
The Medieval Dress and Textile Society

April 2016 www.medats.org.uk Issue 79



Editorial

Welcome to the Spring newsletter. This year began with the very sad news of the passing of Bushy Westfallen, a long time member and significant contributor to the Society. Bushy's ashes were scattered into the water at the Thames foreshore next to the Globe Theatre in February, with friends and family gathered. Photographs and an obituary by Jane Bridgeman will be found overleaf.

On a happier note the first of the years events took place in April at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester. Curator Frances Pritchard put out some lovely textiles and talked the group through them very interestingly. 11 people attended, though only two were members of Medats. It would be good to see more members at such events in future, if only to reassure the committee that we are providing the kinds of events our members want!

The next event on the calendar is the conference and AGM, to be held at The Art Worker's Guild in London. The final programme is published on page 7 and includes a really excellent line up of speakers delivering papers on the theme "On the Move". Oxbow books will once again provide a bookstall and Alice Gordon has been busy sourcing some lovely new items to offer for sale on the Medats table. We are also pleased to be able to confirm that Steven Payne will also be joining us at the conference. Steven completed an epic journey of pilgrimage from Southampton to Canterbury dressed entirely in reconstructed fourteenth century clothing late last year and will be available to chat with during the breaks and at lunchtime. We hope to see even more members this year for what promises to be an excellent event.

The final event of the year to view the Middleton collection of sixteenth and early seventeenth century textiles at Newstead Abbey takes place in Nottinghamshire in November. There are still tickets available, however the event has now been publicised outside of the Society so do grab a place early to avoid disappointment.

As ever all feedback and contributions to the newsletter are gratefully received.

Ninya Mikhaila

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Stephen Payne dressed in his reconstructed fourteenth century clothing during his pilgrimage to Canterbury last year.

Steven kept a blog on Facebook which can be seen at:
www.facebook.com/14thcenturypilgrimsprogress/timeline

To receive the newsletter as a colour PDF file electronically, please e-mail medatseditor@hotmail.co.uk

“Bushy” (Margaret) Westfallen

Many MEDATS members will recall our Secretary ‘Bushy’ Westfallen whose loss to stomach cancer, just before Christmas 2015, has shocked and saddened every-one.

Bushy, who was born in St Bartholomew’s Hospital, Smithfield, was very proud of being a Londoner. She studied Theatre Design at Croydon School of Art, and worked for a variety of theatre companies both as a Designer and Costume Supervisor. These included the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Shakespeare’s Globe Bankside, and the National Theatre, as well as the Clwd Theatre Cymru near Mold in Flintshire, and the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford upon Avon.



The cast of Shakespeare in Love at the Noel Coward Theatre

From July 2014 for nine months she was Costume Supervisor/Designer for the much praised theatrical adaptation of the film Shakespeare in Love, at the Noel Coward Theatre, St Martin’s Lane where, in an unusual accolade for any costume designer, her work was acknowledged by her name being placed on the theatre Playbill. Bushy joined MEDATS in 2006 and I came to know her through her support and contributions to the society as a Committee member, when she became Ticketing Secretary in 2010. Later she combined this role with that of Hon. Secretary to which she was elected in 2013 and held until 2015. She was an extremely effective and efficient Secretary, whose practical and straightforward approach was

combined with a wry, and often wicked, sense of humour. She contributed immensely to keeping the Committee (and the Society) active after the resignations of four Committee members due to ill-health or pressure of work in 2013 and 2014. As a free-lance working costume designer, who must have experienced all the usual late-nights and general aggravation of getting the wardrobe for a production up and running, she always seemed remarkably unstressed and calm, but she was also a rather private person who talked very little about her professional and private life. Bushy was a good friend to MEDATS, and I am sure I am not alone in saying that it was a privilege as well as good fun to have known her. I only wish it could have been much, much longer.

Jane Bridgeman
March 31st 2016.

Bushy’s ashes were scattered,
along with rose petals, on the
Thames foreshore beside the
Globe Theatre



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The First Book of Fashion: The Books of Clothes of Matthäus & Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg

Edited by Ulinka Rublack and Maria Hayward

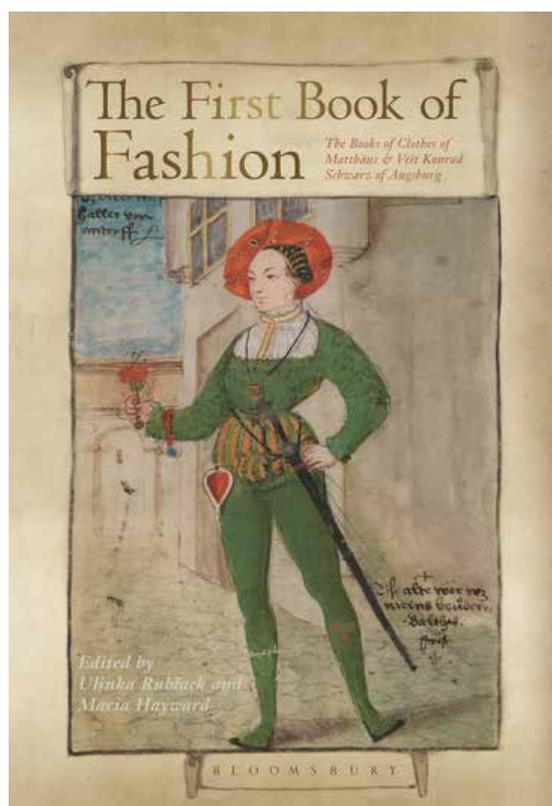
Bloomsbury, 2015. £29.99

Hardback 432 pages ISBN 978-147-424-990-4

In 1520 at twenty-three years old Matthäus Schwarz, an accountant from Augsburg, began what he called his *Kleidungsbüchlein* or “book of clothes”. This was a beautifully illuminated manuscript that contained chronological portraits of Schwarz from babyhood to old age, wearing outfits for different occasions. Over a period of 40 years each outfit and occasion is described in vivid, and often deeply personal, detail. Matthäus’s son Veit continued the practice, producing his own book of clothes in 1561, which is smaller but no less interesting and is included in this volume.

This incredible source is now available for the first time with a full English translation of the original German text, and a commentary on the clothing by historians Maria Hayward and Ulinka Rublack. The book also features a fascinating section by Jenny Tiramani on reconstructing one of the outfits. Jenny describes the methods and materials she employed in great detail, as well as the costs involved in creating a set of clothes as close to the original as possible. She also provides patterns for a shirt, doublet and hose.

This book is a real treasure, providing a colourful insight into sixteenth century life through the wardrobes of two fascinating men.



A review of recent publications on shoes by June Swann

Britain seems obsessed with boots and shoes - and writing about them. *Shoes, an Illustrated History* by Rebecca Shawcross appeared just over a year ago, published by Bloomsbury. It is a 256 page hardback, each section with 2 or more black pages (to stop us scribbling?), roughly chronological. The sections are 2 pages, with the second used for a photograph, some of which spill onto the 1st page, making it difficult to get a clear picture. Too many photographs do not show clearly essentials like the side seam, toe shape, existence or not of heel; so for idle moments rather than information.

Keeping up the black fashion, or perhaps setting it (& especially irritating for book details and Contents page): Helen Persson *Shoes, Pleasure and Pain*, accompanying the Victoria and Albert Museum’s 2015 exhibition with the same name. A 176 page hardback, several sizes of type from full-page height to minute for captions, and narrow, so narrow and tiny for page numbers that you would benefit by writing them legibly before trying to read on. The result is a lot of empty space for no obvious reason, and narrow margins perhaps because ugly enough (especially the cover) to be little used. Chapters are by various authors, known and unknown in the shoe world; not restricted to European shoes.

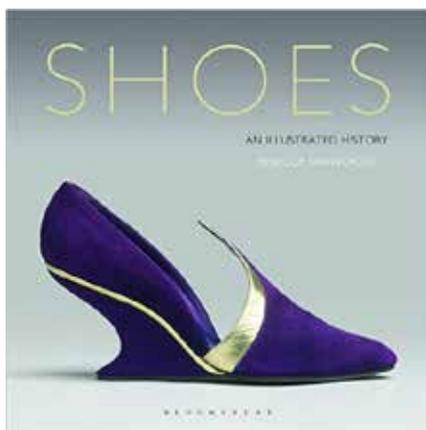
Elizabeth Semmelhack’s *Standing Tall, The Curious History of Men in Heels* was published by Bata Shoe Museum Foundation to accompany the 2016 exhibition, A paperback of 85 pages with photographs on most of them, some text and pictures on black ground, partly chronological. But the only evidence she gives for the Orient as source of European heel is the pair of orthopaedic boots made for Prince, later King Charles I, as a boy (not youth, as she suggests) to support his weak legs (it has long been suggested he had rickets: born in Kilmarnock Castle, Scotland where days are short in the long winter). The back seam had to be let out, so he may have tried them on, but fortunately, there is no sign of their being worn (and certainly not for riding): the rigid sole was made totally flat, but raised by a brass rim under his heel (under a rigid back-part of the upper), which would have made him walk only on toe-tip and the front edge of the rim heel. Surely repeated repairs to the back-part of flat soles like this must be the origin of the stacked heel. And overshoes with platform sole begin to be raised at the heel end from at least 1405, before they developed into the more extreme chopines. To make them lighter, the platform was next reduced to forepart only, creating a separate covered heel; thus the 2 types of heels familiar today. The book is shaped to be tall, with the latest fashion of painfully small type for captions and a lot of empty space.

Continued overleaf

Edited by Nike U. Breyer, Anna Weltert, Phillipe Müller and *Schritt für Schritt/Pas à Pas* (Step by Step) is a 104 page book in German and French, to accompany the 2015 exhibition with the same title at the Bibliothèque am Guisenplatz, Bern. The soft cover binding features a dark red boot lace through 4 sets of punched holes. Colour photographs of boots, shoes, clog overshoes and lasts from Ancient Egypt to the 1st World War. Much made of 19th century books by men trying to reform shoes to the shape of the foot (knowing my brother's foot is a totally different shape from mine, one shape obviously could not fit all); end papers of an 1881 painting of the retreat of the Swiss and French armies in the snow of the 1871 War. Sadly the authors did not realise that Britain had abandoned the straight shoe, reverting to rights and lefts, long before much of Europe. A useful addition to foot health literature.

Finally for those who can face the problems of worn out garments and shoes etc. concealed in buildings, and/or run away from anything to do with 'sorcery' or witches, *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain, A feeling for Magic* is just published by Palgrave Macmillan. A 261 page smallish hardback (& 11 mysterious empty pages at the end). It includes articles on concealed shoes (by June Swann, Ian Evans on Australia and M. Chris Manning on America) and clothing (by Dinah Eastop), as well as other aspects we normally do not research. Mercifully there are few illustrations. Please note I do not use the word ritual in connection with the shoes; nor did sorcery or witchcraft ever enter my head; and there is certainly nothing magic about the worn-out shoes involved. Neither can I agree with the sweeping conclusion that they are all to ward off evil: a child's shoe in the master bedroom wall surely suggests something totally different.

June Swann



Shoes, an Illustrated History

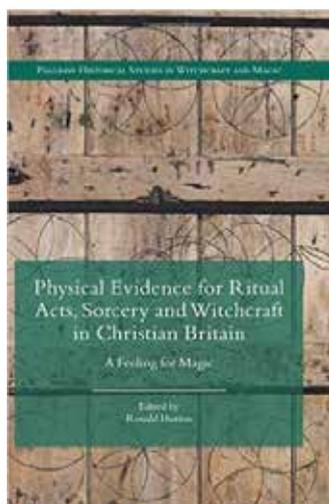
by Rebecca Shawcross
Bloomsbury, 2016 £22.50
Hardback 256 pages ISBN 978-1-47253-100-1

Shoes, Pleasure and Pain

by Helen Persson
V&A 2015 £20
Hardback 176 pages, ISBN 978-1-85177-832-4

Standing Tall, The Curious History of Men in Heels

by Elizabeth Semmelhack
Bata Shoe Museum 2015 \$24.95 CAD
Paperback, 85 pages ISBN 978-0-921638-24-7



Schritt für Schritt/Pas à Pas

Edited by Nike U. Breyer, Anna Weltert, Phillipe Müller
Bibliothèque am Guisenplatz, Bern, 2015
Soft cover, 104 pages ISBN 978-3-906969-61-9

Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain, A feeling for Magic

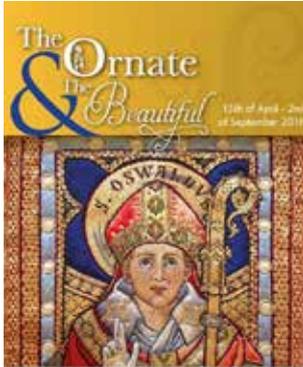
by Ronald Hutton
Palgrave Macmillan 2015
Hardback, 276 pages ISBN 978-113744-481-3

We have a copy of the newly published *Textiles, Text, Intertext: Essays in honour of Gale-Owen Crocker* available. If anyone would like to review it for the next issue please email newsletter@medats.org.uk

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS FORTHCOMING

Abegg-Stiftung

Freind and Foe: Animals in Mediaeval Textile Art
24 April - 13 November 2016
Werner Abeggstrasse 67, CH-3132 Riggisberg
www.abegg-stiftung.ch



The British Museum

Sicily: Culture & Conquest
21 April - 14 August 2016
Great Russell St, London, WC1B 3DG
<http://www.bl.uk>

The Bishop's Palace

The Ornate & the Beautiful
15 April - 2 September 2016
Wells, Somerset, BA5 2PD
01749 988111
www.bishopspalace.org.uk

Gloucester City Museum

The Tudor Child: Clothing & Culture 1485-1625
21 March - 2 July 2016
Brunswick Rd, Gloucester, GL1 1HP
<http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/museums>

Weald & Downland Museum

Courses in traditional rural trades and crafts 2016
An impressive range of courses including spinning, medieval embroidery, rush hat making, Nålbinding and linen processing to name but a few. To receive a brochure email courses@wealddown.co.uk or call 01243 811021 Town Lane, Singleton, PO18 0EU
<http://www.wealddown.co.uk/learn/adult-learning>

The School of Historical Dress

Summer 2016 courses
The Nature of Fabrics c1400 - 1800
2 day course 28th & 29th May
From Jacks to Jumps: Quilting in Garments c1400-1800
2 day course 11th & 12th June
Pockets for Men & Women c1350-1900
2 day course 25th & 26th June
Sugar Loafs, Thrummed Hats, Bicornes and Tricornes: Feltpmaking for Hats c1600-1800
2 day course 9th & 10th July
Shirts at the Court of Henry VIII
2 day course 30th & 31st July

Full details listed on www.theschoolofhistoricaldress.org.uk/pdf/courses_summer_2016.pdf

Middleton collection of sixteenth century textiles and surface decoration workshop

at Newstead Abbey, Nottingham on Saturday 12 November 2016 11am - 3.30pm



Glove gauntlet embroidered with silk and metal threads (CTLOAN 3/21), 1600-1625
(© Lord Middleton Collection/Nottingham City Museums and Galleries)

A rare opportunity to view the Middleton collection of sixteenth and early seventeenth century textiles in the impressive setting of Newstead Abbey, a former Augustian priory and ancestral home of Lord Byron. The morning will be spent looking at the textiles with Judith Edgar, curator of Costume and Textiles at Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.

In the afternoon Ninya Mikhaila will demonstrate sixteenth century surface decoration techniques including pinking, slashing and hot printing. Participants will then have the opportunity to try the techniques for themselves on samples which they can take home. The event is limited to 20 people and the cost is £30 per person for members and £35 for non-members. To reserve a place please send an SAE and cheque made payable to *Medieval Dress and Textile Society* with your name, address and email to:

Carole Thompson, 9 Fairthorn Road, Charlton, London, SE7 7RL by 1 March 2016. Alternatively to pay online via Paypal go to www.medats.org.uk. Refreshments and a light buffet lunch are included in the ticket price. Transport from Nottingham train station and back again at the end of the day will be available. <http://www.newsteadabbey.org.uk>





'On the Move'

The Medieval Dress and Textile Society conference and AGM Saturday 4 June 2016
The Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AT

11.00 Registration. Opportunity to browse bookstalls (cash payments only)

11. 25 Welcome: Elizabeth Coatsworth, Chairman of MEDATS

11.30-12.45 Session I: People on the move

1. '*...out of the folds of their garments': pouches and pockets 1300 to c.1580*

Melanie Braun, The School of Historical Dress, London

2. *Bishops on the Move – Textiles on Site: The Bishop of Freising's Visits to His Manors in the Fourteenth Century* Thomas Ertl, Universität Wien

3. *The travelling clothes of Ippolito d'Este and his household* Mary Hollingsworth

Discussion

12.45-1.30 Lunch. Opportunity to browse bookstalls (cash payments only)

1.30-2.15 AGM

2.15-3.30 Session II: Textiles on the move

4. *Textile protecting textile: how to wrap and transport textiles*

Eva Trein Nielsen, Copenhagen

5. *Convoys of silk cloths* Christine Meek, Trinity College, Dublin

6. *Turkic Transmission: Sino-Iranian Textile Iconography Along Unofficial Silk Routes*

Mariachiara Gasparini, Santa Clara University, California

Discussion

3.30-4.00 Tea/coffee. Opportunity to browse bookstalls (cash payments only)

Tickets for members are £25 each, non-members £30 each, students £15 each and dual (1 member + 1 non-member booked together) £50 each

Please send an SAE and cheque made payable to
Medieval Dress & Textile Society to:

Carole Thompson, 9 Fairthorn Road, Charlton, London, SE7 7RL

Payment can also be made online via Paypal at www.medats.org.uk



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MEDATS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Information about MEDATS and application forms may be had from the Membership Secretary, Carole Thompson, or from the society website: www.medats.org.uk.

Annual subscriptions (payable in pounds sterling only) run from 1st Jan – 31st Dec.

Rates:

£15 Individual members worldwide;¹ (£6 paper newsletter surcharge for Europe, £9 paper newsletter surcharge for worldwide outside Europe).

£20 Households worldwide (2 members²); (paper newsletter surcharges as above)

£10 Student members worldwide (with proof of status); (paper newsletter surcharges as above).

£30 Institutions irrespective of location.

£5 Electronic newsletter subscription, non UK.

1: Members may stand for office within the society, vote in meetings and elections, and gain a discount on attendance at meetings. Within the UK the newsletter is available electronically as a PDF file, or on paper. Please specify which method of delivery is preferred. If no preference is recorded, electronic delivery will be assumed as a default whenever an e-mail address is supplied.

2: One copy of the newsletter will be sent whichever mode is employed, but both named members enjoy the full range of rights and privileges.

3: This gains none of the privileges of membership and is not available to residents of Great Britain.

Bank details:

Lloyds TSB, 109 Finsbury Pavement, London EC2A 1LB

Account name: *Medieval Dress and Textile Society* Sort Code: 30-95-74 Account Number: 24025468

To pay online via Paypal go to www.medats.org.uk

