

Time Warp Textiles

The Historic Cloth Co-operative.

www.time-warp-textiles.co.uk

e-mail aidan@aidan-campbell.co.uk

Newsletter No. 5b

Date: April 2012

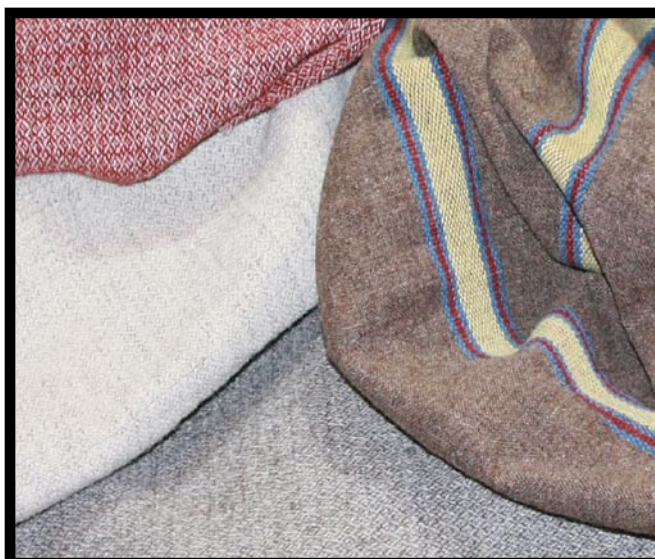
These short newsletters are designed to fulfil two main purposes. Firstly; to briefly explain to those who don't already know the basic idea behind what Time Warp Textiles is and what it does. Secondly; to keep people up to date with what we are currently doing, any surplus fabric we may have available directly from stock, along with mentioning textiles some of our members are hoping to put into production in the future.

The days of making reproduction historic clothes or costume from gaudily coloured nylon or polyester are hopefully long gone, and claiming something to be "authentic" simply because it's made of wool is no longer enough for many. To be truly accurate requires a good understanding of the archaeology and history of early textiles, and using all the available evidence to exactly replicate types of cloth specific to different periods.

With a professional background in museum conservation/restoration, and having worked alongside two of the country's leading archaeological textile specialists I was unhappy to use any old remnant of cloth when it came to making reproduction clothing for my own use. Consequently I began looking into the practicalities of commissioning the production of accurately replicated period cloth made to my own demanding specifications. In many cases this has meant working with primitive/minority breed farmers to obtain period type fleeces, different spinners capable of replicating period types of warp and weft yarn, natural dye studios capable of colouring with madder, weld, woad etc, and using specialist weavers to turn this yarn into cloth produced to the correct patterns of weaving and thread counts.

As other museums, period costumiers and historical re-enactors I knew heard about this work, the numbers wanting to be involved in my project increased sufficiently to drive down average production costs to reasonable levels. A first trial project raised a couple of thousand pounds from about two dozen participants proving the viability of the scheme. Out of the success and interest generated by this first project a second project quickly followed and Time Warp Textiles was created enabling us to now offer a reproduction cloth weaving co-operative for a wide range of people involved with making replica historical clothing.

So how does a co-operative scheme differ from simply buying over the counter? Well, although we often have the last few yards of each previous production run for sale directly from stock, (current details are given later in this newsletter) what we produce is mainly bespoke by request, so you aren't restricted to choosing from a limited catalogue. If we don't have what you want in stock we discuss the costs and practicalities involved in producing it, and let others know what you'd like to see produced. If/when we have enough people interested in producing a selection of similar types of fabric to put together a financially viable project, then we commission our next batch of cloth. As production is paid for in advance by the participants of the co-operative we have minimal overheads, and relatively modest amounts of left over stock tying up our own capital. Consequently we can offer competitive prices allowing individuals to commission single garment lengths of bespoke replica cloth they wouldn't otherwise have been able to afford.



The time taken to produce any particular order depends, to a large degree, upon generating enough interest to make up an economically viable size of project. However, if you are ordering multiple garments worth of cloth, either acting on behalf of many members within a re-enactment society, or commercially as a producer or retailer of period costumes, your order may be large enough on its own. Alternatively, you could pay higher prices per yard to put a smaller or less popular project straight into production. Payment will only be collected once enough people have expressed an interest to make the next batch of cloth viable, so you won't be paying out years in advance only to find nothing is happening with your money. Only having collected in all the necessary money from each participant will the order then be confirmed with the suppliers.

Though our own area of expertise is in Early Medieval textiles, by using the knowledge of the whole co-operative we have produced woollen cloth suitable for periods ranging from Pre-Roman through to Tudor/Stuart. These have ranged from simple tabby weaves to complex rayed cloths and warp/weft faced broken twills, from narrow woven winingas (Saxon puttees) to broadcloth widths and the selection continues to grow with every new participant who joins the co-operative. To date we have replicated more than two thousand yards of cloth in several dozen variations of hue, width, weave and finish, produced for private individuals, professional costumiers, re-enactment societies, museums and academic establishments across Europe and America. A modest selection of these reproduction textiles can be seen in the commissions gallery on our web site.



Prices vary depending upon the complexity of the specific cloth you require, but also on the total length of any single type of cloth to be commissioned by all participating members of the co-operative. However, when we say our prices are competitive we genuinely mean this. This level of historical accuracy doesn't come cheap but compare our prices to anybody bespoke spinning/dyeing/weaving anything vaguely comparable. Our prices would typically start in the region of £15/yd (single width) for replicating the simplest types of un-dyed fabric. If you could be flexible and make use of a variety of types of cloth then let us know. We can offer small discounts to those happy simply to make up the quantities on other people's orders, rather than requesting something specific. The greater the quantity or variety of cloth you will take, the bigger the discount we may be able to offer.

A Boring bit of grey cloth?

To some yes, but look more closely. The colouration is purely natural, from un-dyed wool representative of the vast majority of early textiles. The yarn is a mixed blend of minority/primitive breed fleeces used to get a more historically correct distribution of fibre types from the soft and fine to the coarse and "kempy". The warp yarn has been "Z" spun, the weft yarn has been "S" spun. The sett of the weave has been regulated to around 20epi/18ppi and the cloth woven as a non-reversed 2-2 twill. So, whilst it may just look like a boring bit of grey cloth to some, to those who care or understand, it is a highly accurate recreation of a 10th century commonplace textile



The cost? Well as mentioned earlier, the price per yard to re-create this specific cloth again would depend upon the total length of cloth in another order. However, with many people participating in our first project it cost everyone involved just under £10/yd (single width). Whilst inflation and the passage of time has pushed up prices, this is indicative of the sorts of prices we try to achieve by combining several small orders into one larger, more economic project and typical of our attention to detail when researching period textiles.

If any of the above sounds of interest to you, then please get in touch. If you are unsure of what you need for a particular period we may be able to offer advice and could possibly help from fabric we already have in stock. If you are looking for something specific let us have as much information as you can and we'll discuss how we could best go about producing it for you.

Current News

Progress reports on our most recent and ongoing projects.

It's been quite a while since I last put out an updated newsletter. Those of you who know me will be aware that 2011 was pretty turbulent in terms of upsets and problems with my home life and serious family health problems. Add on top of that the fact that the general world wide economic problems resulted in the woollen weavers I use being recently bought out changing their management structure and staff. Consequently I've had to start again by way of building working relationships with new contacts and getting across just what level of detail it is we're trying to achieve.

Another negative to report is that shortages in the relatively modest un-dyed minority/british breed fleece markets, brought about partially by growing demand from eco-fashion designers along with generally high inflation, means that it is becoming increasingly difficult for me to produce the labour intensive specialist yarns and fabrics we require at the very cheap prices we achieved with the first few batches of cloth. These problems also mean I am facing increasing delays in obtaining some of the fabrics I have had on order for some while now.

Nevertheless in spite of the above I have been receiving a steadily increasing number of enquiries about replica cloth. As such I am confident that with the right attention to detail this business has the potential to grow and benefit the re-enactment community as it does so. I have honoured any prices quoted on pre-existing orders, and seen against a general global trend for increasing prices in all commodities I hope our prices will continue to be seen as affordable for a minority interest specialist product produced to such exacting standards.

One of the more important areas of progress made recently has been the completion of natural dye trials. There are many "hobby" dyers out there, myself included, who can hand dye small hanks of yarn with traditional substances such as madder, weld, woad etc. However the requirements of commercial weavers for much larger cones containing many miles of yarn, mean these smaller hanks are of no commercial use, and I needed to find a specialist hand dyer capable of working natural dyes on a larger scale. I am pleased to report that whilst not cheap, these trials have produced some very successful results. Something proven by the fact that when word got out that I'd just taken delivery of this latest batch of cloth, and that these trials had succeeded some of these were snapped up and sold out in the brief period between starting to draft this latest newsletter and actually completing it ready to publish live on the web.

Nevertheless, for any medieval fans out there, please take a detailed look at the "rayed" cloths. These complex striped fabrics with different colours of yarn and types of weaving through the stripes are very specific to their period, and are, so far as I am aware, something which has never been reproduced for the re-enactment market before.

Another first, for this small business was some of our recent order of bespoke linen. Whilst the diamond twill woven linen we produced has been made available before by other re-enactors, our most recent linen order also included some of the unusual Saxon/Viking honeycomb linen which I have never seen available for sale before, hence the reason the limited excess also sold immediately and never made it into this newsletter.

A small technical point that may be of interest to some relates to the yarn we have spun. It is not economic to spin yarn just for single short lengths of cloth (the last batch of yarn I commissioned was approximately one quarter of a ton) and so we try to use such orders to produce excess of the most commonly requested types of undyed, naturally pigmented woollen yarns and have recently increased our selection and holding of "z" spun yarns. This should ease delays and problems for any waiting on cloth production dependent upon these types of yarns.

We do have more of the ever popular undyed mixed grey brown russets in production as we speak. So I hope that in a relatively short space of time these will be available again, but as is ever the case I keep waiting and hope these turn up sooner rather than later.

Finally, on a personal note, many will know my own area of interest is in early medieval re-enactment. I have long had a desire to replicate a garment of samite; an incredibly rare, luxurious and colourful high status patterned silk. I finally believe I have found a supplier capable of hand weaving this west faced compound twill and that the principle barrier to production is now financial. This cloth is likely to work out at well above £100 per square yard and the minimum order is going to be in excess of £3000. Although many have expressed an interest in tiny amounts for use as decorative trim I've yet to find enough people willing to make the financial commitment to enough for full garments to make up the minimum quantity. I know this isn't cheap but if you might be interested please get in touch.

As we do not carry standard stock products we cannot guarantee having specific items available at future dates. We do however, generate a steadily changing quantity of short lengths of “surplus” cloth left over from each bespoke production run, the details of which are given below. As these can sell out quite quickly please e-mail to confirm current availability and verify an order.

For full terms and conditions about commissioning bespoke cloth along with more details about these textiles please see the separate pdf down-load available from our web site. Prices include standard mainland delivery, delivery outside of mainland UK or insured delivery will incur an additional cost.

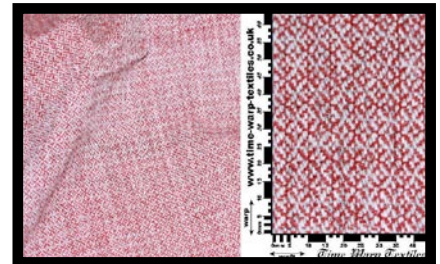
(Please note colours are only loosely indicative due to the difficulties of using flash photography to capture detail in dark textiles and also the variability between computer monitors.)

Currently In Stock. (at time of publication)

Type: 2-2 broken diamond twill, hand dyed madder yarn and un-bleached natural white

Batch Code: 12-08 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

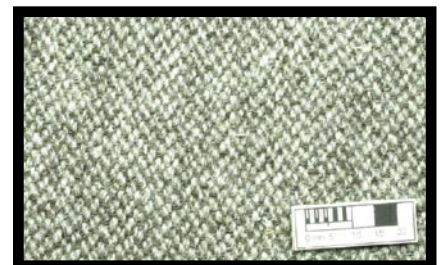
Width: nominal 68” Length: SOLD Cost: £50/yd



Type: 2-2 kreuzkoper twill, un-bleached natural white and un-dyed dark grey

Batch Code: 10-01 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 36” Length: SOLD Cost: £105 in total



Type: 2-2 diamond twill, un-dyed natural brown and un-dyed dark grey

Batch Code: 12-06 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

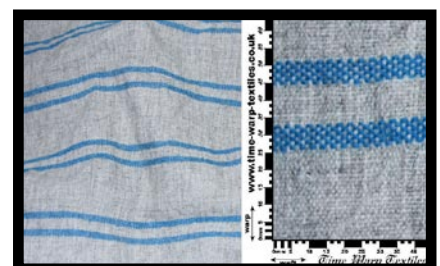
Width: nominal 64” Length: 8yds Cost: £36/yd



Type: Rayed cloth in hand dyed woad yarns and undyed natural grey

Batch Code: 12-05 Period: Medieval

Width: nominal 68” Length: 12yds Cost: £45/yd

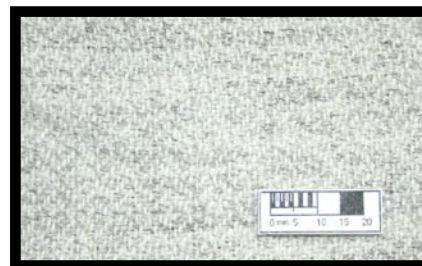


Currently In Stock. (at time of publication)

Type: 2-2 diamond twill, un-bleached natural white and un-dyed off white

Batch Code: 10-02 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 36" Length: SOLD Cost: £108 total



Type: 2-2 diamond twill in un-dyed natural mid tone brown

Batch Code: 12-07 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

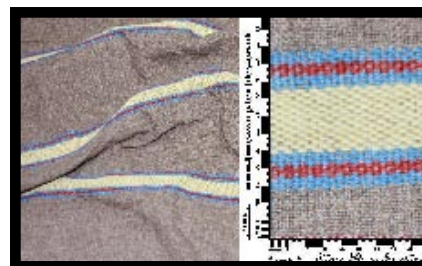
Width: nominal 64" Length: 9yds Cost: £36/yd



Type: Rayed cloth in hand dyed woad, madder, and weld yarns with undyed natural brown

Batch Code: 12-03 Period: Medieval

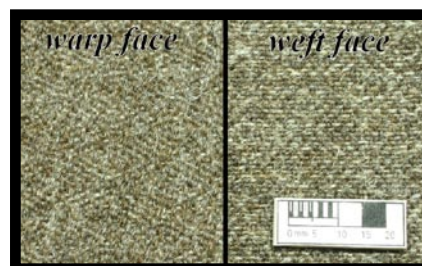
Width: nominal 64" Length: 10yds Cost: £48/yd



Type: 2-1 diamond twill, un-dyed natural two tone brown

Batch Code: 10-07 Period: Primarily medieval

Width: nominal 36" Length: 13yds Cost: £18/yd



Type: 2-1 diamond twill, un-dyed natural two tone grey

Batch Code: 10-08 Period: Primarily medieval

Width: nominal 36" Length: 10yds Cost: £18/yd



Type: 2-1 non reversed twill, two tone un-dyed natural black and un-bleached natural white

Batch Code: 10-09 Period: Primarily post Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 36" Length: 16yds Cost: £15/yd



Currently In Stock. (at time of publication)

Type: 2-1 non-reversed twill, un-dyed natural black and brown

Batch Code: 10-06 Period: Primarily post Norman Conquest

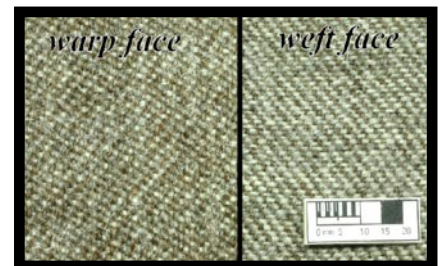
Width: nominal 36" Length; 16¹/₂yds Cost: £15/yd



Type: 2-1 non-reversed twill, un-dyed natural grey and brown

Batch Code: 10-10 Period: Primarily post Norman Conquest

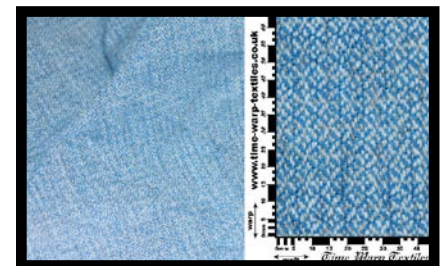
Width: nominal 36" Length; 13yds Cost: £15/yd



Type: 2-2 diamond twill in hand dyed woad yarns and un bleached natural white

Batch Code: 12-09 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

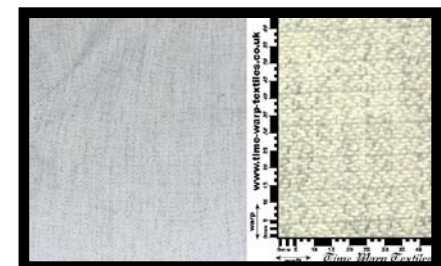
Width: nominal 68" Length: SOLD Cost: £50/yd



Type: 2-2 diamond twill in un-bleached natural white and off white

Batch Code: 12-01 Period: Primarily pre-Norman Conquest

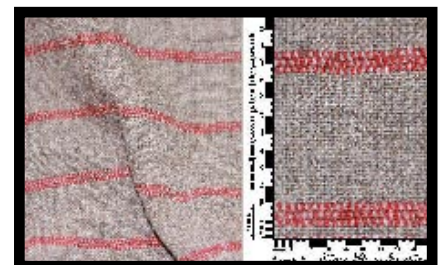
Width: nominal 68" Length: 11yds Cost: £36/yd



Type: early rayed cloth in hand dyed madder yarns and un-dyed mid brown

Batch Code: 12-04 Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

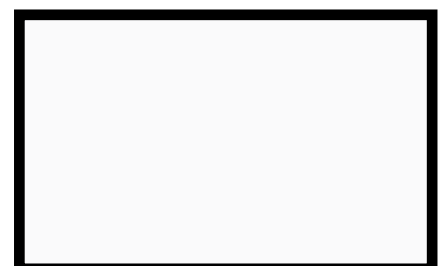
Width: nominal 64" Length: 5yds Cost: £45/yd



Type:

Batch Code: Period:

Width: Length: Cost:



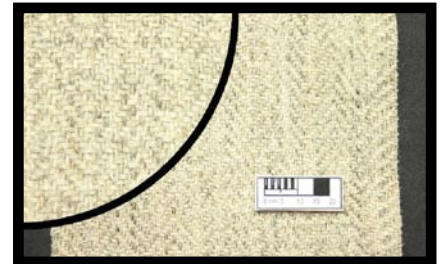
Currently In Stock. (at time of publication)

The following Wickelbänder (leg wraps) have been produced in response to requests for an affordable, narrow woven improvement upon the blanket stitch edged strips of cut cloth used by many Saxon/Viking re-enactors. To minimise costs we have had to accept a few minor technical compromises that very few re-enactors would recognise or understand, as such these replicas are still more accurate than most described by others as "fully authentic" and greatly exceed the authenticity regulations of all major Viking/Saxon re-enactment groups.

Type: Un-dyed "Off-white" pure wool herringbone woven tape.

Batch Code: Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 4" Length: 40+yds Cost: £3.50/yd



Type: Un-dyed "Off-white" pure wool herringbone woven tape.

Batch Code: Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

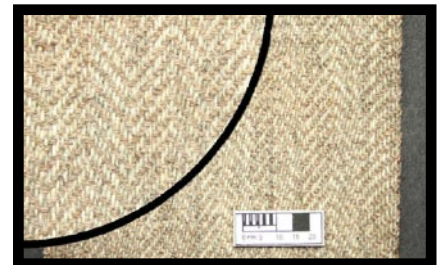
Width: nominal 3" Length: 40+yds Cost: £3.50/yd



Type: Un-dyed "Fair" pure wool herringbone woven tape.

Batch Code: Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 4" Length: 30+yds Cost: £3.50/yd



Type: Un-dyed "Medium" pure wool herringbone woven tape.

Batch Code: Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

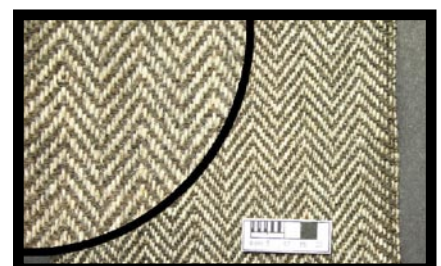
Width: nominal 3" Length: 30+yds Cost: £3.50/yd



Type: Un-dyed "Dark" pure wool herringbone woven tape.

Batch Code: Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 4" Length: SOLD Cost: £3.50/yd



Currently In Stock. (at time of publication)

In the day to day running of our business we are occasionally offered roll-ends or remnants of modern cloth that are a passable approximation of period textiles. These fabrics are typical of the sorts of things most re-enactors try to source when making their own costumes. All these are quality fabrics which would retail on the high street for much more than we are able to offer them here. So whilst not offering the same high levels of historical accuracy as our custom replica fabrics they do offer a more affordable alternative.

Type: Pure Scottish wool pale grey and brown herringbone twill

Batch Code: Rem 3 Period: Pre-Norman Conquest

Width: nominal 60" Length: 10+yds Cost: £8/yd



Type: Plain weave un-dyed linen (we usually have access to a variety of undyed weight s and hues)

Batch Code: (varied types) Period: Wide ranging

Width: nominal 60" Length: various Cost: from £7/yd



Type: light cream paired warp half hopsack woven linen

Batch Code: Rem 5 Period: none specific

Width: nominal 75" Length: 10+yds Cost: £6/yd



Type: pure wool pale brown tabby woven cloth (very slight nap)

Batch Code: Rem 4 Period: Wide ranging

Width: nominal 60" Length: SOLD Cost: £8/yd



Type:

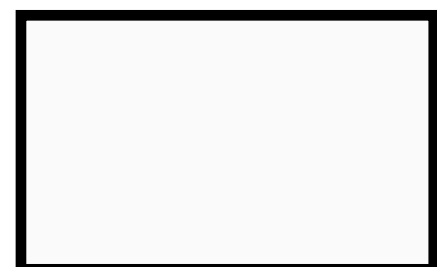
Batch Code:

Period:

Width: nominal

Length:

Cost:



For the Future?

The following types of cloth are some of the requests that co-operative members have been asking about, some of which would be repeats of previously successful projects. We don't have quite enough interest to make their production immediately viable, but in many cases we are not far off. So, if you might be interested please let us know, the greater the interest the more viable production becomes.

These co-operative schemes, and production/delivery times are somewhat different to how many are used to purchasing goods. Please carefully read through all the terms and conditions shown in the separate document available to download from our web site.

Participating in any of these co-operative projects to produce replica historic cloth will be taken as a formal acknowledgement and agreement with all of the terms and conditions shown in the separate pdf file.

Type: Medieval Rayed cloths with a variety of colours of un-dyed grey and brown stripes.

Type: Pre-Norman un-dyed 2-2 broken diamond twill linen.

Type: Medieval Rayed cloths with naturally dyed coloured stripes. (more costly to produce)

Type: Norman 2-1 twills in un-dyed greys and browns

Type: Medieval challis - ultra fine weave, very lightweight pure wool "wimple cloth".

Type: Tudor/Stuart russets with a fluffy dressed surface finish

Type: Early russets in varied natural un-dyed hues (used by peasants throughout most of history)

Type: Medieval "burel" (a cheap coarse cloth used by the lower orders of society)

Type: Pre-Norman un-dyed 2-2 broken diamond twills.

Type: Greenland Wadmaal (heavyweight viking 2-2 twill cloth)

Type: Samite, elaborate multi coloured silk weft faced compound twills (very costly to produce)

Type: Tudor/Stuart kersy

Type: Tudor/Stuart cotton (cheap low status woollen cloth)

Type: Viking woollen sailcloth for use on replica longships and for replica tents

Type: Viking Birka twills (very finely sett 2-2 broken diamond twills)

Type: Tudor/Stuart bayes/sayes

Type: Roman Hopsack woven white woollen cloth

Type: "Celtic" checked cloths in natural un-dyed greys and browns

Type: Pre-Norman herringbone twill winingas/ leg-bindings (need huge minimum orders)

Type: Early saxon Rippenkoper banded warp/ weft faced twill

If we can raise all the necessary finances we can consider producing any type of period woollen cloth you might want. We now have a linen weaver within the group of suppliers we work with, so we can consider producing bespoke linen cloth. We have now successfully undertaken our first experiments with a specialist dye firm to produce period dyed yarns (genuine madder, woad etc.) for weaving authentically coloured cloth and are always looking out for additional spinners, weavers or other textile producers/suppliers capable of adding to the range of textiles we are able produce.

So if there's something you'd be interested in let us know, if others have been asking for the same thing we might have enough interest to make it's production viable. We don't necessarily need massive orders, as in some special cases we have been able to commission just a dozen yards without radically impacting on the cost per yard. Every case has to be judged individually but we do our best to please everyone.

If there is anything else you would like to know feel free to contact me on the e-mail address given earlier.

For full terms and conditions regarding how these co-operative projects are run, please see the separate pdf download available on our web site

Aidan Campbell - Time Warp Textiles Cloth Co-operative

