

WECS Wardrobe

Autumn issue 2023
£8.50: Free to members

wecs
west of england
costume society



www.wofecostumesociety.org

Calendar

AGM

'Glam' Fashion

Saturday 10 February 2024

■ Bath & County Club

March Study Day

Feathers, Fur and Skin

Saturday 16 March 2024

■ Bath & County Club

Janet Arnold

Study Day

Saturday 5th October 2024



Golden Anniversary Tea Party
Pages 8 - 9



Japanese embroidery
Page 15



Audrey Sheppard's Archive
Pages 16 - 17



Bernat Klein exhibition
Pages 18 - 19

Feathers, Fur and 'Skin'

The use of contentious/non-woven materials in the pursuit of Fashion

Saturday 16th March 2024

£28 for members,
£38 for guests

Lunch £12

Booking online, or use the form
with this issue of Wardrobe

MARCH STUDY DAY

The Day's Programme is:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 9.50 | Registration with coffee/tea |
| 10.30 | Tessa Boase
Fashion, Fury & Feminism
– and The Woman who
Saved the Birds |
| 11.30 | Coffee/Tea |
| 12.00 | Jonathan Faiers
Fur, a Sensitive History
– Its Influence on Society,
Politics and Fashion |
| 1.00 | Lunch |
| 2.00 | Raffle |
| 2.15 | Dr Lisa Farouk Shawgi
Lecturer in Design Cultures
at De Montfort University
School of Fashion and
Textiles who will be talking
about the exciting research
and development work
taking place today into
finding new sustainable
fibres for the future,
including alternatives to
leather. |
| 3.15/3.30 | Close |

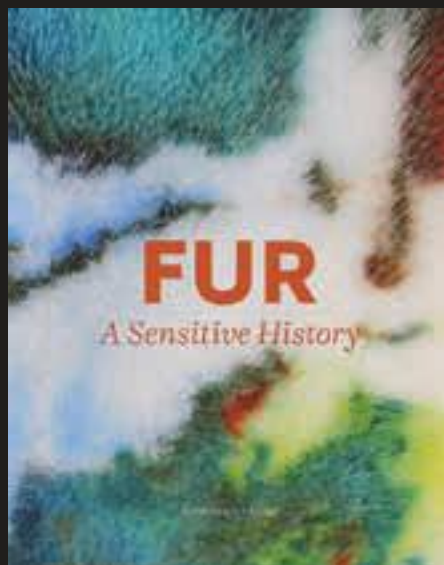


Tessa Boase is a social historian and journalist who loves a good story and describes herself as being addicted to digging deep in the archives, joining the dots, and bringing to life 'invisible' women from the late 19th and early 20th century in highly readable narrative non-fiction. Some of the tales she's uncovered are so gripping, and so surprising, that they demand to be told in person.

Tessa will be talking to WECS about fashion, fury and feminism, and women's fight for change, and will tell us about the story of Etta Lemon, the woman who saved the birds.

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

Fashion, fury and feminism - and the woman who saved the birds



Fur, a sensitive history It's influence on society, politics and fashion

Jonathan Faiers is the professor of Fashion and Thinking at Winchester School of Art University of Southampton and he will be talking about his book *Fur: A Sensitive History* (Yale University Press 2021) a groundbreaking and definitive study of fur, which has been enthusiastically received and described as 'The first and only book of its kind'.

Fur: A Sensitive History looks at the impact of fur on society, politics, and, of course, fashion. This material

has a long, complex, and rich history, culminating in recent and ongoing anti-fur debates. Jonathan Faiers discusses how fur - long praised for its warmth, softness, and connotation of status - became so controversial, at the centre of campaigns against animal cruelty and the movement toward ethical fashion. At the same time, fake fur now faces a backlash of its own, given the environmental impact of its manufacture and its links to fast fashion.



AGM 'Glam' Fashion

■ Speaker Sally Chidlow Grant

Saturday 10th February 2024

14.00-16.00

£10 for non-members



Following the WECS AGM Sally will talk to us about her research and will bring her own collection of vintage clothing along to demonstrate.

Sally Chidlow Grant is the recipient of four Janet Arnold Society of Antiquaries Awards for her research into 1960s and early 1970s UK fashion. She studied fashion and textiles at Winchester School of Art and then pattern cutting at the London college of Fashion and Fashion History.

Sally has worked as a garment fitter and styling and press co-ordinator for Issey Miyake and freelance for Warehouse and became a Senior Lecturer at Liverpool Metropolitan University and Cardiff University. Her academic work continues with research into the 1970s era of 'Glam' Fashion, such as Ossie Clark, Celia Birtwell, Anthony Price.

Colour Revolution: Victorian Art, Fashion & Design Exhibition

Ashmolean Museum

Until 18th February 2024



Rediscover Victorian society as a vibrant colour-filled era – from dazzling dyes used in chic corsets, bold experiments by avant-garde painters, and the flamboyant use of nature’s beauty in jewellery.

As Britain’s industrial revolution gained pace, new scientific breakthroughs allowed the Victorians to become increasingly revolutionary in their use of colour, with new hues greeted with both excitement and suspicion. This explosion of colour was embraced by artists, designers and many others in all walks of 19th-century life.

The exhibition includes fashion pieces – from Queen Victoria’s monotone mourning dress to the most daringly vivid clothing and accessories – and works by artists including Ruskin, Rossetti and Whistler, as well as objects from around the world and some of the earliest colour ‘photograms’. It will reveal the vital role that colour has played in shaping our art and culture.

Ashmolean Museum
Beaumont St,
Oxford OX1 2PH

www.ashmolean.org



Oh Boy! Boys Dress 1760-1930

An exploration into the overlooked world of historical boy's dress through a collector's eye.

The Fashion and Textile Museum is excited to present **Oh Boy!** – an exploration into historical boy's dress. Curated by leading fashion historian Amy de la Haje, alongside renowned expert collector Alasdair Peebles, experience an unrivalled collection of an often-undervalued area of fashion history, spread over two acts.



29 September – 16 December 2023

Act One: Breeched: No More Dresses explores the ceremony of entry to the masculine world, taking place after six years of age, through abandoning dresses in favour of breeches, focusing on 1760 through to 1810. Featuring a dimity gown and coat; a robust three-piece fustian breeches suit and a block-printed skeleton suit, alongside other fascinating pieces.

21 December 2023 – 3 March 2024

Act Two: Ship Shape delves into the vogue for nautical wear dating from 1860 to 1930. Starting with a miniature suit that an Admiral had made for his young son and including linen and wool serge suits, loosely inspired by naval dress, accompanied by accessories.

The space will be adorned, showcasing Alasdair's skills as a decorative period interior painter and will narratively explore the topic of collecting.

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

Dressed to Impress

Footwear & Consumerism in the 1980s

Bata Shoe Museum, Toronto

Until 16 March 2025

This exhibition examines consumerism and self-expression by surveying the very decade famous for its excess.

The exhibition features over 80 pairs of shoes in a gallery space set to transform into a 1980s-inspired shopping mall, taking visitors back in time to experience the full effect of the decade. The gallery will then be organized into six sections: Dressed for Success; Work Hard, Play Hard; Let's Get Physical; Mainstream Rebels; Pump It Up; and Designer Highlights.

Visitors to the retrospective can expect to see signature '80s shoes like the Nike Air Jordan 1 and the Reebok Freestyle Hi. Other footwear highlights that will be on display are the Gucci horsebit loafers, frequently worn by Wall Street executives of the time; John



Fluevog's winklepickers, popular among "Goth" consumers; and Susan Bennis and Warren Edwards' showstopping "Power" pumps.

**Bata Shoe Museum
327 Bloor St W, Toronto,
Ontario, M5S 1WY
batashoemuseum.ca**

Fashion City: How Jewish Londoners Shaped Global Style

Museum of London Docklands

Until 14 April 2024

Step inside a traditional tailor's workshop in the East End and immerse yourself in the glitz and glamour of a Carnaby Street boutique at the height of the Swinging Sixties – when London was the world's fashion capital.

For the first time, this exhibition will uncover the major contribution of Jewish designers in making London an iconic fashion city. Discover the stories behind the Jewish fashion makers who became leaders in their industries, founded retail chains still on the high street today, and dressed the rich and famous – including David Bowie, Princess Diana and Mick Jagger.

Learn about the contribution of key figures, such as renowned wedding dress designer Netty Spiegel, master milliner Otto Lucas, the epitome of British flamboyance Mr Fish, and living legend David Sassoon.



Fashion City brings together places and spaces in London with fashion and textiles, oral histories, objects and photography to weave this fascinating history, where every stitch tells a truly unique story.

Museum of London Docklands
No 1 Warehouse,
West India Quay,
LONDON E14 4AL
museumoflondon.org.uk

Opening the Wardrobe

The History Wardrobe Collection of Lucy Adlington

Bankfield Museum, Halifax

Until 23rd December 2023

10.00 – 16.00 Tuesday - Saturday



A unique exhibition celebrating women's clothes and the stories they tell. This exclusive exhibition features highlights from the private collection of dress historian Lucy Adlington. Lucy runs the History Wardrobe series of costume-in-context presentations, combining history, fashion and tons of fun. The collection spans over 250 years of design, making, wearing and sharing. Whether 'glad rags' or just rags, this exhibition celebrates the way clothes hold powerful memories and link us across generations.

Bankfield Museum
Akroyd Park
Boothtown Road
Halifax
HX3 6HG
museums.calderdale.gov.uk

Hats Made Me

Stockwood Discovery Centre

Until 10 December 2023

The Culture Trust Luton present Hats Made Me, a major exhibition that explores the global significance of hats and headwear. The exhibition, staged at Stockwood Discovery Centre, features objects from the world's most celebrated fashion and performance milliners as well as 300 years of hats from the collection.

With over 200 pieces of headwear, Hats Made Me is one of the largest exhibitions of its kind, pulling together practical and purposeful headwear, with wonderful and whimsical costume from stage and screen. It looks at why the hat styles we know today came into existence, the messages we share through our choice of headwear, and the milliners and hat manufacturers who are pushing the boundaries of what is worn on the head. Highlights include a red visor design chosen by Beyoncé for Vogue, a bridal hat worn by Cara Delevingne in Vogue, Michael Keaton's cowl from Batman, a velvet hat donned by Kate Sharma in the Netflix hit show Bridgerton, and a lace mantilla worn by Queen Isabella II of Spain.

Hats Made Me presents iconic headpieces that transport the wearer into an instantly recognisable character. From Sylvester McCoy's Doctor Who hat, to Cate Blanchett's headpiece for her Oscar-nominated role playing the monarch in Elizabeth: The Golden Age made by Stephen Jones OBE, to a Stormtrooper helmet from Return of the Jedi, the exhibition presents hats and headwear that have featured in global film and cinema.

Hats Made Me also represents Luton's own social and cultural heritage, with a stunning array of headpieces including a durag, an Irish Catholic communion veil, silk and gold Ghanaian headdresses, Muslim prayer caps and Sikh turbans. These are complemented by pieces that reach across four continents.

The exhibition closes on 10 December so this is your last chance to see hats that defined an era, headwear that made a scene, and your favourite pop culture items from stage and screen.

Curated by Yona Lesger

Curator of Significant Collections, Hat Industry & Headwear



Stockwood Discovery Centre
London Road
Luton LU1 4LX
www.culturetrust.com



Gabrielle Chanel Fashion Manifesto

V & A, London

until 25 February 2024

Please be aware that tickets for this Exhibition have sold out but members can still visit.

The first UK exhibition dedication to the work of French couturiere, Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel, charting the establishment of the House of Chanel and the evolution of her iconic design style which continues to influence the way women dress today.

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

Weecs Golden Anniversary Tea Party

1st July 2023 at BRLSI, Queens Square, Bath

■ Report by Liz Booty

What a celebration with over sixty of us gathered together with two guests of honour - Philip Warren, Chair of the Costume Society and Rosemary Harden, Fashion Museum Manager.

As we entered the suitably elegant room, a glass of prosecco miraculously just appeared in one's hand! A feast for the eye with the tables all laid with beautiful antique embroidered or damask white table cloths, pretty bone china plates, cups and saucers (painstakingly collected by the committee from charity shops over a period of time) and our lovely menu cards. Tea was served in more lovely bone china tea pots! Elegant cake stands overflowing with temptations and pretty flowers just completed the scene. Obviously only the very best of manners would be accepted? Gracing the table at the end for us all to see was an amazing, beautiful huge cake with fashion plates miraculously transferred to the icing and a token number of birthday candles, so beautifully created by Ann Brown's daughter.

But what was on our lovely cake stands? Just to remind those present and whet the appetite of those who were unable to join us:



Finely cut finger sandwiches
Savoury canapés
Blue cheese, grape and walnut crostini
Quails egg and bacon croustade
Smoked salmon, crème fraîche and lime filo basket
Then yet more temptation with dessert canapés:
Lemon drizzle cake
Chocolate brownie



The cake candles were then lit and ceremoniously blown out by Philip Warren. It was paraded round each table so all could see the cake before being whisked away to be cut up and served to us.

We had the raffle raising a magnificent £300 with some lovely prizes including an original Veronica Papworth image donated by Gray MCA – an amazingly generous donation!

Rosemary then proceeded to give us a fascinating talk about the significance of the Dress of the Year choice of 1973 - our anniversary date and only ten

years after the start of the collection. They were from the diffused collections from Christian Dior - Diorling, Yves Saint Laurent - Rive Gauche. A women's white coat and the man's blouson jacket with check trousers chosen by the then fashion editor of the Guardian, Alison Adburgham.

The context of this choice was that these were really good examples of the move towards the democratisation of fashion - the diffused lines making them more affordable by some and certainly trendsetting for mass production. YSL felt this move was important - he had his finger on the pulse of social change.

This was then compared with some of the 2023 collections exemplifying how things have changed with possibly the greatest change being in the huge importance these days of marketing via social media, image, celebrity and branding.



The theatricality of fashion shows contrasting with the very 'proper', now considered 'dull' shows of the past to today's extravaganzas put on by the big couture houses. The importance of menswear with most of the couture houses now having their own lines that are so important these days.

Examples of how things have changed were, for example, the Autumn 2023 Dior collection, with the current design director, Maria Grazia Chiuri, was shown in Mumbai - to celebrate craftsmanship, - unthinkable back in the 70s, the use of the celebrity Pharrell Williams as the new man's wear creative director for Louis Vuitton's runway collection shown on the Pont Neuf bridge in Paris! Another stunt that has recently been used is Coperni using Fabrican's



sprayable liquid fibre to spray a dress directly on the model Bella Hadid on stage - the dress could not be taken off other than by cutting it.

Rosemary then reminded us about the menswear collection for Spring/Summer 2023 that saw living plants growing from clothes and footwear exploring the relationship between nature and technology. The seeds were 'planted' on the clothes and grown in a poly tunnel for 20 days prior to the show! Photochromatic materials are now available and science and technology are developing all sorts of 'smart' fabrics - I think that Rosemary's point was - things will change dramatically also in the next 50 years too!

Stay Connected

Her plea to us as WECS members - STAY CONNECTED. I can thoroughly recommend the weekly Friday fashion blogs. As we know, the collection is currently being stored at Dent's head office factory in Warminster from where they are able to prepare and lend items for exhibitions all over the world, which will help maintain the profile of this very important collection. She told us that three quarters of a million people saw exhibits last year but there will eventually be two sites - one for exhibitions in the centre of Bath in the Old Post Office building and there will also be a purpose-built storage (and study area?) in Locksborough Road.

There are plans afoot to launch the Fashion Foundation Charity in the Autumn that will also act as a conduit for grants hopefully. Every time I look for any research online I am amazed at how much work has been done by her team to make the collection accessible wherever you are in the world!

Altogether what a fitting way to end such a hugely enjoyable afternoon. Huge thanks go to all the hard work of the indefatigable committee who curated this very special event for us. Thank you on behalf of us all.



Fashion Versus the Planet

Speaker Sarah Delve

■ Report by Andrea Bartlett

Our autumn study day began with Sarah Delves' thought provoking and engrossing talk about the impact of the fashion industry and its processes upon the environment and planet.

Sarah began her session explaining that she was not an expert but a person with a strong interest in the subject, her specialism is primarily dealing in antiques and collectables and luxury accessories, public speaking, and lecturing. However, during lockdown all her avenues of work ceased.

The next slide illustrated how the manufacture and consumption of fashion items is affecting the environment, and more incredulous figures followed:

The fashion industry is recognised as the second largest polluting industry worldwide, it is responsible for 3.3 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere, and the use of 1.5 trillion litres of water every year.

These greenhouse gas emissions equate to 8% of the world's total each year.



The statistics reveal that the average UK person buys 26.7kg of clothing per year compared to 15.6kg in other European countries. This consumption results in 140 million pounds of clothing going directly into landfill and 65,000 tonnes donated to charity each year.

Overall consumers today now buy five times more clothing than they did in 1980.

It is a sobering fact that the fashion industry produces 150 billion garments a year when the human population is 7.9 billion.

Sarah's next slide went on to recap the enormity of the global impact. Explaining that the manufacture and production of clothing across the world is having a devastating effect upon the environment, with chemical pollution infiltrating the rivers and seas especially from cotton production and textile finishing processes.

Finding herself with unplanned free time, Sarah began to look at what online courses about fashion were available and found some that were free. During this search she came across the subject of fashion and sustainability, which captured her interest, as she had no prior concept of the topic and wanted to find out more.

Before she began her talk Sarah warned us that the information was quite astounding and somewhat depressing, and her first slide was populated with some jaw dropping figures:

The fashion industry is worth 26 billion pounds.

UK Manufacturing is worth 10 million pounds, before lockdown there were 800,000 jobs in the fashion industry, which has now reduced to 500,000.

In 2021 the global apparel market which includes shoes, bags and accessories was worth 1.5 trillion dollars and is set to rise to 2.25 trillion dollars in 2025.

70 million trees are cut down each year to produce viscose fibres, resulting in vast areas of deforestation that leave behind a bleak and desolate landscape.

The industry is inextricably linked to practices of modern-day slavery, exploiting the poor and vulnerable in many countries including the UK.

Sarah highlighted the fact that the environmental impact on the planet from the fashion industry, outweighs that of all international flights and shipping combined.

It was surprising to learn that the UK is the epicentre of fast fashion, with 2 tonnes of clothing bought every minute here in the UK alone. This is exacerbated by the increase in collection 'drops' every six to eight weeks by most major companies today, as opposed to the long-standing traditional business model of the spring/summer collection, followed by the autumn / winter collection.



This is creating an adverse impact on marine life, from microplastics that are released into water systems every time a microfibre polyester garment is washed.

By 2050 it is anticipated that there will be more plastic in the sea than fish.

The deforestation of ancient and endangered forests to obtain material to make rayon and cellulosic fibres is happening on a vast and disturbing scale.

Cotton Farming

Traditional farming methods take 3,000 litres of water to make just one T Shirt – which equates to 900 days of drinking water, and growers and workers suffer due to the use of pesticides and chemicals that contaminate and poison them. By contrast organic cotton processes use 91% less water and are much better for soil health and plant replenishment, with responsible companies planting 40 -45,000 new plants each year.

Slave Labour

Sarah went on to draw our attention more closely to the topic of slave labour, commenting that modern day slavery and forced labour is a very real issue in the UK, and across the world approximately 170 million children are working in some aspect of textile and clothes production.

The search by 'pushy companies' to find ever cheaper manufacturing methods to increase their profits is creating a 'race to the bottom'. It is a stark reality that many people are forced to work for little or no pay with long hours and appalling working conditions, without any rights or access to sick pay, health care or pensions. Those that live in poor and developing countries are frequently exploited and often have few choices, some are even expected to pay to obtain employment as this is considered a better option than having nothing at all and living on the streets.

Sarah went on to talk about some of the positive action being taken in the industry and sum up how we can all make a difference.

How are ecofriendly fashion designers and retailers making a change?

They are reducing the use of microfibres, and toxic waste by making clothes that are distinct and unique, and using sustainable materials and less resources such as water in the manufacturing process.



The next slide showed a hand knitted jumper by Stella McCartney as a fine example of an environmentally friendly produced garment that is sustainable and ethical. The downside to ordinary people being its price tag of £880!

Selfridges now offer a rental option for some clothing lines as well as a repair service. Asda have taken on a team of curators to select and instal small collections of 'pre-loved' clothes in some of their flagship stores. Other retailers such as John Lewis and Toast also offer repair services and are actively looking at ways to change and introduce a more sustainable approach for the future.



What can we do? Buy better:

Before we choose to purchase any item of clothing Sarah recommended checking the brand on the Ethical Consumers and Fashion Transparency Index, to help make a more informed decision.

Choose slow fashion, by making items ourselves or choosing brands that use more traditional and slower methods of production.

Taking a 'Make Do and Mend' approach – wearing our clothes for longer, patching mending and repurposing rather than disposing of items.

Shopping selectively at charity and second-hand shops rather than buying new items.

Sarah's talk provoked a lively conversation, with many comments and observations from the audience, and I'm sure that most of us will be thinking more than twice before purchasing our next item of clothing!



Textile Treaties and Tentacles: Used Clothing Horrors and Hopes

Speaker Liz Parker

■ Report by Tony Cooper

In a thought-provoking presentation Liz Parker began by outlining her past activism in the realms of working conditions, fair pay and workers' rights with reference to the collapse in 2013 of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh.

Originally four storeys the building was erected without permits and the further four floors were added, ultimately accommodating five garment factories together with a bank, shops and apartments. Tragically the heavy equipment used in the factories proved too much for the structure.

The day before the collapse, cracks were discovered and the bank and shops closed. However, the owners of garment factories on the upper floors forced their workers to return to work on the fateful day. There were 1,134 fatalities and injuries to another 2,500. A stark illustration of the price of cheap clothes found in our nice, clean High Street shops.

Liz explained that her work in light of the scale of the problems and the general laxity of the powers that be in the producing countries was exhausting and she felt she had to turn her attention to something else.

But what does a campaigning former fashion studies teacher turn to? The something else was nature - "re-wilding" in particular. Her point is that we have all but forgotten that nature is our life support system but it urgently needs us to support it.

Some species fall into the category of "relict populations", such as the poor beaver that was hunted to extinction in Britain simply because of the demands of the hat industry. As we know, they are gradually being reintroduced into this country sometimes in a well-planned programme but occasionally by misguided activists.

Other species, when they find their environment no longer suits them move to higher ground; this is something that some manufacturers are planning to do in flood-ridden Bangladesh. It is a sad fact that there are some species that, although extant, are unable to reproduce and recover; they are termed "functionally extinct". Remember that term, it will crop up again!

So what of the "tentacles" mentioned in the title of Liz's talk?

Ghana's Kantamanto Market is one of the largest used clothing markets in the world. It is the end of the road for much of the world's used clothing (something like 12-15 million items each year). Once a place for sustainable business, the trend is now for the price of bales of clothing to increase and the quality of the items therein to decrease - fed in by the cheap, disposable, "fast fashion" enterprises. Much of the clothing has been donated by well-meaning people like you and me but more than a third is either unsold or unsellable, leaving as waste, piling up in landfills, clogging water systems, and polluting the beaches.



There is hope, though; non-profit organizations, such as the Or Foundation, monitoring the beaches have found hundreds of long "tentacles" of tattered clothing tangled together. Moves are afoot to help traders mend or remake clothing, to dye jeans and shine shoes to spruce things up for resale. Obviously this doesn't solve the problem of unsold items but some of these are now being converted into thermal or sound insulation or materials for mattresses.

As things stand, the burden of recycling and waste management falls on the local infrastructure in Ghana. However, "Extended Producer Responsibility" legislation is being rolled out across Europe such that textile manufacturers fund clothing recycling, which could transform the future of Kantamanto Market and provide a model for the future of green waste management. In the mean time we have been given a wake-up call to forgo the endless chasing of the "next big thing" and buy better and keep longer.

Liz sees this as a clear sign that the global textile industry in its present form is itself functionally extinct.

Liz said that she set herself a goal of buying no clothes at all for a year - not even in charity shops - and found it relatively easy until she went shopping with friends and felt the temptation keenly but resisted. The second year she committed to mending the clothes



that were in need. She readily admitted to the pleasure we all get from buying something new.

Incidentally, I remember watching a disturbing programme some time ago that featured people (all right, women) who are addicted to shopping, so much so that their homes are awash with items never worn, still bearing their price tags and still in their store bags they were brought home in. Furthermore, the addict's credit cards were red hot!

Liz had a number of suggestions for us to try.

1. Given that each of us has many more clothes than we need and, indeed, more than we generally get round to wearing, she suggests that we box up a selection of items and put them away somewhere, leave them for a year or two. Then, when we come back to them we will get the same acquisitive pleasure as if we had made a purchase – and it would be free!
2. Limit your purchases to no more than five items per year including charity shop finds.
3. Choose an item of clothing and a family member or friend whom you think would like it and give it to them. This would be a personal gift rather than the impersonal donation to a charity.
4. Repair and remake where that is possible.
5. Complain to anyone and everyone with power and influence.

Post Script:

Forgive me for revealing my nerdy side but I couldn't help but see a sobering parallel between the real-world crisis



so starkly illustrated during the study day and the often dystopian world of Douglas Adams' *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to The Galaxy* written nearly fifty years ago. In it Adams came up with a ridiculous(?) postulate of *The Shoe Event Horizon*, which goes as follows:

The Shoe Event Horizon is an economic theory that draws a correlation between the level of economic (and emotional) depression of a society and the number of shoe shops the society has.

The theory is summarized as such: as a society sinks into depression, the people of the society need to cheer themselves up by buying themselves gifts, often shoes. It is also linked to the fact that when you are depressed you

look down at your shoes and decide they aren't good enough quality so buy more expensive replacements. As more money is spent on shoes, more shoe shops are built, and the quality of the shoes begins to diminish as the demand for different types of shoes increases. This makes people buy more shoes.

The above turns into a vicious cycle, causing other industries to decline.

Eventually the titular Shoe Event Horizon is reached, where the only type of store economically viable to build is a shoe shop. At this point, society ceases to function, and the economy collapses, sending a world spiralling into ruin.

All nonsense of course...



Uniqlo Lifewear

By Elliott Fletcher

■ Report by Angela Bailey

After lunch Team Uniqlo took over. Elliott Fletcher, Senior Digital and E-Commerce Manager for Uniqlo Europe, stepped away from his computer for the afternoon, to tell us about the brand and its approach to sustainability.

Uniqlo was founded in 1949 by Tadashai Yanai, a tailor's son who reputedly became the richest person in Japan. It is still a family business, with over \$15bn in revenues worldwide. According to David Marx in his book *Ametora*, Yanai was influenced by the Ivy League trend in post-war Japan and by Gap and, according to Elliott, Next. There are now over 2,000 Uniqlos (1,000 in Japan). In 2002 they extended to the UK, which now has 17 stores, with London as its Europe HQ.

Elliott told us that Uniqlo's philosophy is to create simple, reasonably priced high quality wardrobe essentials ('Lifewear') that last. (They also nod to fashion trends by having seasonal 'drops' from designers such as Clare Waight Keller, Ines de la Fressange and Marimekko.)

Sustainability is key to their manufacturing technology. The amount of water needed to make denim has been reduced from 42 litres to a cupful; fleeces are made using recycled polyester; and by collecting old down outerwear they can reuse both fabric and down.

Uniqlo has always offered free hemming, but last year they opened



Uniqlo's original store



Re-Uniqlo, in London's Regent Street store. It's in the former Austin Reed barber shop. Managed by Katsura Takahashi, Head of Sustainability, they reuse, recycle, repair and remake items. Over 46m reused Uniqlo items have been sorted and donated to charity. Recycled items that are not suitable for immediate reuse for clothing are used as raw materials for soundproofing or car insulation at Toyota. At this point

Elliott assured us that Uniqlo's down is not taken as 'live pluck' - a sharp intake of breath from the audience! Repairs and remakes resize and create new items.

As part of the 'remake' service, Uniqlo has a partnership in London with Studio Masahiko (aka Masa) Morikawa, who then led a workshop on Sashiko, the traditional Japanese mending technique dating back to the Edo period (1615-1868).

Masa then led an hour's workshop for our members, with Elliott and Katsura enthusiastically assisting with the preparation of all the materials needed, which were generously donated to us. This was rather more hectic than expected, since our other workshop contributor, Skye Pennant, had, sadly, gone down with Covid a few days beforehand. However, Masa was very complimentary about the sewing skills of our members, and it was plain that his session was very much enjoyed by all present.

In all, a different afternoon for our Study Day, so many thanks to the Uniqlo team.



Elliott Fletcher, Sarah Bartlett, Angela Bailey, Katsura Takahashi and Masahiko Morikawa

Sashiko

the art of decorative Japanese embroidery

(WECS event – Using the past to secure the Future)

Workshop by Masa Morikawa and Katsura Takahashi from Uniqlo

■ Report by Pat Cooke



Following the talk by Elliott on the sustainability practices at Uniqlo the audience were delighted to take part in a workshop run by team members from Uniqlo on Sashiko.

This technique originated in rural areas of Northern Japan some 400 – 500 years ago as a means of keeping warm and preserving clothing. In the harsh winter climate rural residents including farmers and fishermen relied on producing and repairing their own clothing usually from hemp as cotton was extremely expensive for the working-class population.

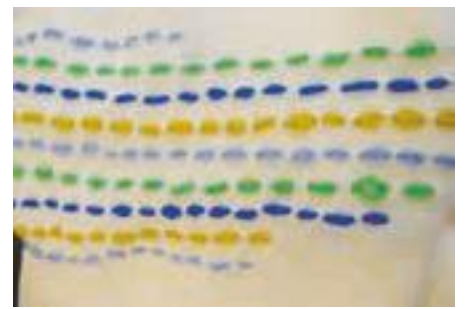
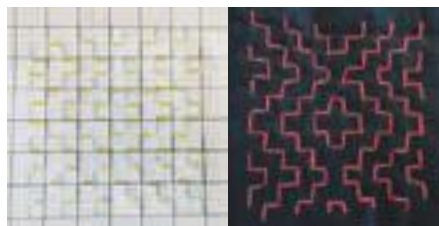
Since items of clothing often had to last through three generations Sashiko

stitch techniques enabled people to fortify worn out areas and extend the life of their clothing. Sashiko translates as ‘little stabs or small piercings’ in Japanese and is basically a small, precise series of running stitches worked across a graft pattern. The stitching patterns are often geometric repetitions or nature inspired motifs.

In rural areas in ancient times two or more layers of cloth were used to cover and reinforce worn areas of clothing. Being sewn with a running stitch created small pockets of air which trapped warmth. Over time this stitch style transformed into an art form and gave rise to regional variations in

designs worked. Traditionally these used white threads on indigo dyed fabric creating a strong visual contrast.

However in the 20th century when the Japanese began to wear Western clothes the technique fell out of favour but recent years have seen a revival of interest both in Japan and across the wider world. This interest has been sparked by the rise of crafting techniques and the desire to customise clothing and reuse worn items and different coloured fabrics and thread are now becoming popular particularly in Japan where Sashiko has become an integral facet of its culture and is now used to decorate tablecloths, cushions and also contemporary fashion pieces.



Audrey Sheppard's Archive

■ By Angela Bailey

On WECS's 50th Birthday: What did Audrey Sheppard, sometime Secretary of WECS, file away in 1973?

The first thing I found was a photo, presumably of Audrey, all dressed up and ready to go (1). Very elegant!

The folder for the year isn't very large but does include a Sunday Times Colour Supplement piece about 18-year-old wonderkid of tennis, Christine Evert, gearing up for her second Wimbledon (2).

Also on a sporty theme we have pictures of Simpson's ski outfits (3) - perhaps Audrey was planning a winter break?

Fashion seemed to follow various paths in 1973. There's the 'mini-all-grown-up' look, with skirts, suits, and dress-and jackets, all above or at the knee; trousers, tailored, wide-legged and high-waisted, and shoes platformed. The shirt theme everywhere (perhaps the Saint-Laurent safari look?) with wide lapels and deep patch pockets (4).

But wait! Other themes emerge: ethnic, kaftan, Batik prints (5), bright colours, longer, swirlier skirts. In September, a half page advert for 'The new Biba' in Kensington High Street (6) all palm trees and exotic prints. A long Sunday Times Colour Supplement piece celebrating fifteen years of Laura Ashley, (7) still working from Wales, and





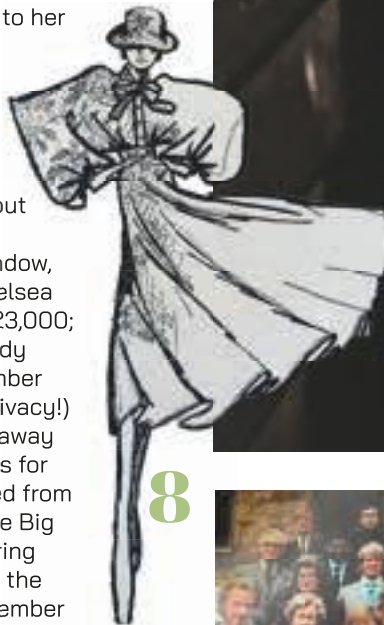
6

now selling wallpaper, as well as cut-out and sew-yourself children's clothing.

In The Times, Prudence Glynn featured the 'half-calf' skirts, previously shown by Kenzo and Valentino, now available at John Bates (8) but still not yet popular with clients, to her disappointment.

As ever, the backs of the cuttings are as interesting as the pieces saved: the new Renault 5 ad tells us about two-speed windscreen wipers, a heated rear window, top speed 80mph. A Chelsea flat can be bought for £23,000; a nanny is needed by Lady Londonderry (phone number included- so much for privacy!) We were invited to send away for records and cassettes for 33p each: offerings varied from Beethoven's Eroica to the Big Ben Banjo Band. A sobering reflection of the times is the Times Law report of November 12, citing their Lordship's reasons for refusing to grant a woman a divorce within two years despite the husband's adultery and desertion two months after the marriage, plus his violence and lack of financial support, because 'a sensible right-thinking Englishman at the present time, would not regard the ... husband's conduct as exceptional depravity or that the wife had suffered exceptional hardship'.

This did not deter Princess Anne from marrying her first husband later that month. The Sunday Times featured a long article about the wedding plans, and features a photo of Maureen Baker and the team at Susan Small and her design team (9), along with Captain Phillips's tailors and Michael of Michaeljohn. The wedding dress itself was not revealed until later, though



8



7



9

several alternatives were offered by other designers (10).

Audrey's archive is safely here with me, but is available to anyone who might be interested to see her collection of cuttings, brochures and patterns. It would make a really good project for someone... do get in touch.



10

Reflections on Bernat Klein exhibition

'Design in Colour'

at the National Museum of Scotland

■ By Andrea Bartlett.

I didn't know who Bernat Klein was until I came across his autobiography 'Eye for Colour' in the museum's library, and after reading his statement on the dust jacket introduction, I was inspired to find out more:



'Many people may consider clothes and colour unimportant and trivial: in isolation and taken out of context, they are. But as part of a full life, which to me means a life composed of many simple small pleasures, clothes and colour are at least as important as food and drink but perhaps nearer, in their source and in the senses that they satisfy, to music, poetry and painting.'

When the opportunity to see a retrospective exhibition about his life and work at the National Museum Scotland in Edinburgh came up, I booked a trip to go and see it.

The first part of the exhibition covered the formative years of his life, illustrated with photographs and examples of his early artwork. Continuing in chronological order, a whole array of beautifully displayed exhibits including fabrics, garments, and paintings demonstrated the techniques and styles he created.

So, who was Bernat Klein? He was born in 1922 in Senta, Yugoslavia (now Serbia), to an orthodox Jewish family who ran a textile wholesale business. After training in fine art and textile design in Palestine during the early 1940s, Bernat's life was profoundly changed by the second world war when Germany invaded his homeland, and his family were sent to their deaths at Auschwitz. During 1944 -45 he worked as a translator for the British Ministry of

Information in Cairo and Jerusalem, and in 1945 he sailed to England to study textile technology at the university in Leeds for the next three years.

Bernat began his career in 1948 as a designer working for Tootal in Bolton, moving to Scotland to work for Munrospun in Edinburgh, and from 1950 in Galashiels, (this is also when he became a naturalised British citizen).

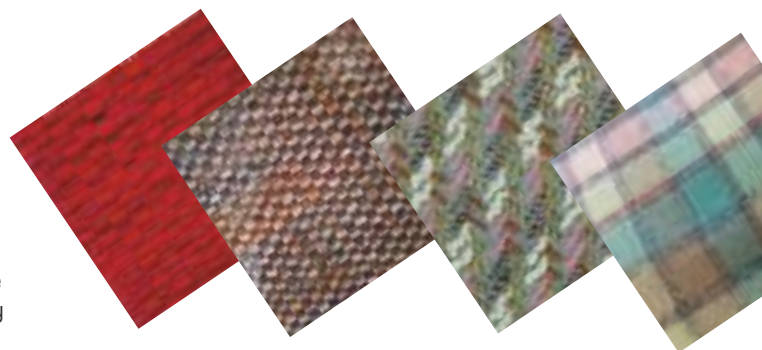
By 1952 he had set up his own business called Colourcraft Ltd and Bernat Klein Ltd. Working from the declining mills in Galashiels, with very limited resources and less than ideal working conditions, he made rugs and furnishing fabrics, and over the next ten years secured orders from the likes of Marks & Spencer and Littlewoods, making headsquares and lambswool scarves. The success of this enabled him to make enough money to 'build up the mill, the machinery, the labour force and organisation,....'.

In addition to being a designer, technician, entrepreneur, and businessman, Bernat was an artist, and the surrounding countryside of his home in the Scottish borders provided constant inspiration for his paintings. He sought to capture the colours and textures of the everchanging weather and seasons, using thick impasto oils on canvas. By the early 1960s he had developed an abstract style that was hugely influenced by a major exhibition he attended in London of pointillist artists like Georges Seurat.

By closely studying the combination and composition of colours in nature, he sought to discover a way to translate this technique of painting to producing woven cloth.

As the business developed, he began to experiment and invent new ways of producing colour woven fabric for womenswear and menswear.

'I dreamt of cloth vibrant with colour, soft in texture, light and practical to wear, easy to make up but above all new and bright and living with colour; I wanted reds that were redder and blues that were bluer than anything I had seen before and I wanted to see cloth in many colours that had never been attempted before.'



The technique he developed was complex and exacting, and pushed the limitations of the current technology and available raw materials - industrially produced yarns were usually made of only one colour. He visualised cloths that would 'blaze or shimmer' made up of many carefully combined colours, 'for then the eye could either add them up all together and so enjoy the fun of their varied subtlety..... or it could see them merging in their multitude to remain an amorphous cloudy hint of tints...'



After much experimentation he settled on using brushed mohair - then a completely new yarn for woven cloth, which gave the impression of being thick but was light and thin. Many months were spent overcoming technical and mathematical issues to get his desired effect of multiple colours within the same thread, eventually coming up with a method of random space dyeing. Hanks of yarn (of specific lengths) were dip dyed with four colours in different proportions, the colours were all different but had the same visual weight, the dip dyeing included the graduation of shades from each colour. As soon as the first colour ranges were created, he knew this was something that would open all sorts of possibilities.

Today we take for granted fabric that is multi coloured and textured, the technology and material we have is sophisticated and seemingly capable of anything. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the fabrics that Bernat went on



to create and manufacture generated much excitement and were described as the first real breakthrough in colour and design for over half a century.

His fabrics were promoted by an agent throughout Europe, and caught the eye of Coco Chanel, who featured his mohair tweed (which was inspired by the colours of a rose) made up in to one of her iconic little suit combinations, for her spring 1963 collection. This launched him into the world of couture, supplying fabric to the design houses of Balmain, Chanel, Dior, Courrèges, Laroche, Ricci and St Laurent, who all featured his fabrics in their 1964 collections. While in London Amies, Cavanagh and Norman Hartnell also used Klein fabrics in their Spring 1964 collections.

Today the exhibition in Edinburgh has brought Bernat Klein's world alive again, the colours of the fabrics as fresh and exciting now as ever they were. The story of his life and business developments told alongside the products he created, illustrated the



breadth of his talents, interest, and the influence he had during the '60s, '70s and into the 1980s.

The garments were given further context by being displayed alongside his paintings which had informed the design of each yarn and cloth they were made of. Seeing the clothes up close also brought a sense of familiarity, because these designs, textures and colours have influenced so much of what has been created by others in later decades.

The success he achieved was quite phenomenal. Through his efforts, the woollen cloth industry in Galashiels was revitalised. He went on to design carpets, woven upholstery, and curtain fabrics, and collaborated with various companies in Britain and Scandinavia as a consultant textile designer and colourist. By the 1970s he was designing textile patterns for new synthetic silks sold under the name of Terlenka and his own Diolen jersey fabrics. 1973 saw a commission from the Department of the Environment to design an extensive range of colour coordinated carpets, curtain, and upholstery fabric, presented in the form of a three-volume coordinated colour guide.



Bernat's entrepreneurial spirit led him to create and launch his ready to wear women's fashion collection of printed jersey pieces, sold through his own small chain of shops and via a mail order catalogue. From 1973 onwards the whole collection is fully coordinated into distinct colour groups.

Margaret Klein, Bernat's wife was also a knitwear designer, and using Bernat's yarns developed a successful business with over 100 outworkers in Scotland and England, where the handknitted garments were sold through selected shops nationally and internationally up until the early 1990s.

The business went from strength to strength all through the 1970s and 1980s with Bernat Klein shops opening in Knightsbridge, Aberdeen, Manchester and Guildford with concessions in department stores such as Binns in Newcastle, Frasers in Glasgow and Forsyth's in Edinburgh. In 1977 he was awarded the Design medal by the Textile Institute and there were exhibitions



of his work at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle and the Grosvenor Gallery in Manchester.

The Heriot Watt University awarded Bernat Klein an Honorary Doctorate in 2003 and established a permanent archive of his work, and in 2004 the Bernat Klein Trust was formed.

Within the archives of Trowbridge Museum are pattern and design books used and created by designers like George Charmbury who created the fabrics woven at many of the woollen cloth mills here, where the influence of Bernat Klein can clearly be seen.

Our museum volunteer Pat Whitehead who was a designer at Home Mills in the 1960s also remembers the excitement she felt when awarded Bernat Klein's book 'Eye for Colour' as a prize for achieving her Textile Design Diploma.

The Bernat Klein Foundation continues as a resource to educate and inform and is a great place to visit if you'd like find out more.

About — Bernat Klein Foundation

Launched in 2018 the Foundations purpose is to manage and develop Bernat Klein's legacy through education, research and publication, and to create opportunities for new designers and creatives.

Thirsty for Fashion – Circular Fashion, Past & Present

■ By Vibeke Ormerod



wedding dress
from 1840

When I heard that Shelley Tobin had a new exhibition at Killerton House, I wanted to go and see it as Shelley always delivers, and this one was on a pressing subject, namely how we are complicit in harming the environment simply by being consumers of fashion!

The exhibition was called **THIRSTY FOR FASHION, Circular fashion, past and present.**

Shelley very kindly gave us a private tour through the different sections. We were first presented with the question of how can fashion (which also means every one of us as consumers) respond to the changing climate and environmental concerns?

Slogans like **Fashion is a thirsty, dirty, hungry, dangerous and wasteful business** were underpinned with graphics, quotes from Fashion Revolution 2022, statistics from UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion and International Wool Textile Organisation:

A **thirsty** business - Almost every process of making and looking after clothes requires water. Even organic cotton is not immune, thousands of litres of water are needed to plant and nurture a cotton crop, spin the fibres, dye, weave and stitch just one pair of jeans.

A **wasteful** business- The problem of discarded clothing is often passed to poorer countries where it is NOT useful or cannot be dealt with. This causes more pollution, especially from non-biodegradable fibres like polyester and acrylic (plastics). Some processes for recycling textiles are also harmful.

A **dirty** business - Many clothing processes pollute the environment, such as the production of synthetic fibres, a by-product of the petrochemical industry, and dyeing textiles. Even plant-based fibres involve the use of chemicals in processing.

A **dangerous** business - Dyes are absorbed through the skin of workers, causing cancers and other diseases. Chemicals and micro plastics leach into waterways, impacting wildlife, rivers and marine ecologies. Pesticides are used to cultivate plant fibres. Poorly managed machinery and overcrowded factories can mean a high human cost to fast fashion.



Shelley Tobin

So to set us on the right track in trying to reduce our fashion consumption and maintain what we already have, i.e. going from linear to circular economy, from fast to slow fashion, we were shown examples of circular fashion from C18 to the present day.

Some came from Killerton's fashion collection, some examples from contemporary designers like Reworked 348 and some were well loved pieces of clothing from ordinary people.

Repair techniques were highlighted, old and modern and to accompany the exhibition some courses were available where one could learn to do Swiss darning, which we did a few weeks later.



The first example of a treasured item of clothing having been kept in the family to be remodelled later was a wedding dress from 1840, which a hundred years later, when fabrics were scarce, was refashioned for a war-time bride.

A 1770s formal gown was altered in the 1840s fashion revival for colourful silks.



Then a man's waistcoat that had been altered 3 times over 3 hundred years! From 1690 to 1986!



In the repair section there were patchwork quilts, multi coloured crazy crochet, darning samplers, repaired stays and the interesting invisible mending, Swiss darning.

In the next room we heard personal anecdotes of clothing that was kept or passed down. Many volunteers told their stories on film and personal posters.

In the long corridor the focus was on Rewear and Make do and Mend with films by British Pathé, dressmaking tips from "Better Dress Making by Ruth Wyeth Spears", 1948, amongst others. How to make two hats out of a top hat and of course there was a parachute anorak and a silk map dress. These were deconstructed and then reconstructed at Ræburn's Lab in East London in 2017 and 2022.



A FEW WEEKS LATER...

we returned to learn Swiss darning.



The course lasted 3 hours and was run by Molly Rooke of Darn Good Studio, Exeter.

Molly runs a creative clothing repairs studio with a strong focus on slow fashion and sustainability. We all had a knitted sample to

practice on and it was quite amazing that one could invisibly mend a knitted garment. But there was of course the choice of making visible Swiss embroidery repairs as well.

Molly told us that several high fashion shops now offer a repair service for their products and they send her some to be repaired, for example a cashmere jumper with a moth hole. One wonders how a repair is possible without the proper yarn, but Molly demonstrated how she could extract yarn from the side seam if it was sewn with chain stitch. Unravelling 10 cm or 4 inches would yield enough yarn to do the repair plus sew up the side seam again. Magic!

I am sorry to say that by the time you read this the exhibition will have finished. We thought it was very well worth a visit!

A homemade dressing gown made from a surplus army blanket in the late 1940s. It looked ever so itchy!!

The importance of looking after clothes through maintenance and repair was closing the exhibition.

After lunch we visited the house proper and in the dining room we came across a baronet " who had died twice" according to the guide. I think it was Hugh Acland, the 6th Baronet, who finally died in 1728. It was believed he was dead after a (riding?) accident, and he was laid out in one of the rooms according to his wife's orders with a couple of men to guard him. They passed the time having a dram or two and as they remembered the baronet used to enjoy a tippie himself, they had the idea of pouring some into his mouth, whereupon the baronet revived!

WECS on the road - Uniformly Elegant

■ By Andrea Bartlett

Thursday 19th October saw Trowbridge Museum begin a three day 'History Highlight Festival' with a chosen focus on Fashion and a super presentation by members of the West of England Costume Society.

UNIFORMLY ELEGANT 1798 – 1805 DRESS, AND CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM OF THE WILTSHIRE MILITIA

Tony and Carolyn Cooper were the models, assuming the roles of cousins - Captain John Swayne of the 1st Battalion Wiltshire local Militia based in Devizes, and Mrs Kitty Woodcock, a widow of modest means. They are preparing to meet at a house in Sydney Place, Bath, where Kitty is staying.

The costumes for Captain Swayne and Kitty were handmade a few years ago by a group of WECS members, as a WECS Ruby Jubilee project using the renowned Janet Arnold 'Patterns of Fashion' publications. Considered the best resource to faithfully recreate period costumes, there are four volumes that include patterns for garments from 1560 – 1940 and they are still widely used for film, theatre, and television productions today.

After many hours of research, planning and sewing, the group decided to create a scenario with characters to explain the relevance and meaning of the clothes and to show the actual dressing process for the wearers. The talk '**Uniformly Elegant**' was created, with an entertaining script that set the context for the current affairs of the time, it was packed with lots of detail and fascinating facts, what follows is a briefer summary of the event.

WECS members Linda Watts nimbly dressed the actors and Jean Scott narrated the action, first setting the scene:

It is summer in the first years of the 19th Century and people are flocking to Bath to take the waters and more importantly to see and be seen.

The story began with Captain John Swayne of the 1st Battalion Wiltshire local Militia, based in Devizes. He is staying with relatives nearby in Bath and has a few hours in which to visit his cousin Kitty and accompany her to take the waters in the Pump Room before returning to his Battalion later in the day.



Captain Swayne enters the room wearing his shirt, which is hand stitched and made from white linen, and almost reaches his knees, it can be tucked between the legs removing the need for undergarments! He wears stockings which had been the norm for both men and women for centuries and were still part of the military uniform. These were made from cotton, (silk was used for evening wear), and hand pieced from a knitted fabric with a tunnelled tape at the top.

The dresser then presents the captain with his pantaloons, made from hard wearing moleskin fabric. These were worn at the natural waist and reached just above the ankle, having a panel at the front and lacing at the back which provided scope for potential adjustments.

We learnt that braces were fashionable among the upper classes, and the C18 word 'galluses', was a variant of gallowses, which came from gallows, hence a means of 'hanging your pantaloons'.

We then met Kitty who is just about to prepare for her day out. To keep warm, she is wearing a woollen shawl over her fine linen chemise, an important washable foundation garment. Her fine stockings were made in the same way as the captains and were often embellished with embroidery along the tops or outside leg.

Convention dictated that no woman over 25 would be seen at home without her indoor cap.

Kitty's cap is made of muslin, with a band around the head decorated with a stylised floral design worked in tambour work and hand embroidery in white and pale yellow, finished with a fine handmade lace frill edging at the front.



It is during this period that drawers were introduced for women, previously they had been a purely masculine garment. We learnt that the novelty of this new addition to the female wardrobe (which came in two separate legs attached to a band), was being adopted by the young fashionable women of the time, and when royalty, in the person of Princess Charlotte, not only wore them but freely revealed the fact, their future popularity was assured.

But not for Kitty. Being rather conservative, she eschews such a risqué garment, although the one concession to modernity that she does make is to no longer wear a corset.

Meanwhile the Captain's dresser is lacing up his high neck collar and putting on a cravat made from fine linen. It is triangular, neatly hemmed and folded to make a band about the same width as the collar, and wrapped round his neck, from front to back, with the ends brought forward and tied in a neat knot.

Apparently, this was the simplest form of cravat, being easy to put on and comfortable to wear under a uniform collar. Jean told us one of its advantages was that it could be quickly changed to cover a grubby shirt and could also serve as a napkin for messy eaters!



passed through loops at the back and brought round to tie under the bust. Quite alarmingly two wider bands of fabric were then attached to the bodice under the bosom and held in place with pins! This was to provide a degree of support in the absence of corsets!

The cousins are almost ready. Captain Swayne puts on his tunic, based on an original also held by Salisbury Museum from the 1st Battalion of the Wiltshire Local Militia 1812 – 13, originally made of 'Stroudwater Scarlet' a woollen broadcloth with a felt like texture produced in Stroud. The tunic had bright cavalry yellow facings, and we learnt that the strong colour combinations served a practical purpose to help soldiers identify each other from their enemies through the thick black smoke of battle.



He puts on a pair of very smart knee-high leather boots called Hessians after the town called Hesse in Germany where they were made.

We returned to Kitty who is about to put on her dress, made from fine white cotton printed with a small geometric pattern in dark purple. The pattern was taken from Janet Arnold's Patterns of Fashion 1, based on an original dress held in Salisbury Museum from 1798 – 1805. The dress was of a simple construction, with interesting features such as a tiny bustle pad held in place with short tapes to exaggerate the fullness in the centre back.

The dresser showed the audience another pair of short tapes sewn inside the dress that could be used to hold the train of the dress up and out of the dirt. She also demonstrated how the gown was held closed by narrow tapes that

It was intriguing to see that the "pockets" on the outside of the tunic were false, and that the real pocket was located inside on the tail flap, a feature that became popular in civilian clothes too.

The captain's outfit is completed with simple cotton gloves and his cap, a Belgic shako, made of felt, (possibly beaver) which at the time would have been heavily stiffened with shellac and have a leather peak.

Kitty dons her navy-blue linen spencer - a cropped jacket tightly buttoned over the bust, with lovely rosette-type button details at the back. To complete her ensemble she wears a straw bonnet and crocheted gloves, and takes her velvet reticule drawstring bag and parasol, ready to promenade through the streets of Bath.

A Collector's Story: A private collection of Vivienne Westwood

The Bowes Museum

Photography Claire Collinson ©The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle

Until 4 February 2024

The latest exhibition in the Fashion & Textile Gallery at The Bowes Museum shows a snapshot from the late Vivienne Westwood's career through the eyes of collector, Peter Smithson. Peter lives in Cumbria and has collected Westwood for nearly thirty years, focusing on the years from Mini-Crini (1986) to Storm in a Teacup (1996/97).

Of the inspiration behind his collection Peter writes, "I was captivated by Vivienne's endless creativity, the links to history and witty parody of Englishness. For the Westwood enthusiast, there is always something new to notice - she still makes me smile in acknowledgment of what a very clever lady she was."

Peter is very keen that his collection should be displayed for others to enjoy and contacted The Bowes Museum because of the parallels between Westwood's historical design inspiration and the collections. The exhibition includes complete ensembles from the 1980s and 1990s, as well as accessories and ephemera, and signature Westwood garments, such as corsets and T-shirts, all from Peter's collection.

The earliest outfit is from Mini-Crini (Spring/Summer 1986) and features one of Westwood's signature mini-skirts inspired by the crinolines of the 1850s, a style synonymous with the Empress Eugénie. Items from the Empress's wardrobe are part of the permanent collection at the Museum and are on display in the Fashion & Textile Gallery.



An Armour jacket from Time Machine (Autumn/Winter 1988/89) reflects the shape of metal armour in its construction from heavy tweed. Armour from The Bowes Museum, displayed nearby, shows the different pieces worn to protect the arms, and how the Westwood jacket imitates these sections and joins with fabric and buckles.



An amazing black velvet catsuit from Portrait (AW 1990/91) is printed with gold ink in a design inspired by French cabinetmaker, André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732), based on a mirror back of 1713 in The Wallace Collection, London.

Two ensembles from On Liberty (AW 1994/95) and Storm in a Teacup (AW 1996/97) explore and disrupt the history of tartan and tweed in fashion and are displayed close to historic examples of children's clothes, showing how these fashions filtered down to everyday wear.

The twelve Westwood ensembles were selected by Peter from over a hundred as most representative of her work. They have been mounted by The Bowes Museum's textile conservator, Cecilia Oliver, with help from two placement students, and Peter's advice on accessories and styling to best recreate the catwalk looks.

Westwood was very inspired by art and fashion, cultural and social history. Objects from The Bowes Museum's stored collections are displayed alongside her creations to show historical sources for her ideas and to examine materials and techniques.

They include an early seventeenth-century portrait miniature, a pair of miniature Boulle plinths, and a limited edition Westwood plate with a lace design, produced by Coalport





in 2003. From the Fashion & Textile collection, tapestry seat covers and a rare pile fabric picture purchased by Joséphine and John Bowes, are on show, as well as a pair of eighteenth-century stays, bustles, shoes, lace from the Blackborne Lace Collection, and children's clothes from local shop Milners in Middleham.

I hope WECS members will feel encouraged to make the trip north to visit the exhibition. We also hope this will be the first of a series of displays from Peter's collection. If anyone is heading up to Barnard Castle, it would be lovely to say hello.

Rachel Whitworth
Curator of Fashion & Textiles
rachel.whitworth@thebowesmuseum.org.uk

N.B. The exhibition is the result of a collaboration between The Bowes Museum and private collector Peter Smithson. It is not an institutional partnership with Vivienne Westwood Limited.

**The Bowes Museum,
Barnard Castle,
County Durham, DL12 8NP**

thebowesmuseum.org



A Long Time In The Making:

■ By Sue Rugg

Some twelve years ago, my partner and I went on holiday to St. Helena.

Before our trip, the only thing that I knew about this small volcanic, Atlantic island came from my schooldays. Somewhere in the far recesses of my mind I could vaguely recall that St. Helena had been the place to which Napoleon Bonaparte had been finally exiled and on which he had later died. What I didn't know, and only discovered when I was there, was that Napoleon had indeed died and been buried on the island, but his body had later been moved to rest in far grander surroundings in Paris.



Photo of the quilt square

After that, things went deadly quiet! Now, St. Helena is a remote place, to say the least, being some 1200 miles west of Africa and just over twice that distance east of South America

The island's remoteness makes following things up from the UK somewhat challenging, to the extent that I've been pursuing the resolution to this story for more than ten years! A myriad of emails, and several vicarious visits from contacts that my partner and I made whilst we were on the island, eventually produced the goods! My square had indeed arrived safely, but the intended quilt had never been made. The quilt square's eventual recipient kindly offered to make it into a cushion cover for me, to be sold to raise funds for the original craft group. So, although it has been more than a decade in the making, this story finally has a happy ending.

Napoleon's grave on St. Helena



Anyway, whilst we were on the island, I noticed a poster in one of the shop windows asking for contributions towards a proposed charity quilt. The quilt was being planned in order to raise funds for a small craft group organised for island residents who had disabilities (<https://www.shapecharity.com>). Having spent my career working in healthcare, and having seen for myself the valuable work that the craft group was doing, the quilt project was one that I wanted to support.

To set the ball rolling, I asked in the shop that was displaying the poster whether non-residents, as well as 'Saints' (as the island residents call themselves) could contribute. I was assured that they could, with the only stipulation being that the square had to be St. Helena-themed. On my return home, I got my thinking cap on and set out to make a quilt square. In the hope of making my offering suitably maritime, I settled on a patchwork eight-pointed compass star incorporating the logo of the island's supply ship; the RMS St. Helena

When my would-be contribution was done, I crossed my fingers in the hope that it would be suitable and would arrive safely and sent it off to St. Helena just before Christmas in 2012.



Photo of the finished cushion cover



Quilt Poster



Map of St. Helena

A visit to the “Diva” Exhibition

The V&A Museum

■ By Ann Brown

On a trip to London recently I did my usual thing and went to the V&A to view the recent exhibition, which at present is “Diva”. Included in your visit you receive a headset which bursts into sound as you approach the various displays. The Diva experience covers mostly women from the worlds of opera, stage, popular music and film starting with opera from Adelina Patti in the mid-19th century to the most recent popular singers of today along with costumes of each artist featured. As you go to the second floor with 21st century artists, the music gets louder but you can turn the volume down on the headset! All the artists featured are or were iconic performers in their own right. There are film clips shown of the “Divas” performing many of their most famous parts including Greta Garbo saying “I want to be alone”.

The list of the Divas featured is endless and the costumes iconic. It is well worth a visit if you are in London and on until April next year. It was one of the best exhibitions I have seen for a while and because of the timed entry, controlling the numbers at one time, there is space to enjoy each beautifully displayed exhibit.

V & A
Cromwell Road,
London SW7 9RL



Dame Lucie Rie

Exhibition at the Holburne Museum

■ By Pamela Sharpe



Dame Lucie Rie (1902-1995) is one of the most admired potters of the 20th century, and an exhibition of her exquisite, delicate ceramics has been on display at the Holburne Museum through the summer, and continues until January next year.

Born and trained in Vienna, she fled to London in 1938, taking with her two pottery wheels and a few pots wrapped



in clothes in her suitcase. She settled in London. Although famous now for her pots and tableware, in the 40s with clay scarce, many button factories requisitioned buttons exempt from rationing, and she supported herself by making ceramic buttons for the fashion industry.

Initially she created tiny disks on her potter's wheel, but finding this an unrealistically slow method she turned to freehand shaping, eventually employing 18 fellow emigres and making 6 thousand buttons a month, colour matched to designers' fabrics.

In a separate room, a floor above the display of pots and tableware, the exhibition includes a collection of these beautiful, tactile, and now highly sought after, buttons.



Treasures of Gold and Silver Wire

Exhibition at Guildhall Gallery, City of London Guildhall

■ By Helen Montague-Smith

The Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers are a London Livery Company with strong links to their trade, i.e. producing gold and silver thread for use in ceremonial and contemporary embroidery.

Their exhibition in the Guildhall in the City of London was assembled by their curator and she spoke to a group of interested Liverymen recently which I was able to join. The most wonderful display of objects, very old and very new together with a demonstration of modern embroidery.



My photos are of the 15th Century Fishmongers Pall - we all loved the mermaid and her reflection!

The Bishop of London wears this amazing cope with all the London churches embroidered on it.

The Burse is a purse in which the Great Seal of England could be carried ceremonially. The Lion and Unicorn are so clever - padded work here.

Sadly, this exhibition closes on 12th November.



Could you be our New Chair?

If you are not shy of standing up in front of people, would you like to introduce our speakers on study days?

Along with other duties this is the job of the WECS chair.

We would love you to come and try and Angela Bailey is offering to mentor you till you feel confident.

Please contact Angela 07887 851410 if you would like to have a go.

Keep Wardrobe Full!

What have you been doing, reading, discovering online?

Write and tell us so we can share

Copy for the next magazine to Caroline Bartlett by 30th 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
07747622481
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

MEMBERS

Andrea Bartlett, Trowbridge Museum, The Shires Shopping Centre, Court Street, Trowbridge BA14 8AT
Andrea.Bartlett@trowbridge.gov.uk

Caroline Bartlett, 15 Cambridge Way, Minchinhampton, Stroud, GL6 9DE
caroline.bartlett15@outlook.com