



Cambridgeshire Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

NEWSLETTER 70

January 2014



“Knitted Taxi” at the Knitting and Stitching Show

Photo by Chris Tucker

From the Editor

At our next meeting, we will have our AGM and look at revising our Constitution. We will also be electing our committee for another year. While I am happy to carry on as Newsletter Editor, I am also aware that Newsletters need a change of editor regularly to keep them fresh and interesting, so if anyone would like to have a go, I would be happy to hand over. Or perhaps you might like to take on part of the job, such as meeting reports or features editor, or become a regular columnist?

Is there a budding writer/editor out there?

If the written word is not your thing, perhaps you are thinking about the National Exhibition and what you could enter? Our exhibition showed the wealth of talent we have in the Guild – let’s show it at the National!

A huge thank-you to everyone who contributed articles this time around. As ever, keep them coming to:

chris.tucker@zen.co.uk or 24 School Close, Gamlingay SG19 3JY.

Chris

From the Chair

The festive season is upon us, marking the end of a wonderful year of talks and workshops for our Guild, an outing to May Berkouwer's conservation studio - as well as an absolutely fantastic exhibition. I would like to thank all members of our committee for all their time and commitment to the Guild, and also the exhibition committee and all those who helped put together and organise such a great show with its very own tea room.

I also want to say how thrilled I am that the Come & Weave days are flourishing and thank Jacqui Fuller and Sue Wallis for the organisation of these. They are a true asset to our Guild.

I am really looking forward to next year; the programme looks very exciting and will, of course, kick off with the AGM. We look forward to seeing you there, with your bags (they don't need to be finished) for our design challenge as well as for the national exhibition.

With best wishes to everyone for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tina

GUILD NEWS

January Meeting and AGM

Don't forget to bring your samples from the Janet Phillips workshop. Also, if you are making a bag for the National Exhibition please bring your work in progress (to be completed by the February meeting).

Library News

The Guild has purchased some new books for the library as follows:-

Ann Richards - Weaving Textiles that shape themselves
Sara Lamb - Spin to Weave
Anne Dixon - Inkle Pattern Directory
Carol Strickler - A Weaver's Book of 8-shaft patterns
The Best of Weavers - Twill Thrills
The Best of Weavers - Double Weave
The Best of Weavers - Huck Lace
Sarah Anderson - The Spinners Book of Yarn Designs

Please remember that to enable as many as possible to borrow these books they should only be borrowed for 1 month at a time during the first year.

We now have all the library books catalogued by category, author and title for easy reference. This list has already been circulated to the membership in .pdf format for information.

Lesley Willcock

Come and Weave Group

The Come and Weave Group continues to grow both in numbers and format. We started off as a small group of novice weavers meeting originally at Sue Collins' home. The need for more space for our looms resulted in our move to Comberton Village Hall where we still meet. At first we had help from Anna (many of us had started our weaving with her at the Cottenham Summer School) and we called ourselves the New Weavers group. After three years we could hardly call ourselves "new" and we were keen to encourage more experienced weavers from the Guild to join us, hence the Come and Weave title.

We meet about five times a year and have twenty members of all abilities. During the last year we have welcomed input from some experienced members of the guild.

In 2014 we will see the group develop again. The Weave Structure group has now ceased to run and has kindly allowed us to hold the Weave Structure samples. They will be available to view at every meeting. Sue Wallis holds the samples and brings them to each meeting. The remaining members have requested that at alternate meetings they show us some of the themes that they have worked on - they start with plain weave in January. Weavers can listen in, or continue with their own projects as they wish.

We are primarily a self-help workshop group, we meet together to share our enjoyment of weaving. They are fun, informal days when you can come for the whole day or just drop in for part of it.

The dates for 2014 are:

18 January
8 March
10 May
13 September
11 October
15 November

10.00 to 4.00 at Comberton Village Hall - bring a packed lunch.

More information? *Contact Jacqui Fuller or Sue Wallis*

Braid Society Come and Try Day at Sacrewell Farm

25 Feb 2014 from 10.15 to 3.30.

Make a ply split coaster or bring your own work.

Contact Jennie Parry)116 273 7189 or jennie.parry@virgin.net

You must book a place to get free entry.

FOR SALE / WANTED

For Sale

Ashford Traditional Spinning Wheel

Includes Lazy Kate and Carders. Thirty years old but hardly used. Offers to Margaret Lake at Outwell - 01945 773357

Demonstrators Wanted for the Countryside Life and Crafts event on Sunday 20 July 2014, at the Farmland Museum, Denny Abbey.
Contact Ann Wise (Museum Manager) at info@farmlandmuseum.org.uk

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Wanted: Advertising Manager - Journal Editorial Committee

If you are organised, computer literate (spreadsheets and database) and, most important of all, keen to expand your textile horizons, make new friends and develop contacts, then please consider volunteering for this important role. Training will be given and all out of pocket expenses, including travel costs to the quarterly meetings held in London, will be reimbursed. If you would like to find out more please contact Christina Chisholm on chair@thejournalforwsd.org.uk who will be delighted to hear from you!

Christina Chisholm

Wanted: helpers for Yarns in the Cathedral

We are now at the stage where need to organise the team for mounting the exhibition. Can you help on Monday to Wednesday 12th, 13th & 14th May? The unpacking will be done at the Cathedral on Monday 12th May. Re-packing after the exhibition will be on Monday 2nd June. Ideally the same people could help with both. Travel expenses can be claimed. Members from all Guilds are welcome for this task.

Angela Colbridge will be in charge and display boards and tables will be provided by the Cathedral and Norwich School.

Also we would like to borrow mannequins, hat stands and wooden poles/broom handles or similar for wall hangings and rugs.

If you can help, please contact Anne at inkleweaver@btinternet.com

Anne Dixon

Calendar 2015

Now is the time to send in your photographs please, the deadline for submission is 20 April 2014. All pictures should be in landscape format. Send digital photos (at least 200 ppi) to calendar@wsd.org.uk and good quality prints or slides to Hilary Turner at 37 Blundellsands Road East, Liverpool L23 8UJ.

Alternatively, submissions can be handed in at the AGM on 13 April.

Hilary Turner

REVIEWS

The Association Summer School 2013

Five Cambridgeshire Guild members attended the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers Summer School held at Trinity St David's College in Carmarthen in August. Between them they took four different workshops out of the selection of 16 on offer and here we give you a taste of those workshops.

“Pick-up damask from 4 to 8 shafts in linen” with Riitta Sinkkonen-Davies

The workshop was entitled Pick Up Damask and although I would rather have done a more general weaving course this is an interesting technique with lots of possibilities for design. We took along our looms already warped up and proceeded to make samples, first in twill and then in four-shaft imitation “satin”. Progress was slow as we learned how to make smooth lines and curves in our pick-up design. I was frustrated by the number of times I found a warp thread skipping over too many wefts – usually 5 or 6 picks after the mistake - unpicking was very slow and tedious. As a result, I ended up with just four samples on my first warp and didn't complete my “project” which was woven in 8 shaft satin/sateen. This was disappointing as I had deliberately chosen a simple design which I hoped would weave up quickly so that I would take home two completed placemats and an empty loom.

Riitta showed us how she warps her loom, pre-sleying the reed in the Scandinavian way, and also brought along lots of inspiring examples of pick up damask. I was most impressed by her display of stricks of flax she has grown over a number of years – all varying in colour but all beautifully fine. She also had lots of skeins of handspun linen which were equally impressive. Riitta showed us how she dresses her distaff and then demonstrated her method of spinning flax on a wheel which had belonged to her grandmother. Those of us who had taken along our spinning wheels were able to buy some Lithuanian flax from Riitta and have a go at spinning it under her watchful eye.

I really enjoyed my week and I became very aware of how much work goes into organising Summer School. It was great to spend a whole week just weaving and not worrying about cooking meals etc.

On the Saturday, it was interesting to look around the other classes and saw that, to my surprise, there were at least three other workshops that would have appealed to me. This particular venue was very well equipped for textiles and, if I had been a regular Summer School attendee, it would have been interesting to do a course that took advantage of the available equipment.

I wish there had been more time for spinning in our class and I would have been grateful for some handouts – having written up my scribbled notes, they needed a fair bit of deciphering!



Stricks of flax, and damask woven linen

Photos by Sue Prior

Sue Prior

Three-end Block Weave with Jason Collingwood

Three end block weaving rugs with Jason Collingwood saw 12 nervous students and a jet-lagged teacher in the classroom at 9am on Monday morning. By day three, Jason's jet-lag had worn off (he'd been teaching in America for several weeks before travelling to Wales), but a cold had developed to replace it.

The students included a complete beginner weaver and some very experienced ones which made teaching us a challenge. Each session started at 9am or 2pm with a formal teaching session for about half an hour to introduce a new technique. I think we all got our colours (labelled A, B and C) muddled, but when the mist cleared we produced cross stripes, vertical stripes, aligned dots and staggered dots all with different background colours and effects.

Later in the week shaft switching was introduced - this can be used to create fabulous designs, if you have enough patience to persevere with it. We all practised twining which is a useful technique for setting warp ends evenly and to give a firm edge to beat against, which is really important when weaving rugs. We had a patient, encouraging teacher, a week of fun, and shared some new skills to apply back at home.

Suzanne Townshend

Creative Spinning with Jane Deane

Our course had two elements: design and techniques for fancy yarns. The design part had worksheets with structured exercises that forced one to look and then concentrate on what one was seeing. By concentrating for example on the proportions of colours one creates something recognizable and these exercises made one feel safe at all times.

In contrast to the structured environment of the art exercises, the fancy yarn making was free form and unstructured. Jane would demonstrate or speak on a subject when a question was asked or she felt the class needed new input. This unstructured learning did not suit everyone but I enjoyed it.

Jane Sinton

Rule Breaking Weaving with Laura Thomas

This workshop aimed to challenge the perceived 'rules' of weaving so we started from a list of possible rules such as even beat, neat selvages, no long floats and many more. Having already broken most of these 'rules' in my weaving life I did wonder where we were going with this workshop but I admit I had a wonderful time. The workshop included a mixture of tutorial sessions looking at weave structures, yarns, Laura's wonderful sample collection and practical weaving sessions. The looms were warped with a selection of different yarns and threadings ranging from cotton to nylon monofilament and we moved around to try different options.

As the aim was to dispel any preconceived notions of right or wrong there was total freedom to weave with whatever came to hand – reflective yarn, feathers, thick chunky knotted yarn and so on... even broken china! We also had the opportunity to work on our samples afterwards with techniques such as devoré, discharge paste, use of heat guns and many others.

The samples displayed at the end were by no means finished products, but to my mind each of them was a 'door' opening to another world for investigation, some I will never pursue, but many I will. It was an unusual workshop as we were guided to discover things rather than being taught them but I found it very liberating.

Lesley Willcock

World Textile Day, Munford, Norfolk, September 2013

Mundford Village Hall hosted this small but beautiful exhibition of woven, stitched, embroidered, dyed and batik textiles from around the world. The pieces were exquisite and were shown with information on the origins, techniques and materials used.

Traders sold textiles and materials, including African and Indonesian fabrics, beads, jewelry, baskets and garments. There were also lectures from Jim Gaffney and Maggie Relph, which seemed to be generating quite a buzz.

It was not the sort of event you expect to find in the East Anglian countryside, and well worth a visit if they do it again in 2014.

Chris Tucker

Knitting and Stitching Show, Alexandra Palace, October 2013

As ever, this was an inspiring event with some wonderful exhibits, including some real (not replica!) mediaeval embroideries.

The thing that really grabbed my attention this year was the final show of the first group taking the **Handweavers Diploma**. I can honestly say they put on a better exhibition than the Graduate Showcase or our "degree show" (they mixed us in with the full time students) at Bradford. With Melanie's permission I will let some of the pictures speak for themselves.



Wearing Art David Armstrong



Flights of Fancy Mary Wright



Madeline Jude



Cushions Suzanne Townshend

You can see more of Suzanne's work at our February meeting.



Heather Brown

WHAT'S ON IN 2014

14 February - 11 May, The Vanity of Small Differences (Six tapestries by Grayson Perry) at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

25 February, Braid Society Open Day at Sacrewell Farm

Contact Jennie Parry)116 273 7189 or jennie.parry@virgin.net

13 - 16 March, Spring Knitting & Stitching Show, Olympia.

26 - 27 April, Wonderwool Wales, Royal Welsh Showground, Powys.

15 May - 1 June, AGWSD Exhibition, The Hostry, Norwich Cathedral and The Crypt, Norwich School.

27 - 28 June, Woolfest, Cockermouth, Cumbria.

26 - 27 July, Fibre East, Redbourne Community College, Ampthill, Beds. Info from www.fibre-east.co.uk

24 - 25 August, Glastonbury Wool Festival, Glastonbury, Somerset.

MEETING REPORTS

28 September - Fibre Craft Afternoon at Arbury

This was an experimental afternoon with three activities. Sue Wallis showed us how to make Christmas Crackers and Tina taught us to make Froebel Stars, both useful items for the coming festive season. Beth showed us a New Zealand Braid technique, using strips of paper, but the braid could equally have been made with ribbons, raffia, rushes or New Zealand Flax leaves.

As we all know, speaker and travel costs are rising, so to keep membership costs as low as possible we are trying to use our own talent for some of our meetings. Turn out for this one was low, but those who came had a fun day, and learnt some useful new skills.

We will repeat the experiment next September, with the theme of weaving on small looms. This might include inkle and tablet weaving as well as rigid heddle and table looms, so please come along and use it as an opportunity to try new techniques and equipment, brush up your skills, or even to demonstrate!



26 October – Thirty Years of Weaving by Janet Phillips

Janet told a packed meeting the story of her career (which now spans 45 years), from her introduction to weaving on a visit to Bernat Klein's mill, through her student days at the Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels, to the building of her career as a fabric designer and teacher.

Janet graduated with first class honours and the Dr Oliver medal for being the best design student of her year. She then worked for a while in a mill in Selkirk, and as a fabric buyer for Wallis, before buying a George Wood dobby loom and becoming a jobbing weaver. After an inauspicious start, her career took off and she had plenty of work from local clients and selling through craft fairs.

In 1976 she was approached by a publisher to write her first book, *The Weaver's Book of Fabric Design* (published in 1983). This was followed in 2005 by *Designing Woven Fabrics*, a beautiful full colour book with lots of Janet's personality in it, as well as a wealth of information and inspiration.

A wonderful slide show illustrated the progression from her early designs to her current body of work. Janet dyes her yarns to get exactly the colours she

wants and uses card winds and mood boards to help the design process, but ultimately it is about fabric structure and fitness for purpose.

In 2009, Janet moved to Somerset where she has her own studio for the first time, and stopped weaving yardage to concentrate on teaching.

As well as short courses she has developed her own Master Class which runs over two years. She is also working with Oxford University developing textiles for medical use.

27 – 28 October – Weaving Workshop with Janet Phillips

Our minds full of Janet's wonderful fabrics, on Sunday fourteen of us arrived at Comberton with our table looms warped up for two days of twill sampling.

Janet started each day with a short lecture on the basis of twill structures, which we then put into practice, with Janet's guidance and encouragement. Somehow she managed to run a class of 4- and 8-shaft weavers, with a wide range of experience and we all came away having learnt masses, and had a lot of fun.

30 November – A Brush with Fine Art by Diane Ashley-Smith

As many of you will know, Diane began an MA in Textile Culture at UEA, Norwich. She had to take a break due to treatment for breast cancer, and when she returned the Textile course was no longer on offer so she transferred to Fine Art.

Diane shared with us her amusement and sometimes frustration at the attitudes of the art world as she tried to introduce them to the joys of textiles. She had to battle against a dismissive attitude to craftsmanship, reminiscent of Grayson Perry's comment that the art world had far more difficulty coming to terms with him as a potter than with his choice of frocks. However, she ticked all the "modern art" boxes, and still featured textiles in all her projects. She also shared with us a vast body of work, and her inspiration for it, drawing on her experiences of cancer and its treatment. Overleaf are just a few examples.

Other degree works included her hangings based on bell ringing peals, her Cambridge Blue blankets, quilting using the traditional design Kansas Trouble (Cancers Trouble), collage using get well cards and printed text on cancer drugs, and many more. A well earned MA and a fascinating talk.



1. Braided Knot. Diane made a huge marudai from a kitchen stool, and made 15ft of braid which she then turned into a good luck knot. She also videoed the process of making the braid to show the rhythm of the work, in darkness and black clothes with lights on her wrists. The fabric under the knot is a design inspired by the patterns of shadows on her bedroom ceiling, during the early stages of recovery. (Part of a group of works based on interference/disruption as caused by invasive illness.)
2. Part of the "Wall of Boobs" which is still a work in progress. This will be a collaborative venture to highlight cancer and invite people to talk about it. And all of the knitted boobs are functional prostheses.



3. Aspects of Infinity. Bronze cast of moebius strips made of braid, inspired by graffiti in Prague. The two twist in opposite directions.
4. Badges depicting words which objectify women. There are 50 words like this for every one about men! Are they just words?

CGWSD Programme 2014

- January 25 AGM and Show & Tell
- February 22 The Handweavers Diploma – Suzanne Townshend
- March 29 Guild Day at Comberton Village Hall with My Fine Weaving Yarns
- April 26 Cocoons to Cloth – Jane Deane
- April 27 Creative Spinning Workshop with Jane Deane, at Comberton Village Hall, *booking essential*
- May 31 The Textile Arts of Mexico – Chloe Sayer
- June 28 The Story of Maximo Laura and Woven Colour – Pete & Della Storr
- September 27 Craft Afternoon at Arbury: Weaving on Small Looms
- October 25 From Concept to Clothing – A Weaver's Journey – Lesley Willcock
- October 26 Sewing Handwovens Without Tears Workshop with Lesley Willcock, at Comberton Village Hall, *Booking essential*
- November 29 Ever Increasing Circles – Stacey Harvey-Brown
Christmas Tea

If you are travelling a distance to see a specific speaker please check with our Programme Secretary, Beth Parks, for programme changes.

Please send any suggestions for speakers or workshops to Beth Parks, at beth@chezparks.demon.co.uk or 01353 649855

And finally... please send news, articles and adverts for the newsletter to chris.tucker@zen.co.uk or 24 School Close, Gamlingay, Sandy SG19 3JY.

And don't forget to send a copy to Tina for our website, tina.tribe@ntlworld.com

Next Newsletter is out in April– please let me have your contributions by the March Meeting. Thank you.

Meetings are held at the Arbury Community Centre, Campkin Road, Cambridge, CB4 2LD unless otherwise stated.

Open from 1.30 pm. Talks start at 2pm.

Visitors welcome – entrance £7

(F/T students/JSA/Income support £3.50)

www.cambsguildwsd.org.uk

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