

Warp & Weft



A rainbow scarf by Rachel Taylor shown at the Weave Interest Group meeting in February

**The newsletter of the
London Guild of Weavers
Spinners and Dyers**

May 2017 Issue 265

FOCUS ON SPINNING

Right: Aruna Reddy showed the tapestry group her method of spinning newspaper strips (p.19)

From the Spinning Interest Group meeting in February, clockwise below: Val Palmer's seascape tapestry; Hazel Will spun fibres sequentially to produce striping yarn, and also knitted gloves in madder-dyed Ryelands; Christine Rowe's art yarn using 5 colours; and Andrea Easey's fractal spinning exercise produces yarn which stripes in knitting (p.9)



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Warp & Weft copy dates for the August 2017 issue
30th June 2017, except for the report on the July meeting;
copy for that by 14th July please

WARP & WEFT ON THE GUILD WEBSITE

Remember to look at the Guild website version of Warp & Weft, which is fully in colour, and allows you to enlarge the photos on your screen. The PDF file should also allow you to click links in the articles to connect to websites.

You'll also find downloadable versions of many past issues of Warp & Weft there, and a list of books in the library that members can borrow.

The open area of the Guild website has lots of information about Guild activities, what's on, upcoming exhibitions, and a gallery of members' work.

www.londonguildofweavers.org.uk

If you have forgotten the password for the Members' Area, contact Helena Timms, the Guild Secretary (contact details overleaf).

The password changes at the end of the membership year, so if you are unable to open the Members' page, please check that you have renewed your membership! Renewal forms available on our website.

FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

You can also keep in touch with the Guild through Facebook and Twitter
[facebook.com/londonguildwsd](https://www.facebook.com/londonguildwsd) **twitter.com/londonguildwsd**

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Forthcoming Meetings

June 10th – Rosemary Crill – Curating the *Fabric of India* Exhibition

Rosemary discusses her approach to creating this major V&A exhibition, with views of the show and its contents.

July 8th – Anna-Louise Meynell – Eri Silk Artisans of North-East India

Presents the creative process of this little known 'peace silk' from cocoon to cloth, and the culture of the Khasi people of Meghalaya.

August 12th – Ask the Panel

Guild members share their knowledge of the crafts they work in.

GUILD NEWS

Membership News

Mrs Sonia Tindale has accepted our Hon. President's invitation to become an Honorary Member in recognition of her long-standing contribution to all the Guild activities. Sonia has always generously supported us across the full range of our crafts and has been an inspiration to many of our members.

We also welcome another two new members: Geoffrey Newby (W) and Juliet Chau (W) and our total membership currently stands at 127.

Rita Gallinari, Membership Secretary

Exhibition update

The 2017 exhibition of the London Guild of Weavers, Spinner and Dyers, *The Thames and Southwark: Threads of London Life*, will take place at Southwark Cathedral.

The exhibition will be open Thursday 23 – Thursday 30 November 2017 inclusive. Opening hours 10.30am – 5.30pm daily.

It will encompass:

- - an exhibition of work in any of the Guild skills. Items may be sold during the exhibition at the exhibitor's discretion, to be sent on to the buyer after the exhibition has closed.

- - a shop with items that can be bought and taken away immediately
- - a display of handspun skeins
- - a display in the Refectory Café of bookmarks that will be donated for Cathedral use
- - demonstrations of loom weaving, tapestry weaving and spinning

Submission dates for exhibits

Last date for all exhibits and bookmarks:

- - Saturday 21 October 2017 at Guild meeting – **OR** –
- - Tuesday 31 October by post, courier or a collection point in London to be confirmed

To help cover the cost of venue hire, members will be asked to pay £10 for up to two exhibited items or £15 for up to four exhibited items.

Bookmark criteria

The bookmarks should also reflect any of the Guild skills. The bookmarks will be framed for exhibition, and therefore they cannot exceed 23cm/9 inches in total length. The bookmark project co-ordinators are Mandy Hewett and Joan Scriven.

Andrea Easey

We have sadly learned of the recent loss of two members who were very active in the Guild for many years, making generous contributions of their time and energy to the running of the Guild. Below we offer tributes to them.

Susi Dunsmore

Susi Dunsmore, who died on 21 January, became a member of the Guild in the early 1980s when she and her husband John retired to Great Bookham in Surrey after many years of travelling around the world, in particular in Nepal where they lived for 9 years. As a craft person herself with an art college training, she observed and documented Nepalese crafts in her book *Nepalese Textiles* published in 1991 by the British Museum, as well as several booklets on *Weaving in Nepal*, *The Nettle in Nepal*, and most recently *Notes on Nepal's Creative Basketry*. In a constant effort to seek ways of relieving the poverty she witnessed, she ran workshops to develop the weavers' existing skills further, and promote desirable products both at home and abroad to bring in a much needed supplementary income. The traditional cotton inlay Dhaka cloth was transformed with great success as a result of her influence, and the local giant nettle *allo*, a poor man's fibre, now knitted into delightful lacy stoles and shawls, or woven into towels and table mats, saw a remarkable revival. Susi regularly involved the London Guild with her endeavours and in 2004 as a follow-up to a Guild competition she instigated for innovative products with *allo* some of its members

travelled to Kathmandu for a workshop with 15 women from Sankuwasabha. Susi created a Charitable Trust, the John Dunsmore Nepalese Textile Trust, in memory of her husband, and she financed a travelling scholarship for students of the Royal College of Art.

Susi was a remarkable woman and many of us in the Guild are fortunate to have enjoyed her friendship.

Claude Delmas

Noémie Watts

Born to a French mother and an English father in November 1941, Noémie was the only girl amongst five brothers growing up in London. In her teens she went to live with her mother in Paris for nine months to improve her French.

Noémie married Mike Watts in 1963 and had two children, Simon and Karen. Like her father and two of her brothers, her husband was an architect, so it was no surprise that she always had a keen interest in buildings and design.

While the young family lived in North London Noémie discovered Margaret Beale at the Camden Institute, who became her first weaving teacher in the early 70s. Places in the class were so few that she and fellow students used to 'camp' outside the building from around 3 o'clock in the morning to enrol for the next term. What dedication and enthusiasm! It was Margaret Beale who introduced her students to the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, which Noémie joined in 1976 – now 41 years ago.

The family moved from London into a Victorian Coach House on the edge of Crawley Down in West Sussex in 1980. Noémie had in the meantime developed such a great interest and passion for weaving that she not only kept a strong link to the London Guild, but also embarked on a two year City & Guilds course in Creative Textile Studies at the London College of Furniture. She also attended weekend courses and summer schools, joined the East Grinstead Spinners and later a textile group in Sussex, the 'Weaverbirds'.

Although she now lived in Sussex, she was very active in the London Guild Committee for over ten years, holding the post as Membership Secretary for eight years in a row, from 1986-1994, whilst being Hon. Chairman at the same time from 1985-1987. And as if this wasn't enough, she volunteered to type out all the articles for Warp & Weft for about 5 years (some of them had been handwritten by the members) and posted them to Yvonne Dedman, who had offered to do the layout. Yvonne would then do the paste-up and call Noémie to read the list of titles and page numbers so that she could finish the job by typing the contents list. This was of course before the days of home computers, so the excitement was great when Noémie received a word processor as a Christmas present, which now gave the team a choice of six fonts!

When I applied for membership of the Guild in May 1990, Noémie, in her very polite way, replied with a two-page handwritten letter, explaining everything from the use of the library to the meetings and the programme, which at the time took

place in Baden Powell House in South Kensington. We soon became very good friends, and I can look back on many occasions when we visited each other, staying overnight at each others' homes, discussing recent events in politics, sharing many memories, talking about textiles, all usually accompanied by lots of laughter. Her dry, and sometimes hidden, wicked humour was catching. I remember a short conversation at one of my first Guild meetings, when I mentioned how happy I was to have become a member of a British textile group; it would help me to make new contacts and get to know people. Noémie replied that for the same reason she had briefly joined the WI when they had moved to Sussex. Since I had no idea what the two letters meant I questioned her. The reply came swiftly: 'Oh, it's a group of women in pleated, checked skirts... they make marmalade and sing 'Jerusalem'. Nothing for you'.

I remember Noémie to be a very practical, hands-on woman who would never make any fuss about herself or others, but instead get on with the job in hand. She was unselfishly prepared to serve a communal cause, in that sense a true socialist, always willing to share, altruistic and modest in her demands on others right up to the very end.

When my husband and I moved back to Germany in 2015, after 46 and 35 years respectively in London, it was Noémie and her daughter Karen who came to help us packing up our lives – an immense effort that we shall never forget. I have lost a very dear and loyal friend, but the memories of our time together will always be with me.

Typically for Noémie, she didn't want her friends to contribute flowers for the funeral, but requested that donations were made to St Catherine's Hospice whose help was vital in caring for her at home in her last three weeks. Instead her woven willow coffin was decorated on the inside with messages and photographs from friends and family and draped in two of her woven scarves.



Noémie Watts died peacefully at home from ovarian cancer on the 24th March after a relatively short illness. Her family and friends will dearly miss her.

Hillu Liebelt

Library News

The Yarn Book by Penny Walsh

This little book is very readable and interesting, and full of technical information from the history of spinning to modern innovations. For a handspinner, the section on plied yarns I found particularly useful. The combining of different textures to produce another beautiful thread is inspirational. This is a little book and each chapter could be expanded; however it is a good addition to the Guild's library.

Lydia Ault (Handspinner)



Tapestry Interest Group experiments in weaving with strips of newspaper spun tightly to form usable yarn, and with the visual effect of creating slits within the tapestry samples

Spinning Interest Group

February 2017

At the November Interest Group, members brought 25g samples of fibre to swap with the aim that each member would take away 50g (or more) in total to spin and use however they liked. At February's meeting, these results were compared and discussed. Some of the samples were 'mystery yarns' and had been used in more than one way to discover their properties.

Val Palmer had taken away blue, white and yellow banana fibre that she had spun and made into a seascape tapestry. Pat Wilson had taken 4 colours and used them in a series of complex effects including cable plying using z and s twist, and also allowing singles to ply back on themselves to get a cable effect.

Alison Clark had originally taken some Jacob fibre, but found it had too much lanolin to comfortably spin. However, she used a Moorit Shetland and added banana fibre from the swap and carded them together in just two passes. This was spun to create a 2-ply sport weight yarn with heather-flecks. Bettina Wagner had some alpaca in mixed colours that she added to reddish brown alpaca at home. This blend was spun long draw, to produce a soft and lofty yarn. Bettina also spun together an unknown turquoise and grey fibre with Angelina – to make fancy yarn plied with grey worsted.

Mandy Hewett had taken yellow and blue merino and an unknown creamy coloured fibre, pink fibre and blue banana fibre. These were carded together three times to make two

skeins of tweedy, heathery yarn. Jan Slater had taken yellow and green merino to aim for an alternate striping yarn. This was chain plied to keep the colours together and a second sample was 2-ply with more random colour changes, to produce a lofty yarn.

Hazel Will had 5 fibre samples that were carded together and spun sequentially. These were chain plied to give definition to the stripes, which was a new technique for her. Christine Rowe had taken 5 colours which she pre-drafted, and spun back on themselves to produce a fancy art yarn with colour highlights.

Christine Barnes had taken colours of banana fibres spun to make rainbow fibre, but also added the banana to a brown mystery fibre with coloured banana highlights. Andrea Easey had taken brown, green and orange merino to recreate a fractal spinning exercise where the colours are spun in a particular sequence as singles and then plied together. When knitted, the resulting fibre gives a striping effect even though the colours are not matched during plying.

The group also talked about 'What can I make with my yarn?' and applying handspun yarn to commercial patterns. Pat Wilson recommended *Creating Designs and Patterns for Handknitted Garments* by Jenny Dean as a source book for designing garments from scratch, rather than working with existing patterns. The calculations in the book would also help when working out whether you have enough yarn, and envisaging garments as 'rectangles' of knitting can help with rough estimates of yarn needed.

All group members recommended making a knitted tension square to measure stitches and rows per inch and the take-up of yarn. Finding out wraps per inch and meterage of yarn would also help when looking at commercial patterns to see if your yarn matches the one used in the prototype. This information also helps decide which of the commercial 'grades' of yarn yours comes closest to: double knitting, worsted weight, aran etc. When spinning singles to ply, remember that you are only producing half the width of the finished yarn.

Considering modular patterns was a recommended technique. Christine Rowe recommended an article from *Yarnmaker*, December 2014 that covers this and the concept of creating wide strips of knitting that are then grafted together to make a whole. Elizabeth Zimmermann's *Knit One Knit All* book of garter stitch patterns was also recommended for having relevant types of calculation. Or create a paper pattern for the item you wish to make and replicate each cut out piece in knitting adjusting as you go. Bettina mentioned that up until the 20th century, knitting patterns would rarely be used and even today, a German knitter would calculate yarn requirements based on needle size and standardised general pattern shapes.

Choosing the wrong yarn or fibre can lead to construction problems. Silk will be heavier than wool and so probably requires taping along seams to support the extra weight. In general 800g of spun and finished wool fibre is required for a woman's

jumper. It was also recommended by all to measure shrinkage of yarn and pre-shrink as much as possible in finishing the skeins. Using small samples in larger items was also a good technique – blankets and wraps made from squares or the projects using hexipuffs were mentioned.

Other ways of using yarn such as Dorset buttons, Yorkshire buttons, Lucet cord will be discussed at later meetings.

Andrea Easey

Weave Interest Group

February 2017

The Weave Interest Group has started to investigate Deflected Double Weave, the weave structure which is also the topic for this year's Lore Youngmark competition. It's a fascinating structure and the group would like to encourage all weavers in the Guild to contribute to the competition even if you're not able to come to interest group meetings, so here is a potted summary.

Deflected double weave (DDW) is a relatively new term for a variety of colour-and-weave that has (of course) been around for a very long time. Some of its previous names have included 'integrated cell weaves', 'false double weave', 'bold colour and weave', and 'parallel double cloth'. Some people can get very excited about whether it's really double cloth, or what it should be called if the threads don't deflect, but the Weave Interest Group is not getting bogged down in this kind of argument and is focusing instead on

the weave itself and what we can do with it.



Berit Lokholm's DDW sample

Archetypal DDW makes circles on one face and crosses on the other face and looks wonderful in softly fullered merino. Many people will be immediately familiar with DDW from Margo Selby's handwoven scarf range and Eleanor Pritchard's throws. But as we found in the February meeting of the Weave Interest Group there are many other things one can do with it – different materials, unequal block sizes, combining shrink and non-shrink yarns for bubble effects...

A number of members had at various times woven samplers we could pore over: Marilyn Burton in a workshop with Margo Selby, Joan Scriven as part of her Masterclass work with Janet Phillips, and Sue McDaid in a two-day workshop with Janet Phillips. Brenda Gibson was able to show us not only the considerable amount of DDW she has woven herself but also folders from Complex Weavers sample exchanges featuring the weave structure. Others had

experimented on the basis of projects in *Handwoven* magazine, a couple of Interweave e-articles, *Best of Weavers: Fabrics that go Bump* and various other sources. The most accessible sources for DDW are listed below.

The group will continue to explore this fascinating weave for at least one more quarter, and because relatively little has been published on DDW our intention is to create a lasting resource for the Guild library including an extensive bibliography, drafts, scans and photos, and some actual samples. In the meantime anyone who would like to join the group would be very welcome to contact Elite Bernet for more information, including a copy of the resource list compiled so far.

weavers@londonguildofweavers.org.uk

Some readily accessible resources for DDW

van der Hoogt, Madelyn(ed). *Best of Handwoven: Deflected Doubleweave: 15 Projects on 4 and 8 Shafts*. E-book in the Technique Series: Interweave Press

van der Hoogt, Madelyn. *School for Weavers – Deflected Doubleweave: Beyond the basics*. Website-only article – an expanded version of an article in *Handwoven* Jan/Feb 2006: *Handwoven* magazine: Interweave Press

Van der Hoogt, Madelyn. *Weaving Deflected Doubleweave*. DVD: Interweave Press

van Duijnen, Alice. *Workshop on Deflected Double Weave*. Online Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers, 2012 (Members of the Online Guild can access all past workshop handouts)

There are also a number of videos on DDW on YouTube.

Wendy Morris

Dyeing Interest Group

March 2017

Madder Dyeing

At the previous meeting in December, Susan Dye shared two contrasting madder recipes (Jim Liles and Ethel Mairet) and samples of chopped madder root to try out. The Liles method takes four days to prepare the madder root (a cycle of soaking, straining, grinding, heating). The Mairet recipe is very quick (not even any pre-soaking of the root). Both recommend heating the dyebath slowly to 82°C and a final 5 minute boil. Yet... most modern recipes caution against ever heating madder above 60°C for fear of producing dull oranges. Marietta Richardson, Christine Barnes, Joan Scriven, Susan, and Roberto Campana brought results of their dyeing and explained the methods used. Some useful learning points emerged.

Marietta dyed wool fibre for spinning. She used 25% madder to weight of wool. She used alum mordanted wool with one cycle of the Jim Liles method of preparing the madder i.e. soaking, grinding and heating (recipe 1 from the handout from last meeting). In the dyepot Marietta kept the temperature below 60°C. The results were a coral pink. She also tried a second dyebath according to a Jenny Dean method which gave a more orange shade.

Question: Would the colours have been deeper if the dyebath were heated to simmer or boil?

Christine Barnes used a recipe for madder from the Woolgathering booklet *The Medieval Dyepot* (Dee

Duke and Rowena Edlin White) on alum mordanted and unmordanted wool. The resulting colours were deeper than Marietta's perhaps because the ratio of madder to wool was higher. Temperature was kept below 60°C. One small unmordanted skein was covered in a pot with aluminium foil and boiled. The colour produced was a remarkably deep warm purple.

Question: Is it possible to mordant in a boiling dyepot of madder with steam condensing on aluminium foil and dripping back in?

Madeleine Jude told us that the very fine roots of freshly dug washed madder left bright red marks on unmordanted but very old linen by simply resting on the cloth to dry. Suggesting that there are many alternative methods to explore!

Joan used old slightly mouldy chopped madder root ground up for the Liles method with an indian grinding tool. She kept the chopped root in the dyebath tied in a muslin cloth. Ratio of madder was 50%. All skeins mordanted at 10% alum heated. The first wool skeins added came out orange. Added washing soda (alkali) and brought the dyepot to near boiling. Resulting wool was much redder. Silk were a range of pink shades.

Observation: Old madder still gives very good results. Keeping the ground root in the dyebath deepens the colour.

Roberto mordanted a silk scarf and a piece of soft linen (possibly silk/linen blend) fabric with alum soaked cold overnight. Used shibori clamp resists (2p pieces and wooden blocks) and

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Joyce Meader showed us this jacket at her talk in April. The 'Make do and Mend' jacket from World War 2 was originally a boy's blazer on which the arms had worn out. Replaced with knitted sleeves made from oddments of wool, it was adapted to be worn by a woman (p.21)

Right: Alison Clark found the colour of her Moorit fleece slightly dull, and spun it together with banana fibre to add interest to it.

Below: Christine Rowe altered the design and order of colours used from those given in the pattern (left) to produce the more striking design on the right for her cushion





Above: Christine Barnes produced skeins using banana fibre to make rainbow yarn, and also mixed it with a brown mystery fibre

Right: Karen Firmin-Cooper experimented with different types and colours of fine wool to see how well the slits she made showed up on each

Below: A Deflected Double Weave sample by Elite Bernet shows how the pattern differs on the front and reverse





Aruna Reddy made this brilliantly clever little tapestry using spun newspaper strips fom just one page of the Metro!

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wrapped with nylon twine and cord. Madder 'boiled to death' for several hours then added shibori fabric and left on a simmer at 90°C overnight. Results were pink on linen and orange on silk.

Question: would the colour have been deeper if mordanted with tannin as well as alum as recommended for vegetable fibres? Was the scarf 100% silk? Were either fabrics commercially treated in any way?

Observation: attractive orange halo around the edge of 2p piece used as a resist.

Susan Liles' method on handspun Shetland at 100% madder and 10% alum and 6% dyers cream of tartar gave orangey red. Used Rowan Blue Faced Leicester yarn to compare mordanting ratios and Liles vs Mairet methods with 50% ratio of madder.

Observation: Leaving alumed yarn to ripen probably helps get deeper colour. Liles' method gave best results. High ratio of madder also helps.

Other dyeing projects

Christine Rowe is following Fran Rushworth's plant dye calendar and brought March's daffodil samples on alum and copper mordanted handspun Ryeland yarn. She made her own copper water mordant by soaking copper pipe in vinegar for a long time. Simply use daffodil blooms after the cut flowers start to 'go over'.

<http://wooltribulations.blogspot.co.uk/2016/11/plant-dyes-for-all-seasons-2017-calendar.html>

Question: Would the orange trumpet daffodils give a stronger colour?

Christine Barnes was given logwood chips by Hazel Will after they had been used in a dyepot. She dyed an alum mordanted and an unmordanted skein and got very attractive purples. The items dyed in the original pot shed lots of pigment even after extensive rinsing.

Observation: Logwood gives a lot of pigment! Exhaust baths can produce lovely results.

Christine Barnes update on beetroot dyeing. At the previous meeting Christine showed surprisingly strong but differing shades, including some lovely purples, from beetroot on wool with vinegar and citric acid. Exposing samples to light revealed that citric acid treated yarn faded but vinegar treated has not faded. The vinegar seemed to be a better treatment for lustrous yarns.

Alison Clark blended a combination of wool fibre – two bright shades from Kool aid dyeing from last time with very pale coloured wool fibre from unsuccessful beetroot dyeing - to produce a very attractive muted tweedy yarn.

Record keeping and other topics –
We discussed methods used including card indexes; sketchbooks or card systems with wraps and yarn samples; A4 task sheets; notebooks; paper card labels; surveyors tape marked up with indelible pen.

Using up dyed samples As dyers, we often end up with more dyed material than we will ever use! What is to be done? Knitted shawls are good for lots or small quantities of

yarn. Tapestry weaving? Could we collaborate with the Tapestry Weaving Special interest group?

Moth Management Most have experienced moth attacks on items that have lain undisturbed. Tip – add a few drops of lavender oil to the rinse water of woollen items. Moths dislike strong perfumes.

What Next?

Future meetings

June 10th Special Interest Group – bring results of any dye project (natural or synthetic) for show and tell. Try out some options of technique as learning points; for example the same dye at different temperatures, or the same dye and mordant with different fibres.

Indigo Workshop – Madeleine Jude kindly offered to host a woad/indigo day at her house (near Wimbledon) in the summer perhaps when people have woad ready to use. Dates to be confirmed.

Japanese Indigo Seeds – Ashley Walker (Susan Dye's husband) has surplus Japanese Indigo seeds from last year's crop. If you would like some free seeds, please email susandye@naturesrainbow.co.uk. Ashley will reserve you a packet (first come, first served) and send instructions for where to send a stamped addressed envelope. Growing instructions at: <http://www.naturesrainbow.co.uk/category/japanese-indigo/>

Warp and Weft

If you have read a useful book about dyeing, please send a short review to the editor for Warp and Weft. If we

don't have the book in the London Guild library it is possible your review might lead to the Guild buying a copy for others to enjoy. Email – editor@londonguildofweavers.org.uk

Exhibitions

The group noted some upcoming exhibitions in April and May to visit or to enter – one still open at the end of May is *Roots Shoots and Leaves* – <http://www.upstairsgallery.co.uk/news/textiles-open-submissions> Celebration of Eco Textiles. Artwork from plant dyed material – submissions by jpeg up to 30 May.

And not forgetting of course... London Guild of Weavers 2017 Exhibition in November.

Susan Dye



Joan Scriven's Deflected Double Weave samples for the Weave Interest Group (p.11)

Tapestry Interest Group

March 2017

Six Guild members and one guest attended the third meeting of the Tapestry Interest Group, led by Karen Firmin-Cooper. We started by talking about current exhibitions, courses, websites, blogs and other things relating to the world of tapestry, and Karen circulated copies of articles on various Scandinavian tapestries and on spinning wool for tapestry weaving.

Aruna Reddy had brought in her completed tapestry of a flamingo, woven in newsprint, and a sample woven in a highly-coloured wrap from the Metro newspaper (see photos on pp.15 and 27). Jan Slater had brought in her tapestry of an intriguing Chinese symbol and cloud-wreathed mountain, which we also much admired. Several of us had small Hokett looms for sampling, which they found very useful; Rosemary Kitchingman determined to buy one from Handweavers that very day! Jan also had an unusual circular sampling loom.

We then moved on to examining the role of open (i.e. not sewn up) slits in the design of tapestry, in samples that Karen and Aruna had created (the rest of us had not done our homework). Karen had found that the small slits she'd created in three samples woven with fine wool at 8 epi hardly showed at all, especially on the darker colours. Aruna had had more success with slits in various samples woven in spun newspaper at 6 epi. The harder yarn showed off the slits better. They showed especially well on areas of

the same colour, but tended to get lost in areas of different colours and especially between two colour blocks, where they tended to disappear completely. We concluded that slits as part of the design work best in harder yarns (linen, cotton, paper), lighter colours and in areas of the same colour, and not too small, i.e. more than just a few passes long.

We then moved on to spinning strips of newspaper under the expert tutelage of Aruna. The idea is to tear off 1.5 cm wide strips from a fairly soft paper like the Evening Standard or the Metro, or the Financial Times if you fancy pink, then spin them tightly using a drop spindle or by hand. You can get different effects by choosing the unprinted border, plain pages or those with coloured images. As a non-spinner I was pretty cack-handed at this, but managed to produce some reasonably presentable spun strips by the end of the session.

Our homework for the next three months is to have a go at the various ways of weaving a vertical line on a single warp, using some techniques that Karen will circulate. At the next meeting (June) we will examine these, and also have a demonstration of weaving a 3-D shape using the pulled warp technique, with a view of attempting on our own for the subsequent (September) meeting. Maybe some of these could become Christmas decorations for the shop at our exhibition at Southwark Cathedral? Or maybe not.

Christine Eborall

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Articles/Blogs of interest for the Tapestry Group:

Wisdom and Folly: Norwegian Pictorial Textiles – <http://norwegiantextileletter.com/article-categories/tapestry/>

Textile Artist Blog which often has pieces on tapestry – more recently on Caron Penney and Cos Ahmet – <http://www.textileartist.org/>

Spin Off magazine, Spring 2017 issue has a piece by Rebecca Mezoff on spinning for tapestry weaving.

Karen Firmin-Cooper

Show and Tell – February

Christine Rowe told us how some knitting wool she bought from Jamieson's included a Fair Isle design, but she felt that using the suggested colour order didn't do justice to the pattern. Re-working it and changing the order of colours in the pattern made a huge difference, and really shows it off, as you can see from the two sides of the cushion she made.

Wendy Morris explained that she had ordered some reeled silk for the shop just before leaving Handweavers because she felt it had an amazing lustre – and having persuaded Dawn Willey to take over the order, felt she ought to try it! She thought that a scarf would test its drape and iridescence; she had been unsure whether the drape would work because it's a very tightly twisted silk. The thread weight was about 450 denier (silk is measured in denier – it would be approx 52 in a spun silk) and was woven on 8 shafts at 30epi. Wendy

also explained the difference between spun and reeled silk; the long filaments of reeled silk give the iridescence but the floats catch on everything while weaving.

Alison Clark had skeins she had spun from fibres bought at yarn festivals. She wanted to spin something heavier than her usual laceweight. One skein used a John Arbon merino silk, the next Merino with Angelina and silk. The last sample used a Moorit Shetland which she felt was a bit beige, but then cut up some banana fibre from the Spinning Interest Group swap and carded it in with the Shetland – resulting in a nice tweedy effect. Next time she would add more of the banana fibre to bring out the colours.

Hazel Will is in the Dyeing Interest Group, which has been looking at madder. She used white Ryelands mixed with a longwool – you can see difference in lustre – and was pleased to achieve a deep colour instead of a washy pink. However she did confess that the colour might have been the result of misreading the recipe!

Lyn Duffus

The History of Knitting, 1800 to Present Day

Joyce Meader - April 2017

This amusing and educational presentation began with Joyce telling us how she came to historical pattern collecting and knitting, that it was a hobby that had 'got out of hand'. On the table she had a mixture of books and knitting implements and a huge bag. Joyce discussed the materials used to make knitting needles of the past, which were metal, bone or ivory, and explained how slippery they were compared to the modern day products which are coated with non-slip agents. Particularly interesting were the knitting needle gauges and how they varied in the way they sized needles, and the sock table chart which helped knitters to knit socks that fitted, once the knitter had decided on which of the 16 heel or 9 toe patterns to knit. There was a brief discussion on Cylinder sock knitting machines, which were also used to make mufflers and baby hats.

Joyce has created garments such as balaclavas and mufflers for the film *War Horse* and explained how she adapts the old patterns to fit the more rounded figure of today. The only wooden items on the table were the darning mushrooms and eggs, one of which was a battery operated mushroom, which no longer works as it uses old sized batteries.

The bag on the end of the table was full of surprises and contained a feast for the senses. It contained knitted items of all shapes, sizes, fibres and colours which Joyce used to

demonstrate the different eras of knitting patterns and fibres. In the main fibres were wool and acrylic. She amazed us by passing the knitted items around the room which allowed us to touch, feel and see the level of skill needed to make them and admire the knitting stitch patterns of a bygone era. This included the frugal era of WWII with its make do and mend mentality, and the thin waisted ladies of the 1800's.

The first item out of the bag was a beautifully knitted 'corset cover' in purple which would have been worn over the corset and under the frock. Oh, what tiny waists women had in those days. A few items later Joyce showed us a military jumper which was for a male in the Crimean War and looked like it would fit a child. Shawls and stoles were made from patterns in Mary Thomas' book. Joyce referred to numerous books on knitting throughout her talk, and how they were influenced by current thinking at that time. She is still looking for editions of 1933 *Stitchcraft Magazine* to complete her collection.

We all had a good laugh listening to her anecdotes and some reminisced when she passed around beautifully knitted 'passion killers' 'easy feelers' (women's under garments) and the old fashioned knitted swim suits for men and women. Many of the group remembered the challenges of wearing a knitted swim suit and Joyce explained that wool picks up a third of its own weight in water and that's why it sagged, causing much embarrassment.

To her credit Joyce also showed us an item that did not come out as per pattern, a white 'cow pat' hat, and haven't we all done it? Used the wrong needles! The hat was a fabulous shape but I think heads are the only thing that haven't particularly increased in size by that proportion over the years. During her talk Joyce pointed out that people have got bigger, as old patterns rarely allowed for women chests bigger than 46 inches, and for men bigger than 38 inches. This made it difficult to judge an item's final size as patterns at that time did not have tension square measurements.

Joyce shared the list of things she least likes to knit, which included, toys, dolls, tea cosies, knitted

jewellery, detachable accessories (collars and cuffs), handbags, gloves and a 'Dutch cap' - it's a hat, and you need to have been here to see the picture. We were reminded that the old patterns were written in paragraphs and often copied so mistakes could be compounded as more copies were made.

The session ended with questions and answer session and we were given time to explore her table full of books, knitting equipment and knitting.

Hazel Will

Joyce's website -
<http://historicknit.co.uk/>

Joyce Meader: Knitskrieg : A Call to Yarns! A History of Military Knitting from 1800's to Present.

Carried Away – Handwoven Baby Wraps

Kathleen Groves–February 2017

Last year, Kathleen brought one of her handwoven baby wraps to a show and tell session; we were all so intrigued that we asked if she would give us a talk on how she came to make these, how they are used, and her design process.

She began by describing what they were, and explaining that some form of baby wrap has been the normal way to carry babies in many cultures through the ages. She showed us photos and slides of different styles, 'papoose' ones of North America, and tightly bound ones from Asia.

When Kathleen was pregnant with her second child she discovered a

growing community of mums who used baby wraps, and being a weaver, decided that the sensible thing to do was to make one. She didn't realise at the time that looking at different versions and styles of handwoven wraps, and discussing them as part of an online community, could become quite addictive!

She explained the many advantages of using a handwoven baby wrap over being hampered by managing a baby buggy, especially with an active toddler also in tow! Some concert and festival venues won't allow baby buggies – but she found that mums with their baby in a wrap have no such restrictions! Besides all the benefits of close contact with the baby, and less back strain from carrying, in addition, when correctly positioned in a wrap, the baby sits

with legs out either side, which is good for their hips.

There are different styles of carrying wrap; some recent 'rucksack' ones are structured, others have a panel and straps; another basic style is the length of cloth which can carry the baby in front or at the back, or on the hip. A newer style is known as a ring carrier, where the baby is supported almost as in a hammock, and one end of cloth is pulled through a double ring which locks in place and is very secure. Within the wraps market, machine woven wraps are very popular, and obviously less expensive and available in lots of patterns; handwoven wraps are more of a niche product, and are treated as collectable textiles and treasured after use in the same way as wedding clothes. Although knit jersey wraps are available, they can become unsafe in use as they stretch and let the baby's position shift.

Kathleen described the features of a handwoven wrap and the names given to the parts: *rails* (the selvages); the *tails* (the two ends); a *middle marker*, which helps users place the baby correctly in a very long wrap; and *strands*, sections of the warp which are pulled in turn for tightening.

The emphasis must be on safety, durability and comfort, and the weave must be loose enough to take a secure knot. Length is usually from 2.8 metres up to 5.5 metres, but they can be longer., and standard widths are from 50 to 80 cm but again, some clients may want them wider.

The design process begins with the weave structure – most can be

suitable, but while it needs to be loose, it should not have floats that snag, nor allow fingers to poke through. It's sensible to prepare enough warp for 3 wraps, which would usually mean about 20 metres. Further decisions need to be made about finished width, sett, and materials. A wide variety of different fibres can be used, not just cotton; silk is popular, so are merino and alpaca. As for colours, gradients and pinstripes are both popular; Kathleen takes her inspiration from what she has seen on her travels around Britain.

Kathleen uses sectional beaming on her floor loom, as plain beaming is not feasible for such long warps. Some customers have a very exact length in mind, perhaps for a specific pattern, so the weaver needs a reliable way of measuring what the finished length will be. Lastly, the selvages should be reinforced; because the user tugs on them to tie knots and get the shoulders sitting right, they take a lot of stress.

Wet finishing of the final cloth is essential or the weave threads can separate, leaving finger-trapping gaps. Wraps also change with use and become softer, and the yarns settle; this can change the way the user handles it.

Then, when no longer needed as a wrap, these special textiles with their memories can be cut up and converted to a ring sling, or scraps can be made into bags, scarves or cowls.

Handwoven wrap enthusiasts have their own language which includes a multitude of abbreviations; the only

one I caught was DH – double hammock – but there were also RTIF, RUB, FWCC, BWCC, DHCCCB! There are about a hundred different kinds of carry, and users are constantly coming up with new variations. There is also an active social media community of professional wrap weavers.

Concerns have been raised about the safety of wraps after some babies suffered injuries; this has led to the USA creating safety regulations on wraps (and other items for children) which are very stringent, requiring laboratory testing of each version of a product. This may in future be prohibitively expensive for individual American handweavers to continue production. Kathleen emphasised again that a baby wrap is a tool; its beauty is secondary to its safe use and users need to learn how to use it properly. A rule for safe babywearing, especially for very young babies, is summarised in the word TICKS – T=Tight, I=In view at all times, CKS=Close enough to kiss. Whatever type of wrap or way of carrying, safety is primary.

Having already warned us that collecting wraps could become addictive, Kathleen finished by showing a selection of beautiful examples from her extensive collection!

Lyn Duffus

Travellers' Tales

AGM March 2017

Whalers' caps

Over Christmas we were with family in Amsterdam and visited the Rijksmuseum. On display in the 'Golden Age of Holland' section are six woollen caps excavated from Svalbard (formerly known as Spitzbergen). The accompanying information, helpfully in English as well as Dutch, reads:

In 1980 archaeologists investigated the graves of 185 Dutchmen – whale hunters and workers near whale oil refineries – who had died on or near Spitzbergen in the 17th century. Many skeletons were still wearing their knitted woollen head coverings. These caps were highly personal. The men were bundled up against the severe cold and could only be recognised by the colours and patterns of their caps. Presumably this is the reason why the caps went with them to their graves.

Some of these poor souls probably died attempting to guard the Dutch whaling facilities and blubber ovens from the marauding English during the Arctic winter, as whale oil was much in demand for lamp oil, soap and lubrication and the baleen was used for umbrellas, corsets etc.

The caps themselves are knitted and as far as I could tell all had an inner layer knitted in thinner yarn and an outer layer in thicker yarn, with possibly some additional material sandwiched in between for extra

insulation. The knitting of the outer layer was virtually identical to the modern beanie: a long tube with a border and/or stripes, and the decreasing at the top done either in eight sections creating a dome, or in four creating a squarer shape.

So, more than 350 years later, the classic knitted beanie is still widely used as a practical and warm head covering for the working man (and woman) and there's really nothing new under the sun!

Christine Eborall



One of the knitted caps; the original is knitted in stripes of orange and black, with flecks of white

Lapland

I went to the Gulf of Bothnia in the Baltic, in Lapland region where Sweden and Finland meet just south of the Arctic Circle. Up there, there are little towns no one has ever heard of, several having World Heritage Site status. Most of the places we visited had spinning wheels, looms and weaving

accessories, and examples of local folk work.

Two places we visited:

Luleå - Capital of Swedish Lapland. The city has a well preserved 'church town'; over 400 little red houses clustered round the mediaeval church. People living a long distance away used to stay for the weekend to attend church. The furniture in these tiny houses is very compact and included a braid loom where they made furnishings - woven bedcovers, etc. The Lapp people - Sàmi - use decorative bands in their national costume and these are probably made on looms like these.

Hudiksvall, also in Sweden, was an area of farmsteads of a very distinctive architecture with large elaborate porches, built round a square - a building for the family, one for the guests, one for the animals, one for the machinery, etc. In these we saw spinning wheels with elaborate flax distaffs, Swedish style basketry, and decorated walls. As part of the year is dark, perhaps they have plenty of time for crafts!

Val Palmer

London Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers Programme for 2017

Entry charges for Guild meetings are £3.50 for members, £7.00 guests
Full time students free on production of a current student card

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|----------------------|--|
| January 14th | Dr Susan Kay-Williams: Imperial Purple to Denim Blue – The Colourful History of Textiles |
| *February 11th (W&S) | Kathleen Groves: Carried Away: Handwoven Wraps for Carrying Babies and Children |
| *March 11th (D&T) | AGM — plus Travellers' Tales |
| April 8th | Joyce Meader: The History of Knitting, 1800 to 1945 |
| *May 13th (W&S) | Louise Oppenheimer: A Tale of Wellbeing in Texture and Colour – Tapestry |
| *June 10th (D&T) | Rosemary Crill: Curating the <i>Fabric of India</i> Exhibition |
| July 8th | Anna-Louise Meynell: Weaving Ethnographies: Silk Artisans of North-East India |
| *August 12th (W&S) | Ask the Panel: Members' Questions Answered by Our Experts |
| *September 9th (D&T) | Wendy Morris: Eco-ethics and Yarn Choices |
| October 21st | Catherine Walter: Why Am I Doing This? Tapestry |
| *November 11th (W&S) | Susan Dye and Hannah Sabberton: The Lost Madder Recipe of Norwich |
| *December 9th (D&T) | Christmas Competitions and Party |

All meetings are held at

St Stephen's House, 48 Emperor's Gate, LONDON SW7 4HJ

There is a map on the Guild website – www.londonguildofweavers.org.uk

**Meetings start at 2.00 pm with Members' Show and Tell and notices
Speakers' talks begin at 2.30 pm**

*Dates with **(W&S)** include the Weave and the Spinning Interest Groups in the morning; **(D&T)** dates include the Dye and the Tapestry Interest Groups.

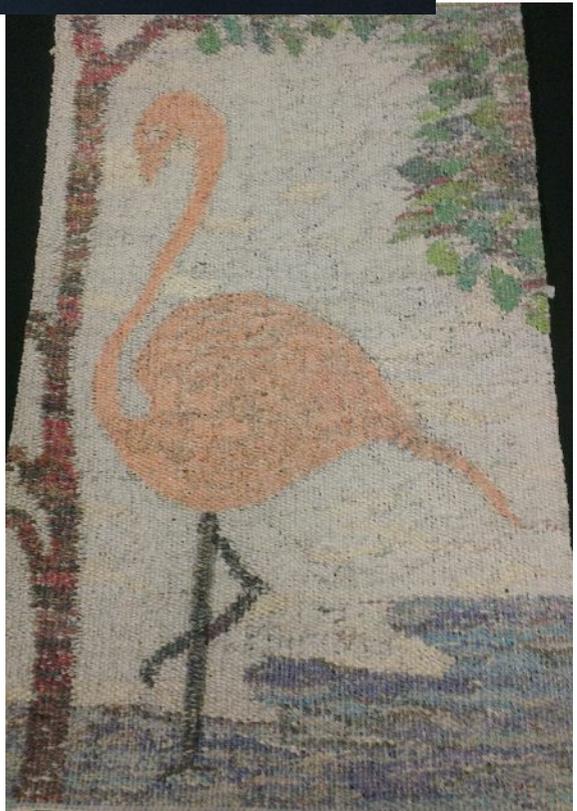
Interest groups all start at **11.00 am**



Two very different woven pieces

Above: A scarf by Wendy Morris shows off the drape and iridescence of reeled silk

Right: Aruna Reddy used strips of newspaper for this tapestry picture of a flamingo. You can easily spot the Financial Times!





the handweavers studio & gallery

**the handweavers
studio & gallery**

Don't miss this!

**exhibition showcasing
the work of our
2015-2017 diploma
students**

**5 - 28 June 2017
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