

WECS Wardrobe

Autumn issue 2021

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costume society



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Calendar

Textile Revolution and AGM

Saturday 12 February 2022
■ Bath and County Club

March Study Day Accessories

Saturday 26 March 2022
■ Bath and County Club

Janet Arnold Study Day Mediaeval Clothing

Saturday 15 October 2022
■ Bath and County Club

Christmas meeting

Saturday 19 November 2022
■ Bath and County Club



Main image

Love the line

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Just checking
Tartan Page 10



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C18th shoes Page 6



Hotpants 1971
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A Handbag?!
Accessories study Page 3



Wrong but Romantic?
Image and reality Page 8



2022 AGM

Textile Revolution: The post war female designers whose vision and vitality changed our world

Saturday 12 February 2022

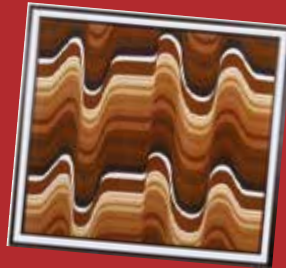
14.00 - 16.00

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

Speaker Ashley Gray, Director of Gray M.C.A

This will be a celebration of the female textiles designers who brought Britain into a world of colour following the dark days of World War II - textiles that revolutionised design for all time.

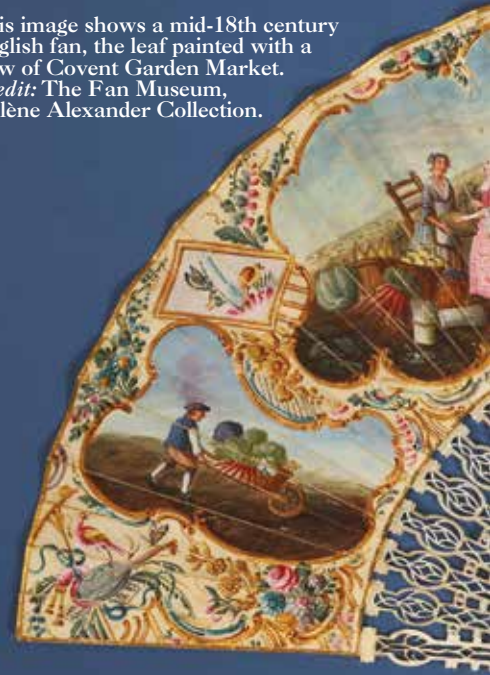
Gray M.C.A, an international Gallery specialising in Fashion and Textiles presents a textile story of drama, colour and innovation. The history of Britain is intricately woven together with the history of textiles. Post War there was a desire for change, colour, and inspiration in the home. This energy and innovation was led by women textile designers destined to revolutionise design world-wide for decades to come. This lecture celebrates their vision that successfully brought Modern and Contemporary art into the home through their designs, truly democratising Modern Art by making it literally a part of the furniture.



Above: Barbara Brown (1932 -) Frequency, 1969 Screen Printed Cotton, Heal Fabrics, 118 x 121 cms

Top: Jacqueline Graog (1903 - 1986) Untitled (Traffic Light), 1952 Roller Printed Rayon, David Whitehead Ltd, 55 x 84cms.

This image shows a mid-18th century English fan, the leaf painted with a view of Covent Garden Market. Credit: The Fan Museum, Hélène Alexander Collection.



MARCH STUDY DAY ACCESSORIES

Saturday 26 March 2022

09.50 - 16.15

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

Jacob Moss
Fans

Mark Wallis
Accessories for Men

Richard Ince
Umbrellas

Sarah Delves
Handbags



Treasures of The Fan Museum: Unfolding the Story of the World's First Fan Museum and its Extraordinary Collections.

Occupying a pair of early Georgian townhouses nestled in historic Greenwich, the story of how The Fan Museum came to fruition dovetails into the multifaceted history of the handheld fan. From an especially rare Elizabethan-period embroidered folding fan to contemporary examples decorated by street artists, discover some of the key objects within the Museum's extraordinary collections which encompass more than 5,000 fans and related objects dating from the eleventh century to the present day and gathered from most parts of the world.

Jacob Moss, MA Curator, The Fan Museum

Jacob joined The Fan Museum in 2010, having completed a Post Graduate degree in Fashion Curation at London College of Fashion. As the Museum's curator, his responsibilities vary enormously from helping to plan and deliver exhibitions and events to designing the Museum's publicity materials and researching the collections. In 2017 Jacob curated the Museum's pioneering 'Street Fans' project. More recently he joined The Arts Society Directory of Lecturers and offers a variety of richly illustrated talks covering different aspects of the fan's multi-layered history.

Accessories for Men

Mark Wallis MA FAHI FRSA

This lively talk will turn out the pockets of the Georgian gentleman to discover what lurks within, from snuffboxes, handkerchiefs and toothpicks to coins, wallets and watches. Mark Wallis has been collecting antique menswear and accessories for over fifty years, and he will bring original accessories from the period for the audience to examine.



Mark is managing director of *Past Pleasures Ltd* which undertakes historical interpretations at historic sites all over the country.

Mark is also known as *The Dandy Dealer* and has been asked to lend costumes from his excellent collection to the forthcoming exhibition at the V&A "*Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear*" opening in March 2022.

Mushs, Gamps and Bumbershoots!

Richard will chat through the history of his business and its relationship with trends and external factors that have shaped its course. He will also talk about how Umbrellas are made and the major changes the industry has experienced.

Richard Ince, MD James Ince Umbrellas 1805 Richard Ince is the current managing director of James Ince & Sons (Umbrellas) Ltd which has been handcrafting Umbrellas since 1805 in East London making them the UK's oldest Umbrella manufacturer. The company is still family owned and run and Richard is the sixth generation to have done so.

The skill with making Umbrellas is mastering three different mediums: wood, metal and textiles. There are so few of them left that Umbrella making has now officially become an endangered craft!



Handbags – A Historical Journey

Starting before the written word we explore how bags and purses have developed through the centuries, the materials used, the social context, what they held and how they have kept pace with the ever changing world of fashion. As we move on to more modern times we explore what was popular through the decades and finally look at the stratospheric rise in the popularity of luxury brands.

Sarah Delves

Sarah has been in the antiques trade since the early 1990's training in the first instance as a ceramics restorer/conservator. Handbags and accessories didn't feature until around 2004. In 2019 Sarah was approached by the Victoria and Albert Museum to join their team as an expert lecturer and has since lectured for the V&A Academy. She was also asked to source some exhibits for their *Bags: Inside Out* Exhibition. Sarah lectures across the United Kingdom and exhibits at some of the best antiques fairs in the country and she is currently taking tentative steps towards undertaking a PhD.



Out & About



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

Blooming Marvellous: Flowers in fashion, 1700s- 2000s *until 3 September 2022*

Whether sculpting cloth to resemble flower heads, weaving blooms into dress fabrics, printing or applying them in the form of embroidery, designers of dress and textiles have long used flowers in their work.



This exhibition features gorgeous garments selected along a floral theme from the Olive Matthews Collection. Men's, women's and children's dress and accessories from the 18th century to the present day, with beautiful examples of woven, printed, embroidered and sculpted blooms, are displayed in Chertsey's fresh and fragrant fashion gallery.



Tamara Karsavina in Russian dance costume 1929. Dress by Natalia Gontcharova. Photographer unknown.

V&A

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



On point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100 *until 1 May 2022*

Explore the 100-year history of the prestigious Royal Academy of Dance. Discover a host of costume designs, film and unique material from the last century including shoes worn by Dame Darcy Bussell DBE at her 2007 farewell performance.

Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser

until 31 December 2021

Enter into the fantastical world of Alice in Wonderland and explore the iconic story's influential 158-year-old history; its origins, evolution and impact on film, fashion, photography, and more. Expect an array of fascinating and whimsical exhibition highlights, from stage costumes and Iris van Herpen designs to Annie Leibovitz and Tim Walker photography. Visitors will also catch sight of Lewis Carroll's original manuscript and fantastic illustrations from John Tenniel, Ralph Steadman and Disney. A wholly eccentric exhibition, the V&A will be the first museum ever to delve headfirst into the evolution of Alice and her long-established cultural influence.



Image: Viktor&Rolf Haute Couture Autumn/Winter 2016 – Vagabonds. Peter Stigter.

Fashioning Masculinities: The Art of Menswear

19 March -31 August 2022

At a moment of unprecedented creativity in men's fashion and reflection on gender, we will explore how designers, tailors and artists – and their clients and sitters – have constructed and performed masculinity, and unpicked it at the seams.



■ Fashion and Textile Museum,
83 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF
www.ftmlondon.org
Info@ftmlondon.org

Beautiful People: The Boutique in 1960s Counterculture *Until 13 March 2022*

For the Chelsea boutiques of the mid-1960s, individuality was the order of the day. Changing attitudes towards gender and sexuality, framed by the socio-political climate of the time, inspired new ideas, freedom of expression and an opposition to establishment values. Fuelled by this creative exploration, a generation of radical young designers emerged, catering to an elite group of artists, aristocrats and musicians: The Beautiful People.

Presenting over one hundred ensembles across three galleries, Beautiful People: The Boutique in 1960s Counterculture explores fabulous and rare examples from these era-defining stores. Designs worn by the likes of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Jimi Hendrix are displayed in colourful, graphic recreations of eight iconic boutiques: *Hung On You*, *Granny Takes A Trip*, *Biba*, *Apple Boutique*, *Apple Tailoring*, *Mr Fish*, *Dandie Fashions* and *Quorum*.

P.LACE.S

until 2 January 2022

Mode Museum, Antwerp
www.momu.be



Exciting news for fashion and textile devotees at the Mode Museum in Antwerp.

The exhibition P.LACE.S, Looking through Antwerp Lace, highlights the important role the city played in the production and trade of lace.

This Autumn Antwerp's major costume museum, MoMu, is reopening following massive renovations with new exhibitions in the main building and temporary exhibitions in other locations in the town. Focus will be on two main aspects of dress and textiles: contemporary fashion and Antwerp's leading rôle in the lace industry from the 16th to 18th centuries, including modern takes on the manufacture and use of lace in fashion. Momu will draw on its own substantial collections but is also borrowing from other major collections worldwide so, no need to travel the continents to see rare and wonderful things, just hop over to Antwerp between late September this year and January 2nd 2022.

News provided by Heather Toomer: some items from Heather's collection of 17th-century baby wear featuring Antwerp bobbin lace will be exhibited in Antwerp's Museum: the collection featured in the Spring 2021 edition of the Costume Society's journal, *Costume*.

Salisbury Museum Fashion Gallery

The Salisbury Museum, The King's House, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN
www.salisburymuseum.org.uk



salisburymuseumfashiongallery.co.uk

Salisbury Museum's new fashion gallery was officially opened by British fashion icon Dame Zandra Rhodes on Saturday 7 August. The carefully curated exhibition includes a wide selection of fashion items ranging from a girl's pretty red coat made from her father's military tunic worn during the Boer War to a skirt and bodice from Christian Dior's 1950 Ligne Long collection. It is the result of three years' work by the museum team, young people, volunteers and experts, all sharing their skills and enthusiasm to produce this dynamic new show which explores our changing relationship with clothes.

The provenance of many of the items has been carefully researched and gives a fascinating insight into the lives of their owners. A silk high-heeled shoe on display was originally found beneath the floorboards of a cottage in Upper Woodford, Salisbury. Dating from the 1730s the fashionable and expensive shoe had been carefully darned and repaired before it was deliberately placed under the floor. Representing a folk tradition that spans at least 600 years, shoes were hidden in homes in the hope that their ability to mould to the wearer's foot would permeate them with their spirit and ward off evil.



The museum project, started in March 2018, was worked on by Arts Society heritage volunteers and groups of young people including students from Bournemouth Arts University, St Joseph's Catholic School and young people attending an afterschool club at the museum. The project was made possible by a grant of £115,360 from the Museums Association Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund which funds projects that develop collections to achieve social impact. The Arts Society Sarum also supported the new gallery with funding for the young people's wider interior design ideas which included a new colour scheme and updated flooring.



Paris of the North NK's French couture atelier 1902-1966

until 18 September 2022

Nordiska Museet, Djurgårdsvägen 6-16, Stockholm, Sweden

Timeless elegance, exquisite craftsmanship and tailor-made dreams. Nordiska Museet shows a fashion exhibition that transports you to the golden age of haute couture and the northernmost outpost of Paris fashion – the French Couture Atelier at the NK department store in Stockholm.



Saving the Macclesfield Stripe Designs of the 1920s-1940s

until 18 September 2022

The Silk Museum, Park Lane, Macclesfield SK11 6TJ
macclesfieldmuseums.co.uk/macc-stripe

This new exhibition takes you behind the scenes of the Macclesfield Stripe collection, where you will discover the iconic 1920s -1940s Macclesfield designs and how they are being protected for future generations.

Followers of Shoe Fashion

A Zoom talk by Rebecca Shawcross,
Senior Shoe Curator at Northampton Museum

Report by Carolyn Cooper.

Who in this world is not attracted to a shoe shop window? Never mind if the goods are suitable or would fit, it is the possibility that one of the pairs might be 'Just The Thing'.

In Rebecca Shawcross's talk on shoes and shoe fashion we were offered about 65 pictures of shoes and boots over which to drool and I only regretted that there was not more time to spend on each one. You may be relieved to know that not every shoe will be described in this article.

Northampton Museum was founded in 1865 and the first pair of shoes, ladies' footwear from India, was collected in the 1870s. Local shoemaker, Philip Manfield (a shoe shop name from my youth), suggested that local shoes should be collected so that local workers in the trade could visit and feel pride in their industry. There are something like 15,000 pairs in the collection and it is still growing, currently from lockdown sort outs. There are also around 6,500 associated items concerning the making, selling and wearing of shoes plus foot measures, shoeboxes and printed material.

Where to start? Rebecca began with an Egyptian sandal made of straw dated 300 BC which is remarkably complete and I noted down 'raffia toe thong' as a natty description. This was followed by a Roman sandal with a hobnailed sole and thence to an example of Venetian *chopines* which raised the wearer to ridiculous heights. These were expensive to produce because a large amount of material was involved, the pair pictured mainly constructed from cork and covered in leather. Although worn by the elite in society they were reputedly favoured by prostitutes.

The medieval *poulaine* of the period 1440-1475 were men's shoes with long pointed toes which inevitably became longer in the point, often stuffed with moss, and needed tying up to the wearer's knees to prevent accidents. Rebecca said that she had observed the same exaggerated shape on the feet of young, male estate agents. Well I never!

There are gaps in the earlier centuries and so Rebecca moved on to the cow's mouth foot bag shoes of the 1600s (mental picture of Henry VIII). Lots of these have been found in the city of London and some were donated to the Northampton Museum. These could measure as much as six and a half inches across the toe but wearers were fined should their shoes be found to be too wide; no-one could 'wrong foot' the king.

All shoes had been flat soled up to the late 1500s but a record in Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe list of 1595 describes a pair of Spanish boots with high heels, perhaps to prevent the wearer's feet slipping in the stirrups.

At this point I was very taken with a picture of a pair of ladies' heeled shoes of the 1660s with squared toes and latches for ribbon ties, in blue velvet with gold embroidery-

Mmmm. A suitable accompaniment for a pair of men's boots with deep turned-down cuffs and stacked wooden heels.

Ever heard of 'slap soles'? Another C17 idea supposedly for protecting the shoe heel from sinking into the mud. The image on screen was of a ladies' gold shoe with the sole extending horizontally backwards under the heel, but not attached to it. Hence the slap as you walked. It is thought not many of these ever saw the great outdoors but were enjoyed for the noise they made when making an entrance.

In this period men also wore heeled shoes, a style picked up from Louis XIV of France, and red heels showed your wealth and status. A ladies' shoe of 1720 showed a gold mule with pointed toes and very high 'Pompadour' heels. Buckles began to replace the ribbon ties and Samuel Pepys made a note of his first pair in his diary:

"22 January 1660 "This day I began to put on buckles to my shoes, which I have bought yesterday of Mr. Wotton."



Top: Thea Cadabra's Cloud and Rainbow shoes
Left: Blue velvet latchet tie shoes. Reputedly worn by Lady Mary Stanhope, 1660
Above: C17 Slap soles

Women's shoes followed suit and the Museum has lots of C18 examples in cut glass and paste from a bequest.

A picture of a ladies' shoe of 1790 showed bullion lace running down the vamp and down the back of the heel. These came from Portugal where previously the authorities had imposed an export ban to allow the shoemakers to catch up on orders for these popular high status shoes.

The 1790s were the time when the heels on women's shoes became shorter and thinner to produce what looks like the C20 Kitten heel with a shorter shoe front. The pair shown on screen were made in black kid leather with cut outs on the vamp revealing bright yellow inserts, and had belonged to the sister of Sir Spencer Percival, the only British prime minister to have been assassinated. At this time men pushed buckles aside and went back to laces on flat-soled shoes.

The C19 opened to a complete change in style in women's shoes. Enter flat soled pumps with ribbon ties which desperately needed something to protect the wearer from the ever present mud. On screen we saw a pair of pattens, not a new idea but this era gave us the wooden sole fixed to an iron ring, a style which featured in the literature of the day. They were still being used in convents in the mid C20 but the nuns were sure to wrap the rings in cloth lest they scratched their highly polished floors.

These pumps were now commercially available 'off the shelf' in shoe shops where pairs were sold with their own cloth bag and increasingly with a paper advertising label on the inner sole. Alongside these dainty pumps there was the ladies' boot, first with side lacing and later with side elastic, or with tiny buttons for which the button hook was required.

Now Rebecca galloped at ever increasing pace into the C20 and I saw another image of a tasty pair of shoes. Made around 1910 by Pietro Yantorny in red velvet with gold embroidery they echoed the ladies' heeled shoe of the C17 but with a discreet buckle on the crossed latches and a pointed toe - Ooooh!

The elegant heels of the roaring twenties were often decorated with glittering 'jewels'. I was particularly taken with the pink *art deco* one she showed but I can see them being a topic for an article of their own.

A gold shoe of 1922 was influenced in its turquoise decoration by the shapes and colours found in the recently discovered tomb of Tutankhamun. (I liked the look of that too.)

In the 1940s materials were scarce. Shoes with wooden soles were made but were not popular, while in Norway a stylish sandal was made using fish skin, plaice, I believe.

Post war developments in materials allowed heels to become finer and in the early 1950s the stiletto heel appeared thanks to designers like Roger Vivier and Christian Dior. Many other famous names became associated with shoe fashion: Anello & Davide with their variant of the elasticated Chelsea boot for men - the 'Beatle' boot, Mary Quant's plastic boots for women, Dr Martin boots, Vivienne Westwood's green 'mock croc' platforms (with a hint of the *chopine*) and Stella McCartney platforms looking much like the 'slap soles' of the C17.

Shoes are intriguing as are the customs and superstitions surrounding them. In some cultures showing the soles of one's shoes is considered disrespectful and to be beaten with a shoe is the depth of degradation. In this country and in Europe, 'concealed' shoes have been found in the fabric of dwellings and other buildings, having been deliberately hidden for whatever reason, be it superstition or for good luck. Such finds have been of particular interest because they are examples of what was worn by the common folk rather than the flashy footwear put away for safekeeping. When we renovated our cottage dining room I confess to hiding one of my baby shoes behind the new panelling.

Shoes are necessary to keep our feet dry and warm but we place far more emphasis on their appearance than our own comfort. At least I didn't hanker after the weird shoes Rebecca showed us such as the fetish red 'ballet' shoes *en pointe* with a stiletto heel of absurd height which cannot be sold on the open market because they are a Health and Safety hazard! And how could I not mention the red 'Kinky Boots'!? But you can wear shoes which are works of art such as the Cloud and Rainbow pair by Thea Cadabra as long as you don't need to walk far.

As ever I am still searching for Just The Thing for my particular feet. No harm in looking.



Top: 1920s jewelled heels

Above: Red velvet buckle shoes designed and made by Pietro Yantorny, c. 1920.

Study Day

Janet Arnold Study Day
The Politics of Fashion:
from Cromwell to
Thatcher

Saturday 2 October 2021

■ Widcombe Social Club,
Bath BA2 6AA

Image and Reality

Politics, Fashion
and stereotypes of
the Cavaliers and
Roundheads

Speaker Pat Poppy

Report by Helen Montague-Smith



(Stereotype: "A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing", Oxford Languages)

The image many people have of the protagonists in the Civil War during the 17th century originated in the wonderful book 1066 And All That, published in 1950. The Roundheads are described as Right but Repulsive whereas the Cavaliers are Wrong but Romantic. Is this really true?

Our speaker, Pat Poppy, began her talk with images from films which have also influenced the way we think of these two groups. *The Devil's Whore* of 2008 was typical of the way 'Roundhead' women were portrayed, - no head covering, bare neck and loosely laced bodice, loose sleeves or even no sleeves with bare arms. By contrast, looking at the detailed painting by Antony van Dyck of Hester Tradescant, she was wearing a coif under a large brimmed hat, had a tight fitting bodice with a lace collar and long sleeves with cuffs. The 2003 film *To Kill a King* had a character wearing a cravat which our speaker thought was a little early. During this time, men's shirt collars began to be tied together by a small black lace or ribbon and this gradually evolved into a large bow.



In *Cromwell*, 1970, the designers had tried to provide realistic costume but it seemed ten years out of date. By contrast, the 1975 film *Winstanley* had many extras who were re-enactors and appeared convincingly unkempt as 'Diggers'. A slide from *The Scarlet Blade*, set in 1648, showed our hero wearing a cloak over his military uniform

which was completely out of keeping. As were the hooped stripes on sleeves which should have been vertical stripes. Buff coats are seen as characteristic of Roundhead soldiers and were always plain.

The famous painting – *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* by WF Yeames shows a Royalist house under occupation by Parliamentarians. The young boy is being interrogated as to the whereabouts of the master of the house. Behind him, a Roundhead soldier holds the boy's crying sister. To the left can be seen the children's mother, wearing a lace collar over a dark dress. The children wear bright colours, the boy in a blue silk suit which contrasts with his Puritan accusers in muted greys and browns. This appealed to Victorian sensibilities and is one of the most visited paintings in the Walker Art Gallery, so still very influential. Pat noted that the painting of this boy must have been the inspiration for Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, painted in 1770 which shows the child in 17th century style clothing.

Many details of modern interpretations of costume of this time are wrong. One which is very easy to spot is the use of buttons – not enough! Original clothing had many closely spaced buttons. Sleeves also are often copied wrongly.

The 1770 Zoffany painting of George III's family shows them wearing clothing of the previous century as the artist was influenced by the work of van Dyck. In fact, this promoted a van Dyck revival in the 18th century. Again, many of the details are incorrect but give an impression of this era and confirm how we imagine it.



Images, left to right:

Inset: Alec Guinness as Charles I in full cavalier from the film Cromwell

Speaker Pat Poppy answering questions

Hester Tradescant, wife to Charles I's gardener John Tradescant, with her stepson also called John.

And when did you last see your father? 1878 By William Frederick Yeames. Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool

Anne of Denmark in mourning around 1612 by Marcus Gheeraerts the younger

Sir William Compton by Sir Peter Lely @The National Trust

Our speaker continued to define more of the influences which make up our images of Cavaliers and Roundheads. As far back as the mid 12th century, a woodcut of the devil showed a woman with tight lacing and long sleeves. This was compared to a 1980s poster which was anti-fur. In the 17th century, long hair, and particularly lovelocks, were criticized, as presumably were full bottomed wigs which were starting to be worn. Underneath a wig, were the men with shaved heads all Roundheads?

Another stereotype was illustrated with an image of the Earl of Strafford, Thomas Wentworth, who also served in Parliament but was a Royalist, who was dressed in black, contrasted with another long-standing Parliamentarian, Goodwin who was wearing orange.

William Prynne, a prominent local Puritan, asserted *“that for men to wear their hair long was “unseemly and unlawful unto Christians”, while it was “mannish, unnatural, impudent, and unchristian” for women to cut it short”*. An image of William Prynne shows him with longish hair but this was probably to cover up his cropped ears!

The term Roundhead was originally a derogatory one – possibly applied to the London apprentices who had their hair cut ‘close round’. This was most likely to deal with head lice. Long hair on a woman was seen as her crowning glory so it would be un-natural to cut it. However, the Man-Woman or Womanish-Man was seen with short powdered hair and this would definitely arouse criticism. Women normally kept their hair covered.

Also criticized was the use of cosmetics and beauty spots and immodest dress which included bare arms and naked breasts. These were seen as a temptation to sin. However, in the 1628 painting of the Duke of Buckingham's family, the ladies are starting to bare their lower arms. They are also aping men by wearing large broad brimmed hats – but trimmed with a ‘wanton feather’. Gowns were looser and high waisted, perhaps influenced by male doublets. To slash or pane referred to the previous fashion of slashed sleeves with doublets which was replaced by panels applied to the surface. A painting of 1635 showed Charles I in a plain sleeved doublet, influenced by French contemporary fashion.

During the Civil War, 1642-46, it was fashionable to be painted wearing armour, or just a breast plate over a buff coat. This made it difficult to decide which side one was fighting on and who was who. Symbols were introduced and the Royalists wore bright colours or sashes which led to them being described as gay or cheerful. Puritan colours were dark or sad and these tended to be worn by Parliamentarians. Interestingly, ‘sad’ included red.

At the time of the execution of Charles I, one's status was still defined by what one wore although statutes on clothing had been abolished. Servant clothing was still defined. The term Cavalier was first used by Roundheads as a term of abuse for the wealthier Royalist supporters of Charles I but later was adopted by the latter and is now associated with the clothing of the court at the time.

Pat ended her talk by asking us to consider and contrast the clothing worn by Jeremy Corbyn and Jacob Rees-Mogg.....





Tartan: Parading power and displaying dissent

Speaker Jonathan Faiers Report by Fiona Starkey

Described as having the job she would love, Angela Bailey introduced Jonathan Faiers, Professor of Fashion Thinking at the University of Winchester. He is also curating a Tartan exhibition for V&A Dundee to open in April 2023.

Jonathan's opening image was a discussion-inviting image of a Drag Queen in tartan - something he'd come back to - and the statement that all fashion is political, with status being defined by what is worn. Tartan is unique in history, being used to show subversion and conformity. Recognised globally, with examples found worldwide, it has a troubled textile history. It has played a part at key political moments: back in 1822, George IV's tour of Edinburgh was an exercise in promoting the United Kingdom (emphasis on United) and the monarch appeared in a variety of different tartans, expecting everyone else attending to do likewise. The über tartan was Stewart red, but George didn't limit himself and spent a tremendous amount on clothing with a list of items from his outfitters including gold shoe rosettes, fine gold head ornaments (pearls, rubies and emeralds), a gold horn, pistols, 61 yards of Royal satin plaid, 60 yards of velvet plaid ... Tartan requires a certain swagger to wear and cartoons of his majesty at the time really take the mickey. Tartan's significance was consolidated



1822 satirical print of George IV: *First Laird in Aw Scotia*

at Culloden in 1746. Swiss artist David Morier's painting of an incident in the Rebellion 1745 was pure propaganda with the highlanders depicted as half-clad, half-wild savages taking on the much smarter redcoats. The post Culloden 'Act of Proscription' in 1747 was brought in to regulate clothing and stop the open display of dissent by banning the wearing of tartan on pain of six months' jail for a first offence and transportation to the colonies for a second.

At first sight it looks as if tartan was banned completely, but soldiers serving the crown, women and gentry were exempted. And if you ban something it becomes more desirable and then it starts to become fashionable.

The early C15 *feileidh-mór* (length of fabric wound round the body, secured at the waist and draped over the shoulder) was seen as a bit brutish, rough and ready but at the same time it was admired as being worn by really tough, hardy and (at a distance) romantic chaps, who wore the tartan by

day and unwrapped themselves to sleep in it at night. Highland regiments like the Black Watch, newly founded in the 1740s, spread tartan around the globe and in the UK it became patriotic to wear tartan which in turn was seen as supporting the spread of Empire via the military.

Jacobite supporters started wearing tartan after the rebellion and nearly a century later in 1839 the Ancient London Caledonian Society was founded to advance and support Scottish interests. Their outfits leaned strongly towards tartan and the Jacobite white rose emblem was picked out in the weave of one suit

on display in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Bonnie Prince Charlie, doomed romantic hero of the Jacobites, formed part of the mythology of the widespread European romantic movement and by association, tartan spread beyond the boundaries of practical wool garments and turned up in fashionable silks and tulle - ladies' dresses in the 1800s and some splendid ballet costumes in *La Sylphide* were examples at this point. Proof of the romantic legacy was a quick pic of Jamie and Claire in 2015's tv adaptation of *Outlander*.

Ideas of nationalism are perpetuated in football's Tartan Army and slightly more decorous sashes on the Scottish Suffragettes, before being totally subverted by RuPaul's Drag Race winner in bright red tartan.

Vivienne Westwood was seriously into the subversive side of the cloth. A 1978 photo of Tracey (an assistant in her shop *Seditionaries*) wearing red and white tartan was a bit brutalist - symbolic of revolt and sedition.

Seditionaries set out to make anarchy and sedition wearable and it helped to be taking a poke at royal tartans (where have we heard that before?). The seldom sung sixth verse of the British national anthem has a very specific couple of lines about beating back rebellious Scots.

Martin Serre's 2019 anti-pollution subversive masks were prescient and Nicola Sturgeon was shown only a year later in a tartan Covid mask. There was a lovely photo of (supposedly wee Nicola's) a week's worth of tartan masks drying near the radiator.

Tartan has been shown to be infinitely translatable. Evocative of the past, it also signifies change and disruption. It



From the left: Lawrence Chaney (winner) and Ellie Diamond from the 2021 *RuPaul's Drag Race*, Jonathan Faiers' book *Tartan*, Jonathan Faiers himself, Theresa May showing 'alliance and affiliation' in her 'lucky' Vivienne Westwood tartan suit, The English National Ballet's *La Sylphide* (those must have been fun to dance in), Edward Bawden's wrapping paper (Bagpipe Player) available at £1.99/sheet at the National Museums of Scotland Gift shop and right, a Caledonian Society coat showing the white rose in the weave.



has migrated way beyond fabric. A pic of Edward Bawden's wrapping paper shows the fundamental grid broken up and superimposed with a highland piper, yet tartan origins are still read easily.

USA, UK and French translations

USA

Tartan acts as a textile reminder of home across much of the US. Early examples of it came over with colonising troops before the mass emigration of the later century. In the C20 the Duke of Windsor kept his father's Inverness cape and Rothesay Hunting tartan suit and was shown in a large red and white check. He had it altered to fit (and included a nice modern zippered fly apparently). Though tartan was never really out of fashion, Edward re-popularised

it, particularly in the US. Links to the old country suggest American dynamism and tartan turned up in coats, waistcoats, DJs. New York tailor 'Chipp' specialised in the tartan Ivy League/ Country Club look. There seemed to be total tartan saturation in the 1950s and 1960s - on offer was everything from coats and jackets to golf slacks and garters, wallpaper, swimwear and PJs. There were Plaid Parties on Sunset Boulevard in 1957 for the rich and famous who had to be wearing tartan to get in. Goodness knows what that did to you after a few drinks. Tartan remains a cloth of showmen. Pharrell Williams' wedding party was one example. Bill Haley, Muhammad Ali, Bo Diddley were all photographed in tartan and more recently, even *Victoria's Secret's* 2013 catwalk show featured tartan. Though it was attributed to the English look, so make of that what you will. There seems to have been a fair bit of tartan in *RuPaul's Drag Race* as well. Several winners and contestants were shown in all their checky glory. Faiers said Clowns have always liked tartan. He cited Bruce Forsyth, Jerry Lewis and... a couple of junior Trumps. There's now a 'tartan day' in the States and there was an example of Ralph Lauren mixing tartan and Navajo in his *Home Look*. Really?

centuries. Never out of fashion, though with ebbs and flows, the 1920s saw an upturn. An *A l'ecossaise* Poiret dress in the V&A shows fashionable tartan chic. 1960s had Lanvin and Cardin. John Galliano designed a tartan suit for Dior. Haute couture in 1990s used tartan in taffeta and chiffons. Christian LaCroix, Dior and John Paul Gaultier were cited as examples and Balenciaga in 2018 kept things contemporary.

UK

The UK was definitely not exempt from the C19 romantic movement. The ballet *La Sylphide* was mentioned again to illustrate the full-on tartan revival in the late 1800s/early 1900s when all things Scottish were in vogue. Walter Scot's depiction of Scotland in novels (*Ivanhoe*, *Lady of the Lake*) and Victoria and Albert's purchase of Balmoral and its decking out as a Scottish German theme park only stoked the interest. Current royals were shown in a variety of tartan garbs, Prince Charles in several re-iterations of kilt (see Rothesay inset). The new romantics of the 1980s were represented by Stephen Strange who turned up as Bonnie Prince Charlie.

France

La Nouvelle Mode 1815 had fashion plates featuring tartan. During the Napoleonic Wars, tartan clad soldiers abroad sparked a tartan mania amongst the French. Cheerfully ribald cartoons along the lines of 'What does a Scotsman wear under the kilt' were all grist to the tartan mill. The Auld Alliance probably played a part too as the French and the Scots have shared a dislike of the English which goes back



1955 advert for Jantzen swimwear

There seemed to be total tartan saturation in the 1950s and 1960s - on offer was everything from coats and jackets to golf slacks and garters, wallpaper, swimwear and PJs. There were Plaid Parties on Sunset Boulevard in 1957 for the rich and famous who had to be wearing tartan to get in. Goodness knows what that did to you after a



Rothesay tartan
Information and image courtesy of Kinloch Anderson

The Rothesay tartan, previously unknown, appeared in the *Vestiarum Scoticum* (1842) under the name 'Prince of Rothesay'. It was worn by King Edward VII as a child and originally classified as a royal tartan. Rothesay is the principal town of the Isles of Bute, stronghold of the Stuarts and the Boyds. The Duke of Rothesay is a title of the heir apparent to the British throne, currently Prince Charles.



Item from Olubiyi Thomas' 2021 collection, inset: Nicola Sturgeon wearing Shelter Scotland 'Homeless' tartan face mask 2021, above: RuPaul on his newly minted star

Vivienne Westwood is still using tartan in 2018. Alexander McQueen used it for political statements - see his *Widows of Culloden* show in 2006. Louise Grey, a Scottish designer, puts it in current collections on more unusual surfaces like plastic. Glasgow born Charles Jeffrey got 'in your face' with gender-bending outfits in tartan. Nicholas Daley in 2017 used Black Watch in his very rugged looking kilt and waterproof top. Lagos born, Glasgow raised Olubiyi Thomas reflects both heritages and upcycles tartan for a very contemporary look bringing us bang up to date with an image from 2021.

Question time

What impact did tartan have on Madras fabrics?

JF: Madras fabrics sparked by tartan regimentals, but developed colourways which worked in Indian light.

When did particular colours become associated with particular clans?

JF: Association with colours probably started by simply being what was locally available, developing weaves and patterns which later became linked with clans or families from the area. After George IV's visit things became complicated and patterns became more specifically linked with particular families. There was a huge commercial incentive to having people buy 'their' particular tartan.

Early examples often look very muted. When did the rainbow colours start coming in?

JF: Really bright colours came with synthetic dyes from the 1850s onwards, but there are some very bright early examples from natural dyes.

Why do we have different versions of the same tartan?

JF: Victorians introduced ancient, modern, weathered, hunting and dress tartans for different applications. With the sizing altered, the same colourway and patterns could be used more subtly for daywear and intensified for evening wear. There were 'mourning' sets of colourways after Albert died.

Do we know how many tartans there are?

JF: Impossible to quantify the number of different tartans extant as new patterns are being registered frequently. There's even a new 'Connerly' tartan which I quite like.

What's the difference between plaid and tartan?

JF: The term plaid is usually understood in the UK to be a garment or a specific piece of fabric and tartan here usually refers to the pattern. An American would understand plaid to refer to both: it's a slippery one to define.





What did Catherine II wear during the Coup and why did it matter?

Speaker Viktoria Ivleva:
Report by Angela Bailey

Before this talk I knew very little about Catherine II (or 'the Great' as she is better known). In order to write this review, I did a little very basic research on the background to her accession to the Russian throne on June 28 1762.

Peter III and Catherine married in 1742 in a political arrangement organised by their families. Neither was born Russian, but he came to the throne through his aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I. The couple never 'got on'; both were involved in amorous affairs. He is supposed to have spent a lot of his boyhood playing with toy soldiers; she was a woman of prodigious intellect and cultural sophistication, fluent in French and Russian. Their opposing political views led him to support the Prussians (the Russians' erstwhile enemies) while she, having immersed herself in Russian culture and the Orthodox religion, had the support of the Russian nobility.

On June 27 1762, after discovering that her husband had had one of her supporters arrested, she left her palace (they were living apart by this time) and gave a speech asking for protection from her husband. At some



Spot the difference.
Top: Erichsen (Ericksen), Vigilius. Equestrian Portrait of Catherine II. Denmark. After 1762. Oil on canvas. 195x178.3 cm. Inv. no. GE-1312.
Above: Begagle, Philip, Kobyljakov, Ivan after Caravaque, Louis (?).Tapestry: The Battle of Poltava. Wool, silk, 300 x 315 cm. Russia, St Petersburg, 1719-1722. Inv.no. ERT-16181.
Images used from www.hermitagemuseum.org, courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.



Above: Uniform of Peter the Great Modelled after the Officer's Form of the Life Guards Preobrazhensky Regiment: Caftan. Russia, 1701-1709. Inv. no. ERT 16753.

Right: Russian uniforms before Peter I. Ceramic depicting soldiers in strelets's and Preobrazhensky uniforms. Inv. no. ERE-188.



stage that night she put on an officer's uniform, and together with 14,000 troops rode overnight to Peterhof. At a monastery eleven miles short of their destination, clergy ordained her as sole occupant of the throne. Her husband Peter III was arrested, forced to sign abdication documents, and died in ambiguous circumstances on 17th July. Catherine reigned until 1796, through turbulent times, involving her troops in a number of wars and insurrections, while bringing in policies that reflected her Enlightenment views.

On, therefore, to Viktoria's (Vika's) talk. What did Catherine wear on the day of the coup? Vika argues that in putting on a regimental uniform, Catherine was following the example of Peter I (also the Great) in order to underline the legitimacy to her claim to the throne. Throughout her reign, just as her predecessors had done, she used this sartorial reference to add to her personal authority, adding the extra nuance of being a woman to develop the monarchy in her own image.

That day, Catherine, and her friend Ekaterina Dashkova, borrowed the uniforms of two officers who were about their size. Catherine's belonged to Capt. Talyzin, of the Semenovskiy Life Guards, and Ekaterina's to Lt. Pushkin, of the Preobrazhensky Regiment, who were serving officers in the two different elite regiments. However, in descriptions of the day, her green uniform was described as 'old' Preobrazhensky. (Vika tells me that although the uniform now looks blue, museum conservators have confirmed that this is because the original dye mixed blue and green, and that the green has faded through time.) Interestingly, in the six months since Peter III had come to the throne, he had signed a peace treaty with Prussia, and had changed the regiments' uniforms to reflect his own Prussian background, so these officers, together with their regimental colleagues, must have stored their 'old' Russian uniforms 'just in case'. The 'old' uniforms

had been introduced by Peter I and it was later written that by the time Catherine was ready to march at the head of the troops, all the soldiers were wearing them.

The Dutch artist Eriksen's portrait of Catherine, astride a white horse, depicts this day. She is wearing the green uniform with the blue moire sash of the Order of St Andrew (Peter I's own chivalric order, only worn by women if they were reigning sovereigns). Vika argues that this portrait

is full of symbolic messages of power and authority that would have been familiar to other European royal families at the time, going back to Roman times: the white horse; the sword pointing upwards to the light; the red horse cloth reflecting the military banners; the image of the monastery where she received her husband's

resignation letter. Previous portraits of Peter I show a similar pose, except that he is shown leading his troops; Catherine's seems an altogether calmer image. (See previous page)

The history of the two regiments founded by Peter I is closely linked. They were the core of his army. As well as fighting his wars, they built St Petersburg, and were involved in the administration and scientific exploration of the period. Peter I was deeply associated with the regiments as Colonel, taking part in official and informal events, and this tradition continued through subsequent reigns, including Catherine's.

The uniforms changed with the times. Peter I first developed the European-style uniform for his 'gentlemen of the bedchamber' as part of a disassociation from the previous Russian soldier's uniform.

His new style was more practical:

Preobrazhenky troops wore green, and the Semenovskiy's falconers blue. The uniforms were of similar design: single breasted knee length coats and knee breeches. Through the years the uniforms of the two regiments became more alike; both wore green coats, with details such as collars, cloaks, badges and hat decorations differentiating them. Both Peter I's uniform and Catherine's regimental gowns, which she wore when she became Empress, can be seen at the Hermitage Museum. The green fabric used for the infantry was relatively inexpensive and distinguished them from Dragoons, who wore blue. During the C19 green officers' uniforms were worn by all the monarchs for their coronations.

What initially seems like a fortunate set of circumstances for Catherine and Ekaterina on the day of the coup, actually served to emphasise Catherine's 'Russian-ness' and reassured the people that Peter I's traditions and policies were to continue. As part of this, she used Orthodox religious symbolism in her accession manifesto, further legitimising her position and separating her stance from her Lutheran husband. Her court dress also reflected her military position, and she would also wear regimental gowns, which were similar in design to traditional pinafore dresses, to reinforce her Russian identity.

Later in the reign she established herself as the mother and grandmother of the country, bringing in social reforms. The Russian monarchy led its people absolutely: politically, religiously, and spiritually, and the donning of that uniform on 28th June 1762 was a continuation of that tradition.

For those of you with particular interest in the uniforms of the period, read Vika's article in *Costume* 53.2 (2019): 'Catherine II, Uniform Dress and regional Uniforms'.



Empress Catherine II's Uniform Dress
Modelled after the Uniform of the Life-Guards
Semenovskiy Regiment. Russia, 1770-1780s
(outer uniform dress). Inv. no. ERT-15581.



From Margaret Thatcher to Tracy Brabin: Dress, Fashion and the Hyper-Visibility of Women in British Public Life

Speaker Dr Daniel Conway
Report Tony Cooper

*Typical, you might think; we had a man,
Dr Daniel Conway, talking about women in public life and now we have
another man writing this report!*

So why should Daniel have used the term hyper-visibility? The first part of his title, *From Margaret Thatcher to Tracy Brabin*, should give a clue – politics. The House of Commons is populated predominantly by middle class men in dark suits whose scope for self expression is down to a choice of tie and, if they are feeling particularly rakish, a pocket hankie. It has become the uniform of our elected representatives who bear the burden of running the country.

Not that that uniform has gone unchanged. For example it was only in 1993 that the following motion was tabled:

“That this House believes the procedure whereby honourable Members are required to wear a top hat or other suitable head covering during certain proceedings on the floor of the House should be ended; calls upon the Select Committee on Procedure to recommend ending the practice; and believes that this whole procedure brings the House into disrepute across the world.”

One can imagine there being top hats

of various sizes for hire by those intent on raising a point of order. Or maybe there were a few hats knocking about the chamber just in case. It’d give a whole new meaning to the phrase “passing the hat”.

For a moment, cast your mind back to school days. You may have seen some poor soul arrive wearing the uniform of the school they had recently left because they hadn’t managed to get the right one in time. They stood out; they were hyper-visible.

Now put a woman in the Commons. What does she wear? Is she expected to wear a sober suit, collar and tie as well? And if she did, what impression would that give? Conversely, if she turns up wearing the high hemline fashion of the day, she’s flaunting herself. It seems that no matter how she dresses she’s in for some stick. What’s more, her political acumen becomes a secondary consideration.

Not that male MPs are exempt from criticism. Many of us will remember the hoo-hah about Michael Foot’s so-called “donkey jacket”, which he wore for the wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in 1981. Many saw

the garment as more suitable for a building site or picket line than at such a solemn event; I wouldn’t be surprised if some cartoonist at the time drew him with “McAlpine” across his back. It makes me wonder whether the fact that it had been bought at Harrods would have made any difference but perhaps a decent haircut would probably have helped.

Some thirty-seven years later, Jeremy Corbyn came in for criticism at the same event and the press were quick to link the two news stories.

Having mentioned these two men falling foul of expected sartorial norms, it has to be admitted that every female MP is subject to critical gaze.

In his work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Bourdieu argues that the social world functions simultaneously as a system of power relations and as a symbolic system in which minute distinctions of taste become the basis for social judgement. No judgement of taste is innocent - we are all snobs. Bourdieu coined the term *habitus* for this, defining it as ‘socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking’. Essentially we are the product of our upbringing and surroundings. Who amongst us hasn’t uttered the phrase “Good God. What is she wearing!?” (And it usually is a she.)

For those of us with short memories, Tracy Brabin is the Labour MP who appeared in an off-the-shoulder black number and suffered vicious verbal attacks (“a tart” being the mildest rebuke) by online trolls and the press alike. It is ironic that at the same time as repeating the offensive remarks the papers also advertised the £35 pleated shoulder pencil dress, sparking



Editor’s NB

Looking for a photo of Michael Foot in a donkey jacket I found myself stumped.

And trying to find one of him in said jacket at the occasion mentioned certainly turned out to be impossible. So it appears that someone didn’t like his attire - or Michael Foot - and put a spin on it:

Why did Michael Foot wear a donkey jacket to the Cenotaph?

He didn’t. As the website *Fashion in Politics* describes:

At the Cenotaph in 1981 (pictured), Foot wore casual shoes and a green coat which was dubbed a Donkey jacket. The press at the time didn’t like it. The Times said Foot looked “dressed as if he had just returned from walking his dog on Hampstead Heath in green donkey jacket, sneakers and paisley tie”. In the early Nineties Foot, through his biographer, said the coat was from Jaeger and that the Queen Mother complimented him on the day. “Why, Mr Foot, what an awfully nice coat,” she said, adding that it was “a smart, sensible coat for a day like this”.



Portrait photo from *L'Express* January 22, 1988. Left: in domestic mode.

Above: some of Margaret Thatcher's outfits up for auction, 2012. Most were bought by an anonymous bidder in South Korea. Photography Mark Baron for *The Guardian*.

a buying frenzy. Clearly the label "tart" didn't put buyers off.

There are always slow-news days when the press wheel out articles such as "Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!" (incidentally written by a woman). It pictured Theresa May and Nicola Sturgeon having the audacity to have legs. Then, Heaven help us, there is the headline "MPs who flaunt their, er, agendas" with a page of photos of MPs in various situations but all with cleavages. It has to be said that the high camera angle within the chamber doesn't help. Why am I not surprised that the *Daily Mail* is one of the go-to papers for such material?

But what of Margaret Thatcher? Whether or not you espouse her politics, she was arguably one of the most successful female politicians to date. She is quoted as saying "I dress for the occasion and for the job" and that maxim generally stood her in good stead and perhaps her female successors should follow it. Not that she was free of criticism. As Minister for Education, she decided to wear a striking "beehive" hat to the 1971 Conservative Party conference only to be told that she looked like a suburban Tory wife at a fundraising event (I paraphrase but you get the idea).

Well, to be fair, she was a Tory and she was a wife. In fact she was more than

once photographed in what we would now consider a pretty basic kitchen putting on a show of domesticity. Nevertheless she took the comments on board and was more considered in her choice of headwear and where to don it. She also adapted to other criticisms; she stopped wearing

checks because somebody told her they looked awful and she had voice coaching to give her naturally "shrill" voice a measured authority. On one point she stood her ground. The pearl necklace (Denis's gift) would stay no matter what!

Growing up, Maggie was brought up in a household where clothing had to be "serviceable" – hard wearing and suitable for many occasions. No "buy-it-wear-it-throw-it" for them. Nevertheless, she secretly envied the Catholic girls in their pretty white confirmation dresses.

She was allowed to go to the cinema where she would admire the sumptuous Hollywood fashions and, possibly unconsciously, begin to understand the relevance of dressing appropriately for one's role and situation and the impact that that would have on others around one.

Both influences stuck with her such that she had many skirt suits, each with more than one bib and two skirt lengths so that she could ring the changes as necessary throughout the day. Whilst she strove to make the right impression, she wasn't above using the terms "elegant", "dowdy" or "tarty" when referring to others of the sisterhood.

It is said that she also had several handbags, fully equipped with the

necessaries, at strategic locations. Whether any of those would be the ones used for the infamous "handbaggings" is not recorded.

Out of the Commons and hobnobbing with the international great and the good gave her an opportunity to indulge her love of clothes. She would often practise walking, going up and down stairs in them before going to an important event. Sensible woman.

At one time Thatcher issued an edict that there was to be no disclosure about her clothing to the media, declaring the topic trivial. However, later she reversed this and would happily tell of her patronage of Aquascutum. Her new maxim; dress should be appropriate but not the star.

She became somewhat superstitious about her work clothes, resolving never to wear a new outfit to a potentially difficult meeting.

Sartorial controversy would again catch up with her amid the Poll Tax furore and the day after her Chancellor, Geoffrey Howe, resigned. She appeared at the Lord Mayor's banquet looking, to some, "inappropriately regal". Her dress sense hadn't changed but the circumstances very definitely had; she was out of office within ten days.

Thatcher liked to associate her outfits with events in her professional life; "the Glasgow G7 suit", "the White House ball gown" and so on. She was wearing a black wool suit with a tan collar when she received the news that she had insufficient votes to carry on. Obviously it was a devastating blow but she later said she still liked that suit.

She may no longer be with us but Thatcher's outfits live on. When



Dennis and Margaret Thatcher on their wedding day 13 December 1951

offered some, the V&A seemed to have some reservations; after all when in office she had been no friend of museums. By the end of her office in 1990, many publicly funded museums were in crisis after years of neglect. Museums were “haemorrhaging key staff” after a virtual standstill on government expenditure. Nevertheless the Museum ultimately accepted the offer as it represents a highly significant character in British life.

It is self-evident that having a snipe at women in public life is a universal sport. It takes enormous courage and commitment for a woman to put her head above the parapet. It may be hoped that the tenacity of such women will encourage more women to brave the slings and arrows and eventually be seen as just part of the normal make-up of political life. In that case I wonder if the Daily Mail will eventually tire of inane sexist articles. Hmm.

Our thanks go to Daniel for a most interesting talk and a peep into a few dark recesses of public life.

Further reading

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Fashion and Textile Museum Chintz: Cotton in Bloom

Marian Banks

18 May 2021 to 12 September 2021

A last minute trip to London to visit this exhibition, which has now closed.

It was certainly worth the visit. I learnt:

- ◆ that hand blocking chintz is both a laborious and skilful activity
- ◆ that restrictive British trade rules at the time banned imports of chintz for domestic use, however chintz was imported and then exported to Africa where it was used as currency to facilitate the trade in people.
- ◆ that the Dutch so loved chintz that it was incorporated into regional dress.

*The video that I mention showed Turnbull Design Company producing

Jean Monroe prints by hand in their factory in Thailand (using the original blocks) and gave an overview of the process of hand blocking intricate chintz designs.



The exhibition was organized by the Fries Museum, Leewarden, The Netherlands and showcases chintz over the years, and as the publicity states *'Chintz: Cotton in Bloom is a collection with an extraordinary story spanning hundreds of years and thousands of miles'*, an early example of global trade.

The exhibition started with a short film* which showed chintz being hand printed in Thailand under the watchful eye of the last UK trained apprentice using all the original British blocks.

Then to the exhibition itself, about 150 items were on display ranging from children's clothes (generally cut down from adults' clothing) to a range of gorgeous dresses, robes and furnishings.

Chintz fabric was imported to the Netherlands by the merchants of the Dutch East India Company. The original patterns were adapted to western taste and were wholeheartedly adopted by the Dutch for both furnishings and costume. Indeed in the Friesland area the 'traditional' costume is based upon chintz fabrics. It was not until the 1750s that the

fabric printers in the Netherlands and indeed Britain were able to reproduce the colours and reduce their reliance on imports. Britain banned the sale of chintz from India, although continued to import it and then exported it to Africa where it was used as a trading currency. The exhibition noted *'a protective law, effective from 29 September 1701 prohibited the wearing of all silk goods and painted, dyed, printed or stained calicoes (East India chintz) imported from China or the East Indies'*.

One of the first items in the exhibition was a petticoat decorated with sailing ships and black people swimming in the water additional to the floral designs – a clear acknowledgement of the link of fabric to slavery.

Really though, the stars of the exhibition were the furnishings and costume, reflecting primarily the Indian connection but also the Dutch trade with Japan and the importation of kimonos which were reproduced in chintz for wealthy people to wear at home.



My particular favourites were a splendid kimono; a selection of dresses (jackets and petticoats); a glorious red and white robe; the Hindelopen costume from Friesland with its outrageous cap.

I shall take away the thought that blue-white chintz was worn at times of mourning; red-white chintz for weddings and multi-coloured chintzes were for festive occasions. I am now looking on eBay for some Dutch chintz (who knew there was such an item? Clearly a lot of people.

SOMERSET RURAL LIFE MUSEUM



■ Somerset Rural Life Museum, Chilkwell Street, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8DB

Visited by Fiona Starkey

Somerset Rural Life Museum is housed in buildings surrounding a splendid C14 barn which once belonged to Glastonbury Abbey. This museum on the south side of Glastonbury was not the first place I'd have gone to for a costume fix, but need's must and it was a convenient mid point for a meeting last month.

An engaging visit for anyone interested in the social and agricultural history of Somerset from the 1800s (ok, I skipped through the Bath & West show part) it has a small respectable costume section upstairs next to the courtyard and a more than acceptable café.

There's a part for 'best' wear for high days and holidays with accompanying photos and a couple of garments. There's his 'n' hers hunting togs and a cabinet of working clothes with a rather spectacular piece of smocking. Well, you'd expect that in Somerset.

The bit I liked best, however, was the laundry display. It's a bit depressing when some of it is living memory, but well worth a visit.

They have regular talks and presentations associated with the themes (willow basket weaving looked interesting) and several have been textile related. The entrance ticket is valid for twelve months and I shall definitely go back for a better look when not in company.



With apologies for the photographs - no flash allowed, obviously. Shown are examples from some of the themed displays: working clothes, hunting clothes and special occasion clothes. The christening gown has an accompanying photograph from 1890 of a baby wearing one very similar. The example on display is from 1870.





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

One of the World's greatest collections of historic and contemporary dress is on the move! The clock is ticking; the Fashion Museum in Bath must leave the Assembly Rooms by 2023.

You can help move the collection by donating to the 'Buy a bag' campaign. 1,400 items need to become move ready with an archival garment bag. Your donations will protect the collection from water, dust, pests, mould, light and damage. You can donate as many bags as you like (£12.50 each) and you can also choose several exclusive rewards too.

A set number of garment bags is included in your donation when you opt for a reward:

Fashion Museum Tote Bag and Guidebook Bundle – three garment bags (£50.00)

Fashion Museum Late event - Planned for 10th March 2022, this special event will be a chance to see the collection after hours in its current home before the move – six garment bags (£100.00)

Tag-a-bag - your name will be written on the labels attached to the garment bags that you donate to – twenty garment bags (£250.00)

Afternoon tea for two - two tickets to the Fashion Museum plus a Champagne afternoon tea for two at our sister venue, The Pump Room – 33 garment bags (£500.00)

Tag a bag and Fashion Museum Late bundle - two tickets for the Fashion Museum Late event and your name will be written on the labels attached to the garment bags that you donate to – 80 garment bags (£1,000.00)

Click the button on their website to treat yourself to a reward for the present and safeguard the collection for the future.

Rosemary Harden, curator says: *Thank you for all your donations to our Buy a Bag campaign so far. We are 58% funded so far, thank you for your support!*



Fashion Museum on Tour

While the rest of the collection is being 'bagged up' ready for the big move, the Fashion Museum is delighted to have loaned this fabulous 1977 printed silk kimono by Bill Gibb to the V&A touring exhibition 'Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk' now on display at the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden. The graphic 'Jubilee' print includes pink blossoms, peacocks and Scottish thistles and was designed by Janet Taylor for Bill Gibb to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of HRH Queen Elizabeth II. Bill Gibb's bohemian and romantic style captured the mood of the time and was popular with models and musicians.



Cromwell Place A trip to London

By Angela Bailey

■ 4 Cromwell Place, London
SW7 2JE
01225 477789
www.cromwellplace.com
info@cromwellplace.com
020 8057 1800
open Wednesdays-Sundays

A recent post lockdown trip to London included a visit to a wonderful gallery near the V&A. Cromwell Place was built in 1858-9 specifically for artists, with large

open spaces for studio design. Painters based there included John Everett Millais, Sir John Lavery and Francis Bacon. Last year, the terrace was reconstructed to become a studio and gallery space, and I visited Connie and Ashley Gray there for their Drawing on Style exhibition, timed to coincide with London Fashion week. Their stunning show of fashion illustrations was located at the top of the building, where the light showed them all to their best advantage. Artists including Gruau, Bouché, Lopez and Perint Palmer were all there, beautifully framed and hung. It was really difficult to choose which images to bring to *Wardrobe*, but some of you might have been lucky enough to see them at their gallery at 5 Margaret's Buildings in Bath which finished on November 20th. Well worth a visit.

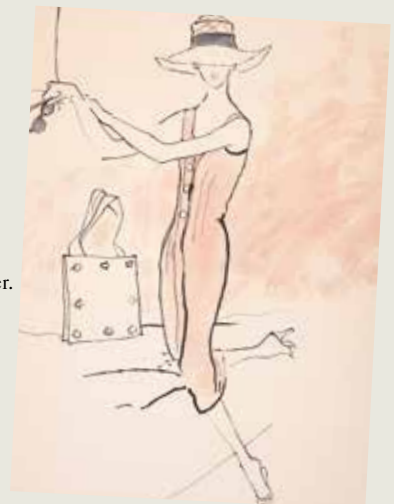


From the top:

Gladys Perint Palmer (1947-) Versace 1998
Ink, watercolour and metallic pastel on paper.
Signed *Sunday Times* magazine August 1998

René Gruau (1909-2004) Line drawing, marker pen on paper, signed, René Gruau estate stamp verso.

René Bouché (1905-1963) East India Pink, 1954 Ink and watercolour on paper, *Condé Nast* stamp verso, *Vogue* December 1954 p150.



A reminder: Audrey Sheppard was a founder member of WECS who left behind a box of fashion cuttings she collected between the 1950s and 1990s.

Audrey's Archive

Is it really 50 years ago?

By Angela Bailey

Audrey's 1971 folder contains a number of gems, and it seems to me that together they mark the end of an era and trends for the future, many of which did not last long. The cuttings are stored in a cover for *Flair* magazine (3/- or 'fifteen new pence') and the star item is the Prudence Glynn *Times* interview with Balenciaga, then 76, having closed his couture house three years before. She was obviously somewhat star-struck, but noted his 'intense dislike of publicity', his charm and good looks, and the influence of Chanel, Vionnet and Louise Boulanger.

Asked why he had closed his salon, he said that 'the life which supported couture is finished' and that 'luxury is impossible to do any more'. At the time of the closure he had ten workrooms; four for tailoring, four for dresses, and two for hats. Social Security payments for staff amounted to \$200 per day. Textile manufacturers no longer kept stocks of rare fabrics, and their deliveries were so unreliable that often items had to be made overnight to reach their deadline. Few survivors existed among the manufacturers of trimmings; ready-to-wear did not interest him; his pupils Givenchy and Courrèges took it on but he said that 'no-one knows what a hard metier it is: c'est la vie d'un chien'.

The metier, however, was still alive enough for the *Sunday Times Supplement* to feature four couture buyers in their finery, including the Comtesse Patrick de Maupeou (in Molyneux) and Queen Farida (in Gres). Ernestine Carter in the *Sunday Times Paris* fashion news reported an adjustment away from the 60s, with 'refined', longer, 'A' line skirt lengths.

She plainly felt that Saint Laurent was wasting his talent on 'simperingly sweet dress' that he called his Proust dresses, and that she fully expected to join the group of journalists banned from his next show. Interestingly all the outfits pictured credit not only the designer but the fabric manufacturers: Dormeuil, Lesage, Bouche, Petillault to name but four.



Flair cover, March 1971
Unattributed yellow dress with refined, longer A line skirt length
Simperingly sweet, ruffled Saint Laurent drawing
Full page colour advertisement for Feraud/Rembrandt/Tricel dress



SAINT LAURENT:
Little women ruffles in Buche's apricot taffeta, the tight basque ruffled at the neck and down the front, the peplum and skirt triply ruffled.



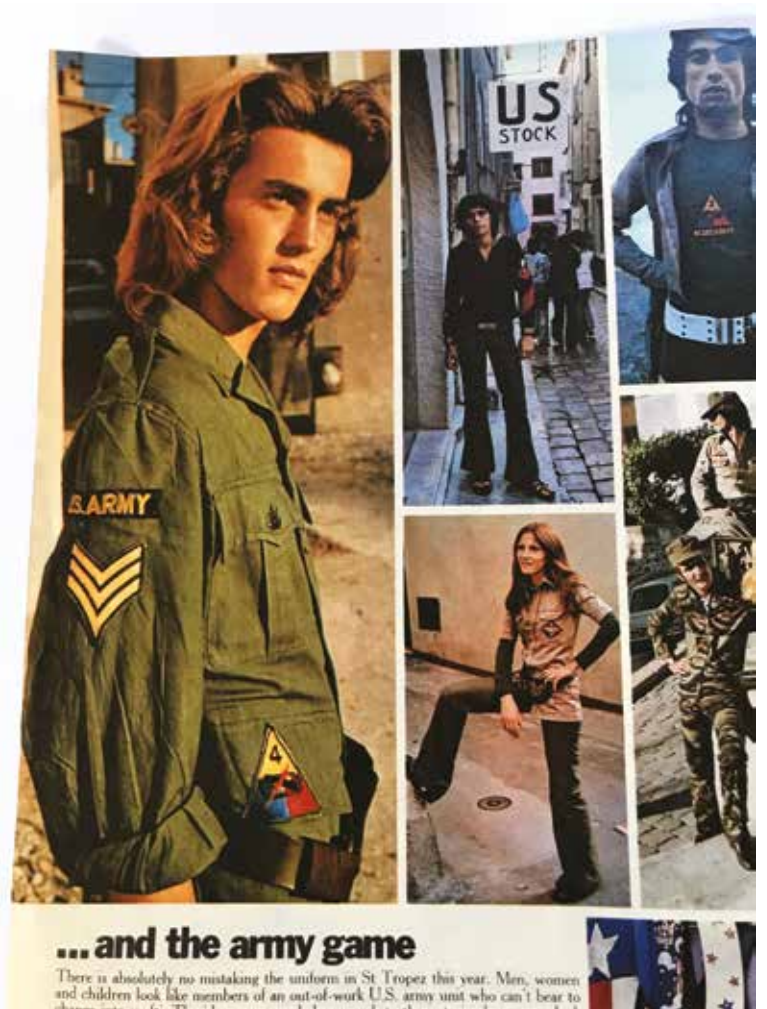
Be naturally beautiful.
Like Tricel.

Be your natural self.
Relax. Slip into something soft and comfortable in Tricel.
Tricel is the fibre with a natural origin. Cool. Beautiful. Like the people who wear it.

MISS FERAUD or REMBRANDT
Elegant dress in Tonal double jersey
Mishapenny/white, Mulberry/red
Whisper/white, White/peach/rose
Size 8-14, Style 2213, About 115-90

COURTAULDS
Tricel

Available from: LONDON, Deacons and Jones, Gray and Tait, Henry Holton, Safford's; CHELSEA, Fenham Court; Exeter, CORDON; Cardiff, ECOMOD; A. Jones; BARNSTAPLE, Egan Clark; FARNHAM, Tinsley; PL, YONGLE, Dingle; WILMOUTH, DPA; BOSTON, W. Stewart; Royal Warranted; BOSTON, 22 Farnham Square, London W1A 1TE. Telephone 01-429 8800.



Cut out and ready to sew - *The Times* dress pattern offer
 Non-regulation hair length guy wearing US army shirt
 and other uniform styling with 'bomber' jacket and lovely lace-up
 boots

Audrey obviously liked this refined style, as there are cuttings that show coats and dresses in the newest fabrics, which seem now to have disappeared: ICI's Terylene and Crimplene; Monsanto's Acrilan; and Courtaulds' Tricel.

Fabric manufacturers even advertised in their own right in the fashion magazines.

Audrey logged the demise of *Corfam*, the faux-leather shoe fabric developed by DuPont at the cost of \$100m, and the development of *Porvair*, an improved, breathable, heat-welded material aimed at the 'volume' market for cheaper shoes for men and boys. Whatever happened to that?

So what were we, the young women in the street, wearing? Newspapers were still featuring paper patterns and fabric offers; jeans, of course; maxi skirts; and, that summer in St Tropez, there was a holiday fad for wearing surplus US army uniforms or parts thereof, which had a brief vogue in London. Of course Vietnam was always in the news, and it was rumoured that some of these worn garments were blood stained. More conventional fashionistas went for suits with battle dress style jackets.



Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses

By Tony Cooper



Detectorists dream of unearthing treasure trove – a hoard of shiny gold that had lain buried for centuries. However, I suspect the reality is more like that portrayed in the Detectorists series on telly – mainly ring-pulls, old nails and bits of barbed wire!

When we moved in to our little cottage back in the early eighties the previous owner had done a lot of work on the building itself but left its surroundings in need of attention. In particular there was an unstable bank of earth that was steadily slumping over the gravel drive which had to go - a job for me while Carolyn was off to research the cottage's history.

It didn't take long for her to conclude that it dated from around 1780 and, for much of its existence, its residents would have disposed of their rubbish in the garden. Hence the sherds and

shards, old and not so old, that turned up on my spade. I had no need of a detector.

In one such spadeful I noticed a dark brown, hoop-shaped object that I suspected was a copper olive. (For the non-plumbers, that's a thing that looks like a broad wedding band and forms a watertight seal in a compression joint.) I picked it up, poked out some of the soil and showed it to Carolyn.

In true archaeologist mode, Carolyn got a bowl of warm soapy water and a toothbrush and set about cleaning the object. It was soon revealed that it wasn't an olive that looks like a wedding band, it was a wedding band. Obviously not gold though – it didn't glister - not even a sign of it ever having been gold plated. With a little more cleaning we saw that it was inscribed inside with the words: "A token of love".

When the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* came to Melksham we took the ring to John Benjamin. Despite being used to handling the likes of Fabergé jewels, he gave our mean object his time and duly pronounced it as an eighteenth century specimen.

It seems that in a Church of England marriage, a ring is essential and although we may be used to gold, it may be of any metal. One can imagine a penurious young countryman – perhaps an agricultural labourer or weaver – buying this brass ring for his betrothed and spending candlelit hours practising his handwriting and carefully engraving it.

Base the metal may be but the sentiment inscribed was far from it. I like to think it signified two lives happily shared, despite the slightly green patch on the lady's ring finger.



What goes around

It used to be a sewing box staple: my mother had one and my grandmothers certainly did. But here you go again - all shiny and updated - a darning mushroom, now being marketed as a recycling aid!

Image taken from clothes-doctor.com

OUR NEW DARNING SUPPORT AND NEEDLE SET
Bring on the heels, shafts and beads, because we've brought you our latest product launch! Our beautifully crafted Darning Mushroom is a true work of art. Each one is handmade by a skilled artisan in a small British workshop, using a blend of natural and sustainable materials.

Pair this with our Darning Needle Set, which includes ten needles, ranging from short and sleeky for small holes, to longer, sturdier needles for your chunky knicker. Together, you've got the perfect tools to help you repair and re-use your most loved garments.

Give darning a go!

SHOP NEEDLE SET

SHOP DARNING SUPPORT



When did tailors stop sitting like this? Or have they?



Shakespearean Wig Styling – A Practical Guide to Wig Making for the 1500s – 1600s

By Brenda Leedham and Lizzee Leedham.
 Published by The Crowood Press - £16.99
 Review by Sarah Bartlett

This book is divided into eight chapters covering the work of a wig maker, the history of dress in this period, different hair styles and facial hair, and the plays at the time of the Shakespearean period are covered. It explains how to make and dress different types of wig, how to keep them free of the actor's clothing (eg ruffs and collars), and how to clean and store them after use.

The book is well illustrated at each step, including how to measure, make a shell and a wig foundation for individual actors; how to tie up their own hair so that the finished wig will sit snugly on their head; cutting, shaping and combing the wig hair to achieve the correct style; how to measure for different types of beard and moustaches, or how to achieve a bald patch. Each project/example lists all the tools you would need and gives a step-by-step method for achieving the desired wig with photos illustrating each stage.

The book assumes that you know the basics of wig making and have made some and if you wish to improve your skills and knowledge it is well worth reading.

As someone who knows absolutely nothing about making wigs, I found it a fascinating read. It certainly makes you appreciate all the work that goes into making wigs and the skills needed to produce even the most simple look.



Captain Swayne and Mrs Kitty Woodcock

from 6 November

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

Comment by Helen Montague-Smith

Do you remember that wonderful Study Day eight years ago when groups of WECS members re-created four (actually five) costumes from *Patterns of Fashion* by Janet Arnold?

I was in the group which created a male and a female regency outfit and I helped to sew the Captain's pantaloons - the ensemble is about to go on display in Trowbridge Museum, where I volunteer.

The museum volunteers were asked what they did in their spare (!) time so I said that I have always sewed and made costumes.

The captain's uniform will be part of a temporary exhibition which starts on 6th November but the museum is considering whether to take the costume into its collection.

Making Corsets

by Julie Collins Brealey

Published by The Crowood Press - £16.99

Review by Liz Booty

This is a thorough, practical, well illustrated, step by step book aimed at makers of all skill levels wanting to make corsets. The twelve chapters offer a very comprehensive 'journey' through corset making. It uses clear instructions and images. The processes are easy to follow, liberally illustrated or photographed.

The first chapter takes a brief overview of the history of corsets and is concise and very readable. This is followed by the nitty gritty starting with a look at the basic sewing equipment needed, moving on to comprehensive specifics of currently available fabrics, busks, bonings, aiglets, laces, tapes and trims including calculating on quantities for each. The book then moves on to taking the body measurements that is carefully explained and illustrated, then a comparison is made between the use of commercially available patterns and self drafted. The adjustment of purchased patterns to fit individual measurements is clear and even has a section about the necessary adaptations required to fit the male body.

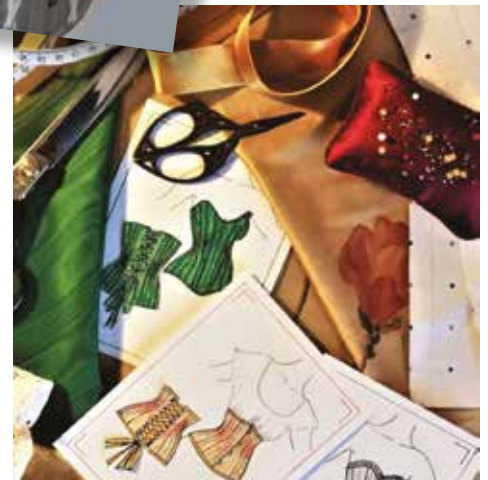
Creating your own pattern for fitting to your own measurements uses clear instructions and illustrations, making this process very straight forward. From my point of view I was particularly pleased to see the importance placed on the inclusion of balance marks, straight of grain marking, naming and numbering the different pattern panels thus in construction of the toile, preventing piecing together the finished item with the wrong panels in the wrong places or with panels inserted upside down - very common mistakes! The potential mysteries of boning position and sometimes basque placement are very clear. The fitting of the mock-up that is so important, either of the self drafted or the commercial pattern is extensively explained and liberally illustrated using photographs of actual fittings in progress. How to insert gussets, how to adjust the styles lines - makes it seem very 'do-able' to achieve a successful project - and then how to transfer all the adjustments to the final pattern. There is a separate comprehensive section on the two potentially tricky fitting issues - adjusting a pattern to accommodate hollow backs and asymmetric figures.

The corset construction methods are now delved into - as thoroughly as everything else - including many permutations to encourage the reader to have the confidence to personalise their work. There are three specific projects that follow next, based on extant historical Victorian corsets - 2 overbust, 1 underbust. You are guided through the styling to your basic corset block pattern to create these basic styles. A 'shopping list' of the items you need to gather in order to create them precedes a step by step assembly guide.

Next follows an interesting section of alternative construction techniques and ideas of how to personalise your projects - adding shoulder straps, applying lace, beading and 'flossing'

Finally the glossary of terms used is welcomed and a listing of possible places you can go and see historical corsets, and a couple of websites to enable you to purchase some of the specialist items you need.

I can't wait to buy it - corset making for whatever reason is such fun and the revelation of ones 'new' self when laced into a corset is uplifting - and a properly fitting one is really comfortable and is wonderful for tired backs! Try it and see for yourselves - this book will be a treasure if you want to give it a go or want to improve your skills. You don't need great sewing experience or fancy machines in order to make one.



Squire Joe

Remember Joe Knapper from the Zoom talk *Realising a Design* in February? While waiting under lockdown conditions for costume-related emergencies during the filming of *The Last Duel* in 2020, a new scene was needed and there wasn't a squire available in time to dress Jacques LeGris, played by Adam Driver. So guess who was the only one who knew how it all went on in the right order? He made the film trailer (blink and you'll miss him) and we're waiting to see if he makes the final cut! The film stars Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, so he's in good company.



PS: Tartan couture

At the study day, Isle of Man member Antoinette Williams mentioned that she'd come by some couture tartan and used it to line a coat. So of course we asked for a photo!

She says: (This is) A tartan designed by Johnson's Wool Mills for a Dior collection. I found this in a samples bin on the Isle of Lewis in 1993. Who could resist ferreting in a sample bin with lovely pieces like this! I still wear the tweed coat I made nearly 30 years later, Harris tweed quality always lasts. I would have also sent you a photo the Isle of Man tartan designed and woven by our village woollen mill back in the 1950s and still in production. It's hideous, pale blue background with yellow and purple and black, but is used on every tourist souvenir and wedding groom's kilt. An example of how not to design a tartan!



Ed: the website's a wonderful thing - we found it!

John of Gaunt

Amazing where a costume interest can lead you. Presenting to you from Queen Square in Bath, the 2021 *Shamboules Pétanque* team in their Black Prince rig after being



impressed by Ninya Mikhaila and Amber Butchart's *Stitch in Time* programme, where the original outfit was discussed and reproduced as accurately as possible. It's still available online. Look for episode 5, the Black Prince.



The Spring Fairy

Helen Montague-Smith

This delightful tableau was created recently in St Mary's Church, Steple Ashton as part of the Harvest Festival celebrations. The Four Seasons were depicted as Jack Frost, the Sun, the Green Man and this flying fairy who is scattering seeds for the coming season. We were asked to give her peacock wings so her costume reflects the colours in the eyes of the feathers. I based the dress on my shift – a very useful garment – pinned onto a body shape; made a fitted bodice but otherwise, all the fabric is pinned together! Sewing feathers onto chicken wire wings was very tricky...but she flew and was much admired..

Keep Wardrobe full!

What have you been doing, reading, discovered online?

Write and tell us so we can share.

Copy for the next newsletter to Vibeke Ormerod by 30 March please

WECS Committee

Chair

Angela Bailey, The Victoria School House, Henrietta Road, Bath BA2 6LU
07887 851410
chair@wofecostumesociety.org

Treasurer

Sarah Bartlett, 4 Cotley Place, Heytesbury, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0HT
01985 840624
treasurer@wofecostumesociety.org

Secretary

Tony Cooper, 52 The Common, Broughton Gifford, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8NA
01225 782711
secretary@wofecostumesociety.org

Booking Secretary

Ann Brown, 29 Thompson Road, Wells, Somerset BA5 1FB
01749 670557
bookings@wofecostumesociety.org

Membership Secretary

Annie Rose, 5 Clarendon Villas, Bath, BA2 6AG
01225 463616
membership@wofecostumesociety.org

WECS Wardrobe Editor

Vibeke Ormerod, 40 Victoria Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1ET
editor@wofecostumesociety.org

Webmeister

Tony Cooper, 52 The Common, Broughton Gifford, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8NA
01225 782711
webmaster@wofecostumesociety.org