



NEWS August 2023

News from The Chair

The AGWSD Summer School 2023 at Harper Adams University is now over.

It was a week full of inspiration, fun, hard work, good food and, most of all friendship; meeting old friends and making new ones.

Imagine my utter surprise when a one time, long term AGWSD treasurer Colin Squire, walked through the door on the Saturday Open Day. I well remember Colin's double weave course at the Scarborough summer school.

This summer school catered for around 300 people, walking from the accommodation blocks to breakfast took an age as so many conversations were had on the way. Old friends, friends from overseas, new friends, all enjoying one of the major biennial events organised by volunteers on behalf of the AGWSD.

The AGWSD summer schools are extremely good value for money and there are bursaries available on application to the GPC. I met a first-time summer school attendee, Jane, on Sarah Waters wet felt course. Jane was camping as she had worked out that she could attend three summer schools by camping or one by paying full board. Jane also transported a quantity of back copies of The Journal on her mobility scooter, from the campsite to her workroom for me to pick up. I had made a request at a guild talk and Helen, also camping, had brought them to summer school for me to collect. I have been picking ones to look through; what a mine of Association history.

The summer schools, the exhibitions, the problems finding volunteers, the expansion of summer schools from nine courses to eighteen in 2023.

As well as thanking all involved in making the summer school such a success, I must mention the AGWSD Certificate of Achievement assessments. Congratulations to Carol Evans who achieved a Credit in Spinning, and to Alison Stattersfield on her Distinction in Natural Dyeing. The assessments are rigorous, every part of a submission is looked at in detail. I estimate they took at least 45 person hours, and the reports still have to be written.

The graduates this year, Lara, Becky, Olivia and Mairi, taking part in the Graduate Showcase exhibition, were all so appreciative of the opportunities given to them by the AGWSD. They were such a delight too and their work innovative and exciting. They were amazed at the talent, expertise and interest of the guild members.

Thank you to all who have made suggestions for venues for future AGWSD biennial events. It is proving somewhat hard to find appropriate places, but the search goes on. Guilds will be informed as soon as information is available.

The Area Link zoom meetings are planned to take place during the fortnight before the next GPC meeting on Saturday 7th October. Your Area link will send your guild secretary the information for joining the meetings. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Area zoom meetings;

Wales & Central England - Monday 2nd October

Scotland, Northern Ireland and Others - Thursday 21st September

Northern Area - Thursday 21st September

Janet Crowther
AGWSD chair

Please contact me, Janet Crowther, chair@wsd.org.uk

Journal News

There are about 20 volunteers that work on producing The Journal, each volunteer is limited to 5 years on the committee, so we are always looking for new people to join us. I recently had some time to flick through some old editions and it was a good feeling to know that I am helping to produce a specialist magazine with such a variety of interesting content. If you enjoy The Journal and think you could help produce it, then please contact the JEC Secretary to find out what roles are free that would suit your skills.

We are currently looking for a Spin Editor for the Journal.

The Spin editor works with the authors to make sure their articles are clear and in language that readers will be able to read and understand. It helps if the Spin editor has good experience and knowledge of spinning, and can work with their network as well as new contacts to ensure that there is a range of topics within 'spinning' to appeal across the diversity of Journal readership. It is also helpful if you have some editing and proofreading experience and a good understanding of English grammar and spelling.

The Journal Editorial Committee meets 4 times a year in hybrid meetings (zoom / in person), our next meeting is September 30th.

If you think you could be the next 'Spin Editor' or are interested in volunteering to help with other aspects of producing 'The Journal', please contact me, Sue McDaid - JECSecretary@wsd.org.uk

Feedback from AGM on Health and Safety Policy

Following queries from guilds about what to include in a health and safety policy, the GPC decided a presentation on the topic would be useful. Although, as voluntary organisations, we are not expected to follow all the regulations set out for commercial organisations who employ people, we do have a duty of care to each other and having a clear health and safety policy works to meet that obligation. Amongst the guilds attending the AGM, a good proportion had spent time developing their own policies and offered their thoughts freely. From the discussion, the GPC agreed to add a column to the risk assessment form about the likelihood of a risk event occurring. Looking at the risk factors faced by guilds, the discussion focussed on what is often the most common risk – slips, trips and falls. There was consensus that keeping clear gangways at guild meetings was a constant issue as we all bring so much with us to meetings with equipment, bags of fibre and lunch bags to name a few.

Area Links gave feedback on the AGM at their meetings held shortly afterwards. There were guilds who had been unable to attend the AGM and wanted to know more about the health and safety discussion. For those guilds who want to more, there is information on health and safety on the Guild Information Hub which can be found on the members page of the AGWSD website. Any guild can ask their Area Link if they have a query or want more support.

Janet Maher
vicechair@wsd.org.uk

My Favourite Piece of Equipment

As a hand spinner, my favourite piece of equipment is this drop spindle. It was made by Enid Ashcroft and it's the one I grab when the spinners at my Guild are trying new fibres together or if we're going out and about demonstrating. It will spin everything (a nice silk and merino blend here) so consistently that I can easily chat to visitors and leave the spinning to the spindle. It frees me up to walk about and meet people without being behind my wheel all the time. The fabulous pattern in the wood is a talking point for people who are new to our crafts as it's eye-catching, and when at events that are focused on fibre, some visitors recognise the style. One person at Fibre East stopped me to say 'I have the sister spindle at home! I love mine too.' It's a great piece of equipment and (don't tell the other spindles in my collection) it's my favourite.



Andrea Easey

East and South East Area Link, AGWSD

A note from our President, Jennie Parry on the Graduate Showcase at Summer School 2023

Hello Everyone,

I thought you would like to read the message below that one of this year's graduate showcase participants sent me. All four graduates certainly were delighted to be with us for this wonderful weekend at Harper Adams and to meet everyone; and were bowled over by the fashion show. They certainly contributed well to the exhibitions.

Warmest thanks to the GPC for your support with this work, it is so appreciated.

Very best wishes

Jennie

Dear Jennie,

I am currently writing this as I sit on the train back to London. I do hope you got home safe and sound yourself.

THANK YOU!

I really do want to say the biggest thank you for having me for the past few days. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect of the weekend but I have to say my expectations were completely blown out of the water! The kindness, generosity and excitement I experienced at the hand of the guild members was unbelievable. A real collection of extraordinary and talented people; it was an honour to meet and speak with so many of them.

I do hope to stay in touch with yourself and the fabulous people I met.

Thank you for your generosity.

Best wishes,

Lara Pain, Textile Artist & Designer, larapain.co.uk

National Conference 2024

The next biennial conference of the AGWSD will be held at Bicton College near Exeter from 12 - 14 July 2024. Bicton College is easily reached by public transport or by car. The campus is compact and level with good accessibility for anyone with mobility issues. The theme for the conference was suggested by a lockdown AGM discussion and is entitled "The Riches of Wool". There will be talks covering a wide range of topics including where our 60+ sheep breeds come from, how we used to work with fleece and wool historically through to modern practices in processing and using wool.

More information will be available in October via the website, newsletter and directly to guilds. Save the dates and watch this space.

QEST

There's not long left to apply for the inaugural @QEST and @Heritage Crafts Sustainability Award. Makers who can show the innovative ways they've improved the sustainability of their traditional craft are encouraged to put their name forward.

QEST is partnering with Heritage Crafts to deliver the Award which celebrates those who have gone above and beyond to become measurably more sustainable in their practice.

Glass maker @Lulu Harrison is a great example of a craftsperson who is committed to reducing her impact on the environment. She is using her QEST Scholarship to pioneer experimental and sustainable glassmaking from locally sourced and waste materials.

Thinking of applying? Submit an application by September 1: <https://bit.ly/HQESTSustainability>

A letter from an anonymous but concerned reader

I am concerned about the future of a wonderful traditional woollen mill in North Wales.

Trefriw is a fine example of traditional Welsh skills, processing wool, dyeing and spinning it before weaving it into blankets with amazing traditional Welsh patterns. It has always had all the machinery on display and in use for the public to look round. The place is powered by hydroelectricity and therefore sustainable.

I am truly saddened that this establishment is now in grave danger as there is now only the owner left carrying out the weaving. A few years ago there were six men working there and they said they were all past retirement age. I asked then whether there were any young people coming through with apprenticeships to learn how to continue the work. I was told that the mill had tried to attract young people but that it had been unsuccessful.

I fear that there will be a loss of heritage and a loss of skills if this situation cannot be rectified- even to run the establishment as a museum would be some gain but preferably to continue to keep the production of their beautiful woven cloth. It takes time for new weavers to learn how to deal with any problems that occur whilst weaving. Time is running out.

If the mill closes it may be that the weaving equipment may be removed or sold on to places abroad as has happened to many other industries. The quality woollen items produced there would then become extinct and our heritage the poorer for it.

Is there anything you weavers spinners and dyers can do to help save or conserve this amazing mill?

An invitation to join London Guild for their Zoom Talk on Saturday 9th September 2.00 pm

Mira Behn and Khadi: Ecology, Community, and Aesthetics in the Gandhian worldview
Bidisha will introduce to you Madeleine Slade (1892-1982), better known in India as Mira Behn, the most famous European associate of Mohandas K. Gandhi, who was also a progressive environmental thinker, a fact the world knows less about. She formulated perhaps the first environmentalist agenda in India, highlighting the social and ecological constraints to development and unlimited economic growth. Mira Behn's lessons in Gandhian thinking began not in the soil of India but in England, where she learned carding, spinning, and weaving at the Kensington Weavers of London. In India, Mira Behn went on to become a key figure in Gandhi's Constructive Program for village economic self-reliance: she helped develop and expand Gandhi's idea of khadi (Indian homespun cloth) through her choice and advocacy of clothes and aesthetics that transcended colonial, gender, class, and elitist bias and her tireless work to improve the methods of spinning, carding, and weaving for village self-determination during India's independence movement.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bidisha-malik-mira-behn-gandhi-and-khadi-tickets-664148805957>

Devon Weavers Workshop have an exciting Autumn coming up. Four day Kasuri courses with American Marilyn Robert. Ikat dyeing the warps and wefts before weaving.
A new beginners course for spinners with two very experienced in-house spinners. An intermediate course will follow in the Spring.
Weaving beginners 6 day course in October; students will learn to dress a multi-shaft loom, sample their chosen colour scheme and patterns to produce a beautiful scarf for themselves.
Angie Parker with her striking Krokbragd designs will be tutoring in November and proved so popular that another 3 day course will be available in January. These courses are usually booked up well in advance so check the website. www.devonweaversworkshop.org

Contact

If you have an item for inclusion in the next monthly newsletter, please sent to: newsletter@wsd.org.uk. All news received by 20th of each month will be considered for that month's edition.
If you have an event/exhibition for inclusion in the next issue of The Journal, check page 3 of the Journal for print deadlines and send to: diary@journalwsd.org.uk If you miss the deadline your copy could still be included in the Diary on the Journal website.
Association Website: <https://www.wsd.org.uk/>
Stuart Groom Memorial Library: library@wsd.org.uk

Speakers List Update

What is at the top of your Guild member's list of skills or knowledge they want to gain? Maybe doing a quick informal survey might reveal some unexpected hot topics and given the breadth of subjects covered by the Speaker's List, it is almost certain that you will find a speaker or workshop tutor able to inspire and inform. If you have used the Speaker's List and encountered difficulties, then do please get in touch – if I don't know of any issues, I cannot address them.

The searchable Speakers List is at <https://www.wsd.org.uk/speakers-list> using your Guild's login or, if you prefer the print-based, fully searchable PDF version it can still be found, without any password, on the Guild Information Hub (GIH) at <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/contents/speakers-list>.

If you have any problems or would like to share details of a new speaker, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Matty Smith
speakerslist@wsd.org.uk



heritage open days

**Bucks Guild of Weavers,
Spinners & Dyers**

OPEN DAY



Sunday 17th Sept. 11am - 4pm

- Free Entry
- Have-a-go activities
- Refreshments
- Craft demonstrations
- Exhibition
- Sales table

**Haddenham Village Hall
HP17 8EE**

FREE TO EXPLORE

www.bucksd.org.uk for more info



#HODs @   www.heritageopendays.org.uk