



NEWS March 2026

From The Chair

I hope members of all guilds in the Association have now received the information on the AGWSD Conference 2026, incorporating the AGM.

Bookings are now open for the event with the full residential package at £300 for Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July, including all the talks, 4* accommodation, meals (including gala dinner) and tea/coffee throughout the day.

There will be activities including the Certificate of Achievement assessment displays and Jenny Parry Graduate Showcase students to meet plus the hotel's spa and swimming pool facilities which are open to us as residents.

Our excellent conference convenor and organising team have worked hard to keep costs down, and the enhanced accommodation is of the type expected for conferences rather than the practical requirements we often look for when finding locations for Summer School.

Bursaries are available for those members of guilds looking for financial support to meet some of the cost of attendance.

Do send in your bookings and bursary applications as soon as possible so we can process your applications.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible there - Andrea

Andrea Easey
Acting Chair AGWSD

Foundation Certificate in Spinning

Congratulations go to;

Carrie Cawdron and Gilly Bell both of Norwich Guild
Chris Maxwell of Mid Herts Guild and
Rose Jeffreys of Leek and District Guild
who have all successfully completed the Certificate.

Chris Knowles
Foundation Certificate Coordinator

National Exhibition 2026

We are really looking forward to seeing the bunting flags you are creating, each an example of the brilliant, varied, experienced, and developing skills that you all have.

Whether you have never felt brave enough to enter a non-selected item before, or are an enthusiastic returner, we are sending a warm welcome to you..... And don't forget you can submit up to three bunting flags each!

For the information pack and forms please contact your guild secretary

**AGWSD National Conference
Burleigh Court Hotel
University of Loughborough Campus
10 – 12 July 2026**

More information and application forms are now available from your Guild Secretary and on the WSD website

**The AGWSD AGM will take place
during the conference.**

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

Journal WSD - Is there a proof-reader in the house?

The JEC is looking for an experienced proof reader to review the final version of The Journal for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers four times a year. The window for proof reading each issue is known around a year ahead, enabling diaries to be planned. No great expertise in our crafts is needed because the technical discussions have already been held.

Are you interested or do you know someone who could do this for us, please? The reward is a free subscription and, if wanted, a seat on the JEC with two expenses-paid trips to London each year to attend our in-person meetings. Two more quarterly meetings are held online. There is also the immeasurable satisfaction of bringing a valued skill to a team of enthusiastic people.

Please get in touch with JECchair@wsd.org.uk to find out more.

Kind regards
Lesley Fidler

Call for helpers for Summer School 2027

The venue has been chosen and secured. Summer School will take place at the Royal Agricultural University, on the outskirts of Cirencester, 15-22 August 2027 – so now we need people to help with the organisation of the event itself. The next task will be to find tutors to provide exciting courses in our main disciplines of weaving, spinning and dyeing – with a few associated crafts as well. There will also be many other tasks to be carried out as we move forwards, such as putting the brochure together, receiving bookings, communicating with the venue and with tutors and students, to name but a few.

If you think you could spare some time to help make Summer School 2027 the best event yet, please contact either Andrea Easey (chair@wsd.org.uk) or myself (events@wsd.org.uk) as soon as possible.

There is no need for you to live close to the venue – Summer School 2025 in Musselburgh was organised by people from Kent and Shropshire! However, we do value local knowledge too.

Sue Collins
Event Coordinator

Gwynedd Guild WSD
Friendship Day & 50th Anniversary

Saturday 13 June 2026
10:00 – 16:00

Memorial Hall, Bethel
Caernarfon, Gwynedd.LL55 1YE

Entry fee £3.00 to include
Light refreshments
Craft Traders
A display of items woven, spun and
dyed by our members

We look forward to a great day
meeting up with old and new
friends

GWENT GUILD OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS & DYERS

FRIENDSHIP DAY



**SATURDAY
9TH MAY
2026**

TIME: 11AM - 3PM

VENUE:
HIGH CROSS COMMUNITY HALL,
CHURCH CLOSE, ROGERSTONE,
NEWPORT, NP10 9SH
workshops@gwentguild.org.uk
FREE TO ALL GUILD MEMBERS

A WARM WELCOME TO
MEMBERS OF ALL GUILDS OF
WEAVERS, SPINNERS & DYERS

Bring a packed Lunch
Cake, Tea and Coffee Served All Day
Wonky Weaver and the Cat & Sparrow
A display of Gwent Guild work
Guild sales table

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Wigtownshire Guild WSD
40th anniversary Open Day
County Buildings in Wigtown,
Saturday 11th April 2026, 10.30 -3.30

Guild members spinning local
fleeces, and weaving on rigid heddle,
tapestry and peg looms.
Display of plant dyed yarns
History Timeline highlighting events
from the archive
Work featuring past Guild challenges
and collaborations.
Displays of current Guild members
work
Home-made cakes and refreshments
and a raffle

All welcome

Area in Focus: East and South East

In the autumn 2025, London Guild celebrated its 75th anniversary with a cake at a special meeting and a two-week exhibition of recent work held at Morley Gallery. All crafts were on display over two floors of the gallery, with demonstrations of our crafts on every day, while a shop sold more items made by guild members and materials for spinning weaving and dyeing were also available for sale.



Mid Norfolk Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers' new year has got off to a good start with meetings on the 2nd Monday of the month, 1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesday afternoons and the 4th Saturday 10-4pm. They have learned how to sew a coiled material basket in a workshop run by guild member Birgit. This was very successful and is ongoing with members working on their baskets at home. In February they had a talk on and sale of angora rabbit fibre in the morning and a workshop on how to craft a teardrop birds nest from cane or willow interwoven with sheep's wool, in the afternoon, run by guild member Angela.

As this is the guilds 50th anniversary, their Golden year, they are concentrating on making a golden banner of 50, A5 pieces of fabric woven or knitted.



The Norwich City Guild hosted a 'Guild Gather' of all the Norfolk Guilds on 8th March. It coincided with International Women's Day which felt like a good omen.

Members of all six Norfolk guilds (Diss, Countryside, Mid-Norfolk, Worsted, Norfolk and Suffolk and Norwich City) gathered in the splendid surroundings of Carrow House conservatory and Garden Room for workshops in Norfolk waffle embroidery, Dorset buttons and cordage making. They also had a most entertaining talk by Janet Crowther. There was an exhibition of spinning tools, past and present and a display of work inspired by the Norwich textile pattern books. They had a

very well stocked sales table and there was plenty of cake and savouries (thanks went to all the talented bakers).

Some people brought their current projects to work on and they all renewed friendships and made new ones. Carrow House - the former home of the Colman family (of mustard fame) - now houses a varied mix of charities, arts and voluntary organisations and is home to the Norwich City WSD Guild although they don't usually meet in the lovely conservatory. The Guild Gather is becoming a fixture in the Norfolk Guild calendar as a way of keeping in touch, swapping skills and ideas. We hope there will be many more such gatherings.

East Sussex Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers had some financial problems during the last year, but thankfully things are now looking up. They have also gained lots of new members. They needed to cut back on speakers in 2025, but their very knowledgeable members have given some great talks and workshops. Members have been busy demonstrating at various events including the South of England Show; Alfriston Clergy House (N/T); the Heathfield Agricultural Show; and the Seven Sisters Country Park to name a few. At their Open Day in September, they included a 'Children's Corner' for the first time which proved very popular. The whole Open Day was a great success. Members brought food along for their Christmas Lunch and the committee provided the table decorations. This was the first time they used this method, and it proved to be very popular. A lovely time was had by all!



Area in Focus: East and South East...continued

Wealden Guild is based in West Sussex and was founded in 1985. They are lucky to meet at quite a new village hall at the base of the South Downs in Thakeham near the village of Storrington. They have 38 members and celebrated their 40th (Ruby) Anniversary last September. In line with the ruby theme they had a cream tea with strawberry jam for all their members. Everyone was given a guild badge with a red background to mark the occasion. They feel privileged to still have some founder members who have been the backbone of the Guild. Every fourth Saturday they gather for meetings. There are a range of skills within the group and members share these either through workshops or on a casual member to member basis. The number of people who weave has increased over the years after one of the members set up weekly workshops for us to learn. This has led to people doing tablet, inkle, tapestry as well as fabric weaving.

Speakers booked from outside the guild have included talks/demonstrations on silk shibori, colour work/theory, advanced knitting, solar dying and even a South Downs shepherd. Demonstrating is a strong part of what the guild does and they are regulars at Findon Sheep Fair which goes back 200 years. They have promoted our skills at Village Hall open days, local agricultural shows and they are having an open day in July to showcase their heritage skills.

Each year there is a Challenge for those who choose to participate. This has included a Lucky Dip whereby small bags of fibre are donated by those joining in and then put in the 'dip'. The dip is shaken up and each participant takes a bag. This has given people the opportunity to try something new e.g. alpaca, Leicester longwool, cotton etc. What they produce is then shared at the Christmas lunch. This year the challenge is to make a cushion - anything from a pin cushion to a floor cushion.

This busy guild thrives due to its enthusiastic, helpful and skilled members.



At North Downs Guild, (near Canterbury Kent), the meeting on the 7 March focused on spinning with Ramie. After an introduction of where this nettle fibre comes from they all had a go. Those who had practiced at home first, knew it might be best to not wear black trousers and to bring an apron! The photo shows how much concentration was needed to start with. The resulting yarn is quite coarse but very strong. Some have decided to blend it to make a softer yarn, and others are going to weave with their yarn. Later in the year they are going to attempt to make cordage with British nettles, so they are having a bit of a plant fibre year.

They are a small group always looking for new members.

Lea Valley Guild have been involved with the Waltham Abbey Wool Show since its inception 13 years ago. The show has grown in size and stature and the Guild continue to demonstrate and run workshops. One member, Janette said of this year's show on Sunday 18 January;

“When we were setting up there was a lovely atmosphere of camaraderie among the craftspeople who were busy setting up the stalls, then the wealth of beautiful fleece, yarns, buttons, books and a multitude of accessories to buy. Once the visitors began to arrive, the chatting started! Two of us were spinning and another member was encouraging people to try the rigid heddle loom using colourful fluffy yarns. Several people had a go during the day and were surprised at how easy it was to weave (see photos below). I had brought my Inkle loom threaded up with a very colourful warp and sat where people were passing. I couldn't believe how much progress I made whilst chatting away to everyone who stopped to watch, telling them all about what I was doing and about the Guild.”

Area in Focus: East and South East...continued

West Surrey Guild are fortunate to have no less than five meetings a month, at four different venues in Ash, Elstead, Farnham and Tilford! This enables them to have regular craft meetings, informal and formal workshops, talks, weekday and Saturday meetings, and public-facing days at the Rural Life Living Museum. They started their year with a brilliant talk by Paul Henry, on 'From Fleece to Kilt', where they learnt about kilt construction, and the vast array of tartan designs, traditional and modern. They thoroughly recommend him as a speaker!

They have had two informal workshops so far this year, one where they all brought carding and combing equipment, and compared techniques, and one led by two Guild members who taught the basics of nalbinding, which some picked up quicker than others! In April they are having an informal workshop on warping a four-shaft loom. Spring and Summer are also particularly busy times for external events, with several special events at the Rural Life Living Museum, the Farnham Sustainability Festival, and other local events. These are a great way to promote the Guild, and we get a lot of public interest and we are looking forward to an enjoyable and educational 2026!



Members of the Cambridgeshire Guild recently attended a 'Yarn Spinning with Spindles' two-day workshop organised by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge. They learnt three different spinning techniques. One session was with Katrin Kania from Germany who taught a 'short-suspended' spindle spinning technique to spin prepared wool which was attached to and hanging parallel from a wooden pole distaff supported in her trouser pocket. Even experienced spinners found this tricky as it involved constant twiddling of the spindle – no drop spindling allowed! Marie Ekstedt Bjersing from Sweden showed them how to spin flax tow using a pencil and Johanne Hogh from Denmark showed a different technique using another smaller spindle together with a simple pole distaff which was supported this time in our apron pocket.



On the second day, they were introduced to two indigenous Colombian spinners, Judith and Carmen. Their hands were constantly occupied with making their traditional bags (mochilas) using a variety of nalbinding technique. The fibre for the bags was from agave type plants known as 'fique' and we were shown how to spin and then ply these long fibres by rolling them on bare thighs.

It was a wonderful two days spent not only with the guest spinners but also people from the Institute and other spinners who had come from all over the country to learn the new techniques – the guild members felt very privileged to have taken part.

Peterborough Guild have just had their AGM and unveiled their 50th anniversary banner. They have worked on the banner throughout 2025, and a little bit in 2024. One of their members donated some alpaca fleece, and their dyeing day in 2024 involved using just 3 colour of acid dye to see what range of colours they could achieve. Once the fibre was dried, everyone took some to card and spin. They then designed their banner, and most members wove, knitted, crocheted or felted a piece to be stitched to the banner.

The guild are starting to be out and about at events, their first one of the year is the Fen Fair at Ramsay Rural Museum on 31 May and they hope to attend more events at Sacrewell Farm too. They have an eco-dyeing workshop on 7 May, by the textile artist Melanie Missin Keating. This is a workshop they are all looking forward to and there are some spare places if anyone is interested in attending.

Please email Peterborough Guild secretary at PGSWD@Outlook.com for more information.



Speakers List Update

With Spring most definitely on the horizon, now is a great time to review programmes for 2027 and to start planning which workshop topics or talks you think your members would enjoy. Many of the those on the Speakers List, get booked up well in advance. So forward planning is essential, especially if you are thinking about combining with another Guild or two in order to share the costs.

Highlight of the Month: Andrew Johnson

Rev. Andrew Johnson is a long-standing speaker and workshop tutor. As a recently retired cleric, Andrew now has both more flexibility on locations he can visit and no limit on travel distances. His workshops include both woollen long draw spinning and long fibre preparation and spinning. He also delivers workshops exploring the inlay weaving technique developed by Theo Moorman and traditional Overshot weaving patterns and how to design and work with them. In addition, he delivers talks on both his life in textiles and on the history of ecclesiastical textiles. Finally, as the current President of the Association of Guilds, Andrew would welcome the opportunity to visit Guilds to and to provide the chance to ask questions about the Association and its work.

To access the Speakers List go to the GIH at <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/contents/speakers-list> and follow the instructions. You will need your Guild user name and password. If you have any problems, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Matty Smith

speakerslist@wsd.org.uk

Loom for Sale £6000

A member of the Highland Guild passed away this year and she had a loom which her family are looking to sell.

The information we have is that it is a Toika Liisa Loom, 80cm weaving width. Standing beater and warp tension system fitted as standard. Sectional warp beam 80 cm height adjustable Eeva Bench. 16 Shaft ES electronic unit and shafts. USB cable and power cable (UK specification)
1 x 80cm 40/10 stainless steel reed, 1 x 80cm 55/10 stainless steel reed

For more information, please contact her daughter Mary - email: thisismarydoll@gmail.com

Rebecca Bolland
HGWSO Secretary

Contact

If you have an item for inclusion in the next monthly newsletter, please send 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