



## *Cambridgeshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers*

### Julie Taylor – A Journey in Tapestry Weaving

Julie Taylor, a member of the Cambridgeshire Guild who was a 2015 finalist of the prestigious Kate Derum Award for Small Tapestries, gave a talk on 25th February 2017 about her journey in tapestry and other textile arts.

Born in Liverpool, Julie grew up in a family of knitters and sewers, but as a teenager was drawn instead to painting, and became fascinated by the work of the Pre-Raphaelites after an inspiring A-level art teacher introduced the class to Millais' Ophelia.

Going on to study at Liverpool Art College, Julie developed her drawing skills, experimenting with representing the folds and contours of textiles in two dimensions. A Fine Art degree at Manchester, took her in a rather different direction as the course was taught within a brutal cityscape which inspired abstract expression in the students' work; Julie, however, started to introduce threading and weaving techniques into her sculpture. Another significant interest emerged in her work on a dissertation on children's art.

After graduating, Julie worked for a time at the Bridewell Studios and Gallery – a lively and supportive artists' cooperative which included a young Anish Kapoor – and returned to painting, creating still life and scarves. In the following years, amid a diverse career in the arts and further training as a primary school teacher, travels in Turkey gave Julie another 'lightbulb moment' when she had her first taste of the glorious colours and shapes of Turkish textiles using natural dyes and fibres.

While teaching in a multi-cultural primary school in East London, Julie did a great deal of drawing and sewing with her pupils, and in her own time created her first needlepoint design, inspired by the style and colours of textile artists Kaffe Fassett and Candace Bahouth. She took further inspiration from pictures and magazines where she first encountered the work of the Scottish tapestry weaver Joan Baxter.

Julie learned to weave with Hilary Utting in Bristol, and started work on her first tapestries in pearlised cotton, enjoying the freedom to blend colours, not possible in needlepoint. She tried merging her own previous work in other media with new tapestry techniques, small samples informing her judgement as to whether the art was enhanced as tapestry, compared with acrylic on canvas. Other tapestries were inspired by the drawings of Julie's own children, and she experimented with different materials including silk and natural dyes.

Julie underlined the importance of sketch books for noting ideas, quick sketches of colours and patterns seen while out and about, and recording her experiments, and showed us some of her many books which have served as a rich resource for future inspiration. This became even more important when Julie developed as a spinner and dyer, since accurate record-keeping allowed her to create very precise colours for tapestry in wool.

Julie continues to spin and dye her own wool, using space dyeing to create unexpected effects in the yarn, and one-pot tonal dyeing with a very strong dye, which results in a series of yarns in gradually fading tones. For tapestry, she uses bobbins custom-made by Robin Dunster, and others to a design used by the Australian Tapestry Workshop and Dovecot Studios in Edinburgh.

Julie's tapestries are typically abstract and characterised by distinctive palettes of colour inspired by outdoor scenes: a Greek swimming pool, or sunset and gulls on a beach. A Caribbean wedding suggested colours for another beach-themed piece.

Since moving to Cambridge Julie has become a member of the British Tapestry Group which brought her into contact with a national network of artists; more locally, she set up the Willingham craft club and a local knitting group. In 2015 she felt ready to have her work judged by fellow artists and entered a piece in the Heallreaf International Exhibition of Woven Tapestry at West Dean College. In the same year she reached the finals of the Kate Derum Award for Small Tapestries at the Australian Tapestry Workshop and was invited to meet and study alongside Australian textile artists during an extended visit.

This visit was clearly inspirational to Julie, who met some key figures in the contemporary tapestry world, including Valerie Kirk, head of textiles at the Australian National University, Joy Smith, Gerda Van Hamond, Jenny Sharpe, and Tim Gresham. Julie was challenged to break her own habit of working at a very small scale, using her own spun and dyed wool, as she had the opportunity to work on a huge nine-metre loom at the Australian Tapestry Workshop. The Workshop has been commissioned to create massive tapestries for several public buildings in Melbourne, such as hospitals and government departments as well as the National Art Gallery.

Finally, Julie told us about a public tapestry commission much closer to home: she is currently working with local people in North Cambridge on the Makeweaves community arts project which will result in a large tapestry celebrating the 40th Anniversary in 2017 of the Arbury Carnival. The finished piece will hang in the Arbury Community Centre so we can all look forward to seeing it for ourselves.

For more details of Julie Taylor's work, see <https://julietaylortapestry.wordpress.com/Copy>

Library Notes April 2017

New Books

Now that we have weeded out the books that no-one was borrowing we are buying some new books requested by Guild members. We have three new books for rigid heddle weavers.

Weaving Made Easy – 17 Projects Using a Rigid Heddle Loom by Liz Gipson (revised and updated in 2014)

This is a great beginners book, with a good introduction to parts of the loom, how to warp up, how to weave and how to finish your fabric. Then straight into the projects which include scarves, bags, table linen, belts and rugs.

Get Weaving – Clothing from your Rigid Heddle Loom by Sarah Howard and Elizabeth Kendrick

The book starts with some tips from getting the best out of your loom, and then goes straight into 11 projects for simple clothing from rigid heddle loom woven fabrics, including cutting layouts and tips for putting the garments together. You can also buy paper patterns for cutting out the garments from Sarah Howard's Etsy site.

## Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom by Syne Mitchell

This book is packed with information for the beginner and the advanced weaver. It starts with a very detailed introduction to the rigid heddle loom including a comprehensive trouble shooting section.

This is followed by a beautifully illustrated section on colour theory. Syne then looks at more complex weaves including twills, leno and Spanish lace, Danish medallions, as well as tapestry techniques such as soumak and clasped weft.

Finally we look at weaving with two heddles, and how to convert 4-shaft drafts for rigid heddle weaving. In this section Syne covers Theo Moorman technique, overshot, shadow weave, woven shibori and bead weaving. This book has something for all weavers.

## The Weaver's Weevil – How to Bust that Weaving Stash by Rebecca Fox

This book will appeal to weavers at all levels and with all types of loom. It is about playing with colour. It starts with an introduction to colour theory, particularly as it applies to yarn and cloth. Rebecca then shows us lots of gorgeous examples of combinations of colours using mainly 4-shaft twill structures.

It is beautifully illustrated and will inspire you to try new colour combinations. A must read for anyone looking for some new ideas.

## Donated Books

Thanks are due to Ann Render for another generous donation of books including:

The Technique of Weaving by John Tovey

Natural Dyes for Spinners and Weavers by Hetty Wickens

The Craft of Handspinning by Eileen Chadwick

The Weavers Workbook by Hilary Chetwynd

Weaving Without a Loom by Barbara Pegg

The Ashford Book of Weaving by Ann Field

The Ashford Book of Dyeing by Ann Milner

And finally if you have any ideas for books you would like to see in the library please let Chris or any of the Committee know.

## Procedure for borrowing books:

We have a self-service library but it is very easy to use:

1. Choose your book
2. Fill in the red Loans Book, usually at the right hand end of the library table, with the date, your name, and details of the book.
3. There is a charge of 50p per month (or until the next Guild meeting), so put 50p in the tin.
4. Returns: in the Loans Book add the date returned and any additional money you have put in for longer loans.

## Teeswater Fleeces Available

I have a small flock of rarebreed longwool Teeswater Sheep in Yorkshire and have some pure Teeswater fleece for sale - it is a blend of 1st and 2nd year clip fleeces. It has been professionally washed and combed and is pure creamy white. I don't make a profit on my sheep i sell the fleece to cover costs of keeping my sheep, shearing and preparing the fleeces.

Prices are as follows:

250g - £10 + P&P £3.50

500g - £20 + P&P £5

1kg - £40 = P&P £7.50

If you'd like any more photos of the fleece please just ask. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards  
Jessica

07956411743  
jessellers@hotmail.com

## Classes

Weave!2017 Erica Jones will be teaching the Guild's Weave! Course this year. The course will be run at Comberton Village Hall. The course will focus on 4 shaft weaving and cover a variety of weave structures and treadling options. The course will also cover weaving terminology and theory. Weave!2017 will be held on the weekends of 30th Sept/1st Oct and 7th/8th October.

Anna Crutchley will be teaching her 5-day course 'Weaving on a 4 shaft Table Loom' again this year at Cottenham Summer School, Monday 24th – Friday 28th July, 10am – 4pm. The course is suitable for beginners or weavers with previous experience. Beginners will sample a variety of weave structures, experimenting with different colour combinations, yarn qualities and surface textures. Weavers with previous experience are encouraged to discuss their ideas with the tutor in advance. You will leave with a comprehensive set of samples, notes and masses of information for further progress.

Contact Anna directly if you would like more information about the course at [info@annacrutchley.co.uk](mailto:info@annacrutchley.co.uk) or 01223 327685, or Cottenham Village College at <http://community.cvcweb.net> or 01954 288752 or for info and booking for this or other courses.

## Loom for Sale Name:Cynthia Jackson

E-mail:[cjack1950@outlook.com](mailto:cjack1950@outlook.com)I have an old Weavemaster loom that measures 120 cm by 80cm by 60cm high several sticks and a shuttle. the loom has 2 beater bars of different gauges and 4 sheds that I need to pass on to an interested person. I live near Kings Lynn and could meet up with someone who wants it. No special price - offers please.

## Something for everyone at Guild Day

With ages ranging from eight to eighty, our Guild day on 25th March saw a large number of members and visitors enthusiastically taking part in activities from start to finish along the fibre journey: from cotton spinning to tablet weaving and tapestry. Sarah Wroot started the proceedings at 10.30 with her cotton spinning workshop. This was followed by Paula Armstrong's Tapestry Discussion Forum at 11.30 and Julie Taylor's colour blending based on Maximo Laura tapestry colourings at 1.15. Throughout the day, Erica Jones held a Tablet Weaving Try-out with up to six members at a time trying the techniques on her easy-to-use tablet weaving looms. Uppingham Yarns also came long and reportedly had a good day, with visitors buying materials for their present and future projects. The acoustic in the large hall at Arbury is always a challenge, with its low roof reflecting sound, and this is something your committee will be looking at when next year's Guild Day is being planned.



## Linen Weaving Workshop 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

Sue Wallis

12 Guild members assembled at Comberton Village Hall for this 2 day linen weaving workshop given by Riitta Sinkkonen-Davies.

Riitta is a much respected hand-weaver and works in all types of fibre but has a special love of linen. She was taught to spin and weave by her Grandmother in Finland who grew the flax on the family farm.

She and her husband live in West Wales and made the 290 mile trip to get to us.

We had each been given the yarn to make the warps and they were all different in thickness, colour and threading. We worked as a 'round robin' moving from loom to loom working on different patterns and structures. She explained how best to warp a loom with linen and ways to tie on the warp to minimise waste. She also described the do's and don't's of finishing the end results.

She had brought an eye-watering collection of yarn that was swooned over by members. Many ended the weekend by adding considerably to their yarn stash!

Thank you to Frankie who originally arranged the workshop and to Tina who co-ordinated the admin. We learned a huge amount and it was great fun.

## Guild Programme

### June 24<sup>th</sup>-Braids

Anne Dixon is returning to the Guild to give a talk entitled *Around the World in Eighty Braids*. This will be a treat, as she will bring examples of braids from 5 continents and discuss their structure.

### September 7<sup>th</sup>-Tapestry Talk

-Carol Humphrey, curator of textiles at the Fitzwilliam Museum has invited us to view and hear a talk on *English Embroidery*. The museum has an outstanding collection. However space is limited to 12 people and so we will ballot it.

### September 30<sup>th</sup>-Saori Weaving

Kim Morgan will give us a talk on *Saori Weaving*. This freestyle weaving technique will be demonstrated and then we can have a go. This type of weaving focuses on free expression and creativity and sounds great fun. If anyone wants any of Kim's products from her website, contact her and she will bring them to the talk for you. ([www.thesaorished.co.uk](http://www.thesaorished.co.uk))

### October 26<sup>th</sup> Worsted vs. Woollen Workshop

Amanda Hannaford will give a one day workshop on *Worsted v Woollen*. These are the two extremes of the spinning spectrum and so to improve on your technique with them and learn how they are best used come to this workshop!

### October 28<sup>th</sup>-Woollen and Worsted

Amanda Hannaford, who is an expert spinner, will give a talk entitled *Afghan Adventure*, on her trip to Kabul in 2015 to teach local women to spin cashmere. So we will have an insight into life in Kabul as well as hearing about the spinning.

### November 25<sup>th</sup> Mediaeval Weaving

Erica Jones, a member of our guild, newsletter editor and accomplished weaver will give a talk on *Mediaeval Textiles*. Let's expand our knowledge of textiles past again and see how these weavers worked!

## Come and Weave

March 11, 2017

June 10, 2017

September 9, 2017

October 14, 2017

November 11, 2017