



COSTUME & TEXTILE ASSOCIATION

MISCELLANY

A collection of articles on subjects
relating to textiles and dress

2010

CHANGING PROFILES WOMEN'S DRESS 1850-1890



Chiné silk day dress c. 1864. Extremely full, flat pleats all round onto a narrow waistband. Bodice has centre front closing with green crochet-covered buttons. Sleeves very shaped with cuff and shoulder trimmings of green and cream bobbles, buttons, fringe and pleated ribbon. **NWHCM: 1972.665.2**

MISCELLANY 2010

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FUTURE ISSUES

FROM THE EDITORS: If you are enthusiastic about a particular subject on textiles and dress and would like to serve as 'Guest Editor' to work with the editorial team for an issue of *Miscellany*, or you would like to contribute an article, please contact us on tel: 01603 441403.

SECRETARY'S LETTER

Welcome to *Miscellany*, a new title that we think better reflects the varied contents of our journal. This issue looks at changes in women's dress between the 1850s and the 1890s, drawing on the knowledge and skill of some of our members and highlighting gems from the costume collection at Carrow. We particularly wanted to include the drawings of Marjorie Budd as a tribute to the skills of a long standing C&TA member who sadly died last November.

This edition also launches our new logo, heralding a more modern style for the C&TA that will be incorporated into all communication media, including our website. The C&TA, like all voluntary organisations, must continue to develop if we are to attract members and achieve our aspirations. Therefore, we are using our website and email to contact members as much as possible. This saves postage and is useful when the timescale is short. More and more enquiries are now received through the internet.



Line drawing by Marjorie Budd of a pale blue taffeta and lace evening dress with red velvet bows c. 1885
NWHCM : 1965.596.

Cover illustration, detail of dress

A completely revised membership application form is now available. Postal weight costs have meant that we couldn't include it with this mailing, but it will be available at all our events. Please ask me if you would like copies for wider distribution. We need to make sure our membership continues to grow, thereby increasing our income to support the Museum. We are also introducing a gift aid scheme, which will feature on our new membership application form.

Many of you will have heard of the sad death of Pamela Claburn. A full obituary is on page 16. Pamela built up the collection when it was housed at Strangers' Hall, and was the founder of the C&TA in 1989. She continued to support our events until very recently — a striking lady of great poise and elegance. We are greatly in her debt.

Those who attended the AGM in May will know that there are some changes in our Executive Committee. Vivienne Weeks retired as Chair. Her drive and enthusiasm were remarkable. She had worked tirelessly staging some wonderful events over a number of years, which did much to keep the collection in the public eye (particularly through the years when Carrow was closed). We remember several in particular — the Thirties event at City Hall in 2004, wedding dresses at the Assembly House in 2005, Beautiful Ball gowns at the John Innes Centre in 2007, Strictly Vintage in St Andrews Hall in 2008, and finally, Fashion Revealed in 2009. And it goes on. What about the Textile Trail in 2007 and the Art of Fashion at the Castle in 2008?

No wonder she's exhausted. She worked us all hard, but it was always fun and the C&TA is very grateful to her. Although Vivienne has relinquished the role as Chairman, members will be reassured to know that she will continue to help us with staging future events.

Lesley Hawes, our Vice Chair and Volunteer Organiser also retired. She has built up the large pool of volunteers who readily help at events, and most importantly, she has master-minded the Vintage Fairs in Norwich. The last one was such a success that we've moved to St Andrews Hall, which we are confident of filling in November. The fairs are a wonderful opportunity for buyers and sellers, but also a very good fundraiser for us. So thank you Lesley.

Frances Moitai, our Membership Secretary, has done much to streamline the membership process, a vital task that keeps our membership flourishing. She has passed on this role but remains a committee member. We are grateful to all three and pleased that they will continue to work with the C&TA.

Barbara Coe, our Events Organiser, has agreed to serve as Chair and committee members have taken on new roles as notified at the AGM — see listing on facing page.

2010 has seen Carrow House open for business again. Our members have enjoyed once more a series of events organised by the Museum Service, events that remind us of the many wonderful gems in the collection. The C&TA has also held a series of talks there, but as space is limited we will continue to use other venues too. Our full programme is set out on pages 19/20.

If this journal excites your enthusiasm, please contact me on 01603 451160 for more information about how you can get involved with C&TA. There may be just the role to suit you. Happy reading.

Jeanne Southgate

STATUS AND THE 19TH CENTURY NORWICH SHAWL

In these days of casual and comfortable wear, there would seem to be a world of difference between how we feel about our clothes and how Victorian ladies felt about theirs, especially shawls. If you look at engravings of the public attending the Great Exhibition of 1851 you will see that nearly every lady wears a shawl. There were of course, shawls and shawls. Whilst everyday shawls were warm and useful, dress shawls allowed a lady to publicly declare her wealth, or rather her husband's, her taste, and her sense of style. By catering for these demands, the Norwich textile manufacturers became renowned for the splendour of their shawls in the 19th century.

So how did this gripping fashion, which lasted for nearly a hundred years, start? In the 18th century, when trade with India and the Far East was rapidly expanding, many artefacts were coming into Europe. Worn by Indian princes, nobles and soon adopted by some European diplomats, the Kashmiri shawl became a status symbol. Its brightly coloured and bold designs were quite unlike the silks and brocades of fashionable Georgian ladies' wear. In its turn the French Revolution brought about many profound changes, not the least of which was fashion. A warm yet beautiful shawl became a lifesaver for the scantily dressed, post-Terror French lady. Lightweight, with soft draping qualities, yet incredibly warm, the beautiful Kashmiri shawls made the perfect accessory for the fashionable, thin cotton



Harriet Ann Dickerson c. 1856 wearing a Norwich shawl. (Kind permission of Mrs Diana Cooke)

'It was here in Norwich that an ideal cloth was made, one which was as high-quality as cashmere.'

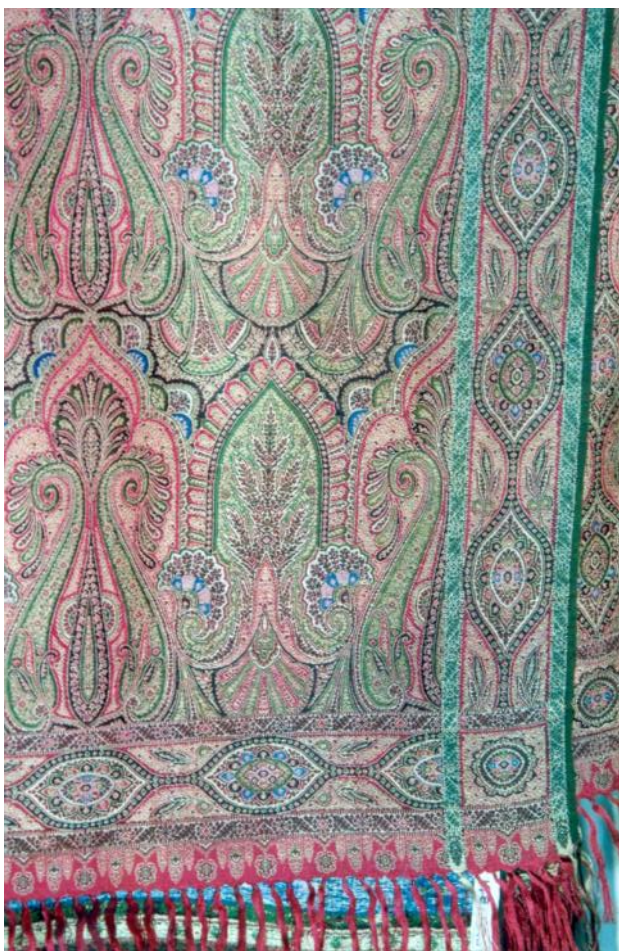
gowns that were inspired by a reawakened interest in the statuary of ancient Greece. To own a Kashmiri shawl was therefore, highly desirable, and with top quality shawls costing the equivalent of a small house, only the very wealthy could afford these exquisite textiles. But what people in the upper levels of society had, the rest wanted, and manufacturers quickly spotted a niche in the market. To meet the rapidly rising demand at the end of the 18th century, European weaving centres were soon copying Indian shawls, undercutting the



Exhibition at Castle Museum Norwich 1995.
19th century shawls from the Museum's collection.

Indian manufacturers' prices and fiercely competing to sell to the affluent middle classes.

There was a problem for the European manufacturers; to match the softness of Kashmiri shawls using local wools was not always successful. It was here in Norwich that an ideal cloth was made, one which was as high-quality as cashmere. Norwich had been famous for cloth-making since medieval times, and during the 16th century this high-quality cloth had been introduced, bringing great prosperity to the city during the 17th century and into the 18th century. Known as *Half Silk* it was woven with a fine worsted weft over a silk warp, giving it the warmth, lightness of weight and soft draping quality that was a near match to an Indian shawl. This gave Norwich a head start, and at the end of the 18th century thousands of shawls were being made in the city. Many of the present day fine houses in Norwich were 18th century manufactories, where Master Weavers lived and conducted their businesses, at times employing up to 900 outreach weavers. These skilled weavers made a large variety of cloths, but the specialist shawl weavers earned the highest rates. They worked in their own homes, receiving from and returning the work in hand to the Master Weaver.



Jacquard woven silk shawl 1850s.
Made by Clabburn Sons & Crisp, Norwich.

At the end of the 18th century Indian designs were *embroidered* into the fabric, which was time consuming; soon however, patterns were being woven into the cloth on *drawlooms*. Called *fillover shawls*, these pieces were worked from a pattern drawn on graph paper. The weaver called out a sequence of numbers to a *drawboy*, who pulled a complex arrangement of cords, altering the shed of the warp for the shuttle to cross over. Shot by

'by the 1860s skirt circumferences reached their widest, and the long shawl... once again became fashionable.'

shot the pattern was gradually built into the weave. On the back, long *floats* of yarn built up, which were then cropped. These pieces of yarn were called *shoddy*, and if they were of good quality, would be re-spun; if not so good, they were used to stuff soft furnishings. From the 1830s shawls were block-printed for summer wear; the designs sometimes hatched into fine lines, giving a woven appearance. Later, in the 1860s, elaborate designs were printed on fine Norwich silk gauze, called *leno*. From the 1820s, the master weavers of Norwich appear to have developed their own style of design and colouring, with the square *fillover* and *turnover* shawls being some of the most beautiful in colour and design on the market, until French designs became fashionable for the large woven shawls of the 1850s.

The motif used most widely in shawls, now known to us generally as the *paisley* design, was a variation of the Indian motif known as the *boteh*, or flower. It became well known as a result of the cloth industry in Paisley, Scotland, which gradually flooded the market with cheaper mass-produced shawls. During the 19th century, despite cut-throat competition, price undercutting, and the mass production by rivals, Norwich successfully continued to make high quality shawls that appealed to an elite and discerning clientele.

In literature of the time, there are many references to the status that the ownership of a fine shawl bestowed on a lady; her taste and the style with which she wore it were noted. Classes were even held to teach a lady how a shawl should be worn. Taking their cue from the Queen, women could portray a genteel, demure and submissive character with a carefully arranged shawl clutched to the bosom.

Whereas, at the beginning of the 19th century, long shawls, in imitation of the Indian shawls, were fashionable, as skirt widths increased from the 1820s, square shawls became the favoured style. These included the delightful *turnover* shawl, made with a plain centre of cloth to which

‘the crinoline of the 1850s and 1860s was replaced by the bustle, and a shawl was no longer particularly elegant when draped over this hump at a lady’s back.’

patterned borders of different widths were sewn. When folded into an uneven triangle, the designs on the borders would fall correctly into place, displaying the shawl to the wearer’s advantage. However, by the 1860s skirt circumferences reached their widest, and with the long shawl, measuring at times, four metres in length, once again became fashionable.

By now the weaving industry was rapidly changing. Norwich manufacturers’ attempts to introduce the Jacquard loom in the late 1820s were met with vehement opposition from weavers, who saw the new mechanism as a threat to their traditional way of working and to their community life. But the old ways couldn’t last; achieving the intricate designs for the huge, all silk fashionable shawls of the 1860s required a more complex system. The Jacquard mechanism, with its punched cards suspended above the loom, provided this system. However, these looms could no longer be accommodated in small homes; the factory system had arrived. When comparing the earlier drawloom woven shawls with those woven on the Jacquard loom, it appears that despite the latter’s complex design, the best craftsman-weavers no longer had the same artistic control of colour and design they enjoyed when working with the drawloom and drawboys. This suggests why the earlier shawls are so distinctive.

By the 1870s wearing shawls was in decline. Mass production meant that a lady could be disturbed to find her cook wearing a similar shawl to her own, thereby destroying the exclusivity of the shawls and challenging the status of wealth. Also the crinoline of the 1850s and 1860s was replaced by the bustle, and a shawl was no longer particularly elegant when draped over this hump at a lady’s back. Equally important was the beginning of more freedom for women in the 1870s. Many girls’ schools were founded and sport was energetically played by young women, albeit in bustle and corsets. Rushing up and down tennis courts was quite a change from the demure lady of twenty years previously.

So what do you do with an old and once valuable shawl? Many were kept as family heirlooms; while others were cut up and made into jackets, dresses, dressing gowns, bed coverings, piano, table and sofa throws and curtains, to name a few. Pamela Clabburn, who made the shawls a special study, was once disgusted to find a valuable

Norwich shawl lining its owner’s dog basket! Research continues into the manufacturers, weavers, dyers and printers who made the shawls. Often members of the public recall a forebear who worked in the industry. Such information is greatly valued because our knowledge of many of the practices used for making the shawls died with the makers.

When looking at the old shawls, the expertise and craftsmanship of the old weavers and printers continues to amaze; something of the shawls’ status still clings to them. Carrow House keeps the Norfolk Museum Service’s collection of Norwich shawls, which can be visited by appointment. And they would be delighted if anyone wishes to donate a treasure to add to it!

Helen Hoyte



Model (above) wears a silk Jacquard woven shawl of 1866. (Below) turnover silk Jacquard woven borders, 1850s. Both shawls made by Clabburn Sons & Crisp, Norwich.



FOUR PART DRESS CIRCA 1868



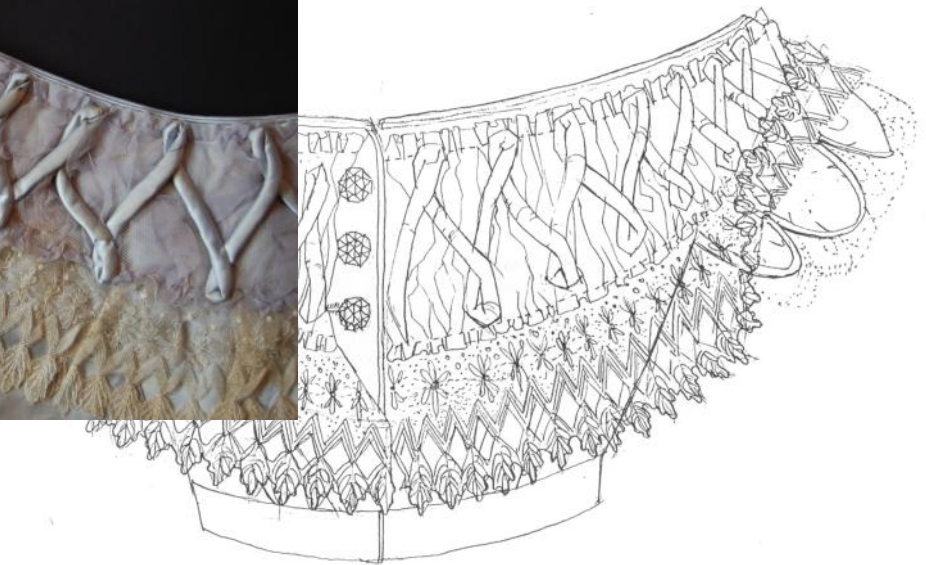
A very full skirt, flat at the waist front and pleated at the sides, with cartridge pleating at the back waist with a slight train and watch pocket.

The evening bodice has a wide oval neck, short sleeves and is trimmed with two kinds of ecru lace, satin piping and rouleaux, blue silk chiffon, red velvet ribbon and glass beads.

A pleated panel and long sash at the waistband is trimmed with silk braid and tassels.

NWHCM : 1972.665.1

These line drawings display Marjorie Budd's great skill at interpreting and depicting Victorian dress.



COLOUR IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Colour was always the object of research in textile printing circles. It had everything to do with profit, for if the colour of a garment was ugly or disappeared, it was a failure. Nevertheless, innovations in colour ensured that whoever reached the market first was likely to remain in business.

Prior to 1856 cloth was dyed and printed using natural resources that had been tested over many generations. The cheaper and more plentiful vegetable dyes produced red, blue, yellow, brown and black hues; red from the madder root, others from leaves, flowers, berries and bark. The more expensive and exclusive dyes came from insects, eg molluscs and beetles. Cochineal from beetles produced a crimson red while Royal or Tyrian purple, the colour of extreme wealth and royalty, was produced from the glandular mucus of snails! Only the Emperor and his household wore purple in Imperial Rome.

Natural dyes had their limitations. The range of colours was restricted, and the dyes were not *fast*. Dyes were considered 'powerful' if they did not fade after a few weeks of washing, wear and tear and exposure to light. Madder, though expensive, was good in the laundry and versatile in the wide range of colours it produced - from rusty reds through to tan and dark brown to lilac, purple, grey and black. Brazilwood colours were *fugitive*, sensitive to air, light, laundering, acids and even handling.



Line drawing by Marjorie Budd of a checked blue and white silk wedding dress c. 1862-4.

The skirt has large full pleats at the side and is fully gathered at the back with a flat front. A tight-fitting, high round-necked jacket has a central panel with 11 buttons and shaped "waisted" panels down the back and sides. Turned back cuffs finish the long curved tight-fitting sleeves.

The cuff edge and jacket bottom is decorated with braid woven with a rosebud design and with a scalloped blue silk fringe.

NWHCM : 1980.419.1



Scientific experimentation in the mid-19th century was about to change all this. A huge problem facing the British Empire was malaria, and quinine, extracted from the bark of a South American tree, was its best treatment. William Perkin, an 18 year old student at the Royal College of Chemistry, experimented in his spare time, devoting his evenings to private investigations in a makeshift laboratory in London's East End. He experimented on the synthesis of quinine from an alkali called aniline that was found in coal tar. His dabbling was not successful, the end result being a black residue. Not to be daunted and perhaps having the enquiring mind of a young man, he made a solution in alcohol, producing a liquid of a mauve colour.

The colour was unusual and it was able to stain cloth. He took out a patent and initially contacted Pullar's dye works in Perth, Scotland, where production was started on what was to become mauveine. Coal tar, available in large quantities, was in cheap supply, but would there be a demand for this new product? Fortunately for Perkin, the influential French Court liked the colour, and 'fashion turned mauve overnight'. Queen Victoria gave her approval when she wore mauve to the 1862 Great Exhibition.

Perkin was the founder of the synthetic aniline dye industry that increased the range of colours of a high intensity and brilliance and at a cheap cost. The industry grew rapidly as new aniline-based dyes were discovered in the 1850s and 1860s and the colour of clothing became more varied and more intense. By 1868 red madder was synthesised and the old madder trade collapsed.

Maggie Johnson



'Going-away' dress in jade and black check c. 1873-5.
Line drawing by Marjorie Budd. Bodice (right) and sleeve detail (below).

NWHCM : 1960.134.1





THE CRINOLINE

Dresses with multiple flounces were very popular in the 1850s, sometimes with pieces of straw placed under each flounce as stiffening to fluff out the skirt. Bands of plaited straw or three to four rolls of horsehair could also be inserted at the hem; although how the dress would be cleaned is a mystery! Can you imagine having to take out the straw to clean the dress, before putting it back in to wear? No doubt that's what ladies maids were for! As early as 1853 some dressmakers inserted whalebone hoops into the lining of skirts for stiffening.

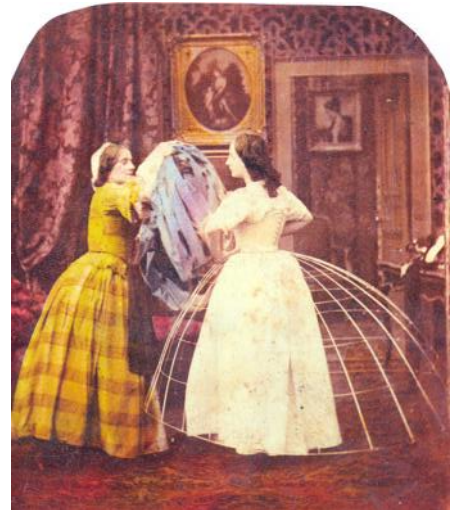
Line drawing (above) by Marjorie Budd. Mauve muslin dress c. 1851-5. The dress flounces are printed 'en disposition' with a zigzagged flower design. A very full skirt with two very deep flounces with piped headings. **NWHCM : 1967.8.4**

The metal cage crinoline, patented by RC Millet of Besançon in July 1856, was a skeleton petticoat, made of steel springs in hoops of increasing diameter from the waist to the ground, connected with tapes or curved steel ribs and fastened at the waist to tape. C. Amet took out a British patent (no. 1729), for this type of crinoline at the British Library on 22 July 1856. Thompson & Co. of Cheapside was the largest manufacturer of crinolines in London, and at the height of this fashion his factory employed hundreds of workers and produced up to 4,000 crinolines daily. The cage crinoline was a breakthrough, as it allowed the fuller dresses to be displayed without the excessive bulk of many petticoats; it also gave a fan shape contour, so much more in fashion and following the French trend. The crinoline enabled the wearer to walk with a graceful swinging movement, but if she wasn't careful, it might tilt up as she sat. It also allowed glimpses of ankles, unseen for the past 20 years and gave the illusion of a very slim waist without the need for tight corseting.

Example of wire hoop-crinoline (below bottom) "Plate from Frank Leslie's Monthly Magazine, May 1863." Steel and horsehair hoop, with horsehair flounce to the hem.



Stereoscopic views from the 1860s.



Another invention designed to increase the width of skirts was rubber tubes similar to inner tubes and inflated with air. In 1849 William Thomas and John Marsh took out a patent at the British Library for India rubber tubes threaded through hollow lengths of wood to create 'elastic' and 'flexible' hoops. Then, in 1856 J. Gedge took out his patent for crinolines made of an airtight fabric, with a small aperture for the introduction of the nozzle of a small bellows for inflating them and a larger hole for deflation; presumably useful for when a lady wanted to sit down. But would she have to carry the bellows around with her, or else not sit down when out shopping or making calls?





Horsehair bustle 1870-5 - four wired puffs at the top over two flounces with a petticoat of white cotton.

THE BUSTLE

The fashions of the 1870s and 1880s are seen by many dress historians as among the worst in history. The multiplicity of patterns, textures and colours in one dress often created a garish effect, and the sheer weight of the fabrics and trimmings encumbered women's movements greatly. But the most preposterous foundation garment of the period was the *Bustle*.

There were three phases of the silhouette in the seventies and into the eighties. Firstly, the round crinoline of the sixties was dispensed with, allowing the bulky skirts to be piled at the rear of the costume, supported by a sturdy substructure of starched cotton or heavily padded with down.

In the second phase, in the late seventies, a lessening of the high bustled contour was seen. The bodice was extended downward to the hips, creating the cuirass bodice (right). Here movement was constrained not by the weight of the fabrics, but by skirts becoming increasingly tubular, so much so that by 1878, the 'princess line' with the skirt drawn tightly around the legs and ending in a 'fishtail' train meant that walking was difficult.

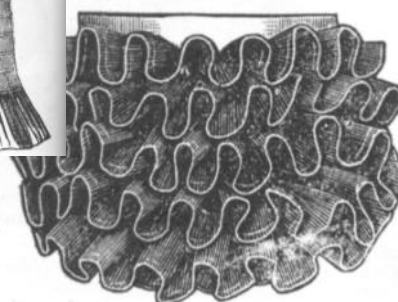
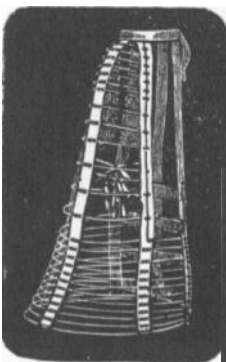


The illustration (left) advertises 'flat' patterns for sale for dressmakers for the Farondole and the Hongroise Dolman. The shape of these mantles not only illustrates the shelf like appearance of the skirt that they had to fit over, but also the rich ornamentation that was in fashion in 1888. (Weldons Ladies' Journal December 1888)

From this pencil thin silhouette, which relied on intricate draping and manipulation of fabrics to create interest, the fashion of the eighties returned to the bustled contour. Now as the tight low waistline curve of the princess line was retained, and the bustle, reinstated in a form even more exaggerated than before, the outward projection became a true horizontal extension. This shelf-like appearance to the centre back of the skirt reached its most extreme dimensions around 1885-8.

As is the way with fashion extremes, the bustle all but disappeared by the 1890s when the focus of costume switched from the skirt to the sleeves.

A range of garments on sale in Bloomingdale's Illustrated 1886 Catalogue, New York. From left to right:- bustle top and tape front with springs; Alaska down bustle without wires, one of the most durable bustles made; long bustle, made of jean with steels that can be taken out when washed; Tampico bustle, with 5 rows of box plaiting; plain and brocade fashionable silk suit of the season.



FROM HAND TO MACHINE- THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEWING MACHINE

Before the invention of the sewing machine, women and sometimes men, unless they could afford to pay someone else, spent many hours sewing clothes by hand for themselves and their families. Those who could afford to pay employed others to sew their clothes for them. When a pair of trousers could take as long as fifteen hours, and a dress or two-piece outfit much longer, the sewing machine can be viewed as one of the great inventions of the Industrial Revolution.

The timeline below follows the invention of the sewing machine through its many developments from the heavy industrial machines used to sew canvas and leather to the small, portable, computerised machines available today; and introducing along the way the many personalities involved in this most important boon to industry, the homemaker and the seamstress.

1790 - The first sewing machine was patented by the British Inventor Thomas Saint. His machine (right above) was designed to sew leather and canvas using a single thread and formed a chain stitch.

1846 - Elias Howe refined current developments and produced and patented a machine (right) U.S. Patent 4,750, that operated at 250 stitches a minute. His lockstitch mechanism out-stitched the output of five hand sewers. The machine contained three new essential features: a needle with the eye at the point; a shuttle operating beneath the cloth to form a lock stitch; and an automatic feed.

However, other entrepreneurs began manufacturing sewing machines and Howe was forced to defend his patent in a court case that lasted from 1849 to 1854. Isaac Singer had perfected a facsimile of Howe's machine and was selling it with the same lockstitch. Howe won the dispute and earned considerable royalties from Singer and other makers.

Some early machines were invented just for a particular industrial purpose, for example in **1854** the Buttonhole machine was invented!

1856 - New York Lawyer Edward Clarke helped Isaac Singer sort out his problems with other sewing machine inventors. A number of companies formed the Sewing Machine Combination: Howe, the Singer, Wheeler & Wilson and the Baker companies then pooled their patents.

The first sewing machines were expensive, so to enable people to buy their own, Singer started the Hire Purchase scheme in **1856**.

1857 - Willcox and Gibbs developed light weight machines especially for use in the home.

1857 - The thread cutter is included on some machines.

1858 - Singer produced their first domestic machine. Recognising the importance of advertising, Singer used pretty girls to demonstrate his machines. He enjoyed advertising his own machines and often hired theatres or halls for the purpose. He also started up a network of shops to help customers.

1860 - Singer had 500,000 machines in use in America costing between £4 and £21.

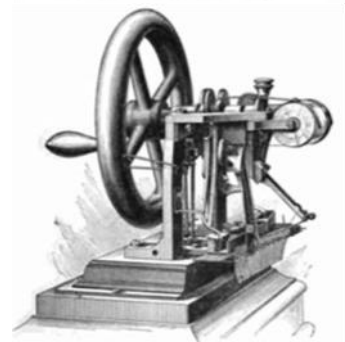
1861 - Reverse stitch included on sewing machines.

1862 - First bobbin winder added.



Thomas Saint and his machine above

Elias Howe and his machine below.



Victorian treadle machine in the home



1863 - Ebenezer Butterick (right) founded the Butterick Pattern Company in response to the increase in sales of sewing machines for home sewing.

At first he sold patterns for boy's and men's clothing, but by **1866** the business had expanded to include patterns for dresses and women's clothes.

Eventually, women's patterns would be offered in 13 sizes for coats, dresses and blouses and 5 sizes for skirts.

1865 - Machines were supplied with a variety of attachments. All of which helped with Victorian Fashion! Machines were often decorated to make them suitable for the home.

1867 - English Woman's Domestic Magazine wrote a series of 'Which' type reports on Sewing Machines. Singer opened his Clydebank factory in Scotland, whilst the centre of the English sewing machine industry was in Birmingham.

1871 - First electric machine!

1872 - The take up lever was added so that every stitch was tightened to the same degree.

1877 - The Sewing Machine Combination's last patent expired which enabled other machine companies to come onto the market.

The treadle machine became more popular than the hand machine.

1879 - Singer's Improved family machine used a round bobbin. This design is still used today.

1882 - Zig zag stitch was invented by John Kayse; the forerunner of swing needle machines.

1889 - Singer powered a domestic machine with an electric motor. (Not fully developed until electricity became more widely available in the home in the 1920's.)

1890 - Sewing machines introduced into schools in the hope that pupils would become the machine users of the future.

Singer sales passed the 9 million mark, many machines being sold by mail order.

1893 - Frederich Gegauf of Steckbern, Switzerland (founder of the Bernina Company) designed a hem stitching machine capable of 1000 stitches per minute.

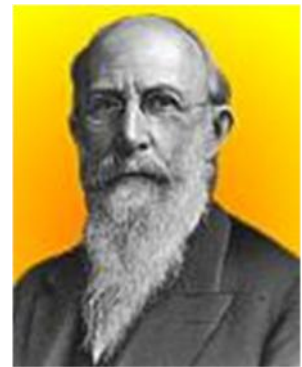
20th Century – A wide variety of machines available for the Textile Industry and the home dressmaker.

1900's - Sewing Machines used in Tailoring

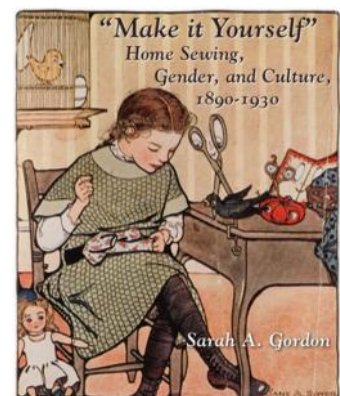
1920's - Electrical machines more common in the home.

1980's - Computer Controlled Machines.

Joy Evitt



Singer treadle (above) - with drawers for equipment etc. Furniture for the home.



Magazines encouraged home sewing across the generations - throughout both World Wars.



THE BIRTH OF AESTHETIC DRESS IN ENGLAND

"Fashion," commented Oscar Wilde, "is usually a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months." As occasional publicist for a loosely linked group of painters and poets known as the Aesthetic School, Wilde, in both his dress and manner, epitomized the Aesthetes' revolt against the dominant trends of the time. Emerging around 1880, the group professed a reverence for the poetry and art of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The original members of this group were William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. They rejected the standards of perfection established by the Italian Renaissance artist Raphael, as well as the Academy system that perpetuated his values. They instead looked back to the artists who had practised before Raphael's time. Included on their list of "Immortals" were Dante, Boccaccio, Ghiberti, Fra Angelico and Bellini. The romantic and medievalised work of the Pre-Raphaelites appealed to other artists of the period. William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones were introduced to the group by John Ruskin. Both men detested the industrialism and materialism of their own time and along with Ruskin, Wilde, James McNeill Whistler and Matthew Arnold, spearheaded the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts Movement of the later nineteenth century.

Aesthetic artists, finding them artificial and ugly, deplored the corsets, crinolines and bustles that distorted the female figure. On the contrary, the fashions of their "aesthetic" lady reflected those of the Medieval period with its loosely but carefully-fitted garments that indicated and enhanced the shape of the body without corseting or padding. The simple dress of the "aesthetic" lady with its softly flowing drapery in muted earth tones contrasted sharply with the garishly coloured and patterned cuirass-like bodice and bustle-extended skirt of the contemporary "fashionable" lady. For them the Aesthete dress was a means of self-expression. It allowed for an artistic approach to line, form, and colour; characterized by its smooth flowing line and soft colours, it was also a protest against all that was ugly and constricting in Victorian society.

The most vocal female proponent of dress reform based on Aesthetic or "artistic" dress was Eliza Haweis. Although she was the wife of the Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis, she was a very atypical Victorian clergyman's wife. She was a competent painter who regularly exhibited work at the Royal Academy. She also advocated the use of whatever means women used to make themselves attractive - except for the corset, which she called "a detestable invention." In 1878, Haweis published *The Art of Beauty*, followed in 1879 by *The Art of Dress*. In these books, she set forth guidelines for a conjunction of "art," "health" and "beauty" with the "natural" body. Haweis wrote that "three general rules must be observed in all good dress - that it shall not contradict the natural lines of the body; that the proportions of dress shall obey the proportions of the body; that the dress shall reasonably express the character of the wearer." She describes the silhouette of an Aesthetic woman thus:

The waist of a "Pre-Raphaelite" is rather short, where a waist ought to be, in fact, between the hips and the last rib. Her skirt is cut full or scanty, as she chooses, but is never tied to her legs with strings and elastics.... Her sleeves are cut extra-ordinarily high on the shoulder, sometimes a little full to fit the shoulder-bone for it is *de rigueur* that a "Pre-Raphaelite" should be capable of moving her arms when dressed as freely as when undressed.

Colours were also an important part of Aesthetic dress. They were muted and used in combinations that produced what fashion journalists referred to as a "delightful arrangement of colour... on tint passing through all its shades." As it happened, they were also the colours advocated by John Ruskin: the



Grey/blue silk and velvet day dress made in Norwich by Caley, c. 1881-2. Photographs of outside and inside of skirt back. **NWHCM : 1998.529.1** Line drawings by Marjorie Budd.

“indescribable tints” of deep red, soft bluish green, greenish brown, dull orange and amber. To others, though, the colours were the “greenery-gallery, Grosvenor Gallery” colours as described in the satirical play, *Patience*, by W. S. Gilbert, first performed in 1881, and as such not thought particularly attractive.

Like Haweis, other Aesthetic women seen around London were also artists. Among them was Marie Spartali, who deliberately sought to create an image for herself totally removed from the currently fashionable mode. Spartali’s personal style of dress was based on Aesthetic principles that rejected the tight corseting, distended bustle and garishly coloured fabrics of fashionable dress. However, it was not only the dress that identified the Aesthete. Some women consciously adopted the overall look and attitude of the Pre-Raphaelite ideal: slender, pale and “languid.” A quote from a correspondent writing in the London publication, *The Queen*, describes them thus:

They moved about with a gliding step; when they sat down they assumed poses whose stillness suggested that thus they had sat for a hundred years, and thus they meant to sit for another century. In the expression and bearing of all these women was a lack of *abandon* and freshness; there was a self-consciousness and a melancholy.

This rather deprecating remark was by a man who was used to seeing women sitting as though they had a steel rod pinned to the back of their dress, and so a woman who was not confined in a corset and dragging along voluminous skirts must have, indeed, presented a challenge to the accepted roles of women in society.

Fashion, by its very nature, was closely associated with the upper classes of society, and from its inception, reflected a desire to demonstrate affluence, personal distinction or sexual attraction. Beginning in the late 14th Century, clothing of the upper classes reflected not only these qualities, but also became a mode of competing for status. During this period, with its transition from a feudal aristocratic society to one centred on capitalism and the emerging middle class, the function of a woman’s dress was to demonstrate her role as the ornament of an affluent household. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the acquisition of goods and services became much easier. Women had access to labour-saving devices such as the sewing machine, introduced in the 1850s. Paper patterns, aniline dyes and Jacquard woven fabrics and trims were readily available and relatively inexpensive. Seamstresses and dressmakers could be hired cheaply. It became the woman’s duty to advertise to the world the abilities of the man as provider, showing that he was able to supply his household with any comforts and goods available. A woman’s clothing, in turn, came to express not only the importance of this socioeconomic development, but also the separate spheres of men and women - the public for men and the private for women.

Therefore, Aesthetic dress became associated with more than just artistic line, form and colour. Since the 1850s women were moving out of the private sphere in record numbers. Increased wealth among the middle class, a consequence of industrialization, gave many women the opportunity to challenge the accepted constructions of femininity and masculinity. English dress reformers, like their American counterparts, were reacting to fashions that were complicated and luxurious, fashions that indicated that “the woman is still, in theory, the economic dependent of the man, - that perhaps in a highly idealized sense, she still is the man’s chattel.” While dress reform was a coherent response to “modern” concerns about health, aesthetics and morality, it was also closely associated with the emerging self-awareness of women and their need to re-define their role in society. As such, this movement was only moderately successful in liberating women from the confines of Victorian fashion. For the most part, women continued to wear restrictive clothing well into the next century.

Kitty Temperley

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Aesthetic dress was loose-fitting and comfortable. In *The Well Dressed Woman* by Helen Gilbert Ecob, p 201.

PAMELA CLABBURN, MBE

There is an inscription in Blythburgh Church that seems perfect for Pamela.

'What we bury in the grave is but an earthly clothing,
what we love, lives on.'

We all have much to thank her for.

On the 2nd July, at Hethersett Hall Care Home, Norwich, Pamela Clabburn died aged 96. Many recent members may not know that Pamela was the founder of the Costume & Textile Association, and until quite recently took a lively interest in its activities. The many people who have been informed, encouraged and inspired by Pamela will mourn her passing, and Norfolk Museums owes her a great debt for the richness of their present costume and textile collection.

After service as an Army nurse for the whole of WW2, Pamela worked in London's rag-trade for a while, before returning to her native Norfolk. In 1965 she was invited to apply for the post of Assistant Curator of Social History at Strangers' Hall. Apart from a thorough knowledge of dressmaking and always a realist, Pamela believed she had few qualifications for the job. However, after the first interview, and despite being advised that she should have made a better presentation of herself, she was told she had the job.

Until she left Strangers' Hall in 1974, Pamela used her considerable skills to organize the existing collection, adding many items to it along the way. She had an endearing way of innocently asking the owner of an interesting article of textile or clothing if they had any plans for it, then quickly indicating that if not, the Museum would just love to have it. Few could refuse her, and over the years, responding to her interest, people donated many of the historic costumes, shawls, samplers, quilts, embroideries and accessories that are the foundation of today's wonderful collection at Carrow House. Also, during her time, firstly as Assistant Curator, then as Curator, she developed many of the techniques now in use for the conservation of fabrics. In addition, her passionate interest in social history and an abiding belief that costumes and textiles were the keys to understanding the past led Pamela to devote much of her energy to research and writing on many associated subjects.

After Pamela retired from Strangers' Hall, she was invited by the National Trust to set up a textile conservation department at Blickling Hall for the Eastern Region. At first her equipment was a table and a standard lamp, but, with a band of willing volunteers and her usual energy and ability to both motivate and innovate, over the next ten years many valuable textiles from the great houses of East Anglia were conserved



under her supervision. One example was an early 19th century bed that was draped in fragile gauze nets and lined with satin. Every piece of fabric was carefully removed, its position meticulously recorded for reassembling, and cleaned. The heavy yards of cotton net were proving a problem; until Pamela met a North Norfolk fisherman who was well used to mending his nets. She persuaded him to apply his skills to the bed hangings!

During her professional life, Pamela earned a high reputation for the quality of her teaching and lecturing, both locally and nationally. She had a regular slot on the Anglia TV program, 'Bygones', and wrote articles for newspapers and magazines on the museum's collection. With her sense of humour and innate skill of expressing herself, she could make any subject come to life. Pamela thrived on research, and as her knowledge grew she published her findings, including several books on specialist subjects for Shire Publications. In *The National Trust Book of Furnishing Textiles*, Pamela wrote of her methods for conservation. Also, the beautifully illustrated *Needleworker's Dictionary* is a must have for those who love the history of the craft, and is now a collector's item. Perhaps Pamela's most significant work grew out of her interest in 19th century Norwich shawls. Publication of *The Norwich Shawl* accompanied the museum's exhibition of shawls in 1995, which, with Pamela as consultant and ably organized by the museum's textile curator, Fiona Strodder, revived interest in the city's largely forgotten textile industry. It has become an invaluable reference book for students and enthusiasts of the shawls.

In 1989, finally retired, Pamela directed her energies into setting up the C&TA. For many years she had had the idea for a new Costume Museum and Textile Study Centre for Norwich. Her aim was to develop an organization that would provide support for the Norfolk Museum Service, raise public awareness of its valuable collection, and lobby for its display. Thanks to Pamela's wide circle of friends and her professional and museum connections, the membership quickly grew. It was clear that many people liked the idea! Under her guidance, popular events were staged, including

fashion shows, concerts, talks, competitions, visits to other textiles collections and the publication of a regular newsletter.

Always a lady who knew her own mind, Pamela had the knack of going to the heart of a matter quickly and competently. She had a wry sense of humour, and there were a few who found her formidable - until they got to know her! Along with so many others, I greatly valued her friendship and her willing generosity to share her great knowledge. In 1999 she was awarded the Member of the British Empire for her services to the Museum Service and her conservation work. Typically, when the offer came for the award ceremony to be at Buckingham Palace with the Queen or at County Hall with the Lord Lieutenant

of Norfolk, she preferred her home ground and chose the latter.

One of her last public appearances was at the C&TA event, *Thé Dansant* at St. Andrew's Hall, where, elegant as always, and in the arms of her great friend, Tony Dalton, she happily danced to the saxophone. Until frailty overtook her, Pamela was often seen, ramrod straight and striding out with her trusty cane, on her way into the city to peer into book shops or to visit exhibitions. She was a compulsive buyer of books, and when she moved from a flat some years ago, she donated her large collection of specialist costume and textile books to the Museum Service. They, along with her research papers, now form the core of the invaluable resource at Carrow House.

Helen Hoyte

CAN YOU HELP—Not only is Pamela Clabburn remembered for her knowledge and teaching skills, but also for her delightful and often wry comments. If you can recall any personal encounters with her, will you please write them down. The C&TA would like to compile a book of recollections, with photos too, of a very special person who had such an important influence on many aspects of Norwich life. No matter how small your snippet, please send to Helen Hoyte, C&TA, c/o Shire Hall, Market Avenue, Norwich NR1 3JQ.

ANNOUNCING THE ANGELA HOUSTON CONSTRUCTED TEXTILE AWARD



Angela Houston served on the C&TA Committee for many years. She was a very able secretary, a stalwart member of the editorial team, and was also active in planning the Wolterton Hall Textile Fairs, as well as many other memorable events. Angela was unfailingly generous and the first to offer help when needed. Her constructive contributions to the development of the Costume and Textile Association were invaluable. Her inspiring presence and infectious enthusiasm for introducing new and interesting ideas for events is still greatly missed by those who knew her well. After her death in December 2005, the C&TA decided to make a group quilt that would be raffled, with the proceeds financing, on the suggestion of her daughter, Sarah, a textile orientated memorial to her mother.

The Angela Houston Constructed Textile Award will be offered to students in Norfolk schools and colleges studying accredited A-Level and Diploma level courses in textiles and on art and fashion courses with a strong textile component. It is intended that the award will enable recipients to specifically explore ideas and develop a constructed textile project.

Offered for one year only, five awards of up to £125 each will go to selected individuals based on the merits of the project, as described in a 300 word statement that must be submitted as part of the application.

Application forms will be available from September 27th at Norfolk schools and colleges offering the relevant courses, and will also be available for download from the C&TA website at www.ctacostume.org.uk/award. Closing date for submission will be 3 December 2010.

Recipients will be required to make a short presentation of their project ideas at the C&TA AGM on **14 May 2011**. The finished projects will then be shown at the **2012 AGM**, when an additional award of £200 will be awarded to one student, based on criteria met for "outstanding work."

A VERY ACTIVE ASSOCIATION

Recently I got the chance to see a list of C&TA events during the last five years. I was stunned to see just how many there have been! Only organizers of events - and I'm a past one - can have any idea of the time, energy, and yes, money, indeed the whole commitment that a Committee puts into these events. So, here and now - on members' behalf - I would like to say an enormous THANK YOU to our Committee for having done such a wonderful job.

There have been many events over the years with inviting titles, like 'Weddings through the Ages', 'Marriage à la Mode', and 'Come to the Ball', where lovely costumes have been displayed. Some have been in conjunction with the WI, and very popular they were too.

One early highlight, was an evening reception at City Hall, by kind permission of the Lord Mayor of Norwich, who, happily for us, was interested in the old textile industry. His Lady Mayoress, Jeanne Southgate, is now Secretary of the C&TA, and has been closely involved with all the activities and continues to be so.



For many people the major textile event of 2007 was a three-day textile trail called 'Walk the Warp'. Over the August Bank Holiday eleven different venues, along a selected route through the city, displayed costumes, shawls, family history, mystery plays, musicians and dancers. Five guilds were involved and independent craftsmen showed their skills. Vivienne Weeks, Jeanne Southgate and Lesley Hawes were the prime organisers - and I'm surprised it didn't kill them! The trail was a resounding success, and many people commented that they 'hadn't realized what a "medieval" city Norwich is until they did the walk'.

Vivienne Weeks took over as Chair in 2008, and along with her many other duties, she planned and organised 'Strictly Vintage' at St Andrews Hall, a nostalgic afternoon, 'The Dansant'. While models displayed 160 costumes, we tucked into tea, ate dainties, and danced to the saxophone. Later in the year an evening event, 'The Art of Fashion', was held at the Castle Museum. There, on a catwalk, the 19th century shawls were modelled, some displayed over period costume, others against black outfits. Then after an interval, Jarrold's fashion department showed their latest

day, evening and children's wear. Again, the most tremendous amount of organising and work by Vivienne and members of the Committee made it a most successful evening; though not for me. Tiresomely, that evening I broke my shoulder on the way to the Castle, and, although I attended, Jean Smith, at such very short notice, competently took over my role as commentator of the shawl parade.

So, we come to the committee's next marathon in 2009. In celebration of twenty years of the C&TA commitment to educating the public about costume and textiles, 'Fashion Revealed' was held. Sixteen weeks of rolling exhibitions were staged in the Oliver Messel Room at the Assembly House in Norwich, featuring underwear, children's clothes, wedding dresses, Victorian and Edwardian fashions, hats, shoes, travel and leisure wear, and glamorous evening wear. Beautifully arranged and packed with interest and information, the exhibitions attracted many citizens, as well as many visitors to the city. There were, in addition, associated talks to highlight the themes. A great deal of energy was required to stage and dismantle each show - not to mention the stewarding of the exhibitions - all of which took tremendous commitment. I hope the knowledge and interest that these events in the Assembly House generated, and which raised the profile of the C&TA in the city, may be some compensation for all the hard work by those involved.

Another notable event held that year was 'East Meets West', an evening at Country & Eastern, where the 19th century Norwich shawls were displayed and modelled. These, along with magnificent old Indian shawls from the owners', Philip and Jean Millward, collection, made for an unforgettable evening. The evening was a sell-out and few will forget the model wearing a 1860s gown with crinoline - correctly displaying the magnificent shawl, in the Danish Royal colours, which is a replica of the shawl presented by the city to Princess Alexandra on her marriage to the Prince of Wales in 1863. There have been countless other events; fairs, exhibitions, concerts, talks, and visits to the V&A. Nor must the newsletter be forgotten. We members have been enormously lucky to have had such an active and energetic Committee, and I for one am very grateful for all they have done.

Helen Hoyte, Vice President, C&TA

C & T A EVENTS PROGRAMME 2010



16 October Coach trip to V&A London - Serge Diaghilev and the Golden Age of the Ballets Russes, 1909 - 1929 £22.50. **Cost of admission to exhibition not included.**

'This major retrospective will examine the origins, development and long term influence of the Ballets Russes, to celebrate their first seasons in Europe a hundred years ago. Diaghilev's extraordinary company, which survived a twenty-year rollercoaster of phenomenal successes and crippling problems, revolutionised ballet. As importantly, Diaghilev's use of avant-garde composers, such as Stravinsky and designers such as Bakst, Goncharova, Picasso and Matisse, made a major contribution to the introduction of Modernism.' V&A website

C&TA at Carrow House, are a series of mornings that provide an opportunity for our members to share their expertise and socialise. This is C&TA led and is in addition to the programme put on by the Museum's Service. Members £5, non-members £6.

17 September - Quilts - Jill Sharpe, hand and machine quilter, designer, teacher and exhibiter.

22 October - Isobel Auker talk on what influences her wool and felt work.

21 November - Vintage Fair, St Andrews Halls, Norwich - 10.00am-4.00pm - £1 members, £2 non-members - payment on the door.

27 November - Talk on Japanese Textiles by Jenny Dobson - Town Close Auditorium 2.00pm, £7 members, £8 non-members.

C & T A EVENTS PROGRAMME 2011

8 January - 'Indulge and Inform'

Venue: 47 St Giles Street, Norwich NR2 1JR - 2.00-4.00 pm, members £6.00, non-members £7.00.

Dig out those family photographs and enjoy afternoon tea. The Carrow House Costume & Textile Study Centre has a collection of photographs that are used to date costumes and photographs brought in by the general public. They are always looking for good quality images of dress that can be accurately dated, to add to their reference collection. We invite you to bring along your photos which we would copy. The resulting image would then be kept by Carrow for future researchers. Images from the 1920s onwards would be particularly welcome. Below is an example of a photograph and supporting notes.



Date:	circa 1919 the boy was born in December 1916.
Status:	Family group in their best clothing Man on left is a guard on the GW railways Both women are housewives Man back right is a draughtsman
Reason for taking photograph:	unknown
Size of original :	15½cms x 10 cms
Studio/town:	likelihood – Worcester

18 February - 'Discovering Carrow House'

Venue - Carrow House Costume & Textile Study Centre, King Street, Norwich, 10.00am — 12 noon, new members free, existing members £5.00. A visit with coffee and biscuits to Carrow House for a tour of the Study Centre. Open to all members.

26 February - Spring coach trip to the Victoria & Albert Museum,

£23.00. Cost of admission to the exhibition is not included. Members will need to book their own timed tickets .

Imperial Chinese Robes from the Forbidden City

'This exhibition will show the sumptuous robes and accessories worn by the emperors and empresses of the Qing Dynasty, the last ruling dynasty of China (1644-1911). These costumes are on display for the first time in Europe and the exhibition is part of an exchange between the V&A and the Palace Museum in Beijing. Official, festive and travelling dress for rituals, celebrations, weddings and royal visits will be on show as well as beautifully patterned fabrics created for the fashion-conscious court ladies.'

V&A website



14 May - AGM - 2.00 pm Town Close Auditorium, Norwich Castle, followed by

'Couture Beading & Embellishment' - an illustrated talk on techniques of wired and Tambour beading. 2.45 pm - £5.00 members, £6.00 non-members.

Events booking form enclosed, also available on www.ctacostume.org.uk.

FURTHER C&TA EVENTS 2011 - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Details to be announced in Noticeboard early 2011.

5-18 March - 'Dressing the Decades - Dragon Hall, King Street, Norwich. An exhibition of twentieth century clothing featuring an outfit for each decade.

6 April - Evening event - details to follow.

16 July - 'The Glory of Ecclesiastical Textiles' talk by Nicholas Groves - an introduction to an Ecclesiastical Trail of Norfolk Churches to be held in August.

August - self guided Ecclesiastical Trail.

15 October - 'Discovering Norfolk Textiles' - a coach journey to interesting textile centres in Norfolk.

November - Vintage Fair

12 November - Talk on Multicultural Textiles from around the World

3 December - 'Modern Christmas Crafts Workshop' - a chance to have a go at creating your own versions of novelty Christmas items for decoration or presents.

NOTICES / NEWS

Examiner of C&TA Accounts We are grateful to Tony Gibbs, who has for many years examined the C&TA accounts in preparation for their presentation at the AGM. He has stepped down and we are looking for a replacement. The accounts are no more than a record of money in and money out. The examination entails taking a look at the paper records; they are well ordered and maintained. The financial year runs from 1 March to 28 February and the AGM is normally held during May. If you are interested in helping us out with this task, please contact Maggie Johnson on 01603 505666 or mstb.johnson@btinternet.com.

Use of members' email addresses The Committee has been reviewing its communications with members. We mail out twice a year - Miscellany in the autumn, Noticeboard in the Spring and our website is kept up-to-date with current news and programmes. We have started building a list of email addresses from membership details and will use this to inform you of short notice events. If you have not notified us of your email address in the past and would like to be included, or if you do not want to receive information in this way, please let us know via ctacostume@gmail.com.

Calling all knitters We are looking into the possibility of developing small item knitting kits based on vintage patterns, as a potential fundraising project. If you are a keen knitter and would like to try out a prototype or if you are able to donate spare good quality yarns, we would be interested to hear from you. Contact: Maggie Johnson on 01603 505666 or email mstb.johnson@btinternet.com.

New membership leaflet

The membership leaflet has been redesigned and reprinted. We have taken this opportunity to introduce a new C&TA logo and update the website.



Change of membership rates

The following revised membership rates were agreed at the AGM on 15 May 2010.

Individual	£18
Double	£26 2 people living at the same address
Family	£35 2 adults and 4 children (the children can include family and friends)
Under 25	£10
Overseas	£25