

WECS Wardrobe

£7.50 (incl. postage)

wecs
west of england
costume society



www.
wofecostumesociety.org

Calendar

**Janet Arnold Study Day:
The Politics of Fashion**

Saturday 3 October 2020
■ Widcombe Social Club, Bath

C20th Fashion Illustration

Saturday 21 November 2020
■ Bath and County Club, Bath

Special Effects Costume 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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Janet Arnold Study Day

The Politics of Fashion: from Cromwell to Thatcher

Saturday 3 October 2020

9.30 - 16.30

■ Widcombe Social Club, Widcombe Hill, Bath BA2 6AA

A fun day - so wear your tartan or carry your Margaret Thatcher handbag.



Programme

9.30 Registration with coffee

10.15 **Pat Poppy**

Image & Reality: Politics, fashion & stereotypes of the Cavaliers & Roundheads.

11.15 Coffee

11.45 **Rebecca Olds**

The Isabella Project: The recreation of Isabella MacTavish's Wedding Dress

12.45 Lunch

14.00 **Viktoria Iveleva** 'Out of the blue'

What did Catherine II wear on the day of the coup and why does it matter?

15.00 Tea and Coffee

15.30 **Daniel Conway**

From Margaret Thatcher to Tracy Brabin:

Dress, Fashion and the Hyper-Visibility of Women in British Public Life?

16.30 Close

Widcombe Social Club (WSC) has introduced strict measures at the venue, including social distancing markers, sanitiser, and wipes, throughout. Full details will be sent to you with your booking confirmation. WECS is responsible for attendees' compliance with these rules; Committee members have inspected the venue. More information about WSC's Covid arrangements is at their website at www.widcombesocialclub.co.uk/members-docs.

Should WSC need to close the venue, or we need to cancel for any reason we will inform you as soon as we can, personally and via the WECS website.

If you requested to have your March Study day fee carried over to October, please email the Booking Secretary (bookings@wefecostumesociety.org): she will note and confirm your place.

We do hope you will join us - we have four great speakers as well as Jill's sales table.



20th Century Fashion Illustration a Genre Rediscovered

Christmas meeting

Saturday 21 November 2020

14.00-16.00

■ Bath and County Club, Queen's Parade, Bath BA1 2NJ

Connie Gray from MCA Gray will present wonderful images of the artwork published in *Vogue*, *Harper's* etc by the great fashion artists of the 20th century. This allows her to give some background on each artist which helps bring context to their work.

Special Effects Costume and AGM

Saturday 13 February 2021

14.00-16.00

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

For the AGM we have something special for you: Joe Knapper, who works for FBFX will talk to us about his role in designing special effects costume for films and how historical fashion and context influences the final designs.



March Study Day

The Game's Afoot

Saturday 20 March 2021

9.30 - 16.30 (rescheduled from 2020)

■ Gloucester Cricket Club, The Bristol County Ground, (also known as the Brightside Ground), Nevil Road, Bristol BS7 9EJ

Historically shoes have always been a signifier of status and wealth and the more decorative and difficult to walk in the less functional they become. Today our desire for comfort in shoes, as in clothes, helped along by advances in textile technology, has led to function and fashion becoming more closely aligned.



Out & About

Little Black Dress

from 25 October 2020

■ National Museum of Scotland
Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF
www.nms.ac.uk
Showcasing dresses from fashion houses like Chanel, Dior, Gareth Pugh, Christopher Kane and Comme des Garçons.



The Roaring Twenties: Fashions of the Jazz Age

From 25 July 2020

■ Chertsey Museum
The Cedars
33, Windsor Street
Chertsey
KT16 8AT
www.chertseymuseum.org

It is 100 years since this fascinating and ground-breaking decade began and Chertsey Museum is celebrating with a glittering display of 1920s fashions. Dazzling evening dress, wedding clothes, underwear, sportswear and accessories are on show; all carefully selected from the Olive Matthews Collection of dress. They have recently added some significant items to the 1920s collections, and these are displayed for the first time. They include a stunning Paul Poiret *Goddess* gown and a beaded tunic from the height of the Egyptomania craze.



Fashion and Textile Museum

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

www.ftmlondon.org

Out of the Blue: Fifty Years of Designers Guild until 21 February 2021

The Designers Guild, founded by Tricia Guild, OBE, in 1970 is being celebrated for 50 years of influential design.

Chintz: Cotton in Bloom

12 March - 15 August 2021

The exhibition will showcase some 150 examples of chintz from around the world.

The Survival of Glamour

1935-1955

■ Totnes Museum, Bogan House,
43 High Street
Totnes TQ9 5NP
www.totftm.org
Totnes Museum will remain closed all year but has an online exhibition. The link is on their web page.



Fashion Museum, Bath

currently closed until
29 March 2021

■ Fashion Museum, Assembly Rooms
Bennett Street Bath BA1 2QH
fashionmuseum.co.uk
Keep following us for updates and we look forward to welcoming you back soon.



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

V&A

■ V&A, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL

www.vam.ac.uk

Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk from 27 August 2020

This exhibition presents the kimono as a dynamic and constantly evolving icon of fashion, revealing the sartorial, aesthetic and social significance of the garment from the 1660s to the present day.

Bags Inside

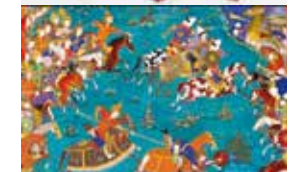
Out
until 21
November
2020

Exploring style, function, design and craftsmanship.

Epic Iran

13 February
- 13 August
2021

Exploring 5000 years of art, design and culture....



Ashmolean Museum

■ Ashmolean Museum,
Beaumont Street Oxford
OX12PH

www.ashmolean.org

Young Rembrandt

10 August-1 November 2020

Mediterranean Threads:

C18 and C19 Greek Embroideries

Online Exhibition

<https://www.ashmolean.org/event/mediterranean-threads>



The Last Straw - almost

Tony Cooper

I'm sure we've all done it, taken a photo of something that piques our interest at the time and then forgotten about it – and forgotten what it's about. I took this snap (above) five years ago and it's sat as the first image on the memory card ever since. Every now and then I notice it and wonder what it was all about.

Having attended musical instrument making courses in the past and seen some whacky instruments, I wondered idly whether it was something to do with them – a dulcimer, perhaps. Or was it simply an old tooth on a stick?

Then the other day I had a phone call from my old school friend. Amongst other things he mentioned he had been doing some family history research as a 'lockdown' project. It turns out that some of his forebears hailed from north Essex and most of the men-folk were 'Ag. Labs' (census shorthand for Agricultural Labourers) and some of the women, children and even the men would make straw plaits. He said he had inherited an object very similar to the one in my photo and explained that it was a straw splitter. Made of bone, the conical tip was pushed into the end of a straw, funnelling it into a set of cutters and splitting it into a number of roughly equal pieces called 'splints'.

At the risk of trying to teach you knowledgeable folks how to suck eggs, straw plaiting involves twisting together lengths of split straw to produce strips in various patterns. Work was sold in multiples or fractions of a 'score' (twenty yards). Scores would be sold at plait markets or to plait dealers who then supplied manufacturers of products such as straw hats and bonnets.

The economics of all this were clear; the wages paid to agricultural labourers were wretchedly low, about six or seven shillings a week at most, and some other income was desperately needed to make ends meet.

For the best kinds of work the makers could get 3/6 a score and one of the best hands could make a score and a half in the week. For the inferior kind of work the rate of pay could be 3d and 1/- per score. The earnings of children and girls could be between 3d and 4d per day. These, as well

as boys, were principally employed upon the coarser work. The straw was purchased from neighbouring farmers at about 6d a bundle; a bundle being about as much as a person can conveniently carry.

Nevertheless, before any money comes in, the family has to make a substantial investment, probably necessitating some more than usually empty stomachs. For example, a woman from Hemel Hempstead reported that she had to provide herself with a "mill" costing half a crown and a tool for splitting the straws at 4d. This outlay would amount to almost half a week's wages for an agricultural labourer. She was to make a blue-and-white plait, so she would also have to buy a bundle of white straw (5d) and one of blue (3d) from the dealer to whom the plait is sold. Provided the straw was good it would work up into about five score and if the plait was exceptionally good it would fetch 4d per score. The five score would therefore not bring more than 1/8d from which 8d must be deducted for the cost of the straw.

Straw splitter illustration

'If I commence about nine in the morning', said the woman, 'and leave off at nine at night, doing some housework between-whiles, I can do 25 yards which will bring me in "clear" about 3d. It is poor enough pay but as I have the children to look after, I can do nothing else.'

The mill, the woman mentioned, was a plait mill used to flatten the finished plait ready for sale. The plait was dampened and pressed by passing through the rollers of the mill. The rollers were profiled for different widths of plait. Finally the plait would be wound around a board eighteen inches wide.

There is another form of this mill with plain rollers used for flattening damp splints.

When it comes to straw hats, I always think of Luton; after all, the football team's nick-name is 'The Hatters'. However, this is clearly not the whole story. The voracious industry relied on legions of men, women and children across Bedfordshire and further afield in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex to provide the plaited straw.

But why Luton? The origins of plaiting can be traced back a thousand years to harvest labourers who wore braids of straw on their heads. In around 1600, plaiters from Lorraine came to Luton and reputedly introduced methods of straw plaiting to the area. The industry was born.

Not all scores made it to Luton; in the seventeenth century the poor in many parishes made straw hats for their own use. A fatigued Mrs Pepys, after trudging around the forty-two-acre garden at Hatfield Park one hot summer's day in 1667 was pleased to try a straw hat as a novelty - *"Being come back, and weary*

with the walk, for as I made it, it was pretty long, being come back to our inne, there the women had pleasure in putting on some straw hats, which are much worn in this country, and did become them mightily, but especially my wife."

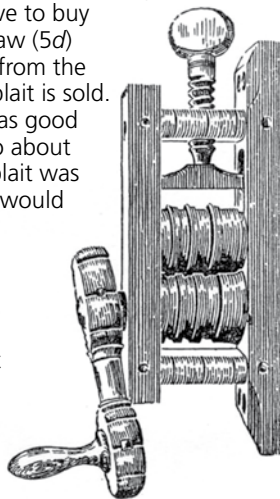
In 1689, a Bill before Parliament included 'enjoining the wearing of the Woollen Manufactures of this Kingdom at certain Times of the Year'. Immediately there was an angry response, 'Upon reading the Petition of divers of the Inhabitants (about 14,000) of the Counties of Bedford, Bucks, and Hertford, who get their Livings by making Straw Hats; praying, to be heard'. Thirty years later, folk from a far larger area protested against the importation of straw hats from Tuscany.

So-called 'leghorn' hats got their name from the English name for Livorno in Tuscany from whence they were exported. Being of much better quality than the English product, they were in great demand from the wealthy. Leghorn straw (a bearded wheat), itself, was also imported to be made into hats in this country.

The insatiable demand for straw plait was fuelled by the steady move away from the cotton mob caps to straw hats and bonnets. By 1735 a report stated: *"Several thousand plaiters found profitable employment in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire...I was told at (Hemel) Hempsted that £200 a week has been turn'd in a market day in straw hats only, which manufacture has thriv'd in those parts above 100 years."*

By the middle of the eighteenth century, a familiar sight was said to be *'a farmer's wife or another small personage's wife clad on Sundays like a lady of quality...When they go out they always wear straw hats which they have made from wheat straw and are pretty enough'*. Straw hats were both high and low fashion.

The first decade or so of the nineteenth century saw the Napoleonic Wars cause severe disruption to the importation of straw and straw hats. Nevertheless the expert handiwork of French prisoners of war was highly prized. The resultant shortage of straw hats encouraged English producers to cultivate varieties of straw suitable for plaiting. Ideally they would be able to match the Leghorn straw that was straight, disease-free, hollow, of constant diameter, had a thin wall and at least nine inches could cut for plaiting. They never achieved that but after some experimentation, varieties such as Red Lamas, Rivet and Golden Drop were developed specifically for the plait trade. These strains thrived on the chalk fields of the Chilterns. Surprisingly their straw was *'valued in the inverse ratio of the vigour of the plant'* – the best straw coming from the poorest areas and contained enough silica to be strong, but not brittle. Straw grown in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire was better than that produced in the more fertile fields of Essex, Berkshire and Suffolk – indeed, Essex dealers preferred to buy straw from Hitchin market rather than locally-grown material.



Wheat for straw plaiting was carefully reaped a little earlier than the rest of the harvest. After the cut, suitable straws for plaiting were selected by a 'drawer'. At Harpenden, Herts, '*...men from the village went from farm to farm to draw straw, being very expert, quick and clever...these straw drawers as a rule were also expert thatchers*'.

Only perfect samples that were not diseased or rain-spattered were selected. Straws were drawn from between the drawer's legs and then tied together.

After the ears were lopped off, the resulting 56*lb* bundles were sold to plait dealers who cut the straw into useable lengths and then sorted into different thicknesses. The graded straw was tied into small sheaves, perhaps bleached and dyed and sold to dealers or directly to plaiters for 4*d*, 6*d*, 8*d* or 10*d* according to the quality of the straw and state of the market.

Plait Schools

So important was plaiting to the economy of the area that 'Plait Schools' were set up to help children master the challenging skill and give them a smattering of learning.

Most schools in rural areas were held in a small cottage room into which up to thirty children, some only three or four years old, were crammed. A news report in 1867 described the rooms as '*low, small and close, where the atmosphere in winter becomes intolerable, fetid and unwholesome*'. It was observed that there were '*more pale faces amongst the little ones*' at Plaiting Schools than usual in a country parish. A child of ordinary intelligence might '*be taught the very finest, and indeed all kinds of plait in three months; the inferior qualities, in a fortnight*'.

The education 'curriculum' was largely learning a few Biblical verses by rote – parents did not want their children's work to be sidetracked by economically unproductive activities such as learning to read and write. One progressive teacher at Hemel Hempstead wrote, '*The parents cared nothing for it (an offer to provide instruction); plaiting alone was everything*'. Proper school was referred to as the 'reading school' whereas Plaiting Schools were often dubbed 'sore thumb schools'.

Parents paid 2*d* a week to the Plait School for each child who attended and supplied the straw. But this was recouped from the completed plait – provided it was saleable – valueless work was known as 'widdle-waddle'. A child of ten could earn two-thirds of their labouring father's income.

Above right: Seven straw plait

There was a rhyme that they recited to remember the sequence of making a seven-straw plain flat plait:-

Over one, under two:

Pull it tight, and that will do.

They were taught to use their thumb and second finger, using their forefinger to turn the splint at the edges. A flat edge and



taut, uniform work were prerequisites for an acceptable plait.

One variant of the plain flat plait is the Rustic- or Pearl Plait in which only four ends were used and folded around each other at an angle of 60 degrees, thus forming a hexagon pattern. As it was simple to execute, children often made this pattern while chanting,

*'Criss-cross patch and then a twirl,
Twist it back for English Pearl'*

There were many other beautiful varieties of plait including brilliant, bird's eye, whipcord, batwing, ventilated and so on, some of which had one fancy edge or even two. Some of these commanded prices between 10*d* and 2/6*d* according to the variety, quality and (of course) the state of the market.

The Factory Act of 1867, which banned the employment of children under eight years in handiwork and stipulated that those aged between eight and thirteen should attend elementary school for a minimum of ten hours a week, still failed to close Plait Schools. Children simply became 'half-timers'.

The etching above shows 'A Luton Lass Plaiting Straw' from the Penny Illustrated Paper, 29 August 1885

The Luton lass is shown with a bundle of moistened straws under her left arm. As she worked, she would bend her head and pull out one or two new straws, moistening them with saliva and then storing them on the sides of her mouth ready to be plaited. The corner of her lips might be scarred or discoloured as a result. It was said, '*Never kiss a plaiter!*'

Like casting-on knitting, starting the plait was a particular skill as was adding new splints along the way. The ends and beginnings of the splints were left protruding until they were chopped off when the plait was completed.

It was essential to keep the ends of the plait damp, so in wintertime, women sat away from the fire and kept warm by filling an earthenware pot with embers or coals and placing the pot under their skirt. (How

the men managed doesn't seem to be recorded.)

As they were braided, plaits were measured by holding out work – if stretched from chin to fingertips, it was about a yard long. The lengths were coiled over the left arm. In many households, notches were cut in the mantelpiece at nine and eighteen inches and a yard to give a more accurate measure of the work.

Once finished the plait was now ready for the 'brimstone box'. The dampened plait was placed in the middle of the box leaving a clear space in the middle. Then, a saucer or tin lid with a small hotcoal was placed in the space together with a piece of brimstone. The resultant fumes bleached the plait, giving it a brighter appearance.

Plait Markets

Once the plait had been made, it then had to be sold. This may be to one of a network of travelling plait dealers or at a nearby Plait Market with their wares. In turn, the dealers sold the plait to factories in Luton where it was 'blocked' into hats. Luton was known as 'Strawopolis'.

As with any boom there was the inevitable bust. The 1870 Education Act, which ordered the compulsory school attendance of children, meant that fewer 'hand-hours' could be devoted to the plait. This in addition to cheaper, imported plaits from China and Japan (t'was ever thus) gradually stifled the trade in locally-produced plait.

Postscript

Plaiting by hand may no longer be economically viable for the hatting industry but that doesn't stop the enthusiasts of today. If you are tempted to try your hand there is no-one better to turn to than Veronica Main who is the most experienced traditional straw hat plaiter in the U.K.

The Heritage Crafts Association has placed the craft of 'hat plaiting' on the 'critically endangered' list so you could do your bit to bring it back from the brink. And think of all those lovely summery hats!

A Bite of Pineapple Through History

Vibeke Ormerod

As my husband was leaving to go shopping I called after him:

Don't forget the pineapple!

We were going to be part of a Regency house party and dress in costume. We had hired a National Trust property and there would be old English country dances, games and dining. The main dinner would be a Regency banquet and that's why we needed a pineapple.

The pineapple nowadays is a fruit we take for granted, we are so used to seeing it in the shops, to buying it, cooking with it and eating it that we don't give it another thought, in fact, a pineapple, perfectly ripe and tasty can be had for as little as £1, so we may not think that in its glory days we would have had to raise a huge amount of money to get hold of one.

If the pineapple were the main character in a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale like the one about the Christmas tree, stripped of all its decorations and discarded after the festive season, it might well sigh and bemoan the fact it was now barely noticed, lying with plenty of others on the shelves of the supermarket, thinking back to its heyday in the C18 when it was a very special and valued item indeed and people would beg, borrow or steal to get hold of one if they didn't have the means to buy, rent or grow the sweet smelling, exotic looking fruit.

Discovery

Christopher Columbus discovered the pineapple in the Caribbean in 1493 on his second voyage and brought it back to Europe, but it wasn't until the middle of the C17 that it properly appeared in England, the most well known occasion being Charles II receiving a pineapple from his gardener in the 1670s, immortalised in the famous painting in the Royal Collection Trust.

The pineapple became a status symbol and the fruit for kings and queens like Louis XIV, Catherine the Great (who grew her own) and Charles II.

The long journey often resulted in the fruit decaying before reaching Europe, especially if the weather had been bad and many pineapples were picked unripe and were therefore rotten on arrival. So a fresh pineapple was very hard to procure and consequently was a rare delicacy in Europe, associated with power, wealth and hospitality. People may wonder if there was an association between pineapples and slavery and there most probably was as we know fruit was imported to Europe on the third leg of the triangular trade but it was likely on a smaller scale as pineapples remained a niche commodity.



The dining table set at Attingham Park with pineapple centrepiece. Water and cream ices made by Ivan Day of historicfood.com
The Dunmore Pineapple
Georgian hair jewellery pineapple earrings.

As the pineapple became easier to obtain, people could hire rather than buy it and proudly show it off at gatherings and events where it would be the main adornment, the centrepiece at dinners, not eaten, only viewed, for it would be used till it was beginning to go off to get the full benefit out of it.

The craze resulted in the pineapple invading every part of C18 life:

Potteries produced pineapple shaped household items and of course, pineapple stands, culinary experiments became triumphs of pineapple design or flavoursome desserts.

Fashion

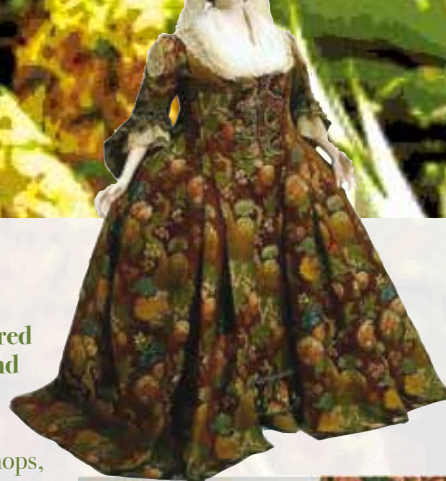
Interior design and furnishings did not escape the pineapple make-over, nor did the fashion in clothing and accessories.

Any self respecting lady would want to be à la mode and proudly show off the latest Spitalfields brocades where floral and botanical designs were all the rage during the 1730-40s

Desirable as accessories were Georgian embroidered pockets or Regency reticules, knitted with little beads.

Pineapple craze

Pinerics, orangeries and hothouses sprang up during the C18 and the most expensive gardeners were hired to cultivate the desired fruit which would take two years to fruit. The exotic appearance inspired designers and builders and stone pineapples were incorporated wherever possible in sculptures and architecture, the most impressive one is the giant pineapple on top of the hothouse at Dunmore house, constructed 1761 by John Murray, Earl of Dunmore.



This page, from the top: Lady's pineapple gown 1773-5, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

From the Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto, Canada.

Morning dress ca 1740, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



And another chance to pineapple-adorn oneself was through jewellery.

Even shoes were pineapple-enhanced, so in C18th and in early C19 textile production the pineapple was very evident, whether woven, embroidered, printed, sewn or knitted.

Not only did the pineapple taste sweetly and look exotic it could also offer the dress of dreams!

In the Philippines a most gorgeous fabric called piña was produced from the fibres of the leaves of the red pineapple. It was a sheer, slightly stiff fabric, I imagine it must be a bit like silk organza. A most luxurious regency gown from 1804-10 with pineapple embroidery at the hem must have been something else to wear!

So after my lengthy musings, my husband returned with the pineapple and the Regency feast was on.

The pineapple would now take pride of place at the centre of the table, surrounded by candles reflected in the glass and silverware.

With Hans Christian Andersen in mind you can almost hear the pineapple heave a deep sigh of relief, thinking: *This is where I belong!*



Audrey's Archive

Angela Bailey



It all began with an ad in the Spring 2018 edition of *Wardrobe*. 'A storage box full of fashion articles between 1960-80, free to a good home'. I duly collected two boxes from member Liz Booty, and spent several hours going through the contents. They appear to have belonged to founder member Audrey Shepherd, who, sadly for me, I never met.

She was a maths teacher at Red Maids School, and, with Christine Stone, instigated the Bath Fashion Museum Textile Files.

Audrey's archive covers at least 30 years; her sources, from catalogues, magazine and newspaper cuttings, and advertisements. It seems that she was above average height, a 60's size 16, (probably nearer a 12 nowadays) with long, narrow feet. During the 60s she lived in south west London. There is so much in the boxes that I'm proposing a series of short articles for future *Wardrobes*. I am hoping that, like me, you will be fascinated by her skill, taste, and wisdom in saving items that must surely be of interest to dress historians.

This piece then, is about her collection of dress patterns, packed in a polythene bag marked 'University of Cambridge Examination Board'.

They date from 1957 to 1976 - nearly all are priced in £sd - and show her to have been extremely skilled: even *Sewing Bee* winners would have difficulty with the so-called 'easy to-make' patterns of the day. She liked a plain pattern, but lively fabric. The envelopes have lost the pattern pieces but all have the instructions, and some even have fabric remnants. Many of the patterns were made up and have annotations as to how and when they were made. As now, the *Vogue* patterns are the most expensive, costing 3/6 in 1959, and 8/6 for the 'designer' range. *Simplicity* patterns were the second choice.

She bought from *John Lewis* (where else), *Robinson and Cleaver*, and *Liberty's*. There are no trouser patterns.



From the top: Dress and detail of embroidery, 1804-14, French, silk piña, Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

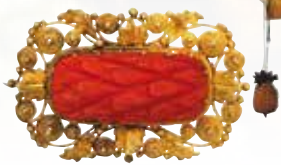


Pair of lady's shoes ca.1735, Spitalfields, V&A, Photograph copyright Loretta Chase.



Pineapple dress French ca 1810, Palau's Galliera, Paris Dress and knitted pineapple in the Kyoto Museum, 1800-1810

Georgian 18 carat gold pineapple cut coral brooch.



Showing Marian Banks' knitted reticule above and Vibeke Ormerod's fabric one, right. Details far right.



Lockdown pineapples

I am sure many of you have been busy during lockdown with unfinished or new projects. If you would like to share your efforts with members please drop us a line with a photo or two.

As you may know by now some WECS members take an interest in Georgian and Regency clothing in particular, and in arranging events and outings there is always a need for some new garment or accessory to be made. The desirable accessory to wear with your regency gown is a pineapple reticule.

Marian Banks, who is a great knitter (she knitted the stockings for our Eleanora di Toledo burial dress project) has reproduced an early C19 reticule with tiny beads.

I am not a good knitter so had to invent a way with bits of fabric, this was a dental waiting room and airport lounge project and had been 18 months under way.



So you think you know your laundry symbols?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

35 symbols - Answers at the foot of the page



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Unusual Sourcing

Sarah Bartlett

On an 'educational'* trip to Piemonte in northern Italy a few years ago we went to a small abbey just to the west of Torino called Abbazia di Sant' Antonio di Ranverso. In one of the side aisles was this wall painting depicting the "Salita al Calvary" (the ascent to the Calvary). I was immediately taken by the outfits of the people, especially the man holding the rope leading Jesus. His hose appears to be held up by toggles attached to what looks like a belt or similar under his loin cloth. The two prisoners also on their way to be crucified appear to have a buckle fixing keeping their clothes on. When you look at the rest of the wall painting you notice the hats and head gear of the crowd and their different foot wear, let alone the weird mixture of people from soldiers to what looks like a native Indian.

The painting dates from 1450 and was done by a local artist, Giacomo Jaquerio, and presumably this is the type of clothing he would have seen every day. I still find the painting fascinating and I'm glad that they aren't my neighbours! If you are ever in the area this place is well worth a visit.

**My husband used to organize trips for a local archaeological society and decided that the area needed exploring to prove that there were other wines produced there and not just the famous Asti. We did the official stuff too!*



Attention Vintage collectors

Free to a good home: a vintage working Singer sewing machine with cabinet. Bath/Bristol area.

Enquiries to davidbiggs540@gmail.com



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

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Laundry symbols, from left to right: 1: Cool iron, medium iron, hot iron, do not steam 2: Do not wash, hand wash, cold wash, warm wash, hot wash 3: machine washable, gentle wool wash, synthetics cycle 4: short cycle, delicate/gentle, reduced moisture, OK to bleach, do not bleach, use non-chlorine bleach 5: dry clean only, do not dry clean, petroleum solvent only, any solvent except TCE 6: OK to tumble dry, do not tumble dry, tumble dry on low heat, tumble dry on high heat 7: No steam finishing, low heat, permanent press synthetics 8: Do not wring, drip dry, dry flat, hang to dry