



NEWS May 2024

News from The Chair

There are many AGWSD events to look forward to over the next year.

AGWSD AGM

Firstly the AGM on Saturday 8 June. I do very much hope your guild has a delegate attending, in person is wonderful as the lunch and coffee breaks give such good opportunities for having those chats with old and new friends. Unfortunately Zoom doesn't quite give those opportunities, though it is nice to see your faces. If attendance is impossible, please do ensure your postal vote has been sent.

'The Riches of Wool'

The Conference in July, fully booked, sees a return to a conference with back to back speakers of worth. The Guilds Gathering in 2022 was a fun weekend but numbers attending were limited by the workshops. There will also be the Certificate of Achievement assessment exhibition and the Graduate Showcase.

'Battles, Borders, Books'

Then we have the National Exhibition in October. Please do read the Information Pack with care, we have tried very hard to make it straight forward. The submissions for the items put forward for selection, the feelie pieces and photographs, need to be sent to arrive between the 24th and 31st July. The notebook covers including the A5 or A6 notebook they are covering, will need to be sent to arrive between 23rd – 28th September. All the details are in the Information Pack. It is available on wsd.org.uk, your guild secretary will have the forms for completing.

With many, many thanks to the Sue White and Sarah Greer, both of the Herefordshire Guild, who are joint convenors and all those involved on the National Exhibition committee. They are all from guilds in the vicinity to Hay on Wye.

Over the years I have heard many rumours about the national exhibition, many of interest but just not quite right. The National Exhibition is open to all members of guilds, the work is selected to ensure

that the public see what can be achieved by you and me. The non selected items are an opportunity for any guild member to take part. The submission costs are kept as low as possible. In reality they cover the costs of return postage, the AGWSD supports the exhibition financially as it is such an important part of our education policy. Please do remember that the Hay Castle Trust is a charity, as are we. They rely on visitor numbers and payment of the entrance fee, which will last for a year, to ensure that they can keep the building open and running. The venue is a free exhibition space, we don't have to pay to exhibit there, which is a huge bonus for us. The Hay Castle staff will put up the exhibition. It maybe that the notebooks and selected items are arranged as suits the building, in a variety of spaces.

To end, I am reminded of a pigeon who decided to nest in the Rambling Rector rose that is over our front door. I have delusions of country cottage in the south London suburbs. As you may well know, pigeon nests are little more than a collection of twigs that rest lightly over each other, and are inclined to fall out.

The pigeon sat stoically on the nest for a good three weeks, the paper delivery, the post, and the occasional Online purchase delivery did not disturb her. Then she was gone, no egg no squab, just a few twigs remaining.

As chair, I seem to be like that pigeon, endeavouring to nurture the Association, a bundle of guilds, committees, and the members of the guilds all loosely balanced together. The odd twig or two falling out until one day there was nothing.

Maybe that is the way of life, but thankfully we have those willing to help hold those twigs together. Otherwise, there would be no AGWSD, no summer schools, no conferences, no exhibitions, no Newsletter, no Journal, no SGM Library, no Public Liability insurance provided.

I do wonder what magic Miss Hester Viney had (see last month's AGWSD News) to bring together all those interested in spinning, weaving and dyeing; together against all the odds, to form the wonderful organisation it is today.

Janet Crowther
AGWSD chair

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

Focus on the South and South West Area from Kay Johnston

It has been a busy year for the Guilds in the South and South West. We continue to meet by zoom before each GPC meeting and we have had several interesting and entertaining discussions. I would encourage all Guilds in the Area to send along a representative to our next meeting, planned for Monday 22nd July. The link meetings this year have meant that it is easier for guilds to communicate with each other, inviting each other to share activities or book a speaker jointly, thus reducing costs.

As Janet (Crowther) mentioned in her piece last month, Dorset was the first guild in the country to be set up and it continues to be a lively guild with a variety of activities every month. Over the summer months, they have planned a trip to the Fibre Festival at Coldharbour Mill, Devon: with return coach travel from Dorchester on Sunday, 2nd June and has invited members of other guilds in the area to join them.

The Guild is holding a Fleece Fair on 29th June, at Holy Trinity Parish Hall, Sunninghill Preparatory School, Culliford Road North, Dorchester, DT1 1QG. Come and buy a fleece to suit your needs! Open from 10am to 1pm. Tea and coffee available.

On 17th July, they have organised a fabulous visit to Di Davis's Alpaca Farm; this should be a super day out to come together and spin, bring a picnic and meet Di's flock of Alpacas. AlphaAlpacas.com

The plan is to meet from 10.30 - 11.00am onwards to sit together and spin and share some yarns, have a picnic, (which leaves Di time to look after the flock), before a tour of the farm & exploration of her fibre mountain. On her website she says she has 50 alpacas so there should be plenty of babies to observe. Address: Woodstock Mapperton Lane, Bridport DT6 3UF.

If you are in the area and would like to come to either of these activities, just let Nicky Footer, the Guild secretary, know at dorsetguildwsd@gmail.com

Frome Weavers ran a day of courses in spinning, 4 shaft, rigid heddle, and inkle loom weaving in March. It was hugely successful and was attended by 10 enthusiastic weavers and spinners. Following this, the members worked hard to begin dismantling looms and packing up in preparation for their move....

After almost 5 years at their workshop premises at Baywell House in Frome, they are now in the process of moving to a new venue, just 5 minutes drive away. Whilst they have loved being in Frome, the premises were not ideal for everyone. The new studio is fully accessible and this is a truly positive change, having been on the second floor at Baywell House. Finding premises which could accommodate their floor and table looms had not been easy, but they are so excited about the new location and hope to attract more people to our craft with easy parking and accessible buildings.

Frome Weavers are now located in a purpose-built unit at Redwood Rare Breeds, Station Road, Wanstrow BA4 4SZ, and their workshop will be ready to resume weaving and spinning from May 14th onwards. The new setting is surrounded by beautiful, inspirational countryside views, and of course, the chance to weave, walk and think while admiring rare sheep, pigs, cattle and fowl.

They hope to be able to welcome visitors soon, so please direct any enquiries to them at enquiries@fromeweavers.org.uk

Somerset Guild meets every 3rd Saturday in the month at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall. They currently have about 80 members. For more information, see their newly redesigned website <https://www.somersetguildwsd.org.uk>

They are holding a fleece fair on Saturday 15th June. Fleece available will include Alpaca, Exmerino, Gotland mix, Jacobs, Portland, Romney, Ryeland, Shetland, Soay, Zwartbles, and more.

On Saturday 17th August they invite you to go along and help them celebrate their 75th anniversary year. There will be displays reflecting on the history of the group and demonstrations by present members, sales tables and, of course refreshments.

This year, they have been able to invite some very interesting speakers to their meetings. In January, Brian Bond from Badger Crafts gave a fascinating talk about his adventures with natural dyeing, and the 'grandes teintes'. They welcomed visitors from Wales to this meeting and last summer several of them took up Dorset Guild's invitation to visit his dye garden near Totnes.

The AGM in February was followed by a very entertaining talk: An Introduction to the world of kilt-making with Paul Henry from Fleece to Pleats. In March, Bethan Murray, the curator of Social History and Textiles at Somerset Heritage Museum spoke about the reserve collection of local textiles. April was the skills share day with opportunities to try weaving on a hula hoop, icord knitted edges, shibori, improving fine spinning, inkle loom weaving and fleece preparation

This year's demonstrations started with three days at the Abbey Steam Fair in May. The beginning of June will be busy with three events on the same day; an Envirofair in Stoke St Gregory; and Wellington Street Fair, on 1st June, overlapping with the Bath and West Show! That could be a challenge but luckily they have a keen team to cover all of them.

As well as Somerset celebrating 75 years, Avon Guild will turn 50 later this year. They are still planning how best to mark this occasion.

And finally, readers may be interested in this communication from Becks at John Arbon, Devon:

"We are holding our annual Mill Open Weekend (MOW) on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th June 2024 and we'd love to see you and your Guild members!

We'll be building a giant pop-up shop with all our woolly wares at South Molton Town Hall where we also have a programme of talks and classes to enjoy. Our Mill will be open for tours, so you'll be able to see it and learn about our vintage spinning and processing machinery with our trusty Mill Folk on hand to explain it all. You can find out all about the MOW and how to book talks, tours and classes here: <https://www.jarbon.com/mill-open-weekend/> "

Janet Crowther sent in a link to a very interesting community interest company. The link takes you directly to their website where you'll find a video showing the first ten years of the company. An interesting watch.

Romney Tweed CIC as a social enterprise has the twin aims of encouraging local industry and helping young people acquire skills. Romney Tweed has embarked on several initiatives involving local organisations and spreading knowledge of weaving and textiles.

The Romney Tweed Fashion Challenge, run across Kent secondary schools and based on the colours of the local environment, focusses on spreading knowledge of weaving and the textiles industry, plus educates on the virtues of wool as a sustainable, homegrown material.

Romney Tweed continues with its aim to bring skills and employment to the Marsh. Plans include acquiring production looms for small scale bespoke projects as well as holding weaving courses.

<https://www.romneytweed.co.uk/vision-history/>

Virtual International Weaving Exhibition 'Cross Border'

The weaving group International Weaving presents its first virtual International Weaving Exhibition 'Cross Border'. Woven artworks by Camilla Aarhaug (Norway), Hannie Seegers (Sweden), Stacey Harvey Brown (UK/France), Simona Sanguineti (Italy), Mylène Louicellier (France), and Jacqueline Eshuis, Roos Cox and Anneke Kersten (The Netherlands) can be seen in the virtual exhibition from 1 March 2022.

The Dutch weaving association WEEFNETWERK contacted weavers in Europe. Eight European weavers got together and organized this pilot international exhibition with their artworks. Their plan is to hold more weaving exhibitions with weavers from all over the world. For the virtual exhibition, see: www.artsteps.com/view/613b77925be1681b67add576. For more information contact www.weefnetwerk.nl

Speakers List Update

Covering travel expenses is one of the big challenges many Guilds face when booking speakers. Whilst various suggestions have been made to mitigate these costs (having virtual rather than face-to-face events, combining with another Guild or opening places to non-Guild members paying a fee) it might also help to be able to filter the list according to location. Over the next few months, I will be highlighting speakers from the various Regions. To start with, here is a list of speakers living in the **Northern area**. For more details on any of them, go to the Speakers' List (see below)

Avril Otif. Soft basketry, small tapestries and off-loom weaving (Cheshire)

Chrissie Freeth. Tapestry weaving & medieval tapestries (West Yorkshire)

Debbie Tomkies, Workshops that cover a wide range of topics including dyeing, knitting and crochet. She also has a travelling shop (Cheshire)

Freyalynn Close-Hainsworth. A wide range of topics covering all aspects of spinning from fleece selection through preparation, carding/combing and spinning as well as dyeing (West Yorkshire).

Jaqueline Jones. Rug weaving and Dyeing (North Yorkshire)

Jan Beadle. All aspects of weaving (Cumbria)

Lesley Hordon. The management of Angora rabbits, their history, and the preparation and spinning of their wool. (West Yorkshire)

Patricia Greaves. Felt making and mixed media textiles (Merseyside)

Pauline Turner. Crochet in all its varied forms (Lancashire)

Penelope Hemingway. British Textile History & Folklore (North Yorkshire)

Sue Lawty. Will travel widely to present richly illustrated talks on her creative life (inc. woven tapestry) and her travels through Bhutan exploring their culture and textiles. (Yorkshire)

Lucy Adlington. Lucy Adlington is a dress historian offering costume-in-context presentations via her unique collection of vintage and antique garments and textiles (Yorkshire)

Jane Walkley. Exploring the connection between memory, place, and attachment, Jane creates sculptural tapestries using traditional techniques and hand-cast resin (Leeds)

Heather Audin. Curator of The Quilt Collection, owned by The Quilters' Guild and a museum professional with over 20 years experience of looking after historic textiles (York)

Angharad Thomas .Angharad has a speciality in knitted gloves having researched these intensively for the last 10 years and intermittently for the previous 40 (Huddersfield)

Tanya Bentham. Embroiderer of medieval things in the medieval fashion, using naturally dyed threads (Leeds)

Highlight of the month: Linda Lemieux



Linda works with rush and willow; growing, harvesting and preparing prior to weaving with them. The results are a wide range of mats and baskets for all sorts of occasions. Based in Devon, Linda gives talks on 'Rush Cutting on the River Isle' and 'Willow Growing, Harvesting, Uses in Baskets & Structures'. She also leads workshops in rush and willow weaving – something quite different, but strongly related to our traditional textile weaving.

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