



## Association News

The AGWSD Summer School was such a very successful event. The GPC were delighted that it went ahead against all the odds.

We are now working on summer school 2023. We are just in the process of booking the venue, Harper Adams University in Shropshire, 13th - 20th August 2023. It is a good campus with the usual student accommodation and a very good range of rooms available for courses. The GPC agreed sometime ago that they would find the venues for the AGWSD events and then seek guild members to help to run the events.

I have told the tale before of how I came to be involved with Summer School 2017. I became a guild secretary and was then presented with the guild secretary files. In one I found the email sent to the guild by the GPC asking for help with organising Summer School 2017. The guild committee had decided against offering and had said 'no'. But they hadn't asked the guild members.

This Newsletter should go to all guild members and is a very good place for me to ask if you would like to help. It is handy if you live in the Shropshire area, but not necessary as the convenor for our last summer school at Writtle in Essex lived up in the north of Scotland.

Ruth Archer was a student at Harper Adams, which seems a very good reason for holding a summer school there, as well as it having just the facilities we need

**Are you interested in helping to organise this summer school? Please contact me, Janet Crowther, [chair@wsd.org.uk](mailto:chair@wsd.org.uk), if you would be interested.**

## Exhibition 2022

We have had further contact with the venue, Leigh Spinners Mill and GPC members are visiting the mill any day now to see how all the refurbishments look and to see the completed exhibition space.

We are continuing with the theme, 'Coal, Cotton and Canals' for the selected items, the non selected items theme remains 'Silent Waters'.

The GPC are looking for guild members to join the exhibition subcommittee. The postponement of the exhibition from 2020 to 2022 has meant that some of the original subcommittee are no longer available to help.

We intend, as far as possible, to use zoom for committee meetings which will save travelling and the time that takes. You don't have to live near the mill either, just to have enthusiasm and some organisational skills

I am sure there are a number of you who will be very willing to be involved, please contact me, Janet Crowther [chair@wsd.org.uk](mailto:chair@wsd.org.uk)

**The Guilds Gathering** event 'Colour- the Full Spectrum' is being reorganised for next year. The dates are June 17th - 19th 2022 at the University of Worcester.

In 2020 this event proved to be very popular and sold out fast with everyone being refunded when we had to postpone due to Covid. Most of these original delegates have opted to rebook. We are looking forward to welcoming Guild members to a weekend of 'colour' which we hope will be informative, inspirational and fun.

Kate Batchelor  
Guilds Gathering Convenor

## **Meet the GPC**

Andrea Easey - Joint East and South East Area Link

Hello - I'm a new recruit to the GPC having recently served 4 years as Chair of my local Guild (London), which I joined in 2012. Like many other members of our Guilds, I like to try all our crafts, but I would introduce myself as a spinner first and foremost. I do weave with some of my yarns, but primarily I knit. I believe the act of 'making' is crucial to sustaining good mental health, and know that if I don't have a project to hand, I become quite gloomy. And that's my excuse for having so many 'works in progress' waiting in project bags in corners of the house.



I have always worked in the heritage sector - which I still do - having studied art history and then specialised in museum studies. On a couple of evenings each week, I sing with one of the London choirs and when we had 'normal' seasons, we would perform in 8-10 concerts per year. Put like that, how do I have time for textiles, the Committee and being an area link? As I always say: 'if you want something done, ask a busy person'. I love learning new things and accepting a challenge.

So far, I am really enjoying my GPC duties - especially meeting up with the members of the Guilds in my area over Zoom or in person at our recent Summer School. I'm looking forward to getting to know more Guild members in the coming years of my term on the GPC, and if you do see me at an event - please do come and say 'hello'

## **Relocation of the Stuart Groom Memorial Library**

New Guild members may not be aware that the Association has a library facility. The Association does not have premises for a library and we have depended on volunteers within the Association running this facility from their own homes. As there are quite a lot of books, this has not been ideal and no-one has been able to undertake this role for the past 18 months. We have been very fortunate that Trowbridge Museum has offered to house and run the service for us. The museum was an old weaving mill and has been set up to preserve the heritage of weaving, spinning and dyeing in the town. We are at early stages of planning and managing the move and the library will not be available for a few months whilst shelves are purchased, books catalogued and a clear borrowing process agreed. A further announcement will be made in the newsletter when the library is ready for loans to be made. Watch this space.

Janet Maher  
Vice-Chair AGWSD

## **The Lake District Tweed (Hefted Cloth) Project**

The project is an initiative by Maria Benjamin with tweed designs created by members of the Lancs and Lakes Guild (LLWSD). Maria and her partner John farm in the Lake District, where, as she explains: "they run a traditional beef and sheep farm as well as farm diversification businesses. Historically, wool played an important role in the economy of the Lake District, but farmers now receive so little for their wool that many resort to burning it."

Maria demonstrates that there is a demand for 'wool with provenance', using wool from her own and friends' flocks to develop local woven tweed cloth. This new three-year project is designed to expand on her work, by using wool from each Lake District Valley and designs from LLWSD for thirteen distinctive tweeds. These will be based upon particular aspects of each valley such as topography, colours, history and current or historic industry. Maria is also working with Yorkshire based textile designer Louise Dixon, who will translate final designs from the Guild into weave cards for the weaving company.

This year, Maria is producing four tweeds for Coniston, Windermere, Ennerdale and Ullswater. In Year two a further four tweeds will be added to the collection, with the final five tweeds in Year three. For more details see <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/lakedistricttweed/lake-district-tweed-hefted-cloth>



Sheila Philips (LLWSD) (left) filmed with TV presenter Charlotte Smith on BBC One 'Countryfile' in October 2021, talking about the project and showing a sample design of Coniston tweed.

Maria discovered the work of the Lancs and Lakes Guild via Sheila Philips showing her the 'Reproducing the Kendal Pattern Book, A Window on 18th Century Weaving' (2010) researched by Alison Ongley together with Sheila and other members of the LLWSD. Maria was impressed by the work and how this specifically demonstrated the type of draft and detail required for her Lakeland Tweed project. The Lake District Tweed Project has recently been featured on the BBC One's 'Countryfile' with Sheila preparing two threaded up looms with sample fabric (see photo) and presenter Charlotte Smith trying out some weaving on the Coniston tweed.

**Amanda Bingley**

**Secretary, Lancs and Lakes Guild of Spinners Weavers and Dyers**

## News from the Journal

### Winter 2021: Journal 280

Due out in late November, the next issue of the Journal will include an article by Babs Behan on Bristol Cloth - her project to revive locally produced cloth, made from sustainable fibres, naturally dyed and locally woven. Theo Wright explains how he has developed a new series of woven hangings emphasising the interplay of colour and structure. Along similar lines, Stacey Harvey-Brown looks at colour-and-weave and shadow weave. We revisit (for those with long memories) Chris Aslan Alexander's carpet weaving social enterprise in Uzbekistan and his quest for natural dyes. Sonya Hammond explains how she undertook a major spin and knit project, giving guidance on how to tackle a big project. In what we hope will be the first of an occasional series on textile museums, mills and collections, Carol Christiansen introduces the Shetland Museum textile collection - its not all Fair Isle and lace knitting. Two recent textile graduates showcase their work - sustainability is a key consideration. The usual features such as Guild Highlights, Book Reviews, Diary and Notebook are there, plus we have an Exhibition Review.

### And further ahead....

The Spring 2022 issue will mark the 70th anniversary of the publication of the first Journal, so we will look back over the Journal and highlight some items. It is interesting to see what has changed - and what hasn't. We won't limit our celebration of 70 years to one issue, but will pick up items through the year - do contribute to marking this anniversary. We will also be looking forward to where the Journal might go in future.

The summer issue 2022 is being planned as a linen issue - looking at flax and linen which is increasingly being seen as a sustainable and local option. We will also draw on the history of linen in the UK and hope to have an article about notable linen weaver, Alison Moreton, who died earlier this year (there will be a short tribute to her in the winter 2021 issue).

### Bulk Guild Orders

The Journal continues to offer a discount for bulk Guild orders with a minimum of three orders to a single address. The price remains £16 per subscriber. Please send your orders to the Subscriptions Secretary as soon as you can.

Queries to: [subs@journalwsd.org.uk](mailto:subs@journalwsd.org.uk)

### Journal website project

The Journal Editorial Committee, with support from GPC, has embarked on a project to substantially update the Journal website. This is because the current website offers very limited functionality, meaning that a great deal of behind the scenes manual work is required. All this is done by volunteers - as is all the work the Association does. Under the current system new subscriptions, renewals and casual sales all require manual transfer of data involving both the Subscriptions Secretary and the Treasurer. At busy times, such as November to January when the bulk of subscriptions are due for renewal both of these JEC members have to give a very significant amount of time to keeping it all up to date and making sure errors don't occur. Much of this data handling could be done automatically if we used up-to-date software and could link subscriptions and the accounting system. There are other admin issues associated with keeping the website up to date which are more complicated than they need to be. After much discussion and analysis of the issues the JEC has developed a specification for a new website and has invited contractors to submit tenders. We have set up a Working Group with both JEC and GPC members involved and both committees are being kept informed. The website work will be funded entirely from Journal finances - this is one of the reasons that we need to maintain financial reserves, to cover costs such as this. Ultimately we are working to make the most efficient use of our valuable volunteer time and to deliver a better service to subscribers and website users.

### Contributions to the Journal

Don't forget that we are happy to publish contributions such as Guild Highlights, diary, exhibitions reviews and Reader's Showcase. Contact the relevant editor for advice on how to submit items.

[highlights@journalwsd.org.uk](mailto:highlights@journalwsd.org.uk)

[diary@journalwsd.org.uk](mailto:diary@journalwsd.org.uk)

[exhibitionreviews@journalwsd.org.uk](mailto:exhibitionreviews@journalwsd.org.uk)

Or contact: Hilary Miller [chair@journalwsd.org.uk](mailto:chair@journalwsd.org.uk)

## National Wool Museum

Dre-Fach Felindre, Felindre, Llandysul SA44 5UP

On the 4th October the museum launched its new Digital Experience where you can take a virtual tour and click on various hotspots to find out more information. You can find the Dye Garden talk by Guild member Susan Martin here too.

The Exhibition of Hope, opened on the 2nd October and runs until 15th January 2022 at the Wool Museum. This started with an invitation during Lockdown to people to contribute rainbow themed squares to a blanket. Eventually over 2000 squares were collected and made into 40 blankets by volunteers which are now displayed in the museum. It looks amazing. The stories of the people who contributed and why are an important part of the project.

Susan made a square from locally grown Llanwenog fleece which she natural dyed using plants which can be found in the garden. She was delighted to find that it was chosen by Museum Wales to put on the title board for the exhibition.

The National Wool Museum is one of my favourite places to visit.  
Janet Crowther

## Working Weaving or Spinning Mills

I was handed some pieces of wool jacquard cloth the other day. It was woven in Northern Ireland in a mill long gone, the looms smashed for scrap.

I would love to feature working mills in future editions of the News. They are few and far between but if we can raise awareness of any existing working mills we can perhaps do our little bit to help them survive and avoid losing the skills and equipment they contain.

Send any information to [newsletter@wsd.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wsd.org.uk)

## Speakers List Update

Speakers List Update

Are you looking for a speaker or workshop tutor on a specific topic? Why not get in touch with me so that I can throw the query out to all the Guilds and possibly find a new entrant for our Speaker's List at the same time. I am happy to take on any challenge!!

Meanwhile check out the searchable, online Speakers list here:

<https://www.wsd.org.uk/speakers-list> or if you prefer the print-based version of the list it can still be found on the WIP at <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/contents/speakers-list>.

Matty Smith

[speakerslist@wsd.org.uk](mailto:speakerslist@wsd.org.uk)

## Must Farm Talk 13th November 2.00 pm

An open invitation from the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

Our next Speaker is Dr Susanna Harris from the University of Glasgow giving a talk on the Must Farm Bronze Age Settlement fabrics finds.

She will be presenting research about the site and the unique evidence of plant fibre fabrics and twining.

This is open to non members on Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/remarkable-fabrics-yarns-of-must-farm-bronze-age-settlement-1000bce-tickets-193001190757>

## Contact & Social Media

If you have an item for inclusion in the next monthly newsletter, please sent to: [newsletter@wsd.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wsd.org.uk). All news received by 20th of each month will be considered for that month's edition.

Follow the Association on social media: [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Twitter](#)

Association Website: <https://www.wsd.org.uk/> Web Information Point (WIP): <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/>

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@thejournalforwsd.org.uk](mailto:diary@thejournalforwsd.org.uk) If you miss the deadline your copy could still be included in the Diary on the Journal website.