



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

News

April 2023

News from The Chair

Summer School at Harper Adams is drawing closer. I visited Harper Adams this week along with a number of the Summer School subcommittee to establish which rooms would be used for which courses. I consider it an excellent campus for our needs, but, as always, there are compromises. The bedroom accommodation is good, particularly thinking back to my own student days. The workrooms are good too but please remember they are not purpose built for us, so some compromises are needed. The only place I have been where there were purpose built workrooms was the WI's Denman College and that had tables, water, sinks, electricity points in every room and even beverage facilities outside the rooms, in fact all you would need. Unfortunately it was not viable and was closed.

If you are not going to summer school and would like to gather a group of guilds, or members of guilds together, why not do as Val Conway did in 2019 in the south east. She booked a hall for a week, advertised that it was open to anyone interested to bring along their loom, spinning wheel, whatever they were doing and had a get together, which sounded like it was really good fun. As long as there is enough interest to make it financially viable (and I would suggest money up front and no refunds if you can't get there every day) why not give it a go. Before anyone asks it would have to be self financing.

The return form for your guild to attend the AGWSD AGM, in person or by zoom, on 10th June, in London, should be with Mary England by the 27th May. The meeting is at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. The Ethical Society moved to Red Lion Square in 1929 and named their new headquarters after Moncure Daniel Conway, anti-slavery advocate and outspoken supporter of free thought. It has the words, 'To Thine Own Self be True,' over the stage. I consider it a good place for an AGM where we can freely discuss the matters of the AGWSD.

I belong to a number of textile organisations; all of whom provide a fascinating insight into many aspects of textiles. .

Currently I am watching a series of afternoon talks by the Medieval Dress and Textile Society. The speakers are from across the world and this is where zoom comes into its own. Here's an interesting snippet snippet from the talk by Sarah Bendall from Australia. 16th and 17th century farthingales were most likely supported by 'Bents', which were precursors of whalebone. The 'Bents' were bundles of reed grasses. Sarah had experimented and discovered that marram grass was more flexible than esparto grass, common rush is another ongoing experiment. Her enthusiasm was captivating.

Another venture I have started is a V&A online course, Textiles 1800 - 2000. This is a three month course, it goes out live, when questions can be asked of the speaker, and it is also recorded for watching again. Some would say that it is a bit costly, but the information is excellent and I don't have to leave the comfort of home.

Please let Lorna know if you know of any organisations or courses, that you think would be of interest to other members of our guilds.

Janet Crowther
AGWSD chair

Area Zoom meetings for your diary

Scotland, Northern Ireland and Other Guilds

Wednesday 12th July

Thursday 21st September

Monday 27th November

Tuesday 13th February 2024

Your guild secretaries will have details of all of these meetings in due course

Ann Johnson
Area Link

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

Journal News

The summer issue (No. 286) will be published at the end of May and contains the second part of Susan Foulkes' fascinating exploration of the weaving disc and the first of a two-part article on reading weaving drafts by Stacey Harvey-Brown, to help those starting out on a weaving journey.

A timely article on botanical printing by Elisabeth Vigue-Culshaw is encouragement to experiment with summer leaves. Jo Lilley, who won the Lylie Smart Trophy for a novice weaver at the National Exhibition, tells us how her guild members helped her get started and how she then embarked on an ambitious project. The rug weaver, Mark Cullen, looks at sources of inspiration and how they transfer into the rug design. And Sonya Hammond explains why filling a bobbin evenly improves spinning consistency. We also have a short appreciation of Tim Searcy, who dedicated much time to supporting the Association, and was one of the initiators of the Certificate of Achievement. There are reviews of the exhibitions of Rachel Scott's handspun and handwoven rugs and of Magdalena Abakanowicz's amazing 3-D tapestries at the Tate Modern.

The Journal Editorial Committee (JEC) is seeking new members for several posts. Lyn Duffus has very efficiently filled the role of Collator for many years, but is now stepping down and we are looking for someone to replace her. The Collator receives all the content for an issue, checks for readability, raises any queries with the editors, and ensures that images supplied are usable. The proof stage usually involves several iterations, the Collator then sends the final copy to the designer for transfer to the printer. The Collator also produces a Production Schedule with all the key dates for each issue. Training will be given. The role would suit someone with publishing experience, or who is willing to learn. We would be happy to talk to anyone interested in taking on this role.

We also have opportunities for Exhibitions Reviews and Notebook editors.

The JEC meets four times per year - usually 3 Zoom meetings and one face-to-face in central London (about 15 mins walk from Euston/Kings Cross), travel and any other essential expenses are reimbursed. If you are interested in joining our lively team and have useful skills or would like to learn new skills, please contact: chair@journalwsd.org.uk for more information.

The Journal website will be merging with the Association website in early May, so all the information that you previously accessed on the Journal website will now be on www.wsd.org.uk. Anyone subscribing online will have an account and will be able to make address changes themselves. Details of passwords will be sent to subscribers by email. You will be able to download a .pdf of the feature article from each issue and we hope soon to be able to make digital issues (initially back to 2018) available as a .pdf for download on purchase. Subscribers to the digital issue will continue to receive the new issue in the FlippingBook format on publication.

From the Association Treasurer

When you are making an online payment for an Association event or certificate, please ensure that you carefully read the payment details in the relevant form **and make your payment to the correct account.**

If you're applying for one of the Certificates (either registration or assessment), the application form sets out the bank details of our Association 'general' account.

There are separate bank accounts for the three events, Summer School, Conference and National Exhibition, in each instance the application form sets out the relevant bank details.

There is a totally separate account for Journal subscriptions and one-off back copy orders.

In recent months much (voluntary) time has been spent trying to identify payments made to the wrong account (including to the Online Guild on occasion!), then send them to the right account. If you have previously made payments to the Summer School account and then register for the Certificate of Achievement, for example, you might find that your bank account automatically offers you the Summer School account - this is the reason why you need to check details with the application form before making the payment. If in doubt, the relevant event Convenor or Certificate Co-ordinator will always be happy to help, as will I.

Many thanks!

Christina Chisholm
AGWSD Hon. Treasurer

Focus on.....Scotland, Northern Ireland and Other Guilds

A look back on events in Edinburgh over the past few months

Edinburgh Guild has been busy with a full programme over the last twelve months. In September we enjoyed exploring the technique of Double Weave with Jan Beadle and the following month two of our members talked about dyeing with fungi and the amazing range of colours which could be obtained. In December we had an online meeting on Zoom and Janet Crowther gave us an inspiring talk about the Certificates of Achievement. Following a very successful 'Wheel Dating' day before the pandemic we had a 'Loom Dating' Day when members brought a variety of different warped up looms for everyone to try with looms ranging from a small pin loom to a folding four shaft floor loom. Other activities have included Making a Wrist Distaff, Spinning the Blues Away with a fibre challenge and Triangular Board Weaving. We are now looking forward to finally being able to welcome visitors from other Guilds again to our Broughton Gathering on 19th August.

Examples of the range of colours produced from fungi



The Dumfries & Galloway Guild have a full programme of events across the summer

Sat 22nd April. The Scottish Alpaca Club Show at Lanark auction mart.

A super display of alpaca handcrafts and a commentary by the alpaca judge make this a very interesting day out. We demonstrate and are given beautiful fibre to play with, as well as space to sell our makes.

3rd & 4th May. Royal Highland Educational Trust Food & Farming Day at Dumfries House

We provide taster sessions for Primary age pupils of Scottish schools and although a busy day, it is a very rewarding one.

Sun 21st May. Members of the guild will be demonstrating at the Scottish Museum of Country Life at Killochside, East Kilbride. A lovely relaxing day in a nice venue.

Sat 5th August. Dumfries & Lockerbie Agricultural Show.

We provide a demonstration and show in the Wool Board tent. We always recruit new members from this one.

Sun 15th October – SAVE THE DATE – it's our Gathering where we welcome all and sundry to Lincluden Community Centre DG2 0DL.

In addition to these events we have organised a trip to the Cumbrian Wool Gathering on June 24th, and probably another to The Great Tapestry of Scotland in September.

Programme details are on our website www.dgguildswd.org and if anyone is in the area please come and join us at our meetings.

News from Northern Ireland

We have had a great winter here in Ulster with no meetings having to be cancelled (is this a first?) We have traditionally met on a Tuesday evening but took the decision last summer to trial a Saturday Spin-In. This has proved extremely popular and is a great help to new spinners. So, we now meet twice a month with an average of 12-15 members attending each meeting. We are forever grateful to the Ulster Folk Museum who provide rooms for all the craft guilds in Northern Ireland free of charge.

In March we had a wonderful natural dyes workshop provided by our own Kay Johnston which gave 12 members the chance to experiment with a variety of different dye stuffs and each went happily away clutching their wonderfully coloured skeins.

Note from the Editor: If your Guild has held an interesting event or workshop please send a piece and a photograph through to your Area Link for inclusion in the Focus On feature.

My favourite tool

A stiletto is a neat, often decorative and very useful tool that was once commonly found in traditional sewing boxes. Today they can be found amongst bundles of crochet hooks and perhaps button hooks at car boot sales, charity shops, junk shops and posh ones at antiques fairs.

Their original use was for making eyelets in fabric, such as for embroidery anglais, or pulled work. I have a great many uses for a stiletto, and always have one in each of my sewing, my weaving and my braiding tool kits.

Where and how do I use it?

- for undoing stitches or wefts, such as tacking or machine stitches, errors in weaving or band weaving, or braiding, as there is no damage. I can loosen a weft along the pick to the edge so much more easily using the stiletto. I never use a 'Quick unpick' or 'Seam Ripper', as it is all too easy to slip and cut a hole.
- for finding a 'lost' thread on a bobbin on a spinning wheel
- for pointing to a specific place on student's work
- for counting out threads on fabric under a piece glass
- for drawing and counting out patterns on graph paper for pick-up woven bands etc.

I have drilled a hole in the handle so that I can attach a braid loop to my stiletto so that it can hang from my lanyard or a hook on my inkle loom. (I was always leaving it on a student's table when teaching.)

Some of mine belonged to my mother, and have bone or mother of pearl handles, and are such a pleasure to use. The points vary too. I do avoid the exceedingly sharp pointed ones, and the very blunt ones are less useful. Perhaps a parallel with Goldilocks? - one is just right, not too pointed and not too blunt!

Jennie Parry

The London Guild have opened up this fantastic opportunity to members of affiliated guilds

Janet Phillips – Deflected Double Weave Workshop on Zoom

30th June and 7th July 2023. From 6.00 – 8.00 pm

Information on the workshop

The London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers are now able to offer a limited number of spaces to other Guilds on this Zoom Course being taught by Janet Phillips. On this workshop you will be making a sample blanket which will be woven on 8 shafts. You will learn the design method to weave deflected double cloth on more than 8 shafts even though the sample blanket will be woven on 8 shafts.

In Janet's book *Exploring Woven Fabrics* she uses 8/2ne cotton, or 2/17nm wool but something thicker would be OK 6/2ne cotton or a wool such as 2/11.5nm. You will need 2 colours of about 200 grams each and a tiny bit of a third colour. Hopefully you will have something suitable in your stash, If everyone uses a different yarn you will all learn more.

Beginners are welcome to join the course. It is a simple structure but produces complex looking cloth. The only proviso is that a beginner must be confident about making a warp and dressing their own loom.

A warping sheet will be sent out to everyone beforehand so that your loom will be ready for weaving. Janet will be available for questions throughout the time of the course. The lessons will be videoed and available for two weeks after the course. If you cannot attend on the nights of the workshop, the video link will be sent to you but viewing will need to be within the two week period. Janet also advises that you have a copy of her book *Exploring Woven Fabrics* as the information in this book will be used throughout the workshop. This is available from her website janetphillips.co.uk at cost of £39.95.

The cost of the workshop is £35.00 and there are eight available spaces Please contact Juliette Syme, juliette.syme@gmail.com if you have any further queries or to reserve your place. I will then forward you the payment details.

Invitation from the London Guild

Paul Cackett of Calyx Cotton will be giving a Zoom talk to the London Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers on Saturday 13th May 2023 at 2.00 pm.. The company grows cotton using hydroponics and indoor farms. Their trials have generated a new quality of cotton and they are excited to be growing exclusively in the UK for their next stage.

Calyx has worked with the London Guild of Weavers to spin the initial UK grown cotton. Paul will talk about how they started, the results and their plans for the future.

Tickets are available to non LGWSD members either as a talk on the day or as a recording through Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/using-hydroponics-to-grow-cotton-paul-cackett-tickets-618469678457>

Speakers List April Update

With Spring emerging fast and the weather improving, now would be a good time to consider the subject of natural dyes for your Guild meetings. Carole Keepax can provide very well qualified insights into the topic. She gained the Association's Certificate of Achievement in Natural Dyeing in 2015 with distinction and has since completed a 'Hundred Dye Project', making samples from all the Scottish plants traditionally used for dyes. She offers, amongst other things, an illustrated talk on 'Colours of Scotland' (available via Zoom or face-to-face) and a workshop on 'Dyes from the kitchen or garden'.

You will find all her details on the Speakers List at <https://www.wsd.org.uk/speakers-list> using your Guild's login. If you prefer the print-based/fully searchable PDF version it can still be found, without any password, on the WIP at <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/contents/speakers-list>

. If you have any problems, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Matty Smith
speakerslist@wsd.org.uk

A date for your diaries

Urdd Gwehyddion Nyddwyr/Gwynedd Guild WSD Friendship Day

Do please make a note in your diaries that our Friendship Day will be held on Saturday 10th June 2023 at the The Memorial Hall, Bethel, Caernarvon, Gwynedd



List Of Craft Traders

Mark Jones Cefn Llan Fibre Flock, Josie Russell, Gwynedd Guild, Helen Melvin Fiery Felts, Tania Oakshott Weki Wools, Sarah Keys Tecstiliau, Katie Weston Hilltop Cloud, Elaine Knight AngleseyTextile Group, Jenny Pritchard Jenny's Crafts Raffle

We look forward to a great day meeting old and new friends

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: www.wsd.org.uk

Web Information Point (WIP): wipagwsd.wordpress.com