



NEWS August 2024

News from The Chair

Congratulations to all who have had their work selected for the AGWSD National Exhibition at Hay Castle this October. Should your work have not been selected, please do not be downhearted. Don't forget to finish your book cover for the non-selected part of the exhibition.

Last month I was asking for a volunteer to become an Area Link, the call was answered, thank you. When you volunteer for the one of the many roles that keep an organisation such as ours running, you will be asked to sign the Confidentially Agreement, and the Code of Conduct; to read the policies and the AGWSD constitution. We have these in place to protect those who volunteer and all of you too. We use Office 365 for all our communication storage. It may seem a little daunting to start with, but, once mastered, is so much better than 'bits of paper'.

Summer School 2025 is coming together well, see the next page for a taster of the 18 courses already planned.

Sue Collins, AGWSD Events Co-ordinator has started looking for venues for 2026, for the Conference and the National Exhibition. It seems that we have hardly taken breath from one than the next events are at the planning stage.

Janet Crowther AGWSD chair

National Exhibition

Hay Castle: 14th - 27th October

A huge 'thank you so much' from all of us on the Exhibition Committee for your submissions. The standard this year was extremely high and we were thrilled to get 117 entries.

Last week our wonderful team of selectors, who are experts in their fields sat for a day and a half ably supported by suitable refreshments including cake, of course! They went carefully through each submission and interesting discussions followed. They agreed that the process was fair and robust and were fascinated by many of the stories that had inspired you all.

The exhibition is going to be superb if we have anything to do with it and we do hope many of you will come and visit it. Hay Castle is a fabulous venue and Hay on Wye itself a great place to visit. You will not leave without a book!

It has been a fun process to be part of so far, so next time it comes to your area please think about volunteering.

Sue White

Joint Convenor National Exhibition 2024

Please feel free to contact me about any aspect of the AGWSD,
Janet Crowther, chair@wsd.org.uk

Summer School 2025, 3rd August – 10th August, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh Eighteen courses featuring an amazing array of tutors, techniques and inspirations

A snap shot of the delights on offer:

Spinning



Fancy Yarns
Jane Deane

Dyeing



Blue Prints
Elisabeth Viguie Culshaw

Weaving



Design with texture
Charlotte Grierson

Other Textiles



Nature in our hands
Deborah Gray

I would love to book onto all the courses planned as each and every one has a tutor of excellence, and offer great opportunities for learning new and exciting techniques. If you are an AGWSD Certificate of Achievement student, there are a number of courses that will help you with those techniques and design elements that can be a bit daunting.

Please remember this is a year ahead, the costs of all the AGWSD events are kept as low as possible and the good thing is that you can start saving now. As I would say to my children when they started having pocket money, save buying that packet of crisps and we can put the pennies in a pot for something more lasting. Also, please remember that things can happen along the way, and tutors and courses might have to be changed.

The AGWSD Summer School 2025 brochure will be available from mid-ish September on the website wsd.org.uk and from your guild secretary too.

As summer school is in Edinburgh there is a Scottish flavour to a number of the courses.

There will be all the other parts of a summer school, the Trade Fair, the Silent Auction, the Fashion Show, the raffle and a talk or two. Not forgetting that Alan Parker will be there in his role as personal shopper, and as knife and scissor sharpener.

Summer School is at the beginning of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe; we are joining the elite of the creative world. We hope there will be an opportunity to book extra nights at QMU, through their website.

Janet Crowther

Area Link Meetings - September 2024

East & South East: 3pm Sunday 22 and 7pm Tuesday 24 September

North: Thursday 26th September

South & South West: Wednesday 25th September

The Area Links will email guild secretaries with Zoom links and joining times.

These meetings are an ideal opportunity for you to discuss any issues you may have, share ideas with other guilds and of course, to get the chance to have your voice heard, through your Area Link, at the next GPC meeting.

A Rookie at Conference

This July I boarded a plane for Exeter bound for Bicton College and the National Conference 2024. This was my first time attending an AGWSD event, other than the AGM, and I have to say it won't be the last.

Janet Maher and her team had found a superb location and laid on the most interesting programme of talks. The effort behind this was obvious in the relief on Janet's face late on the Friday evening having successfully welcomed all delegates (even those faced with horrendous delays), seen the first meal devoured and the first of nine speakers received to rapturous applause.

The range of talks was superb and although not a native of the Southwest I found those talks relating to the textile history of the area to be of immense interest. In fact, finding myself in Exeter on the Sunday afternoon after the conference had finished, I made a bee line to find the now landlocked medieval Exe bridge, passing one of the leats on my way. Thank you to Isabella Whitworth and her knowledge of the Exeter Dyers.

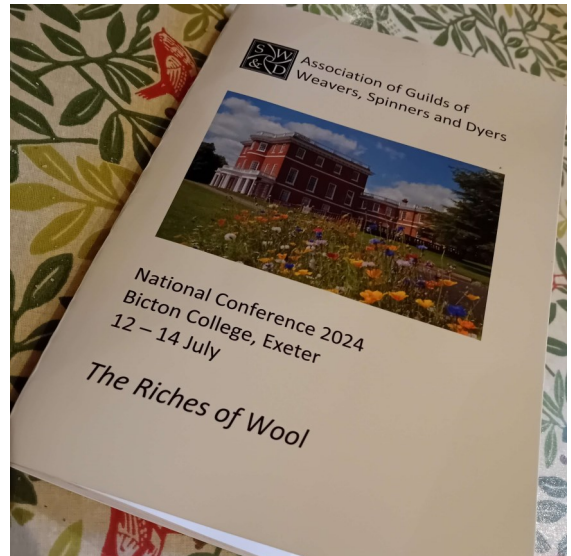
It wasn't all about history though and it was encouraging to hear from Mike Blake and Katie Allen about their efforts to improve and promote the use of locally grown wool. I learned a lot from Louise Cottey about drugget and other old terms for fabrics and how they were made and finished. And who knew that beers are specific number of ends in a warp? Well maybe you did but I'm only a novice here.

I realised how I had taken old illustrations of hand spinners for granted, not even giving a thought as to how they were using a distaff for wool or how they were holding their spindles. I realised that I had missed significant mentions of Paisley shawls in the classical books that I have devoured over the years. I have walked around wonderful carpets in stately homes without giving a thought as to how they were made or preserved.

All this and superb food too. If I thought that the climax of the gala dinner was to be the dry ice centrepiece to the dessert course I thought wrong as David Wilkins of Rampisham Hill Mill gave a most entertaining presentation on how to prepare your fleece for the mill.

A highlight was hearing and meeting Philip Walling, author of one of my favourite books about sheep but the biggest buzz from the whole weekend was meeting and talking to so many like minded people and swapping anecdotes about all our many and varied journeys in the world of wool. Thank you again to Janet Maher and her team for a well organised and thoroughly enjoyable weekend. If any of you are wondering about attending, or indeed helping to organise, Summer School 2025 or Conference 2026 - just do it!

Lorna Shannon
Ulster Guild



The First Year of the Evesham and Redditch Guild

Back in April 2023, I and a couple of friends were at the Cotswold Wool Weekend and we got chatting (as you do). We were lamenting the fact that, while there are lots of great guilds in the Midlands, all of them met on a Saturday and this was a problem for us because of other commitments. One of the members of a local guild (Gloucester, I think) mentioned that you only needed to have three people to start a guild. 16 months on, we are approaching the first anniversary of the first meeting of the Evesham and Redditch Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers with an enthusiastic and growing membership.

It has been an amazing journey.

Our membership has taken the idea of sharing their skills very much to heart and, thanks to them, we have been able to examine, among other things, button making, braiding, willow weaving, solar and ice dyeing and art yarns. Thanks to their efforts, we have been able to offer two entries for the selected exhibit and two for the open exhibit at the national exhibition, while their generosity means that we have a well-stocked library of both equipment and books to lend.

We were also very fortunate to have been offered stands at a couple of local events: Astwood Bank carnival, a long-standing local event and the award-winning Battle of Evesham. The original Battle of Evesham was a pivotal battle in English political history, and is commemorated each year with a two day festival including Medieval Battle Reenactments, Living History Camp, an artisan market and Grand Parade through Evesham. This is also a well established event with an estimated foot-fall of 40,000.

Both events were well supported by our members who demonstrated their skills and answered a wide variety of questions from visitors from all over the country and beyond.

Rebecca Jordan
Chair E&RGWSD



Guild tent at the Battle of Evesham

East Sussex Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

We are holding an Open Day to mark
International Spin in Public Day
on **September 21st 2024** at **Ringmer Village Hall**
10am to 4pm

Exhibition of Guild Members Work
Natural Dyeing Display

Weaving & Spinning Demonstrations
Skills Sharing
Members Sales Tables

Refreshments Available
Free Entry ~ Everyone Welcome

Exposed Warp Tapestry Weaving
Sat 21 & Sun 22 September
Central Scotland School of Craft, High Street,
Dunblane

Join award winning tapestry artist Jo McDonald for a weekend exploring the contemporary art of Exposed Warp Tapestry Weaving, focussing on bold imagery inspired by strong shapes in the natural world. Using thick weft bundles and translucent materials we will weave in such a way that the coloured warps beneath remain exposed and become an intrinsic part of the design.

<https://scottishcraftschool.com/product/exposed-warp-weaving/>
hello@scottishcraftschool.com
01786 643329

Speakers List Update

New addition to the list

This month sees another new entry on the Speaker's List; **Becks, of Tiny Fibre Studio**, offers in-person and online workshops exploring various spinning techniques, with a focus on intentional spinning and colour management. Becks began spinning in 2011 and quickly built up a sizeable stash of mismatched single skeins. She now focuses on being more purposeful about the yarn she produces, usually spinning specifically for a project... or at least a type of project... unless she's spinning samples for her next workshop!

Speakers by Region

The final region of the AGWSD, **Wales & Central England** contains 12 speakers located within it. For more details on any of them, go to the Speakers' List (see below)

Alastair Duncan: Tapestry weaving and design focusing on the interpretation and use of sound and communication.

Andrew Johnson: Ecclesiastical textiles, Batik, Theo Moorman Technique, Woollen Long Draw, Long fibre preparation & Spinning, Overshot weaving.

Helen Philips: Crafts drawn from the peoples of the Himalayas

Jim & Diane Gaffney: Talks on hand made textiles especially batik and ikat from Indonesia, Thailand, Laos and China, with lots of wonderful examples from their collections.

Julie Hedges: Ply-split braiding and decorative twisted cord making.

Katie Weston: Workshops on spinning techniques of all kinds, fibre dyeing, and talks focusing on other aspects of historical textile production

Laura Thomas: Creator of unconventional textiles for contemporary spaces

Nicola Davies: Temari classes across the UK and online both for beginners and those experienced in this beautiful Japanese art of embroidered thread balls

Riitta Sinkkonen-Davies: Spinning flax and weaving with linen

Sue Hiley Harris Sculptor weaver with a particular expertise in using silk.

Teresinha Roberts: Talks detailing the delights of natural dyes and indigo

The Thread of Time: Spinning wool with a distaff, is an ancient European technique. It was nearly lost but has recently been revived.



Highlight of the month: Lesley Hordon

Lesley is all about the management of Angora rabbits, their history, and the preparation and spinning of their wool. She has kept rabbits since her childhood and had an interest in crafts since the age of 7. She acquired her first Angora rabbit in 1997 and now has 14 English Angora rabbits, comprising Angora rabbits of Smoke, Blue, Chocolate, Sooty Fawn and Lilac colours. Her talk: 'The Angora Rabbit', covers the history, wool structure, care and crafts associated with Angora wool. She takes questions and engages in discussion throughout her talk. Lesley has a website at <https://www.skyrackangoras.co.uk/> and can be contacted by email at skyrackangoras@hotmail.co.uk

The searchable Speakers List is online 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

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: jecdiary@wsd.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