

## **Textiles from the Crossrail Broadgate site (Moorfields Marsh)**

Despite being very fragmentary, the textiles belong to recognisable types of the Tudor period and some can be singled out as being especially typical. These include the scraps of knitting worked in stocking stitch, which almost certainly derive from a cap, a standard item of headwear worn by men and boys throughout much of northern Europe from the late 15th century to the mid 16th century. Many well-preserved examples have been recovered from sites in London especially in the Moorfields area when it was developed at the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> A recent study of 16th-century knitted caps indicates that flat caps were produced in three styles, namely with single brims, half brims with neck flaps, or split brims. Close-fitting coif caps, with or without ear-flaps were also knitted and for outdoor wear these would generally be worn with flat cap on top as can be seen in portraits by Hans Holbein.<sup>2</sup>

Among the woven wool fabrics, the finer worsted stuffs in 2.2 twill are forerunners of the so-called 'new draperies' that first appear in quantity in England during the sixteenth century, although examples are known from as early as the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Two examples have a balanced number of threads in the warp and weft <2529> and <2532/1> and another is weft-faced as it has more than twice the number of weft to warp threads <2532/2>. This latter textile preserves part of a narrow hem and was doubtless originally part of a garment.

A medium weight 2.2 twill woven from S-spun yarn with 12 threads per cm in both warp and weft <2531/1> compares closely to cloth used for hose and netherstocks in the sixteenth century before more elastic, and thus better-fitting, knitted stockings supplanted bias-cut cloth for the purpose. Many discarded examples of legwear worn by ordinary Londoners were recovered from sites in the neighbourhood of Finsbury Circus soon after World War I and are preserved today in the Museum of London.<sup>4</sup>

The other woven wool textiles are coarser and probably would have served ordinary everyday household or industrial needs.

A short length of a silk cord or drawstring represents a more costly class of textile. Produced using a fingerloop technique which was customarily undertaken by girls in

workshops run by women, who specialised in the making of small goods and accessories, such as buttons, girdles, points, ribbons and tassels, from silk thread. Many of these workshops were based in London with supplies of raw silk being traded to the city from Italy and Spain.<sup>5</sup> Two small tassels decorate the end of the cord suggesting that it may have been used to fasten the neck of a shirt.

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<sup>1</sup> For a location map of the sites see Lambert 1921, 78, fig 14.

<sup>2</sup> This study of knitted caps is described in Malcolm-Davies and Davidson 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The changes in worsted stuffs woven in 2.2 twill during the later middle ages are discussed in Crowfoot et al 1992, 36-9.

<sup>4</sup> An example of 16th-century cloth hose is illustrated in Staniland 1997, 247, fig 16.5.

<sup>5</sup> The activities of the silkwomen in London is discussed in Lacey 1987.