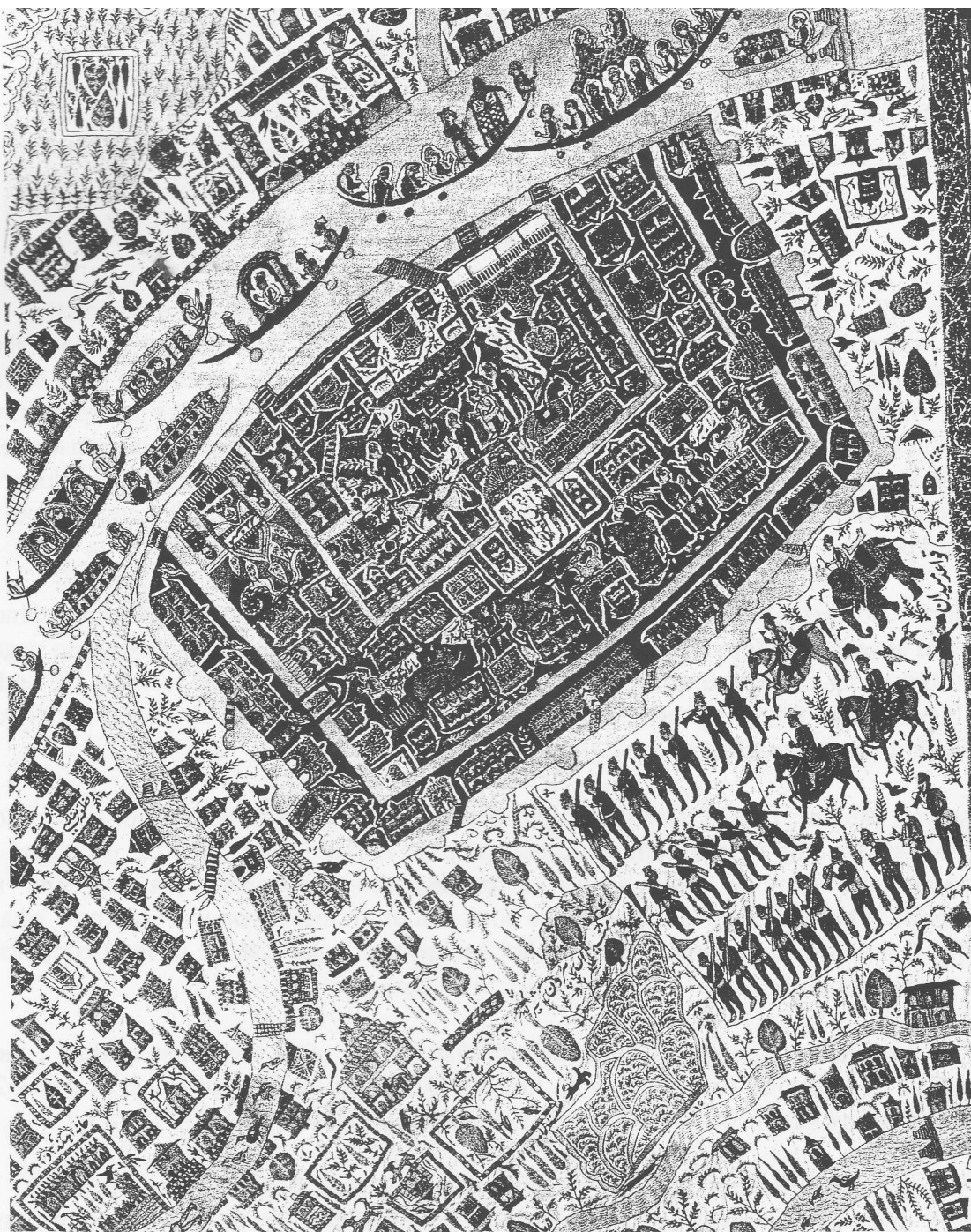


OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 13

June 1999



Detail from a shawl, embroidered pashmina, Kashmir, c. 1870 (V. & A. no. IS 31-1970), at present on show in the *Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms* exhibition. By courtesy of the Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum. (See exhibitions inside)

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EDITORIAL

You will notice that there are a number of changes in this issue of the Newsletter; I hope you will not think they are changes for the worse. Perhaps the most noticeable is the change of typeface. This is because in the past I have produced the newsletter on a word processor in the Department of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean, and I should like to express my appreciation to the Keeper for permission to do so. Now, however, personal circumstances have made it necessary for me to use my own old Amstrad. This means that I can no longer accept copy in disc form - unless you also happen to have an old Amstrad! - and can only accept hard copy.

More fundamental are the changes in layout. Because the old one was to my mind logical, and always the same, I assumed that readers would, for example, go straight to page 5 to find out about the forthcoming programme, and to find diary entries towards the end, with only book news following them. It seems that I was mistaken, and I have been criticised for compelling readers to rifle all through to find these things.

As you can see, I have moved the forthcoming programme forward from page 5 to page 3, so that you only have to turn over the front page to find facing you what is on, and I am using the intervening page with a table of contents (above) followed by a new item: a brief editorial. I have also moved forward the book feature so that if you want to know what is on other than our own programme and cannot be bothered to look at the table of contents, you can go straight to the end.

This arrangement has the advantage that what I think of as the "First Feature", the review article of a specific collection, is no longer confined to the straight jacket of pages 2 to 4, and can be any length (within reason) that the author pleases.

I hope you will like the new look. If not - or even if you do - please let me know. I am always open to comments and suggestions. I like to involve as many members as possible in the Newsletter, which is why I always try to find someone who has not done so before to write up the Group's meetings, and welcome articles, or suggestions for articles - not to mention Letters to the Editor, which have so far been rather thin on the ground - what about a debate on the question put by Patsy Yardley on the question put in her last paragraph (p.14)?

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 7 July
at 2 p.m.

**THE ROBERT SHAW COLLECTION
OF CENTRAL ASIAN GARMENTS**

introduced by Ruth Barnes

Curator of the 1995 exhibition *Dressing for the Great Game*

at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: visit to the collection
Numbers limited to 15*

**Wednesday 8 September
at 2.30 p.m.**

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

A members visit to the Japanese country textiles

in the Reserve Collection and Japan Gallery

Introductory talk by Anna Jackson

Assistant Curator at the V.&A. and author of *Japanese Country Textiles*
Numbers limited to 12*

**Thursday 21 October
at 5.45 p.m.**

Pitt Rivers Research Centre
64 Banbury Road, Oxford

AGM of the Oxford Asian Textile Group

followed by refreshments and

at 7.00 p.m.

TAKE TWO SQUARES: ETHNIC CLOTHES WITHOUT PATTERNS

by Penelope Woolfitt

Lecturer in Costume, City Literary Institute, London

Members free; visitors welcome - £2

*To book a place for either of these events, please contact Felicity Wood. Address: 2 Frenchay Road, Oxford, OX2 6TG; tel/fax: 01865 554281; e-mail: felicity.wood@dial.pipex.conL Both events are free of charge, but booking is essential and is on a 'first come - first served' basis.

SOUTH ASIAN COSTUME AND TEXTILES IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF SCOTLAND

The Royal Museum of Scotland was founded in 1854 as the Industrial Museum of Scotland. It was established at a time when there was great enthusiasm for exhibitions, public museums and education for everybody. It was also a time of industrial wealth and an important part of this was the textile industry.

From the outset the Museum was interested in collecting textiles and exploring how they were produced and used. This interest extended not only to British textiles, but to textiles from all over the world. The Museum's collections of South Asian textiles and costume number about a thousand pieces, some five hundred of which are Indian. There are also items from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Burma.

By the 1850s Indian cotton mills were flourishing and exporting textiles in large quantities. The designs and colours used were much admired and this is reflected in one of the Museum's early acquisitions. In 1866, the year the Museum was officially opened by Prince Albert, the Museum collected a set of books illustrating the *Textile Manufactures of India* (A.1866.44). These were presented to the Museum by the Secretary of State for India, and another full set of volumes can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The sample books contain textile specimens from all areas of production in what was then India (some of the areas covered are now in Pakistan or Bangladesh). Examples of the fabrics included are turban cloths, garment pieces, muslin, calicos, silks, cottons and woollens. Four volumes can be seen in the *Within the Middle East* gallery which opened in 1995.*

The first South Asian textile to enter the Museum's collection was a square piece of gold and silver embroidery on a green cashmere ground (A.299.1). This was presented to the donor as a gift from the King of Oudh in Lucknow, 1858, and given to the Museum later that same year. The decoration includes sequins and coloured beads sewn into the border and there is an overall geometric design. Although the Museum has actively collected since its foundation, the majority of the collections have been gifts such as this one, many collected by the donors as souvenirs.

The most interesting of the earlier pieces of Indian costume in the collection are two outfits that were worn by women at the court of Bhopal in Central India in 1856 (A.1905.6&7). They came to the Museum in 1905 and consist of caps, jackets, robes, trousers, sashes and undergarments. The clothes are of silk and wool and include silk, gold and silver embroidery for decoration. The trousers are tie-dyed woven silk and the undergarments are embroidered muslin.

*The author has done some research on these books, and has agreed to write on them more fully for the February 2000 number of the Newsletter. - Editor



Embroidered KANTHA (quilt) with horses and women in a harvest dance, from East Bengal c.1900. National Museums of Scotland (1982.336)

In contrast to these court costumes, the Museum also has many more modest but just as interesting pieces. For example, in 1982, three Kantha quilts (A.1982.336-8) from East Bengal were acquired. Two are dated to c.1900 and one to c.1950. These quilts are made by re-using old saris and dhotis put together in several layers and then quilted with a simple running stitch in designs of almost anything. Birds, animals, people, everyday and religious scenes can all be outlined with running stitch and then filled in with embroidery. The Museum's quilts include designs of geometric patterns, fluid designs of animals, fishes and flowers and men and women performing a harvest dance (see illustration below, p.5).

The National Museums of Scotland continue actively to collect contemporary and historical textiles. Most recently, with the help of the National Art Collections Fund, the Museum has acquired a rare and important woven silk. It was made in Assam in the early 18th century as part of an altar cloth and the woven design in red and yellow depicts scenes from the life of Krishna. Only a handful of these textiles, called *vrindavani vastras* are known. They prove that high quality textile production was happening in a region -where traditionally it was thought there was none at this time.

The South Asian textile and costume collections of the National Museums of Scotland represent what has become available to the Museum and what individuals have collected in the last hundred and fifty years. Sometimes individual tastes or particular regions are better represented than others. Even so the collection offers the opportunity to examine techniques of textile production and adornment from all over the sub-continent. There are examples of embroidery, weaving, tie-dying, wood-block printing, quilting and applique. Future acquisitions, especially of contemporary material, are planned in conjunction with hopes for a new permanent gallery to host these fascinating collections.

Lyn Stevens Wall History and Applied Art, National
Museums of Scotland



Paper cut from Shidong in S.E. Guizhou. The paper-cuts are drawn by the older women, who know the stories, and sold in the market, where they are bought to be embroidered over in satin stitch. The cuts are made through several thicknesses of paper together, and the details are drawn on only the top copy (as seen above). The reverse, seen opposite, shows the unadorned state in which the rest of the pile are sold. Most girls would buy an outline like this and use their own imagination in embroidering the details.

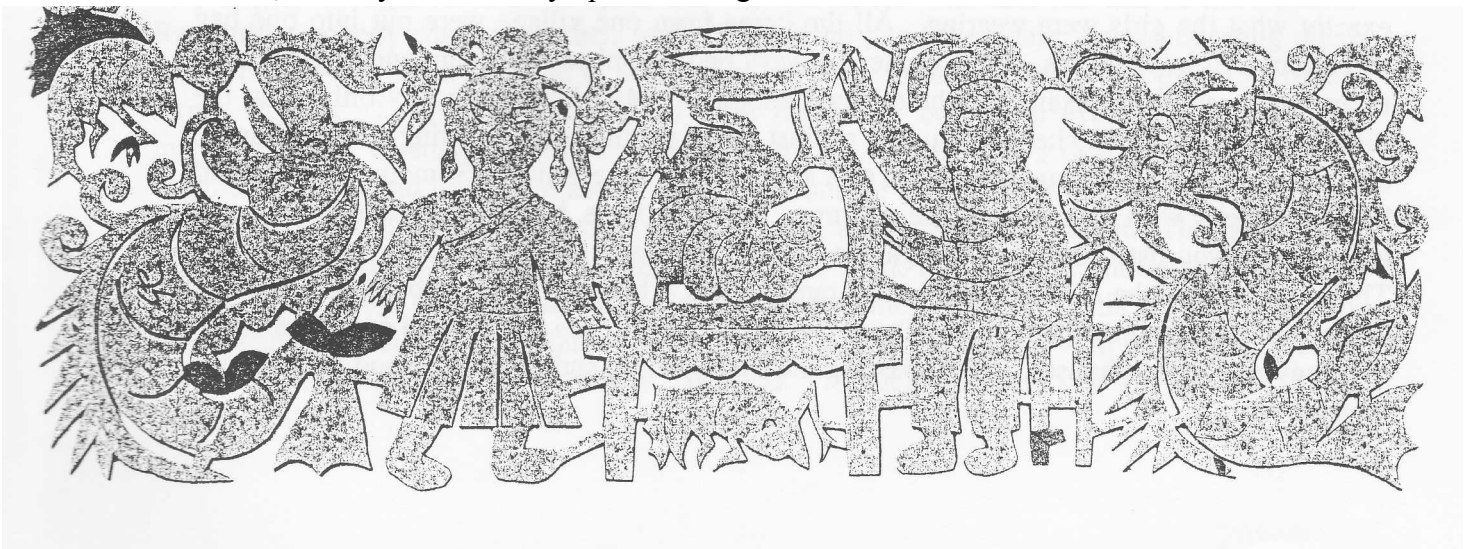
HOW A COLLECTION OF MIAO COSTUMES CAME TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM

This is the story of how almost fifty complete Miao women's and men's costumes from Ghizhou Province in remote South West China came to the British Museum. It is also the story of how costumes, previously only made by the young girls to show, at festivals, their dexterity and skill at weaving and embroidery to prospective husbands, suddenly became tradable items, bringing a considerable amount of wealth to Miao villages which became involved in the making, buying and selling of existing and replica costumes.

In 1988 I designed a textile tour to Yunnan Province. Yunnan has many minority peoples and I had noticed, whilst combing the official Chinese journals, that the minorities here were still wearing traditional dress, which appeared often to be hand-woven, embroidered and rich in various resist techniques. I was even more interested to note the highly decorative costumes worn by the Miao to the east of Yunnan, in Ghizhou Province. This province in 1988 was largely closed to foreigners, as it was poor and did not have any tourist facilities except in Guiyang, the provincial capital, which I decided to visit as the last destination of the tour.

At Guiyang, we stayed at a Cadre Hotel in Huaxi on the city outskirts and made a daring journey into the centre of Guiyang, along a road that was a sea of mud and stones which seemed to be on the move in small wheel barrows, pushed by teams of peasants. It took two hours. To-day it only takes half an hour. Everything was being rebuilt for a planned influx of overseas Chinese tourists who would visit the Huangguoshu Waterfall, the largest in Asia.

In Guiyang, we were taken to a room in the Tourist Office. In front of our eyes at least 100 pieces of the most gorgeous embroidered costumes were unpacked. The embroidery largely consisted of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic designs embroidered in red satin stitch over paper cuts (see illustrations opposite and below). They seemed to represent folk tales. Later I identified the pieces as coming from Shidong in the south east of the Province. My first comments were to the group, "Don't touch; these are museum pieces". Actually they were pieces collected by Han Chinese from the Miao people and were for us to buy. I selected two small pieces. The group were delirious at our find and bought many pieces. I was invited by the tourist officials to return and explore the Miao areas around Kaili in the south east, the only areas readily open to foreigners.



I arrived back in Guizhou several months later, in February 1989, as I was told the low agricultural season was festival time for the Miao people and young girls dressed in their best costumes came to appointed "flower grounds" (meeting places designated by township officials) for the festivals. The village girls gathered at the flower ground and displayed their costumes in a slow stately dance, accompanied by *lusheng* pipes played by the village boys. Crowds looked on. Other villagers shopped at stalls set up by pedlars and vendors. Old men displayed their caged singing birds. Traditionally-minded men attended water-buffalo fights, or horse racing. Modern young men played in basket-ball or volley-ball competitions. At dusk everyone dispersed up the long twisting path to the villages to feast and drink. The festival continued for three to five days and liaisons were forged between boys and girls who were looking for marriage partners.

On my first day I was lucky enough to see five completely different costumes, which, I learned, came from various local areas. I was totally mesmerised by the richness of the costumes and was determined to return and find out more.

I made arrangements to return with a group interested in textiles and planned to visit some villages. I was promised by the tourist authorities that the Miao girls would dress in festival clothes as well as demonstrate some textile techniques. The tour was a huge success and others followed on an annual basis.

Miao groups in Guizhou had not been visited by Europeans since foreigners and Christian missionaries had left after 1949. The missionary presence had been strong in Guizhou and they had left behind a series of interesting reports and books, which I read voraciously. Contemporary information was more difficult to find.

My Chinese colleagues in the Tourist Office were keen to explore other areas in the province with the idea of opening up new areas to tourists. This was the beginning of a partnership which usually meant that I travelled with my Chinese colleagues, visiting as many of the areas of the province as possible, often before they were officially opened to foreigners. In following years I returned with groups.

I had never been a collector, but some instinct led me to collect the different costumes of the various Miao groups methodically, as I felt it was probably one of the last areas in the world to have so many skilled craftswomen performing spinning, dyeing, weaving and a huge range of embroidery techniques. I tried to collect whole costumes, assembling carefully exactly what the girls were wearing. All the items from one village were put into one bag and referenced in my notes. Once home, I always photographed each item and clipped it on to an index card with details of where I had bought it. My idea was to buy only from the villages where I could check costumes against what people were wearing. The Chinese officials arranged for costumes to be on sale at the villages we visited. Sometimes one could bargain directly with the owner of the costume. At other times, bargaining was done through a Headman, who listed the price you gave next to the name of the woman who sold it to you. This was because the Miao women could rarely speak Chinese, therefore bargaining had to be done through an intermediary. Sadly, sometimes Han officials tried to sell costumes in the evenings at the guest houses, thus bypassing the Miao people and making a good mark-up for themselves.

However, the Miao women soon developed a network of their own to sell directly. A textile market developed, especially at Kaili, which most foreigners visited. Miao women from Kaili and the Taijing area were the major traders buying in from other areas. Han Chinese and Miao scoured the Guizhou countryside buying costumes from unsuspecting women and resold them at a good profit in Kaili market. Sometimes the traders forgot which pieces of costume went together and unsuspecting foreigners were sold a costume which was wrongly matched or incomplete. Sellers often did not know where the costume came from.

Traders made money and the original owners usually made little. There is a sad story of how Miao traders went into a very remote poor area. The peasants had only rice and vegetables to eat, so the traders bought a whole pig from the market. They brought it to the village, cooked it and gave a huge feast for the villagers. The grateful villagers gave them, in return, many superb costumes.

By 1994 the textile trade was in full swing. Even hotels in Guiyang had costumes for sale at exorbitant prices. When foreigners came, the pavement outside the Kaili Hotel suddenly filled with Miao women with huge bags and bundles containing embroidered pieces and whole costumes. Bargaining was fast and furious and these Miao traders managed to make large sums of money and bought the new flats being built in Kaili city. The trade became more sophisticated. The Miao women began to invite foreigners to their new homes to buy in more salubrious surroundings. Taxis were laid on for clients and paid for. Tea and fruit were on offer, even a fresh fish hot-pot for a good client. Those who made introductions and translated for clients made good profits.

The following tale, which I recorded, is typical, indicating the changing fortunes over the years. It was told me by Zhang, a fifty-four-year-old Miao grandmother and trader. She said that her family originally lived in Shidong. They had been quite rich, the family owned land and rented it out. Before liberation they even had servants. Many of the women servants were employed to sew all day and make beautifully embroidered jackets and pleated skirts for the family. After liberation, their land was taken away and the family made a small living from selling silk thread which they had made from their silk worms. They often traded the silk in Jianhe, a short boat ride away, and when she was sixteen Zhang accompanied her father to Jianhe where a marriage was arranged for her in three days. She and her husband returned to Shidong and had to work as peasants on the newly formed communes. She had four children and she mentioned she had hardly any time to raise them. She commented that they largely brought themselves up as she was too busy. She told me that in the Cultural Revolution nobody could wear their traditional clothes, and their hair, instead of being piled into typical Miao hairstyles, had to be worn in pigtails. Often they wore People's Liberation Army clothes. Their festival costumes were frequently burned to avoid the attention of marauding Red Guards, and there were no festivals. After Mao's death, some land was returned to them and they were able to earn a reasonable income with the new responsibility system in place. It allowed them to sell the surplus, after tax, at the market. The family had managed to educate one daughter, and she began to work in Kaili and married a Miao man who worked in the transport unit as a driver. They rented a flat from his work unit which they eventually bought, using family funds largely earned by Zhang, who had begun selling textiles to the foreigners who visited Guizhou. In fact, she was one of the first Miao

To-day Zhang lives with her daughter in Kaili, collects textiles made by her friends in Shidong and sells them in the streets in Kaili. They have become so rich that they have managed to buy a smart new apartment, and foreigners are now invited to the flat to buy textiles. Shidong red embroidered textiles particularly attract Taiwanese and overseas Chinese businessmen, who buy textiles from her and sell them in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Others are bought by businessmen from Beijing, who sell through Art Troupes visiting foreign countries. The daughter's husband has left his job and his mother-in-law has bought him a taxi which is very useful for collecting visitors. The family can now afford a country-woman to live in and look after the daughter's child. A full circle has been completed; the family has become rich again.

I have largely bought costumes from the villages. Sophisticated dealers now have shops. Prices are breath-takingly high and often quoted in U.S. dollars. On another level, young language students from the universities buy up collections and follow tourist groups. I too have been side-tracked by unusual and rare pieces which have been obtained from dealers, but the collection bought by the British Museum is largely a contemporary collection of named pieces. Anything bought from dealers is clearly stated. The work is so skilled that many think the pieces are old, but this is not the case.

Accompanying the costumes that went to the British Museum is a set of photographs of the villages and villagers where the costumes came from, and pictures of textile techniques that had been used in the making of the costumes. Also to this are added several pages of descriptive material which Deryn O'Connor and I wrote after examining each costume carefully, combining it with our field notes which had been built up over various visits.

There are still many queries and questions as to the base-cloth and the techniques used, as, although one has visited Guizhou for over ten years, it does not reveal all its secrets readily, which is perhaps the major fascination of the collection. The costumes are jewels made by the Miao women. They are in strict contrast to the hard physical environment where the Miao live often at subsistence levels. They are the true "art" and culture of the Miao people.

Gina Corrigan

[If you would like to join any of Gina's textile tours, which she accompanies herself, contact her at Hoe Bam, Hoe Lane, Bognor Regis, Sussex, P022 8NS, Tel. 01243 582178. - Editor.]

O.A.T.G. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due on or before 1 October. Rates remain at £10 for individuals and £15 for two or more people living at the same address and sharing a newsletter. Send to the Membership Secretary, Dymphna Hermans, The Warden's Lodgings, All Souls College, Oxford; OXI 4AL, tel. 01865 289104; fax. 01865 279337; e-mail: dgh@mukh.assc.ox.ac.uk. She will be pleased to send members a Direct Debiting Mandate, as well as further information and application form for potential members.

DRESS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

In the last issue of this newsletter (No. 12, February 1999), there was a brief note about the Stitching Textile Research Centre, Leiden, and its collection of Near Eastern garments. This article is intended to clarify certain points about the Stitching and its work in this field.

The Stitching is a non-profit organization with the stated aim of promoting the study of archaeological and anthropological textiles and costume. It is housed in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, and its Director is Dr Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood.

Since the note appeared in the last newsletter, various changes have taken place in the nature of the Stitching's collection and its potential uses. The collection now stands at over 900 garments, mostly of Iranian and Egyptian origin, although other countries, such as Tunisia, the Yemen, Oman and Afghanistan are also well represented.

One of the long-term objectives of the Stitching is the creation of a representative collection of garments currently worn in the Islamic World, which can be used for study and publication purposes. It is envisaged that eventually over 5,000 items will be needed in order to achieve this aim.

The main project being carried out at present is a study of the urban and regional costume of Iran. Thanks to the generous support of Shell, it has been possible to make several field trips to Iran to collect garments and take relevant photographs. More fieldwork will be carried out over the next few years.

To date, however, nearly 500 garments have been registered and are available for study purposes in Leiden. These garments include Kurdish, Qashqai, Baktiari, Arab, Baluch, as well as urban items. In addition there are a small number of Qajar garments.

It is envisaged that several books on regional clothing and an exhibition on the same subject will be available within three years. This work is being carried out with the co-operation of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization, Teheran.

In addition, one of the aims of the Cultural Heritage Organization is to produce an illustrated encyclopaedia of Iranian costume, based upon their extensive collection of traditional and modern garments. This work is being supported by the Stitching and staff members of Leiden University and the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden.

In conjunction with the National Museum of Ethnology, a book will be published later this year of nineteenth century Iranian photographs which are housed in Leiden.

The National Museum of Ethnology also has a large collection of Qajar objects (approximately 400) of which there are about 120 items of clothing. All these garments were purchased by the museum in 1883 from a Dutch businessman called A. Hotz. These garments will form the basis for a detailed study of Qajars dress.

It is not only garments worn by Muslims that are represented in the Stitching collection. There are, for instance, a number of garments for Zoroastrian women from Iran. It is hoped that this area of the collection can be built up in the future.

It should be noted that the Stitching's collection is not regarded as a series of museum objects, but rather as study items. There is no intention of having a regular series of exhibitions based on the collection, nor is the collection open to the general public. Access to the objects is by appointment only. Nevertheless, the Stitching is prepared to lend out objects to other research institutes for exhibition purposes.

A further aim of the Textile Research Centre is the promotion of the academic study of archaeological and anthropological textiles and costume in a wider field. In this connexion it has, since 1992, been carrying out research, in co-operation with the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, into the textiles and clothing found in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh, Tutankhamen. Various garments are currently being remade in Sweden and the Netherlands, and will go on display in Borås, Sweden, in October. The exhibition, entitled *Tutankhamun's Wardrobe* will then travel round Europe - including two venues in Britain (about which more in a later issue) - and America.

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

REPORTS OF O.A.T.G. MEETINGS

A Visit to Wendy Black's Collection

On Saturday 27 February, a group of about 20 of us went, at Wendy Black's kind invitation, to her lovely house in Purton near Watlington, to see her collection of textiles, felts and accessories from remote areas of China and Bhutan. We were welcomed with a cup of tea or coffee and then Wendy proceeded to describe her collection of Miao costumes, yak hair and felt masks, prayer mats, pattern books and other items from her travels, which she had laid out in different rooms for us to see. She also gave us a very informed talk about the individual items, as well as their uses and origins. Her collection is vast and very well documented, and my notes are not comprehensive, merely describing the things that most appealed to me.

In the lounge she had displayed some costumes from Guizhou Province, including a beautiful pleated skirt from Shibacun village on the River Miao. This is a festival skirt with most of the embroidery at the back, because an embroidered apron would have been worn at the front, and the girl would not have been able to sit down during the festivities for fear of disturbing the pleats. The jacket had indigo panels which had been calendered to make them shine. There was also a very interesting collection of braids and belts.

In the dining-room were grouped together a collection of baby-carriers. As babies are the most important members of these people's families, the most beautiful decoration is lavished on the carriers. These included one in several layers from Quiling village near Shucheng by a group known as the "small flower Miao" where each layer was in a different technique. The top layer was embroidered with fabric pieced in a striking geometric pattern in red and yellow with indigo blue, whilst lower layers were woven or batiked.

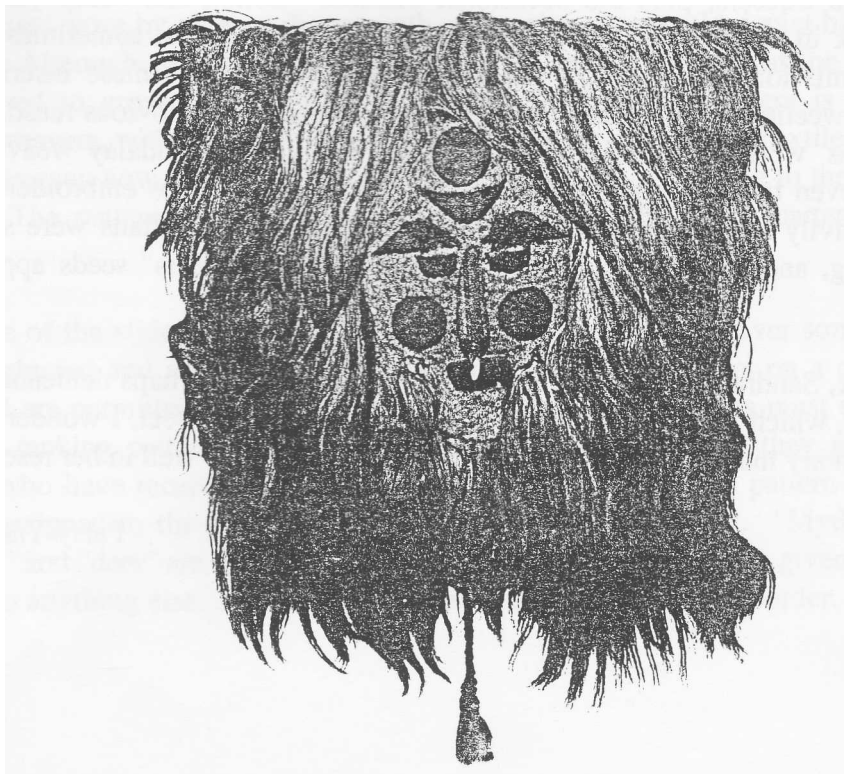
The finest embroidery was upstairs in the main bedroom. There were some wonderful festival coats from the Taijiang area Miao and from Chuan-Xingzhai, both with brightly coloured dragons featured, a motif shared with the Chinese. Wendy also has patterns drawn onto pink tissue ready for stitching, which are sold to assist embroiderers. One of the most interesting items was made from silk paper. The poor silk caterpillar is put down on a bamboo board where it runs around laying down layers of silk in an attempt to make a cocoon. When the layer of silk is deemed thick enough the caterpillar is removed and released, and the resulting silk paper dyed in bright colours in synthetic dyes. Intricate shapes are cut out and stitched down with horsehair. A fringe was made from the same material.

In a back bedroom were grouped articles from the Hani (Aini) people from Yunnan Province, including a hat, puttees, blouse front, skirt, jacket and belt, plus another child's hat from the same place. These were bought at a Sunday market in West Jinghong in April 1993. The hats are very colourful, with bright stitching on a very dark background and lots of pom-poms, feathers, metal discs and coins applied. The skirt is pleated and the jacket embroidered indigo-dyed cotton in geometric designs. A second jacket also has coloured strips of fabric stitched onto the sleeve and is from the Akha (Hani) tribe, who area hill tribe from north Thailand, originally from Yunnan.

Among countless other things, Wendy also has a unique collection of felt boots, ponchos and capes. Perhaps the pride of her collection, however, bought fairly recently in December 1998, is a festival mask of yak skin and felt from Bhutan, made by the Brogan people who are yak herdsman (see illustration below).

It was lovely to see at close hand such an extensive collection of textiles from these remote areas. I took four rolls of film and made copious notes, but they cover only a small part of the collection, built up so carefully over several journeys. On behalf of the group, I would like to thank Wendy and her husband for making us so welcome and allowing us to see these beautiful textiles.

Judith Gussin



Textiles from Burma in Museum Collections

The speaker at the open meeting on 9 March, Sandra Dudley, introduced herself by saying she was a D.Phil student and an assistant curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum. She is also involved in a separate project looking at different types of Burmese textiles, collating which sorts were in which collections and researching into problems of classification. For her lecture, she showed us and described slides of fabrics and clothes from different parts of Burma, most of which examples came from museums or collections.

There are three main types of collections of textiles from Burma: anthropological, military or colonial, and missionaries' collections. The anthropological ones are best documented but narrow - for example, German, Scandinavian, Australian, Canadian and some American ones. The colonial and military collections in the U.K. are mostly shallow, but diverse. For example, Brighton has the collection formed by Col. Green of the Burma Rifles, and the Bankfield Museum at Halifax has that amassed by E.C. George in the 1890s. Over a hundred museums in Britain have some material from Burma, but not necessarily textiles. The missionary collections are on the whole not well documented but are localized -for example in Denison, Ohio, where there are retired Baptist Foundation missionaries' collections.

There are seven states in Burma with an extraordinary diversity compared with the number of people: fewer than 45 million people use over 100 different languages, and in the Chin area in western Burma alone there are 44 groups and sub-groups. Broadly speaking each region has its own style of textiles.

Those shown mostly had soft colours with black and white, a luscious warm earthy red being commonly used. Indigo and some weft ikat is chosen in some regions. Stripes and geometric patterns predominate, some of these being fine and intricate, but examples of tufting were also shown. Items of clothing shown in the slides were mostly skirts for men and women and some trousers, plus the occasional blanket. Cotton and hemp yams are mainly used, plus silk in some states. Bags were used as commodities, sometimes being specially woven for missionaries and with English lettering, though Burmese inscriptions with words such as "sweetie" or "love" in Burmese were also used. For obvious reasons, the less accessible regions' work was less well represented, though in Mandalay weavers on frame looms have woven textiles in other areas' styles. Not many groups embroider their textiles, but some heavily embroidered jackets and applied panels on kaftans were shown. There is some piecing, and application of cowrie shells and "god's tears" seeds appear in some regions.

Early in her talk, Sandra made a passing reference to "dress" as perhaps demeaning the importance of textiles, which is an interesting thought. What do others feel, I wonder? The slides and the commentary made a fascinating evening, and we wish her well her research.

Patsy Yardley

Iban Textiles

Knowing next to nothing about Iban textiles, I was very keen to attend Traude Gavin's talk and slide show. I was also most fortunate in having my name drawn as one of the select band to attend the Pitt Rivers Conservation Department in the afternoon to see a selection of Iban textiles and learn about their patterns from Traude.

On display at the conservation department were about a dozen textiles, all ikat dyed, some more intricately than others, and of varying ages. There were burial clothes, sarongs, skirts and jackets. Two large cloths were made from two strips of weaving sewn together. Traude explained that often the border, which was not ikat dyed, was added in as warp on the loom before the weaving began. Traude was at pains to inform us that the iconography and the names given to images were not of any outstanding significance, but were merely an easy way for the weavers to identify specific patterns. As long as the name is memorable, such as "moonrat", and has assonance, rhythm and rhyme, it will do.

In the lecture we learnt more about the Than people, who in the 1500s did not exist as a cultural group, but moved about a lot and then finally settled in the 18th century in the Sarawak region, the Malaysian part of Borneo. The Iban live in longhouses along the riverbanks. In the past the longhouses were of wood and wood-shingle; nowadays they are of milled timber with a tin roof. The people grow hill rice and supplement their income with cash crops. Their main income comes from working in the timber and logging trade, with the men working away from home.

Traditional Iban society was, and is, an egalitarian one with personal achievement mattering a great deal. Men would in the past head-hunt and women would weave. Men have tattooed heads and women a tattooed thumb. Headhunting, although not practised nowadays, is still used in a ceremonial/shaman aspect, but it has been transferred to business activities.

Jackets worn by men on the warpath, or by shamans would depict bird figures, usually in blue. Although people generally stopped weaving by the time of the second world war (they ceased to grow cotton), some is still practised to-day. There is great competition between weavers, with women being awarded prizes for their skill. Textiles are used in ritual ceremonies even now. Large cloths are used as a base for an offering to the gods, such as at a funeral. The patterns in the cloths have power, with the Ranja pattern being the most powerful.

One of the slides we were shown was of a woven awning over some pigs, which are then slaughtered and accomplished women receive the pigs' livers on a cloth. Weavers of great skill are permitted to perform such ceremonies. These cloths must contain a powerful and high ranking pattern depending on the occasions for which they are used, made by weavers who have received charms and spells. The trophy head pattern is one, a personal name is assigned to the whole pattern, not to any particular part. "Mythical flying tiger", "moonrat" and "deer" are names given to skirt cloths, which are often given names of animals rather than anything else. The bamboo motif is usually used on the border.

Naming a motif is a quick reference system. Names have to be memorable and easy to recall. The motif need not have any resemblance to the animal it is named after. The iconography is not relevant.

The dyes used are mainly indigo and morinda. Mordants such as tin and alum may be used, with the alum being found as a natural source in some plants. The warp is wrapped and tied off where the first and second colours are not wanted. The red dye is the first dyebath. Sections of warp that are to remain red are then wrapped and tied off and undyed areas are exposed to take up the second dye bath, which will be indigo.

Ikat dyeing is a time consuming and labour intensive method to achieve a pattern. It is also very skilled and quite mathematical, but it allows the dyer/weaver to attain a precise and intricate pattern in the warp. The textiles we saw were all warp faced and warp ikat dyed, a technique usually referred to as a single ikat.

Altogether it was a most informative time, and made more so by the fact that generally there seems to be little information available, apart from Alfred Haddens' study, published in 1936, and Traude Gavin's own papers on Iban textiles.

Mary Kinipple

MUSEUMS ROUND-UP

The Michael Marks Print Room in the Ashmolean Museum's Department of Eastern Art was officially opened on 7 May 1999 in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Museum's Director, the Department's keepers and staff, as well as a representative of the anonymous donor who made it possible to furnish and equip the room with conservation-standard storage cabinets, a large plan chest for oversized textiles, and a study area. The Museum's holdings of Japanese and Chinese prints, Indian and Islamic miniature paintings and the bulk of its three thousand or so Asian textiles, are now housed there.

The spacious room has a calm and restful atmosphere and provides a wonderful working environment. It also accommodates one of the Department's rarely seen treasures: a set of Burmese Hat figures, commissioned by the colonial administrator Sir R.C. Temple and carved in the 1890s. They represent local nature and guardian spirits, as well as deified historical figures. Nat worship is a characteristic of Burmese Theravada Buddhism, which combines deities from the Hindu-Buddhist pantheon with local indigenous beliefs. The Department's collection is an almost complete set (according to Burmese belief there are 37), carved from teak and punched and chiselled with fine detail. They are now placed on the top of the Print Room's elegant cabinets in the manner of classical busts in an 18th century library, adding considerably to the character of the room.

It just remains for a generous benefactor to fund additional staff to man (or woman) the print room so that it may be freely open to the interested public in the way that the Western Art print room is, for you all to come and draw inspiration from the Hats as well as study the other goodies stored there. In the meantime, access is strictly by appointment only.

It is all go at the Ashmolean. This summer it has been staying open until 8 p.m. on Wednesdays (5 p.m. on other days), and there is a gallery talk every week at 5.30 p.m., as well as concerts and other events on some evenings. The restaurant and shop are also opening later in line with the rest of the museum on Wednesdays. This extended opening lasts until the end of July.

Work has at last started on re-roofing the Pitt Rivers main building; cases are all covered in bubble-wrap and the scaffolding is going up. When all is completed, the Museum will have a new slate roof in place of the familiar blackened glass, with much better insulation. At the same time the environment will be improved by restoring the original high-level ventilation scheme and providing new lighting. While the scaffolding is in place, opportunity will be taken to repaint the ironwork of the upper levels. The conservation department hopes that it will also be able to take advantage of the scaffolding to clean the totem pole and the boats.

Meanwhile, the conservators are enjoying their new premises, which area considerable improvement on previous ones, though farther away from the main and Balfour buildings. Small groups of O.A.T.G. members are being given opportunities to visit it - one such group has already enjoyed the privilege (see above p.15) and another will do so on 21 October (see p.3 above).

The Heritage Lottery Fund is much in demand by museums. The Museum of East Asian Art at Bath has submitted an application for funds to buy premises for an Education and Study Centre. The Museum's education programme, launched in 1996, has proved a great success, and the cramped accommodation and resources available to it severely limits the work it is able to do. New premises would allow it to extend public access to the handling collection and library, and provide a purpose-designed multi-use classroom to accommodate up to 35 schoolchildren, or 50 people for a lecture.

The Horniman Museum has recently received a grant of £10 million from the Fund for an extension which will link the museum and gardens, enabling the collections of musical instruments and ethnography to be re-displayed, providing a new temporary exhibition gallery and creating a new education and handling centre. The South Hall will also be restored to house a new permanent exhibition, *African World*.

Norfolk City Council has put forward a lottery bid to obtain money for a suitable separate home for the costume and textile collection which, you will remember, was only just saved from dispersal a few years ago when the Strangers Hall Museum had to be closed. For the present, the costume and textile collection is housed at Carrow House, Norwich, but with only limited access to the public.

This collection has recently acquired a very interesting early Norwich shawl. It is square and worked in such a way that, when the shawl is divided diagonally, half shows the face of the fabric and the other half the reverse. When worn folded over to form two triangles, the "right" sides of both will show.

The former Keeper of Strangers Hall Museum, and Director of the Textile *Conservation* Workroom for the Eastern Region of the National Trust at Blickling Hall, Pamela Clabburn, was awarded an M.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List. You may remember that she wrote an article on Norwich shawls and the Indian connexion in a recent newsletter (no. 11, October 1998).

Farther afield, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has recently opened no fewer than 22 new galleries of Asian art. These enable Islamic, Himalayan, Indian, South-East Asian and Korean holdings, hitherto concealed in store, to have permanent exhibition space for the first time, as well as expanding the display space devoted to China and Japan fourfold.

Editor

OBITUARIES

Angela Lodge

The O.A.T.G. has recently learnt that one of its members, Angela Lodge, has died. She will be remembered throughout the world of textiles, and by many members for different reasons, for she played many different roles in her time.

A quiet and gentle person, Angela had the ability to listen, giving appropriate words of encouragement and direction to a situation. One of the high lights of her contributions was to be the driving force behind the successful Textile Festival held in Bradford in 1990, where many craftspeople and exhibitions were brought together, an event that is still talked about today.

Rodrick Owen

Montse Stanley

Montse Stanley learnt to knit as a child in Spain and soon developed a passion for the craft. But her interest did not stop at the KI PI stage; her inquiring mind led her to research into its techniques and history. When she came to live in England she published a number of books on the technical aspects of the subject, and at the time of her last illness she was working on a Ph.D. on the early history of Spanish knitting. The origins of knitting and its passage into Europe particularly interested her, and she hypothesized that it may have originated in Asia in an article *Knitting - an Asian Invention?*, in this newsletter (no.9, February 1998). She was a member of the Oxford Asian Textile Group from its beginning.

Her enthusiasm for knitting led her to assemble a considerable reference library at her home in Cambridge, comprising all kinds of printed material referring to knitting, equipment and knitting samples. The collection was built round two main areas: British domestic hand-knitting and Spanish hand- and machine-knitting from the 19th century onwards, but extended into other areas and into allied crafts. In time it became too big to accommodate in a private house, and the last time Montse wrote me about it she was negotiating for it to be incorporated into an academic institution in Cambridge. She also had an extensive collection of knitted artefacts and knitting equipment which formed the basis of an important exhibition in her native Catalonia.

She started the Early Knitting History Group in 1993. Its membership soon rose to about 150, drawn from over twenty countries. Several successful conferences were held, and Montse herself led a tour to Spain. It was, however, mainly her drive that kept the enterprise going, and when illness led to this being withdrawn, the group began to decline and since her death has amalgamated with the Mediaeval Dress and Textile Society.

With her untimely death on 1 March we lose a woman of energy and enthusiasm, warmth and charm, who will be sorely missed.

Phyllis Nye

PUBLICATIONS

The next issue of the journal *Textile History*, which is published with the support of the Pasold Fund, is about to come out with a special number on South and South-East Asian textiles. The editors are Ruth Barnes and Rosemary Crill - both, of course, well-known to everyone in the O.A.T.G. Contributions cover both historical and contemporary textile production, including articles by Jenny Balfour-Paul, Susan Conway and Traude Gavin (co-authored by Ruth Barnes) - all O.A.T.G. members and former speakers to the Group. In addition there are essays by Steven Cohen, Erna Wandl, Deborah Swallow and Marie-Louise Nabholz-Kartaschoff. You will find a full list of titles on the order leaflet enclosed with this Newsletter.

Elizabeth Wayland Barber, *The Mummies of Urumchi* Macmillan, London, 1999, 240 pp, 29 col. plates, numerous b/w illus., 24x16 cm, ISBN 0 333 730240, £20.

Although the existence of mummies in the Tarim basin area of Sinjiang (formerly Chinese Turkestan) has been known for a hundred years or more, no work was done on them before their "rediscovery" in the late 1980s, when Dr Victor Mair assembled a team of specialists to study and conserve a collection of them in the Urumchi Museum. The team included two experts in the field of ancient fibres and textiles, of whom the author was one. Her very readable book, therefore, is heavily weighted in favour of the textile element of the burials. These are mainly clothes, exceptionally well-preserved and still very colourful. Details of dyes, weave and construction are all meticulously described and illustrated. The author does not, however, neglect other aspects of the subject, and especially discusses the possible history of these people, who have Caucasian features and affinities with the Celtic cultures of Europe and yet came to be buried in Central Asia 4000 years ago.

Valerie Steele, John S. Major et al, *China Chic: East Meets West*, Yale University Press, 208 pp, 60 colour plates, 50 b/w illus., ISBN 0 300 07930 3, £24.95

Many designers are inspired by Chinese clothing and decorative motifs, yet few people understand their historical significance. This book explores the evolution of Chinese dress, from the dragon robes and lotus shoes of the imperial era to the creation of new fashions such as the *cheongsam* and the "Mao" suit that symbolized modern Chinese identity.

Editor

EXHIBITIONS

The Uncut Cloth

The Uncut Cloth will be Paisley Museum's major exhibition during the summer of 1999, and will form Paisley's contribution to Glasgow's year as the City of Architecture and Design. The idea behind the exhibition is to look at garments made from a single piece of cloth without any cutting or sewing, of which the shawl is obviously a prime example, and at the same time to explore historic and trade links between Scotland and the South Asian sub-continent comprising India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Many single-piece garments originate in that area; examples include the sari and the turban. There are also Scottish examples, such as the early kilt, which was draped around the wearer and held in place by a belt, and the plaid which went over the shoulder of the Highlander. The Museum promises to be a riot of colour from June to October, with important pieces from public collections being shown alongside loans from members of Scotland's South Asian communities, to show how the textile traditions have continued to the present day.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an education programme to meet the needs of schools, and a comprehensive diary of events for children and adults, ranging from lectures on related themes, through demonstrations of techniques by visiting South Asian master-craftsmen and live performances of Scots or Indian music in the galleries, to practical workshops and masterclasses for those with an interest in textiles.

Such is the enthusiasm and interest generated by this exhibition that it has been awarded a grant of £57,000 by the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund and has also attracted a range of sponsorships to help with different aspects of the work. There will also be a tangible, permanent legacy for Renfrewshire in that four textile artists have been commissioned to produce artworks especially for this exhibition. After the exhibition, two of these will be added to the collections of Paisley Museum, one will be the property of Chivas Ltd and will probably be displayed in their premises in Paisley, and the fourth is to go on display at Glasgow Airport.

The exhibition will also produce a lavishly illustrated publication with contributions from Elizabeth Arthur, former Curator of Costumes at Glasgow Museums, on the history of textile trading between Scotland and South Asia, Nasreen Askari, Curator of the 1997 V. & A. exhibition, *Colours of the Indus*, on South Asian one-piece garments, and Valerie Reilly, Keeper of Textiles at Paisley Museum, on the design influences on Paisley shawls. It will sell at a special price of £14.95 at the exhibition and £17.95 thereafter.

Valerie Reilly

The Uncut Cloth is on display at the Paisley Museum, High Street, Paisley, from 19 June to 23 October. There will be demonstrations in the galleries as follows: from 19 June to 3 July Ustad Jaffarali, master weaver from Varanesi, will demonstrate the ancient skill of "Jala" tying for the weaving of silk brocades; from 27 August to 3 September Khatri Alimohamed Isha, master tie-dyer from Bhuj, Kutch, will explain tie-dyeing techniques; from 6-17 September, a master embroiderer from Pakistan will demonstrate traditional techniques of decorating costume, and on Saturday 2 October there will be a demonstration of traditional embroidery by Vanaja Puli. On Saturday 28 August, 2-4 p.m., Anne Marie

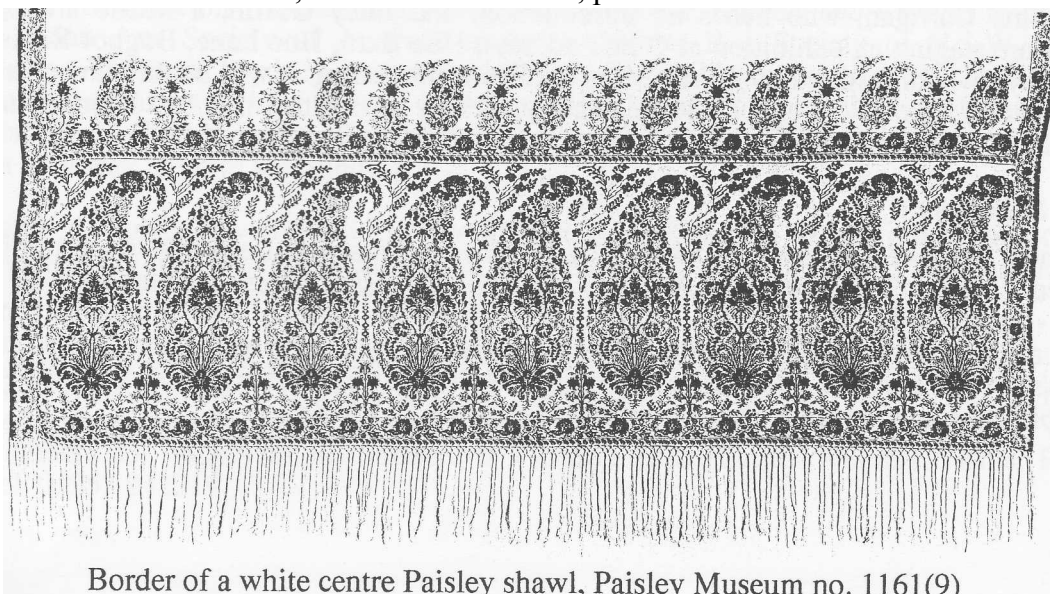
Benson of Phillips Auctioneers, London, Liz Arthur, a free-lance textile and costume specialist, and Valerie Reilly will be on hand to identify and value your textile treasures.

Drop-in family workshops will be held on every Tuesday and Wednesday from 6 July until 11 August, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., led by Sandi Kiehlmann and Deirdre Nelson, at which participants will help create a "Rumal of the Universe". Children's workshops will be held as follows: Saturday 14 August, 10 a.m. to 12 noon & 2-4 p.m., Jayanti Kundu will introduce traditional craft techniques, suitable for 7 year-olds and upwards, no booking required; Saturday 28 August, 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. & 1.30-4 p.m., tie-dyeing with Vaishali Londhe, suitable for 12-year-olds upwards, booking necessary; Saturday 4 September, 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (suitable for 7-12 year-olds) & 1.30-4 p.m. (suitable for 12-17 year-olds), fabric painting with Sarbjit Natt.

Lectures: Saturday 19 June, 2-4 p.m., *Uncut Cloth in the Cultural Traditions of Pakistan*, Nasreen Askari (co-curator of the exhibition and Curator, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi). Wednesday 30 June, 7.30-9.30 p.m., *An Indian Odyssey* with Dan Coughlan, Weaver, Paisley Museum, who will talk on his recent visit to Varanasi and Calcutta to study weaving techniques; Friday 2 July, 7.30-9.30 p.m., *Kantha, Past, Present and Product* Kim Gourlay will talk about her visit to West Bengal and Dacca, Bangladesh, to study Kantha; Friday 6 August, 7.30-9.30 p.m., *The Kashmir Influence on Paisley Shawls*, Valerie Reilly; Friday 3 September, 7.30-9.30 p.m., *Interacting with the Artist* Sarbjit Natt will lead a participatory session; Friday 10 September, 7.30 - 9.30 p.m. *A Treasury of Indian Textiles at the Calico Museum, Ahmedabad*, Professor Anne Morrell; Friday 8 October, 7.30-9.30 p.m., *Trade in Uncut Cloth: the Scottish Connexion*, Liz Arthur (co-curator of the exhibition) will discuss the historic links between the West of Scotland and South Asia, with particular reference to Turkey red.

All the above activities are free, but the following adult workshops cost £15 each, including basic materials, and as places are limited it is essential to book in advance through the Museum, all run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Saturday 3 July, Kim Gourlay will explore "Kantha with a Twist"; Saturday 24 July and Sunday 29 August, block printing with Vaishali Londhe; Sunday 5 September, textile painting with Sarbjit Natt; Saturday 11 September, "Embellishment of Cloth", a practical study day with Professor Anne Morrell to explore traditional embroidery stitches and their importance in the cultural life of village India, with particular reference to Kutch; Wednesday 20 October, "Indian Embroideries: Design and Techniques" with Surjeet Husain, of particular interest to teachers as well as to the general public.

For further information, or to book for events, phone 0141 889 3151.



Border of a white centre Paisley shawl, Paisley Museum no. 1161(9)

OTHER EXHIBITIONS

Handmade in India -

- is at present showing at the City Museum and Art Gallery, Brunswick Road, Gloucester (tel. 01452 524131) until 27 June, and will continue at the Harris Museum, Market Square, Preston, Lancs., (tel. 01772 258248) from 10 July to 11 September. For a full description of this gorgeous Crafts Council Touring Exhibition see the O.A.T.G. Newsletter no. 10, June 1998.

A Dyeing Art -

- at the James Hockey Gallery, the Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Farnham, Surrey. I am sorry we have only just heard of this exhibition of geometric double ikat fabrics from Andhra Pradesh, which has been on since 1 May and ends on 19 June; you may manage to catch it. (Tel. 01252 892646)

Bhutanese Textiles -

- at the October Gallery, 24 Gloucester Street, London, 10-18 June. A selling exhibition by Vavasour Fabrics, a textile company specifically concerned with supporting the hand-woven Bhutanese fabric industry, and focussing on contemporary- This exhibition is the fruit of Alatheia Vavasoues fourth trip to Bhutan and, along with purchasing fabric, she is now commissioning weavings. Contact her on 0171 262 003, or George Tobias on 0171 375 0992.

Feng Shui in Textiles -

- throughout June at Linda Wrigglesworth's gallery, 34 Brook Street, London. The exhibition includes some very fine examples of household and decorative antique textiles from the Ming & Qing periods (1368-1912), and is an extension of her show on the same theme at the Hali International Carpet and Textile Fair (see below).

Stitches in Time -

- at Haslemere Museum, Surrey. from 28 August to 9 October. Four centuries of world textile design as exemplified in the museum's own rarely seen collection, focussing on embroidery and stitched design work from around the world, including textiles from India and China. (Tel. 0128 642112)

Inspired by the Miao -

- Gina Corrigan, who needs no introduction, and Lucy Goffin, a textile artist and designer, are staging an exhibition at Gina's address, Hoe Barn, Hoe Lane, Bognor Regis, in which Lucy's works inspired by Gina's Miao textiles can be seen. It will be on view over the week-ends of 11/12, 18/19 and 25/26 September, strictly by invitation only. Phone Gina at 0123 582178 if you would like an invitation.

Walk in Splendour -

- now until 12 September at the U.C.L.A. Fowler Museum Los Angeles, California. Sub-titled *Ceremonial Dress of the Minangkabau of Indonesia*, this spectacular array of 250 objects - ceremonial textiles and accessories - celebrates one of the finest and most sophisticated weaving traditions in the Indonesian archipelago. The exhibition draws on the museum's own collections and private holdings. A lavishly

Last Chance to See -

Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms finishes at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 25 July. Much of this major exhibition comprises pictures, especially Indian miniatures and early photographs, but a large number of the artefacts are textiles, including that featured on the front of this newsletter. This extraordinary shawl is embroidered with a map of Srinagar. The river Jhelum winds through the city on our detail which also includes a lot of human and other activity. The only specifically textile event remaining is a gallery talk by Imogen Stewart on *The Influence of the Kashmir Shawl on European Fashion* on Tuesday 22 June at 2 p.m.. There are, however, performances of the Panjabi folk dance *Bhangra* throughout the afternoon of Saturday 26 June, and the Sikh martial art *Gatka* on Saturday 3 July, as well as a practical introduction to tabla music from 11 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday 16 June. Tel. 0171 938 8638

Threads of Light: Chinese Embroidery from Suzhou and the Photographs of Glenn Ketchum finishes at the U.C.L.A. Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, California on 5 September. Tel. 310 825 4288.

LECTURES AND EVENTS

10-14 June - HALI International Antique Carpet and Textile Art Fair, Olympia, London. Sorry the notice is so short; I am afraid many of you will miss it unless you have heard of it from other sources. Tel. 0171 970 4000.

17 June - *Indigo-dyed Textiles from Different Cultures* by Penny Walsh, and

22 June - *The Influence of Kashmir Shawls on European Fashion* by Imogen Stewart -gallery talks at the V. & A., starting at 2 p.m. (tel. 0171 938 8638)

17 July - Diane and Jim Gaffney will talk on *Javanese Batik and Resist Dyeing* to the Oxford Guild of Spinners and Weavers at the Village Hall, Stanton St John, at 2 p.m. There is a small charge for non-members. Secretary, Thelma Robinson, tel. 01908 505289

7 & 14 August - *Wearing Kimonos* at the V. & A., 2-5 p.m. Discover how the layers of traditional Japanese costume are worn, in this demonstration by Noriko Sato in the Japanese gallery. (Tel. 0171 938 8638)

29 August - Seminar on *Central Asia: Textiles and People, Carpets and Culture*, to be held by the Asian Arts Society of Australia and the Oriental Rug Society of N.S.W. at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, accompanied by an exhibition entitled *Silken Steppes*. International speakers include George O'Bannon, U.S.A., on carpets and Sheila Paine, U.K., on embroidery. Further information from Christina Sumner, tel. 001 2 9217 0111. (It seems rather a long way to go to see Sheila!)

8 September - Janice Hay will talk on *The Mughal Tent Project* to the Oxford Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild at Iffley Church Hall at 7 for 7.15 p.m. on Wednesday 8 September. For further information phone the Secretary, Sally Carter, on 01869 253284.

centuries), a lecture/demonstration with slides and original examples by Pamela Brooks to the West of England Branch of the Costume Society at 2.15 p.m. at Abbey Church House, Bath. Non-members £3. Apply to Jill Sanders, 9 Vicarage Hill, Hartley Wintney, Hants, RG27 8EH, tel. 01252 842314

STOP PRESS

I know I said on page 2 that you need only to skip to the end to find out what's on, and here I am breaking that rule in the very first issue of the new-look newsletter. The following items, however, came in after I had set up the previous 23 pages - so if you are only interested in what's on, you will have to turn back a page!

P.S. TO A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In a letter published in the last Newsletter (No. 12, February 1999, p.10) Rodrick Owen appealed to members-for their assistance in locating braids and braid-makers for a book he is preparing. He now adds the following:

To make clearer what I am looking for, I thought that I should like to give an explanation of oblique interlaced braids. Many narrow fabrics are named as braids; there is, however, a distinct difference between those that are woven and those that are braided. Narrow fabrics made with vertical warps and horizontal wefts are Bands.

Braids are those structures where the threads move diagonally at a 60 degree angle either from the outside edges to the centre or from the centre to the outer edge, both directions giving either a warp faced or an open interlaced structure.

Rodrick Owen, 19 Salter Close, Oxford, OX1 4QD
Tel/fax. 01865 722906, e-mail: takaman@globainet.co.uk

URGENTLY WANTED -

- a replacement for Felicity Wood when she retires as Programme Secretary at the A.G.M. in October. It is a job that could be shared if no one person is prepared to take it on alone. Felicity has very much enjoyed doing it, and is willing to help ease the next incumbent into office. Offers or nominations please to Ruth Barnes, tel. 01865 278076, or ring Felicity, tel. 01865 554281, if you would like further information before committing yourself.

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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE - MONDAY 4 OCTOBER 1999

Contributions should be sent to the Editor:
Phyllis Nye, Hewel Barn, Common Road, Beckley, Oxon, OX3 9UR, U.K.
Tel/fax 01865 351607