



# Cambridgeshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

## From the Chair

### Exhibition 2019.

It's hard to believe but the next guild exhibition is just under a year away. Grantchester Village Hall is booked for Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019. This is the main hall for the exhibition and the 'reading room' for the café.

We exhibit new work by any Guild member, i.e. items that have not been displayed before at a Guild exhibition.

We need lots of help that weekend, stewarding, demonstrating, helping with sales or the café. All cakes in the café are home made by members.

If you would like to help the organising group please let me know. This would involve 2-3 meetings spread over this autumn and early 2019.

### Exhibition Challenge.

In 2016 the challenge produced fabulous work so for 2019 I have suggested the following.

'Plain weave doesn't need to be plain'.

Woven items must use a plain weave structure ('tabby', 'under 1 over 1'). Use your imagination. Think about unusual colours/texture/fancy yarn/colour and weave /crammed and spaced warps, etc.

Tapestry weavers likewise think colour/texture/ 3D form.

Spinning- texture, unusual colour combinations etc.

Dyeing- colour, space dyeing, ikat.

Be creative and see what you come up with. Items can be a finished piece or a small sample it is up to you.

This is not compulsory and it is not a competition! We just want to show visitors what we can do.

## 2018 Guild Programme

## Come & Weave Dates

Saturday 29th September Fungus the Bogey Dye: dyeing with fungi with Irene Taydler & Carole Thompson

September 8th  
October 13th  
November 19th

Saturday 27th October Sustainability & The Weaver by Alison Daykin

Textile Tradition Study Group Dates

Sunday workshop 28th October: Patterns in the Hand - finger manipulation patterns & textures for the Rigid Heddle, with Alison Daykin

11-4 Northern Lecture Room, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

October 6th  
December 8th

Saturday 24th November Member Dr Carolin Crawford: Symmetry & Chaos from Earth to Space

*By: Anna Crutchley*

John Sanders was instrumental in setting up the Cambridgeshire Guild alongside Doreen in 1981 and served as its first Secretary for five or six years. Not a spinner, weaver or dyer himself, he was nonetheless a great advocate of craftsmanship and learning, and influenced the Guild's activities in its early years.

As an engineer, John's career spanned over forty years at the Welding Institute (TWI) where his achievements included instigating professional training activities. John's long-standing colleague and friend, Tim Jessop, described how he founded the School of Welding Technology in 1957 and later the School of Applied Non-Destructive Testing:

'What began with small numbers of students in a London basement is now a multi-million pound training activity spanning the globe. Moving to the new Cambridge headquarters in 1968, John took over responsibility for all TWI's communications activities which included marketing, publications, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, etc. He proved to be an extremely effective planner and organiser of these activities, and, through them, he contributed greatly to TWI's burgeoning reputation both in the UK and overseas.'

John and Doreen first met as teenagers in Paignton, Devon where Doreen lived and John's family came for their summer holidays. Their friendship took root and was truly symbiotic – as an example when John mounted and exhibition of the Welding Institute at the Science Museum in 1966-7, Doreen wove fabric for curtains to cover the huge entrance doors, in a variety of grey and metallic yarns to simulate the effect of metal. In return, John would create equipment for Doreen such as the beautifully fashioned (and clever) pulley system which Doreen uses to transport heavy items to her studio in the attic of their house in Ely.

John's own hobbies which he shared with their son, Adrian, included classic cars and his motor boat. His standards in craftsmanship and everything else he put his mind to were extremely high, and he was always interested in the people and activities of the Guild. Ill-health prevented him from taking part in the Guild, but those who visited John and Doreen's house in Ely will remember him fondly as a kind, engaging and also humorous man.

*Meeting 23/6/18. [The Art of Drapery in portraiture.](#)*

*By Sue Wallis*

We were delighted to welcome the textile historian Mary Shoenser to give this talk. It was a fascinating insight into the subject, detailed and excellently illustrated and I can only give a short overview here.

In art historical terms 'drapery' is the depiction of clothes and cloth and was first applied to the study of classical sculpture where figures are seen with flowing, folded robes. Painters over the centuries have sought to depict drapery in portraits and historical pictures but the significance of the drapery has often been overlooked in art historical terms. More recent scholarship has shed fascinating insights into the accuracy and significance of the portrayal of textiles in art.

The depiction of drapery in portraiture conveys meaning about the wealth and status of those depicted that would have been understood by contemporary viewers but which may be lost on us.

Expensive and elaborate dress set apart the people shown in the painting. They were both 'other-worldly' - in a different social or religious sphere- and 'worldly' as their dress indicated their status and sophistication in a wider world. Many sumptuous and expensive fabrics were so accurately portrayed that it has been possible to identify them with reference to surviving examples of cloth.

Technological improvement in silk yarn production meant that the 'must have' fashion textile was lustrous plain silk satin. In 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century portraits every opportunity was taken to depict subjects in this fabric and show it to best advantage. It was so expensive it was immediately seen as a sign of immense wealth and sophistication.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed and photography became more readily available detailed painting of drapery gradually declined. Many of the examples shown in the talk are paintings at the National Gallery and we can look at these pictures with a new perspective

Jennie's braiding is exquisite, and she brought with her many samples, and also the large pieces from her Bubbling Water exhibit at the National Centre for Craft and Design, Sleaford in 2016.

Jennie began braiding on the Takadai in 1991 with a small two-level Takadai which she still uses for teaching and demonstrations. She bought a larger Hi Takadai in 1993, and when she received a bursary from the Theo Moorman Trust in 2012 she was able to get a three-level Takadai.

From the outset Jennie's braiding has been experimental. In Japan Takadai braids are plain weave, usually made of silk, but Jennie introduced twills to add interest and texture. She also began experimenting with new materials such as copper wire, stainless steel mixed with silk, monofilament, cotton and linen, jelly chord and paper. She developed what she describes as an interest in un-straight things, and likes to use curves and pleats to create shape and texture.

Jennie attended an international Kumihimo Conference in Japan in 2007. While she was in Japan she found a new way of joining layers together, and using this was able to make three-dimensional braids using bast fibres and jelly chord for an exhibition (Rhythmic Distortions) in 2008.

For her Rhythmic Ripples exhibition in 2010 she used paper and shiny lycra yarns to create some very stiff sculptural pieces. This was when she first introduced curves into her braids, and started to make fascinators and "twirlies". So far she had only been working with two-level Takadais.

In 2012 she acquired her three-level Takadai, which has 36 bobbins at each level (108 in total), which allows her to make very organic forms. She also discovered new paper yarns and shrinking yarns which allowed her to make folds. She began making very open work and large hangings. In 2014 she had a joint exhibition in Japan with Mayumi Kaneko. Since then she has produced some stunning work including Homage to the Rainbow Nation in 2015, Melting Ice 2015 (using monofilament), and Bubbling Water 2016.

Jennie constantly samples new fibres and combinations and keeps very careful records so that she can re-visit previous work and develop ideas further. She always asks the question "what happens if.."

To see some of Jennie's amazing braids have a look at her web site [www.jennieparry.co.uk](http://www.jennieparry.co.uk)



### Double Knitting By Jacqui Fuller

On the recommendation of Paula Armstrong, Pippa and I went to a morning's tutorial on Double Knitting led by Nathan Taylor aka the sockmatician.

Double knitting is a fascinating technique for making two, locked together sides of a piece of fabric, where both sides are worked at the same time. In other words Double Weave, but knitting. You knit a fabric where there is no wrong side, but which is double the thickness of normal single face knitting.

Samples of his work before we started filled us with enthusiasm, from the invisible casting on and the perfect edges changing from one colour to the other, to the intricate patterns he has designed.

There were 11 of us there and we all came away with a sample square. This in no small part can be attributed to Nathan. His teaching style is excellent, it was a joy to be taught by someone who really knows his stuff.

You can find patterns of his work on Ravelry and there are YouTube tutorials for techniques.

I would thoroughly recommend this session.



Friday 6th July. Trip to Sudbury.

10 members met in the centre of Sudbury for a Blue Guide walk around the town, we heard about the origins of the town and it's importance as a wealthy wool town in Medieval England. After the wool trade declined silk weaving replaced it following the movement of Huguenot refugees in the early 18th century.

We saw weaver's cottages and went into the garden of the Gainsborough Museum. There is a very old black mulberry tree there, reputedly planted by the Gainsborough family. If you are a 'Friend' of the museum you are given a jar of jam made from the fruit of this tree.

A very pleasant morning but extremely hot.

We reconvened at Gainsborough Silk Mill after lunch. This was founded by Reginald Warner in 1903 (no relation of the Warners in Braintree). He was a very skilled weaver and designer and the company has continued to weave high-end fabrics and now has the Royal Warrant.

We were shown a selection of sumptuous fabrics by Lynette, the archivist who is working hard to organise the company's records. Their archive contains many fabric samples, silk hanks, card books etc that all need cataloguing and conserving.

The factory was not working that afternoon (company summer party and World cup) so we were allowed onto the weaving floor. They have 20 + Hattersley looms and 2 huge computer controlled Dornier looms. They also do some dyeing on site.

It was a fascinating trip and much thanks to Lynette for allowing us to visit.

Sunday 8th July. School of Textiles. Coggeshall.

The school was set up 18 months ago by Mary Schoeser and Kate Wigley to promote the study of textiles and design as well as a place to store Mary's extensive collection of books and textile artefacts. They hold lectures and workshops there and all the details are on their website [www.schooloftextiles.co.uk](http://www.schooloftextiles.co.uk).

Mary gave us an entertaining talk about her career and future plans to promote the school and textile events in Coggeshall.

We were shown a small selection of items including some new donations of fabric sample books that were delightful.

A thoroughly enjoyable morning. The group then dispersed for lunch, visits to Paycock's house (NT) or the lace museum.