



Association of Guilds of Weavers,
Spinners and Dyers



National Conference 2024
Bicton College, Exeter
12 – 14 July

The Riches of Wool

Set in beautiful parkland in the South-West, Bickton College is an ideal location to hold this biennial event. Conference 2024 will be a traditional serving of interesting speakers around the theme "The riches of wool". The idea came from a lockdown AGM discussion where delegates raised the issues of how we can support sheep farmers and breeders. This led to looking at the wider aspects of using wool in our crafts.

The programme for this conference celebrates these riches from historical practices using wool, through to current and future possibilities. The weekend will commence on Friday 12 July with dinner and close after lunch on Sunday 14 July. Residential and non-residential options are available. Given the cost-of-living pressures we all face currently, every effort has been made to keep costs down as far as possible.

Bursaries are available for this event. The forms are enclosed at the end of the document. Please read carefully if applying.

We hope there will be something to appeal to everyone.

Janet Maher
Conference Convenor &
Vice-chair AGWSD

Speakers:

Philip Walling: “Britain is sheep country”. A practical farmer for 10 years and then barrister for over 20 years, his love of the land reclaimed him and in homage to the pastoral heritage of Britain he wrote two successful books, *Counting Sheep* (A Sunday Times bestseller) and *Till the Cows Come Home*. Philip will talk about what our sheep breeds were like historically through to the present breeds we know.

Mike Blake: “Exmoorino sheep”. Mike is a country vet in North Devon. He will describe the journey to produce a dual-purpose breed started by his father. There will be examples of yarn products.

The Thread of Time Distaff Spinners: (Also known as the Evangelical Church of Distaff Spinners on Facebook). “Distaff spinning: a forgotten aspect of medieval wool textile production”. Mary Cleaton, Alice Evans and Jane Hunt will talk and demonstrate historic distaff spinning with wool, exploring the art history, archaeological and ethnographic evidence for the use of the long distaff to spin wool, from at least 1100 - 1900 CE, and look at why it was so popular throughout medieval Western Europe.

Louise Cottey: “Kersey – my interpretation and discoveries”. Louise Cottey, weaver, tutor, and co-founder of The Loom Shed has a passion for local weaving stories. This was borne from her time working for Coldharbour Mill as an education officer with a desk next to the archivist. In 2013 she was awarded a grant first to research kersey, then to weave her own 21st century interpretation of it. This talk will share both her working practice as a weaver and some stories uncovered in archives that captured her imagination.

Louise's weaving career has encompassed creating her own brand of woven textiles, designing for fashion houses, art projects, weaving to commissions, taking active roles in local creative fibre groups, teaching hand weaving, and creating The Loom Shed, a centre for fibre crafts in the West Country and online.

Isabella Whitworth: “Samuel Poole and the Exeter dyers”.

A small handwritten notebook by a dyer called Samuel Poole has offered rich insights into the life and times of Exeter dyers in the eighteenth century. The talk will illustrate some historical vestiges of Exeter's clothmaking past. Artist, dyer, author and tutor Isabella has researched the nineteenth century orchil lichen trade and most recently has focused on re-creating historical recipes for orchil. After the discovery of the Exeter Cloth Dispatch Book she has worked with Jenny Balfour Paul to research the eighteenth century dyers of the city.

Heather Tetley: “Yes, it was hand knotted. Conserving the great British Axminster carpets or sitting on the floor in palaces”. Heather Tetley is an accredited conservator with over 35 years' experience and research into the conservation of wool carpets. She has been Royal Warrant Holder by Appointment to HM Queen Elizabeth II for conservation of carpets. She is co-founder of the leading carpet conservation studio 'Tetley Workshop'.

David Wilkins: “Preparing your fibre for processing and what happens to it next at the mill”. Rampisham Hill Mill is a family run semi-worsted spinning mill in Dorset, specialising in the small-scale processing of sheep wool to customers’ specifications. David will talk about how the mill works, the types of fleece he processes and how he works with customers.

Katie Allen: “The interwoven relationship between soil, nature and the clothes we wear”
Katie Allen is an organic farmer and knitwear designer/maker based at Great Cotmarsh Farm in Wiltshire. In 2021 she graduated from Bath Spa University with a Masters Degree in Fashion and Textile Design, launching a knitwear collection handmade using the fleeces from her flock. Her work has won multiple awards and achieved SouthWest England Fibreshed accreditation. She has been stocked at Liberty London and her knitwear graced the catwalk at London Fashion Week 2023. Keen to fully observe the model of farm-grown clothes, Katie is in the process of establishing a market-garden scale dye garden at the farm, alongside a community dye kitchen.

Valerie Reilly: “The history of the Paisley shawl”. The Paisley pattern makes the name of an otherwise largely unremarkable Scottish town world famous. How did this ancient design become associated with a fashion garment woven in Paisley in the 19th century? This story covers art and design; fashion history; weaving technology; international rivalries and social history. Valerie was Keeper of Local History and Textiles at Paisley Museum and cared for the internationally renowned collection of Paisley Shawls. She was the driving force behind the successful application for Paisley Museum becoming recognised as holder of a Collection of National Significance. Now retired, she continues to give talks.

Talks will commence after dinner on Friday 12 July.

Note: There will be a Graduate Showcase open to attendees during Conference. There will also be Certificate of Achievement assessments and display open to attendees after the assessments are complete.

Location:

Bicton College, East Budleigh, Budleigh Salterton EX9 7BY. The college campus is compact and level with free parking available near the accommodation blocks. Accommodation blocks are a short distance from the main conference room and canteen.

Travel:

Bicton College is easily accessible by car, plane, or public transport.

Car: Use M5 or A303 to reach Newton Poppleford. From there take B3178 towards Exmouth. The entrance to Bicton College will be found on right.

Train: Mainline train to Exeter then to Exmouth. The college is a 10 mins taxi ride.

Plane: Exeter airport is 20mins by taxi to Bicton

Accommodation:

There are 112 ensuite single bedrooms available in seven blocks of eight. Half the bedrooms are ground floor and there are larger bathrooms on each ground floor for easier access. Bedding and towels are provided. Toiletries are not provided, and guests are requested to bring their own. There is free wi-fi.

There is a kitchen with fridge, kettle and microwave serving each floor of 8 bedrooms. A pack of semi-skimmed milk will be provided in each fridge. Further supplies can be purchased at the canteen. Beverages are not provided, and guests asked to bring their own supplies. Plant milk is available in the canteen. The college does not provide crockery or cutlery in the kitchens. Mugs and teaspoons will be provided for the event by the AGWSD.

Longer stays can be accommodated by separate arrangement with the college. Please give contact details on booking form. The Convenor will pass details to the college and provide an email introduction between the applicant and the college. Thereafter anyone staying longer is responsible for making arrangements, including payment, directly with the college.

Meals and refreshments:

The residential package includes all meals:

- Supper on 12 July
- Breakfast and lunch on 13 and 14 July
- Mid-morning/mid-afternoon refreshments
- Gala Dinner on the final evening.

For non-residential students the package includes:

- Supper on 12 July
- Lunch on 13 and 14 July
- Mid-morning/mid-afternoon refreshments
- Gala Dinner on the final evening

All meals include vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options.

Wine is not included in the gala dinner as a fair way of keeping costs under control.

There is a bar which can be used by all at tea-time and after dinner. Wine will be available to buy with dinner on both evenings

Registration:

Please complete the registration form on the next page and return by email to conference@wsd.org.uk along with full payment as indicated by 31 January 2024. Places can be applied for at any time before that date. Applicants will be notified by 28 February if they have a place.

Residential package £250

Non-residential £145

Accompanying guest (if space available) £175

Payment by BACS is preferred as cheques incur a processing charge from the bank. The charge for paying by cheque is an additional £1.50. PayPal payment is available for international applicants only. Please contact the Convenor in this instance on conference@wsd.org.uk

If the Conference is oversubscribed, places will be drawn randomly from a hat. There will be a waiting list and unsuccessful applicants notified if a place becomes available. There are 120 places available.

Once places are confirmed, details will be sent about registration times with further travel information.

Cancellation:

If you have paid for a place and need to cancel, your payment will be refunded if you cancel before the 31 March 2024.

From April your payment will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances, less any costs, and if the place can be filled.

You are strongly advised to take out travel insurance. If the event is cancelled by the AGWSD or Bicton College, you will be refunded.



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

Registration Form: National Conference 2024

Personal Information

Full name	
Full address	
Phone number(s)	
Email address	
Guild	
Emergency contact	

Attendance Options

	Cost	Selection ✓
Residential package as described	£250	
Non-residential package as described	£145	
Accompanying guest (if available)	£175	

Payment Method

Please ✓ appropriate box	
BACS (preferred) Lloyds Bank Name: Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Sort Code: 30-98-97 Account: 78043968 Please use your initial and surname in reference box	
Cheques payable to The Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Conference (do not abbreviate name) and send to Convenor at Honeysuckle Cottage, Ashill, Ilminster, Somerset TA 19 9NN	
Paypal only for international applicants. Email Convenor for information on conference@wsd.org.uk	

Accommodation Requirements

	Please ✓
Do you require a ground floor bedroom?	
Do you require a bathroom with wheelchair access?	

Any Dietary Requirements

	Vegetarian	Vegan	Gluten free	Other
Please tick ✓ box				
If other, give details				

Any Other Information

If there is anything further you wish to share with the organisers, please complete box below

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Photographs

If you do not wish to appear in any photographs taken at the event, please indicate below. Although the Convenor will relay the information to any person wanting to take photographs, it is the responsibility of the applicant to inform anyone taking photographs that they do not wish to be included.

	Please ✓
I do not wish to be included in any photographs taken during the event	

General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Information supplied in the registration form will be available to the Conference Convenor and Deputy who are responsible for registration and booking and will be shared with Bicton College where required for accommodation and catering purposes. Data will be stored securely, and storage will conform to the legal requirement of GDPR 2018.

Please tick ✓ that you understand and accept your data will be stored and used to manage your registration and will be shared with the venue	
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Please return your completed application to Janet Maher, Convenor at conference@wsd.org.uk



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

AGWSD Bursaries for Biennial Conference 2024 Bicton College, Near Exeter

In meeting the educational aims and objectives of charitable status, the AGWSD invites application from current guild members for bursary awards to attend Conference 2024. Bursaries are awarded to those guild members who show they would have difficulty financially in attending conference and who will use the learning to further their own practice as well as sharing the learning with others.

The bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the AGWSD General Purposes Committee based on the evidence submitted by the applicant and the two referees. A proportion of the course fee will be considered.

Applicants will be a member of a guild affiliated to, or an associate member of the AGWSD. The information submitted by the applicant and referees will be treated in confidence.

If a bursary has been awarded previously for Summer School or Conference, the time limit for re-application is six years.

Applications are made by completing the enclosed bursary application form. There is a form for the applicant and one for each of two referees. Referees will be people who know the applicant well and may be guild members but not family members. Filling in all the boxes on the form is required by applicant and referees. Omission of any part of the application will result in the application being null and void.

The application form is available from Guild Secretaries or can be downloaded from the Association website at www.wsd.org.uk/news-events/conference/

Completed applications to be received by the AGWSD Secretary, Montrose, Tower Road, Ashley Heath, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 4PU by 31 December 2023
Email: secretary@wsd.org.uk

The applicants will receive the decision on their application by 15 January 2024 which is before the closing date for Conference applications.

Successful applicants will be issued with a code to insert into the application form which will be used to adjust their payment.

Please note: The offer of a bursary does not guarantee a place at the Conference.



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2024

Applicant Details:

		AGWSD Use
Name		
Email address		
Home address		
Home telephone		
Mobile phone		
Guild		
Financial circumstances leading to your application		
Anticipated learning you will gain by attending Conference		
Methods by which you will share your learning for the benefit of others		
Your background in spinning, weaving, or dyeing and how attending Conference would enhance your skill		
Signature		
Date		

Bursary Committee Notes:



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2024

Referee One Details:

		AGWSD Use
Name		
Email address		
Home address		
Home telephone		
Mobile phone		
Relationship to applicant		
Your understanding of the financial circumstances leading to this application		
Anticipated learning the applicant will gain by attending Conference		
Methods by which they will share the learning for the benefit of others		
Background of applicant in spinning, weaving, or dyeing and how attending Conference would enhance their skill		
Signature		
Date		

Bursary Committee Notes:



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2024

Referee Two Details:

		AGWSD Use
Name		
Email address		
Home address		
Home telephone		
Mobile phone		
Relationship to applicant		
Your understanding of the financial circumstances leading to this application		
Anticipated learning the applicant will gain by attending Conference		
Methods by which they will share the learning for the benefit of others		
Background of applicant in spinning, weaving or dyeing and how attending Conference would enhance their skill		
Signature		
Date		

Bursary Committee Notes: