

# OXFORD ASIAN TEXTILE GROUP

Newsletter No. 1

June 1995

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## AN INVITATION

Over this last year, a notice has been circulated about the unusual and important collections of Asian and Islamic textiles in Oxford. The response to it was surprising: without any great effort of publicity, more than 100 people sent back their names and wanted to be informed about further developments,

**We now invite you to participate in the Oxford Asian Textile Group.**

### Who are we?

The initiative to start the group has come from Dr. Ruth Barnes, who is a research associate in the Department of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum. She has worked for the last five years on different parts of the textile collection in the Department and has noticed over these years that hardly anyone outside knows about the wealth of the collections. To change this, she approached a number of interested people in Oxford, with the result that the **Oxford Asian Textile Group** is now ready to be launched.

Michaela Coulthard is the secretary in the Department of Eastern Art. She has spent several years living in Hong Kong and is particularly interested in Chinese art. She is willing to be the membership secretary for our group.

Julia Nicholson, who is curator for documentation at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, agreed to become the liaison person for her institution. The Pitt Rivers Museum has a very large collection of ethnographic textiles from Asia and the Islamic world, but most of it is at present inaccessible because of storage problems.

Phyllis Nye is the senior guide in Eastern Art in the Ashmolean Education Service. She has agreed to edit the Newsletter.

Felicity Wood was until recently responsible for the Newsletter of the Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum. She has travelled widely in Asia and has a personal interest in textiles. She will be our programme secretary.

### Our aims

We want to make the University's Asian and Islamic textile collections better known both to specialists and the interested public. To achieve this, the Oxford Asian Textile Group will provide a forum for study visits, exhibitions, lectures, and seminars. Members will receive the newsletter three times a year, as well as invitations to participate in events. The newsletter will also inform about related occasions that may interest members, such as exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and new publications. Members are encouraged to write for the newsletter, either with information or questions they may have. The emphasis is on sharing knowledge and making connections.

### Membership

You do not have to be a specialist to participate in the group. Everyone with an interest in the subject is welcome. As we do not know how successful our group will be, we decided to minimize the bureaucratic side at least for the first two years. Initial membership is £ 10.00 and will be for two years. If you want to join, please fill out the form on p. 5 and return with your payment. Cheques or Money Orders should be made out to Oxford Asian Textile Group or OATG and sent to Michaela Coulthard, Department of Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH (Tel. 01865-278067; Fax 01865-278078)

### **Our First Event: Please Come**

The official start of our group will be a special occasion:

**Thursday, 28 September 1995 at 5 p.m.**

**Pitt Rivers Museum**

**A Private View of the new exhibition *Embroideries from Islamic Journeys*  
Followed by the first meeting of the Oxford Asian Textile Group**

The exhibition is from the collection of Sheila Paine, the author of *The Afghan Amulet*, as well as two books on embroidery. She has agreed to introduce the exhibition to us on this occasion.

Additional events for the autumn will include an invitation to see some of the Mamluk embroideries in the Department of Eastern Art, as well as a slide talk by Ruth Barnes on her most recent trip to Indonesia (planned for this July and August).

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN OXFORD

### EXHIBITIONS

#### Ashmolean Museum:

5th July to 3rd September 1995

*Patterns in Oriental Art* - Pattern in a range of artefacts from all of Asia, including some textile items, one of which is a rarely seen 19th century Kashmir shawl.

For further information phone Department of Eastern Art (number above).

#### Pitt Rivers Museum:

23rd September 1995 to 30th March 1996

*Embroideries from Islamic Journeys* - an exhibition following Sheila Paine's journeys through Afghanistan and Kurdistan; embroideries, photographs and excerpts from her book, *The Afghan Amulet*.

For further information phone (01865) 270927

### LECTURES

Saturday 16th September at 2 p.m. /1  
Jessica Kent will talk on *Weaving in Bangladesh*

Saturday 18th November at 2 p.m.  
Jennie Parry will talk on *Japanese Braids*

Both the above lectures will be given at the O.F.W.I. Hall, Middleway, Summertown, Oxford, and are part of the Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers programme. Visitors welcome, £2. For further information phone (01844) 351508.

## NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

### EXHIBITIONS

#### British Museum

Until 29th October 1995

*Textiles from Masada* - some of the 3000 textiles found during excavations at Masada during the 1960s, which have recently been conserved at the Textile Conservation Centre at Hampton Court. On loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority, they mainly comprise fragments of clothing worn by the beleaguered Zealots, but also include other textiles used by them and the Roman besiegers.

For further information phone (0171) 636.1555-8

### **Museum of Mankind**

Until 10th December 1995

*The Ainu of Japan* - an exhibition about a remarkable Ethnic minority, including striking textiles.

*Social Fabrics* - recent textile acquisitions from Indonesia.

For further information phone (0171) 437.2224

### **Victoria and Albert Museum**

Until 3rd September 1995

*Japanese Studio Crafts: Tradition and the Avant-Garde* - The most extensive exhibition of contemporary Japanese studio crafts ever seen in Europe, including textiles, among which are resist-dyed kimono by Kunihiro Moriguchi, whose exhibition at the Ashmolean in 1991 will be remembered.

A symposium in connexion with the exhibition is to be held on Saturday 1st July.

Until December

*Japanese Fukusa* - a small display of textile gift covers from Edo and Meiji Japan (early 17th to early 20th centuries).

Until January 1996

*Fabulous Fans* - textile and other examples from East and West.

For further information phone (0171) 938.8500

### **Harris Museum, Preston, Lancashire**

Until July

*Preston Asia* - a celebration of the costume and textiles of Preston's Asian communities. Although most of the textiles are contemporary, the Harris Museum possesses an important archive of pattern books of Indian textiles dating from the 1860s, some of which are included in the exhibition.

For further information phone (01772) 258248

### **LECTURE**

Victoria and Albert Museum

Friday 7th July at 2.30 p.m.

*The Textile Trade in Mughal India* - gallery talk by Fahmida Shah.

For further information phone (0171) 938.8500

### **NEW GALLERY FOR EDINBURGH**

The National Museums of Scotland have recently opened a new permanent gallery in the Royal Museum of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh, devoted to their Middle Eastern and Indian collections. These collections are impressive in both their historical and their geographical range, and include a great many textile items as well as ceramics, glass, metalwork, lacquer and paintings. Though permanent, it is not intended that the display shall be static and there will be frequent changes in the objects on exhibition. The curator is Jennifer Scarce.

For further information phone (0131) 225.7534

**Contributions for the next issue of this newsletter should be sent to Phyllis Nye, c/o Hewel Barn, Common Road, Beckley, Oxon, OX3 9UR (Phone/Fax 01865.351607) or c/o Education Service, Ashmolean Museum, by 1st October 1995.**

**IDEAS FOR A LOGO WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME**

### **Membership in the Oxford Asian Textile Group**

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Please fill out and return with your payment to:  
Michaela Coulthard, Department of Eastern Art, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford OX1 2PH

Name:

Address:

Telephone/Fax :

Area of Interest:

**Please enclose your payment of £ 10.00, made out to Oxford Asian Textile Group.**

