

# WECS Wardrobe

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**weecs**  
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

**Fashion Illustration 1930-1970**

Saturday 21 November 2020  
■ Bath and County Club, Bath

**Study Day:  
The Game's Afoot**

Saturday 20 March 2021  
■ Gloucester Cricket Club, Bristol



Main image  
**Blooming!**  
Bhutan Page 20

Inset  
**Hand in Glove**  
The Glove Story Page 7



**Weaving stories**  
Orkney Page 14



**Ten-Hut!**  
1940s Déjà Vue Page 16



**All for show**  
Lace Page 12



**A stitch in time**  
Williamsburg Page 27



**Bhutan-ierre?**  
Getting stuck in Page 20



Message from Angela Bailey, our new Chair:

### Greetings

Greetings from us all on the WECS Committee\* and we hope you and your families are staying as well as you can in these difficult times.

We were so sorry to have to postpone *The Game's Afoot* event on 21st March; however, as things turned out it was the right thing to do. Thanks to your Treasurer, we have managed to negotiate a re-book of the venue (Gloucester Cricket Club) for 20th March 2021 at no extra cost, and two of the speakers have already kindly agreed to pencil in the date. If you booked for the day, and have not yet notified us about your refund/rebook options, please contact Sarah at treasurer@wofecostumesociety.org.uk.

Plans for our October Study Day are in place, and at our Christmas meeting Connie Gray, of the Gray Gallery in Bath, will talk to us about fashion illustration 1930-70. This will take place at a new venue for us, the Bath and County Club (Queens Parade, just off Queens Square, Bath).

We are working on ideas for next year's events, and will let you know as soon as we can what we have in store for you.

**Finally, we would like to set on record our great thanks to Jean Scott, who has retired from the Committee (but not as a member!) after fifteen years as Chairman, Secretary and general person-to-go-to for WECS. We owe her a great deal. We should also note our gratitude to Tony Cooper, who has retired as Chairman after six years of successfully refereeing Committee meetings, and has agreed to stay with us as Secretary and Webmaster.**



Tony Cooper presenting Jean Scott with Lifetime membership of WECS at the February AGM

Thank you all for your support to WECS - and we hope to see you again in the autumn. In the meantime, do check our website and facebook pages for more news from us.

With every good wish

Angela and the Committee

# 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

*This should be 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

\* The new committee and contact details are on Page 28

## Is fashion political?

In 2005 Joshua I. Miller published in a University of Chicago Journal an article called Fashion and Democratic Relationships. On page three he says this - "*Clothing has political significance because it affects the relationships among citizens. Clothing is not simply a private or personal matter; it implies the existence of an inter-subjective social world in which one presents oneself and is seen by others*"

The ambivalence of fashion with, not only political but also social, aesthetic and moral systems has always caused much anxiety throughout the generations.

The recent vicious attacks on MP Tracey Brabin for her off the shoulder ensemble in the House of Commons equated her appearance with perceived stereotypes. Women are regularly defined by their dress especially if they espouse to positions of authority or power. This study day will look at the part politics may have played in the fashions of the day or perhaps how politics has influenced what we wear.

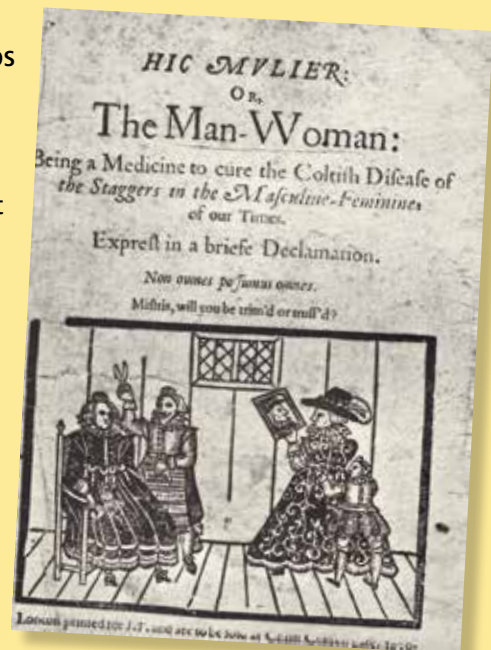
We start with **Pat Poppy**, - an independent costume historian with a special interest in pre-modern history and re-enactment, Pat is also a long standing supporter and contributor to WECS.

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

The talk will examine the stereotypes we have of Cavaliers and Roundheads, both male and female, and how each generation/century has re-interpreted them to reflect their own social and political situation. It will look at how their clothing has been depicted in 20th and 21st century film and television, and in 19th and 18th century painting. It will then look at where these stereotypes originate by looking at who was complaining about various fashions in the first half of the seventeenth century - mainly the Puritans. Which brings in the ideas of both *Hic Mulier* or the Man- Woman and *Haec Vir* or the Womanish-Man. Finally it will look at what was actually being worn in the mid seventeenth century, and how that does not necessarily indicate their political stance, and only occasionally their religious stance, but it certainly reflects their social status. As Arthur Dent put it, "one may be as proud of plaine apparel as well as of costly".

Our next speaker is **Rebecca Olds** to tell us about **The Isabella Project**.

Researching her own wedding dress led Rebecca, of *Timesmith Dressmaking*, to organise the live performance of the recreation of the Isabella MacTavish wedding dress, which was part of The Wild and Majestic Exhibition at The National Museum of Scotland in 2019. The original dress was worn by Isabella MacTavish for her wedding in 1785 and is unique for being the only woman's tartan gown dated prior to 1800 known to be in existence. It has been handed down through the family and was last worn in 2005. The recreation (not reproduction) was made by an international team of eight to illustrate the skills and working practices of skilled mantua-makers of the period, and utilised hard tartan cloth woven on an antique 19th century loom. The style of the dress and the construction methods used to achieve it give the nod to both the 1740s and the 1780s, giving rise to the question as to whether the use of a hard tartan, by the 1780s an unfashionable fabric for dressmaking, was intended to convey political or romantic sentiments, or a nostalgic mix of both. In the recreation, the modern day mantua-makers uncovered a number of interesting problems encountered by the original mantua-makers during the course of the cutting and fitting and are delighted to share the ingenious fixes employed.



Rebecca Olds, centre in red and right, the MacTavish dress





To start the afternoon we welcome **Viktoria Iveleva** from the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Durham University.



Thinking of the image women project, *The Other side of the Coin* told by the Queen's dresser Angela Kelly, shows the thought and preparation which goes into the Queen's public dressing.

### 'Out of the blue': What did Catherine II wear on the day of the coup and why does it matter?

Uniform as a means of identification and allegiance has particular significance for royalty and after Catherine II usurped her husband to become Empress of Russia she understood the importance of her clothes. This work examines the origins of different attributions of the uniform that Catherine II wore on the day of the coup of 1762, and traces the importance of this episode in eighteenth-century culture by looking at various memoirs, by exploring the history of the Preobrazhenskii and Semenovskii regiments and their uniforms, and by studying royal ceremonies and the iconography of eighteenth-century portraits. The article also uses the lens of Pushkin's novel *The Captain's Daughter* to rethink this episode in the context of early nineteenth-century culture and Russian history and culture more generally.

Viktoria has published in her research areas of 18th-, early 19th-, and early 20th-century Russian literature and culture; Dress culture in Imperial Russia and Catherine II.



To bring us right up to date we then have **Dr Daniel Conway**, a Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster.

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

His paper explores the role of dress and fashion in the representations and construction of women politicians in British parliamentary and broader political/public life. He draws from Nirmal Puwar's argument that women are conceptualised as 'space invaders' in the traditionally male, white and upper class confines of British parliamentary politics. This makes women hyper-visible and vulnerable to sexist, racist and class based criticism, with critiques that focus, in particular, on dress. The paper explores the complex roles of dress in gendered and political terms; dress can be an integral part of political action, identity and agency, but also a debilitating means for disciplining and as this it is one that a majority of women politicians resent. The paper focuses on the case study of Margaret Thatcher, who faced both critiques and used dress as a means of crafting her identity and enhancing political appeal, alongside other women politicians who continue to negotiate a fraught and highly gendered terrain of public visibility and scrutiny of their dress.

Daniel published *Margaret Thatcher, Dress and the Politics of Fashion* (2016) in Behnke, A. (ed) *The International Politics of Fashion: Being Fab in a Dangerous World* (Routledge) and is writing, with Professor Jutta Weldes (Bristol) a chapter on role of the Queen's Dresses and British Public Diplomacy.



## Out & About

### A trip down memory Lane with WECS

*Sarah Bartlett writes:* Just before the great lockdown began I was weighing up the chances of a WECS visit to a weaving shed in the wilds of Worcestershire in June going ahead when I remembered the visit we had had to Cold Harbour Mill in Devon in June 2011. This started me thinking of all the other places the society had visited over the years since I joined in 2003. So here are some of them in no particular order, just as they came to mind.



**Leeds**  
(May 2015)



**Horsehair Factory**  
(May 2014)



**Blandford**  
(Autumn 2016)



**Manchester**  
(Summer 2017)

Though it was exciting some of it was also exhausting! In Leeds we had had a very long walk to the mill!

We certainly get around!

When we are all allowed out again, where shall we go next? Let us know where you might like to visit and we will see what we can do, though no promising!



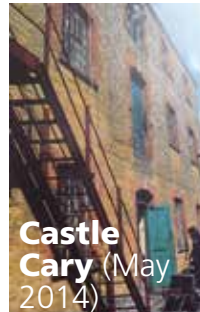
Blaise Castle in Bristol (Oct 2009 & May 2017), St. Fagans Museum near Cardiff (June 2009), Llancciaciaw Fawr Manor (June 2010), Manchester (Sept. 2013) Snibston in Leicestershire (April 2008), Kelmscott Manor and Letchlade (Oct 2011), Salisbury Museum (Aug 2008), Clarks Shoe Museum in Street and John Boyd horsehair factory in Pittards in Yeovil (June 2015), Beckford Silk Mill and Cheltenham Museum (May 2007), Berrington Hall (June 2005), Dents Glove museum (Sept 2012 & 2019), Trowbridge Museum (May 2012), Weald & Downland Museum near Chichester (Aug 2012), Blandford museums (May 2016), and Wells Cathedral (July 2016).



**Waddesdon Manor**  
(Sept 2014)



**Killerton House**  
(June 2011 & July 1028),



**Castle Cary** (May 2014)



**Wells**  
(July 2016)

### Covid 19: Play to your skills

*Jill Hazell writes:* One thing there is a terrific need for in the NHS at the minute are people who can make sets of scrubs for the doctors and nurses. This is one of the websites with information:

<https://m.facebook.com/sharer.php?sid=1500699350098765&referrer=group>

Some hospitals are also asking for wash bags to put dirty scrubs and uniforms in to take home to wash at the end of a shift (not the Covid19 wards as their scrubs are washed in the hospital). I and a group of neighbours are converting loads of old duvet covers into bags which are being taken into our local hospital as fast as we can make them by another neighbour who works there!

These are a couple of photos of my production line

Again, there's lots of information online about them.



*What does your work space look like in lockdown? Quietly ordered and fully productive, or creative chaos with a cat under there somewhere? We want to know! Send us your photos.*

## The Glove Story

Christmas meeting 2019

■ Bath Bowling Club

Speaker Rosemary Harden

Report by Jean Scott

**It was a pleasure to welcome Rosemary Harden, curator of the Fashion Museum Bath, to WECS Christmas Meeting. Rosemary has not only served as WECS chair but has continued to offer invaluable support and advice to the society for many years.**

The museum holds well over 100,000 objects, is designated of national significance and it has recently become the custodian of the glove collection of the Worshipful Company of Glovers of London. A selection of the gloves are currently displayed throughout the permanent exhibition, *A History of Fashion in 100 Objects*.

Rosemary started her Glove Story presentation with some early history. Gloves are one of the oldest forms of clothing being not only functional but also decorative and ceremonial. Gloves were found in the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922, buried with the boy king in 1323 BC. To demonstrate the link of past with present she juxtaposed with the fingerless mittens worn by Karl Lagerfeld, designer for Chanel, who included a mesh glove in his A/W collection 2012, with a metal wrist gauntlet from a suit of fifteenth century armour. The practicality of gloves is evident in all cultures from the medieval shepherd to the hawking glove of the Mughal Empire but the transition to a fashion item happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth century when gloves became symbolic and showed wealth and societal position. Elizabeth I was said to be very proud of her long white fingers and elaborately decorated gloves/gauntlets were an essential part of her wardrobe. They were often given as New Year gifts equating with lavish jewels and embroidered sleeves.

The Worshipful Company of Glovers of London started as a medieval guild where trade and training were carefully controlled and it was in 1638 that Lady Killigrew petitioned Charles I to grant the company its Royal Charter. It now has probably the finest collection of gloves in the world. In 1959 'The Spence Collection' of 120 seventeenth century embroidered gloves, which are extraordinary, were given into its care and were then lent to the Fashion Museum in the 1980s. For 150 years Messrs. Harborow of London made the coronation gloves and always made duplicates in case of an accident. These duplicates were given to the Worshipful Company in 1972. Dents of Warminster then took over the making of the coronation gloves from

*This page from left to right:  
Embroidered glove with animals  
The Glove Collection Trust*

Knitted gloves  
*The Glove Collection Trust*

*Opposite page from left to right:  
Limerick gloves in a walnut shell  
The Glove Collection Trust*

Queen Elizabeth I to Queen Elizabeth II display cabinet  
*Fashion Museum Bath*

*Opposite page, inset: Pale Armistice Embroiderers' Guild Collection, Buckinghamshire County Museum*



George III onwards and were given the privilege of making Elizabeth II's glove; and it holds the duplicate gloves of the previous three monarchs in its private collection. Until recently they were also the custodians of the Worshipful Company's general collection of more modern gloves. The Worshipful Company's collection is now owned by 'The Glove Collection Trust', which is a separate charitable body. Over the past two years the Fashion Museum has brought the whole collection together, cataloguing and boxing 2,500 objects. Rosemary said The Trust continues to collect and a WECS member, Pompey Parry, has recently added to the collection.

The Fashion Museum tells the Glove Story with twenty-four interventions in the museum's display. Gloves from circa 1620 are exquisitely embroidered with exotic animals similar to those found on nightshirts and embroidered waistcoats of the period. Royal menageries of the time indicated wealth, status and curiosity and this was reflected in the designs. Knitted gloves have a long history and Rosemary showed a painting from 1400 with the Madonna knitting on four needles. Extensive medieval trade routes brought ideas from the east to the west and intricate designs on Spanish mittens, circa 1700, showed the eastern influence.

By 1800 lots of gloves were made from cotton, the new wonder fabric, but fine leather remained most desirable. It takes a seven-year apprenticeship to be a glove cutter and the same processes are still used today. Rosemary was able to visit the French glove maker *Maison Fabre* where she saw the painstaking process of producing hand made gloves. French kid leather, a by-product of the cheese industry, is hand stretched until rectangular portions of leather are achieved with the correct degree of stretch. These are called tranks, which are placed back to back ready for cutting or slitting as it is called. The glove industry has its own vocabulary; for example, the smaller pieces of the glove have wonderful names like fourchettes, quirks and thumbs. Some of the finest gloves of the time were Limerick Gloves, sometimes called chicken skin gloves because they were so fine and supposedly kept the hands smooth and white. They have since been shown to be made of the skins of unborn calves and could be so fine they would fit inside a walnut shell. They were very difficult to get on and would sometimes only survive one wearing and were a favourite of Queen Victoria.

The central section of the Glove Story exhibition is a collection of works by the artist Rozanne Hawksley. She visited the museum in the 1980s and was moved by the history and beauty of the gloves from the Spence collection, which then inspired her practice. The three-dimensional pieces



Elizabeth I

This is one of a pair of gloves worn by Queen Elizabeth I at her coronation at Westminster Abbey on 15 January 1558. The coronation started at 7 o'clock that morning but the ceremony had begun the previous day with a procession of over 1000 horses. The new Queen was seated in a fine, a protective covered processional chair and carried on her shoulders by men from the Tower of London to Westminster Palace.



James I

King James was King of Scotland and 1603 when, on the death of Queen Elizabeth I he became King of England and Ireland too. His mother was Mary, Queen of Scots. It was the custom to present similar gloves to the monarch. James I was given "a pair of gloves with... good looks" (good news) Edward was given a pair of gloves when he visited Cambridge University in July.



Charles I

These gloves are associated with King Charles I. They date from the 1630s, the time called the 'Dimitrius' time, when the King had that flock of purple gloves knit through to Queen Elizabeth, Ireland and Scotland without Parliament. Ultimately, the suit to lead to the English Civil War in the 1640s. These gloves came originally from the archives of Queen Elizabeth II and were held in 1880s at... interesting relic.



Victoria

These are Queen Victoria's mittens, which she wore mostly when she was in the net. Victoria was always interested in fashion and was well-known for her pioneering national symbols, such as tartan in Scotland and bluebirds in Ireland, into the dress, so as to show her devotion to her subjects.



Elizabeth II

This is the ceremonial glove worn by Queen Elizabeth II during her coronation at Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. The glove was placed on the right hand during the intervention section of the coronation ceremony before St Edward's Chair was placed on the monarch's knees and the crown placed on her head. The glove is made of gold and silver thread.

follow the theme of 'Love, Loss and Remembrance' and resonate with the psychological and social influences of gloves. One of her pieces, part of the Embroiderer's Guild collection, and called 'Pale Armistice', 1987-89 was part of the ground-breaking exhibition 'Subversive Stitch'. It was made in the wake of the Falklands war and another version is also held by the Imperial War Museum.

Rosemary then went on to talk about who wore the gloves on display. The most prestigious must be those worn at coronations. Made of fine white leather and decorated with elaborate gold embroidery, only the right hand glove is made, along with a duplicate in case of accident. It is worn in the section of the coronation ceremony called the investiture and is thought to represent the monarch's even-handedness throughout their reign, particularly in relation to taxation. The duplicate gloves of Edward VII 1902, George V 1911 and George VI 1937 are displayed in their own glass cabinet. Recently returned from a trip to the other side of the world are another five sets of gloves with Royal connections. These are Elizabeth I's coronation gloves and Elizabeth II's coronation glove (the actual glove not the duplicate), with gloves worn by James I, Charles I and Victoria. These were part of the exhibition on Royal Portraiture at the Bendigo Art Gallery in Australia. Rosemary was the custodian of these most precious of objects on their journey to and from Australia, which must have been nerve racking, but when objects are lent to other museums there is funding to carry out careful conservation which ensures their future.

The juxtaposition of gloves from different periods is fascinating and under the theme 'Gloves that Went Riding' sits a riding glove from the 1650s with metallic embroidery and six types of metallic fringing, next to the Queen's riding gloves from the 1990s and the Duke of Edinburgh's very battered carriage driving gloves, also from the 1990s, said to have been made from deer skin from the Balmoral estate, by Pittards of Yeovil. A pair of camouflage gloves worn by Captain Nick Hammond in Helmand Province in 2012-13 bore witness to much blood and gore is displayed alongside seventeenth century mourning gloves. Rosemary met Nick and stressed the importance of capturing stories of wearers to add depth and understanding to objects for audiences of the future.

Moving on to who made and sold gloves, Rosemary showed a salesman's carrying case from the 1930s containing forty-two pairs of gloves, which was associated with Silas Dyke, a Somerset glove maker. The firm was operating between 1837 and 1984 when glove making was an important British industry, particularly in the southwest with more than 25 Yeovil Glovers. France also had a thriving industry and the company called *Alexandrine*



*This page:*  
Dents staff with Queen Elizabeth II's coronation glove *Dents*  
The Gloves that went riding: Her Majesty's riding gloves and the Duke of Edinburgh's carriage-driving gloves  
*The Glove Collection Trust*  
Gloves concealed and revealed; Captain Nick Hammond's camouflage pair  
*The Glove Collection Trust*  
Silas Dyke salesman case  
*The Glove Collection Trust*



produced gloves that went on the stage. Mistinguett, an early twentieth century stripper, who had her legs insured for £100,000 used long gloves as part of her act where taking off the gloves was more important than putting them on. Not only companies made gloves but also individuals. Mrs Anne Kershaw, a self-taught maker who started with make-do-and-mend in the war years, went on into the 1950s providing gloves for London couturiers. Rosemary related the discovery, made during the cataloguing of the glove collection, of a leaflet written by Mrs Kershaw called 'My Secret' about stretching leather. Hidden in this leaflet was the confession that she had made the tiny gloves for the Miss Virginia Lachasse doll, one of the treasures of the Fashion Museum collection.



Today there are only two surviving glove-making companies, one of which is Dents and the other Chester Jefferies. Dents

started in the 1777 in Worcester, another area where glove making was an early industry, and went on to have factories in France, Belgium and the United States. Driving gloves have long been an important part of Dents' business being the exclusive provider of the Metropolitan cart or van drivers' gloves in the 1890s, through to elegantly painted ladies' motoring gloves circa 1905, to the punched designs of the 1960s the variants of which are still marketed today. However, gloves have gone further afield and to end her talk Rosemary showed gloves from fact and fiction. The Trust's Collection holds the space glove worn by Colonel Alexander Volkov, who left for the Mir space station as a Soviet cosmonaut and, due to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, returned to earth



a Russian cosmonaut. His signature is on the metal wrist clasp of the glove; and from space fiction, the gloves of Luke Skywalker from the *Star Wars* science fiction film.



Gloves certainly carry amazing, meaningful stories of love and loss together with memories of adventure, wealth and power, all contained in what seem to be such minor items of clothing. My personal memory is stored in a pair of white leather gloves purchased in an Italian market on the day England won the World Cup. I was the only English person in the market at the time and I'm sure I got a bargain on the back of it.



*This page:*  
 Virginia Lachasse doll and wardrobe *Fashion Museum Bath*  
 Cosmonaut Glove *The Glove Collection Trust*  
 Gloves concealed and revealed; Mistinguett *The Glove Collection Trust*  
 Gloves that went Driving *The Glove Collection Trust*  
 Luke Skywalker gloves *The Glove Collection Trust*

## Go on - give your brain a workout!

Answers on the back page.

**1** What was the main textile that has been preserved from ancient Egyptian fashion?

Linen, cotton or silk

**2** What is the name given to silk production?

Silk culture, worm culture or sericulture

**3** Every weaving technique now known had been discovered in China by what time?

200BC, 220AD or 1400AD

**4** What colour clothing is most often worn in Korean culture?

Red, white or purple

**5** The loincloth-like *dhoti* and the women's *sari* can be found how far back in Hindu culture?

200BC, 200AD or 500AD

**6** What are sumptuary dress laws?

Laws for controlling modesty in dress, laws that tried to control spending on clothes or fashions or laws controlling who made clothes

**7** The Roman emperor Tiberius forbade men from wearing what? The colour green, silk or high heeled shoes

**8** Tiberius wasn't the only one. In 14th century England, who was allowed to wear fur?

The royal family, only peasants or only those who ranked as knights (or above).

**9** Russia's Tsar Peter I was even more restrictive. What did he decree?

Men must shave their beards, everyone had to wear western clothes, or both

**10** Joan of Arc was tried for what sartorial offence?

Flaunting her clavicle, showing bare legs or dressing like a man

**11** Native Americans often used animal skins for clothing. How did they condition and soften the leather?

Leaving it in water for days, treading on it for hours or rubbing in oils from the animals' brains

**12** Classical Greek dress was often personalized how?

Different styles of draping or pleating, length of the outfit or colour

**13** Women in some Middle Eastern cultures began using a veil and covering themselves completely in public at what time?

Before Islamic influence, as Islamic influence spread or in the C14th

**14** Who was the first designer and couturier to create collections and sew a name into clothing?

Coco Chanel, Paul Poiret or Charles Frederick Worth

**15** What made the Elizabethan-era ruff really blow up?

Queen Elizabeth I's adoption of it, production of starch in England or

## Quiz



both

**16** Haute couture translates to what in English?

Correct sewing, pretty shirts or high fashion

**17** By what time had fashion become more global, and less about nationalistic or regional dress?

1600, 1800 or 1900

**18** By the 19th century, women's fashion was largely a product of what nation?

France, America or England

**19** 19th century men's trends tended to stem from which nation?

America, England or France

**20** What influences on "fashion" extended it into the middle and even lower classes?

The sewing machine, department stores or both

**21** Which modern staple of Western female dress was first introduced in mid-19th century (but didn't catch on until much later)?

Bras, pants or tights (panty hose)

**22** Paul Poiret, an extremely influential designer at the turn of the 20th century, advocated what in his designs?

Getting rid of the corset, an hourglass figure or women being very thin

**23** After the end of World War I, men were interested in having what in their wardrobe?

Rain coat, a white dinner jacket or a tweed sweater

**24** Skirt hemlines rose to knee-length in what era?

1910s, 1920s or 1930s

**25** When did the zipper become a clothing mainstay?

1830s, 1900s or 1930s

**26** Who introduced the T-shirt into a wardrobe staple?

Elsa Schiaparelli, US navy or Christian Dior

**27** What has been an extremely modern innovation in clothing trends?

Clothes for young people, clothes for sport or clothes for evening wear

**28** The very first fashion shows were called fashion parades and differed how from the modern runway show?

The models were all men even for womenswear, they were private affairs or audience members were dressed in the clothes, then paraded out

**29** What low-end material did Coco Chanel embrace for womenswear, introducing sportswear into her designs?

Jersey, cotton or spandex

**30** The precursor to Amazon and online shopping, who produced the first American mail-order catalogue for clothing... and more?

Sears, JCPenny or Montgomery Ward

## Patterns of Fashion and Eleonora of Toledo

Report by Sarah Bartlett

Scarlett Mortimer contacted WECS through the web site last summer asking if anyone could help as she had decided to recreate the Eleonora di Toledo burial dress for the Costume Society's *Patterns of Fashion* award held annually for fashion students. She was searching for examples of dress of a similar age, especially undergarments, which was a very difficult task and going to Florence to have a look at the dress would be too expensive.

Knowing that we had made the dress and undergarments for the 2013 Janet Arnold Study Day and that I had been to Florence with Fiona in 2012 specifically to look at the existing pieces of the dress, bodies and stockings in the Pitti Palace museum, Scarlett was put in touch with me.

An email to our group quickly produced lots of information and offers of help and Scarlett was invited to come and see our dress, which Marion still has. In August Scarlett came over to Bath to meet us and view the dress and as she was the right size for the dress she tried on the outfit so she could get a feel of how it should look when worn. She wasn't the least bit deterred by all the work involved and tales we told her. We are full of admiration for her managing to finish the outfit in such a short time and wish her well in the competition.



Scarlett Mortimer in her Eleonora dress and inset, Marian Banks wearing the one made for the WECS project.

## Found on Sadanduseless.com

Just because you're stuck at home, you don't have to live without a bit of culture.

The **Getty Museum** in Los Angeles challenged art fans to post photos of themselves recreating their favorite works of art from the safety of their homes. People responded with a lot of enthusiasm and flooded social media with their unique artistic interpretations. We've picked some of the costume-related images, but do have a look at some of the others - they're hilarious!

Give yourself a cuppa if you can name the paintings - and a biscuit if you can name the artists as well.



## White Embroidery Accessories in the Victorian Period

8 February 2020

■ Bath Bowling Club

Speaker Heather Toomer

Report by Carolyn Cooper

**Heather Toomer joined us to talk about the changes in white accessories accompanying the fashions of the Victorian era. Her latest book, 'Fashionable white-embroidered accessories c1840 to 1900' charts the rapid changes in society due to industrialisation, growth in wealth and the expansion of the middle class, all affecting dress and fashion..**

I look forward to Heather's talks as she brings with her not just pictures but beautiful examples of original material from the period, in this case collars, cuffs, chemisettes and undersleeves worked in different types of embroidery. Plenty for an amateur lacemaker like me to sigh over.

In her introduction Heather explained the difference between lace and whitework. The former starts as a few threads woven or sewn in a pattern broken up by areas of ground stitches giving the appearance of cloth. On the other hand, whitework is a woven fabric decorated with embroidery.

Heather illustrated her talk with slides of contemporary fashion plates and later, photographs, beginning in the 1840s when the look was demure and bonnets hid the wearer's face. By the 1890s women were more confident and outward looking, many going out to work and machine made lace and embroidery was widely available. Accessories changed with dress fashion and although colour was used, white remained a good choice to set off a woman's skin. Collars and cuffs were more easily washed than the dress itself, as was the skin.

I don't intend to list every picture but Heather began with a fichu of the 1840s embroidered in Rococo style with areas of padded satin stitch and pulled thread fillings. It was asymmetrical in pattern with a border of bobbin lace. This was followed by a chemisette of 1846 with very expensive embroidery.

In the 1840s sleeves were becoming shorter so undersleeves were tacked inside which were removable for laundering. As sleeves widened there was more fabric to decorate and in the 1830s, 1850s and 1880s the pointed edges of Van Dyking were popular.

Fashion magazines included sheets of patterns ready to be transferred onto fabric by pricking and pouncing. Other patterns were printed on the material and once worked the ink could be washed away. Some of these patterns were never finished and one or two examples lay tantalisingly on the display table.



A selection of the delicate, beautiful, hand and machine made examples brought by Heather on the day. For further information (and accurate descriptions!) refer to the books.





A picture of an 1850s collar showed larger motifs complimented by seeding (dots to you and me). There was broderie anglaise showing designs of holes which were a quicker method of decoration for the amateur sewer and even Van Dyked broderie anglaise.

In the late 1850s crinoline petticoats were sometimes given 4 to 5 yards of whitework edging at the hem, the best being hand worked in Ayrshire. However, machine made embroidery had improved by the 1850s and could be hand finished. The fine work of cotton thread on cotton fabric continued but Swiss imports threatened the Ayrshire industry and in the 1860s the country was running out of cotton due to the American Civil War.



Back to the pictures. Heather showed us an image of a fichu in Tambour work threaded with a coloured ribbon. It was narrow and had long ends which could be stiffened. Examples exist of 'pretend' drawers which are merely tubes of fabric and are just as likely to be sleeves; maybe they had a dual use.

By the 1860s collars were narrow, often in sets with cuffs or undersleeves and made of a combination of bands in lace and whitework.



By the 1870s women were going out to work (no wonder some embroideries were never finished), there was less frivolity and patterns were concentrated on the turned down edge of collars. They could be hand embroidered, machine worked or both. Collars were narrow and upstanding or crossed over at the front.



In the 1880s collars expanded over the shoulders with a pie frill neckline. Different fabrics were used with lace panels and a lot of it was machine work. In the 1990s cross-over fichus were back often with frills over the shoulders.



As ever with fashion times are always a-changing and it seems the accessories were racing to catch up. The improvements of the industrial age made it possible for nearly everyone to have their whitework and wear it although, just as now, and luckily for us, some were too slow to finish one pattern before they wanted something else.

Our grateful thanks to Heather for conducting us through the complications of the whims of fashion in whitework during Queen Victoria's glorious reign.



# Dress and Textiles in Orkney Island's Council's Museum collections

Rachel Boak



*Rachel Boak is probably the most northerly member of WECS and curator of social history at the Orkney Islands Council Museum.*

**Some of you may remember me from my roles at the Museum of Costume (before its name change) and at Waddesdon Manor, visited by WECS several times for tours of dress and textile-related exhibitions.**

For the last three-and-a-half years I have lived in Orkney, working as Curator of Social History for Orkney Islands Council since March 2017. The Council is responsible for a large and varied collection, ranging from archaeology to art and craft by contemporary Orkney makers.

The social history collection includes farm implements, objects from three centuries of everyday life, dress and textiles, fine and decorative arts, and items representing Orkney's vital role in two world wars, including uniforms for the Orkney Royal Garrison Artillery Volunteers, and World War II Army, Navy, RAF and nursing uniforms. The collection is spread across five sites: Orkney Museum and St Magnus Cathedral in the islands' capital, Kirkwall; Corrigan Farm Museum and Kurbuster Museum in the West Mainland; and Scapa Flow Museum at Lyness, Hoy, currently closed for refurbishment.

I am based at Orkney Museum which opened to the public in 1968 in a 16th-century townhouse opposite St Magnus Cathedral. The displays begin with the prehistoric ages and move through the galleries chronologically to the 20th century. There is a programme of temporary exhibitions which regularly includes local artists and craftspeople.

The collection of dress and textiles is not extensive and, being an island community, Orkney men and women did not have the same access to materials, shops, designers or makers as residents of larger Scottish towns and cities. However, being islanders, settlers in Orkney through the ages have been very industrious in their manufacture of cloth and in maintaining trade routes to provide access to other goods and services. There is evidence in Orkney Archive and Stromness Museum of wealthier families sending to Aberdeen or Edinburgh for fabric and it may be that older items of clothing in Orkney Museum's collection made their way here via these routes.

Wool has been woven for many centuries in Orkney, with at least one weaver in every parish. At Corrigan Farm Museum a hand-loom used by George Merriman of Harray parish is on display, with partly-finished cloth still on the loom. From the mid-18th century until 1830, a linen-weaving industry grew up in Orkney, replaced by straw-plaiting as employment for local women until the mid-19th century. There are samples of the equipment and produce of both industries in the collection.

By the 1930s, a mill had been set up in Kirkwall to produce Orkney tweed in an attempt to rival Harris Tweed. Between the 1930s and 1970s this cloth was made up into clothes by local shops, with examples of men's and women's wear and advertising material in the Museum's collection, as well as being exported. By the late 1970s, Orkney tweed was only being produced on a small scale for tourists, but there has been a recent revival of tweed products, although the wool is currently woven in Shetland before being made up into accessories, home furnishings and collectables in Orkney.

As you might expect, there are wedding dresses, christening gowns and mourning clothes at the Museum, but one of the most intriguing items is a blue quilted petticoat and pink brocaded silk overdress allegedly worn by Helen Rendall for her marriage to John Scott of Westray (one of the northern Orkney isles) in the 1790s. The dress was inherited by the grandmother of the donor, and worn by the donor's mother, Lynda Marsden Grieg, for a portrait in 1913. In the picture she is posing as 'Sophia Primrose' from Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*, wearing a milkmaid-style cap, with lace decoration on the bodice, a lace collar and sleeve ruffles. You can view the portrait on the Art UK website: [https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/lynda-marsden-grieg-as-sophia-primrose-from-the-vicar-of-wakefield-167529/search/keyword:orkney-islands-council/page/10/view\\_as/grid](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/lynda-marsden-grieg-as-sophia-primrose-from-the-vicar-of-wakefield-167529/search/keyword:orkney-islands-council/page/10/view_as/grid)



**From the top:**

- Rachel Boak, Orkney Museum, Kirkwall and the hand-loom used by George Merriman, Corrigan Farm Museum
- Opposite Page
- 18th-century overdress
- Costumes from The Pageant of St Magnus, 1937
- Earth on Fire (detail)

All images © Orkney Islands Council

*Note: In common with museums and heritage sites all over the world, the museums run by Orkney Islands Council are currently closed to the public because of the coronavirus pandemic. We hope that our sites will soon be open again, but please check before planning a visit.*

The dress (shown right) is in poor condition, with both petticoat and overdress previously shortened and repaired. If this dress was worn for a wedding in the 1790s, then it was old at the time, since the pink silk is more likely to originally date from 1730s. The overdress has been re-lined and the ruches on the sleeves added to make them longer and more comfortable to wear. The sleeve alterations are visible in the 1913 portrait, while the lace worn by Lynda Grieg is finer than the lace and gauze currently on the dress. The bodice fastenings and lace have evidently been replaced a number of times and the condition of the dress and its use in the portrait suggests that, as well as being an heirloom, it was used for family dressing up.

Another occasion for dressing up was the Octocentenary Pageant for the 800th anniversary of St Magnus Cathedral in 1937. *The Pageant of St Magnus* was written by Orcadian authors, J. Storer Clouston and Eric Linklater, and staged in Brandyquoy Park, Kirkwall. The costumes for the main characters were professionally made by Messrs R. Sheldon Bamber, Ltd, Glasgow, at a cost of £300. However, costumes for other players and the many props required for the huge cast were created locally. Between scenes seventy-two girls, known as 'curtain dancers', formed a living curtain by moving across the arena in bright yellow dresses with flared skirts, manipulated by wooden battens. Their costumes were home-made and the Museum has two in the collection, in addition to another child's costume from the Pageant.

One of the most recent textile acquisitions is an embroidered panel, *Earth on Fire*, presented to Orkney Museum in 2017. Inspired by a photograph by Leicestershire photographer, David Hunter, of the corroded remains of World War II defences at Hoxa Head, Orkney, the Lutterworth branch of the Embroiderers' Guild set about creating a textural interpretation through stitch.

The photograph was copied, cut into postcard-sized segments, and distributed to each of the forty-five members working on the project. Each person decided their preferred technique - hand- or machine-sewing, embroidery, felting or collage - for producing a 'postcard', but the size, colours and shapes within their segment of the image had to be followed. They were not told what the original photograph depicted as this was to remain a mystery until the project was unveiled! All of the separate pieces were then stitched together to form a hanging which will be displayed at the refurbished Scapa Flow Museum when it reopens.

I hope this summary has given you a taste of the dress and textile collection held by Orkney Islands Council. While not everything is on display, appointments can be made to view items in store. In addition, there are artists and craftspeople all over the islands whose studios are open to the public. If you haven't been to Orkney, you will soon see why the landscape and history has inspired so many creative people over the years.



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[www.creative-orkney.com/](http://www.creative-orkney.com/)



## West Somerset Railway 40's weekend

Report by Jeanne Evans

■ Watchet

www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk/events

*On one of the last sunny Sundays in September I decided to take myself for a drive to the coast. I plumped for Watchet, partly because I hadn't been there in quite a while and I remembered it as being a quiet, old-fashioned sort of place: just the thing for a relaxing day out. But as I stepped across the one-track railway line onto the Esplanade, I walked straight into the 1940s....*

The streets were bedecked with bunting, and there were fascinating vintage stalls selling everything from memorabilia to clothes and jewellery. All the shops and cafes had their windows criss-crossed with bomb tape, and were advertising spam and corned beef sandwiches. It was a lively, noisy scene, with period music; live bands and the Liberty Sisters. Dancing was encouraged – and there was no shortage of well-dressed enthusiasts.

Everyone was dressed in period costume – and I had never seen so many uniforms; all the forces, including Americans, home guard, ARP, land girls, police, WVS – and even some dodgy nuns (men in drag) who were rumoured to be spies!



Vincent in his 1790 creation with home made death head buttons.

**Patchwork:** *n.* 1. needlework done by sewing pieces of different materials together. 2. something, such as a theory, made up of various parts: *a patchwork of cribbed ideas.* Collins English Dictionary.

Vibeke Ormerod

To be able to put one's hands to good use with sewing or similar in a crisis is not only great for relieving stress and keeping one sane but can also serve to boost confidence and give great results. So if you haven't already started what about embarking on a long term project like Patchwork?

Create something with your beautiful fabric remnants.

It was only by chance I came across such a project amateur costumer Vincent Briggs, who makes the most wonderful Georgian outfits for himself.

Vincent is working on a 1830s patchwork dressing gown; he drafted the pattern and worked out that he would need just over six thousand triangles. 4071 are cut and some of those have been sewn. The dressing gown or banyan was started over a year ago and sometimes has to be left for long periods while other

garments are being worked on but Vincent says it is almost addictive and once working on it he doesn't want to put it down.



Dressing gown 1821, British, made with roller printed cottons. Metropolitan Museum of Art.





There were sand bags everywhere, with Bobbies guarding roped-off bomb sites and lining the route for the imminent visit of the King and Queen (George VI and Queen Elizabeth). Then the King and Queen arrived, together with De Gaulle and Churchill, and after speeches at the war memorial, they paraded along the Esplanade amidst crowds waving mini Union Jacks.

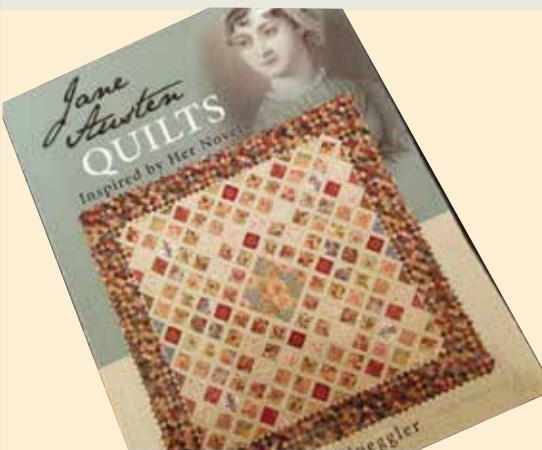
I had a fabulous (if unexpected) day out! Evidently the whole West Somerset Railway celebrates, with a 40s Weekend every September, so put Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September 2020 in your diary!



Victorian double breasted waistcoat, and detail. Augusta Auctions.



Reversible Turkish coat in brocade and patchwork, made in 2013 from Folkwear pattern 106



Jane Austen made a quilt which is displayed in her house at Chawton and the printed cottons from C18 and early C19 are very pretty.  
Cover of the book by Karen Gloeggler



Pierrot jacket 1770-90 from Nordiska Museet.



1790s jacket with patchwork lining, The Metropolitan Museum.



## Mary Quant dress in Trowbridge Museum

Report by Helen Montague-Smith

■ Trowbridge Museum

[www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk](http://www.trowbridgemuseum.co.uk)

Working with a former designer of Salter's cloth, Hanne Dahl the collections officer in Trowbridge Museum was able to establish that Mary Quant used West of England cloth for some of her garments. The search was on to find such a garment.



Luckily, Hanne was successful and with funding from The Friends of the Museum, a dress was bought for the collection towards the end of last year. It is made of blue flannel and very importantly, it carries two labels, one for the Ginger Group and the other West of England Cloth.

Before the garment was accessioned, we managed to find a model who could wear the dress for some photos. She has on my 60's wig and holds a contemporary bag from the education handling collection. The dress is in a very good condition and hopefully will be on display when the museum re-opens in the autumn. Meanwhile, the search goes on for more Quant garments made from Trowbridge cloth.



## Knitting History Symposium

Report by Pat Poppy

■ Leiden

**The first weekend in November I attended the Knitting History Symposium in Leiden, a beautiful city which I recommend. The Saturday was very full,**

**with nine speakers. All the papers were given in English, and those who gave papers in a language not their own have my utmost admiration.**

Several of the papers were of work done on the *Texel* wreck silk stockings. There was a lot about the wreck in the newspapers back in 2015-6. It is now thought to have been an armed Dutch merchant vessel, which sank around 1645-1660. Chrystal Brandenburg spoke about the use of volunteer knitters to produce, so far, 27 reconstructions of the silk stockings. These have been produced, using different silks, needles and techniques, for those of you who knit they used two sizes of needles, 0.7 mm and 1.0 mm and the gauge was 83 stitches and 100 rounds per 10 cm. If anyone wants to try this at home, there is a pattern on *Ravelry*. Later in the day Geeske Krusman talked about the effect of wearing and washing on the reconstructions. Art Proaño Gaibor spoke on reproducing seventeenth century dye recipes, particularly black, for dyeing the reconstructions. Other papers included subjects such as hand knitters in seventeenth century England, early stocking survivals in the Czech Republic, and the earliest published knitting patterns.

On Sunday morning we visited the Textile Research Centre exhibition (now ended), on socks and stockings. As an aside an exhibition they had in 2018 entitled 'For a few sacks more.... How feedsacks clothed and warmed Americans during the Depression and later', should be coming to Claverton Manor next year. The director Gillian Vogelsang welcomed us to the Centre, and gave us a brief history of the organisation, and a tantalising look around their store, their oldest textile is 7,000 years old and the most recent is this year.

On Sunday afternoon we visited the Wevershuis (Weaver's House) museum. Built around 1560 this is basically two rooms and a loft, which is reached more by ladder than stairs. There is an 1830s loom in the front room which is still in use, and small temporary exhibition of some modern art textiles.

[www.wevershuis.nl](http://www.wevershuis.nl)



## Vietnamese Women's Museum, Hanoi

Report by foreign correspondents  
Ann Brown and Annie Roae

■ Vietnam Women's Museum, Ly Thuong Kiet Street, near the central Hoan Kiem Lake and the old quarter.

After an eleven hour flight and a few hours' sleep in our hotel in Hanoi we ventured out into the steaming hot, busy streets, dodging the thousands of motor bikes to try and find the Vietnamese Woman's museum. Having asked various people, waving a map at them we found our way to the museum dedicated to researching, collecting and exhibiting the life stories and experiences of Vietnamese women. The museum contains three main galleries : *Women in family*, *Women in History* and *Women's fashion*.

We started with the *Women in family* gallery which shows traditional marriage and childbirth customs across the country's different ethnic communities. It also examines women's involvement in small business and crafts such as sewing, weaving and pottery. For example in the Hoa community in Ho Chi Minh City the bride is veiled for the wedding and wears a red dress symbolizing happiness and good luck. Gift boxes and lanterns are also red. For children in some communities, caps are made by the grandmother or the mother. The caps have special patterns, silver coins and amulets to protect the child from evil spirits.

Weaving is a long standing tradition for many of Vietnam's ethnic populations. At a very young age girls are taught to sew by the women of the family. Before a wedding, women make their bridal clothes and also presents for the groom's family such as blankets, pillows and clothing. During her life a woman makes all the family's fabric and clothing. Sewing machines and chemical dyes are now widely used. Industrial fabrics and manufactured clothing are readily available. The craft of weaving is disappearing slowly and traditional costumes are being modernized and only worn for ceremonial occasions, although we saw many women in the streets wearing traditional clothing with their conical hats to shade them from the sun.

As you might expect *Women in History* does not look at costume. The gallery vividly recounts the sacrifices and achievements of female soldiers and civilians during the two resistance wars. It shows the great spirit with which they defended their country and fellow citizens.

We finished our visit on the top floor of *Women's Fashion* which showcased the diversity of Vietnamese fashions including the unique techniques and motifs of the country's ethnic groups. The display shows the joy with which Vietnamese women have expressed themselves throughout the ages. Cotton is the most popular fabric for Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups, with natural silk reserved for appliqué and festive costumes. Patterns and motifs reflect each population's identity and its environment. Clothing styles have evolved over time and through external contact. Fashion exists even in the most remote regions. Today change is accelerating especially in the northern Hmong and Yao communities where synthetic fabrics, wool and chemical dyes are now in wide use.

If you are in this part of the world this museum is well worth a visit.



From the top:

Wedding costumes

Red wedding costumes from the Hoa community

Children's caps

Modern traditional dress

Ethnic garments in natural materials.

Day out with the girls!

## Textiles and costumes of Bhutan

From your foreign correspondent Liz Booty

Textiles are the premier art of Bhutan and said to be the finest throughout Asia having come to life by centuries of individual creativity and transmitted skills in fibre preparation, dyeing, weaving, cutting, stitching, embroidery. Textiles as garments convey the social identity of wearers. Gifts of cloth mark transitions such as career promotion and marriages. They are critical for the practise of Buddhist ritual.

Women are the weavers - usually learning from their mothers although there are regional weaving schools. Back strap tension looms widely used with intricate very unique form of interworking in what are called 'supplementary' warps and wefts to form complex patterns.

Complex cutting, stitching and embroidery as well as tailoring, are the prerogative of men though this is changing now.

### Clothing

**Men:** since the C18 men have worn the 'gho' and women the 'kira' - both of these were pronounced as being the National dress in 1989 and is worn by school children onwards. Very occasionally you see youths possibly wearing jeans but this is uncommon. The *gho* is a highly practical garment for men. It is a voluminous full

length robe that overlaps at the front and is fastened with ties at each side. It is folded into two wide pleats from the hips at the back and bloused above a narrow belt so that the hem hangs to the knees These garments are always made by men. They are usually either of checked or striped fabric and depending on the colouring etc. it can denote the region they are from and their social status. The pouch formed acts as a much used voluminous pocket - sometime a laptop might be carried at the back and the front is wherer money and goods are normally carried! This is worn over a loose shirt whose deep cuffs, usually white and often detachable, are folded over the bottom of the sleeve. Long socks and lace up shoes or the traditional boots are worn with this.

For women, the *Kira* - this is a large rectangular textile, wrapped around the body, folded into a wide pleat at the front and fastened on the shoulders at the front with ornate silver and gold brooches. The dress is tightly belted and bloused above the waist - again where money etc. is carried. This is worn over a blouse with a jacket known as a *Taego* often made of damask.



### This page

Our driver and guide wearing their Ghos, Me trying to master the weaving process, Typical set up for rural weaver, Women on their way to the festival wearing their best Kiras

Deaf and dumb girl weaving but look at the reverse side of the cloth

Kathy being shown how to wear a kira by some weavers, A *Thanka*- an embroidered and appliquéed ceremonial festival hanging

### Opposite page

Weavers who have set up shop for us, Student tailors at the art college, Dancers at the festival, Detail from an embroidered belt, Embroidered traditional boots at the Boot shop



I was fortunate enough to spend three weeks with a group of eight weavers and textile lovers coming from Australia, New Zealand, USA and myself. Our tour leader, Wendy, had spent eighteen months working in Bhutan and her special interest and passion is weaving. She had spent time in various remote villages learning the amazing techniques and now regularly takes small group to Bhutan - she can be found on the web under Textile Trails.

Beautiful textiles are also produced for religious use incorporating appliqué and embroidery with some of the best examples being used for *Thankas*, huge hangings that only are ceremonially hung for a short period during their most important annual festival.

The highest skilled weavers are found in the foothills of the Himalayas particularly on the Eastern and central areas. We spent a magic time living in a village renowned for their weaving and the women generously wanting to share their lives and skills with us. They were weaving primarily lengths of cloth to wear as *Kira* though they were also producing smaller items to be used in a variety of ways. A merchant from the main town, Thimpu, comes once a year to buy from these women.

### Weaving

The looms mainly used are back strap looms, with simple stick 'shed rods' that enable the warp threads to be raised and lowered by hand to create a 'shed' through which the yarn is passed with a shuttle. Supplementary warp and weft threads added in set places and are used to wrap around the warp yarns in different directions creating intricate patterns. These additional threads are added and finished with a short length left hanging on the back of the weaving creating a shaggy looking rear to the weaving. On a complex weave it can take up to half an hour to create one weft pass. After each crossing the threads are beaten into place with a beater creating a rapid 'tuk tuk' sound that can be heard all over the place! A really complex cloth for a *Kira* can take up to one year to weave but often takes six to nine months. As a consequence they are costly therefore when worn are a kind of status symbol.

We had several experiences weaving - it is hard sitting on the ground with a wide strap around one's lower back, using one's feet to push against a bar to create the tension on the warp, then mastering the release of this tension momentarily to be able to change the shed let alone learning how to introduce the supplementary coloured threads and wind them round the correct number of warps in the correct manner to create the complex patterns.

In creating a beautiful modern textile museum in Thimpu, the capital town, the importance of these textiles is recognised.



# Lindsay Evans Robertson

## 1934 - 2019

Many of the longer-standing members of WECS will remember Lindsay as an absolute rock of the Society but some more recent members may never have had the privilege of meeting him. His achievements were substantial and outlined briefly below, but let's open with the man rather than the career.

Liz Booty recalls "Numerous happy occasions at conferences and events with a bottle of wine and enjoying 'chilling' and absorbing events. He gave me huge encouragement and support with my work with the *Patterns of Fashion* Award and Student Bursary at the main society and when chair of WECS helped me find speakers for our study days (the chair person did that then!)."

Jill Sanders remembers that she "... always struggled with flat pattern cutting, it was Lindsay who gave me the courage to model on a stand and was the constant voice sat on my shoulder reminding me not only to look but 'to see'. I shall be for ever grateful for his friendship."

Fiona Starkey "knew of his formidable back story and was duly pretty intimidated at first, but it didn't take long to realise that Lindsay was generous as well as knowledgeable and had a wickedly dry sense of humour. My fondest memory was of a lunch outing chez Liz Booty which involved a row boat on the river. Lindsay refused point-blank to share the rowing because it would ruffle his sang-froid (and his linen blazer), and Liz said she'd done her bit by prepping the lunch, so Heather Toomer and I did both ways, with sang-froid thoroughly ruffled."

Lindsay Evans-Robertson was the youngest of three children, brought up in a Welsh village near Neath. He went to Neath grammar school and by the time he was in his mid-teens knew he wanted to become a designer of beautiful clothes.

With surprisingly supportive parents for the 1950s, Lindsay attended the Swansea School of Arts and Crafts followed by a three year post graduate course in the Fashion School at the Royal College of Art in London, interrupted by National Service in 1958. One stipulation made by his father was that he had to be fully qualified so that he could at least teach if needs be.

It wasn't necessary - before he graduated he was offered a job as PA/Designer at the House of Cavanagh, one of the best couture houses in London at £12 a week!

Five years later one of his RCA tutors with his own couture business offered Lindsay the chance to start a parallel, still couture but less expensive label called "Boutique" making simpler clothes with only one fitting.

In 1974 after a successful seven years Lindsay became the Designer/Co-ordinator for Hardy Amies' new Ready to Wear operation, moving after only a year to another designer post at Cojana; a top ready-to-wear company.

In 1975, after his partner Bill Leake died, Lindsay decided to move from London to Bristol and into education. For some time he had been a visiting lecturer at Cheltenham and Bristol. He updated his diploma course to an honours degree course in fashion textiles.

In his second year in Bristol he met Philip who became a close friend and partner.

In the early 1980s Lindsay joined the Costume Society UK and until 2001 was very involved, serving as Trustee, Hon. Secretary, and on Programme, Education and Awards Committees. He was also an active committee member and supporter of the West of England Costume Society and with the Costume and Textile Society of Wales.

In 1987 Lindsay established a new degree course at Manchester Metropolitan University. However he wasn't a Northerner and after four years he moved south again to become a part time tutor at Cheltenham which allowed him to establish himself as a freelance lecturer to the many UK costume and textile societies and The Arts Society (previously known as NADFAS), taking him all over the UK, to Spain and even Australia.

Philip and Lindsay moved from Downleaze in 1994 when they bought a house and garden in Portishead, living there until Philip's death in 2012. Deteriorating health dictated a slightly slower pace of life (and a lot less gardening) and Lindsay decided to move to a flat in Bristol, then after three years to Druid Stoke where he rekindled some social life and once again started going to concerts and the opera.

He lived a varied and fascinating life, talented, intelligent, sociable, kind and charitable: he will be sadly missed.



Tony Cooper, Chairman of WECS at the Christmas meeting presenting Rosemary Harden, Curator of the Fashion Museum, with a cheque from the proceeds of Lindsay's book sales.

## To Cut the Perfect Shape: C18th bodice fitting

Report by Fiona Starkey

Burnley and Trowbridge describe themselves as a company specialising in Historically Accurate Textiles, Notions, Sewing Tools and Fashion Accessories from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. They also run courses and workshops in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. This one was to teach the making of a late 1700s fitted bodice in the way it would have been done at the time. There were no formal patterns, each lady (and you would have been a lady) was fitted individually and her 'shape' kept for a perfect fit every time.

There were twelve of us on the workshop (*oh, you're from Bath, how wonderful - I love your accent*) which was taken by Brooke and it started with an overview of the period with prints, portraits and paintings of the time. Photographs of museum examples from the inside and out prompted lots of questions as we relaxed into the subject.

Homework was to familiarise ourselves with the general shape of the individual pattern pieces until we could draw them without reference to the diagrams.

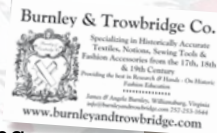
Before we broke up for the evening, there was a visit to the B&T warehouse for all those period-authentic bits and pieces normally only found online or at re-enactors' fairs. Fabric, naturally: wools, linens, silks and a few that needed explaining, plus handmade pins, buckles, ribbons and all manner of haberdashery to put you into an C18th swoon.

The following morning we dressed in our shifts, petticoats and corsets as Brooke pulled a model out of the front row to demonstrate the technique. Anyone who's done pattern cutting will be broadly familiar with the process: cut a generous swathe of fabric, find the straight grain, decide where it needs to go and work out where the 'must have' points are to

make the smoothest shape. Pin, draw, swear a bit and redo. See - it's as easy and (because we're all different) as complicated as that! We were working in pairs with Brooke around to answer questions when we couldn't work it out for ourselves. Funny how many people still can't take notes they can understand afterwards, but that's another story.

At the end of the day we all stopped in good time to see how everyone had fared and swap comments. In physique, our group ranged from very slender (though personally I think she could have done with a good meal) to American generous, and it was interesting to see how a well fitted bodice made people look so good.

The Georgian silhouette is very forgiving.



The next day was getting the sleeves right (my personal bugbear) and after a generous lunch, how to adapt the shapes we'd been working on for the different decades of the late C18th.

This brief outline doesn't really give a full flavour of the amount which was packed into a three day course. Brooke's explanations were clear and she managed the range of abilities so that nobody came away lacking.

A tacked-together piece of muslin (calico to us Brits) which has marks all over it, cuts in odd places and patches where the cuts went badly may not look like a lot, but there's a wealth of learning in it. And it fits!



## Books

### The Sports Shoe: A History From Field to Fashion

By Thomas Turner

Published 2019 by Bloomsbury

ISBN: HB: 978-1-4742-8179-9

Review by Jean Scott



With an interest in the history of fashion you might think this is not the book for you but far from it. This is a very comprehensive and detailed exploration of a cultural phenomenon. Who would have thought that a simple piece of practical footwear known to many of us as the plimsol or plimsoll, or perhaps daps, pumps or sand shoes (sannies) depending on which part of the country you come from, could metamorphose into the stylish, and sometimes very sparkly, trainer or sneaker worn by literally everyone today from pre-walkers to grandparents. A well-researched and illustrated book backed up with archival evidence, Thomas Turner takes us on a fascinating journey. The canvas and rubber soled beach shoe invented in the 1830s by The Liverpool Rubber Company became the modern sports shoe at the end of the nineteenth century, and this is where Turner starts his journey.

Like Thomas Turner, children born in the 1970s will have strong memories of all the trainers they have ever had or aspired to (and their parents perhaps but for different reasons). The brand names *Adidas*, *Puma*, *Reebok* and *Nike* were so desirable that the latest designs were hankered after by every schoolchild and from my observation still are, together with many adults. In 2015 the market for trainers/sneakers was \$2.8 billion in the UK and \$36.3 in the USA, and no other product links sport, fashion, celebrity and everyday life in the same way. Today Turner tells us that only a quarter of all sports shoes are sold for sport.

It was the coming together of industrialisation, technology, social change and the rise of leisure activities such as sport and exercise at the end of the nineteenth century that led to the rubber soled, canvas or sometimes leather topped shoes, which were light, non-slip and comfortable, appealing to the young male. For the women socially correct dressing still took precedence so aesthetics were essential and designs were more luxurious. Advances in mass manufacture coinciding with the rising interest in lawn tennis fuelled production, and manufacturers became aware of marketing their products to particular consumers,



Suzanne Lenglen 1922

such as children and aspirational young women, as well as the sporting fraternity. The war then got in the way but by the 1950s Dunlop's '*Green Flash*' tennis shoe was marketed as the choice of Wimbledon Players and stayed popular till the 1970s. A growing young population with money and time to spend on sport led to constant innovation and the German chemical industry inventing synthetic rubber led to Adidas transforming the shoe industry, in competition with Puma. In the US protective tariffs held back this innovation and the '*Converse All Star*', closely linked with the national sport of basketball, was the best selling sneaker, unchanged since 1917. It took the entrepreneur Phil

Knight to bring German technology and Japanese manufacturing together and the rise of the jogging/running culture to change the US footwear industry. And then came skateboarding! Not really requiring a specialist shoe, apart from a nonslip sole, colour and style became important to the young with branding and identification with the group becoming a significant factor. The influence of popular culture with the Hip Hop style encompassing rap music, breakdancing and graffiti art brought its own style of footwear. In the 1980s working class boys in the UK were obsessed with sport, particularly football, which brought fashions for kit and footwear that identified the club



Names of trainers (Perrin 2004)



An 1889 advertisement for the high-heeled *El Dorado* tennis shoe. H. Dunkley advertisement, 1889



Black and white heeled sports shoe 1925  
These high-heeled sneakers from 1925 were supposed to strike a compromise: "allowing" women to play sports while still keeping them from "losing" their femininity. Hal Roth/American Federation of Arts/Bata Shoe Museum



Keds These Converse high-tops look remarkably like today's, but are from 1917. Image courtesy of American Federation of Arts

they supported and their aspirations, rather than their participation in the sport.

In the general populous casual informal dress codes were inspired by sportswear, think 'tracksuits', and the desire to look sporty even if you did not indulge, meant manufacturers had to cater for two markets.

**Vibeke Ormerod writes:**

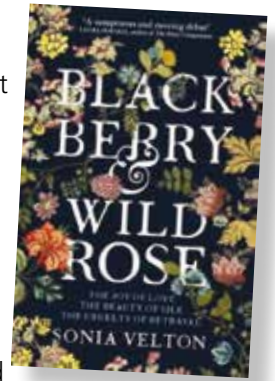
I became aware of a talk in London by three authors who had all written about textiles and as I couldn't go I decided to have a go at the books. The three authors were Tracy Chevalier, whom I already knew, Nicola Baumann and Clare Hunter. I am reading Clare Hunter's *Threads of Life* at the moment and have bought Nicola Baumann's *A Very Great Profession*.



**Blackberry and Wild Rose**

By Sonia Velton

Is the debut novel by Sonia Velton and is set in Spitalfields in the late 18th century when the Huguenots had brought the silk industry with them from France to



**A Single Thread**

By Tracy Chevalier

is set in 1932 in Winchester where Violet Speedwell is trying to carve a life for herself. Having lost her fiancé in the Great War she has become one of the many surplus women who in their thirties have to fend for themselves.

On a visit to Winchester Cathedral Violet is struck by the beauty of the bright

**The Silk Weaver**

By Liz Trenow

Is also based on the Huguenot silk weavers in Spitalfields which is a subject dear to Liz Trenow's heart as she herself is a descendant of Spitalfields silk weavers who later set up in Sudbury which became a major centre of silk weaving and after more than two hundred years is still producing silk.



knelters embroidered by volunteer women and by chance she becomes part of the group where she finds support and community and gains in confidence to later speak up for better conditions at work. Tracy Chevalier throws eloquent light on the many aspects of social history at a time when existing as an independent single woman was extremely difficult.



England after escaping religious persecution. Although the story evolves around the fictional household of master weaver Thorel and his wife Esther and her servant Sarah, real people and events are the background for the novel. Esther is a reference to Anna Maria Garthwaite, a famous designer of silks from 1720s and on. The Victoria and Albert Museum holds many of her designs.

The silk trade was very much threatened by the import of and desire for cheaper printed calico, both master weavers and journeymen silk weavers stood to lose their livelihood and the situation is very well described with the culmination in the silk riots. As an amateur weaver myself I was very impressed with Sonia Velton's knowledge and descriptions of the processes.



Kanye West and Marc Jacobs with West's Louis Vuitton shoe at Paris Fashion Week, 2009. Photograph: Eric Ryan/Getty Images



Foot shaped £114.95 Air Max 90 –best selling women's trainer



Trainers as an art form – pink Pumas



Mustard Nike Blazers

The application of the science of ergonomics brought sports shoes that made you run faster but also brought comfort through impact absorption. Young professional women jogged to work in practical trainers carrying their vertiginous heels. Note that female dress code still got in the way of all day comfort in the office. Today the

fashion shop is just as likely to sell trainers as the sports shop where you will find them designed to co-ordinate with dresses and mini skirts, leggings and tracksuit bottoms, and styled for the very young and the very old.

And so the sports shoe has moved from field to fashion because of its comfort, affordability and suitability to

modern life. Thomas Turner's book is a fascinating and entertaining read with an appeal to anyone with an interest in popular and material culture as well as fashion history.



Nike Air Max



**What Clothes Reveal**

The language of clothing in Colonial Williamsburg and Federal America

By Linda Baumgarten

Published by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in association with Yale University Press  
yalebooks.com ISBN: 978-0-300-18107-4

Drawing on the costumes and accessories in the Colonial Williamsburg collection, Linda Baumgarten looks at the way Americans of all classes dressed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This chunky book (265 pages) can be approached on a couple of levels. It's a delight to the eye and generously illustrated with plenty large photos of complete outfits, lots of the close ups of techniques, fabrics and the details beloved of historians and makers alike (buttons, buttonholes, maker's labels) with supporting contemporary images. It's also a good dense read covering myths and meanings of clothes, who wore them

(slaves to gentry), the fabrics they're made from (common to posh) and the uses they're put to (cradle to coffin).

The last chapter, while acknowledging the importance of an intact, unchanged item, puts up a spirited defence for clothing which has been altered as being history in its own right.

At the back there's a timeline 1690 - 1835, separated into rough decades with a précis of the most important things to look for in the development of men's and women's clothing, textiles shoes and accessories. Helpful for a quick check and a pointer as to where to look next.

A 1790 gown in the Williamsburg collection and the modern reproduction of the East India cotton it's made from, should you wish to emulate.



There is also a very full section on notes if you want to follow up the detailed references.

Not the cheapest book I've ever bought, but well worth it. If you don't particularly want new, ebay has some at around £30.00



Leatherworking with the proper way to sew buttonholes in buckskin



Bootmaker



Veg patch



Cutler



Wig and perruque maker

Looking towards one of the Big Houses



Village Pump



Period reproduction fabrics at \$20/yard



# Postcards from Colonial Williamsburg

From your time-travelling foreign correspondent Fiona Starkey

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, is a town preserved, remade, reassembled, call it what you will, as a time capsule from the time of the American Wars of Independence, or the Revolutionary Wars as they call them there, around the 1770s. It covers an area about one and a half miles long by about three quarters of a mile wide, peopled by costumed guides who all have a story to impart if you show a bit of interest.

There are gentry, servants, slaves, merchants, coach drivers, soldiers and a whole support group of trades and occupations to keep them going. All the craftspersons (slightly anachronistically some were women) actually produced goods adhering as closely as possible to the materials and techniques of the period and you are able to go in to the shops and work spaces to watch it happening. Anything produced and not used on the site either by people working there or kept as examples for visitors to look at and handle was traded with other museums or sold to visitors, but as I learned, by the time anything remotely destructible had been handled by a years' worth of visitors, it probably wasn't good for much else. The rags went to the paper-maker.

Many of the houses were originals, either from the town itself or imported plank by plank and rebuilt. Many not open to the public were available for rent and I saw several reenactors who were staying in costume for the duration.

There was the courthouse (burned down several times), a grand mansion, the Governor's House (burned down several times, once deliberately), merchants' houses outhouses and slave quarters. There was the house where George Washington came to discuss mutiny (sorry, independence) with his friends. The house lived in by Thomas Wythe (one of the Declaration of Independence signatories) was open for inspection from cellar to attic; a snapshot of Georgian life with his family's bits and pieces left where they'd been dropped. The town was obviously a hotbed of insurrection and with my accent I occasionally got an aside, in muted tones, that this particular individual was a loyalist, just didn't like to say so too loudly.

It is an absolutely brilliant place to wander in. Any of the bodies in costume are happy to talk to you and many are very knowledgeable indeed. You can stop at the coffee shop (men only and it's bitter sludge) one of the taverns for a period correct snack (peanut butter soup, anyone?) or proper Georgian dinner (Virginia cider is lovely because of the West country settlers; wine is expensive). The taverns are lit by candles and you begin to understand why so many houses burned down at regular intervals.

But best of all for me, were the trades' shops and workshops and talking with the people working there. So many obviously love what they do and are genuinely pleased to discuss it with you, even to the point, occasionally, where it's difficult to get away!



The haberdasher's millinery offer



The draper himself



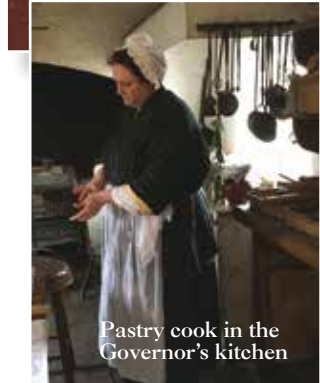
General store

*Tinker, tailor, mantua maker, milliner, haberdasher... shoeshop, bootmaker, tinsmith, blacksmith, bookbinder, printer... militiaman... you get the idea.*

*Just look at the pictures.*



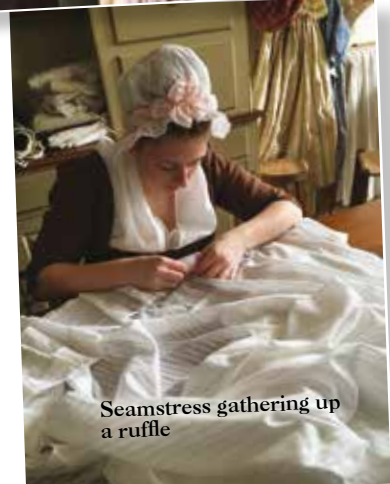
Coffee House owner taking the air



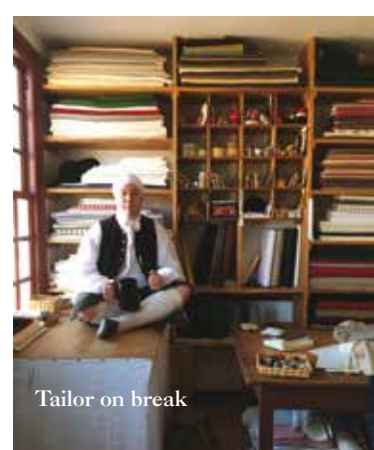
Pastry cook in the Governor's kitchen



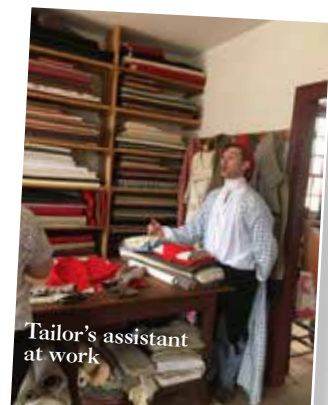
An indoor slave, wearing better quality than her outdoor counterparts



Seamstress gathering up a ruffle



Tailor on break



Tailor's assistant at work



Guarding the Magazine. Note the rough seams on the outside of the hunting shirt which give an extra air layer for warmth.

## Totnes Fashion and Textiles museum

Home of the Devonshire Collection of Period Costume

43 High Street Totnes Devon TQ9 5NP.

tel: 01803 862857

www.totft.org

costumemuseum@yahoo.co.uk

Summer Exhibition 2020

### The Survival of Glamour 1935 - 1955

Open 19 May - 25 September  
11.00 - 17.00 Tuesday - Friday.



Twins N Needles was founded in 2018 by Lara and Lisa Neel (who really are twins!). They organize and teach sewing events of all types, from half day historic hat workshops to full-weekend pattern drafting. Follow them on Facebook, check their website at [twinsnneedles.com](http://twinsnneedles.com) or Instagram @lisacneel for daily tips on sewing, current projects, and notes on resources of interest.



## COVID19 and mask making.

Last year WECS advertised in *Wardrobe* for old sewing machines, fabric, knitting yarns etc to help the charity *Hope Aid Direct* ([www.hopeandaiddirect.org.uk](http://www.hopeandaiddirect.org.uk)) We had a very positive response and our machines have helped start an important humanitarian project.

*Hope Aid Direct* gave WECS' sewing machines and fabric to *Team Humanity (Hope and Peace)*.

The Team Humanity centre is only 150m away from the Moria refugee camp in Greece and a large mask

factory has been set up in the warehouse part which received the donated sewing machines. We have had a message of thanks from the team sending us a video of their workroom. With Covid19 they are now extremely busy producing masks.

Many thanks to all who donated fabric or machines, it couldn't have been put to better use.

You can see the film clip on YouTube:

<https://www.facebook.com/sk.aldeen.3/videos/1638775472947609/>.



## Handsonworkshop.com.au

is a business which specialises in artisan and high end crafted items, including beautiful sewing items from Japan. Their Cohana section includes the



dinkiest scissors we've ever seen, made by Hasegawa Cutlery, a manufacturer of edged tools since 1933. Cohana has other sewing accessories as well - individually blown glass-headed pins, tiny pincushions and very practical work bags amongst others.



## Quiz Answers

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 16 High fashion       | 15 Both                 |
| 17 1800               | 14 Worth                |
| 18 France             | Influence               |
| 19 England            | 13 Before Islamic       |
| 20 Both               | draping or pleating     |
| 21 Pants              | 12 Different styles of  |
| 22 Getting rid of the | animals' brains         |
| 23 A rain coat        | 11 The oils of the      |
| corset                | 10 Dressing like a man  |
| 24 1920s              | 9 Both                  |
| 25 1930s              | as kingly or above      |
| 26 US navy            | 8 Only those who ranked |
| 27 Clothes for young  | 7 Silk                  |
| 28 They were private  | clothes or fashions     |
| 29 Jersey             | control spending on     |
| 30 Montgomery Ward    | 6 Laws that tried to    |

**Copy for the next newsletter to Vibeke Ormerod by 31 July please**

*See Page 5 for a way you can help to cope with the Covid*

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