COSTUME & TEXTILE ASSOCIATION

MISCELLANY

A collection of articles on subjects relating to textiles and dress

2013

£3.00 where sold

TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY
Miscellany - Autumn 2013

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Textiles, the materials and techniques employed in their production, and the people who worked with them, are the subject of much research and discussion. However, there is less focus on the technology and equipment used in textile work, whether in the very personal environment of the home, in the din of factory production or in the relative quiet of the digital studio.

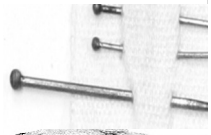
With many, many subjects to choose from, I have tried to assemble a selection that reflects the change of textile technology over time, its impact on both maker and society and, essentially, how textile production is at the heart of so much human experience.

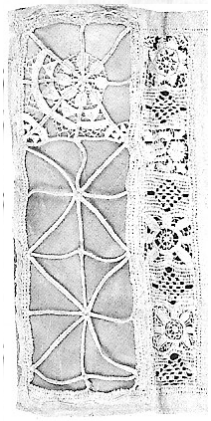
The central role played by textiles and their supporting technology is demonstrated by numerous references found throughout literature. Writers often use actions, materials and tools familiar in daily life as short cuts to a wider meaning. Complex issues of, for example, politics, religion, gender and personal relationships, are often expressed through textile vocabulary and imagery. The horror of the looms of the Valkyries contrasts with Helena's wistful memories of the shared working of a sampler, but both rely on direct knowledge of textile technology for their impact. Included in this Miscellany are just a few examples - copyright issues dictate that I have not ventured further than the mid-nineteenth century here - please let me have others!

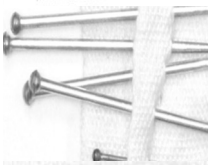
I would like to thank all of the contributors to this edition of Miscellany; their knowledge, and their ability to communicate it to others, has made the editing both a pleasure and a learning experience. They are all busy people who have spared the time to search out fascinating references and images. I hope you enjoy their articles as much as I have. Thanks are also due to Maggie Johnson for her skill in assembling all the content: Miscellany would not have its professional appearance without her.

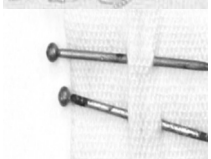
Beth Walsh

Cover - *blowbrain* by Leslie Sercombe









CHAIR'S LETTER

This edition of Miscellany is based on Textile Technology, aspects of which touch all our lives. I have always been interested in technology and I think you will all find this a fascinating read. Many thanks once again to Beth Walsh for being the Guest Editor, Maggie Johnson for her skills with the presentation and all those who have written articles.

We try to provide members with a varied and interesting programme but there are, as always, a few old favourites that we like to continue. For example, the New Members' Tea Party in February welcomed those who have joined us and explained our aims. A tour of the Study Centre was also available as part of their introduction, conducted by Ruth Battersby-Tooke.

A very successful event of special note must be the Shawl Spectacular staged in The Weston Room at the Cathedral. Organised by the C&TA with NUA (Norwich University of the Arts), some very important Norwich shawls from the 19th century were shown together with student scarves. We helped the students with the cost of the digital printing, the rolled hems and awarded three cash prizes. We must thank Helen Hoyte for her help and support throughout the planning and staging of this event as well as the students who helped to make it so special.

This year at the AGM we said good bye to David Mawson as President and thanked him for his contribution over 24 years and welcomed Vanessa Trevelyan as our new President. She has already attended a committee meeting and is keen to support us in our endeavours.

The History Wardrobe provided us with a very entertaining and interesting talk on Agatha Christie in June and they will be bringing their talk on Fashion and The Great War to us next year.

The C&TA continues to promote Costume and Textiles in Norwich and with the cutbacks in the Museum Service we hope we can help both financially and with volunteers. The generous bequest from Geoffrey Squires will enable us to promote contemporary textiles as well as help the Norwich Museums. We have been able, this year, to give a Bursary to a NUA Fashion student so that they could attend The Costume Symposium this July in Norwich. We are also supporting the Jacquard loom project at the Bridewell and linked to this there will be some special events for members.

Having lasted for 24 years, next year will be our 25th anniversary and we will be organising a number of special events as well as a competition that will encourage members, textile artists and students to submit work in three different categories. There will be a number of prizes and an exhibition in The Hostry at the Cathedral (see page 20). We also hope to organise a weekend trip to Bath to The Costume Museum. We hope that you will be able to help us celebrate 25 years of The Costume and Textile Association: do look out for events and activities that you can attend and take part in during the celebration. Throughout our busy anniversary year, we will be in need of helpers to steward events. If you are interested please contact Jenny Daniels at mandjdaniels@waitrose.com

During the year I have been very grateful for the help and support of all our Committee and members. With their wide variety of talents I feel that the association is in good hands. I would particularly like to thank Pauline White for all her hard work and support as well as the fantastic job she does with the website where you can always find a wide variety of information about the Association.

Thank you all for your continued support and do enjoy Miscellany.

Joy Evitt

A Forgotten Industry of Norfolk

Detail of 'and Eve span' from the Velislav Bible, c.1340

'… and Eve span' – so too did our medieval housewife. Being a 'multi-tasker', she clutched her distaff and spindle as she spun flax, hemp or wool as availability of a yarn or need demanded, as she walked to market, watched grazing livestock or took food to her husband as he worked in the fields.

Spinning was a wholly female occupation – married or single, she was a spinster. The 'ster' ending, especially in Norfolk, also denoted other feminine pursuits of the time such as 'brewster', bakestere', 'huckster' (a seller of ale, fish and bread) and 'webster'.[1] When, later, men took over as weavers they retained the term 'webster' and it became the usual name for a worsted weaver.

The distaff[2] – from the Old English *distoef* – *'flax staff'* – was a rod or stick with a cleft end on which the prepared fibre was placed to be drawn down by skilful fingers into a thread caused by the action of it being attached to a spindle, the drop spindle, with a weight, the spindle weight, known as a whorl or rock, which twisted to create the spun yarn.

Spinning was a three-fold operation:

1. Drawing out or 'drafting' of the fibres.
2. Twisting the prepared fibres, called 'rovings', into a continuous yarn by the use of the distaff and spindle.
3. Winding the yarn on to a reel, in East Anglia a 'blade' or 'yarn wyndle', a wooden implement resembling the spokes of a wheel.

Woman spinning on a great or walking wheel. Lutterell Psalter (British Library, Add. MS 42130, f.171) c. 1320 - 1340

'An unsociable invention that would keep a woman in her place in a hitherto unaccustomed manner'[3], the spinning wheel, introduced from the East in 1298 (dates as specific as this can always be questioned!) lacked the mobility allowed by the distaff and spindle and thus encouraged their use for many more years.

Weaving was another female craft and, like spinning, has a long history. Used for weaving at least since Greek and Roman times, there were two versions of the early, vertical loom: the warp-weighted loom and the two-beam loom. Both successfully stretched the vertical warp threads through which the horizontal threads, the wefts, were interlaced to complete the woven fabric. These looms required little capital outlay and were used to create plain weaves. Many loom weights have been discovered by archaeological digs.

Some peasant workers, unable to access even the simplest, though more expensive, treadle looms when they were introduced in the 11th century, continued to use the warp-weighted or two-beam looms on which it was convenient to produce short lengths of cloth. The treadle loom speeded production and enabled the making of longer pieces of cloth in double or single widths and twills to make zigzag, chevron, diamond and many other patterns. The smoothness and hardness of the yarn make patterns woven in linen show clearly and effectively. On the later draw-loom, the weaver could make plain and patterned cloth including damasks.

Medieval north-east Norfolk became famous for its textile production using both vegetable (flax and hemp) and animal fibres, the most notable being aylsham [sic] linen (from flax) and its companion, worsted (wool from sheep). Until competition from the Continent caused its decline, 'the esteem of aylsham'[4] linen declared its importance. Known as 'aylsham web', 'cloth of aylsham', 'aylsham linens', the industry centred, not surprisingly, on the town of Aylsham to which it owes its name, a royal borough in the 14th century.

Flax and hemp were widely grown to produce a variety of linen cloth from coarse (from hemp), for making the lining of quilted jackets, as perhaps worn under armour at Agincourt, to sophisticated products (more likely made from flax) as mentioned in a 14th century tale *The Romance of Sir Degravant*, possibly by a Norfolk author, where luxuries seen in the bedroom of his beloved are described:

Weaving, spinning, and combing perhaps flax, 1400s, France

MS Fr. 598, f. 70v, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

> Towells of Aylsham
> White as the sea foam
> Surnaps of the same.[5]
> (surnaps were a type of tablecloth)

Beautiful and useful though the finished cloth may have been, the growing, harvesting and particularly the processing of flax and hemp was labour intensive and unpleasant: 'the agony of flax'[6], similarly for hemp, says it all.

Seeds for fibre were grown close together to make plants with straight stems and fewer branches. When grown, the stalks were pulled by hand, not cut, thus maintaining the full length of the fibre right down to the roots. They were then gathered in bundles, tied up and either stacked or hung up to dry for about two weeks. Then came retting by water, when to separate the core and outer rind from the fibre, the bundles were held down by stones or large pieces of wood in slow-flowing rivers, in water-filled pits (hemp-pits) or in dewy fields (dew-retting). The retting of flax and hemp was a smelly business as Thomas Tusser (c.1524-1580) describes in verse:

> Now pluck up thy hemp and go beat out the seed,
> And afterwards water it, as ye see need;
> But not in the river, where cattle should drink,
> For poisoning them and the people with stink.

After drying the stalks came the breaking by hand or in a 14th century flax-break. This was followed by 'swingling', when bundles of flax were beaten against a board with a bat or blade to remove broken straw, then 'heckling', when the fibres were passed through a series of combs to remove any remaining small pieces of straw and short fibres called 'tow'. Tow was either used to make tougher, coarse yarn or was discarded. The finest yarn, called 'line', was separated and made into bundles, known as 'stricks', which could then be spun and woven. Hemp, with its coarser fibres, comes from the strain of the plant *Cannabis sativa*, which is, like flax, *Linum usitatissimum*, a bast fibre.[7] The dry climate and soil conditions of East Anglia made hemp more widely grown. The resulting yarn had great tensile strength and made ropes for ships, including those of Christopher Columbus, and sails of canvas – the word derives from cannabis.

Bleaching was another time-consuming process using, alternatively, acid and alkaline treatments of 'bucking' – the cloth was boiled in *lye* (alkalised water), then 'grassing', where the cloth was laid on grass in an area called 'the bleach green' and exposed to the air, sun and dew for several days. After this came 'scouring' using buttermilk, sour milk, water fermented with bran or rye meal, vitriol and weak sulphuric acid, followed by 'soaping'.

Although aylsham was frequently coloured, 'a piece of aylsham teynt'[8], the composition of linen, from flax or hemp, made dyeing difficult as the fibres resist the penetration of the dyestuff. Blue, from indigo of the woad plant, was a favourite colour in the Middle Ages, and the only dye that was fast on flax.

Norwich and Aylsham were famous for the finishing of cloth which was pressed or 'calendared' to close the surface of the fabric, and to make it smooth, glossy and bring out its natural lustre. 'Aylsham' or 'Aylesham' was highly regarded. It was termed a 'prized commodity'[9] and as such was given as a gift by Norwich to visiting royal justices in 1301, bought by Norwich Cathedral Priory and for the royal household and Great Wardrobe and was also extensively exported. But by 1400 it was unable to compete with the linen industry of northern France, Flanders and the Low Countries. Here flax was grown in ideal conditions – 'no linen of England could compete in price, quality or quantity'.[10]

Linen, however, continued to be made on a domestic scale in East Anglia and the names of some Norfolk villages attest to this – there are two Hempsteads, a Hempnall and a Hempnall Green and also several references to 'hemplands', which refer to small plots where hemp was grown. The land along the Waveney valley was particularly suited to the growing of hemp and here the weaving industry survived until the nineteenth century – 'the Lophams had 47 hemplands as recently as 1833.'[11] Gradually the popularity of cotton textiles ousted linen, which became increasingly expensive – 'Now it is a forgotten crop …'[12]

Jean M. Smith

1 Information from the work of Gustav Fransson in his study of occupational surnames, 1100-1350, cited in Norfolk Archaeology Volume XL, Part III, 1989
2 As in the 'distaff side', the female line, or maternal branch of the family, was also called the 'spindle side'
3 'Medieval Women. A Social History of Women in England, 450-1500, p.147
4 Norfolk Archaeology, ibid
5 ibid
6 ibid
7 Bast—the woody outer layer of the stems of certain plants such as flax and hemp
8 Norfolk Archaeology ibid
9 ibid
10 ibid
11 Eric Pursehouse, *Waveney Valley Studies*, 1966
12 ibid

Patterns and Tools for Tudor Embroidery

By the time of Elizabeth I, clothes and furnishings were elaborately embroidered in brightly coloured silk threads and embellished with gold and silver wire, sequins and jewels. On sleeves, collars, ruffs and coifs, delicate patterns of swirling lines surrounded flowers, animals and insects in black or red silks in a tradition that originated in Spain.

Queen Elizabeth I, herself a keen embroiderer, supported professional embroiderers by granting the Company of Broderers their first Charter in 1561. This ensured that apprentices were properly trained, hours of work were set, there was protection against incompetence or fraud and that 'all embroidered work was brought to the Guild Hall and sealed before sale' i.e. checked and measured as 'Bayes', a name for the number of threads. The Broderers' coat of arms shows a Broach (bodkin) and spindle to wind thread and a Quill – a bobbin for holding thread.[1]

Broderers' coat of arms – from Dan Escott, *Guilds of London*
Quill or bobbin *(right)* Broach *(left)*

Designs and patterns came from emblem books, bestiaries, and herbals. Emblem books, first published in France, became hugely popular for their pictorial and allegorical mottoes and sayings.[2] The pomegranate, symbol of Catherine of Aragon, denoted friendship; the columbine, sorrow; the sunflower, fidelity; the lily, purity; rosemary, associated with Ophelia, for remembrance and pansies for thoughtfulness. The close relationship between the natural world and embroidery design is made clear in John Rea's *Flora* of 1665:

> In Spring when Flow'rs your garden grace,
> With Needle or Pencil you can trace
> Each curious Form, and various Dye
> So represent unto the Eye,
> Noble proportion ev'ry Part
> That Nature blushes at your Art

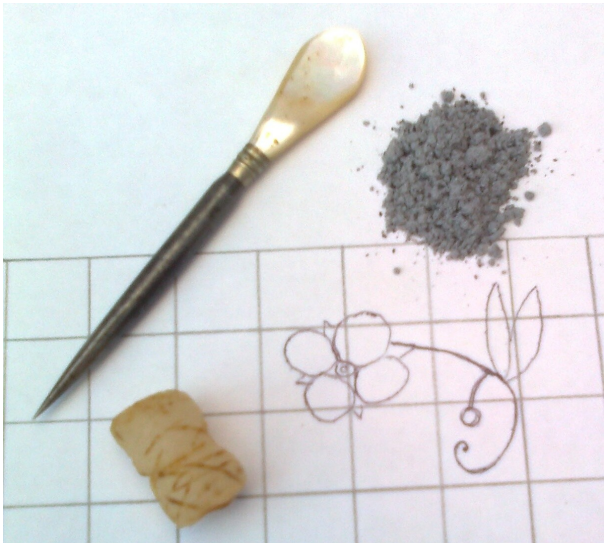
Other sources came from engravings, woodcuts and lining papers for boxes and coffers. A mirror was popular, meaning 'know thyself'; a serpent was for wisdom, eyes for vigilance and a heart or open book for knowledge. Elizabeth I favoured embroidered eyes and ears as seen in the 'Rainbow' portrait and this is referred to in Spencer's *The Faerie Queen*, published in 1590,

> 'All in a kirtle of discoloured say
> He clothed was ypainted full of Eyes.'

By 1550, specialised pattern books for embroiderers were being printed in France, Italy and Germany. These books were followed in England by 1631 when John Taylor published 'The Needles Excellency' and in 1632 by 'A Schole house for the needle' by Richard Shorleyker intended for embroiderers and lacemakers.

Frames were essential for holding the backing material taut and firm. Professional embroiderers required large, floor-supported frames, sometimes referred to as 'tents', for working on large items such as wall hangings, bed canopies and coverings. Handheld frames could be used for smaller items such as book covers, gloves and purses.

Ways of transferring a pattern to cloth varied. One system would be to hold both up to a light source either from a window or, with the framed cloth and pattern on a supportive frame, lighting a candle from underneath - not a method to be recommended! The most usual technique was pricking and pouncing. The pattern was traced on paper or parchment, and the outline pricked round with a pin or needle. The paper was then placed over the pattern on a firm surface and pounce, a fine powder such as gum sandarac or charcoal, was dusted over the perforations to the cloth beneath. Excess powder was gently brushed off and the pattern outline painted over with a fine brush. Another method was the system of copying the pattern onto squared paper and then on to a larger paper grid, keeping the pattern within the original squares.



Grid for enlarging , stiletto and pounce for copying and wax for thread © Philippa Sims

1 Geoffrey Briggs: *Civic and Corporate Heraldry*, 1971
2 See Rosemary Freeman: *English Emblem Books*, 1967

Cloth used in embroidery varied from wool for crewel work, hemp canvas and buckram, to more delicate materials such as taffeta, filasella and other silks, fine cambric, white linen and 'tissue': i.e. cloth of gold.[3]

Threads and sewing tools were available from mercers, pedlars and milliners. The names given to some thread colours seem strange today but again many were influenced by the Elizabethan love of analogy: goose-turd (yellowish green) for youth and hope, filbert (hazel), folimot (brown) for despair, Isabella (light buff), watchet (pale greenish blue) strammel (red) and rat's colour (dull grey), whey and 'Coventry' blue.[4]

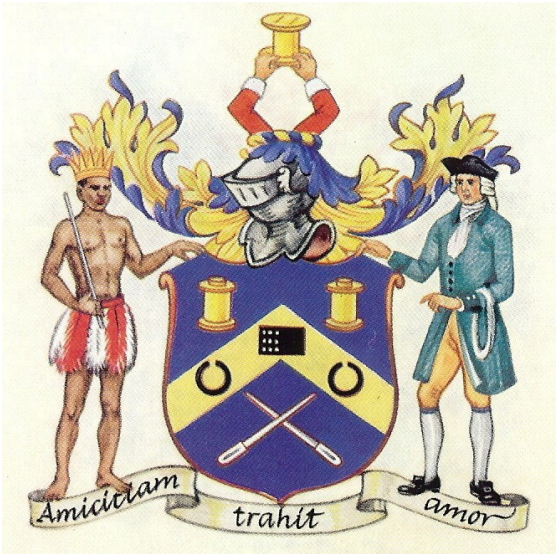
Influenced by Catherine of Aragon, blackwork was a popular embroidery technique. To give an indication of the cost of black thread, in 1511 'an ounce of' untwisted floss cost 2s 6d.[5]

Pattern for blackwork on lining of C17th box

Gold and silver threads were couched or held down with natural or coloured silks, often worked over a padding of parchment, vellum or threads to form a pattern. This created shading to offset the design as light fell across the work. Imported from Venice and Cyprus, flattened wire was wound or 'lapped' around a silk or linen core, a long and tedious process. The metal plates through which the wire was pulled using the size gauges can be seen on the coat of arms of the Guild of the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers. Bobbins and needles are also shown. An Indian wears an eastern crown and carries a silver bar, representing the source of the silver and the other supporter is a silk throwster holding a hank of silk.

Slips were used when the embroidery was on large items such as curtains or hangings. A piece of embroidery would be worked on a separate, more manageable, piece of the material. When completed the slip would be applied onto the main article, sometimes with gold or coloured overlay to the edging stitches.

Embroidered slips 1550-1600 NWHCM : 1934.56.1



Drawers' coat of arms from Dan Escott, *Guilds of London*

Samplers, or saumplaires meaning to teach 'by example', would have been made by daughters of the nobility. Stitches were copied onto a strip of material and new ones added as they were learnt. Few samplers of this time exist, probably because the sampler would have been stitched or copied then rolled up and put away in a drawer until needed again.

Intricate cutwork is shown on a sampler of the 1600s. The linen material is laid over vellum to hold the cloth rigid while the area for stitching is 'cut' away and also to ease the passing of the needle under the linen threads.

Cutwork c. 1600 NWHCM 1922.135

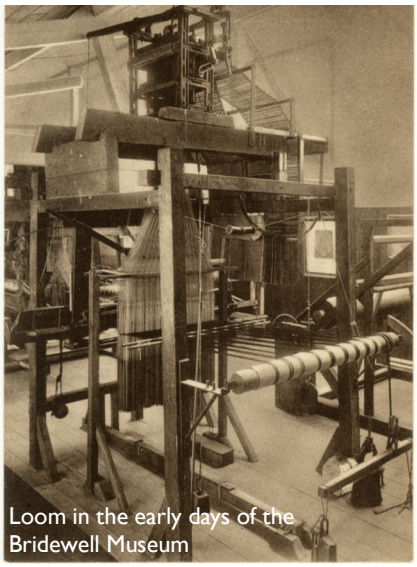
Tudor and Elizabethan equipment and techniques are still important and are used and learnt by hand embroiderers today. Materials and threads have changed and extended in their range and application, but methods of their use have changed little.

Philippa Sims

3 Janet Arnold: *Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe unlocked,* 1985
4 Penny Ladnier: *Costume in England: A History of Dress*, 1980
5 Elizabeth Geddes & Moyra McNeill: *Blackwork Embroidery*, 1965

Putting the colour back: the restoration of the Bridewell Jacquard Loom

One of the Bridewell Museum's most iconic exhibits is a nineteenth-century Jacquard hand-loom. The last surviving loom in Norwich, it was given to the museum in the 1920s and is an evocative reminder of the city's long association with weaving when thousands like this were in use in weavers' homes, workshops and factories across the city.



Loom in the early days of the Bridewell Museum

The loom was donated to the Bridewell Museum by James Hardy of the Norwich silk-weaving company Francis Hinde and Sons to help ensure that a record of the vanishing Norwich textiles industry was preserved for future generations. Although in the early days of the museum the loom was in working order, gradually the linen harness for silk weaving decayed and the pool of expertise available to operate it dwindled. Plans were afoot to renovate the loom in the 1960s but in the event it has taken fifty years for the time to be right. As part of the Heritage Lottery Fund-funded redisplay in 2012, the loom has recently been refurbished and its harness rebuilt to allow typical 'Norwich' fabrics to be woven in the museum. The work was carried out by Richard Humphries MBE, FRSA, the country's leading specialist silk and worsted weaver, working with the NMAS conservation and display teams fully involved to make sure that the loom's complex conservation requirements and operational safety could be successfully married up.

The work on the Jacquard took place off-site between June 2011 and March 2012, involving hundreds of hours of work painstakingly cleaning and reconditioning all the working parts and rebuilding the harness *(below)*. Meanwhile, the loom frame was re-erected in the museum and metal bracing installed to strengthen the frame and allow for movement during use. On-site work to warp up and thread the loom took place from April to June 2012, and finally the team was rewarded by the thrilling clack-clack sound of the loom working again after decades of silence.

The loom itself is a four post hand-loom of mid-nineteenth century date. At the top, a wooden structure known as the 'castle' has been fitted to allow for the mounting of the Jacquard mechanism. It is this machine that controls the way a pattern is produced on the fabric. The weaver provided the hand power to shoot the shuttle across the loom and used a foot pedal to advance the mechanism, although in a workshop or mill setting looms like this could be supplied with power from a factory steam engine.

Jacquard Technology

The Jacquard mechanism on this loom is by Devoge of Manchester and is typical of the type used in the late-nineteenth century. The invention of the Jacquard machine by Joseph-Marie Jacquard in 1801 was an important development in the history of weaving. It was designed to make the weaving of complicated patterns easier, by dispensing with the need for the 'draw boy' who pulled up the harness cords which regulated the pattern on the draw loom (a more complicated predecessor for weaving patterned cloth, used extensively in Norwich). The technique is often considered to be the precursor of the modern computer since it is based on a binary system using holes punched in card sets which are 'read' mechanically to control the needles and hooks that connect via the harness to the warp threads. These are then raised or lowered row by row to allow the shuttle to pass through and produce a patterned cloth.

The invention itself, like most designed to improve productivity in the weaving industry, was controversial. Its introduction was strongly resisted in Jacquard's native Lyons, where it was feared that hand-loom weavers' livelihoods would be ruined. The weavers were right to worry - the effect of this innovation was that what had previously been one-off designs woven by individual families for several generations, could literally be picked up and reused (since the card sets were portable) on other looms. Paradoxically, the Jacquard's invention was secretly introduced to its great rival, the Spitalfields silk industry, with comparatively little trouble.

The accumulated dirt of decades is removed

Typically, Norwich did things a little bit differently. The expertise of the workforce for generations back lay in highly-finished worsteds and half-silks such as bombazine, which did not require the use of a complex loom. Norwich manufacturers of the early-nineteenth century worried about attacks on machinery by weavers fearful for their livelihood - with good reason: the shawl manufacturer Willett suffered attacks and window smashing when he tried to mechanise in the late 1820s. The upshot was that the introduction of the Jacquard loom in the city was both belated and faltering. As all-silk fabrics and shawls replaced worsteds in popularity, so Jacquard hand-looms were introduced to weavers' homes, garrets and small workshops. These were of the same type as the Bridewell loom, quite tall and with the 'London tie' of the side-hung cards allowing the loom to fit into the steeply-sloping roof space. About the same time, power-loom weaving of simpler fabrics, including silk gauzes and bombazines, was introduced in mills such as St James Mill: this was paid at lower rates and staffed largely by female operatives. Although we think of Norwich hand-weavers as being men, by the middle of the 19th century women were using these looms too, either as part of the family enterprise or in their own right.

The 1840 report of the Parliamentary Committee on hand weaving in Eastern England[1] provides a fascinating and poignant insight to the lives of the local textile community; a harsh one by any standards. Essentially, by this time even an experienced weaver could only just make a living. Outgoings for candles, shoot and winding quills generally equalled income, and thus the lives of a weaving family hung on a knife edge - if anything went wrong, such as an illness, a slack period or a yarn shortage, there was little room for manoeuvre and the workhouse beckoned. First person accounts detail large families living in the courts of the St Pauls/Barrack Street area of Norwich, with 'one down one up' decayed dwellings housing families of six or eight children; where death and illness were common visitors and the loom shared a room with the bed where most of the family slept. As a 1850 report stated, such weaving families were 'reduced to the lowest possible state of wretchedness and misery'.[2]

Our loom itself shows continual adaptation over the years with seat and pedal raised, suggesting an elderly weaver making minor modifications to allow him to keep weaving as his strength began to fail. The last fabric woven on this loom was a patterned silk with a double warp – perhaps one of the last Norwich shawls, a wrapper or fabric for a dressing gown. However, the technical difficulty of weaving all-silk designs, combined with the shorter lifespan of a silk harness, suggested that we would need to think carefully about the choice of fabric that would be technically possible to weave.

We decided to weave cloth representative of the earlier Norwich textiles, the worsteds of the late 18th century, which was technically more feasible. The striped warp of the loom shows the Norwich speciality of fancy stripes designed to fit the floral Jacquard pattern. The pattern we used was taken from the stunning and rare example we have on show in the 'merchant's warehouse' display.


Loom awaiting restoration

Into the future

In the summer of 2013 the Bridewell commenced a three-year education and events programme, to build on the restoration and revive skills. Richard Humphries *(below)* has trained a small team of local weavers to use the loom: a skill requiring physical stamina, excellent co-ordination and attention to technical detail. We are finding that the loom, as befits a grand old lady, needs continual attendance and adjustment and more than a bit of TLC! The project has been made possible through generous support from the Costume and Textile Association and the Worshipful Company of Weavers. We hope the result will be the preservation of skills of hand-weaving and Jacquard-loom technology in Norwich and the opportunity for a wide variety of people to directly engage with our glorious textiles history.

Cathy Terry


Fully restored and working again

1 Report to the Parliamentary Commission on hand-loom weavers in the East of England, by J Mitchell Est LLD, Part II, 1840
2 *Morning Chronicle*, 29 Jan 1850 Letter XVII

Textile Technology in Literature

A ruler's inscription, 8th Century BCE, Karatepe (modern Turkey)

In those places … where a man fears ... to go on the road, in my days even women walked with spindles.

…

Odyssey, Homer, 760-710 BCE, **Book 1 356-59**

Odysseus' son, Telemachus, speaks to his mother, Penelope: 'Go to your quarters and get busy with your own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and tell your women slaves to get on with theirs. Speech shall be for men, for all men, but especially for me, since I have authority in this house.'

…

From ***The Greek anthology***
(this poem pre 3rd century BCE?)

O Pallas, Athene, Aesione, now bowed with old age, hangs up for you the gift of her poverty: her shuttle, singing like the early chattering swallows, which makes the smooth web of Pallas the Weaver; her comb for preparing the wool; her spindle, worn by her finger, brimming with the whirling thread; also her wicker basket which she once used to fill up with the wool she had trimmed between her teeth.

…

Meditation, Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD), Roman, Bk X, Ch. 5

Whatever may happen to you was prepared for you from all eternity: and the implication of causes was from eternity spinning the thread of your being.

…

Njal's saga, c. 1280, Chapter 156. This poem, 'Song of the Spears', probably much earlier, describes the looms of the Valkyries. As is usual in Old Icelandic poems, the text runs across the break in the line.

Far and wide	with fall of the dead
The warp is stretched	and streams down blood
A spear-grey fabric	forms on the loom
Woof of warriors	we valkyries fill
Binding and crossing	with blood-red weft
The web is woven	with warrior's guts
Heads of the slain	serve as its weights
Heddle-rods are spears,	spattered with blood
The shed-rod is iron,	arrows its pegs;
With swords we beat	our battle web.

…

Hermia and Helena in ***A Midsummer Night's Dream,*** William Shakespeare, 1594-96, Act III Sc. ii, 203-8

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate.

…

The Bible

Proverbs 31 *The Good Wife*

Who can find a virtuous woman?
For her price is above rubies. …
She seeketh wool, and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands. …
She layeth her hands to the spindle,
And her hands hold the distaff. …
Strength and honour are her clothing;
And she shall rejoice in time to come.

Mark 9:3

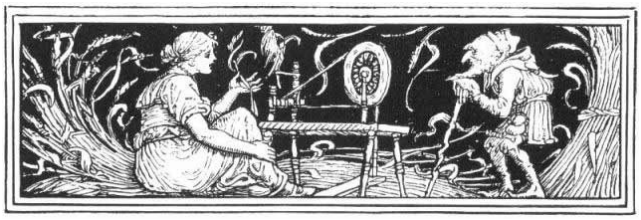
And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

…

From ***Silex Scintillan***, Henry Vaughan, 1650-55

Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God order'd motion, but ordained no rest.

…



Traditional

See a pin and pick it up,
All the day you'll have good luck.
See a pin, and let it lay,
And you'll rue it all the day.

…

Shirley, Charlotte Bronte, 1849, set in the period of Napoleonic Wars, 1811-12, Chapter 2

'Seriously, do you suppose that the putting up of this new machinery will bring you into danger?' …

'I only wish the machines - the frames - were safe here, and lodged within the walls of this mill. Once put up, I defy the frame-breakers. Let them only pay me a visit and take the consequences.
My mill is my castle.'
……
Misery generates hate. These sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the buildings which contained those machines; they hated the manufacturers who owned those buildings.

…

North and South, Elizabeth Gaskell, 1854-5

Chapter 13
'I began to work in a carding room … and the fluff got into my lungs and poisoned me. … Little bits, as fly off fro' the cotton, when they're carding it, and fill the air till it looks fine white dust. They say it winds round the lungs, and tightens them up. Anyhow, there's many a one as works in a carding room, that falls into a waste, coughing and spitting blood, because they're just poisoned by the fluff.'

Chapter 41
'Ugh! Cotton, and speculation, and smoke, well-cleansed and well-cared-for machinery, and unwashed and neglected hands.'

…

***A Tale of Two Cities*,** Charles Dickens, 1859 (revised by Dickens 1867-8), Chapter 15

... all are following to the Guillotine. In front of it, seated in chairs, as in a garden of public diversion, are a number of women, busily knitting. …the tumbrils begin to discharge their loads. The ministers of Sainte Guillotine are robed and ready. Crash! A head is held up, and the knitting-women who scarcely lifted their eyes to look at it a moment ago when it could think and speak, count One.

The second tumbril empties and moves on, the third comes up. Crash! – And the knitting-women, never faltering or pausing in their work, count Two.

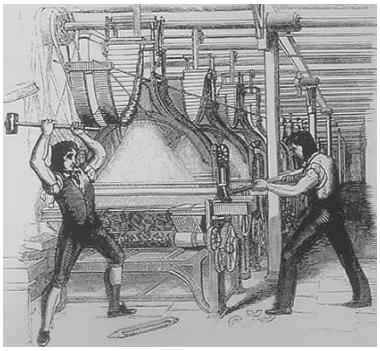
…

Beth Walsh

Rumplestiltskin, Brothers Grimm, first published 1812

'Alas!' [said] the girl, 'I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it.' 'What will you give me,' said the manikin, 'if I do it for you?' 'My necklace,' said the girl. The little man took the necklace, seated himself in front of the wheel, and 'whirr, whirr, whirr,' three turns, and the reel was full; then he put another on, and 'whirr, whirr, whirr', three times round, and the second was full too. And so it went on until the morning, when all the straw was spun, and all the reels were full of gold.

…



Elizabeth Gaskell c.1860

Good Wives, Louisa M. Allcott, 1869

by and by, Beth said the needle was 'so heavy' and put it down.

…

From ***The Song of the Shirt***, Thomas Hood, 1843

'Work — work — work,
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work — work — work,
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream! …

Stitch — stitch — stitch,
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.'

…

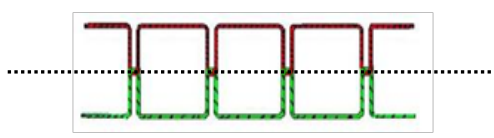
Domestic sewing machines

An early 'Thimonnier' sewing machine

Until the sewing machine was invented in the middle of the 1800s, everyone made their own clothes or household goods by hand unless they could afford to pay someone else. Girls learnt to sew at an early age completing samplers or books of samples, many of which are treasured today or in Museums. For centuries, women took pride in their ability to embroider and make items for their home. The workforce in crowded textile workshops were frequently women but there were some professional craftsmen who worked in specialised workshops creating beautiful items for stately homes.

The idea of inventing a machine that could complete the complex task of putting a needle in and out of one piece of fabric to join it to another was worked on by a number of pioneers in England, France and America but these early machines did not work smoothly and could be dangerous. Putting the eye in the point of the needle was one of the first steps to success.

It took an actor and engineer called Isaac Singer to actually take someone else's machine and make it work smoothly and accurately. Singer looked at a machine being repaired in a Boston shop that used the lockstitch technique where you need both a top and bottom thread to complete a secure stitch. He adapted the machine to a horizontal movement with an up and down needle as well as a presser foot to hold the fabric in place. The ideas come from a number of inventors but Elias Howe felt that Singer had copied his patent. Howe sued Singer and benefitted from this by earning royalties on his patents. Singer, in partnership with Edward Clarke, merged the best of the inventions and by 1860 was the largest producer of sewing machines in the world. Massive orders of machines to create Civil War uniforms as well as those for the domestic market made Howe and Singer the first millionaire inventors in the world and the Singer logo is still universally recognised.



Lock-stitch, with the fabric in the middle
brown upper thread, green lower thread

Victorian attitudes proved a little more difficult to overcome. Labour saving devices were very rare in the 1850s. Questions were asked such as, why would women need these machines? What would they do with the time saved? Wasn't work done by hand of better quality? Weren't machines too taxing on women's minds and bodies, and weren't they too closely associated with man's work outside the home?

Singer devised an amazing strategy to overcome these attitudes. He set up lavish showrooms that simulated elegant domestic parlours; he employed attractive young women to demonstrate and teach the machine operations. His advertising claimed that the women's extra free time could be seen as a positive virtue. Machines were decorated with flowers so that they were attractive as well as practical items in the home.

The invention of the graded paper pattern by Ebenezer Butterick helped to make modern fashion accessible to the rapidly expanding lower middle classes. With a pattern and a sewing machine it was

possible to be fashionably dressed even if you were unable to afford custom-made clothing.

Sewing machines became very popular and most families had someone who owned one and was able to make clothing and household goods. They were particularly useful throughout the First and Second World Wars when many people had to make do and mend.

An Elna machine that was popular in the 1950s

After the Second World War, home dressmaking was still very popular as people were short of money and fabric was scarce. There were a large number of manufacturers still making machines and several resorted to unusual colours to make their machines more interesting. Many used a series of different shaped cogs to enable the machines to do a variety of patterns.

Sadly, since the 1960s the use of the domestic sewing machine has declined. Clothing has become comparatively less expensive and more women going out to work has meant that fewer have time to sew. Some manufacturers have stopped making machines and others have merged so that they can cope with a decreasing market. They are, however, increasingly used for a wide variety of crafts and creative embroidery as well as for dressmaking.

Although the Over-locker was developed at the end of the 1800s, its domestic use was slow to be adopted until the 1970s. It is a wonderful addition to the home dressmaker as it enables her to get a professional finish on edges that look neat and will not fray. The four thread over-locker is probably the most popular.

An over-locked edge *(left)* and machine *(right)*

Today even the simplest home sewing machine is computer controlled and can complete a variety of complex processes from buttonholes to embroidery just by the press of a button or the turn of a dial. More expensive domestic machines can work in conjunction with a computer and designs can be transferred to the machine's memory for it to complete.

Lettering can be typed into the machine which it can then stitch in a variety of different fonts. Many machines have a large number of patterns programmed into their memories so that patterns can be used to decorate clothing or household items with considerable ease. The fabric is held in a frame and the machine completes all the necessary movements and stitches that are required for the design. They have a screen that tells you how the design is progressing and, if there is a fault, what you should do to put it right! They leave little to skill or chance.

Although computerised machines work wonders, the actual technology used to complete each stitch is still the same as those early hand machines, powered by hand or treadle, used to complete their lock-stitch. Once computers were included inside the machines the possibilities were endless but there is still something very satisfying about using a machine that is not computer controlled and relying on skill.

Joy Evitt

The Cutting Edge: NUA Textile Technology

The textiles industry is always looking and moving forward. From the days of cottage industry, through the industrial revolution, to today's SMART textiles, it's a fast moving, continually developing environment. Students on the BA (Hons) Textiles Course at Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) are fully engaged with this and are asked to develop their practice at the very cutting edge of their discipline, developing an awareness of not only the very latest advances in textile technology but also the most current debates affecting, influencing and informing the industry. Alumni and visiting tutors bring to the University an external insight to current practice that students can aspire to be part of.

One such alumna is Amy Congdon, who progressed from NUA to study MA Textile Futures at Central St Martins in London. On a recent visit to our studios, Amy described to the students her work *(below)* in bio-mimicry and developments in biotechnology that will allow the creation of materials that are grown, as opposed to made. This research has allowed her to imagine garments that contain the wearer's own body cells and can protect them from disease and allergies. Amy's work has also allowed her to experiment with developing fabrics that can support the body from within, following surgery or injury, without fear of bodily rejection.


© Amy Congdon

New uses for traditional materials, or the updating of traditional materials and processes for a contemporary market, is a theme often returned to by students. 'Tradition' has become a marketable trend or concept and when combined with new ideas and contemporary materials the results can be very exciting.

Guy Hills arrived at the University in February 2013 to talk about his company 'Dashing Tweeds'. Guy and his co-founder Kirsty McDougall have been working with the weavers of Harris Tweed in Scotland to make this traditional fabric more attractive to the younger, fashion-conscious client. With a softer finish to the cloth, and by introducing a reflective yarn into the weave, they have produced fabrics that contain


© Guy Hills

elements which glow in the dark (*above*). By day the design of the cloth is colourful and current, by night the fabric glows, creating stylish garments with a safety function for cyclists and business people living and working in the city. Their quirky contemporary design is attracting a new type of tweed wearer and breathing new life into the traditional British weaving industry.

Each spring the textile students visit Première Vision in Paris, the largest textiles trade show in the world. Here they have the opportunity to be introduced to 'intelligent' textiles. Intelligent textiles, also known as SMART fabrics, electronic textiles, or e-textiles, have attracted considerable attention because they can suggest a revolutionary impact on human life. Manufacturers at Première Vision show the latest fabrics that have in-built technology allowing them to be stain resistant, mosquito resistant, bacteria resistant, that have shape memory or are resistant to staining. There are fabrics that have super absorbent qualities that enable them to absorb smells and perspiration, and those that can apply or release perfumes on the wearer. The world of 'intelligent' textiles is expanding and being at the show allows the students to be aware of the latest research and fabric innovation.

Young people brought up in a digital age can see a future emerging where technology and textiles can combine to allow the clothes you wear to function also as tools that can enrich your life. The Internet has become a key component in our lives and mobile phone technology and social networking is being built into the clothes we wear. The garment called the M-Dress, designed by the London-based fashion company CuteCircuit, allows the making and receiving of calls through the insertion of a SIM card under the label in the neckline - different ringtones even allow the wearer to recognize the caller. Gesture recognition software allows the wearer to respond to a call by raising their

hand to their ear and end a conversation by letting it fall back to their side.

Recently the singer Nicole Scherzinger wore a dress to a red carpet event in London that featured eight metres of fine French silk, five hundred Swarovski crystals and 2000 LED lights. These displayed ever changing messages on the fabric in real time from fans using Twitter, allowing them, albeit remotely, to actually take part in the event. The dress was also made by CuteCircuit and has become known as the 'Twitter Dress' *(right)*.

In addition to using intelligent fabrics for communication and entertainment there is research by a company called Cen Tex Bel in Belgium, where electrodes are being embedded in fabric to allow measurement of heartbeat and breathing. It is easy to appreciate how these fabrics could support elderly or disabled patients in the future.

The increased demand for excellence in sports stimulated by the London Olympics has led to increasing research into performance fabrics for sport and for the military. Fabrics have already been developed that heal themselves. Simply rubbing torn edges together allows the fibres to reknit themselves together, self-mending tears or damage. This could have a huge effect for sportsmen and soldiers in combat offering uninterrupted performance and protection.

Could a 3D printer be the key to our future wardrobe? Designed by New York designer Michael Schmidt and architect Francis Bitonti, the world's first 'printed' dress has been produced in America. Dita Von Teese wore the lacquered black dress which was electronic from its design to its production at an event in New York earlier this year. Schmidt designed the dress on his iPad, communicated with architect Francis Bitonti on the 3D modelling necessary to make the dress wearable, and printed each piece of the dress remotely via a printing studio.

The dress [redacted] made from a powdered nylon that was hardened by lasers and had to be designed with 17 articulated components and 3000 joints to make it wearable. Other 3D printed fashion includes a collection by Iris Von Herpen shown at Paris Fashion Week in January 2013. If this type of technology becomes the norm we could be printing out dresses from our laptops at home on a 3D printer!

Sustainability is a key consideration for many students, and an increasing number are choosing to embrace sustainable practices in the production of their work. Contemporary research suggests that designers in partnership with scientists are the most likely teams to find alternatives to widespread use of insecticides in the production of fabrics and the damage to the environment that the use of chemical dyes and the disposal of textile waste can effect.

During April, Karen Spurgin from 'ao textiles', a UK company using natural dyes and working for clients who put 'sustainability and traditional craftsmanship at the heart of their design' (ao textiles) visited NUA. Karen highlighted to the students the need to ensure that products are produced sustainably, ethically and support the communities where they are produced. Students regularly challenge visiting speakers to reflect on the consequences of sending products abroad to be produced and this has led sometimes to an awkward moment or two!

The challenges of sustainability are complex but students need to know, or imagine, what those challenges might be. Many have become committed to reviving and supporting local sustainable initiatives such as Woad-inc in Dereham*(left)* , Azsu Alpaca in Thetford and the Incrop project at the UEA.

Through placements and live projects with partners such as these, we are ensuring students develop from the outset of their careers an awareness and understanding of sustainable and ethical issues within textiles. This will help them develop an ability to combine good design with responsible use of materials to ultimately make sustainability attractive to manufacturers and consumers.

In conclusion, science and technology, in partnership with innovative, informed and considered design practice, suggests an exciting future that we are ensuring our students here are ready to embrace.

Where next? Watch this space!

Jill Rodgers

Hat pins - NWHCM : 2011.89.6, 2011.89.27, 1971.617.4.1, 2011.345.34.4

The Humble Pin

Needles and pins, Needles and pins, When a man marries, His troubles begin

From *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* first published in the 19C

The word 'pin' is derived from the Latin 'spina' meaning thorn.[1]

There are various current meanings for the word 'pin': PIN stands for personal identification number - you need a PIN to obtain your own money from an ATM (automated teller machine) or 'hole in the wall'. Pins are used in hand grenades, whilst surgeons often use pins to mend bones. The phrase 'pin money' may have been derived from as early as the 15th century when men would allow their wives or mistresses money to purchase pins, considered a luxury at this time. For the purposes of this article I will construe 'pin' to be a thin pointed implement. I will be using Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, Costume & Textile Study Centre Collection as reference.

The origin of the pin can be traced back to prehistoric times, when shards of flint, bone and thorns were used to fasten clothing together.[2] Thorns were boiled in oil to harden them, while bone pins have been discovered in caves from the Paleolithic and Neolithic age. With the discovery of bronze, made from copper and tin, Bronze Age man was able to cast pins. Ancient Egyptians and Romans took the process a step further by hand forging them with highly decorative heads.

Thorn. NWHCM : 1972.83

Later, men who made pins were known as 'pinners'. Each pin was individually crafted with about eighteen separate processes. The metal needed to be drawn out, straightened and cut, sharpened at one end and ground at the other. The head of the pin was made from a coil of wire that was then soldered to the pin shaft. It was extremely labour intensive. The pins also had to be polished and packaged, then pushed into folded paper and sold as a paper of pins. What would be the reaction today if a young man gave his loved one a paper of pins, deemed to be a suitable gift in the Middle Ages?

Bones known as 'pin bones' are found in fish such as salmon. It seems perfectly plausible that these bones may have been used in early lacemaking. Bobbin lace has in the past been called bone lace, possibly because the bobbins were made from bone, ivory or horn; or could it have been because fish bones were used as pins to hold the threads? On the Estonian Island of Kihnu, 'fish bones are used even today instead of modern steel pins'.[3]

Pins were being made by hand in London from as early as the thirteenth century, each man employed in one or more of the various processes. It is estimated that there were more than one hundred small domestic pin suppliers in England around 1760.[4] The Industrial Revolution brought huge changes, introducing machines that could do the work of several men.

In opposition to machine-manufactured pins, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

> Let us be content, in work
> To do the thing we can, and not presume
> To fret because it's little. 'Twill employ
> Seven men, they say, to make a perfect pin:
> Who makes the head, content to miss the point:
> Who makes the point, agreed to leave the join:
> And if a man should cry 'I want a pin,
> And I must make it straightaway, head and point,'
> His wisdom is not worth the pin he wants.
> Seven men to a pin and not a man too much.

London and Gloucester were the main pin-making areas in England. The Gloucester pin industry made them by hand from the late 16th century until the

1 Hunt, Jonathan, '*Pinmakers to the World*' London: James & James, 1989
2 ibid
3 Bulletin Oidfa, nr1-2013, p 6
4 Folch European Pin Manufacturer www.folch.com

Three hand made pins (left) machine pin (far right)

early 19th century. They employed people from the city's poor houses, together with their own in-house workers and sometimes prison labour. They also employed people working from their own homes. Gloucester machine production for pins started around 1820. At this time there were eleven pin suppliers in Gloucester employing 1,500 people out of a total population of 7,500.[5]

Pins were coated with nickel to prevent rust, though this tended to flake off. To help sharpen and clean them they were pushed back and forth into pincushions filled with emery grit. Pins made from wood, bone, metal and ivory can be found in the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service collection; the Costume & Textile Study Centre have a good selection of hand and machine made pins, including a thorn pin. Within the collection there are stunning examples of hatpins, tiepins, brooch pins and pincushions.

From the Middle Ages in Britain and Europe, pins have been used to hold wimples and veils in place. Later, the hatpin became a standard women's accessory, reaching its peak of popularity during 1880-1920. This was fuelled by the increase of disposable income and growth of the middle class. They were often fashioned by jewellers and silversmiths such as René Lalique and Archibald Knox. A British man, Charles Horner, and Tiffany & Co in America were two of the main hatpin makers in the early 20th century.

The designs began to reflect current trends, for example, Art Nouveau and the Suffragette movement. The music hall also had some influence on the hatpin industry displaying larger and even larger hats that needed hatpins. A bawdy Cockney music hall ballad begins

NEVER GO WALKING OUT WITHOUT YOUR HAT PIN:

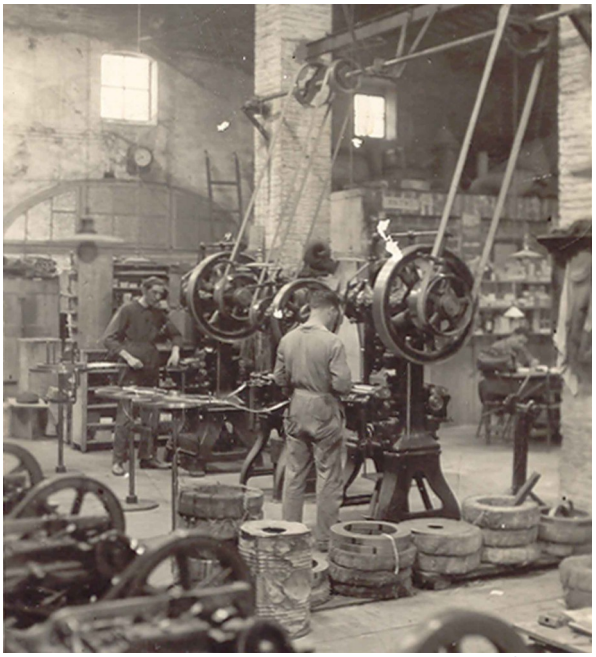
My Granny was a very shrewd old lady,
The smartest woman that I ever met.
She used to say, 'Now listen to me, Sadie,
There's one thing that you never must forget.
Never go walking out without your hat pin.
The law won't let you carry more than that.
For if you go walking out without your hat pin,
You may lose your head as well as lose your hat.'[6]

Among the ingenious novelty hatpin designs were those which, when opened, would reveal a tiny mirror and powder puff or vinaigrette filled with smelling salts.[7]

The hatpin was sometimes considered to be a deadly weapon: 'laws were passed in 1908 in America, which limited the length of hatpins, as there was a concern they might be used by suffragettes as weapons.'[8] Some hatpins were 18 inches long. In the UK, legislation was passed imposing the use of a point protector for hatpins worn in public places.

After World War II the wearing of hats fell from fashion; inevitably so did the hatpin. However tiepins and brooches, often called pins, are still much in use today. The hatpin is now considered a very collectable item, with hatpin societies in both America and the UK.

Folch European Pin Manufacturer is the largest steel pin maker in Europe, producing a wide range of pins to serve unique needs in different industries. They have created a range of pins for every type of

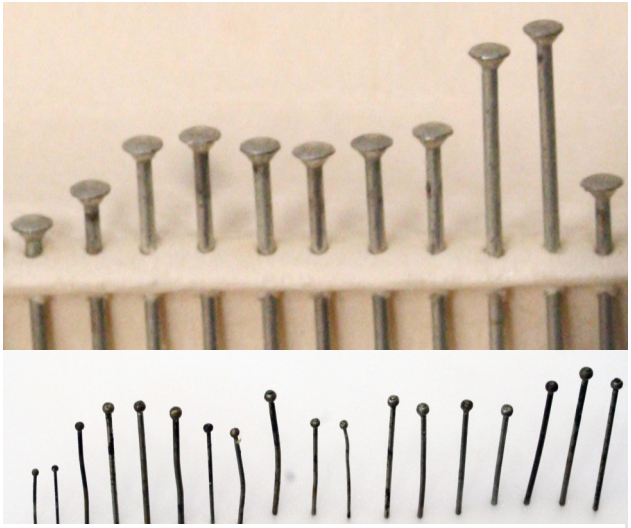


Folch European Pin Manufacturer

5 Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology Journal for 2005 pages 4-18
6 www.glitzqueen.com.html 25.05.2013
7 www.news.google.com Milwaukee Sentinel September 29, 1910
8 www.wikipedia.org

handmade lace, from tiny Duchesse pins to fine, long Flanders pins. In 2010 they produced hardened and tempered 24-carat gold pins. These would be ideal for lacemakers and the artist inspired by pins, who is looking for the ultimate pin.

The imagery of masses of pins has fascinated me since I started to make lace. Various artists, including myself, have produced work inspired by pins.



Pins *(above)* from the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, Costume & Textile collections at Shire Hall, Norwich
Machine made *(top)* and hand made *(bottom)*

Pin Ritual, detail (inset) - Kirsty Hall

Pins in Progress - Leslie Sercombe

Kirsty Hall has produced an ongoing collection of sculptures, performances and drawings that use dressmaking pins. She explores issues of repetition, obsession, the meaning of domestic labour and the power of ritualised mark-making. Kirsty says *'Pin Ritual* began as a simple sculptural idea about making a piece of very thin translucent cloth heavy but quickly developed into an ongoing performance piece about stories, memories and conversations. I sit and pin row after row. As I pin I tell people stories about pins or listen to their stories, I then pass on some of these stories to other people. The stories pass into the pins and out again.'[9]

As a final point, excuse the pun, Graham Short who is considered to be one of the most talented living artists in the world, known as 'the world's smallest engraver', has etched the Lord's Prayer on the head of a gold pin.[10]

Leslie Sercombe

9 http://kirstyhall.co.uk
10 www.thehandsofgenius.com 12.04.2013

Sampler by Lorina Bulwer, resident of Great Yarmouth Workhouse (*top and middle*) NWHCM : 2004.824.1 and NWHCM : 2004.824.2

Brereton Bed Hangings (*below*) NWHCM : 1929.116

Frayed: Textiles on the Edge

Time and Tide Museum, Great Yarmouth, UK
10 October 2013 – 2 March 2014

Time and Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life is very excited to be planning an exhibition exploring historic and contemporary textiles, examining individual self-expression and mental health issues through stitch.

At the heart of the show are some of our most fascinating and poignant objects: two embroidered 'letters', each over three metres long and entirely covered in text, made by Lorina Bulwer whilst an inmate in the lunatic wing of Great Yarmouth Workhouse between 1901-5, and the extraordinary counterpane and bed hangings made by Anna Margaretta Brereton while in deep mourning for the loss of her two children in 1801.

Alongside these will be significant loans, including Elizabeth Parker's sampler from the V&A collections which, like the Bulwer sampler, has been an inspiration for contemporary artists' work. The C&TA are supporting the exhibition by purchasing a quilt by Sara Impey, called 'Stitch Talk', which is inspired by the Bulwer letter and the Parker sampler and also two pieces by Fine Cell Works, a charitable organisation that sells needlework and quilting by prisoners.

The aim of the exhibition is to allow each object to speak for itself, with interpretation focussing on the biography of the maker and the context in which it was made. This is in keeping with the deeply personal resonance of many of the pieces on display, such as the Parker sampler which is known by the name of the individual who wrote and created it, rather than by the title of the work or location of its creation.

The interpretation of the issues of mental health, grief and post-traumatic stress disorder will also be articulated using the works of contemporary artists, including Tracey Emin. This will enable these issues to be explored in a historical context, while demonstrating that textile arts are still a means of personal testimony and therapy for people affected by mental illness and grief.

We will also be working with Youth Engagement Officers and local mental health groups to use the exhibition as a catalyst for creative workshops to explore the issues raised.

Ruth Battersby Tooke
Curator of Costume & Textiles at NMAS

Please contact Time and Tide to make organised bookings for groups.
Time and Tide, Blackfriars Road, Great Yarmouth, NR30 3BX
Tel: 01493 743930

Forthcoming related events will also be listed on the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology website: www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk

C&TA members - do we have your email address?

We send regular updates to members about C&TA news and events via Gmail, if you haven't been receiving this information, maybe we don't have your current address. Email is free and so keeps our administrative costs down. Please contact us via ctacostume@gmail.com to tell us of any changes.

Pauline White

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Costume & Textile Association
c/o Shire Hall, Market Avenue
NORWICH NR1 3JQ

The C&TA is a member of the British Association of Friends of Museums.

Email

General: ctacostume@gmail.com
Miscellany: mstb.johnson@btinternet.com

Website www.ctacostume.org.uk

Telephone

Events: 01603 745766
Membership: 01953 788594

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