



NEWS August 2026

From The Chair

Dear Guilds - I'm sure some of us are welcoming a slight drop in temperatures after a busy summer. Several guilds have told me about their fabulous solar dyeing experiments this year - and the unexpected results from having more heat than they might have expected.

The discussion point at our AGM in July was about sustainability and it was very interesting to hear from guilds around the country about how they approach this in their own areas. The GPC are still gathering feedback about the Conference and AGM, so if you attended and have not let us have your feedback yet, do send it through.

It may be too late for extraordinary solar dyeing to make it through to the judged entries for the National Exhibition - but it's not too late for the bunting! Those are due in September and all guild secretaries should have the full pack of forms for submissions, mailed in July.

We're all looking forward to seeing all the work on display in October.

With best wishes - Andrea

Andrea Easey
Hon. Chair AGWSD
chair@wsd.org.uk

An Apology

I must apologise to the members of the Tweed Guild for mis attributing pictures in the last newsletter to the Dumfries and Galloway Guild

The Editor

AGWSD National Exhibition 2026

A Festival of Flora and Fauna
1st and 29th October 2026
Rose Patterson Gallery
Weston Park
Weston-under-Lizard
Shifnal TF11 8LE

It has been a busy few weeks here at exhibition HQ! The selection process was amazing to see, and preparations for the exhibition are ongoing. An email has been sent out asking for sale information (prices or NFS), in advance of your forms. Please do send this by email via your guild secretary so we can get this information to the gallery.

We are now looking forward to receiving your selected items and bunting (or bunts as they have become familiarly known here) and of course to seeing you all at the exhibition

National Exhibition Team

AGWSD Certificates of Achievement and Advanced Textile Studies

It is with great regret but with unlimited thanks and praise that we announce that Janet Crowther is stepping down from her role as Coordinator of CoA and CATS. For many years now she has steered the certificates, ensuring a robust assessment process and giving unlimited support to all those enrolled.

I will be taking over the role in September and look forward to working with all our students and the assessors and will work to maintain the high standards set by Janet.

Please now use certificate@wsd.org.uk for all CoA/ CATS correspondence.

Lorna Shannon

The Stuart Groom Memorial Library

The AGWSD holds an amazing collection of books that are available for members of our affiliated guilds to borrow or study. This is the first in an occasional series highlighting some of the books that are available in the library

A Manual of Dyeing, Volumes I and II

Authors; Edmund Knecht, Christopher Rawson, Richard Loewenthal

Published; 1910 Vol I, 1925 Vol II

REFERENCE ONLY

These two books inspired awe, to be allowed to hold texts that are over a hundred years old. Opening them to read and learn about dyeing was like entering a level of witchcraft. Not only are there chemical formulas, detailed explanations of processes and diagrams showing the machinery, but there are also the occasional hidden little notes scattered throughout the books. People used these books, and adapted the processes, and recorded their feedback.

These two manuals cover not only the actual processes of dyeing, but also break down the types of fibres, the machinery used for commercial processing and the history of fibre arts and manufacturing, including snippets of historical information too. Volume II has a collection of pull-out tables, that breakdown the different processes, and the results. Each pull out table focuses on a specific colour, listing specific boiling times, which chemicals create different shades and it even records how air will affect results.

The photos and diagrams are clear, black and white and easy to understand. And there are plenty of them scattered throughout the two manuals, breaking up the walls of text. It's clear that these were essential, informative and well received books. Our copy of Manual I was a reprint in 1910, and a quick scan online showed that the most recent reprints were within the last decade. It has been internationally recognised that these manuals are culturally significant and worth preserving. Just typing that made me appreciate even more how lucky I have been today, to read these books for review.

These books are aimed at practical dyers, manufacturers, students, and all interested in the art of dyeing. I love how they declare that very statement on the title page.

Are these books for the general hobby dyer? Probably not, there are easier books to read for those of us who are just wanting to play with a bit of colour. But if you take dyeing seriously, and want to explore the history, chemistry, engineering or even just have deep dive into the topic, then these two wonderful books are definitely worth browsing through at the Trowbridge library, where we store our amazing SGM library collection.

Amanda Lawrence

AGWSD Library Representative

The library is held for us at the Trowbridge Museum, The Shires, Trowbridge BA14 8AT, which in itself is a great place to visit. Books can be posted out to you once you become a member, or you can arrange a visit to study those titles which are too precious now to be loaned out.

Applications to join the library are invited from guild members. Membership cards will be issued to anyone who has a current guild subscription. Please read the [user guide for borrowing books](#) and then, contact the Association Library representative on library@wsd.org.uk An application form will be emailed to you. More information is available at wsd.org.uk

Exhibitions and Opportunities to help

Living on the Edge, Karen Charlton

Tynedale Guild member Karen Charlton, has been invited to exhibit her design and weaving skills in an exhibition at The Borders Towerhouse Museum - Exhibition Room from 25th July to 2nd November 2026. Her work is shown alongside textiles designed by Bernat Klein.

Karen is an award winning textile artist. Her project Living on the Edge drew inspiration from the textures and colours of the land and seascape of Bamburgh, Northumberland. She works with British wool, often spinning and dyeing locally sourced fleece and alpaca fibres to create the textures and colours of the natural environment.

She was inspired by the work of Serbian textile designer Bernat Klein, who lived and worked in the Borders region of Northumberland and Scotland. It was Klein's use of colour and textured yarns plus his use of abstract art as part of his design process that drew Karen's interest.

The design of the finished project, a coat, was based on the shawls of Grace Darling and those of the Cullercoats fisher women as depicted in the Victorian paintings of the era and Winslow Homer, American artist, respectively.

The weave pattern at the bottom of the coat depicts the deep sea and submerged reefs around the Farne islands near to the Bamburgh coastline. Moving up the coat the pattern changes, it becomes the sea splashing against the rocks on the beach. The pink sandstone that is present in the sand and Bamburgh castle is highlighted in soft hand spun blue faced Leicester and alpaca fibres dyed with madder root. The light blue bouclé collar represents the sea spray as it lifts into the air.

For further information visit:

The Borders Textile Towerhouse, 1 Tower Knowe, Hawick TD9 9ENT

<https://www.liveborders.org.uk/exhibitions/living-on-the-edge/>

The museum has lots of interesting spinning, knitting and weaving artefacts and information. There is currently another exhibition which will be of interest to Weavers Twill to Tweed. This exhibition tells the story of Tweed from its inception in 1826 to the present day.

17 cloths have been curated to show how each played its part in this 200-year history.

<https://www.liveborders.org.uk/exhibitions/twill-to-tweed/>

Weavers & Dyers in Scotland

My name is Michelle. I am planning on applying for the Watsons Fellowship. This is a year-long grant for purposeful and independent exploration outside of the United States. Here is their website: <https://watson.foundation/fellowships/tj>

My project will be focused on weaving using natural fibres like wool or flax, and dyeing with natural materials. I want to learn more about the weaving and/or dyeing process in Scotland.

Would anyone be interested in hosting me between August 2027 and July 2028? I would like to do a work study exchange with them: I can learn from them for several weeks or months and I can help them cook, clean or with their business-- or help take care of sheep if they have any!

Please feel free to ask questions about the fellowship or myself! If this does not work for you, perhaps you could recommend any other potential contacts.

Michelle Chen

michelle.chocold@gmail.com

Surrey Barn Weavers will be open for visitors on the 3rd and 4th of October 2026 as part of Mole Valley Arts Alive.

The Barn will have a small exhibition and there will be a chance for those who are interested to try weaving for the first time.

We are looking for new members too.

See the Mole Valley Arts Alive web page or contact

surreybarnweavers@gmail.com

The Embroiderers' Guild have recently received a large donation of fine (100/3) Gütermann silk threads which they are looking to sell.

Please contact the Embroiderers Guild directly at education@embroiderersguild.com

From around the Guilds

Crickhowell Guild

We've been delighted to be involved in a project with Llangynidr Primary School where Year 4 are working on Heritage Crafts for a competition run by the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative. They came to us to find out about spinning and weaving before Christmas, before learning to do a little of each for themselves in the Spring term. Each pupil had a go at spinning with a spindle and also a spinning wheel. Finally we took a set of peg looms to the school for everyone to make some fabulous mug rugs. The pupils enjoyed the activities and were able to take something they had made home.



The pupils have also tried other traditional crafts such as embroidery and woodworking, baking and growing vegetables. We were thrilled to hear recently that they won their section, and have been rewarded with a trophy and £300 of books for the school.

Members of CGWSD really enjoyed working with the pupils who were all enthusiastic about our crafts.

North Shropshire Guild

I read with interest Lesley Fidler's report about her experience at a large North of England show. I thought I would share my experience of a show from the other side.

Last Saturday, was the Oswestry Agricultural Show and the North Shropshire Guild was invited to attend to demonstrate our skills to the public.

As usual we found ourselves close to the sheep pens (but not far from the ice cream van!) The number of sheep entries was up this year, as travel restrictions had been lifted, leading to a large range of sheep breeds on show. Judging took place all day both in the ring and by the pens allowing families to enjoy the experience.

As families made their way to and from the sheep pens, they passed our stand and many shyly stopped to have a look and try to explain to their children what they could see us doing. This gave us the opportunity to invite them to have a go at carding wool on small hand carders, spinning using a wheel or spindle, and weaving either on a peg loom or a small rigid heddle. While the children and some grownups had a go, we were able to chat about the Guild and what it does. There was great delight on the children's faces as they went away clutching their lumpy, bumpy samples!

There was great interest in the natural dyed wool samples we had and the sample range of fibres we can spin, as well as the finished articles on display including jumpers, scarves and felted sheep skins. We spoke with several farmers who had fleeces to sell and we were able to offer ideas for their use. One person who came to chat was the local M.P. Helen Morgan who was particularly interested in what we do and later awarded the North Shropshire Guild with 3rd Prize!

(Imagine our delight, as we didn't know there was a competition for stands!) Needless to say not much spinning was completed by us, but we had a great day out and hopefully have attracted some new members for the Guild.



Speakers List Update

What is at the top of your Guild member's list of skills or knowledge they want to gain? Maybe doing a quick informal survey might reveal some unexpected hot topics and given the breadth of subjects covered by the Speaker's List, it is almost certain that you will find a speaker or workshop tutor able to inspire and inform.

If you have used the Speaker's List and encountered difficulties, then do please get in touch – if I don't know of any issues, I cannot address them.

The searchable Speakers 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 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

News from the Online Guild



Our Convenor, Margaret Parker, has stepped back from the front line, after 24 years as founder and convenor of the Online Guild (OLG). As a mark of our appreciation for all that she, and her husband, Alan, have done on behalf of the OLG, the membership gifted them a garden bench and a book of theatre tokens to enjoy in their 'retirement'. Margaret kindly sent us this photo of her, on the bench, in her back garden.

With Margaret stepping back, the Online Guild has undertaken an inaugural Annual General Meeting with members both revising and then accepting a dedicated Online Guild Constitution as well as a new Committee. During that AGM, Margaret was confirmed as the Honorary Life President of the Online Guild in recognition of her hugely important role in its foundation and development over more than two decades.

The past few months have been busy for the OLG members. Giuliana Bond and Alice van Duijnen started the year by leading our traditional Unfinished Objects workshop. This was followed by a very stimulating workshop on Exploring Ideas for Projects, led by Angharad Thomas. Martina Saldanha then delivered a fascinating talk on textile conservation and, after a few weeks' break we enjoyed a spinning workshop, led by Cheryl Hardy, which is entitled 'One Fleece: Three Yarns'.

In addition, our public website has been updated (<https://onlineguildwsd.org.uk>) – do take a look! We are looking forward to August, traditionally a quiet time for the OLG, when we can re-energise ourselves for workshops in September on Dyeing, in November on Off-Loom Weaving and our annual Festive Exchange in December.

Matty Smith

Chair, Online Guild

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