

# TEMPLETONIAN

VOL. IV. No. 55

JUNE 1953

PRICE 3d.



# THE CORONATION CARPETS

**I**N our long history as carpet manufacturers, many famous occasions have been especially marked for us by the carpets we have supplied, but none more so than the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 2nd June 1953. During many months prior to the ceremony in Westminster Abbey the Coronation carpets were the subject of frequent discussion in our factories and offices. As the weeks passed, and the carpets were at length woven and packed and despatched, our interest grew apace.

Now the great day has come and is past; but the glory remains and will be inscribed in the pages of history. To have had the honour of supplying the carpets for this most notable occasion will for ever be a source of pride to James Templeton & Company Limited and to all our employees, past and present.

To some of our older workers, this Coronation year of 1953 must be a particularly memorable one, for they can now look back and survey three of the outstanding events in the life of the firm—the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth and that of her father and her grandfather. To have been concerned in the manufacture of the carpets for all three Coronations is an achievement of which they are entitled to be very proud, and we should like to place on record our thanks to them for the fine service they have rendered through the years. We would thank them not only for the quality of their work, but for the care and devotion with which they have trained the younger employees so that they, in turn, might continue the Templeton tradition. That this tradition has been maintained is clearly demonstrated in the carpets for this year's Coronation,

THE CARPETS BEGIN TO ARRIVE AT  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY



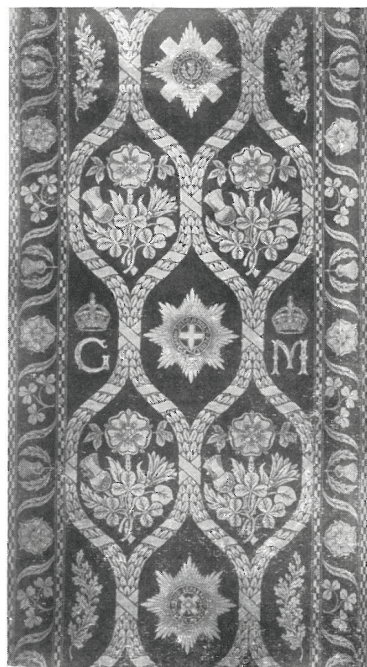
Photograph by courtesy of P.A. - Reuter Ltd.

and great credit is reflected on all, both old and young, who have taken part in their manufacture.

It is perhaps fitting that the carpets for all three Coronations should have been made entirely by the Chenille Axminster process. This process was patented by James Templeton, who founded the firm one hundred and fourteen years ago, in 1839. That his invention was a notably successful one was soon evident and it is the foundation upon which Templetons has been built. A family connection has always been maintained with the founder of the firm and to-day one of the directors, Sir Alastair Young, Bt., is a great-great-grandson of James Templeton. It is a lasting tribute to the memory of our



*James Templeton (1802-1883), the founder of the firm.*



founder that Chenille Axminster carpets by Templeton have been chosen for three successive Coronation ceremonies.

In the following pages we give an account of the various manufacturing processes through which the Coronation carpets passed. We should, however, like first to glance back for a moment to the year 1911, when we first made carpets for a Coronation ceremony. There is reproduced a section of one of these carpets, from which it will be observed that on that occasion a design was employed, the royal monograms and the national

*A section of the carpeting made by the firm for the 1911 Coronation. The ground was in dark blue, the design being woven in a lighter shade of blue.*

emblems being woven into the carpet.

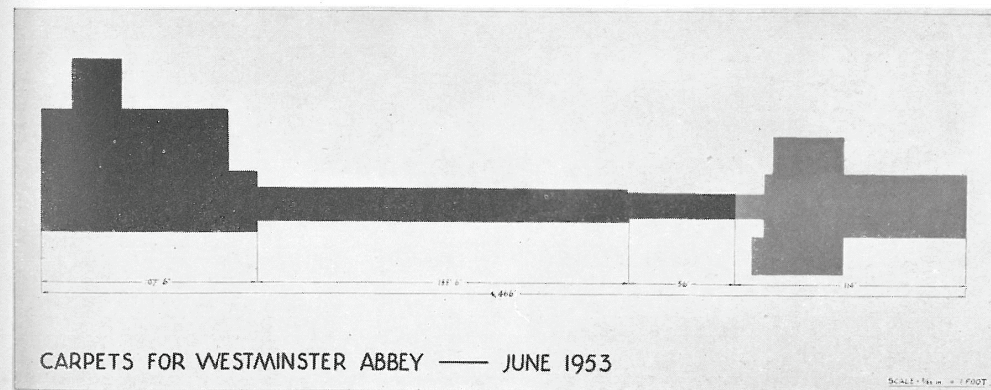
The carpets supplied for this year's Coronation (as also for that of 1937) were in solid colours without design. They were woven seamless—a feature of Chenille Axminster—and were of very exceptional fineness, having 288 tufts of 6-ply worsted yarn to the square inch, a closeness of weave that is extremely rare. The pile was short in order not to impede the passage of the robes and trains of the peers and peeresses in the Coronation procession. Altogether thirty-one carpets were woven, sixteen being gold in colour and the remaining fifteen blue, some of these having a light blue centre with darker blue borders.

A ground plan of the carpets is shown on this page, the section coloured black representing the blue carpets and the gold carpets being shown by the shaded portion. From the Annexe,

where the main procession formed, a carpet was laid along the Nave, past the Orchestra and Choir, to the Theatre, where the actual Coronation ceremony took place. The Nave carpet measured 188 feet 6 inches long by 17 feet wide. The width comprised 10 feet of light blue centre with contrasting dark blue borders, each 3 feet 6 inches wide. Similar carpets extended in front of the Orchestra and Choir, a further distance of 56 feet to the Coronation Theatre.

For the Coronation Theatre itself, and for the Sanctuary and Traverses that lie behind, the carpets were of gold. Twelve separate carpets made up this group, the largest being 86 feet by 32 feet.

In the Annexe, the same colourings were used and the carpets had the same short pile, although the closeness of weave was not so pronounced.



*This ground plan of the Coronation carpets gives a good indication of the magnitude of the task. The black section represents the blue carpets and the shaded section on the right of the plan the gold carpets. It will be seen that the overall length is 466 feet.*

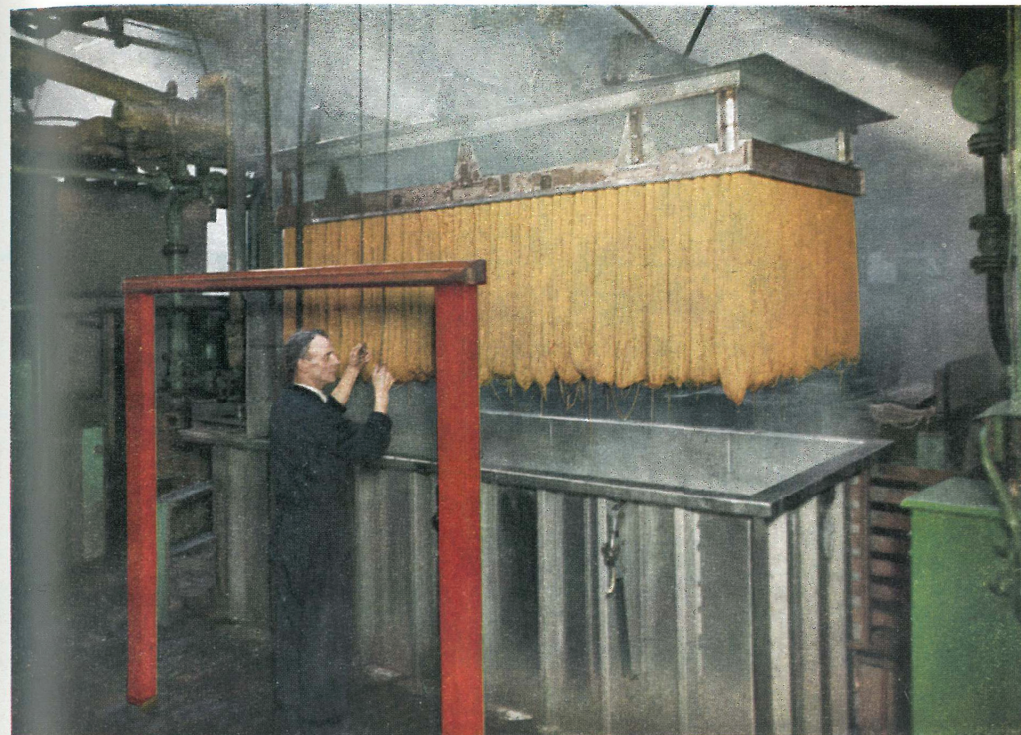
## SPINNING

The yarn for the pile of the carpets laid in the Abbey itself was a 6-ply worsted yarn which was spun at our mill in Stirling. Into each square yard was woven  $3\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. of this yarn, this being rather more than double the weight of yarn used for the average household grade of carpet.

For the Annexe carpets we used a 2-ply woollen yarn which was blended, carded and spun in our mill at Brookside Street, Glasgow. Each square yard of carpeting contained  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. of surface yarn.

In each case the backing materials consisted of jute and cotton yarns. Jute, which is very inelastic, ensures that the carpets keep their shape and a soft spun cotton, which formed the bulk of the backing material, produces a pliable cloth which lies flat from the moment it is laid.

*Spinning mules at our Brookside Street mill working on "Blend 17"—the Coronation Yarn.*



*A fine illustration of the Coronation yarn newly dyed.*

## YARN DYEING

The process of yarn dyeing is one that requires considerable care and this is of particular moment when the carpets to be woven are in solid colours, i.e., without design, as in the case of the Coronation carpets. If a single hank of yarn deviates even slightly from the correct shade, a whole carpet may be ruined.

The Coronation yarn was dyed in our factory at Tullis Street, Glasgow, and the photograph above shows the gold coloured yarn newly withdrawn from a stainless steel dye-box.

## WEFT WEAVING

The first process in the manufacture of Chenille Axminster is the weaving of the chenille or fur which will eventually form the pile of the carpets. The chenille method of manufacturing textile fabrics is believed to have originated in France and the word "chenille" is French for "hairy caterpillar"—an apt description of the chenille or fur before it is woven into a carpet.

Chenille is made by weaving a cloth with woollen or worsted weft threads which are held together by fine cotton warps spaced at uniform intervals. The distance between each warp thread determines the depth of pile in the carpet.

The illustration on this page is of a weft loom weaving the chenille or fur for the Coronation carpets in our Tullis Street factory.



*This loom is the first of two looms used in the manufacture of Chenille Axminster carpets.*



*The chenille is now cut into strips on the fur-cutting machine, to make it ready for the carpet-weaving process.*

## FUR CUTTING

The cloth woven on the weft loom is then cut lengthwise exactly half-way between each row of cotton warps. This forms a number of strips of material and each strip of Chenille or fur is eventually divided into equal lengths, each of which is to form one row of tufts in the carpet. In the course of the cutting process, the fur passes over a heated, grooved cylinder which gives a permanent V shape to the chenille strips.

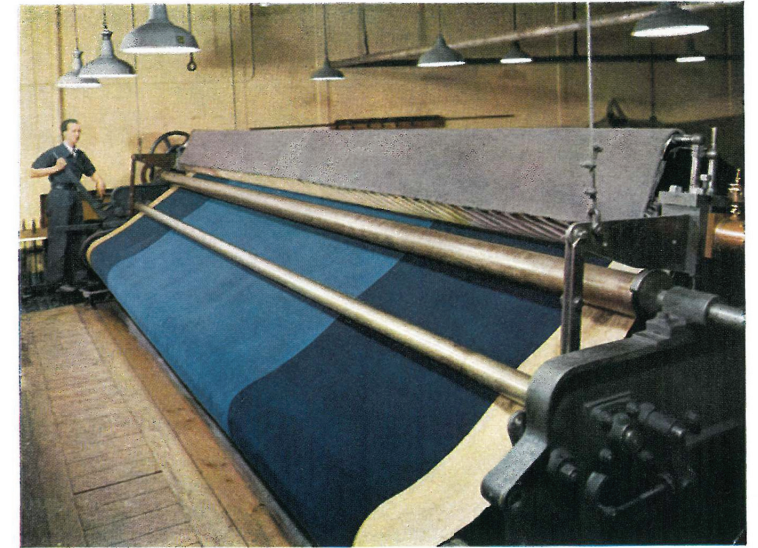
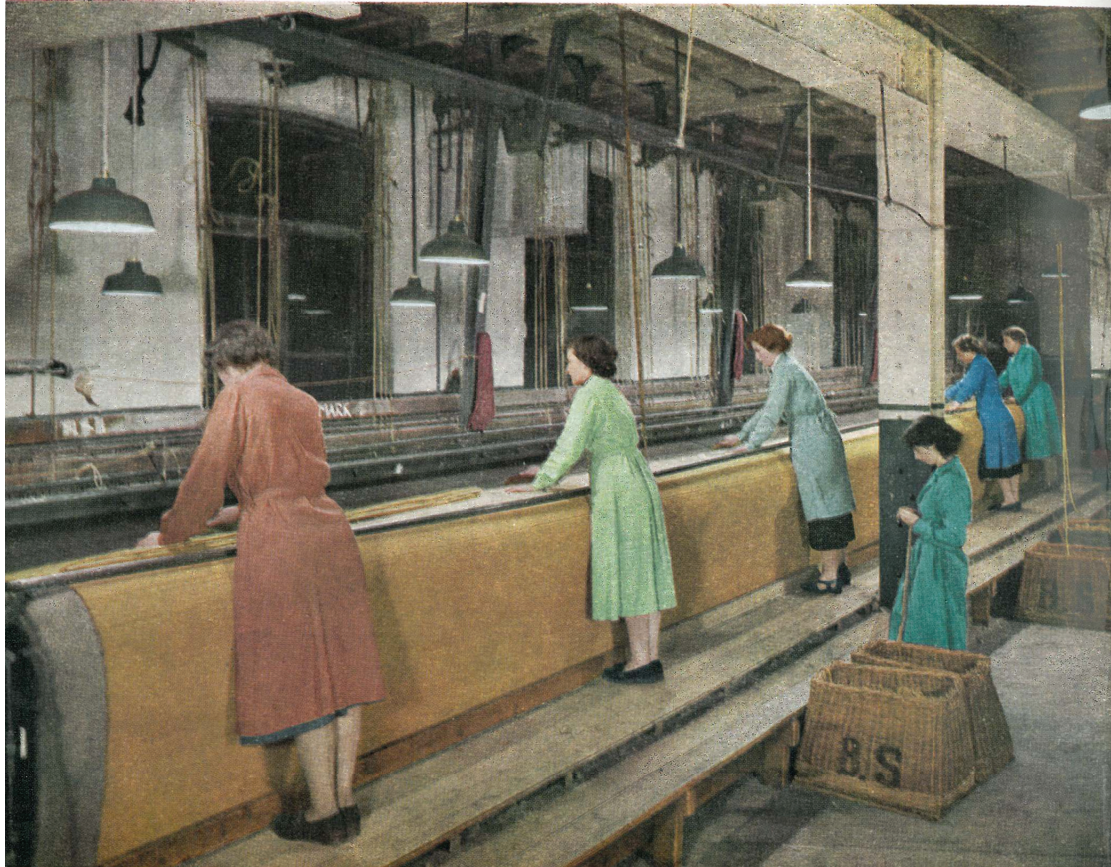
The fur-cutting process is shown in the photograph above.

## CARPET WEAVING

Each length of fur forms one row of tufts in the width of the carpet and a further loom is used to weave this fur into the jute and cotton backing.

Many of the Coronation carpets were woven on a loom capable of weaving seamless carpets 33 feet wide. This huge loom, the widest power-driven loom in the world, is operated by five girl weavers working abreast, and they are shown in the photograph weaving the 32 feet wide carpet used in the Coronation Theatre.

*The widest power-driven loom in the world.*



*The blue carpet laid in the Nave of the Abbey is seen being passed through a cropping machine.*

## FINISHING

The carpets have been woven, but they are still far from ready to be despatched. They are now passed through a number of finishing processes, one of which is shown above, and each process has the same ultimate purpose—to ensure, so far as is humanly possible, that every carpet leaves our premises in perfect condition.

A large travelling shearing machine—in operation not unlike a gigantic lawn-mower—moves over every square inch of carpet, trimming any tufts that may be slightly longer than the rest, so that that depth of pile may be exactly even throughout. Each carpet is meticulously examined both back and front by skilled employees and any remaining imperfections of weaving are corrected by hand.

A few days before the Coronation carpets were sent off to Westminster Abbey, specimens of the blue and gold carpets were displayed in our Glasgow showrooms in order that local customers and friends, as well as employees and their relatives, might view them. It is estimated that upwards of 10,000 people came to see the carpets.

And thus were the Coronation carpets made. It has been our privilege to have made them and we shall always remember with pride that our young Queen, on her way to the throne, walked on Templeton carpets woven in Templeton Chenille Axminster—as did her father and grandfather before her.

*Two of the carpets in our Glasgow showrooms. In the left background are specimens of the 1937 Coronation carpets, and on the right a section of the carpeting used at the 1911 ceremony.*



## OVERSEAS WAREHOUSES AND AGENTS

### SOUTH AFRICA

We feel sure that from time to time our overseas staff and agents must have items to report which would be of general interest to our factory and office staffs at home, or which they would like to see published in the magazine. "The Templetonian" circulates to most of our principal customers in all countries, and so news which might interest them would also be welcomed.

It is therefore requested that any 'copy' should be addressed to the Editor in Glasgow, and it should be noted that items for publication in the Christmas issue should be mailed so as to reach him not later than 15th November.

While we have fairly regular visits from many of our agents overseas, it is always pleasant to record a call from Mr. E. F. Robbins of New York. Mr. Robbins was combining pleasure with business on this occasion and hoped to see the Coronation procession in London.

We also welcomed our recently appointed agent for Western Germany, Dr. C. V. Daumas, on his first visit to our Glasgow offices.

In the last issue, mention was made of the appointment as our agent for the whole South African territory of Mr. John R. M. Pitt, hitherto our representative in the Cape Town ground. This involved the finding and furnishing of new Showroom and Office accommodation in Johannesburg, and it goes without saying that Mr. Pitt has been far from idle in this respect.

The address of his Johannesburg premises is—

59 WALTER WISE BUILDING,  
JOUBERT STREET,  
JOHANNESBURG.

Mail addressed to P.O. Box 3605 will find him, and the telephone number is 23-1254.

The area manager under Mr. Pitt is Mr. Donald M. Ross, formerly with Copland & Lye Ltd., of Glasgow, whom we wish every success in his new appointment.

Mr. Pitt, of course, continues to have his headquarters in Cape Town.

*A corner of the new premises in Johannesburg, recently acquired by Mr. J. R. M. Pitt, our South African agent.*

