



NEWS July 2026

From The Chair

Dear Guilds - we were delighted to see representatives of so many guilds at our AGM in July, combined with the AGWSD Conference at Loughborough. There will be a full report on the Conference in a subsequent newsletter, but all the speakers were very well received and there was time to view an excellent group of students' work in the Jennie Parry Graduate Showcase while also celebrating the achievements of our Certificate of Achievement candidates. Having a pool and spa at the hotel also gave us the chance to cool down in the very hot weather we were experiencing.

There is a short questionnaire in this issue which will help us plan for future Conferences, so please let us know what you think.

Many thanks to our team of volunteers who organised the Conference, and to Sue Collins who sourced an excellent venue for us. The CoA display and assessment were organised by Janet Crowther and the Loughborough College Textiles Department sourced the Graduates for the Showcase.

I'm also very grateful to all our GPC members who organised the AGM paperwork and procedures and ran the voting process. Welcome to new members joining the GPC and JEC and heartfelt thanks to Ann Martin (GPC) and Lesley Fidler (JEC) who stood down from their roles after their elected term.

Andrea Easey
AGWSD Chair

Certificate of Achievement Successes

Congratulations to the five AGWSD Certificate of Achievement students who put their work forward for assessment at the Conference in Loughborough. Laura Baigrie achieved a pass in spinning, Paula Knight a credit in weaving, Becca Roy a credit in spinning, Wendy Barritt a distinction in spinning and Anna Macnaughton Lindemark a distinction in spinning.

The Certificate of Achievement rewards the achievement of each student from registration to assessment. The assessment is rigorous, fair and to set criteria. The assessors work very hard, looking at every part of the submission before the award level is discussed and agreed together with the moderator. My advice to future CoA students would be to read all the information available and to check with the coordinator if you have any doubts or if you want reassurance that you are working along the right lines.

The CoA is self-directed learning and currently costs £40 to register and £120 for assessment.

The syllabi and CoA Handbook 2026 along with the registration form, are on the website, wsd.org.uk in the GIH (Guild Information Hub).

Janet Crowther, CoA Coordinator

AGWSD National Exhibition 2026

We are buzzing at exhibition headquarters! We excitedly await the arrival of selected item entries and are deep in preparations for selection weekend.

Sending you all the most creative of thoughts and vibes for the Summer!

National Exhibition Team

Please feel free to contact me, Andrea Easey, chair@wsd.org.uk

AGWSD Conference

Some of us are lucky enough to have just come back from the National Conference at Loughborough, where we had a wonderful weekend listening to interesting speakers and indulging in conversations about our favourite textile topics with others attending.

It is now time for me to be researching a venue for the next event, in 2028. This is an opportunity for each of you (whether you attended Conference this year or not) to share your thoughts.

- ◇ How much would you be prepared to pay for a weekend event?
- ◇ Would you prefer a hotel (as we had this year) or student accommodation (which might keep the cost lower)?
- ◇ Is there an alternative format that would make the event more appealing to you?
- ◇ This year we incorporated the AGM into the Conference – is this something we should do in the future?

Please contact me on events@wsd.org.uk with all of your thoughts and comments. Many thanks.

Sue Collins, Events Coordinator

Demonstrating – a cautionary tale

I spent a lovely sunny day at a large north of England agricultural show recently. Lots and lots of sheep. And cheese. And many other delights. In the sheep area I watched fat lambs being judged with a commentary about their finer points (yes, their bums really should look big from the back). I saw competitive sheep shearing and even a competition for fleece rolling. Did you know that the fleece handler should be able to pack the fleeces from two shearers as they work? That is a lot of wool! In the marquee nearby there was a fleece competition with the exhibited fleeces rolled and stuffed into what looked like rabbit hutches: wooden compartments with wire mesh door panels. I suppose there wasn't room for them to be spread out, but I would have dearly loved to see the champion fleeces in their full glory.

Next to this was a circle of women sitting on chairs and facing inwards. Some were chatting to each other. They were all spinning. They didn't miss a beat as I stood and watched. I'm not sure if they were even aware I was there. Another woman was standing nearby using a drum carder. I stood next to her and studied the posters beside her. I pointed out features of the information on the posters to my husband. The carder got on with her carding and said nothing. I stayed. She said nothing. The circle continued to act like a defensive ring, participants' backs facing out, no interest in those coming and going past them. Eventually I walked away.

Why were they all there? Was it more pleasant spinning in a hot marquee on a dusty show field on a sunny day than being at home? Is drum carding really so absorbing that one cannot make contact with the visitor standing right next to the table and who is carefully reading the posters? Did the organisers expect them to behave as if behind a sound-proof screen so visitors could only look? Or had they all fancied a day out and been offered free admission tickets if they came and demonstrated? Hmmm ... The ethos of the agricultural society and its show includes education of adults and children. This group did not even attempt to find out if I wanted to know something. I can understand that at Guild meetings there are shy members who do not wish to engage with strangers, but are they the people to volunteer for a show? Instead of a dozen women chatting between themselves, why did this group not send just two or three who would engage with visitors?

I cannot, honestly, remember the name of the group, although it was displayed. I did note that the word 'Guild' was not there – thank goodness. So, the moral of this cautionary tale? I'll leave you to decide that and better still, share it when you're next out demonstrating to the public.

Lesley Fidler, JEC Secretary

(Editors note: I refer you back to Andrew Johnson's piece in the AGWSD News April 2026)

Focus On SANIO

The SANIO Area includes Scotland, Northern Ireland, Overseas and Online guilds. As you might expect, there has been a lot going on throughout this large area over the last little while.

The Dumfries & Galloway Guild has had a year of upheaval, which they have embraced with characteristic enthusiasm, moving from a small community hall to a large space in the Crichton Hall in Dumfries.

Monreith House is their new home, with secure access, kitchen facilities, ample equipment storage, space for demonstrations and workshops and large group spaces for shared conversations and catch ups. October will see the second 'Gathering' event in this bright new location when the guild will welcome local makers with their products, greet friends old and new and share crafting skills and ideas over those all-important refreshments. Before this, there is a busy summer ahead of agricultural shows, public demonstrations and involvement in the National Exhibition challenges. The nominated guild charity this year is the RSABI for which members will be producing small, crafted items. The RSABI provides much needed support for those involved in the Scottish Agricultural industry. <https://www.rsabi.org.uk/about/>



The Guild's new home



May and June were busy months for members of the Tweed Guild. In mid May they were invited to the Children's Countryside Day based at the Kelso Showground. Older children from local primary schools came to learn about farming and associated industries in the local area. The Guild provided a display of historical spinning and

weaving equipment, along with up to date methods. There were several activities for the children to have a go at showing the different properties of wool and why we do what we do. These included stick spinning, making a felted ball and tapestry weaving, re-using scraps of material to make a small work of art.

At the end of May the Guild exhibited at Tangled in Galashiels, an event many Association members will be familiar with. Once again, it proved a very successful venue over the two days, introducing people to the Guild and hopefully to our crafts.

June presented this Guild with two new opportunities - Scotsheep and the Haddington Show. Scotsheep was amazing – despite the wind! Again there were Primary school pupils to entertain with stick spinning and making friendship bracelets with an explanation of the various processes in the morning. The afternoon brought High School pupils and many sheep farmers. A totally different experience but one the guild is keen to repeat. The Haddington Show presented another wind challenge, but an enjoyable day. This was a more family orientated show, where the guild again demonstrated spinning, made friendship bracelets and invited people to 'have a go'.

After a bit of a break (when they plan to work on bunting for the National Exhibition) Tweed Guild will be back demonstrating at the World Sheepdog Trials and the Elemford Show in September.

Focus On continued

More pictures from the Dumfries and Galloway Guild



Tangled in Galashiels



Haddington Show



Scotsheep 2026

The East Central Scotland Guild has been kept busy since March. They have held a number of skill share workshops led by some of their talented members, and the workshop programme for the year is well underway. Having already explored Swedish knitting (Tvåändstickning), Peg Loom weaving and hearing about the redevelopment of a local Flax Mill, they are planning workshops on cyanotype printing, Tunisian crochet and weaving over the next few months. The summer season has brought invitations to attend local agricultural shows to demonstrate a variety of our skills and of course to encourage the public to have a go! So far (fingers crossed!) the weather has been kind and it has been lovely to welcome visitors along to monthly meetings.

One of the Guild's members has completed the Foundation Course in Spinning, and this has encouraged other members to consider undertaking it. An on-line support group has been set up for those members to provide mutual help and support.

Finally, everyone is looking forward to the annual Suppliers Day in September which is a celebration of various fibres and crafts, and is open to the public. What a treat!

The Irish Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers is having a relatively relaxed year this year, having celebrated its 50th birthday last year with two exhibitions, one in Dublin and one in Galway.

The Guild was invited to take part in the European Wool Day which took place in Tralee Co Kerry at the end of March 2026. The Guild had a stand and demonstrated spinning and weaving at the Wool Day, as well as hosting a joint exhibition with the good folk at Feltmakers Ireland.

This spring, there have been some very interesting talks at the Eastern region meetings in Dublin, such as the textile history of Balbriggan, the experiences of a weaver who worked with knitwear designer Lainey Keogh and the unique folk costumes of Romania.

The summer seems set to bring more interesting events, such as Dublin Maker, August Craft Month, and other cultural and heritage shows around the country.

The Guild's online monthly Zoom talks continue to be very popular. The guild also facilitates several smaller spinning groups to meet up around the country, which is wonderful to witness, as it gives people the opportunity to meet locally and spin or craft together. A group of members are currently working on the Foundation Certificate for Spinning and others are working on the Certificate for Natural Dyeing.

The Ulster Guild will be out and about over the summer at agricultural shows around the province. A natural dyeing workshop was held in June at the home workshop of one of the members and a great day was had by all who were able to attend. The sun shone and the indigo vat worked. What could be better? They are looking forward to a packed autumn and winter schedule, which will include meeting up with the Irish Guild at the Knit and Stitch show – and perhaps a visit to Ulster Wool just in case we run out of fleeces!

Speakers List Update

The National Conference attendees enjoyed six outstanding speakers, all of whom have been approached with an invitation to join the Speakers List - more information to follow. Meanwhile, I was struck by the number of conversations I had with Conference delegates waxing lyrical about interesting speakers or workshop tutors their Guilds had recently enjoyed working with, but who were not on the List! Please, please, if you find a good speaker or tutor then just drop me an email with the details and I will approach them with an invitation to join the list so that other Guilds can enjoy them.

We have no new speakers this month but please consider Eliza McClelland as you plan your new programmes.



Highlight of the Month: Eliza McClelland

Eliza is an actor and her talks are about using beads to embellish cushions, bags, throws, anything! How to make bead soups, use texture, find the right materials and have glamorous fun.

Eliza brings gorgeous examples to pass round - with stories of an actor on tour and how she came to find her designs. There is a fabulous patchwork quilt with snippets from loads of different costumes, handbags, flowers, doorstops, collars et al!

Eliza offers both talks and workshops. The latter show how to make a sampler with areas of all the different techniques for varied colour work and textures which can be used as future reference and as a beautiful piece ready for applique. Huge scope for creativity and imagination.

Eliza is based in London and prefers in-person activities. Her details can be found in the online or PDF versions of the Speakers List.

The online edition of the Speaker's List is 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 GIH at <https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/contents/speakers-list> (note this document is now 42 pages long). If you have any problems, 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 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