

WECS Wardrobe

Autumn issue 2020

£7.50: Free to members

weecs
west of england
costume society



www.wofecostumesociety.org

Calendar

Realising a Design and AGM

Saturday 13 February 2021

■ Bath and County Club, Bath

Study Day: The Game's Afoot

Saturday 20 March 2021

■ Gloucester Cricket Club, Bristol

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A Harris hug

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It's a wrap!
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Meetings for 2021

Realising a Design and AGM

Saturday 13 February 2021
14.00-16.30

■ Bath and County Club,
Queens Parade Bath BA1 2NJ

We intend to hold the AGM meeting at the Bath and County Club. Depending on the Covid situation nearer the date, we reserve the right to cancel the in-person meeting either to a future date or hold it via Zoom. We will endeavour to give as much notice as possible of any changes and not less than one week before.



Do we boldly wear costume...?

After the AGM meeting and tea, Joe Knapper, who works for *fbx films*, will relate how his company translates film designers' ideas and turn them into costumes. His company has made costumes for films such as *Spiderman*, *Outlander*, *Wonder Woman*, *Star Trek* and many others. It should be a fascinating afternoon.

March Study Day

The Game's Afoot

Saturday 20 March 2021
10.00-16.00

■ Gloucestershire County Cricket Club, Nevil Road, Bristol, BS7 9EJ

We are hoping to run last March's cancelled study day with some of the previously booked speakers. Two of the speakers have confirmed that they are willing to attend and we are waiting for confirmation from the others.



Owing to the current Covid situation and restrictions we have decided not to send out the booking form yet. We are intending to do this by a mailshot in the New Year with more definite programme details.

We sincerely hope that these two events can take place "in the flesh" as it has been a long time since we all met up. Of course we will keep you all informed of future developments by email or post.

Afternoon Talks and Visits

The Events Committee has been trying to plan ahead for the next fifteen months and we wondered whether members would be interested in having afternoon talks once every two months. The idea would be for a speaker to give an hour's talk, allowing time for questions and refreshments afterwards. These talks would be held in Bath probably at the Bath and County Club and a small charge made.

It is several years since we went on trips out and we are considering starting these again. These would be the "get yourself there" type and either whole days or afternoons.

The committee would appreciate feed-back on these ideas, (whether you would attend, whether a weekday afternoon is preferable, your thoughts on the price, any particular topics you would be interested in, places to visit, etc), so please email me at sarah@tiramisu.co.uk.

With best wishes for a good Christmas and may the New Year be a definite improvement for the better on this year!

Out & About

V&A

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



Bags Inside Out

until 12
September 2021



Tracey Emin for Longchamp, International Woman suitcase, 2004. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. DACS



Inside the Kimono: Kyoto to catwalk

In case you missed the exhibition here's a quick look at it:
<https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/inside-the-kimono-kyoto-to-catwalk-exhibition>

The V&A blog

Have a look at the blogs, there are many to choose from. Here's one example:
#Let's Make
Wednesdays - Step into Autumn
Harriet Curnow,
October 7 2020
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London



QUEZ

The use of English has sneaked in to French fashion terms which I imagine the Académie Française would not appreciate.

The use of terms like "street wear" and "pop-up store" is now being challenged.

Below extracts from an article in *The Times* by Pascal Le Segretain.

France tries to reclaim the language of fashion

The French Culture Ministry has teamed up with the fashion industry to introduce a lexicon of French terms to be used in the trade and media instead of their English language counterparts. Time will tell if they are successful. Translations inside the back page!

- ① mannequin vedette
- ② boutique éphémère
- ③ mode de la rue
- ④ catalogue de collection
- ⑤ d'époque
- ⑥ magasin amiral
- ⑦ mode éclair
- ⑧ styliste
- ⑨ boutique-concept
- ⑩ cyber vêtement



Stroudwater Textile Trust and Museum in the Park

■ Museum in the Park, Stratford Park, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4AF. 01453 760923
Alexia.Clark@stroud.gov.uk

The latest newsletter from the Stroudwater Textile Trust had a photograph of an incredible quilt from the Museum in the Park collection which we have permission to share with you. This beautiful piece is not normally on display so here is a chance to have a peep. If you want to know more about it you are welcome to contact

Alexia Clark, Documentation & Collections Officer, Stroud District Council, details above.

Embroidered Stroud Scarlet Quilt with black, navy, cream and turquoise. The first photo shows the centre section of this beautifully constructed Indian embroidered quilt, made entirely from Stroud cloth, scarlet cloth being the dominant feature and the one the area is famous for but other colours such as black, navy, cream and turquoise are also used. The piece is heavily embroidered all over. This elaborate quilt came to the Museum's collections having been rescued from the Stroud School of Art where it was being used as a backdrop for still life work. Images from of the Collections of Museum in the Park, Stroud, ref.no.STGCM 1995 139



Trowbridge Museum 2020

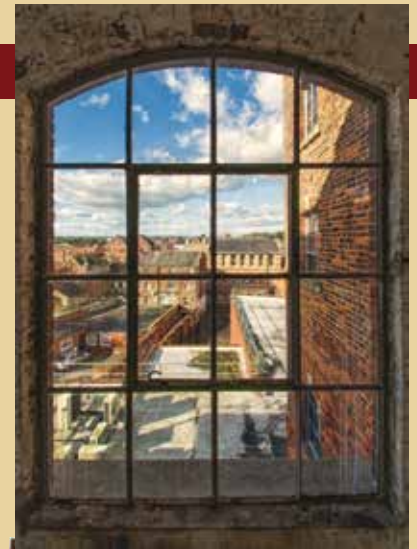
Report by Helen Montague-Smith
www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk

We have been busy expanding into the empty floor above, to double our size and bring Trowbridge a brand new museum, with new displays, never before seen objects and interactives for all ages.

All of our objects have now been safely returned from their temporary home at Upper Heyford in Oxfordshire (a former Air Force base!), where they were heat treated to ensure that no nasty pests were stored with them.

In 2019 we started our journey with designers – Smith and Jones, and architects – Architecton, on the finer details of the re-build, bringing Salter's Home Mill back to life.

We have watched on as Beard Construction made our plans a reality, uncovering original gnarled brickwork which has survived mill fires, building our exciting new learning space, restoring windows which have flooded the space with light and made way for the innovative displays.



Photos courtesy of Roy McDine

We moved back on site (from our temporary office at The Civic) in 2020, excited to set up our offices and get to working on creating the displays, planning to reopen in the Summer.

Then came Covid... We'll say no more.

After a couple months of dining table desks and patchy skype calls, we were able to return to our museum and have been working frantically since, trying to claw back lost time. The new racking in the store has been filled – well over 500 boxes – and many objects on open store in new racking. Friends and volunteers have been working with the staff and their help has been amazing. The very important Spinning Jenny has been conserved and stabilized during the summer, thanks to funding from The Friends.

We are now starting to hang pictures and put items in new display cases. Much more of our costume collection will be on display. So good to have more exhibition space and the Lifelong Learning area on the upper floor is huge with wonderful views over the town and countryside beyond. We can even see the Westbury White Horse! The hidden mice will all be back and entry is still free.

Although our opening has been pushed back until February 2021, we promise the wait will be worth it!

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The Christmas Bazaar this year is online and can be reached by putting **Tulsi Oriental Textiles** into your browser bar or by following the link:
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www.tulsi.uk.com

Out and About comes with all the current caveats about masks, checking first and booking at the various venues and events.



Eighteenth century Dance Shoes

Dance history seems to love its myths. Take dance shoes, for example. A deeply entrenched view has long been that proper dance footwear was unknown until around the beginning of the nineteenth century. In her history of the Pre-Romantic ballet, Marian Winter for example, claims that “a decisive change in dance technique and style came toward 1790, literally on the heels of the Ancien Régime, as the dancer’s heeled shoes were exchanged for supple cothurns or soft, gloving-fitting slippers.”

Such writers are quick to point to an image such as Lancret’s portrait of the famed dancer Camargo from c1732, which shows a heavy stiff high-heeled shoe. This is, however, a portrait, not a photographic record of what was actually worn by professional dancers. And there is good evidence that such a shoe – essentially a street shoe – would *not* have been typically worn by eighteenth-century dancers in performances on or off the stage.

Pumps

Shoes designed for – or at least well suited to – dancing were in existence already by the beginning of the C18. Such shoes were apt to be called *pumps* in the English of the period, or *escarpins* in French. And there are a number of references to these. *The Connoisseur*, for example, mentions in passing “dancing pumps,” while the *Satyr Against Dancing* speaks of thin-soled shoes for dancing:

*The Feet, which vilely to the Earth declin’d,
Are the remotest Members to the Mind:
Yet these manur’d with Cotton Pantaloons,
Soft tender Heels, gay Hose, compleat
Buffoons,*

***The Shoes must be precise, the Soles as thin,
As theirs, who Puppet-like shall dance therein.***

Jenyns in like manner speaks of thin-soled low-heeled shoes to be used in ballroom dancing:

*Thus each Man’s Habit with his Bus’ness suits;
Nor must we ride in Pumps, or dance in Boots.
But you, that oft in circling Dances wheel,
Thin be your yielding Sole, and low your Heel.*

Walcke’s handbook also prescribes that one “always changes shoes before entering the dancing hall,” which again implies the regular use of dance shoes in the ballroom.

The equation of dance shoes with insubstantial pumps is also evident from an anecdote told by Henry Angelo about Grimaldi Iron Legs’s duping of the theatre manager John Rich in 1742:

*Rich . . . listened with rapture to Grimaldi; who proposed an extraordinary new dance; such a singular dance that would astonish and fill the house every night, but it could not be got up without some previous expense, as it was an invention entirely of his own contrivance. There must be no rehearsal, all must be secret before the grand display in, and the exhibition on, the first night. Rich directly advanced a sum to Grimaldi and waited the result with impatience. The maître de ballet took care to keep up his expectations, so far letting him into the secret that it was to be a dance on horse shoes, that it would surpass anything seen before, and as much superior to **all the dancing that was ever seen in***

Introduction

I came across this article by Edmund Fairfax on my general search in costume and dance-related blogs.

I was impressed with the detailed research and wrote to Mr Fairfax to ask permission to print this excerpt in *Wardrobe*.

I had a very kind positive reply complimenting us on “our wonderful work”.

Vibeke Ormerod



Opposite page: Marie Taglioni, Auguste Vestris engraving and Aquatint, *Le Petit Sabotier* 1730s, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This page: Dancing at Almack's - beloved of Georgette Heyer fans everywhere and modern reproduction Georgian shoes from the *American Duchess* website.



pumps. The newspapers were all puffed for a wonderful performance that was to take place on a certain evening. The house was crowded, all noise and impatience – no Grimaldi – no excuse; at last an apology was made. The grand promoter of this wonderful, unprecedented dance had been absent over six hours, having danced away on four horsehoes to Dover and taken French leave.

Pumps were not strictly confined to dance but could also be worn as a **kind of sportshoe**. The *Tatler* satirically alludes to the nicety of a couple of duelists who momentarily set aside their slighted dignity in order to take the time to don their pumps first. At the appointed place, “the Principals put on their Pumps, and strip’d to their Shirts, to show they had nothing but what Men of Honour carry about ‘em, and then engag’d.” In like manner, the *London Magazine* (1735) refers to a beau skating with “his pumps bespatter’d all with mud” (cited in Cunningham 1971: 80).

Pumps could be worn **even as everyday wear**, especially by fops until the latter part of the century, when they became widely fashionable. In his novel *Jonathan Wild*, for example, Fielding has an attorney’s dandified clerk wear “a pair of white stockings on his legs and pumps on his feet.” The *London Magazine* also refers to a fop dressed in “Spanish-leather pumps without heels and the burnished peaked [i.e., pointed] toes” (cited in Cunningham 1971: 80). Retrospectively, the vicomte de Châteaubriand (1768–1848) was to typify the genteel garb of the late *ancien régime* in France thus: “A man in a French coat with powdered hair, a sword, a hat carried under his arm, pumps and silk stockings” (1902:1/173).

Construction

The construction of dance pumps is described by Taubert:

A light dance shoe with a pointed toe, single sole, and low heel and tongue is both elegant and comfortable for dancing, especially since it can be easily flexed and controlled like a sock, which best allows one to dance with grace, while a large, thick,

and broad shoe, on the other hand, is heavy on the foot like a lead weight. With a neat shoe, one can dance on the toes of the foot and execute all movements with style and almost without effort, while with a clumsy shoe, one must use the greatest of force and cannot even get up onto the toes because of the length and the thick soles. The latter sort then suits peasants and grenadiers much better indeed than galant dancers. If one wishes to make use of a pair of such muck-plungers for drudgery and daily wear, then one can at least keep a pair of neat dance shoes aside, which will stand one in good stead on the [dance] floor and at assemblies.

Something similar, again in the context of ballroom dance, is also suggested by Bonin:

*And finally, much also hinges upon the shoes, and it is a requirement that they be made **neat and delicate**. Wide shoes are mostly worn now, which are very serviceable for everyday use and which some wear in the winter instead of boots. I have no bones to pick with such use or ménage, but I think that it is not very good if they are huge, with thick heavy soles, such that they end up looking more peasant-like than galant.*

*I would advise those in particular who are to make an appearance on the dance floor – or if they are already advanced in this exercise and are to join in at balls or assemblies – that they wear a **pointed shoe**, which is no little ornament to the foot. It is more agreeable by far than a shoe made merely for traipsing about.*

If it has a neat buckle, so much the better, since that contributes much to a person’s pleasing appearance, especially if it lies not on the stocking, but rather the tongue goes somewhat beyond it.

But whether it is to have a red or black heel, with a large tongue and other features, that is up to the individual.

Completely heelless shoes were also known. The *London Magazine* cited above, for example, mentions “pumps without heels.” These were worn by fops, acrobats and dancers.

Materials

Taubert's description refers specifically to "light" shoes, which implies the use of **lightweight materials**. Cunnington notes that with eighteenth-century pumps generally, satin, for example, could be used for the uppers, leather for the thin soles, and either leather or cork for the slight heels. Such materials would, of course, wear out fairly easily with heavy use, especially on the feet of a professional dancer and on the fairly rough surfaces of an eighteenth-century stage and presumably also the rough floors of class and rehearsal studios. Indeed, the *Satyr Against Dancing* also mentions that "the Shoes must be precise, the Soles as thin, / As theirs, who Puppet-like shall dance therein." And Jenyns (1729: 7) writes that "you, that oft in circling Dances wheel, / Thin be your yielding Sole, and low your Heel."

That such shoes did not last long is also apparent from **shoe allowances** granted to professional dancers. When Jean Dauberval signed a contract in the fall of 1762 making him first dancer in Noverre's ballet company at Stuttgart, he was to receive "2,500 florins yearly and 130 florins shoe money to Easter 1764." Noverre himself was also granted a shoe allowance of 130fl. in 1760; Charles Le Picq a shoe allowance of 100fl. in 1761; and Baletti 130fl. in 1761. (The quotation and the figures come from entries in the *Wurtemberg Landschreiberrechnungen und Rentkammerprotokollen* and *Oberhofmarschallamt*).

130fl. was a considerable amount of money. When Antonia Guidi was engaged by Noverre to come to Stuttgart, from Copenhagen apparently (a distance of nearly a thousand kilometers), she was allowed 200 florins as travel money. If we follow Paritius's exchange rate (1709) to get a very rough British equivalent of Dauberval's shoe allowance, then 130fl. would seem to have been worth about £20. A pair of pumps advertised in Britain in 1747 cost 1/10; in 1761, serviceable shoes for the poor could cost 2/-, while between 1768-1790 shoes suitable for servants on average might cost 3/11 a pair. And so if, on the basis on these figures, we allow a generous 10 shillings per pair suitable for a first dancer (with 20 shillings equal to a pound), Dauberval's shoe money may have allowed him to procure for himself roughly forty pairs of pumps or more, and this was apparently thought sufficient for two years of employment as first dancer. (A professional ballerina today might go through 100-120 *pointe*-shoes in one season.)

While such a large number of shoes perhaps reflects in part the need to have a variety of shoes in varying styles or colours on hand to harmonize with different costumes, clearly **the expectation was that a professional dancer would quickly go through not a few shoes, which, in turn, implies that such shoes were flimsy in construction and would wear out very quickly**. Indeed, the insubstantiality of these shoes was indirectly the cause of the dancer Maximilien

Gardel's death. In alighting from his carriage in 1787, apparently wearing his dance shoes, he stepped on a bone fragment lying in the street, and this pierced both his shoe and foot, and he ultimately died of gangrene caused by the wound. In fact, eighteenth-century footwear generally does not appear to have lasted long. An English labourer would typically wear out two pairs of shoes each year, while a stout nailed shoe might last one year, even with mending.

Fasteners

Shoes depicted in the pictorial record regularly show **buckles rather than lacing** typical of the footwear from this period generally. Lacing was not unknown, however. Weaver saw French dancers in London, for example, who "perform'd in *Shoes lac'd, and ribbanded*." And Noverre notes that the shoes for the fauns in his ballet *La toilette de Vénus* sported "lacing." (The use of shoe-strings rather than (especially ornamented) buckles became politicized in France during the early 1790s, as a sign of republican sympathies.

Red Heels

When they bore a heel, eighteenth-century dance shoes appear to have been commonly **black with red heels**, in or outside of France, although not invariably so. The author of *Observations sur l'Opéra* complains about the popularity of this colour combination at the Paris Opéra, irrespective

Mrs Johnston

This piece is made in paper clay and silk in the Johnston tartan for an exhibition organised by the Friends of Duff House, entitled *The Constant Thread* in autumn 2007.

Mrs Daniel Cunyngham

Made in clay and white silk, Mrs Daniel Cunyngham is based on a portrait by Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) displayed in the dining room in Duff House.



Artist Sue Hemmings originally trained as a teacher, gaining an HND in Ceramics and Design at Cardonald College, Glasgow.

She can be contacted at Garden Cottage, Drybridge, Buckie, Banffshire AB56 5JP T:01542 831711

of its fittingness for the character represented, and notes that he would not “have it that heroes, gods, the Pleasures, or shepherds always wear black shoes with red heels and large buckles. Footwear should be made for them that represents buskins as needed.” *The Guardian* similarly alludes to the popularity of red heels, and red stockings, among dancing masters generally: “a *Dancing Master* of the lowest Rank seldom fails of the Scarlet Stocking and the Red Heel; and shows a particular respect to the *Leg* and *Foot*, to which he owes his Substance.” Weaver also mentions “*Red-silk Stockings*” as typical among the French dancers that he saw perform in London in the early eighteenth century. (Noverre seems to imply that white stockings were also very common on stage.) The option of red heels is also mentioned by Bonin. Such heels – and red stockings – were doubtless intended to draw attention to the movement of the feet and would have been particularly effective in highlighting the brilliance of beaten jumps such as the *entrechat*. (Red heels with cream or white uppers seem to have been an option as well, at least with classy street shoes.

Postscript

The material presented ... is an abridged excerpt from my ongoing scholarly study to be entitled *The Technique of Eighteenth-Century Ballet*, the second volume in a three-part study of early ballet. The first volume was published as *The Styles of Eighteenth-Century Ballet* (Scarecrow Press 2003).

For the many excellent references and the extensive bibliography please see the full excerpt at <https://eighteenthcenturyballet.com/2020/10/18/eighteenth-century-dance-shoes/>



Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV from the Louvre.

Red heels had been introduced in the seventeenth century at the court of Louis XIV. Within the kingdom of France, they were initially the preserve of the nobility (Frisch 2013) and never lost their association with the royal milieu. The anti-royalist pamphlet *Portefeuille d'un talon rouge, contenant des anecdotes galantes et secrètes de la cour de France* of circa 1783 (Portfolio of a Red Heel, Containing Fashionable and Secret Anecdotes

About the French Court), for example, clearly equates red heels with the denizen of a corrupt royal court. This association must have made them increasingly unfashionable – and even politically risky – in France during the years leading up to the Revolution, and then during the 1790s, they appear to have disappeared for good, presumably out of political expediency.

Even outside of France, red heels were not entirely free of any association with the high class outside of the theatre. According to Cunningham, red heels were proper for court wear or full dress in Britain until circa 1760, when they briefly went out of fashion, but were revived again by Charles James Fox in the 1770s.

Planning for a sustainable wardrobe

Purely in the spirit of helpfulness for slightly straitened times, we're reproducing this 1940s four year guide to wardrobe planning.

A four year plan for a woman's wardrobe, from Sew and Save

First year

- 1 pair shoes
- 6 pairs stockings
- 10oz wool or 2 1/2yds material
- 1 suit
- 2 slips
- 1 blouse (home made)

Second year

- 1 pair shoes
- 6 pairs stockings
- 8oz wool or 2yds material
- 1 silk dress
- Underwear: cami-knickers or vest and knickers (2 or 3 pairs)
- Corsette or brassière and girdle (2 or 3 pairs)
- 6 handkerchiefs

Third year

- 2 pairs shoes
- 6 pairs stockings
- 4oz wool or 1yd material
- 1 jacket
- 2 cotton or silk frocks
- 2 slips
- 1 pair corsets

Fourth year

- 1 pair shoes
- 6 pairs stockings
- 6oz wool or 1 1/2yds material
- 1 woollen housecoat or dressing gown
- Underwear: Cami-knickers or vest and knickers (2 or 3 pairs)
- Corsette or brassière and girdle (2 or 3 pairs)
- 6 handkerchiefs

A four year plan for a man's wardrobe, from Sew and Save

First year

- 1 pair boots or shoes
- 6 pairs socks
- 1 suit (no waistcoat)
- 1 overcoat
- Collars, ties or handkerchiefs

Second year

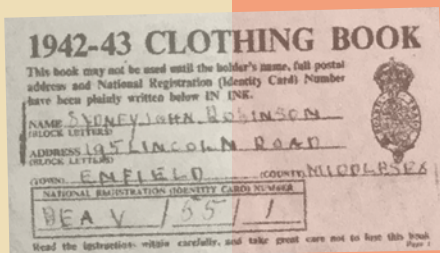
- 1 pair boots or shoes
- 6 pairs socks
- 1 pair corduroy trousers
- 3 shirts (silk or cotton)
- 2 pairs of pants
- 2 vests
- 1 pair gloves

Third year

- 1 pair boots or shoes
- 5 pairs socks
- 1 suit
- 1 pullover
- 2 pairs of pyjamas

Fourth year

- 1 pair boots or shoes
- 6 pairs socks
- 1 overcoat, or unlined mackintosh and vests
- 3 shirts
- 2 pairs of pants
- Collars, ties or handkerchiefs



My Lockdown Story

Ann Brown

It was right at the beginning of lockdown, at the end of March, when Pat Ardron, a fellow WECS member contacted me with an idea to cheer up people in the village of Chilcompton, where we are both members of a "knit & natter" group. Two years ago she had organised a group of people to knit and crochet poppies to tumble down the steps of the Chapter house in Wells Cathedral, so knew we all still had the patterns. This gave her the idea to knit and crochet flowers of many colours, using scraps of wool to decorate the bridge over the stream at the bottom of the village in Chilcompton. The bridge is a wooden structure, of no particular design, that had been recently constructed after a car had driven into it! It cried out to be decorated.

So as the days and evenings became long for many people we were able to get the knitting needles and crochet hooks out and began passing the time either watching television or just sitting in the sun. VE day came on 8th May and Pat decorated the bridge with Union Jack bunting, which gave us more time to keep knitting. By the middle of May all the flowers were gathered in for Pat to start stringing them together and in the end there were 420 multi-coloured knitted and crocheted flowers. I think I was responsible for about 60 of the crocheted flowers. They were then draped all over the bridge with the help of staples to keep them in place from all winds and weather.

People started to stop and stare and even take photos. I felt they were so picturesque and thought that *Mendip Times* may be interested so contacted them to take photos and write something about them. It was not long before someone put photos on Facebook and this was picked up by BBC Somerset Sound who asked for an interview with Pat to be broadcast early one morning! This was then picked up by BBC Points West who arranged for a small group of us on 24th June, a hot sunny day, to meet at the bridge to be filmed for broadcast on the programme that evening! I was thrilled to be asked to be one of these people and to my surprise it was Alex Lovell, one of the presenters of Points West who came to interview us along with one cameraman and a two metre long microphone! She was as charming in person as she appears on television, putting us immediately at our ease. A week later it was time for the *Mendip Times*, but sadly not such good weather for photography but photos were still taken with us standing at a safe distance from each other with the flowers in-between.

Many people have stopped and taken photos and said it has put a smile on their faces, so it was worthwhile. Sadly bad weather in late August caused the flowers to droop but not to be put off our little group replaced them with knitted bunting! We hope these may survive until poppies can replace them in November.



PS: Pat Ardron and I put these on the bridge in Chilcompton the other day using poppies made for Wells Cathedral in 2018. We made up the wreaths also using the same poppies.

Ann Brown



Lockdown Boredom – “What’s in there?”

Sarah Bartlett

While trying to keep occupied during the great lockdown this spring, I opened a drawer and discovered various things which had been put there for want of something better to do with them at the time.

In amongst them was an old Chinese jacket that my mother had brought back from China in the early 80s. It was at the time when China was opening up to tourism and people were selling off their old clothes, having worked out that tourists would pay well for them. I think it may have been made for a child or young adolescent. It is padded red silk with a light blue lining and covered with embroidery. I’m not sure how old it is but it is definitely hand sewn .

Another time she brought me back a length of silk brocade, about three metres though not very wide. It is a beautiful jade colour with sprigs of flowers, the sort of material that needs to be made into something really special, but then again too nice to cut up . So back on the roll it went (suitably wrapped in acid-free tissue, of course!)

Underneath it on the same roll was a beautiful red dragon cloth, the size that would make a single bed cover . I found this stuffed in the back of the linen cupboard when I was emptying my mother’s house, so ‘acquired’ it! I have often thought of having it as a wall hanging but finding somewhere where it wouldn’t get light-damaged and a big enough space has meant that back on the roll it goes. There again, is this a bit like keeping your valuables in the bank that you never get to see and appreciate them? So maybe I will seriously start looking for somewhere to hang it, risk the damage and enjoy it.

Delving deeper unearthed various other bits such as a sarong and shawl from Indonesia; a short length of woven fabric with two pockets which looks as though it ought to be worn hanging from your shoulder (I think this came from Tibet); and two beautiful Chinese gossamer silk scarves.

Last but not least, in amongst some cotton baby dresses (the type probably used for family christenings) were two dresses that my mother had worn as a small child that were made from “Granny’s old petticoat” . Recycling is definitely not a new thing!

All these pieces were carefully put back where I found them while I “think about it” . A problem for the next generation to sort maybe?

From the top: Possibly C19th child’s jacket, serendipitous fabric discoveries, cotton baby dresses, dragon cloth wall hanging/bedcover
Background image: length of jade silk



Facing our Fellow Man

(or The Hairs On My Chinny Chin Chin)

Tony Cooper

Have you noticed since spring 2020 (I refuse to use the “L” word!) the prevalence of men acquiring a new hobby? In many cases the almost ubiquitous designer stubble has finally reached maturity - a beard.

That got me thinking about what we mean by “Costume”. Surely it is the veneer by which we present ourselves to the world; the “look” we adopt and perhaps hide behind. For a man that’s not just the dodgy double-denim or the sin of socks and sandals; it might include facial hair.

I clearly remember when my Dad first used his electric razor on my upper lip fuzz. Not quite the full rite of passage of the foam and cold steel but there was a certain something about it that told of an impending change from a skinny, hollow-chested boy to, as it happened, a skinny, hollow-chested youth.

Don’t laugh but over the years I’ve done the full beard, I’ve done the mutton chops and I’ve done the Mexican moustache. The full beard and the sideburns had to go because the deputy Headmaster took one look at me and simply said ‘No’. The ‘tache had to go because Carolyn declared herself most reluctant to kiss me. I have to admit, now, that I find all that shaving lark a bit of a chore and the adverts for shaving items that end with a gorgeous girl stroking the freshly scraped chin don’t convince me.

In various societies and at various times, facial hair has fallen into and out of favour and even become the subject of law. When we look at those faded photos of Victorian and Edwardian military men we may be struck by the ubiquitous moustache; it was almost as if when they had their uniforms shoved into their arms, there was a stick-on moustache on top of the pile. Actually, it was the law; from 1860 to 1916, the British Army imposed mandatory dress regulations on their soldiers that prohibited shaving above one’s top lip. The regulation did essentially mandate the growing of a moustache – unless, of course, you weren’t able to. This led to various forms of self-expression with moustaches being trimmed in many styles, from “toothbrush” to a “Dick Strawbridge”.

The moustache became an official symbol of every regiment of the British Army with the passing of Command N° 1,695 of the King’s Regulations in 1906. It stated:

‘The hair of the head will be kept short. The chin and the under-lip will be shaved, but not the upper lip. Whiskers, if worn, will be of moderate length.’

Though shaving was meant to be punished severely with imprisonment, such a penalty

A survey in the USA revealed that about 33% of American males have facial hair of some kind, while 55% of males worldwide have facial hair and women found full bearded men to be only two-thirds as attractive as clean-shaven men.



Further to Tony’s hair story let me introduce you to 4 bearded men, all made by Tony as part of his next automaton.

The Waiting Room

(Work in progress)

It is a Sunday afternoon in late September in the very middle of the 20th century. We are in the waiting room at Fettlebank station on a sleepy branch line. There is major work in progress up the line and the normal timetable is suspended. Everyone is waiting...



An encyclopaedia salesman sits reading his newspaper and occasionally scanning the room. New to the job, he is on his way to his first pitch, smartly turned out in suit, trilby, bow tie and brogues. He is conscious of his fresh-faced appearance and has managed to grow a toothbrush moustache in an attempt to give himself some gravitas.

was rarely enforced. The threat of it came to an end in 1916, when General Sir Nevil Macready dropped the regulation as well as his own facial hair: the General hated wearing a moustache and it is said he dispensed with the regulation for his own benefit.

Carolyn has some photos of her great uncles in uniform, ready to “give the Kaiser a bloody nose”. They looked so young and were often clean-shaven because mother didn’t approve of facial hair. Nevertheless, in other Great War photos moustaches still feature strongly, suggesting that although no longer a legal requirement, there was still strong peer pressure to “man up”.

The regulations were not as arbitrary and pointless as one might at first think. One has to bear in mind the norms and attitudes of ones enemies. A big part of warfare is to instil fear into your opponent; failing that, respect would do. You could be the best equipped army on the planet, but mince into the battlefield in pink satin uniforms and you wouldn’t give your enemy the heebie-jeebies. (On second thoughts, perhaps you would.)

Anyway, at various times the British had found themselves fighting in Afghanistan, India, the Sudan and the Middle East where facial hair was (and to some extent still is) seen as a sign of power, strength and masculinity. Conversely, clean-shaven men were viewed as juvenile and un-manly; not an image you want your troops to convey.

Mother Nature’s intention is fairly clear; left to its own devices a man’s chin will sport a beard. One could postulate that for prehistoric humans the beard would keep out the cold and provide a degree of protection against sand, dirt, the sun, thickets and so on. Perhaps, if the hunting trip was a bust, it might also protect the unfortunate man from the slaps of his irate spouse!

You may not be surprised to be told that the word “moustache” is French and is indirectly derived from the Greek *μύσταξ*, meaning lip. (You say that five times and see how you get on.)



Hatshepsut

A beard creates the look of a stronger-looking jaw line; making the wearer appear more imposing but beards have fallen into and out of favour throughout history.

Let’s go back to the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. I’m sure we all remember the fabulous burial mask of Tutankamun with its stylised beard? By all accounts, Tut was too young, weak and inbred to have grown a beard anything like that. In fact it would have been a false beard made of metal and held in place by a ribbon tied over the top of the head. Such beards were one of the symbols of authority and even female pharaohs such as Hatshepsut are portrayed wearing them.

Hatshepsut are portrayed wearing them.

Now my old mum might have pooh-pooed those beards as “squiddy things” but roll back the years a few centuries and you get to the real thing when the Phoenicians, Assyrians, Mesopotamians and Babylonians all seemed to vie with each other for the most outlandish face fuzz.

For example, apart from codifying a set of laws that are said to be the first of their kind in all of human history, Hammurabi, a Babylonian king, had a beard set to challenge his rivals.

Continued on next page

Spending as much time as he can behind the shutter is the ticket clerk. Despite being but a lowly clerk during the war, he likes to play up his RAF background and has even grown a handlebar moustache to help his image.



Finally, out on the platform is the porter. Older than Cronos and twice as uncommunicative, he’s been doing the job from time immemorial and in all that time he’s never darkened a barber’s door. Today he is busying himself trundling milk churns in one direction and boxes in the other. Tomorrow he may do the opposite.



Farmer Strawbridge passes the time holding court and pontificating on all subjects under the sun to anybody who will listen (and anyone who won’t). He wears his favourite hat, corduroys and wellies. He won’t waste good baccy money on a belt or a dog lead when a few bits of old bailer twine do the job perfectly well.



(Incidentally, a bas-relief of him features as one of 23 reliefs of great historical lawgivers in the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives in the United States Capitol.)

Mentioned in the Bible (2 Kings 18), Sennacherib, a king of Assyria, demonstrates his entry for the competition. (I have to say I'd hate to judge and to be honest they both look as if they could be played like Pan pipes.) Nevertheless, they clearly took great care of their beards, regarding them as status symbols and deserving of appropriate care.



Sennacherib

In those times oil was a vital food, but they were also aware of its grooming properties. Kings and other wealthy worthies treated their beards with oil and used curling irons to form ringlets, frizzles, and tiered effects, creating stately and dignified styles.

So much for beards being in favour but Alexander the Great decreed that soldiers couldn't have beards because he was afraid that opposing soldiers would grab on to the Grecians' beards and use it against them while in battle.

A Roman by the name of Lucius Tarquinius Priscus encouraged the use of razors in order to guide the city to hygienic reform in around 600 BC. However, despite his best efforts, the practice wasn't generally accepted until about two hundred years later.

The adoption of Christianity has played a role because they were required by canon law to shave, prompting the faithful to follow suit, and William the Conqueror created a law that obliged his nobles to shave in order to fit in with Norman fashions.

Now, bang up to date, *The Fellowship of the Beard NZ* will be hosting the 2023 World Beard and Moustache Championships in New Zealand.

To quote Oscar Wilde (albeit in a different context): "A man should always have an occupation of some kind."



Hammurabi

The average man spends 145 days of his life shaving. Real men don't waste their time.



2020 and counting *(and shaving!)*

The art of topiary finds expression in unexpected places. John Knapper (closely related to a member who does not wish to be identified!) has obviously had too much time on his hands recently and posted photos of the progress of the face embellishment over a period of weeks.



Apparently he's clean-shaven at the moment, but the head hair is growing. We await developments.

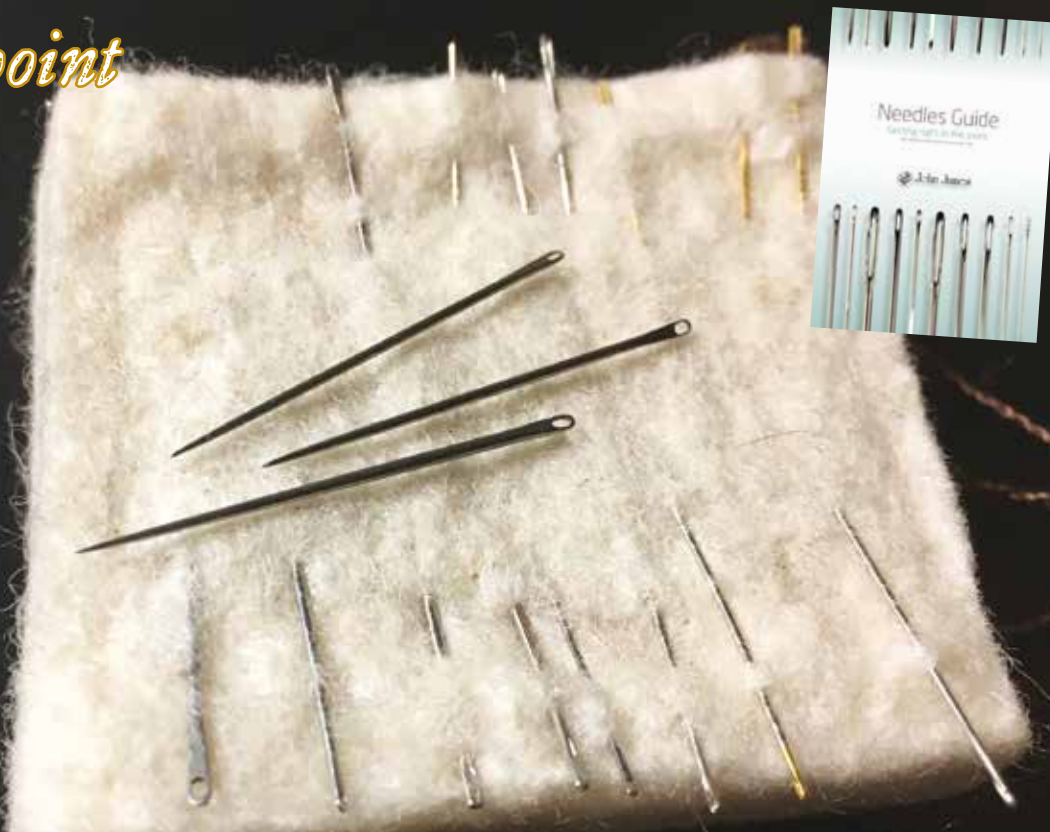
Getting the point

Fiona Starkey

You just want a new needle - it can't be that complicated, surely?

'Just pop in' to the shop for a packet of needles and you'll be faced with the slightly bewildering array of needles available to the C21 stitcher and yearn for simpler times. Actually, it was never that simple, but this may help.

I'm going to concentrate on hand sewing and pretty much ignore machine needles, though some of the principles hold good. One big difference is the sizing: with hand sewing, the bigger the number, the smaller and finer the needle. This is easy to remember when you think of the way they're made. Needle wire was originally sold in standard lengths and stretched to the required thickness before being cut to size, drilled, sharpened and polished. The size referred to the number of needles you could get from the standard length of wire.



Hand made steel needles are kept in wool felt to prevent rusting. Note the flattened end where the hammer has landed before drilling the eye. An eye wider than the shaft of the needle allows easier passage of thread through the hole formed.

Multiple eyes and ends images below are from the John James website

With machine needles it's the other way round: the bigger the number, the larger the size of needle. This is because when Americans started manufacturing machine needles they started with small number=small needle and worked up. So - sharp at one end and hole at the other? Yes, but... These descriptions are written up from notes made at a talk by John James needles many years ago and any errors are mine. Their website has much fuller information.

Sharps are general purpose sewing needles, recognised by dressmakers for centuries. Oval hole for standard sewing thread and as you'd expect, a nice sharp tip.



Embroidery or crewel needles have a longer eye than standard sharps which makes them better for threading stranded cottons such as the DMC or Anchor skeins. Other than that, pretty indistinguishable from regular sharps.



Quilting/betweens are specifically designed for quilters, being usually shorter and more robust to cope with the 'pull' exerted by quilting. Chunkier than sharps.



Tapestry needles double as cross stitch needles. They're larger, have a more rounded point so's to glide between canvas threads



without piercing them and a long oval eye big enough to take wool and crewel threads.

Chenille needles are almost identical to tapestry needles, but have a sharp tip for sewing coarser fabric.



Milliners or Straw needles are more commonly now used for pleating and fancier stitching such as smocking. They're also the ones traditionally used by bookbinders. As they're longer, you can use them for beadwork at a pinch, but they're a bit thick for that.



Leather or Glovers' needles have triangular, spear-like tips for piercing thinner leather. You may have come across these if you've visited Dents' factory. They can also be used for suede and softer plastics and vinyls.



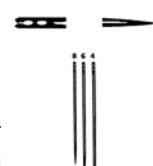
Darners are long and sharp and have long eyes, and as the name suggests, they've evolved to darn anything from linens to wools. Nice sharp tip and sometimes known as wool darners.



Long darners... as above but longer and with larger eyes making them better for wool mending and coarser threads.

Really specialist needles are made for beading - exceptionally thin and usually a bit longer than usual, though perversely you can get 'short' beading needles too. They're just as thin and a nightmare to find when dropped.

If threading the things is taking the fun out of your sewing, also on the market these days are 'easy threading' needles, sometimes known as Calyx eyes. If you look closely at the eye end, you'll see a slanted channel cut from the end towards the eye which guides a thread into position without having to poke it through cut end first. The 'hook' formed by the slanted cut keeps the thread in position.



If you're in Bath, needles can be bought at Country Threads, 2 Pierrepoint Place, or the Guildhall Market, off the High Street.

Online go to www.jjneedles.com.



Orkney Museum is participating in the *Between Islands* project - devised by Stornoway arts centre An Lanntair with financial assistance through the LEADER 2014-2020 regional cooperation scheme - with the aim of collectively promoting the heritage and culture of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been reconfiguring the planned summer 2020 *Between Islands* exhibition at Orkney Museum as an online exhibition which I hope will be available from the end of November 2020. It will be a standalone website available via the *Between Islands* website (<https://www.betweenislands.com/>), YouTube channel, and Orkney Islands Council's museum web pages (https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/Arts_Museums_and_Heritage.htm). This is a new way of working for me and I am grateful for the support of Rebecca Marr and Mark Jenkins of cultural heritage and arts creative partnership Kolekto (<https://kolektopartnership.wordpress.com/>) who are undertaking the design and production of the online exhibition.

The Orkney *Between Islands* exhibition explores the inspiration and legacy of islands in the arts, crafts and literature of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. Alongside images of objects from Orkney Museum, Orkney Library and Archive, Shetland Museum and Archives¹, and Museum agus Tasglann nan Eilean², we are showing complementary images of archive material, historic photographs, paintings and objects from other Scottish collections, to illuminate stories behind featured objects, places and personalities.

Crafts in the northern and western isles have grown out of necessity - tools for particular tasks, containers for transporting or storing food and fuel, furnishings for the home, clothes to wear – using materials available locally. Skills have been developed and honed over generations so that crafts have come to be identified with specific places, such as the weaving of Harris Tweed or Fair Isle knitting. While it is not possible to include every aspect of dress and textiles in the islands in the exhibition, or to mention every contemporary maker, I wanted to balance local aspects of textile production with the international reach that island textiles have had at certain points in their history.

Harris Tweed

Tweed was made initially in the Outer Hebrides for use and trade between islanders. From the mid-nineteenth century, the Countess of Dunmore, widow of the landowner in Harris, began to promote the island's tweeds to her aristocratic friends. This was so successful and the demand for tweed for sporting-wear so high that an industry was launched.

The colours and patterns of Harris Tweed are inspired by the land- and seascapes of the islands. Wool from island and Scottish mainland sheep is combined and dyed before being spun, originally with dyestuffs available locally, but now with commercial dyes. As production grew, mills were set up in Lewis to process the wool and the finished cloth. To protect it from imitations, the Harris Tweed Association Ltd was formed in 1909 and the trademark orb and cross registered in 1910³.

The industry was reformed in the early 1990s and given further protection by an Act of Parliament in 1993, stating that Harris Tweed is "Hand-woven by the islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, finished in the Outer Hebrides, and made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the Outer Hebrides." Now there are three mills in Lewis and self-employed weavers create the cloth on hand-loom at their homes, returning it to the mills for finishing and distribution. Over the past century, tweed has grown from a fabric for country sports, to being favoured by fashion and interior designers.

For example, in October 2004 Nike approached Donald John and Maureen Mackay of Luskentyre Harris Tweed to supply 9,500 metres of cloth for limited edition tweed 'Terminator' trainers. Working on his Hattersley hand-loom, Donald John's usual weekly output is one hundred metres. To be able to fulfil the order the Mackays contacted the KM Harris Tweed Group and the work was outsourced to over fifty weavers throughout the islands. In 2010, Nike collaborated with Harris Tweed again on its 'Air Royalty' trainers.

Between Islands: culture and life in Atlantic Scotland

Rachel Boak

Following my article about dress and textiles in the collection at Orkney Museum in the spring 2020 edition of *Wardrobe*, I thought WECS members would be interested to hear about a forthcoming online exhibition.



Above: Nike, One of a pair of ladies' trainers, 2004, Harris Tweed, leather and rubber; accession number 2013.1 © Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean

Left: Caroline Townsend, Mandarina Shoes, One of a pair of ladies' sling-back shoes, 2004-2012, Harris Tweed; accession number H19 © Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean

Below: Harris Tweed pumps for Mandarina shoes - a member's pair!



Like the Nike trainers, this sling-back shoe uses Harris Tweed in an unconventional way, taking it from the moors to the street. Commissioned by Harris Tweed, Isle of Harris, in Tarbert, the shoes were made by Caroline Townsend at *Mandarina Shoes* in Forfar. Designers including Vivienne Westwood, Margaret Howell and Nigel Cabourn have featured Harris Tweed in their collections since the 1980s. During London Fashion Week 2016, Margaret Howell commented, "A lover of wild open spaces, I feel an empathy with Harris Tweed. Weaving on hand-loom creates a depth and complexity of texture that can't be imitated by a mechanical process. The resilient wool, the designs in earthy colours, reflect the landscape, the climate and the skills of the local people who produce it."

The traditional grand finale of a fashion show is a wedding dress, and Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway has a beautiful wedding ensemble in Harris Tweed. It was designed by Ann McCallum of Hebridean Dreams and comprises a dress and full-length coat with train, worn by Gaelic singer, Alyth McCormack, from Sandwick in Lewis, in January 2009. The tweed was made at Carloway Mill from lambswool and both dress and coat are lined with blue satin. The dress bodice and coat train are hand-embellished with pearls and glass beads.

Although not as famous or long-lived as Harris Tweed, tweed has been produced in both Orkney and Shetland. Commercial weaving in Shetland began around 1900. Before that, as in Orkney, weavers were locally-based and created cloth for the people who lived around them. Shetland has its own native breed of sheep which is noted for its fine and soft wool. This translates into tweed with a soft drape and feel, with yarn traditionally woven in natural colours.

By the late 1940s Orkney had two tweed manufacturers, both set up by local men, but employing weavers from Stornoway to work alongside those from Orkney. General merchant, Robert Garden, started Argarden Orkney Tweed, while local draper, John Sclater, set up Norsaga. Both brands drew on Orkney's Norse history in their marketing material. Argarden and Norsaga tweeds were available as fabric and ready-made garments in Kirkwall, as well as being exported to mainland Britain, Europe and the USA. However, by the 1970s, the popularity of traditional tweed had waned and both Argarden and Norsaga stopped production. It is only in recent years that there has been renewed interest in producing Orkney tweed.

Knitting

In addition to woven cloth, hand- and machine-knitting are also important to everyday life and the larger economy of the islands. Practical garments, like socks and stockings, were knitted from local wool, but employed delicate finger-work, intricate patterns and bright colours.

Orkney Museum has a pair of child's socks (shown on the next page) from 1907, the yarn for which is believed to be wild bog cotton, hand-spun and knitted by Mary Ann Cooper from Stronsay, one of the north isles. Although it grows in short tufts, and is often used for stuffing pillows, bog cotton has also been used to make thread and cloth. It featured at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the form of "garments woven by crofting women ... much admired for their beauty and fine texture."

The pair of wedding stockings (also shown on next page) was made for Kenneth Macleod who left Lewis for Canada with three hundred emigrants on the Canadian Pacific liner *Metagama* on 21 April 1923. The knitted pattern incorporates a star motif, often seen in Scandinavian designs, and a 'Tree of Life' motif, sometimes found on Eriskay ganseys or fishermen's jumpers.

North Ronaldsay, the northernmost island in Orkney, has a native ancient breed of sheep. Since 1832, when a sheep-dyke around the perimeter of the island was completed, the sheep have been confined to the seashore, except for lambing, and have adapted to a diet of seaweed. Natural fleece colours range from cream



Above: Ann McCallum, Hebridean Dreams, Wedding dress, 2009, Harris Tweed, satin, pearls and glass beads; accession number 2013.25i © Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean

Left: Norsaga Orkney Tweed jacket and skirt, 1960s-1970s, wool; accession number 2012.41.1-2 © Orkney Islands Council



and grey to brown and black. Orkney Museum's collection includes pairs of socks knitted by Mrs Tulloch for Joseph Grimond, Liberal MP for Orkney and Shetland from 1950 to 1983, in wool from North Ronaldsay sheep, and to local alphabet designs. Their worn condition suggests they were well-used by the owner!

The best-known examples of island knitting come from Shetland. Lace-knitting is thought to have evolved from knitted stockings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as techniques and patterns were refined and markets for island textiles grew from the 1830s. While shawls and stoles were mainly produced in the early years of the industry, other items included blouses and jumpers, children's clothes, mittens and decorative covers for the home, especially in the early twentieth century.

Similarly, Fair Isle knitting developed from practical garments for fishermen from or visiting Fair Isle. Its early patterns and colours were affected by locally-available wool and natural dyestuffs, but also by influences from Scandinavian and Baltic countries whose ships used the busy sea routes of the North Atlantic. Bartering of knitted items by islanders with visitors led to the growing appeal of brightly-coloured and intricately-patterned garments as souvenirs, particularly large geometric designs in reds and blues.

While genuine Fair Isle refers to knitwear made on the island, it has become a generic term for designs of this type. The demand for Fair Isle meant that hand- and machine-knitters throughout Shetland were producing garments commercially, often to supplement their income (see bobble hat, above right). Like Shetland knitted lace, Fair Isle patterns were, and still are, published all over the world so that skilled knitters can produce their own versions at home.

The *Orkney Between Islands* online exhibition ranges widely through books and prints documenting island journeys and scenery, paintings by island artists, portraits of island writers and their publications, and island crafts, exploring the rich connections between Scottish islands. I hope this article encourages you to discover more through the links and resources listed and to visit the islands once we are able to travel again!



Opposite page: Pair of child's socks given to John Robert Hourston, born in Tankerness on 29 July 1907, bog cotton; accession number 2016.18 © Orkney Islands Council
Lower left: Pair of knitted wedding stockings, Lewis, early 1920s, wool; accession number 1999.34 © Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean
Lower right: Pair of socks, North Ronaldsay, c1960, wool; accession number 1984.11 © Orkney Islands Council
Above: Commercially-knitted Fair Isle bobble hat, early twentieth century; accession number TEX 8944 © Shetland Museum and Archives (Shetland Amenity Trust)

¹See <https://www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk/>

²See <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-culture/museum-nan-eilean/> and <https://www.lewis-castle.co.uk/>

³For more information on the history of Harris Tweed see <https://www.harristweed.org/>

⁴See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/harris-tweed-celebrates-uk-revival-at-the-scotland-office>

⁵For more information see <http://www.theorkneysheepfoundation.org.uk/>

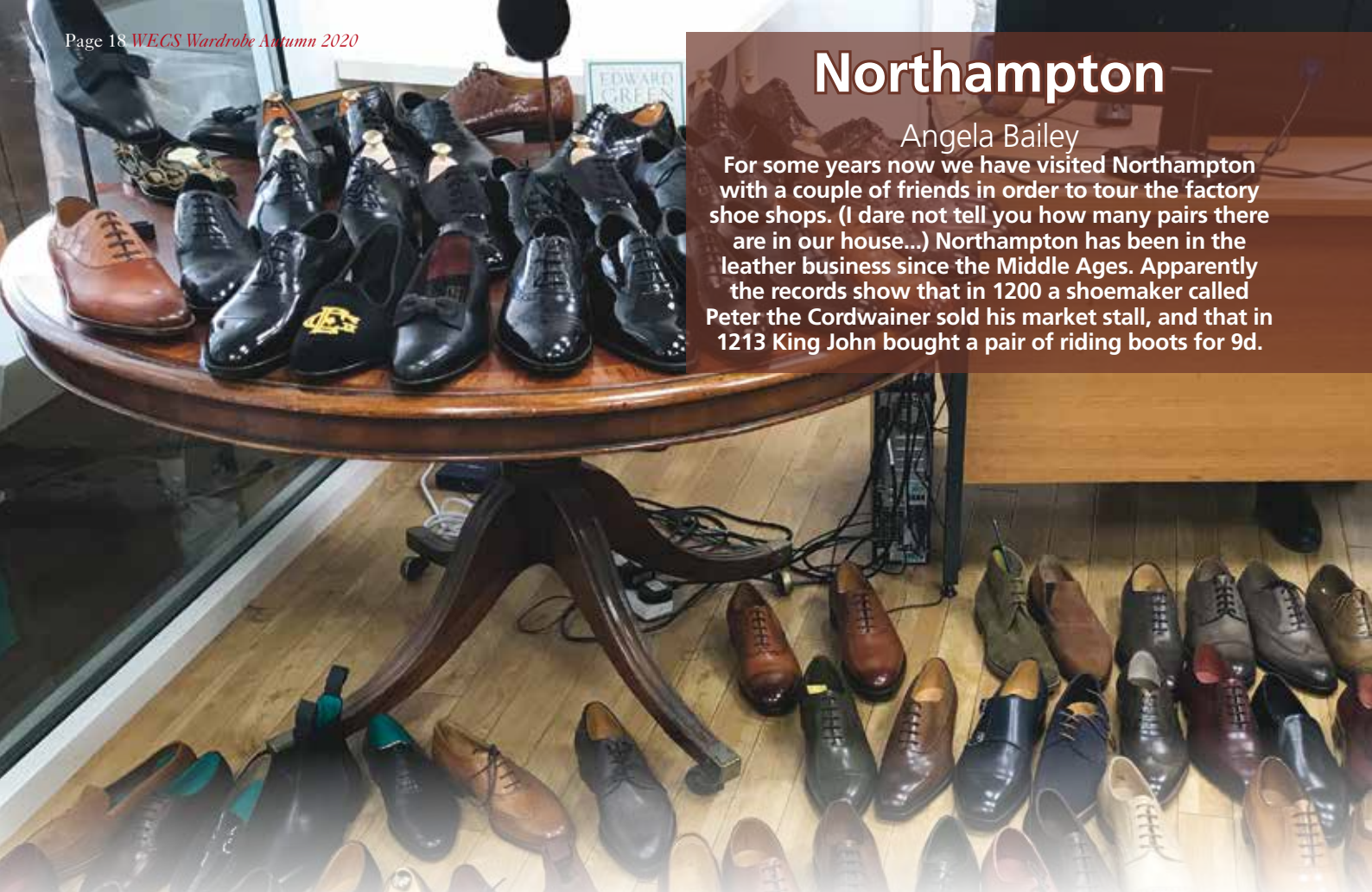
⁶For more information on the textile collections at Shetland Museum, links and resources, see <https://www.shetlandmuseumandarchives.org.uk/collections/museum/textiles>



Northampton

Angela Bailey

For some years now we have visited Northampton with a couple of friends in order to tour the factory shoe shops. (I dare not tell you how many pairs there are in our house...) Northampton has been in the leather business since the Middle Ages. Apparently the records show that in 1200 a shoemaker called Peter the Cordwainer sold his market stall, and that in 1213 King John bought a pair of riding boots for 9d.



Originally the hides, bought in London, were transported to Northampton for tanning, because the local oak tree bark and river water were ideal for the purpose: as time went on hides were purchased from the local cattle market. Production exploded in the 1640s when Oliver Cromwell ordered boots for his army. Until the 1800s the artisans worked from home, with their employers receiving, packing and sending out from warehouses in the city. Later in the C19 shoemakers banded together and opened up their own small factories using the new machinery (at one point there were over 150 factories) and the reputation of the area for high-quality footwear, that featured 64 stitches to every inch sewn, grew and remains to this day. By 1871 almost half the men in Northampton were shoemakers, and 'out' working had declined significantly.

The area also supplied millions of army boots for both world wars.

After WW2 the number of shoemaking firms in the city declined as manufacturing offshore became cheaper and more mechanised. However, there was still demand for traditional hand finished shoes, and now there are still over 25 factories in the area mainly catering for the men's market, employing about 4,000 people. Exports to Japan alone are worth over £20m per year.

Some of the names will be familiar to you: Church's, well known for their businessmen's black toecaps and highly fashionable women's lace ups; Crockett and Jones, worn by Daniel Craig, featured in the latest James Bond movies; Lobb, who shod (among others) Queen Victoria; Loake, who have a shop in Bath; and Tricker's. Doc

Martens are based in Wollaston, outside Northampton, and the make-to-order sports shoe company, Crown, has made trainers for five generations. Some of these companies are now incorporated in major conglomerates.

Our outing starts at Edward Green (EG). This is an independent company founded in 1890, with the mission of 'making the finest shoes, without compromise'. They make about 250 pairs a week and have shops in London and Paris, but sell worldwide and are very popular in the Far East. In charge of the factory shop is Crystal, who manages her excited customers, shelves of stock and the 'bargain basement' with care. Many of the 40 or so EG highly-skilled employees have been with the company a long time, but there are young artisans here too: father and son duo Andy and Nathan go all over



*Above: Edward Green
Left: stitching with hog's bristle
This image: Church's work shoe.*



Designs on the Detective

Annie Rose

Just before the last lockdown, my granddaughters had a plan for me. They "knew" I would love it! We had to sit one afternoon on a sofa...a group from nine years to 75 years..... to watch:

Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries

Well, how right they were....and in the first lockdown I revisited Miss Fisher many times.

Miss Phyrne Fisher is a lady sleuth...on the side of the under -dog...glamorous and fearless. Set in Melbourne in the 1920s.

Why am I telling you this?

The costumes are MAGNIFICENT and somehow Miss F manages to change for every scene...her cloche hats, wonderful silk dresses, handbags etc. Sleuthing is active work, running after

criminals, shinning down drainpipes etc, and the enchanting clothes are designed to cope with this.

I was curious about these wonderful designs, a feast for the eyes and very classy. I discovered the designer for the series is Marion Boyce, an Australian costume designer who has been behind many successful productions amongst others the film *The Dressmaker* (2015) with Kate Winslet.

Marion Boyce described the relish she felt when given the brief for this series.

"Miss Phyrne Fisher is a glamorous dresser , plucky in spirit and uninterested in the social conventions of the period. She had recently returned from England (where the fashion was staid) and Europe....in Paris she was living in a very bohemian quarter"

With this information Boyce had plenty of leeway to design for this maverick character.

Any thoughts of original 1920s clothes were dismissed for two reasons.

1: People were smaller in those days

2: Our heroine needed to move easily, jump walls, hide in cupboards, leap over obstacles. Beginning with the hats, Marion Boyce designed them and then the milliners could steam and shape. Apparently the Queen Mother with her flamboyant hats was her inspiration. The amazing dresses are mainly in silk as *"nothing hangs so well"* and only fabrics found to be used in the 1920s were used. The key to the dresses were no darts; only panels. The patterns were commissioned and printed and the results breathtaking. Body language was studied and proved to be most interesting and important to convey the 20s.

"We have bigger movements and we stride now. They had smaller steps and were more measured in a way, because they had heavier footwear."

Today we have 'leisure wear' more relaxed which gives us plenty of freedom. But then, how you stood, how you wore hats and how you carried yourself... all those things had to be learnt by the actors.

Even the handbags were designed to accommodate the "pearl tipped gun" that Miss F always carried.

Because of her personality, no colours were off limits. I noticed her wearing the range from turquoise to magenta to peacock colours. Subtly it emerged that each episode had its own colour palette, even the extras.

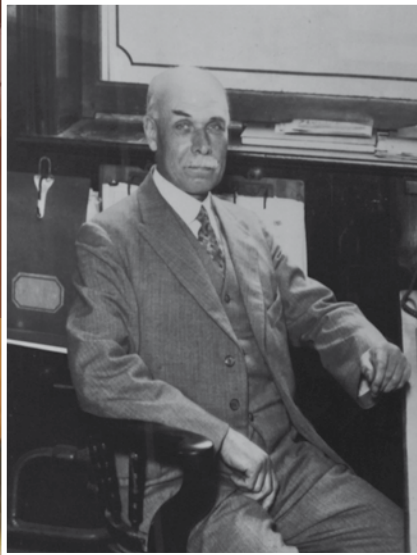
All in all a bit of harmless fun to help us through these times, but anyone with an interest in fashion will delight in the quality and quantity of every scene. The murders happen too of course !!

Having searched for more episodes, it seems they have taken a break but will return to Netflix and Amazon Prime soon.

There is also a new film out in February 2020 *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears*.

From the top:

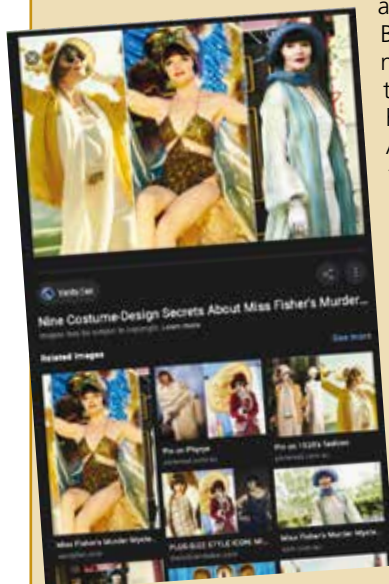
Actress Essie Davis plays Phyrne Fisher
Designer Marion Boyce with two of her creations and *left*, while looking for images to accompany this article, your editors found that Annie's not on her own - there's a whole sub culture! This image is from the Vanity Fair site.



the world demonstrating the fine art of stitching with a hog's bristle in the traditional way. By the time we have tried on various shoes we have become friends with other customers, offering each other opinions and scanning the shelves for items that will fit them (EG offers width as well as length sizes).

We then make for Crockett and Jones: after greeting our new friends from EG who have also made the trip there, we produce a pair of the son's work shoes that seem beyond redemption (the soles are worn through to the cork welt beneath, the heels completely ruined, and the leather watermarked). We speak to Sue, who promises that they are salvageable and that they will be delivered to the London shop near son's office in due course. A few weeks later he collects, is amazed how good they look, and has promised to take better care of them in future (we will see).

Our final visit is to Church's. Here we review the sample styles for women: a family member has been known to select Chelsea style boots with studs on the front. I buy work shoes but am amused to see that in this month's *Vogue* a similar pair (albeit made by Tricker's) is sported by Serena Williams. We then go to lunch and (if we have succumbed) compare our purchases. This is a lovely way to spend a day, but be warned, a credit card would be useful.



Audrey's Archive: Part II

Angela Bailey



Further to my article in the summer *Wardrobe* about Audrey Shepherd's boxes of fashion-related papers, this article is about some shoe catalogues she received. Audrey seems to have been blessed with long and very narrow feet, and was on the mailing list for a retailer called Elliott, which had three branches in London and one in Cheltenham. Sizes went up to 12 American and included AAA, AA and B fittings. Staff were trained to fit the shoes correctly and stock came from France, Greece and Italy with big names such as Charles Jourdan and Christian Dior. 'Young' Mr Elliot, as he is described in the catalogue, held 'narrow fitting fortnight' events, sending out catalogues in advance.

These were no ordinary catalogues. Audrey saved hers in 1965-1986. Autumn 1965 comes in the guise of a pack of 42 playing cards in a card case, complete with calling card from Mr Elliott himself, and of course the price list. Styles range from sensible lace ups (89/11) and winter boots (£5.9.6) to high heeled sling backs (99/11), and, from brand 'la jeunesse', seriously cute patent flatties with buckles on the front (79/11). The text advises to 'pick a card, pop it in your handbag and take it along to Knightsbridge to 'find your future style'.



The 1966 catalogue comes in a fold-out format with 48 styles, including a 'jeunesse' collection of beautiful patent lace ups at £5.19.6 (a week's wages for me at the time!) and at the very top end, the Charles Jourdan court shoe, at a mouthwatering 13 and a half guineas. Directions to all four shops with maps are given, and of course the price list.

By the summer of 1967 Mr Elliott's copywriters had gone into overdrive. This time one received an 'Elliott Narrow Fitting' pretend cheque book complete with made-out cheques

depicting the style and price in the 'pay' area and on the reverse of the cheque, a photograph of the style in question. Again, they range from sensible walking shoes to the bootee of the mid-60s, white, zipped and with a cut out toe (119/6). My favourite, however, is the flat sandal with ankle strap, which was probably extremely uncomfortable! And expensive at 6 gns.



The 1968 offering was again in the format of the playing card. Again, Mr Cecil Elliott invites us to his Narrow Fitting Fortnight. This time the cards are numbered so that the price list makes a little more sense. The Christian Dior classics now cost 13 gns. There are now also brightly coloured offerings from Pierre Cardin (9 gns). However, for the largest sizes (11 1/5 and 12) a guinea surcharge has been put in place 'as a result of Government measures'. What were they, I wonder?

Audrey's taste in shoe styles seems to have become more practical later on. A catalogue from Barker Shoes of Northampton from 1986 shows us brown, beautifully made models, probably suitable for work as a teacher. Remember these? And the cost has risen to £54.95, too.

Having looked at these documents I am so impressed, not only by the quality of the copywriting and design, but also that it was possible to buy shoes in such a range of sizes. it seems to me that A fittings are only available online nowadays and that in the 20 years described here the prices had risen to an enormous extent.



There is a great deal more in Audrey's archive, and I have really enjoyed looking at it all and, in a way, getting to know her. Next time we will find out what she was interested in wearing in the 1950s and 60s and how she perceived the huge changes in fashion and retailing during that period.

Portrait of a woman in silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World

By Zara Anishanslin

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016

Introduction by Vibeke Ormerod

I came across this book not entirely by accident as I have a fascination for Spitalfields and its history and for Anna Maria Garthwaite and her fabulous silk designs of the early C18 in particular. (See earlier book review, especially *Blackberry and Wild Rose* by Sonia Velton)

I purchased the book, thinking the lady on the front cover was Anna Maria Garthwaite and I expected to discover what one most expects from biographies. But this is a fascinating book that delves into the history of an object (a painting) and thereby delivering the object of history, namely giving us an understanding of social, political, aesthetic and commercial values in the transatlantic world of the C18.

The book is divided into four main parts, leading us back to the lives of the four protagonists who all had a hand in the painting coming about:

The silk designer, Anna Maria Garthwaite, the silk weaver, Simon Julins, the sitter, Mrs Anne Shippen Willing and the painter, Robert Feke.

The painting from 1746 hangs in the Winterthur museum, Delaware.

I am only on part one of the book, which is very thorough but I was keen to recommend it to you now as we are finding ourselves in the second lockdown hence I will leave the proper review to Professor of Art History, Laura Auricchio, who is Professor at Parsons School of Design, New York

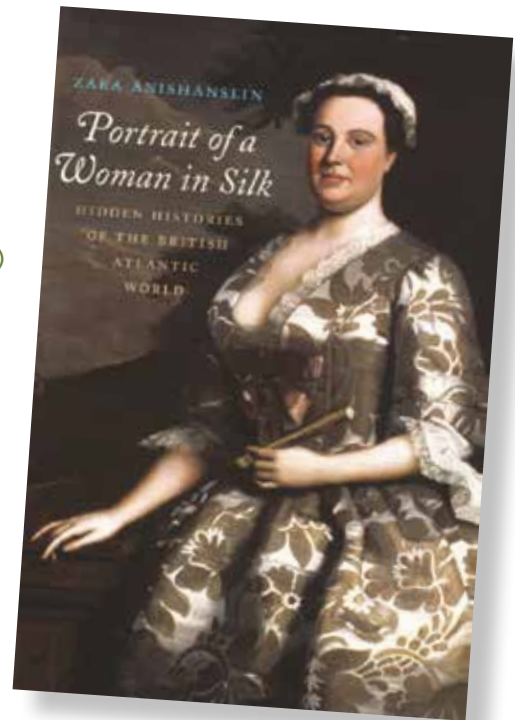
Review by Laura Auricchio.

Rarely does a book offer a truly new approach to the eighteenth century, yet Zara Anishanslin's *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* accomplishes precisely that. Taking as her starting point a 1746 portrait of a Philadelphia merchant's wife, Anishanslin crafts a trans-Atlantic narrative that brings us from Lincolnshire and London to Newport and Oyster Bay while touching on sweeping historical themes including the dynamics of colonial trade, the formation of American identities, the challenges of writing women's histories, and the global exchange of botanical knowledge. Paintings, textiles, buildings, and other types of visual and material culture provide the bulk of Anishanslin's evidence. By mining such non-textual sources, Anishanslin explains, she is able to uncover some of the "hidden histories" (p. 18) of people and objects that left only scant traces in the archival record. In a brief but thorough introduction, Anishanslin articulates ambitious goals. She sets out to complicate the received wisdom on several topics of significant interest to eighteenth-century studies. For example, lending nuance to the literature on colonial consumption, Anishanslin reminds us that "colonists were never simply emulative consumers of the products of Britain. They were also producers". Focusing more specifically on silk and portraits, she argues that the shared "experience of making and buying" these luxury objects transcended regional boundaries, furthering "the development of a shared colonial identity that might be called 'American'... that predated the American Revolution by decades".

The introduction also lays out an innovative structure. The life stories of four individuals form the core of the book: Anna Maria Garthwaite (1688-1763), who, working in the Spitalfields area of London, designed the floral pattern seen in the portrait's silk dress; Simon Julins (1686/8-1778), the Spitalfields master weaver who commissioned the

design and produced the fabric; Anne Shippen Willing (1710-1791), the Philadelphian who sat for the portrait; and Robert Feke (c.1707-c.1751), the Newport-based portraitist who painted it. By telling these four stories, Anishanslin promises to present "the eighteenth-century British Atlantic World from multiple perspectives".

Anishanslin devotes several chapters to each person in succession, presenting birth-to-death biographies and exploring broader contexts. Following her sources where they lead, Anishanslin varies her focus with each case. The tale of Anna Maria Garthwaite examines the gendered opportunities and restrictions that led this provincial clergyman's daughter to transform herself from a genteel hobbyist creating vellum cutwork pieces into a sought-after silk designer and successful businesswoman who sometimes found floral inspiration in London's botanical gardens. With Simon Julins, we enter the world of the London guilds and delve into William Hogarth's 1747 print series *Industry and Idleness*, a parable centered on the diverging moral paths of two Spitalfields weavers. Crossing the Atlantic, we visit the townhouse in which Anne Shippen Willing hung her portrait and explore the local and affective meanings that prompted her sister-in-law to commission a painting of herself wearing the dress featured in Willing's portrait. Lastly, Robert Feke's portraits of Newport merchants introduce us to the notion of the "colonial georgic... in which labor embodied a battle between virtue and vice" - a notion troubled by the vicious practice of slavery that underpinned Newport's apparent virtue. A fifth, concluding section entitled "Death and Rebirth" focuses on the political disputes that roiled trans-Atlantic trade in the 1760s. Here, Anishanslin brings together two strands of history that, having occurred on different sides of the Atlantic, are usually examined separately. In London, Spitalfields silk weavers faced a devastating



economic downturn from 1764 to 1766 and responded with protests that ran the gamut from peaceful lobbying to deadly street violence. At the same time, American colonists registered their opposition to the 1765 Stamp Act by boycotting English goods including Spitalfields silk. Moving briskly from these crises to the American Revolution, Anishanslin adopts a weaving metaphor to explicate the "unraveling" of the British empire.

For all the significant achievements of *Portrait of a Woman in Silk*, there is room for improvement in two areas: images and editing. Although it is surely no fault of the author, it is unfortunate that the volume's one colour picture is a cropped and rather muddy reproduction of the eponymous portrait printed on the book jacket. Inside are only black-and-white reproductions of Garthwaite's floral designs, Julins's woven fabrics, and Feke's oil portraits. Drained of the colours, textures, and plays of light that grant silk its unique allure, the illustrations lack the attention to materiality that the text emphasizes so effectively. The text, while written in a refreshingly engaging and jargon-free manner, suffers in places from repetition resulting from the very structure that renders the book so innovative: perhaps because the four biographies address shared topics (albeit from different vantage points), several ideas recur in multiple sections. For instance, the impact of the Calico Acts of 1700 and 1721, which prohibited the importation of certain textiles to Britain but not to its colonies, is discussed in the introduction as well as in the sections on Garthwaite, Julins and Willing. A bit of duplication, however, is surely a small price to pay for the benefit of Anishanslin's multi-layered analysis of a *Portrait of a Woman in Silk*.

Laura Auricchio, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: A Review*, Journal18 (April 2017)
www.journal18.org/1716

The Costume Maker's Companion

by Diane Favell

The Crowood Press, £25.00

Review by Sarah Bartlett

Diane Favell is the Head of the Costume department at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art running postgraduate courses in Costume Making and Supervising.

This book of 272 pages is divided into three sections -

Part I: *The History of Costume* covering Medieval; Tudor; Jacobean to Restoration; and Regency to Victorian periods.

Part II: *Costume Making* with two pieces from each of the four periods.

Part III: *Details and Accessories* – three or four pieces from each of the four periods.

It concludes with an Appendix of useful patterns blocks, a Glossary, and an Index.

In the Introduction the author gives advice on setting up a workroom, what space and equipment you will need, covering everything from cutting tables to sewing machines and their attachments.

Part I: The History of Costume is divided into the four periods and has plenty of drawings and photos for each garment ranging from the undergarments to the outermost ones including headwear and explaining how they were and should be worn. Each section has both men's and women's clothing, including colour fabric details for some of the costumes.

Part II: Costume Making. This section includes a Houppelande, an Elizabethan doublet and hose, an Elizabethan dress, frockcoat and breeches, a saque back dress and ends with a Victorian frockcoat and dress. Pattern pieces are plentiful and there is an 'order of making' with loads of illustrations for each step.

Part III: Details and Accessories. "This section is all about reference and broadening knowledge" says the author so if you want to know how to make chain maille or do leather and goldwork, this is for you. I found the chain maille instructions and photos fascinating. It appears that the construction technique of the maille is similar to knitting. However, if you are in a hurry you can always 3D print it! There are also instructions for making a ruff, embroidering a stomacher by machine and making flounces for a Victorian evening dress.

I found this a fascinating book even though I don't make costume. It is full of interesting facts on how things were made and how to wear them correctly. It is extremely well illustrated with clear instructions and, although mostly aimed at serious or professional makers, it is a book that you could flip through backwards and forwards for hours. And you never know, you might just make yourself something you didn't know you needed!



Images courtesy of Crowood Press.

Witchery



Seeking a pointy hat for Hallowe'en (don't ask) prompted a short digression into witches' costume. These days it's almost a uniform so I started to look for images to see just how far back the idea went. 1451 and counting so far...

Say 'witch' and immediately comes to mind a tall, wideish brimmed pointed hat, bodice with high neck and long sleeves, waisted and fullish long skirts, Georgian style (buckled) shoes - and possibly a broomstick and cat. Preferably black, but all definitely dark. But why?

Images of witches before the 1500s and into the early 1600s seem to be simply (usually older) women in contemporary dress, broomstick optional. They're often shown at the stake in daywear or shifts, which doesn't help much.

There's a lot of references in the 1600s and the pointy hat (sometimes sawn off at the top) and general shape of the clothing morphs into the C17 puritan look. I'm thinking Salem here. I haven't found anything from the 1700s which is useful and 1800s and Victorian witches, when they appear as fancy dress costumes, are already stuck in a time-warped.

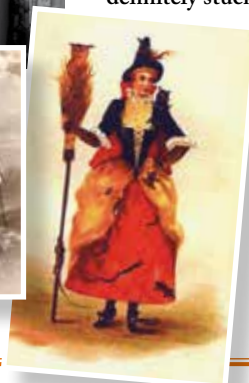
It seems that as the fear of actual witches receded, the costumes get more playful but style definitely stuck around the late 1600s up until this century. *The Witches of Eastwick* (2008) head for the definitely contemporary glamorous but an ebay search for costume has you firmly back in panto land. More research required. And a pointy hat.

Fiona Starkey

From the top: Ebay search for witches' costume
Terry Pratchett's Discworld witches
Professor McGonagall as played by Maggie Smith in the Harry Potter films
Elizabeth Montgomery as Samantha in *Bewitched* (for the younger amongst you, that's a TV series, 1950s and 60s)
Three lots of early C20th ladies dressed for Hallowe'en 1451 'The Ladies Champion' French book with margin doodles, including broom sticks, but no pointy hats yet.



Does my broom look big in this?



Fashionopolis: The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes

by Dana Thomas:

Apollo Press, 2019, HB £20.

Review by Angela Bailey

On opening this book I prepared myself for the now-familiar 'woke' rant about exploitation, sustainability, and the evils of fast fashion. Instead I was presented with the extraordinary statistics that have brought the clothing sector to its current status, interviews with various fashion luminaries, and research into the history of mass production. There are however, some fascinating possibilities for the future.

The book is a gripping read. A wide-ranging Introduction sets the scene: we learn that Zara's sales for 2018 were \$18.9 bn, and that its owner is the sixth richest man in the world; that between 1990 and 2012 the US garment industry lost 1.2 million jobs, which were lost to offshore (mostly third-world countries with questionable human rights records) and that the sector is responsible for 20% of all industrial water pollution worldwide. Apparently we wear a garment an average of seven times before we 'toss' it.

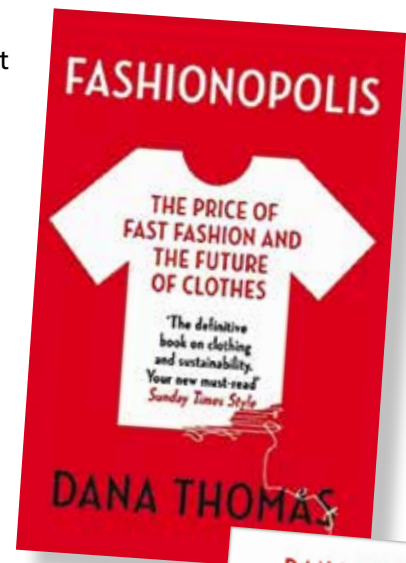
Part 1 tells us how the Reagan-era North American Free Trade Agreement opened up the possibilities for US brands to take their manufacturing offshore to cut costs and prices. Despite the efforts of the US clothing sector to keep manufacturing onshore, the contracting and subcontracting of all aspects of their business led to huge growth in branded retailing - for example, Zara now has over 2000 shops worldwide. So many clothes are being made that there are not enough customers for them - and the left-overs are discarded - or simply burnt.

Sweat shops still exist, of course, even in 'first-world' countries, but manufacturing has been exported most notoriously to Bangladesh (where Ms Thomas interviews survivors of the Rana Plaza disaster in Dhaka where 1,134 people died). At Levi's, the denim company, we are shown how offshoring to Vietnam closed all fourteen US-based factories (they lost over 37,000 employees worldwide).

However, there is evidence of a fight-back. **Part 2** tells us about the development of 'slow' fashion: a movement made up of growers of pesticide-free cottons and dyes, makers, designers, merchants and manufacturers worldwide. Ms Thomas visits makers in the USA and England to investigate the 'rightshoring' movement, whose aim is to bring the processes back, with the latest technology, while paying employees a decent wage and benefits such as health care. Even Levi's is joining the campaign, albeit in a small way so far.

Part 3 tells us how Stella McCartney, who celebrates 20 years this year as a top-flight designer, has stuck with her principles of vegan sourcing: no leather, no fur. She has extended her reach to more environmental issues so, no PVC, no cheap cashmere, only organic cotton, recyclable shopping bags. Research into cell-grown leathers, synthetic silks, high-quality recycled cotton and nylon, 3D and robotic processes, shows us how new technology is already revolutionising our wardrobes. Redesigning old clothes is just part of this movement, as is rental, smaller retail venues such as pop up shops and trunk shows. The development of on-line shopping has helped the smaller start-ups as well as the larger names.

Ms Thomas says her book is about women, for women, but the issues she addresses are universal. Since the arrival of Covid, fashion has had to cope as best it can to stay abreast of developments. Designers are reducing the number and content of shows; retailers such as *Toast and Cos* are offering to resell items; even *Ikea* has announced that it will start a 'buy back' scheme in November. It would be really interesting to read an update from Ms Thomas - perhaps sometime next year? As I said, this is a gripping read and I thoroughly recommend it.



- Answers to Quiz on page 2:
- 1 mannequin vedette
 - 2 boutique éphémère
 - 3 mode de la rue
 - 4 catalogue de collection
 - 5 look-book
 - 6 d'époque
 - 7 vintage
 - 8 magasin amiral
 - 9 flagship store
 - 10 mode éclair
 - 11 fast fashion
 - 12 styliste
 - 13 designer
 - 14 boutique-concept
 - 15 concept store
 - 16 cyber vêtement
 - 17 E-wear

Follow up on Unusual Sourcing

Previously, in summer's *Wardrobe* issue: Sarah Bartlett's interest was taken by the gents' hose in a wall painting in Abbazia di Sant' Antonio di Ranverso, a small abbey just to the west of Torino, depicting the *Salita al Calvario* (the ascent to the Calvary).



Billie Brown replied to the item:

I can understand your still finding the Calvary painting fascinating (*Wardrobe* summer 2020). There's so much variety in it and lovely colouring.

At the risk of 'coals to Newcastle', you might find the following helpful:

if you can find a copy of, *Renaissance Dress in Italy, 1400-1500* by Jacqueline Herald, 1981, Bell & Hyman, ISBN 0-7135-1294-6, in the *History of Dress* series edited by Aileen Ribeiro, it's filled with c.250 pages of explanation, copious illustrations and a brilliant glossary.

Another very good source for basic understanding is Sarah Thursfield's, *The Medieval Tailor's Assistant, Common Garments 1100 -1480*, 2nd edition 2015, Crowood Press, ISBN 978 1 84797 834 9. Very clear diagrams and text and patterns - aimed at re-enactors.

I've just quickly consulted the above and as far as I could tell with a magnifying glass, the man pulling Jesus' rope is wearing not a loin-cloth but an undergarment termed, 'braies' or 'breech' in English, possibly 'brache/braghe' in Italian?

There was apparently a version, looking much more like modern 'briefs' called in Italian, 'mutande' which would be more fashionable (and higher status?) in 1450. Those in your picture seem almost to hint at short legs.

The white hose look to be slung from a waist girdle or the drawstring of his braies by laces or points as you say attached by buckles or some sort of clasps anyway. Again possibly lower class because by now full length hose joined at the centre back with a cod-piece (not yet the padded ones like H.VIII's) tied in front; these would have a series of points laced through pairs of holes at the top and tied through holes in the bottom edge of the short doublet.

The dark lower leg coverings look like overstockings worn with overshoes of some kind.

Another source you might know or like to find is, *Dress in Italian Painting, 1460 - 1500*, by Elizabeth Birbari, pub. John Murray, 1975. 0 7195 2423 7. It has a lot of interesting text and theories including the amount of garment-shedding that would happen according to social status, but doesn't mention 'underpants'.

However, amid the copious illustrations (including some of individual figures/part figures from big groups in action like yours, chosen to pick up particular details including of construction) there are quite a few showing nether garments from odd angles, at least one very revealing indeed.

Diagrams are fewer and one or two I should love to have heard her discuss with Janet Arnold! Janet sent me some very good explanatory diagrams and words of the principles of no wastage in Mediaeval cutting when umpteen years ago I was designing/making for the local am.dram's for *The Lady's Not for Burning*; admitted that was set around 1400. I'd been hoping there was a new *Patterns of Fashion* due but sadly not so, but I still treasure her letter.

Billie Brown,
Dorchester

* Sarah adds: *Interestingly, the word "mutande" is still used in Italy for underpants, though they are even more skimpy nowadays and "braghe" is still used in local Milanese dialect for trousers.*



Copy for the next newsletter
to Vibeke Ormerod by
31 March please

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