

Journal Timeline

Hilary Miller, Gwynedd Guild, and Alison Castle, Durham Guild



The *Quarterly Journal of the Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers* was first published 70 years ago in March 1952. The editorial in the first issue reflects the background to its publication in the post-war period, commenting that: 'The launching of a Journal in these difficult days of paper shortage and high printing costs may perhaps seem daring and even foolhardy, but the demand for such a Journal has become so pressing that it was no longer to be denied.' The energy created by the rapid formation of Guilds

across the country was the driver for joint action, even before the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers had been formed. Since then production has been unbroken, despite periods when there clearly were difficulties. What is outstanding is that the *Journal* has been produced by volunteers over the whole period.

We have drawn up a timeline setting out key events which preceded the current publication and the life of the *Journal* over the last seventy years.

The Forerunner

1932 – 1939

The Guild of Weavers and Dyers was formed in 1931, and from 1934 became The Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, a UK-wide organisation. In 1932 it published the first quarterly *News Sheet*, which started as a single sheet, increasing to 6 pages and from issue 12, May 1935, it became *the Quarterly News of the Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers*, a centre folded A5-equivalent of 15 pages, with the Eric Gill logo still used by the Association today, on its cover. The aim was to keep members in touch and provide information about Guild activities such as Summer School, conference, exhibition and advertisements. It began to include notes on items of interest, information about forthcoming exhibitions and short articles, such as an article on summer & winter weave structure, with drafts and a black and white photograph.

The final issue was 29/30 in December 1939, after which wartime disruption made it impossible to continue. The Guild went into abeyance but was not formally wound up until 1954.

Quarterly Journal of the Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers: No 1 March 1952

Aims

The policy of this journal will be to further the aims of the Guilds. These are:

- To encourage and maintain integrity and excellence of craftsmanship.
- To foster a sense of beauty of material, texture, colour and design.
- To provide opportunities for the exchange of information, for enlarging knowledge at holiday schools, for demonstrations, lectures and library facilities.
- To co-operate with other Guilds having like aims.

Extract from the Editorial: [The Journal] has been made possible by the creation of a reserve fund from grants and donations which guarantee its first year of life. These are the visible expression of the interest of the expanding Guilds in their own crafts; but they also reveal a deeper expression of faith in craftsmanship at a time when the tide of materialism has all but washed away the vestiges of individual creativeness and enterprise.

There are signs, however, that this tide is now turning. People of all walks of life are beginning to realise that, unless the handcraftsmen are there to maintain a standard of excellence, the great tradition of good workmanship which has been the mainstay of Britain will not survive. The Guilds are today, as they once were in the past, the guardians of a standard.

Extracts from Good Wishes published in Issue 1

Sir Ernest Goodale, the Worshipful Company of Weavers (extract):

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the birth of this Journal and wish it every success.

The growth of Guilds devoted to the craft of spinning, weaving and dyeing, which has been so rapid since the last war under the skilled hands of Miss Hester Viney, clearly shows the urge in most of us to make things with our hands. What action is more satisfying than spinning or weaving, and what music more pleasant to a weaver's ear than the rhythmic movement of the shuttle in the loom?

Spinning, weaving and dyeing are crafts, let us not forget they are arts as well. There is no great merit in producing something by hand that is technically competent but ordinary and which a machine could have done better and with much less fatigue.

Bernard Leach, Leach Potteries (extract):

As from one craft to another I welcome the re-establishment of a Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Journal. A good workshop periodical, besides telling an interested public what is being done, also serves as a forum for exchange of thought as to why and how it is done, and it should lead towards raising standards. After two wars it was inevitable that standards both of ideas and of execution should waver and lose direction. Workers were disbanded, workshops abandoned and the threads of tradition cut right and left: new Government regulations for industry came into force which have borne down hardly on handcrafts for which they were not planned. But in the ten years of uncertainty which have elapsed thousands of young people, not only in these islands but all over the industrialised world, have been turning from the factory and office to craftsmanship as a more creative way of life.

Others who sent good wishes included:

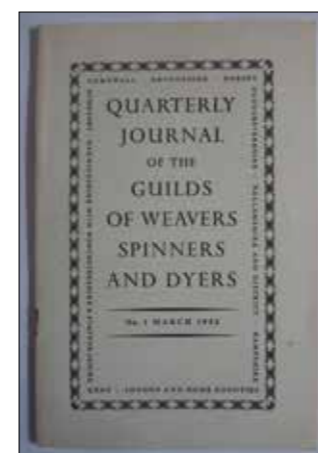
- Mr Wingfield Digby, Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert Museum;
- Miss Wilkinson, Principal of the London School of Weaving; and
- Mr Dan Cooper, American Institute of Decorators.

The Journal in its various guises

1952

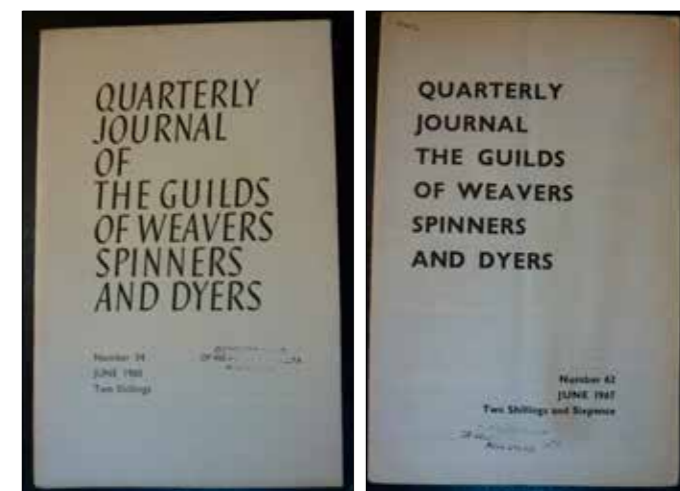
The Quarterly Journal of the Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers was launched by an Editorial Committee as a result of a meeting in Bristol during an exhibition of weaving in 1951. Ten original Guilds had started around 1949: Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hallamshire and District, Hampshire, Kent, London and Home Counties, Somerset, and Warwickshire with Worcestershire and Staffordshire; they were joined by several newer Guilds including Cambridgeshire and Sussex.

The initial committee comprised: Hilary Bourne, Alice Hindson, Elsie M. Davenport, E. Sheila MacEwan (Chair), F. Dickinson and Hester Viney, with Mrs A. Broadbent as Honorary Treasurer. The first editor was Joanna Bourne, Hilary Bourne's sister, who was sub-editor of the magazine *Time and Tide* and offered her professional knowledge to support the new *Journal*¹.



1954

The Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, which had ceased activity in 1940, formally wound up its affairs and bequeathed its assets of £83 0s 0d to the Editorial Committee of the *Quarterly Journal*. The Council of the original Guild gave permission to the Journal to use 'their beautiful colophon, designed by the late Eric Gill'. This then appeared in the *Quarterly Journal* on the page listing Guild contacts.



1955

The Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers was formed, and the Journal Committee was incorporated within it.

1958

In issue 27 (September) the Eric Gill logo was replaced by a new Association badge, which was the result of a competition, won by Mr R. E. Twining, Cheltenham. This was used until issue 60 (December 1966). There followed a period of some 14 years without any form of identifying logo, either on the cover or in the body of the Journal.

1976

The reference to Guilds in the title was dropped as the name was changed to *Weavers Journal*. The Editorial of issue 97 explains: '1976 brings a new name and a new look to the Journal. The title seems more appropriate now that our readers include so many non-Guild subscribers both at home and overseas.' The *Weavers Journal* continued in small format, with cover in colour but internal illustrations in black and white until No 116 (Winter 1980). Glossy paper was introduced from No 100 (Winter 1976), and the average number of pages during this period rose to approximately 40.



1980-1

The *Weavers Journal* changed to a new format. The Editorial in the Winter issue 1980 (issue 116) notes that '1980 has been a disastrous year for the Journal with constant problems in getting it out. Your next Journal will have a new layout and shape and the contents will appeal to a broader range of Guild members.' This was the final *Journal* printed by the Ditchling Press.

In issue 113 (Spring 1980) there was an announcement that, at the Association's AGM in May 1979, it had been decided that the Eric Gill logo would be used as the Association's emblem. Although it was prominent on the Index to *Journals* 1 – 100 which accompanied issue 114 (Summer 1980), the logo didn't reappear in the *Journal* itself until issue 117 (Spring 1981)



which was the first in the new 'square-ish' format. The content remained approximately the same, as the number of pages was reduced to 32. It retained the coloured cover, but inside illustrations were all black and white until the last three issues of this format, when there was a couple of colour pages inside.

1984

The cover name was changed to *The Journal for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers* from issue 131.



1986

From issue 138, January 1986, the current larger format with a colour image on the front cover was adopted. For some years the back page was a full page colour advertisement, but subsequently was used for images related to the content of the issue. The change may be related to comments that the recession had caused a fall in advertising demand.

1992

The fortieth anniversary of the *Journal* was marked in issue 161. Hilary Bourne (Editorial Committee member 1952 – 1956) provided an article on *How it All Began* and Mary Barker (committee member in various roles 1952 – 1983) wrote *The Journal: From Past to Present*. Mary commented that articles 'were sent in but not paid for and the Committee had to be on stand-by to pick up their pens to fill the gaps.' Much the same today – but we reach for our keyboards rather than our pens.

1999

The *Journal* designer, Ros Lobb, redesigned the *Journal*; advertising increased.



2001

The magazine becomes full colour.

2009

The Peter Collingwood Special Edition was published as an additional (unnumbered) issue and was received by all subscribers. Peter Collingwood (1922 – 2008) was well known as an innovative weaver with wide-ranging interests and was a member of the *Journal* Editorial Committee for 29 years from 1954. He contributed numerous articles, book and exhibition reviews, some of which were reprinted in the Special Edition (which is available in digital format from the *Journal* website).

2011

From issue 240 subscribers could order via the *Journal* website.



2012

The *Journal* joins social media with Facebook and Twitter accounts.

2016

Issue 257 was the first to be available in digital as well as print format. For the technically minded: Over her long spell as *Journal* designer Ros Lobb oversaw the change to electronic design, adopting the software QuarkXPress to arrange the whole magazine ready for print at Henry Ling. Sam Ross took over as designer in 2018, using InDesign software and the complete layout, including advertisements is sent digitally to the printers.

Footnotes

¹ Letter from Hilary Bourne. Issue 151, July 1989, p28.

About the authors: Alison contracted the spinning/weaving/dyeing bug when working in North London in the late 1970s, and still has it more than forty years and several locations later. She currently holds the *Journal* Archive, and is very happy to research any queries from any source.

Hilary has enjoyed looking through old copies of the *Journal* to research this piece.

The Versatility of Overshot

Stacey Harvey-Brown, Online Guild

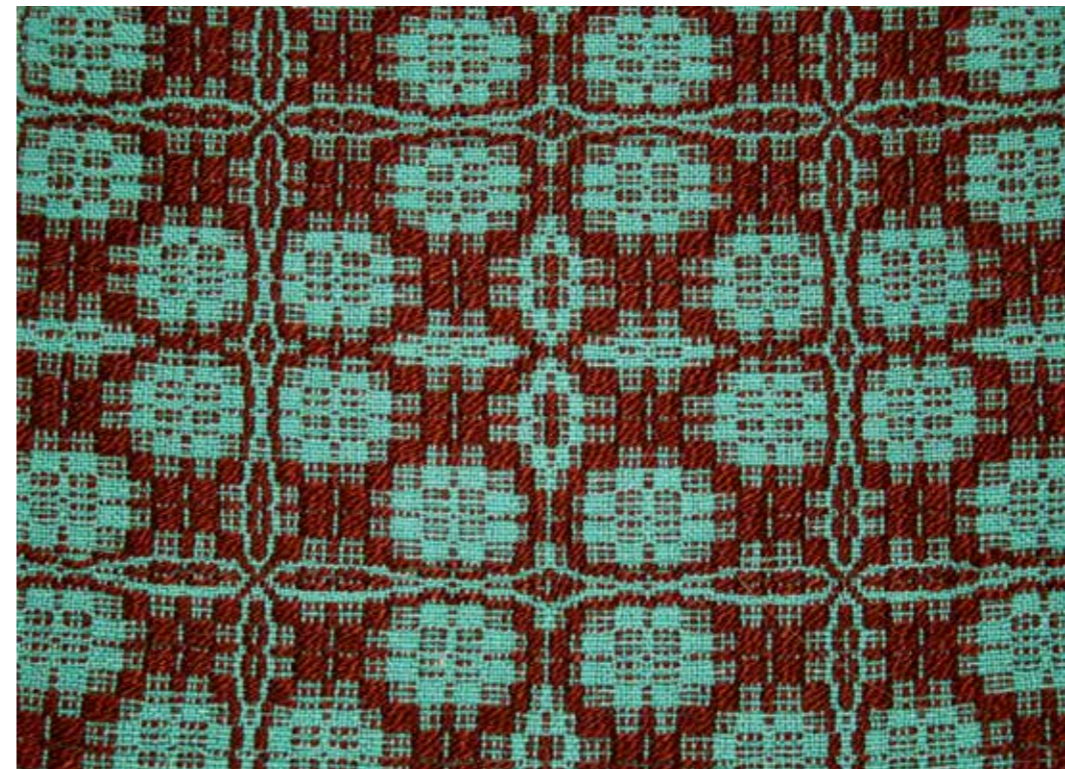


Image 1a: Sample of Johann Speck #33, side 1

All images courtesy of the author

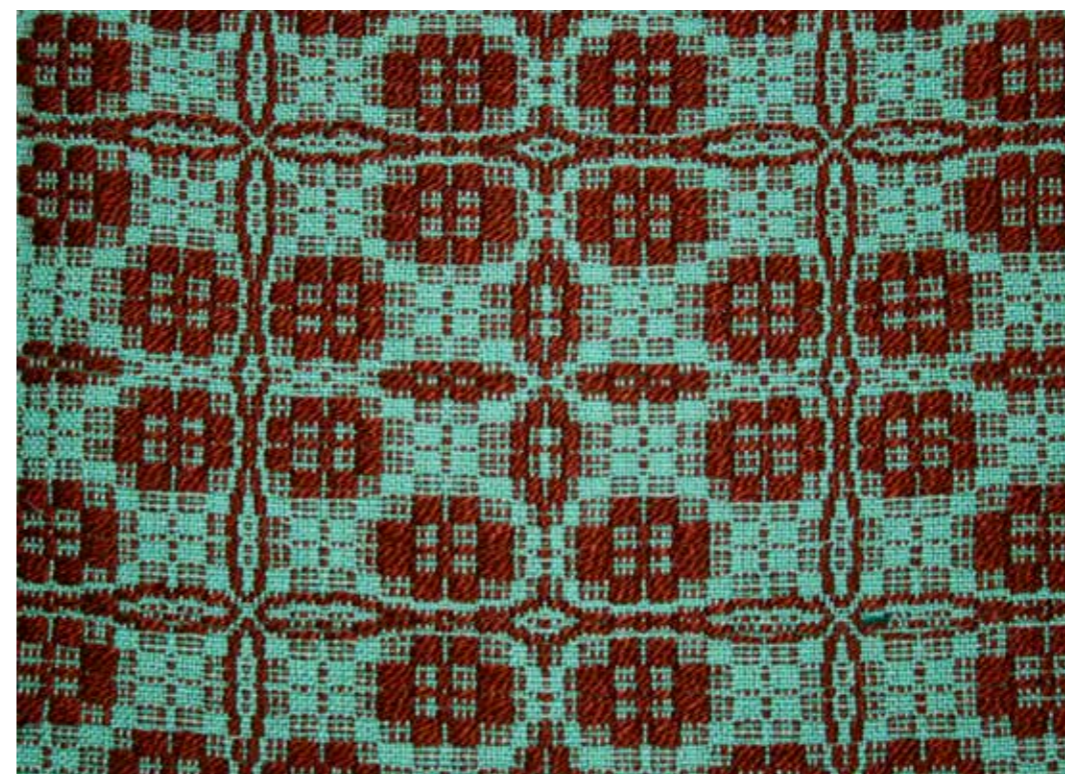


Image 1b: Johann Speck #33, side 2

'Overshot' is often one of the first terms that a new weaver hears, and it has a long and varied history. According to Irene Emery's *The Primary Structures of Fabrics*, overshot is most commonly used to denote weaves characterised by supplementary weft-float patterning. The 'shot' element in the name is the hint here – a pick was also known as a 'shoot' or 'shot'. Firstly, let me explain what supplementary weft-float patterning is. For overshot, a supplementary weft is an additional yarn used for decorative purposes, whether to create pattern or add colour, to a ground weave which is usually plain weave but can be twills or satin. This supplementary yarn is often thicker or more textured than the ground weave yarn so that it stands out as a design feature. It normally floats (sits on the surface of the fabric for a length) above and underneath the ground weave to create patterning, and is usually a contrasting colour to the ground weave.

These days we are more often used to hearing the term 'overshot' in relation to colonial-style weft-float designs from the USA. These feature a plain weave ground cloth, usually in linen or cotton, which gives the main 'handle' of the fabric, with a contrasting, usually thicker, weft to create many different patterns of floats and interlacements which switch from one side of the fabric to the other, creating a two-faced fabric. The extra warmth imparted to the fabric by the use of the weft patterning, which was traditionally woven in wool, would have been invaluable for bed-coverings and garments in the days when heating was purely by open fire and, perhaps not surprisingly, overshot has become synonymous with coverlets. In Sweden overshot is known as *daldräll*, and Swedish and German weavers were probably the importers of the technique when they migrated to the USA, taking with them their traditional geometric block-weaving patterns (images 1a and 1b – left).