



NEWS October 2026

From The Chair

Having visited the National Exhibition half-way through it's run at the Rose Paterson Gallery, I must offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has made it possible. Our team of volunteers who devised the theme, organised the submissions and hung the show have worked so hard, and the outcome is a testament to their skill and judgement.

I must also thank all the individuals (and collectives) who entered items for the juried section. The variety of skills on display is breathtaking and I do hope everyone who had a piece selected feels suitably proud of their achievement.

The bunting strings might, just possibly, be the stars of the show, though. Every one is a great example of guild members coming together to produce collaborative projects that were all interesting, witty and displayed our crafts to best possible effect.

Our demonstrators who have given up their time every day have shown that spinning, weaving and dyeing are skills that might be 'heritage crafts' - but they're very vibrant and certainly alive now.

I met visitors from guilds and also coachloads of schoolchildren who were all excited by the displays and the skills on show.

With Summer School 2027 booking opening in the next few days, it's useful to reflect how all these successful activities that are so enjoyable for guild members are all thanks to volunteers coming together.

'Many hands make light work' and the AGWSD always welcomes offers of help for the day-to-day as well as special events - come and join us!

Andrea Easey
Chair AGWSD

Foundation Certificate News

Congratulations to Ann Allen of Southend and Online Guilds who has successfully completed the Foundation Certificate in Natural Dyeing.

Thanks

Chris Knowles
Foundation Certificate Coordinator

AGWSD National Exhibition 2026

We have enjoyed meeting guild members from across the nations at the exhibition. Thank you to everyone who came to say 'hi' and have a chat with the demonstrators at the exhibition. We have read all your lovely feedback emails

The Rose Paterson Gallery volunteers have really enjoyed working with our demonstrators and meeting guild members from across the country. The results of the vote for the Lylie Smart Trophy will be announced soon.

AGWSD Exhibition Team

AGWSD Summer School 2027 Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester 15 - 22 August

There will be plenty of exciting courses on offer, plus the usual evening activities and friendly camaraderie.

Keep a look out for the Brochure, coming to your Guild Secretary and the AGWSD website shortly. New for this year is an online Booking Form which will also go live shortly.

Your Guild Secretary and/or the AGWSD website will have more information as soon as it is available.

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

Journal News - 300th Issue due to be released

I hope readers of The Journal WSD will be as delighted as we are with the winter issue due to reach you at the end of November. It is number 300, marking 75 years of publication. The editorial team have celebrated with a focus on 'Heritage' looking at the past and how it continues to inspire for the future.

Look out for timely articles about the dyes of the Bayeux Tapestry, reflections on lives dedicated to weaving, spinning and dyeing, plus stories from some long-lived guilds, the innovations of new graduates and much more.

The Journal Editorial Committee always welcomes volunteers; we can surely find you a role suited to your skills. We currently would benefit from some expertise in publicity and marketing, if that's your interest please do get in touch. Thank you!

Kath Gerrard
JEC Chair
jecchair@wsd.org.uk

Certificate of Achievement and Certificate in Advanced Textile Studies

As you may be aware, I have taken on the role of coordinator of these AGWSD certificates. If you are registered on either of the above, you should have received an email from me in the last few days. If not, there has been a glitch in the system, in which case could you please make me aware, by email at certificate@wsd.org.uk

Lorna Shannon
CoA and CATS Coordinator

Your AGWSD News Needs You!

In light of the above announcement, the GPC are looking for an interested person to take over the administration of the AGWSD News. Your role would be to collate information from the GPC, advertisements for guild events and other regular features into a newsletter. All input for the newsletter comes to you (you never have to go looking for it) and contributors are very good at meeting the 20th of the month deadline. Full guidance and support will be given and you will be co-opted on to the GPC ahead of being voted on at the next AGM. The GPC are a welcoming, hard working team of volunteers and you'll be given every help to settle into your new role.

Lorna Shannon

Guild Events

Norfolk Countryside Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers Exhibition

6 November - 4 December

Members' work, including woven, spun, dyed, felted, sewn and embellished.

Cley Marshes Visitor Centre, Coast Road,
Cley-Next-The-Sea, NR25 7SA.

West Surrey Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers

Invite you to an exhibition of their members' work including spun, woven and dyed products for sale Saturday, 24th October to Sunday, 1st November in the

Upper Gallery of The Farnham Pottery, Pottery Lane, Wrecclesham, Farnham GU10 4SL.
Open daily from 9.30am to 4pm.

Focus On...the Northern Area

The Northern Area covers guilds located in rural areas and those closer to towns and cities. This is a sample of what some of the Guilds in the Northern Area have been getting up to.

Bowland:

Bowland WSD are a friendly, thriving 55-strong Guild straddling Yorkshire and Lancashire. Eight of our member volunteers demonstrated a variety of fibre crafts from weaving and spinning to needle felting at Queen Street Mill Museum in Briercliffe on 12th September, to coincide with Heritage Open Day. We are about to conduct a similar demonstration at Clitheroe Castle on 24th October, to celebrate Wool Month, October.

Bowland Guild were also involved in the SuperSlowWay Homegrown: Homespun project in 2021-2023. Members of our Guild helped spin the locally grown flax which was then woven into a projection screen for the Textile Biennial in 2021, and into a kurta in 2023. Alongside the flax-spinning, we delivered weekly spinning and weaving demonstrations at Blackburn Market on behalf of SuperSlowWay.

Bradford & District Guild:

Members spent the early summer busy with their needles to contribute to our host Bradford Industrial Museum's 100 Sheep display to be used throughout the museum for a new museum trail.

Meanwhile, at the highlight of our show calendar year, members got to count the real thing at Masham Sheep Fair! We spent the weekend along with the Craven Guild with great sales on both sides and lots of craft chats with interested fair goers. The coveted yellow Best Fleece rosette winner was the pale coloured Ryeland from Cowslip Farm, and our Secretary was lucky enough to be invited into the pen for a stroke! Fibre bargains were hard to resist with raw BFL and some rosette winning fleeces alongside rare heritage breeds at the fleece stall in the Market Square. A great year for rare breeds at the fair with Louis the Boreray from Benmar Flock, winning Best Male. Another winner was our Minutes Keeper who entered several categories in the Woolcraft Competition, winning several rosettes!

Finally, we've committed ourselves to finding the best speakers and workshop leaders... in our own Guild! Our Chair led by example with a fabulous inkle loom workshop and has committed to a follow-on Baltic Pick-up next year! We'll be making peg loom rugs and learning about Dorset buttons as we make the most of our home grown expertise.



Above: members of Bowland Guild at Blackburn Market

Above right: A display by members of Bradford Guild

Right: A flock of sheep created by Bradford Guild for Bradford Industrial Museum



Focus On...continued

Craven Guild:

Our 2026 Programme, expertly organised by our wonderful Programme Secretary, reflects everything that makes the Craven Guild so special: creativity, learning, craftsmanship and community. Whether members, both experienced makers and those beginning their fibre craft journey, come to spin, weave, knit, dye or simply enjoy the company of like-minded people, they can look forward to a year filled with inspiration and shared enthusiasm.

Throughout the year, regular Spin and Chat gatherings provide opportunities to work on personal projects, exchange ideas and enjoy the company of fellow members, with the monthly "show and tells" providing real inspiration and points of discussion.

Our programme included speakers and workshops. Shaun Smith of Harcourt Rare Breeds spoke about Britain's traditional and rare sheep breeds. We explored the characteristics of their fleeces through a hands-on session, and were able to purchase fleece, batts and yarn. Kirstie Williams led a workshop on cyanotype printing. We discovered how this historic photographic process can be used to create striking blue-and-white prints on fabric and paper, incorporating natural materials, lace and handmade textile samples to produce unique designs. Experienced knitters and adventurous learners enjoyed a two-colour brioche knitting workshop with Judith Schur, learning techniques for creating beautifully textured reversible fabrics and a whole new knitting language.

As autumn approached, we focused on preparing for the Masham Sheep Fair, which is co supported by the Bradford Guild.

We are looking ahead to a visit from historian and local author Lucy Adlington who will present Unravelled: The Story of Four Red Sweaters, sharing the remarkable true stories behind her research into four Jewish women and girls whose lives were connected by humble, knitted garments during the Holocaust. The talk promises to be both thought-provoking and inspiring, highlighting the enduring significance of friendship, survival and resilience.

Eden Valley Guild:

Eden valley Guild has had some inspirational talks and workshops this year. These have included "Spinning for Consistency" with Sue McNiven and " Hand Knitted Gloves of the British Isles" with Angharad Thomas. We are looking forward to our annual Betty Brame memorial lecture later this month, in honour of one of our founder members. This is to be "Textiles in the Community: weaving and dyeing across Asia" by Jim Holmes.

We continue to struggle to find speakers to come to our corner of the country and welcome any suggestions. However, we have also tapped into our members' skills, with a workshop on "Warping without Tears" and a talk on "The True Colours of the Bayeux Tapestry".

In June we had a very enjoyable and successful presence at the Cumbria Wool Gathering.

Our current focus is very much on preparing for our 50th anniversary next year. The highlight is to be an exhibition at the Rheged Discovery Centre near Penrith titled "50 Years of Fleece to Fabric", from 30th April to 27th June 2027. For this, members have been challenged to put examples of their best work into an A2 gold frame. We also hope to take the exhibition to Farfield Mill in Sedbergh later in the year.

A wonderful display of Hand knitted Gloves of the British Isles from Angharad Thomas speaking at Eden Guild



Leek and District:

In 2026, Leek and District Guild celebrated meeting for 20 years. The previous year, 2025, the Committee came up with a plan. We would try to grow and process our own flax in celebration the following year.

So, April 2025, saw the distribution of flax seeds to all members who wanted to take part. Flax matures in 100 days, and we planted the seeds when we could, so all our plants matured at different times over the year.

In June 2026 we had a flax processing day at our Guild meeting.

The breakers, scutchers and hackles were outside under a gazebo and fortunately it was a beautiful day. Processing flax is a very dusty operation, and everyone was anxious to process their own flax, with varying amount of success. Too much retting damages the fibres so some people, including me, had a poor crop. Others however managed to get some lovely long, golden fibres and promptly went indoors to spin from a distaff on their wheel. Others collected the short fibres called tow and processed those.

We had a great time, with some members even managing, eventually, to knit or weave with the linen thread that was made. It made us realise how much planning and hard work goes into making a textile from plants.

Tynedale Guild:

We have members from a wide area including the cities, coastal and rural areas. We cover a large area with a strong tradition of Summer agricultural events. The events vary in size from the larger North East Wool Show and Northumberland County Show, attracting over 26,000 visitors, to small village shows and heritage open days, supported by the local community. They provide us with the perfect opportunity to demonstrate our skills, engage with visitors, and attract new members.

This year we updated our stand including new signage, promotional materials, pop up banners, tablecloths and postcards printed with our Guild contact details. These have been very successful in raising our visibility to new audiences. We have gone, beyond our traditional engagements, to demonstrate at the Darlington Wool Fair, the Textile and Art Exhibition which took place in the church in Corbridge and the Bishop Auckland Heritage Festival.

Participation of our younger guild members has been particularly appreciated by visitors, proving that our crafts can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. Our focus on making our stand more interactive and encouraging people to have a go at weaving, braiding, felting and drop spindling has enabled us to also attract welcomed some lovely new members to our Guild!

As well as a full program of workshops and talks at our guild meetings our summer events have been great fun, we have had some great days out, encountered gorgeous sheep and alpacas and met some lovely visitors.



Left and below: Members of Leek Guild using a flax breaker and scutching board
Right: Tyndale Guild's updated display stand



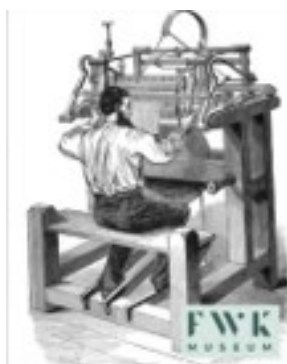
Speakers List Update

In this month's update: four new speakers, some very positive feedback on an established speaker and a speaker suggestion to follow up! Following the AGWSD Conference last month, I am delighted that we now have three of the conference speakers available through the Speakers List.



Amanda Briggs-Goode

Amanda is Professor of Textiles at Nottingham Trent University, specialising in lace research, archive leadership, sustainable practice, and skills development for a circular future. Through her work with the NTU Lace Archive, Amanda champions the preservation, interpretation and application of lace heritage, creating opportunities for interdisciplinary research, education and public engagement. Her research has contributed to a greater understanding of how lace can inform contemporary design practices while demonstrating the importance of specialist collections as sources of knowledge, inspiration and innovation. She gives talks on both Nottingham Lace Heritage and Schools of Art & Design, UK.



Framework Knitters Museum (Susan Russell)

The Framework Knitters Museum is an independent museum and charity dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of framework knitting. The award-winning Museum was established in 1971 and is an independent accredited museum and charity dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of framework knitting (which is recognised as Critically Endangered on the Heritage Crafts Red List) and the stories, skills and traditions of the framework knitters. Susan Russell delivers a fascinating talk on the history - technical, social and industrial - of this amazing craft.



Sue Russell: Peak Gate Textiles

Sue is a weaver who uses weaving as an art form to explore our industrial heritage through mixing weaving techniques. She started weaving in 2017 on a Textile Design BA(Hons) programme at the University of Derby, inspired by a tapestry exhibition at Stirling Castle. Studying part-time she completed her degree before moving onto a PhD full-time, still with the University of Derby, now using weaving as a research methodology. Her doctorate has been an inquiry into Masson Mills, a cotton spinning mill in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and she is now learning to maintain and restore 19th and early 20th century commercial looms. We also have a new speaker added to the list through very positive recommendations from two Guilds.



Jane Evans

Recommended by both Crickhowell Guild and Carmarthenshire Guild, Jane offers engaging talks and hands-on wet felting workshops. Passionate about felt making, Jane gives members the chance to explore fibres, textures and techniques in a friendly, practical way. She is a textile artist inspired by worldwide travels and her Towy Valley environment in mid Wales. Sessions are designed for people who are already curious about wool and all its processes, as well as those who would like to try wet felting for the first time. Talks can introduce the inspiration, methods and creative possibilities behind felt making, while workshops give members the chance to handle fibres, experiment with colour and create their own felted piece with step-by-step guidance.

Speakers List Update

Highlights of the Month: Jim Holmes and Jane Walkley



Jim Holmes

I recently received very positive feedback on Jim Holmes from the Leicester Guild who had booked him, to give a talk. They emailed me to say, "Highly recommended ...this talk deserves five stars!" They go on to add that Jim's talk "gave us insight into the weaving communities of Laos and Nepal. Jim has actual first-hand knowledge of these groups of people as he lived and worked in Vietnam for 15 years and talks with authority, knowledge and humour. The photographs he shared were beautiful, and eloquently captured images.."

High praise indeed! Do look at Jim's entry on the Speakers List.



Jane Walkley

Jane Walkley is a UK-based visual artist whose work explores the complex relationship between memory, place, and attachment. Using traditional tapestry techniques and hand-cast jesmonite resin, she creates sculptural and tactile pieces that maintain a physical and visual connection to the sites she is researching. Her evocative and informative work invites viewers to explore their own memories and attachments to place. Walkley's work is both site-specific and gallery-ready, creating sculptural tapestries that can be enjoyed in both public and private spaces. An active member of several prestigious organisations, including The 62 Group and the British Tapestry Group, Walkley studied for a BA (Hons) in Crafts specialising in ceramics and woven textiles at Manchester Metropolitan University in 1993 and later earned an MA in Creative Practice from Leeds Arts University in 2019. Jane is based in Leeds.

The online 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 43 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