



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

Registered charity number: 289590



National Conference and AGM 2026
Burleigh Court Conference Centre and Hotel,
Loughborough
10 – 12 July

Threads through Time

In a break with tradition, we are making use of a 4* hotel for our conference in 2026. Located at Loughborough University's campus in the heart of England where north meets south, Burleigh Court is a state-of-the-art conference centre and an ideal location to hold this biennial event. Accommodation will be in the hotel, with facilities including a swimming pool and spa. To find out more, go to:

www.burleigh-court.co.uk



Conference 2026 will be a mix of interesting speakers, all local to the East Midlands, around the theme “Threads through Time”. The theme arose organically from our realisation that this part of England is home to a rich textile history, as well as groundbreaking work to develop new ways of producing textiles and reducing textile waste. The programme for the conference aims to celebrate this history, innovation and current textile practices. We hope that there will be something for everyone in our offering.

The weekend will commence on Friday 10 July with dinner and close after lunch on Sunday 12 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. However, do please remember that this conference will be held in a 4* hotel with excellent facilities and the prices reflect this.

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

We look forward to welcoming you to Loughborough.

Kay Johnston
Conference 2026 Convenor

Speakers include:

Leicester Longwool Society: This local breed is towards the top of the list of endangered sheep breeds. The society exists to protect the particular nature of this breed and to promote the wools it can provide.

Sue Russell – Peak Gate Textiles: Sue defines herself as a weaver, teacher and witch! She has always crafted, but pursued a different career until she saw the tapestries at Stirling Castle and knew she had to learn to weave. She will talk about how she has been using weaving as a method of exploring the history of Masson Mills and how that has influenced her textile practice.

Ruth Singer: Ruth is an award-winning artist with a background in museum education which has influenced her textile practice. She has written several books about sewing and women who sewed, exploring heritage and culture from a non-traditional angle. Ruth has recently produced an exhibition in Leicester about Mary Linwood, a talented embroiderer of the 1800's who stitched replicas of famous paintings.

Susan Russell, Framework Knitters Museum, Nottingham. The knitting frame was invented in the 16th century and the framework knitters in the East Midlands produced stockings on these machines, living and working in very poor conditions. Susan will tell us about the history of this industry and its legacy for the textile heritage of the area.

Dr Chetna Prajapati: is a Senior Lecturer in Textiles at Loughborough University. Her research explores the application of enzymes (biocatalysts) produced by microorganisms such as fungi as creative design tools to produce textile dyes, surface pattern textiles, and deconstruct textile fibres to create new and interesting materials.

Annual General Meeting; The AGM for the AGWSD will also be held on Saturday afternoon as part of the conference. Details about this event will be sent out separately to Guilds.

Talks will commence after dinner on Friday 10 July.

The Graduate Showcase will be open to attendees during Conference and to AGM delegates. There will also be Certificate of Achievement assessments and display open to attendees after the assessments are complete.

Location:

Burleigh Court Hotel, Off Ashby Road (A512), Loughborough University (West Park), Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3GR. Just one mile from J23 M1, 8 miles from East Midlands Airport and 90 mins from London St. Pancras, the hotel and conference centre is easily accessible by road, rail and air.

Travel:

By car: Use the postcode LE11 3GR or type 'Holywell Way, Loughborough' into your sat nav. Leave junction 23 of the M1, taking the A512 Ashby Road towards Loughborough. At the first roundabout, turn right into Holywell Way (signposted for Burleigh Court and Holywell Park). Once you've got your visitor badge from the gatehouse, turn left at the roundabout, passing the STEM Lab building on your right hand side. Take the next right which is sign posted to Burleigh Court and proceed to the car park barrier. There are designated accessible spaces and EV charging spaces available.

By train: Loughborough mainline station is only 3 miles away, so 10 minutes in a cab. Regular intercity services operate from London St Pancras direct to Loughborough. This service is a 90 minute journey.

By bus: The popular University shuttle bus runs between the University and Loughborough's train station every 20 minutes out of term time.

By air: Burleigh Court is just 8 miles from East Midlands Airport and 38 miles from Birmingham International Airport with easy bus and rail links from each.

Accommodation:

There are 115 ensuite bedrooms available for our use, including fully accessible rooms for those who require them. All rooms include free 1gbps Wi-Fi network, flat screen TV, tea/coffee making facilities, hairdryer, ironing facilities and luxury toiletries.

Longer stays can be accommodated by separate arrangement with the hotel or via www.booking.com.

Meals and refreshments:

The residential package includes all meals:

- Dinner on 10 July
- Breakfast and lunch on 11 and 12 July
- Mid-morning/mid-afternoon refreshments
- Gala Dinner on the final evening.

For non-residential students the package includes:

- Dinner on 10 July
- Lunch on 11 and 12 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, but there is a fully stocked bar.

Registration:

This year we have two ways to register for the conference and to apply for a bursary, you can either complete an online form or fill in the forms on pages 6-12 and return them via email.

[Application form online application](#)

[Bursary online application](#)

[Bursary referee online application](#)

Please complete the online forms above or the registration form on the next page and return by email to conference@wsd.org.uk along with full payment, as indicated, by 30 April 2026. Places can be applied for at any time before that date. Applicants will be notified by 31 May at the latest if they have a place.

Bursary applications must be completed and returned by 31 March. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 April, thus giving adequate time to register. Further details on bursaries are given below. You can submit an online application, using the link above, or complete the form below.

Residential package £300

Non-residential £180

Payment by BACS is preferred as cheques incur a processing charge from the bank. The charge for paying by cheque is an additional £5.00. PayPal payment is available for international applicants only. Please contact the Convenor in this instance on conference@wsd.org.uk

Places are limited. 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.

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, less a 10% cancellation fee, if you cancel before the 31 May

After that, your payment will only be refunded, less a 10% cancellation fee, in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the GPC, 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 Burleigh Court, you will be refunded.



Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

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Registration Form: National Conference 2026

Personal Information

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

Attendance Options

	Cost	Selection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Residential package as described	£300.00	
Non-residential package as described	£180.00	

Payment Method

Please <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 53 Wandsworth Road, Belfast BT4 3LT	
Paypal only for international applicants. Email Convenor for information on conference@wsd.org.uk	

Accommodation Requirements

	Please <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Do you require a bedroom with wheelchair access?	

Any Dietary Requirements

	Vegetarian	Vegan	Gluten free	Other
Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 the Burleigh Court Hotel 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 Kay Johnston, Convenor at conference@wsd.org.uk



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AGWSD Bursaries for Biennial Conference 2026

Burleigh Court Hotel, Loughborough

In meeting the educational aims and objectives of charitable status, the AGWSD invites application from current guild members for bursary awards to attend Conference 2026. 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 for at least 2 years. 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 either submitting an [online application](#) or completing the below 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. [An online referee form can be found here.](#)

The application form is available to [submit online](#), 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, Lambruk Cottage, Brampton Road, Madley, Herefordshire HR2 9LU
Email: secretary@wsd.org.uk

The applicants will receive the decision on their application by 15 April 2026, 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.



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AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2026

Applicant Details:

		AGWSD Use
Name		
Email address		
Home address		
Home telephone		
Mobile phone		
Guild		
How long have you been a member of the 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:



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AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2026

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:



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AGWSD Bursary Application Form Biennial Conference 2026

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: