only the one piece swimming costumes for women but also brightly coloured beach pyjamas worn to laze around the pool and wander from the beach to the smart hotel. Up until 1930s men were required by law to cover their torsos, but rules were relaxed and two-piece suits appeared with detachable tops. Several examples of all of these were on display with a background of an outdoor lido and some models paddling in the imitation pool and one lady complete with bathing hat diving into the pool from mid air, looking just like the logo for *Jantzen* swimwear. This was also the era of the knitted swimming costume which brings back memories to many of us who had one as a child in the 1940s, samples of which were also on display.

### Mould and control

Walking up the stairs with posters from well know seaside resorts one came into *Mould & Control* 1940 – 1959. Swimwear production virtually stopped during the Second World War, so the displays in this era were mostly on the glamorous costumes worn by the bathing beauty Queens at contests in many British seaside towns in the 1950s. The brightly patterned playsuits and cotton sundresses became popular in this period made by companies such as Horrockses\*, an essential

garment for the growing popularity of Continental holidays.

### Body Beautiful

The next section *Body Beautiful* 1960 – 1989 saw the increased popularity of the bikini with several examples on display along with the skimpier men's swimwear introduced by the popularity of *Speedos*. Palazzo pants and other resort wear with designs by Emilio Pucci are particularly noteworthy in 1960s and 70s.

The exhibition concludes with *Second Skin* 1990 onwards. Continuing advances in fabric technology have provided tan-through fabrics and speed-enhancing materials that

have helped shave seconds off Olympic swimming records. The swimwear designed by Stella McCartney for the British women's swimming team made part of this section along with diamanté and rhinestone encrusted swimsuits, resort and cruise collections now available all year round.

The Fashion and Textile Museum is always worth a visit in a fascinating part of London. Their next exhibition is *Liberty in Fashion\*\** which runs from 9 October until 28 February 2016. Look for details on

www.ftmlondon.org

*Illustration and quotes from the Fashion and Textile Museum publicity*

\* See Dr. Christine Boydell, one of our speakers at the March Study day for more information about Horrockses. Page 4

\*\* More information in 'Out and About' on Page 5



## Granny's Days Out in London

Ann Brown, our roving reporter, has been on her travels again.

Latest instalments brought to you by WECS Wardrobe!

*Next column, top:* Poster for the exhibition  
Post cards, both pages: "Make do and Mend" British Poster, Second World War  
"Go through your Wardrobe" Donia Nachshen. British poster, Second World War  
"Utility clothes: Fashion restrictions in War time Britian, Ministry of information, Second World War official collection, 1943  
"Miss Vivian Thomas applies face powder using the wing mirror of an ambulance, 1941"  
With thanks to the Imperial War Museum



## Fashion on the Ration 1940s Street Style

5 March - 31 August 2015

■ Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ

www.iwm.org.uk

Report by Ann Brown

IWM IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS



Once again I had time to myself in London before collecting my grandson from after school club so I set off to The Imperial War Museum and the exhibition of *Fashion on the Ration*. Having fought my way past tanks, guns and aeroplanes I made my way to the second floor for a less violent but practical view of the Second World War.

On entering the exhibition examples of many of the uniforms worn by both men and women serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Land Army during the war were displayed along with their accessories including the lisle stockings the women had to endure and darn for as long as possible.

Early on in the war were advertisements for stores such as Fortnum & Mason and Lilywhites in many magazines such as *Vogue* for practical clothing. One garment that really caught the eye was a siren suit, to be worn mostly at night so you could just get up and go to the air raid shelter. The forerunner to the "onesie"! In the same area under practical items were two very fashionable looking bags designed to disguise your gas mask. As the lights went out people were encouraged to make or buy luminous items such

as flower brooches, buttons on coats or even carry luminous bags, many samples of which were on display. The famous turbans and patterned housecoats could not be left out, worn by the wives left at home and as a safety protection for the more physical jobs women were taking on.

### On the map

Silk maps were sold off by 1945 and a classic example of this was an underwear set made for Patricia Mountbatten with a map of Italy given to her by her boyfriend! The centre of this display was a wedding dress made in 1939 using petticoat fabric and then by 1946 had been used by 12 people. Many brides had to arrange their wedding in five days and *Vogue* was another source of information. Parachute silk was not available until 1945.

There was a section on the Utility Scheme, where ten members of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers had been commissioned by the Board of Trade to produce stylish and economical outfits that could be produced under the Utility scheme. These had to follow all the rules and regulations set down and on display were many examples of men's and women's wear including accessories and children's clothes, short trousers only for boys under 13.

Make up was not left out of the exhibition with advice from Yardley cosmetics "We have to remember that to yield to carelessness is to lower standard to the enemy". There was a wonderful display of Jacmar scarves with propaganda prints such as *Careless talk costs lives* and *Happy landings*.

Although the war ended in 1945 there was a further cut in the clothing allowance leading many people to say "Most of our garments won't make do or mend anymore!" Export of clothing of better quality items which held the double eleven symbol was encouraged.

The exhibition concluded with the de-mob suit which was valued around £12 and produced by several companies including the Leeds firm *Burton*, of which members that visited the city earlier this year will be aware. Finally on film the legacy of 1940 style was discussed by six people from today's fashion industry, including Patrick Grant from the *Sewing Bee* and Katie Entwistle assistant archivist from *Marks & Spencer*.

It was a fascinating insight into how life changed so dramatically for so many people during the war, especially for those left at home where many new skills were learnt and friendships made. Maybe at last we are realizing what these people gained from the experience and we are learning some of these skills again, as we scour the charity shops and learn to knit and sew once more. We just call it recycling or upcycling!



### On the ration begins

On 1st June 1941 clothes became rationed which brought on the *Make do and Mend* campaign. This was a recurrent subject in women's magazines which were full of advice such as "buy bigger clothes for children". Knitting was encouraged as wool that contained less than 16% animal hair was off ration so there was no excuse not to knit your child a swim suit, one of which that had survived was on display. People were encouraged to go to "Make do and Mend" sewing classes by colourful posters displayed for all to see.

The clothing allowance was reduced in late 1942 causing renovations to existing clothes to be made which was encouraged by the readers of *Vogue*. Propaganda films to educate the public to "Make do and Mend" were on show including the famous *Mrs. So & Sew*.



## Moravian Textile Tour

18-25th May 2015  
Report by Liz Booty

Seven of us from the Textile Society (several of whom are also members of the main Costume Society) spent a fascinating week discovering the textiles, costumes and so much more of this beautiful part of the Czech Republic that was once part of the Austrian/Hungarian Empire so full of wonderful architecture and countryside.

We visited so many places finding out about blueprint printing, pearl button making, felt hat making, ecclesiastical embroidery and tapestry/carpet weaving. We went to open air museums featuring traditional buildings, crafts and fabric manufacture, and the Bata shoe museum. The Mammoth hunters' museum had evidence of the earliest known example of weaving and an extraordinary proliferation of skeletons. We ended in the Czech Republic's second city Brno – where we visited Mies van der Rhohe's world famous iconic Villa Tugendhat and finally the fascinating one and only Gypsy Museum. Some of us even fitted in an opera.

It was a wonderful trip put together by Margaret Beith and using the excellent guide/organiser of Zoe Brooks of Czech Tours who has a great in depth knowledge of the area.

## Small Print Alert

Your committee is suggesting we amend WECS' constitution to reflect changing times: mostly editing long passages to shorter sentences and reflecting the changing, current makeup of the society. Passages which have been altered are marked in **magenta**, below. This updated constitution will be voted on at the AGM.

### Constitution

- 1) The name of the Society shall be "The West of England Costume Society". No one shall use the name of the Society without the permission of the Committee.
- 2) The object of the Society shall be:
  - a) promotion of the study of costume and its history
  - b) helping in the preservation of significant examples of historical and contemporary dress
- 3) The management of the Society shall be vested in a Committee of Officers and Ordinary Members. The Officers shall include Chairman, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. Other Officer roles may be identified as needed. The Committee shall meet at least three times a year. Each member of the Committee shall have a vote. A motion shall be passed with a simple majority of the quorate Committee. A quorum shall be five members of the Committee. The chairman shall have the casting vote.
- 4) The Annual General Meeting shall be held at a regular time each year with a minimum of three weeks' notice.
- 5) The Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and shall serve for a term of office of three years. They shall be eligible for re-election for one further term of office, after which, in the event that no other Member stands for election, the existing Officer may offer themselves for re-election annually.
- 6) Two Ordinary Members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting for a term of three years. They shall not be eligible for immediate re-election or co-option except as Officers.
- 7) Additional members may be co-opted by the Committee as needed; the co-option shall be ratified at the following Annual General Meeting. Such co-opted members shall serve for no more than three years from the date of the Annual General Meeting and shall not be eligible for immediate re-election or co-option to the Committee except as officers.
- 8) The Committee shall maintain true accounts of the assets and liabilities and income and expenditure. The accounts shall be presented for approval at the Annual General Meeting and audited accounts published as soon thereafter as is possible.
- 9) The Society may raise a subscription from its members to cover administration costs.
- 10) If the Committee decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society it shall call a meeting of all members of the Society. Twenty-one days notice shall be given of the meeting. The disposal of any funds shall be agreed between the Committee and the members of the Society.
- 11) The Committee shall have the power by a majority of two to one to cancel the membership of any member without reason being given, provided that a quorum of not less than five Committee members is present.

## The Language of the Fan

The hand-held fan has been in use for around 4000 years and in ancient Rome, ladies had slaves to fan cool air around them. In the 19th century fashion decreed that every woman should have a fan, often feathered - it was a symbol of femininity and romance. Victorian ladies used the fan to keep cool, hide blushes and send messages...

Rest on the right cheek	Yes	Dropping it	Will we be friends?
Rest on the left cheek	No		
Carrying in right hand		Fanning slowly	I am married
in front of face	Follow me	Fanning quickly	I am engaged
Placing on left ear	I wish to get rid of you	Open wide	Wait for me
		Carrying in left hand, open	Come and talk to me
Twirling in the left hand	We are being watched	Placed behind head	Don't forget me
		Presenting a number of sticks	What time?
Twirling in the right hand	I love another	Clasping the hands	
Drawing across the cheek	I love you	under the open fan	Forgive me
Drawing across the eyes	I am sorry	With little finger extended	Good bye
Touching tip with finger	I wish to speak with you		

Now the only thing to wonder after all that - who's talking to this terrible fidget and what on earth is the chaperone doing allowing this semaphore?

Extract taken from a Ladies' Guide on Etiquette.





## WECS Pinboard



### Committee

#### Chairman

Tony Cooper, 52 The Common, Broughton Gifford, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8NA  
01225 782711  
tony@cooperta.plus.com

#### Secretary

Pat Poppy, 56 Wareham Road, Lytchett Matravers, Dorset BH16 6DS  
01202 622115  
patpoppy@aol.com

#### Treasurer

Sarah Bartlett, 4 Cotley Place, Heytesbury, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0HT  
01985 840624  
sarah@tiramisu.co.uk

#### Membership Secretary

Linda Watts, 3 Woodlands Edge, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 7BE  
01225 763920  
membership@wofecostumesociety.org

#### Booking Secretary

Ann Brown, 29 Thompson Road, Wells, Somerset BA5 1FB  
bookings@wofecostumesociety.org

#### Webmeister

Tony Cooper, 52 The Common, Broughton Gifford, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8NA  
01225 782711  
tony@cooperta.plus.com

#### Programme Secretary

Jean Scott, 24 Pound Lane, Semington, Wiltshire BA14 6LP  
01380 870964  
jeanscott30@btinternet.com

#### Wardrobe Editor

Vibeke Ormerod  
40, Victoria Rd, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1ET  
vibekeormerod@hotmail.com

#### Graphics

Fiona Starkey, The Shambles, Sham Castle Lane, Bath Somerset BA2 6JH  
01225 445800  
fiona@bathdesigncentre.com

#### Co-opted members

Sarah Kenyon, 5 Northover Mews, Frome, Somerset BA11 1AZ  
sarah.kenyon@trowbridge.gov.uk

Angela Adam, 34 Thornhill Road, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 8EF  
01985215331  
adamrb4@blueyonder.co.uk

### See your work in print!

#### Report Writers wanted

We're always looking for diversity in our reports and the more the merrier! It all goes to make the *Wardrobe* an interesting read and gives a real flavour of the society.

To encourage you to give it a go, we're offering a voucher for FREE entrance to a WECS event of your choice as a *thank you* for all published reports.

Please talk to Vibeke Ormerod (Wardrobe Editor) if you'd like to volunteer - starting with the *History of Performance costume* in February and one (one each -you're not expected to do all four!) of the Study Day talks in March.

How to earn  
FREE entry to a  
Study Day!

### Infinite possibilities

#### What would you like to see happening in WECS 2017?

Jean Scott has been arranging WECS' big events for several years now - we've things planned into 2017 - and would appreciate some assistance with some of the smaller, single speaker events and visits.

Would you like to help? Is there somewhere you've been, someone you've heard speak, something you think other members would like to know about? It's great fun, there's lots of support with the logistics and we promise you wouldn't be landed with a Study Day!

Please contact Programme Secretary Jean Scott.

### Workshops for 2016

There's a proposal that WECS organises some Beginners' workshops for small numbers of students next year. Subjects under consideration are

**Beadwork** for appliqué and costume

**Braid making** (tablet weaving, round and flat braids, finger weaving)

Jacobean **crewel embroidery** (think Layton jacket, *Patterns of Fashion* winner this year, Georgian pockets)

**Blackwork** Tudor style

**Lace making.**

With a maximum number of ten people, classes would probably be in or around Bath and in the region of £35-£40 for the day.

If you're interested, please contact Fiona Starkey with an idea of which one(s) you'd like (any others?) and if there are enough to make a class viable, we'll start making firm arrangements.

### Sharpen your pencils!

Pat Poppy will have served three years as Secretary of the Society next year and according to the Constitution the post will be up for (re)election. If you'd like to consider joining in the inner workings of WECS, and can make a pithy report from a committee meeting, there's a nomination form with this magazine.

Thinking ahead - some more Officers are coming up for re-election at the end of 2016. If you'd like to have a bit more to do with the society, please start thinking about how you might contribute to one of the liveliest societies around.



*Eleanora's outing to Avebury Manor*

Earlier this summer the Janet Arnold *Eleanora* outfit (that's the white one, right) made a visit to Avebury Manor where the volunteers are making period-appropriate clothes for past residents. The English Elizabethan outfit is from about the same date as the Italian one but English style has developed a farthingale - apparently fingers have been well and truly worn out stitching it all together and we look forward to seeing it *in situ* on 11 February next year accompanied by a lecture on Tudor costume.

See *Dressing Mrs Dunch* - page 7

**Websites worth a look:**

**www.cardigan.ltd.uk**

Knitted fish counter? You've got to see it to believe it. Look for 'Kate Jenkins/Press' on the menu bar.



**www.stitchfabrics.co.uk**  
Rosenberg & Son  
Excellent fabric suppliers - even fine quality white lawn cotton!



WECS' influence is reaching further than you may have thought. This notification from the Facebook team came in the other day. Anyone fancy a trip to San Diego?

And have you checked out the Facebook page yourself yet? Contributions welcomed.



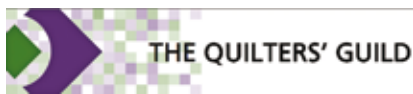
**www.beadworkersguild.org.uk**

For the exchange of ideas and knowledge and to promote beadwork to the public.



**http://icanmakeshoes.com/courses/**

I can make shoes - ballerina pumps, flatties, kitten heels... have a look at the website for courses from beginners to advanced.



**www.quiltersguild.org.uk**

Learning, making, preserving: does what it says in the title.

**www.yalebooks.co.uk**

Fashion books from Yale - too many to list - from the Middle Ages bang up to date.



**www.quiltmuseum.org.uk**

This museum's in York, comfortably near a pub if your companion is not into things fabric.



**www.eurojapanlinks.com**

Cottons from Japan for craft, dressmaking, sashiko supplies, kits. Mail order only.



**www.hangitdangit.com**

Adjustable, extending poles for hanging things straight without fuss or too many holes in the walls. Originally intended for hanging quilts, they also work for Kimonos, costumes and anything with a sleeve on the reverse.



**www.lamanufacturebohin.fr**

French museum/factory for needles, pins, sequins... factory visits and courses offered next time you're in the region just south of Le Havre.

**With this Autumn issue of the magazine you should have:**

- Booking forms for
- History of Performance Costume/AGM
- Fabrics of Fashion March Study Day
- Blandford and Wimborne visit
- 2014 WECS Accounts
- Membership renewal forms for 2016
- Nomination form for 2016 AGM

**Copy for the next newsletter to Vibeke Ormerod by 29 March please**

Meg Andrews  
Antique Costumes and Textiles - rare, unusual and interesting

www.meg-andrews.com  
+44 20 7923 0331

**tulsi**  
- the travel company -

*Specialists in Craft and Textile Study Tours*

**EXCITING INDIAN JOURNEYS FOR 2016-17**

- Tribal Tour of Chattisgarh combined with the textiles and crafts of Orissa and Kolkata  
*November 2016*
- Short tour of Assam with a visit to eastern Bhutan to include the Trashigang Festival  
*November 2016*
- Textile and Craft tour of Gujarat and Rajasthan  
*January/February 2017*
- Tour of western and middle Bhutan  
*February 2017*

Individual unaccompanied tours to India and Bhutan can be arranged at any time

For brochure and further information please contact Pie Chambers  
Tulsi - The Travel Company  
Weavers Cottage, 33 Sturford Lane, Temple, Coatesley, Wiltshire BA12 7QR  
Telephone: 01373 832856  
E-mail info@tulsi.uk.com • Web Site www.tulsi.uk.com