

# OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 9

February 1998



Indian block-printed and indigo-dyed cotton textile traded to Egypt. It is C-14 dated to

## TEXTILES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EASTERN ART AT THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

The Department of Eastern Art holds several collections of Asian textiles that are of particular historical or aesthetic interest. By far the largest number are from the Islamic world, although there are also some that have moved between cultures. The readers of our Newsletter will have heard about the Newberry collection of Indian block-printed textiles traded to Egypt, which I have catalogued and researched; they are striking examples for the early importance of textiles as transmitters of design. There are more than 1200 pieces in the collection, and 22 have been tested for C-14. Representative pieces were recently on display in the exhibition *Textiles and the Indian Ocean Trade*. However, there is a second part to the Newberry collection, equally important and almost as big, consisting of about 1000 embroideries. These were also acquired in Cairo by the Egyptologist Percy Newberry. He and his wife Essie had a keen interest in textiles and their history. Essie Newberry in particular took an active part in the Embroiderers' Guild; she was the Guild's Vice-President from 1922 to 1945, and its Treasurer between 1935 and 1938. The embroideries in the Department all come from an Islamic context, possibly mainly produced in Egypt itself. There are also tiraz textiles among them, some of which may have been made in Iraq. These date to the 10th century. Most of the embroideries, though, seem to be of Mamluk date (13th to 15th century). Marianne Ellis, who is a member of OATG, has spent much of her time researching the collection.

The Newberry Collection was offered to the Ashmolean Museum by Percy Newberry in 1941; the donation was completed by 1946. It was initially in the Department of Antiquities, but in the early 80s the Islamic embroideries and Indian trade textiles were transferred to the Department of Eastern Art. There were also 39 Coptic textiles in the collection, these remained in the Antiquities Department. A second important collection of embroideries came into the Department in 1960 as the Myers bequest; these are approximately 50 Greek island embroideries, strictly speaking not part of the Islamic world, but nevertheless relevant as they relate closely to Turkish Ottoman textiles. In 1978 a second donation of Greek embroideries was made by John Buxton, who gave 20 textiles.

The single most popular textile in the Department is the splendid flat-woven robe that once belonged to T.E. Lawrence and is on permanent loan from All Souls College. It can be viewed in the Department's office corridor. It has a simple design of vertical stripes, but as these are woven in silver and gold thread with black silk, the effect is one of dazzling luxury. The accompanying undergarment is also in the Department, though not on view. Also of biographical interest is a collection of clothes that once belonged to Edward W. Lane, the author of *Manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*. It was donated to the Department in 1983 by descendants of Lane and consists of the (Egyptian-style) garments he apparently wore during his travels in Egypt in the early 19th century. Lane went to great lengths to adopt local dress and manners.

The Indian textiles in the collection are a mixed lot, most of them acquired coincidentally rather than as part of a collecting policy. They total just under 300 pieces. Most remarkable is the 18th-century Mughal carpet which is usually on display, but currently is part of an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. There are approximately 10 Kashmir shawls, most likely to be 19th century, and some of fine quality. Two patola

(double-ikat silk) cloths probably have a similar date. In addition there are a few examples of *phulkari* (heavily embroidered ceremonial covers), a tie-dyed sari, several sari cloths with woven patterns, and some 19th-century printed textiles. More recently the Department acquired historical textiles of considerably quality; a large Gujarati embroidery is a quarter of a floor or bed cover, probably dated to the early 18th century and decorated with fine flowers and animals done in chain stitch. A few smaller Mughal textiles, including an early fragment of Kashmir weaving, have also been added. These will at least occasionally be on view as part of the new Mughal art display.

Some additions to the Indian collection were acquired to complement the Indian trade textiles in the Newberry collection. There are two Indian block-printed cloths, both very large, that were originally traded to Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia and used there as ceremonial fabrics. Both have parallels in the Indo-Egyptian material, and C-14 dating on one has shown it to have a date of around 1400 A.D., a remarkable record of survival from a part of the world where textiles are usually assumed not to be older than the 19th century. A third cloth from Sulawesi was made locally, but clearly imitates an Indian prototype. On recent journeys to India and the Yemen I collected contemporary textiles which were also of relevance to the Newberry material, as they show a certain degree of continuity, both in production and in the ongoing importance of trade in Indian textiles.

The Chinese textiles come to a total of approximately 180 items, mostly robes, and of 19th or early 20th century date, mainly of silk and embroidered. One fragment of silk tapestry weaving is much earlier, though: it has a Song dynasty date (11th century). There are also just over 40 cross-stitch embroideries from Sichuan, donated to the Department a few years ago. Temple and domestic hangings, usually heavily embroidered with silk, number about 40. From Japan there are just a few items, the most notable one a kimono that was recently restored by Susan Stanton and is now on display in the new Japanese gallery.

Finally there is a collection from Central Asia that is of particular interest, both for the quality of design and the biographical connection. When the Eastern Art Department was set up in the early 1960's, about 20 silk and cotton ikat coats were transferred from the former Indian Institute here in Oxford. It has only recently been possible to identify them as part of the material collected by the merchant and explorer Robert Shaw (1839-1879), the first Englishman to visit Yarkand and Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan. He travelled to the region in 1868/69, at a time when Central Asia was the setting of the Great Game, the espionage and power wrangle between England and Russia over the international control of the area. When relating the adventures of his travels in his book *Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand, and Kashgar*, Shaw described the splendid dress of the court dignitaries, and he mentioned receiving a satin coat from Yakub Beg, the ruler of Kashgar. From information and photographs discovered in 1995 in a family album that once belonged to Shaw's sister (who was the mother of another Great Game player, Francis Younghusband), it is now quite certain that the ikat coats in the collection were acquired on this journey. Two of the photographs even show Robert Shaw wearing the coats, in one case the satin silk garment presented to him by Yakub Beg. This gives the collection a particular biographical flair, but also provides a date and provenance, which is rare for 19th-century Central Asian material. Apart from the coats, there are also about 20 embroidered skull caps, as well as socks decorated with ikat strips.

This brief survey shows that the textiles in the Department fall into one of two groups. The first contains collections of considerable historical interest. Foremost among these is the Newberry material, unparalleled in size and quality. In addition there are certain collections that are intriguing because they were acquired by, or had an association with, interesting people. Some of the latter, in particular the T.E. Lawrence and Shaw collections, have been researched and are by now known to a wider public. The second group of Asian textiles is of mixed or indifferent quality. It is possible, though, that further research into the origin of some of this material may produce interesting information.

Ruth Barnes



Robert Shaw and his fellow travellers after the return from Chinese Turkestan (1869). Shaw is wearing a coat given to him by Yakub Beg. Original photograph British Library.

**PROGRAMME**

**Saturday 21 February at 11.20 a.m.**

**COLOURS OF THE INDUS**

Gallery Talk with Rosemary Crill  
Co-curator of this Exhibition, at the V.& A

Members received a separate mailing about this event in January. There are still a few places left, but there are also some people who would like to bring a friend if not all places are taken up by members. Please let Felicity Wood know by Wednesday 11 February at the latest if you would like to take up a place.

**Tuesday 5 May at 5.45 p.m.**

**PURSUIT OF INDIGO; ARABIA EASTWARDS**

Lecture by Jenny Balfour-Paul  
Author of *Indigo and the Arab World*  
at the Pauling Centre for Human Sciences, 58 Banbury Road, Oxford.

Refreshments will be served from 5.15 p.m.  
Visitors welcome: £2

**Thursday 28 May at 10.30 a.m.**

Visit to the  
**TEXTILE CONSERVATION CENTRE**  
at Hampton Court Palace

There is also the option to visit the Royal School of Needlework  
in the afternoon - see information sheet enclosed

## KNITTING - AN ASIAN INVENTION?

Knitting as a subject of study was, for a very long time, trapped in a vicious circle. Because those who looked at it in any depth were few and far between, hardly any papers were published, let alone monographic books. Consequently, knitting was rarely included in major works dedicated to the history of fashion and textiles, the authors having found no books on knitting in any bibliography. They therefore assumed, if they ever actually mentioned knitting, that this area of textiles was only of any consequence after the technical break-throughs of the late 18th century, often forgetting that it had been mechanized as early as 1589. As for hand-knitting, the silk stockings fashionable in the European courts in the 16th century might have been mentioned. Otherwise, hand-knitting was dismissed as the work of maids and country-women.

The fact that knitting had been ignored to such an extent, precisely in the books that form the backbone of textile history education, could only lead to a general lack of scholarly enthusiasm for the subject. In other words, the original lack of specialist publications was self-perpetuating. Fortunately, there were a few cracks, and these are gradually getting larger. But we are still in a situation where, by and large, general understanding of knitting history in the West is at best fragmentary and at worst misinformed. Looking towards the East, matters only get worse, as we have hardly any elements to start sketching a coherent picture.

This lack of knowledge of Eastern knitting is especially sad because there has long been a sense that knitting was introduced into Europe by the Arabs. So here we have a parallel with silk manufacture and, indeed, the examples of 13th and 14th-century knitting found in Spain, France and Switzerland are all knitted in silk. The earlier Spanish pieces (two cushions for the Castilian royal family and a pair of episcopal gloves), moreover, bear strong formal resemblances with contemporary Hispano-Moresque weaves. One of them even has the word *barakat* knitted in in kufic script. All of this would support the hypothesis of knitting having travelled along North Africa and into Spain as a specialist silk manufacture. But further proof has failed to materialize.

A variety of fragments from Fatimid Egypt, dated 11th and 12th centuries, are knitted in wool or cotton. Of these, the cotton ones are the better known, in particular various socks and sock fragments in white with blue patterning. Technically, however, they are inferior to the wool fragments. These tend to be given the earlier dating, and show an extraordinary complexity of patterning - not unlike Middle Eastern rugs in some cases. Quite a number of these can be seen in *Tissus d'Egypte*, the catalogue of the Bouvier Collection exhibited in Geneva and Paris a few years ago. (Editions de l'Albaron, Société Présence du livre, 1993, ISBN 2 908 528 525). Knitting an intricate pattern in a fine gauge with five colours per row is not for beginners, and working a narrow tube in blocks of colour without leaving floats of yarn on the reverse is not even considered possible by the vast majority of knitters to-day. It is clear, therefore, that knitting had been mastered well before the 11th century. But here the mystery starts.

It seems extraordinary that, given the quality of the woollen Fatimid fragments, there should be practically no examples of knitting before them. The many Coptic socks, still sometimes referred to as knitting, are not knitted. As has been pointed out repeatedly, they

are a form of looping that structurally is like twisted stocking-stitch. There remain a couple of fragments from Dura-Europos, of which the larger one is also a form of looping. Then there are two more, from Roman Egypt, very recently discovered by Dominique Cardon, who will be publishing full details in due course. There is also a small cotton fragment found in a Viking grave and kept at Langeland Museum in Denmark. It has been studied in depth by Lise Warburg, who suggests a date c.980 and possibly a Persian origin. Viking trade routes followed Russian rivers to Basra, Samarkand and Constantinople, while contemporary sources describe the export of stockings from Persia. (The Early Knitting History Group plans to publish full details of this research at some future date.)

To my knowledge, this is the only evidence that knitting historians have found of an organized knitting production in Asia. It is unlikely to be the only reference. And it is unlikely that knitting managed to get to the highly-developed stage it had reached by the 11th century without leaving any traces. If, as seems likely, knitting originated in Asia, it is obviously to Asia that we should look for further signs of when and where it started, how it developed, and how it spread. In this respect, Warburg's work in tracking down knitting techniques along the course of inland waterways is highly illuminating. It suggests, for example, that the idea of knitting spreading to the West exclusively through North Africa might be too simple, and the possibility of various simultaneous routes of introduction needs to be assessed.

In Asia itself, there are probably examples of knitting in museums we have not heard of. It is also likely that there are references to knitting in primary sources and these may have even been quoted in articles dealin<sup>g</sup> with other subjects which we have as yet failed to pick up. Now that interest in knitting is growing, it is important that whatever leads there are should be followed up. However, we first have to discover them, and for this the need for help from specialists in the various textile fields cannot be over-emphasized. In the case of Asian textiles, any information relating to finds and references that members of the O.A.T.G. might be able to pass on would be invaluable and most appreciated.

This need for information extends to all periods. With the exception of Turkish socks, which have been the subject of various books, little else is known in detail. In *A History of Hand-Knitting*, Richard Rutt mentions various pieces from India and Kashmir in the Ashmolean and Victoria and Albert Museums. Other examples very likely exist in other British museums, while the Knitting Reference Library has two pairs of fine silk socks from Central Asia and a Lepcha cap, probably in yak wool. Individually they are all very interesting pieces of knitting, and testimony to thriving Asian traditions that need to be studied in detail - proof that there is much work to be done.

I should welcome any information O.A.T.G. members might be able to give me, and should also be happy to give them further information about the Early Knitting History Group and the Knitting Reference Library. Please contact me at the Knitting Reference Library, P.O. Box 471, Cambridge CB5 8DG, fax 01223 574 766.

a young girl making a simple item for the home, to the highly skilled work of older women making fine pieces for temple use. A particularly fascinating aspect is the inter-relationship of women weavers, their menfolk and the monks in the creation and development of textile designs.

Susan Conway, using excellent slides, showed how cotton is prepared for dyeing with indigo, a favourite colour, or with other vegetable dyes. The other widely used material is silk, and we saw the stages of production from the young caterpillars, needing feeding and "changing" three times daily, through the cocoon stage to the reeling of the silk thread. Only the grubs are left; these, apparently, provide valuable protein.

A varied collection of woven pieces was on display. They were brilliantly coloured and patterned, and illustrated the four main weaving techniques used locally. Ikat weaving, known in Thailand as *matra*, is based on the weft threads being tied and dip-dyed. A handpicking technique produces elaborate borders suitable for skirts and pillows. Some complex designs used can be stored as a collection of shed sticks, which are rolled up and can then be used or loaned to fellow weavers. *Jok* weaving involves hand-picking with the wrong side of the work upwards. This technique produces the finest pieces, requiring great patience and skill. Tapestry weaving, known as *ko*, is also used to make women's skirts and hangings.

Exciting recent research has compared the costume and dress of mid-19th century figures in temple wall paintings, with traditional and contemporary weaving designs. Thus the costumes of royalty from the Kingdoms of Chiang Mai can be linked with contemporary clothing.

Fiona Sutcliffe

### **A Morning at the Pitt Rivers - 17 January 1998**

After a cup of coffee, a welcome, and introductions by Ruth Barnes, what was a large party divided into two groups for a very intensive two hours.

While Lorraine Rostant described conservation techniques to one group, Julia Nicholson had just 25 minutes to go over a very full showcase from the Nagas with the other. Textiles and objects had been collected by two civil servants, Mills and Hutton, ethnologists who worked in the north-east province of Assam. Their collections were assembled between the two World Wars. The Nagas were head-hunters; their cloth was dyed red or blue and was almost exclusively of cotton but in rare cases they used goat or dog fibre. The women wove the cloth on back-strap looms; the men embellished with either embroidery or paint.

The painted panels are on white, with elongated human forms representing the hunted, in a strip repetitive pattern with intermittent skulls or bison, the latter being important as a sacrificial animal. The cloths can be de-coded for their use and the rank of the wearer. One very distinctive woven panel was dyed goat hair with a large circle of cowrie shells representing the sun. Inside the circle was a cross - the stars. As hunting was done by night, this panel is presumed to represent their powers to hunt by starlight.



The two groups then came together to look at the exhibition, *Braving the Elements*. This was certainly a conservation challenge as all the items are made of raw plant fibre. The material was mostly protective clothing to shield the wearer from sun or rain. A palm-fibre raincoat from Chisiang province in China is a dramatic main feature of the exhibition.

Dividing into our groups again, those who had been with Julia Nicholson now went to Lorraine Rostant who began by thanking members who had contributed to the appeal for her to attend a six-week textile conservation course in Budapest last year. She did learn a lot and saw some amazing items with excellent results. For our group she had three very different problems to show us. This led to a spirited question and answer session.

First, a silk embroidered shawl that had been folded with a pinned-on label. Enemy no 1. for all textiles is ultra violet light, and folding, pins or stitched labels eventually cause damage. Such an item would, ideally, be kept dry, rolled and interleaved with acid-free paper.

Next, a cotton shirt that had been folded and kept in a wooden chest. Wood leaches oil and sap; it is best, therefore, to line wood with foil. Other items can leach colour if not separated with acid-free paper. Some garments need padding out with rolled or crunched-up paper.

The third item was a pair of silk slippers (in a plastic bag) covered in frass. This was treated by freezing, as are many items that may have an infestation, such as fur. The Museum freezes such items at -30° for 72 hours.

Lorraine's message was: good housekeeping is essential for all objects; check them regularly. Avoid Verpona: it can affect dyes. Rentokil has a home service. If washing, use soap flakes and distilled water. An interesting book is *Wildlife in the House and Home* (Collins, ISBN 0-00-219367-1)

Marion Weinstein

## CARING FOR TEXTILES

Following on the morning at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Lorraine Rostant has kindly provided the following care notes for members.

### Suggested Reading

*Guidelines for the Conservation of Textiles* by Alison Lister for English Heritage, 1996  
Available from: Ancient Monuments Laboratory, Conservation and Technology  
Branch, English Heritage, 23 Savile Row, London W1R 2HD, tel. 0171-973.3434

*The Care and Preservation. of Textiles* by Karen Finch and Greta Putnam, Batsford, 1985.

*Museums Association Information Sheet - Textiles: Their Care and Protection in Museums*, a leaflet obtainable from the Museums Association, 42 Clerkenwell Close,

### Suppliers of Acid-free Wrappings

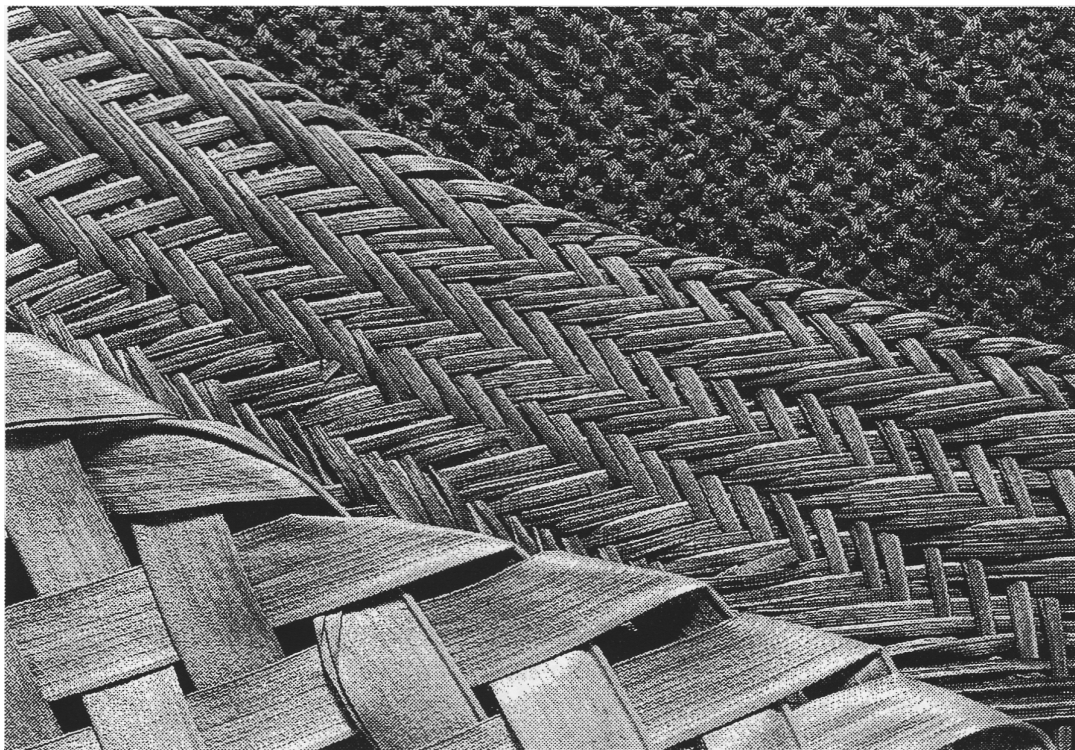
Acid-free paper and card is available from:

Conservation Resources (UK) Ltd and  
Unit 1, Pony Road  
Horspath Industrial Estate  
Cowley  
Oxford  
OX4 2RD  
Tel. 01865.747755

Falkiner Fine Papers  
76 Southampton Row  
London  
WC1B 4AR  
Tel. 0171-831.1151

Acid-free cardboard boxes are available from Conservation Resources as above and

C.A. Coutts Ltd  
Violet Road  
London  
E3 3QL  
Tel. 0171-515.6171



Details of eye-shades: Top, knotted coconut fibre from Tahiti made by 1774; centre, palm-leaf from the Solomon Islands, late 19th century; below, palm-leaf from Tuvalu, Micronesia, late 19th century; all in the exhibition *Braving the Elements* (see above, p.10 and below, p. 13)

## LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Editor,

There is a group of ladies here who have an avid interest in S.E. Asian textiles. We try to hold monthly meetings so that informal talks can be held on the wonderful collections that some of these ladies have.

I thought it might be nice to put a note in the newsletter inviting anyone who may be passing through Singapore to get in touch with me. It is always enjoyable to meet other textile enthusiasts.

Yours sincerely

JANICE THOMPSON

5 Hacienda Grove #04-04, Singapore 457911

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## MUSEUMS ROUND-UP

Michael O'Hanlon (M.A. Cambridge, Ph.D. London), at present Assistant Keeper in the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum, has been appointed to the Directorship of the Pitt Rivers Museum with effect from 14 April 1998.

His research has been in the New Guinea Highlands, and he was responsible for the large exhibition on that area at the Museum of Mankind on view between 1993 and 1995.

He is the author of *Reading the Skin: Adornment, Display and Society among the Wahgi and Paradise: Portraying the New Guinea Highlands*.

Meanwhile no appointment has been made to the vacant Directorship of the Ashmolean, and Roger Moorey, Keeper of Antiquities, continues to serve as Acting Director.

The Ashmolean's Department of Eastern Art is hoping to acquire a complete embroidered tunic from Egypt, recently radio-carbon dated to 1020 A.D. +/- 35 years. It would complement the Newberry collection of Islamic embroideries.

Members will be pleased to know that the upheaval that has disrupted the Eastern Art Department at the Ashmolean over the last two years has at last come to an end. All the

## EXHIBITIONS

### **Braving the Elements: Conserving Plant Fibre Clothing from Around the World**

On display in the Pitt Rivers Museum is an extraordinary collection of protective clothes all made from unmodified, or simply modified, plant material - leaves, bark, palm spath, reeds. They are brought together in the exhibition *Braving the Elements*, on show until the end of 1998.

In one respect this is a typically "Pitt Rivers" exhibition; the objects chosen represent 26 different cultures from five continents and range in date from mid-nineteenth century to the present day. There are two themes linking these disparate objects, first that they are all made from plants, secondly that they all protect the wearer from the elements in some way - snow-goggles are displayed next to brow-shades, rain-capes in a case next to sun-hats.

This brings us on to the aspects of the exhibition which make it rather atypical for the Pitt Rivers. These all stem, to a lesser or greater degree, from the fact that the exhibition was curated by the Conservation Department. We have tried to link the protective nature of the clothes with the protection they now need from us, the museum professionals, whose job it is to ensure their preservation. The aims of the exhibition are two-fold: to display fascinating, ingenious objects, and through them to explain the basics of preventive conservation. The importance of minimising light levels in the gallery, ensuring a regular level of humidity, protecting objects from unnecessary handling, are all explained in information panels and interactive displays.

The methods we use to communicate this message are also rather atypical for the Pitt Rivers: information panels are aimed at children rather than adults, and there are displays of objects which the visitor is encouraged to touch. We rely heavily on feedback from the public to discover how successful these methods are; there is a book for visitors' comments in the exhibition - we look forward to reading those from members of the O.A.T.G.

*Braving the Elements* is on display at the Pitt Rivers Museum, main building in Parks Road (through the University Museum) until the end of 1998. A range of postcards, a leaflet on the conservation of one of the objects and a teacher's pack to accompany the exhibition are on sale in the Museum shop. (Tel. 01865.270927)

Conservation Department, Pitt Rivers Museum

### **Other Exhibitions**

*Palms, Pearls and Pinnacles* continues its tour around Hampshire, and can be seen at Havant Museum until 17 February (tel.01705.451155); Willis Museum, Basingstoke (tel.01256.465902<sup>1</sup>), 17 February to 31 March; Red House Museum, Christchurch (tel.01202.273240), 10 April to 28 May; and the Allen Gallery, Alton (01420.82802), 5 June to 28 July. This is an exhibition of traditional women's dress from the Arabian Peninsula collected by Josephine Kane, an O.A.T.G. member.

Editor

## Edinburgh

**The Colours of the Indus** Exhibition moves from the V.& A. and will be seen at the Royal Museum, Chambers Street, through May and June. For those of you who have not seen it, this is an exhibition tracing the rich textile traditions of Pakistan, presenting more than 150 exquisite costumes dating from the mid-19th century to the present day. Conceived as a journey up the river Indus, the exhibition explores the astonishing diversity and beauty of regional textiles.

Also at the Royal Museum, until 31 March, **The Ainu Bear Festival** The Ainu are an indigenous people who live in northern Japan. The Bear Festival was a central part of Ainu life, during which a bear would be killed in order to return him to his spiritual home. This intriguing display presents the Museum's unique collection of Ainu costume and decorative objects used during the Festival.

(The telephone number of the Royal Museum is 0131-225.7534)

## Overseas

The Indianapolis Museum of Art is showing an exhibition of Japanese kimono from its collection until 10 May,

### Last Chance to See -

**Dazzle and Dare** at the V,& A. (tel.0171-938.6400) closes 22 February

**Open Sesame** at the Glasgow City Museum and Art Gallery (tel.0141-339.8855) closes 10 April.

### Apology

In the autumn I received an understandably indignant postcard from a member in Devon who went all the way up to London to see *Nomads on the Move* at the Horniman Museum, only to find it had already been dismantled, although she had read in the newsletter that it was on until January. I do apologize to her and to anyone else who may have been similarly disappointed, The entry was based on information supplied by the Museum - as is all the information included in this feature. (I myself went to London to see an exhibition which happened to be closed on that day - though in my case the attendants surreptitiously let me in!) May I suggest that you phone to check that what you want to see is visible on the day you want to see it before making a journey that may be wasted. You will notice that I have included telephone numbers in this issue (except for Indianapolis, which I do not know), and will try to remember to do so in future.

Editor

## LECTURES AND EVENTS

### Ashmolean Indian Study Day

This is now fully booked with a waiting list.

### Victoria and Albert Museum Gallery Talks - all at 2 p.m.

Tuesday 21 April - Islamic Carpets I, by Fahmida Shah.

Tuesday 28 April - Islamic Carpets II, by Fahmida Shah.

Thursday 30 April - Fashion in China through the collections of the V.& A.,  
by Olivia Callea

### The Textile Society

Tuesday 17 February - Visit to Sanderson's

(Contact Freddie Lannert, tel.0181-898.3677)

Wednesday 25 February - Study Day on *Colours of the Indus* at the V.& A.

(Contact Ngozi Ikoku, tel.0171-938.8420)

Friday 20 March - Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, "Items from the Newberry  
Collection" (Contact Freda Chapman, tel.01428.683703)

Sunday 22 March - Antique Textile Fair, Manchester

(Contact Margaret Bolger, tel.01470.592361)

Wednesday 6 May - Kew Gardens, "Plants and Dyes")

(Contact Freda Chapman, tel.01428.683703)

Further information about the Textile Society, its membership and activities, may also be obtained from Freda Chapman (an O.A.T.G. member) on the above number.

### The Textile Society of America

The 6th Biennial Symposium of the Society will take place from 23 to 26 September 1998 at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York City. Under the title, *Makers, Methods, Markets*, it will consider the factors affecting the creation of textiles throughout the world and across time. Further information can be obtained from Desirée Koslin, Fashion Institute of Technology, Graduate Studies Department, 7th Avenue at 27th Street E-315, New York, N.Y., 10001, tel. +1-212-760-7714, fax +1-212-760-7156.

### Auctions at Christies, South Kensington

Islamic Costume and Textiles - 29 April and 14 October 1998

Oriental Costume and Textiles - 10 June and 24 November 1998

**BOOKS**

Sheila Paine's book, *Golden Horde: Travels from the Himalaya to Karpathos*, published last summer in hardback, has already sold out, but is due to appear in paperback this month, published by Penguin at £8.99. Penguin have also issued a reprint of *The Afghan Amulet* at £7.99.

Anne E. Wardwell & James C.Y. Watt *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles*. A book produced to accompany a joint exhibition of material from the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum, New York. It features more than 60 fragile and luxurious objects, including tapestries, silks, embroideries and printed textiles which were produced in imperial workshops and traded along the Silk Routes, and those created for Buddhist monasteries. Essays deal with the social, economic, political and religious contexts in which these precious textiles were created, and individual entries offer descriptions and technical analyses. Metropolitan Museum N.Y., 1997, 220pp, 180 illus (100 in colour), \$65.00

Nancy Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham, eds.: *Languages of Dress in the Middle East*, Curzon, 1997, ISBN 0-7007-0670-4 (cloth), ISBN 0-7007-0671-2 (pbk), £35, cloth, £12.99 pbk. This book examines the complex relation between clothing practices and natural languages in the Middle East, but each of the nine papers stands as a separate study. The authors include anthropologists, ethnographers, historians and linguists, and their papers cover aspects of dress in relation to identity, politics and religion over a range of costume from simple rural dress to elaborate court robes.

**ACCOMMODATION**

In response to earlier requests, Felicity has drawn up a list of local members who would be prepared to give overnight accommodation, at a modest charge, to members from further afield who may not wish to make the long journey home after meetings, especially in the dark. Anyone wishing to take advantage of this offer should get in touch with her.(address on page 5).

**FOR THE NEXT ISSUE - MONDAY 1. JUNE**

Contributions should be sent to  
Phyllis Nye, Hewel Barn, Common Road, BECKLEY, Oxon, OX3 9UR  
Tel/fax 01865 351607