

Cambridgeshire  
Guild of Weavers  
Spinners & Dyers

**NEWSLETTER 74**

**April 2015**



**Exhibits from our stand at Textiles in Focus:**

**Yarns spun and dyed by Jacqui Fuller, and tapestries by Paula Armstrong.**

**FROM THE CHAIR**

Thank you for electing me as your new Chairman. I shall do my best to carry on the good work of my predecessors.

I think the Guild has gone from strength to strength over the past few years. We have many new members and lively meetings. The Come and Weave days are hugely popular and a forum where we can gain creative ideas and support in an informal atmosphere.

I feel it is vital to promote a friendly, innovative and inclusive organisation, and I am delighted that we shall be running another weaving course later in the year.

May 2016 is our next exhibition. This is an opportunity for us to show the world what we do. I want as many members as possible to show their work. I don't want to hear anyone say their work 'might not be good enough'. There is space for everyone from the most experienced to those just starting out. Start planning now what you are going to exhibit, or sell, next year.

*Sue Wallis*

**FROM THE EDITOR**

Important News! The Newsletter is going to be put onto our web site.

Back copies of the newsletter contain many pictures of Guild events, and there is a chance that your picture may be included.

I hope that everyone will be OK with this, but if anyone would like me to seek and remove their photo please let me know by the May meeting.

[Chris.tucker@zen.co.uk](mailto:Chris.tucker@zen.co.uk) or 01767 650904

Many thanks

*Chris*

*Photos by Chris Tucker*

## GUILD NEWS

### A small world!

For many reasons (mostly orthopaedic) I needed to upgrade my floor loom. To this end I found a nearly new Louet Octado dobbie loom on The Loom Exchange. As ever 'buyer to collect'.

This buyer sneaked off after the January meeting to drive as far as Penrith. On the Sunday morning we arrived in a little village in the borders just outside Biggar. Bright blue sky and snow covered hills all around.

The door opened and a lady said 'oh yes, I recognise you. I used to belong to Cambridge Guild'!

Michelle Bowling-Johnson sends her regards. She was just leaving Cambridge as I joined. Her loom has hardly been used and is now back in East Anglia where it started.

### Addendum – Loom for Sale:

As a consequence of the above 'Rita' needs a new loving home.

'Rita' has belonged to lots of people and she is a 4 shaft counter-march Varpapuu loom. She is basic but sturdy and I have loved her.

She needs an MPV or small van to transport her but if anyone is interested please contact me on 01223 247790 or [sue.wallis142@gmail.com](mailto:sue.wallis142@gmail.com). Price negotiable.

Sue

*(NB I think I have transported her in a Fiat Doblo – Chris)*

### Weave! 2015

A reminder that Weave! 2015 will run on the first (7-8) and second (14-15) weekends of November. Suzanne Townshend will be lead tutor.

The committee is asking for anyone who would be interested in being an assisting tutor. If interested please contact me at [tinatribe@ntlworld.com](mailto:tinatribe@ntlworld.com)

Tina Tribe

### ...And Other Weaving Workshops

Anna Crutchley will be teaching her five-day **Weaving on a 4-Shaft Table Loom** course at Cottenham Summer School again this year (27–31 July). See the website for details – [www.community.cvcweb.net](http://www.community.cvcweb.net) or phone 01954 288751

Suitable for beginners and improvers.

Anna will also be running a two-day workshop sponsored by Fibre East on 16-17 May, at Redbourn Community College, Ampthill. The workshop is called **Weaving: Exploring Texture and Structure on 4 or 8 Shaft Looms**. Further information from

[www.fibre-east.co.uk](http://www.fibre-east.co.uk) or Janet Ellison 07710 462540 or email [janet2007@me.com](mailto:janet2007@me.com)

Suitable for people who have their own looms and can warp up.

**NB** Booking and payment are wanted by 17<sup>th</sup> April for this one – I'm not sure if the newsletter will be out early enough, but there may still be places available.

### Come and Weave Group – remaining dates for 2015

9 May	10 October
12 September	14 November

Venue: Comberton Village Hall. Times: 10am-4pm.

Drinks provided, bring a packed lunch.

Bring your loom or a project to work on or just drop in to see what everyone is doing. All Welcome.

This is a relaxed day working in pleasant company, with the opportunity to get (or provide) help and feedback.

*Further information from Jacqui Fuller or Sue Wallis.*

### Guild Buddies

There are still three members of the guild who are not on email and need buddies to pass on information to them.

Please could guild members volunteer to be their buddies.

If you are willing to be a buddy please could you let the person concerned, and myself know [paulatextile@gmail.com](mailto:paulatextile@gmail.com)

Verena Martinez

26 Hills Avenue Cambridge CB1 7XA, Tel: 01223 212610

Doreen Sanders

19 Waterside Ely Cambs CB7 4AU, Tel: 01353 669497

Elizabeth Todd

22 Walker Court, Arbury, Cambridge CB4 2RU, Tel: 01223 779720

Many thanks *Paula Armstrong*

### **New Additions to the Guild Library:**

#### **Traditional Textiles of Chinchero – A Living Heritage by Nilda Callanaupa Alvarez**

A beautifully crafted book. The photographs are stunning and the history of the people, techniques and the designs fascinating (and I promise to bring it back for the April meeting, so form an orderly queue.)

### **OBITUARIES**

#### **Anne Akseralian**

When Anne moved to Cambridge from London, she joined the Cambridge Guild. She was interested in textiles, had been a member of the William Jefferies tapestry group in Kew, and continued to work on tapestries with me in Cambridge. As I missed his Cambridge Guild visit and workshop, Anne arranged to take me to one of his weekend classes in Kew. She also introduced me to the Knitting and Stitching show at Alexander Palace, which now tempts me every year. These were typical, generous actions by Anne.



She proved to be a very helpful, reliable member of the guild, joining the committee where she had a calming influence, perhaps due to her quiet voice, shyness and willingness to mediate. In her customary positive way she took on the responsibility of the library and often tea-making, also helping to hang an exhibition. Always busy, she appeared smiling and cheerful, unassuming but quietly productive.

Her main love was music. She played viola weekly in several local string quartets and orchestras. She was also a member of a local art group, exhibiting some of her work. Sadly she died in late February.

*Rosanne McConkey And Charlotte Ries*

#### **Jan Morris**

It is with great sorrow that I have to tell you about the death of Jan Morris, one of our very active members from the start of the Guild.

I first met Jan when she came to my weaving classes at the Countryside Centre in the early 1970s. From the start she was a very enthusiastic member, taking part in weaving and spinning classes and also the summer courses. She was always there to help with exhibitions and events. Since my retirement she has been in the Tapestry Group that I run at my home, and she was with us for the first two months of this year. She eventually died very peacefully in the Arthur Rank Hospice in the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> March, ironically at the same time as the Tapestry class.

I have found her death a great loss, and I'm sure that a lot of other weavers will be similarly affected.

*Doreen Sanders*

#### **Textiles in Focus 2015**

It was very good to have a Guild presence at Textiles in Focus this year. Our stand was in the middle of the first hall that everyone had to pass through so we got lots of visitors, and many of them had a go on the table loom. We had quite a few visitors to our February meeting as a result, so it is definitely worth putting in the time at these events. We hope some of these folk will become members.

As ever it was an interesting event. The exhibitions by Spectrum and Eastern Region Textile Forum were fantastic. Those lucky enough to attend might have recognised some of the work, as Diane Ashley-Smith had three pieces in the ERTF exhibition. There were also some local stall holders: Alison Barker was selling her gorgeous Yarnscapes yarns and Rampton members were also selling some lovely yarns and fibres.

Some of our past speakers were selling their wares too – Martin Conlon brought his Slow Loris textiles and Maggie Relph brought African fabrics and baskets.



Our stand at Textiles in Focus.

Maj-Brit and I both bought tickets for the Quilters Guild raffle and won a cushion each.

As ever, we didn't have many volunteers to help. We did muster enough people, but only because some were willing to do all three days. If we want to grow and attract new members we have to put ourselves out there, so please consider helping with events in the future.

*Chris*

### **Cambridgeshire Guild Triennial Exhibition 2016**

Our next exhibition will be at Granchester Village Hall on the late May bank holiday weekend: **Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th May 2016.**

Let's try to make it even better than the last one. You can't say you don't have plenty of time!

## **ASSOCIATION NEWS**

**Reminder:** The Association AGM will take place on Saturday 18 April, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

### **Help Wanted**

#### 1. Knit for Peace

As you may know, it is our 60th anniversary this year and we discussed how to celebrate it. It was suggested that it would be good to do something for others. Knit for Peace (who I know some Guilds support) are asking for dressing gowns for people in the UK. What a sad fact that some people in the UK can't keep themselves warm

Anyway, the challenge is for Guilds to make one dressing gown, as a group and would be fantastic if we got 60 dressing gowns to celebrate 60 years

They don't have to all be knitted; they could be woven, crocheted, or a combination. They don't all need to be squares as someone could make a rectangle of three or maybe a larger square of four. Guilds could just knit them up randomly or could even design it specifically. they can be multi coloured or colour co-ordinated.

The link for the dressing gown is:

<http://www.knitforpeace.org.uk/>

#### 2. Florence Higgs

We have been asked if we can trace the children of Florence Higgs, who was a tapestry weaver and lived in the UK from the 1950s until her death in Lancashire in 2006. A librarian in Melbourne Australia is wanting to publish an image of one of her tapestries on their website and needs permission from the copyright holder(s). You can see an article about her on the internet at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/46458689?searchTerm=%22florence%20higgs%27&searchLimits>

Please contact Sarah Williams at [secretary@wsd.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wsd.org.uk) if you can help.

## WEAVING WORDS

A couple of years ago I wrote about how to choose weaving subjects from your everyday life. I'd like to take that a bit further by thinking about how to imbue your weaving with emotion. We can see what makes a piece of weaving skilful or accomplished, but what makes it seem opulent, youthful, joyful or fun? Are there ways to look at these attributes in your planning process? Can you decide to produce an emotionally charged piece of work whose qualities will shine through into new ownership? And if you can, what should you go for and why? Not being a weaver myself, I don't have the answers, but perhaps drawing parallels from other arts and crafts, may prod you into thinking about your work in new ways.

When I think about a new painting, I sometimes describe it to my blind, invisible friend before making any marks. She is more concerned with textures and emotions than accurate proportions – not so much about the subject as my response to it. This helps set a direction not only about the picture's content but also about how I feel about it. And that in turn will affect my choice of materials and marks made. It's all too easy to pick on the nouns of a subject – what it is – rather than the verbs or adjectives – what it's doing, why and what effect that is having. And verbs are what give language and paintings vigour.

Some years ago, I nearly wrote off the Taj Mahal as just another big white building rather than the splendid sight it truly is, simply because of the amount of hassle we had had getting in to see it: security, long queues, the pitiful presence of begging lepers and the heat all conspired against putting me in the right mood for one of the wonders of the world. Had I been painting that day, I dare say I would have brought more darkness to the gleaming memorial than is usual, but it would have been genuine. And crucially it wouldn't have shown up in photographs.

This is a longwinded way of suggesting that if you want your audience or customer to take a particular idea from a piece of work, you need to plan for that all the way through. And I don't see why weaving should be any different from painting in this respect.

What it takes is thinking about how your choice of yarn, weave structure, colour and scale reflect how you feel about your inspiration point, and then following those ideas through from start to finish. The main point here is consciously to decide to reinforce your main idea with every step you take.

That doesn't mean that you need to know exactly how a piece will turn out before you start – that sounds dangerously industrial to me – but it means that you need to work out how each decision you make bolsters or undermines your main theme.

Back to painting, in her book, *Drawing on the Artist Within*, Dr Betty Edwards suggests there is a universal emotional language in painting that you can use to reinforce your main ideas. At its simplest we think of dark as depressing and shapes at the top of the page as being more cheery, uplifting even. We also know that blocks of red act as stepping stones for the eyes that can take the viewer along interesting routes within a picture, that diagonals represent energy and power and that straight lines are always perceived as faster than curves. Moving to colour, we know that adjacent complementaries give extra zing; limited colour schemes promote compositional harmony and that high key (pale) pictures suggest peace, elegance and even heavenly qualities. How much of all this is biological and how much is cultural is uncertain, but the point is that you recognise and feel this in a picture even without an art history degree to explain it. This universal language simply helps an artist to talk to audiences in ways they will understand at a visceral level. And it helps viewers to unpick a picture to find out why it works.

Even better, though, if you don't understand this universal language yourself, you can make your own. The chances are it will chime with other people anyway. But it doesn't matter whether you associate sunflower yellow with summer or vomit so long as you recognise how it makes you feel. And that you then use it to help bring that feeling through in your finished work.

Take decisions that reinforce one another within your own world view. It's perfectly valid to reject this language at every turn, but I would argue that leads you towards the chocolate teapot. Chocolate is good; teapots are good. Chocolate teapots less so! I think the best work has one idea only or only one expression albeit perhaps multi-layered. Perhaps that is why mixed media may be fun and lively but is rarely critically acclaimed.

So, to weaving. I don't know enough to say how this applies, but I know enough to be dangerous. Let's think about warp rep as a weave structure. To me it says industrial, clinical, strong, impersonal even, regardless of the colour or yarn chosen. To a Scandinavian, it may seem more homely, perhaps as a result of landscape and architectural cues. So if your take on warp rep is the same as mine, you wouldn't choose it to make a snugly weekend scarf, but it may be just the thing for table settings, rugs or other domestic wares.

A double weave with disconnected but aligned blocks of colour suggests something more like a journey. The choice of colours may make it more meandering, like a summer meadow. Either way, you wouldn't choose double weave to express the same things as warp rep, even if you really like one or other structure.

I am sure the same goes for other structures. What does a twill say to you? And is that different from a satin? And can you think why?

Finally, if we accept this notion of either a universal or personal language of weaving that can be dissected, expressed and reinforced at every stage of your project, from paper plans to the choice of finishing, isn't there a danger that we work the imagination out of it and reduce our work the mechanical? I would say not, because what makes hand weaving different from machine cloth (or artists different from most photographers) is the injection of the personal into the project, and this language is just a way of enabling that to happen. Your weaving is part of you until you let it go to a new home, but that means you must remain mindful throughout the process from inspiration to execution. If you do that, perhaps your weaving will find new homes even more readily than they do today.

*Mark Boyd*

## **WHAT'S ON**

**11 April – 3 May Fibre to Fabric: Northants Guild Exhibition** at Guildhall Road Museum and Art Gallery, Northampton. Info from [www.northantsswd.org.uk](http://www.northantsswd.org.uk)

**25-26 April – Wonderwool Wales**, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells. Info from [www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk](http://www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk) or 01938 820495.

**30-31 May Proper Woolly**, Holsworthy, Devon. Info from [www.properwooly.co.uk](http://www.properwooly.co.uk) or 07551 396650

**26-27 June Woolfest**, Cockermouth, Cumbria. Info from [www.woolfest.co.uk](http://www.woolfest.co.uk) or 016974 78707

**25-26 July Fibre East** at Redbourne School, Ampthill. Info from [www.fibre-east.co.uk](http://www.fibre-east.co.uk)

**27–31 July Cottenham Summer School.** info from 01954 288751 or email [community@cvcweb.net](mailto:community@cvcweb.net)

**16–23 August Association Summer School** at Moreton Morrell. Information from [www.wsd.org.uk](http://www.wsd.org.uk)

**12 September World Textile Day at Mundford Village Hall, Norfolk IP26 5DW.** Information from [www.worldtextileday.co.uk](http://www.worldtextileday.co.uk)

**And in 2016..**

**28-29 May 2016 Cambs WSD Triennial Exhibition at Grantchester Village Hall**

## **MEETING REPORTS**

### **31 January AGM**

Another AGM has passed, with healthy finances and a slightly increasing membership (hooray!). As ever, members donated generously to the Bring & Buy sale to raise money for the exhibition fund.

There have been several changes to the committee, so in case you missed it, your new committee is:

Chair – Sue Wallis

Treasurer – Jacqui Fuller

Membership Secretary – Beth Parks

Meetings Secretary – Sue Prior

Programme Secretary – Frankie Owens

Web Master – Suzanne Townshend

Newsletter – Chris Tucker

Without portfolio - Eric Jones and Urszula Chojnacka

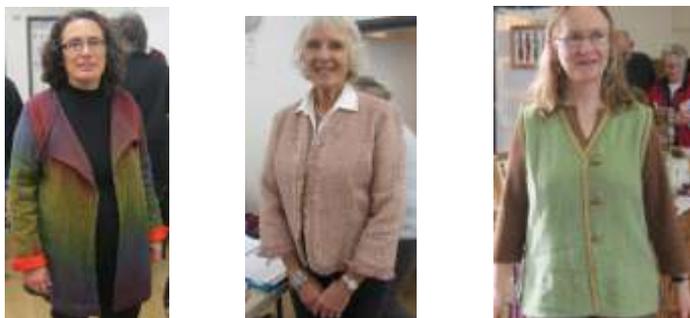
Paula Armstrong, Pippa Le Roux, Tina Tribe, and Lesley Willcocks have now left the committee (and we will miss them!)

*NB at the February Committee meeting Erica agreed to become Librarian and Urszula has taken on Workshops.*

The real fun of the day was the “Fashion Show”, where those of us who took part in Lesley Willcock’s wonderful sewing workshop last October showed off our creations.



1. Sue Prior – wool jacket. This fabric was woven from 2 cones of yarn in the week before the workshop.
2. Sue Wallis – lined waistcoat, in 2/17 wool with fancy yarn in random stripes.
3. Beth Parks –stretchy top with “poodle” yarn warp and lycra weft.



4. Jo Wexler – “Committee Jacket”, with rainbow warp skein interspersed with three other colours (four warps were put on the loom simultaneously!).
5. Sue Cox – lined jacket in wool, silk and linen, with braid edging, all woven on her table loom.
6. Chris Tucker – shadow-weave waistcoat in cottolin with inkle loom braid trims.

## 28 February – Meandering Threads - June Croll

June stepped in at fairly short notice after another speaker cancelled, but you would never have guessed. This was one of the most inspiring talks I have attended.



June wearing one of her scarves, and two of her hangings.

June has been weaving since the 1970’s and works in a studio in Norwich. She takes her inspiration from walks in the countryside and on the Norfolk coast, taking reference photographs as she goes. She loves colour and texture, reflections in water and the changes in light and in the seasons. She works mainly in plain weave, using natural fibres, especially silk, and metallic threads. She does her own dyeing, paints her warps and sometimes incorporates screen printing.



The end products include tapestries, garments, and wall hangings in gorgeous colours (several of which were in the Norwich AGWSD exhibition). June has also done collaborative projects with a potter, Kate Vogler. It’s all about playing and experimenting and the quest to make weavings that aren’t rectangular and flat!

## 28 March – Guild Day at Arbury

Our now traditional open day got off to a good start with Janet Phillips of the Threshing Barn bringing a very tempting selection of yarns, fibres, books and tools. Janet also ran two button making workshops which were great fun.

In addition Paula ran a lively discussion group on use of colour in weaving, with books and examples from several guild members, and Frankie gave a spinning workshop.



Button making and the Threshing Barn pop-up shop.



Chris Tucker

## CGWSD Programme 2015

- April 25      **Sprang** Carol James  
April 26      **Sprang Workshop**, Carol James *Booking essential*  
May 30        **Certificate of Achievement** Heather Seddon  
June 27       **Weavers Bazaar + Pop-Up Shop**  
July 25        **Weavolution**, Erica Jones  
September 12 **Guild Outing to World Textiles Day** at Mundford, Norfolk.  
September 26 **Weaving for the Masterclass**, Sue Wallis  
October 24/25 **Texture in Weaving Workshop**  
                    Stacey Harvey-Brown *Booking essential*  
October 31    **Let There Be Trims** Lily Emma Tennant  
November 28 **Cotton: Handspinning & Weaving**, Sarah Wroot

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 £2.50)

[www.cambsguildwsd.org.uk](http://www.cambsguildwsd.org.uk)

Contact: [secretary@cambsguildwsd.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cambsguildwsd.org.uk)

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

Please send any suggestions for speakers or workshops to Frankie Owens, at [owens.frankie1@gmail.com](mailto:owens.frankie1@gmail.com) or 01263 588410.

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

**Next Newsletter is out in August– please let me have your contributions by the June Meeting. Thank you.**