



Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Newsletter

October 2018

David Carey 1941 - 2018



I first met David in 2003 when I moved to Oxford and joined the Guild. From day one both Jill and David made me feel very welcome. So much so I signed on the dotted line and became a member.

Jill, who was chairperson at the time, was quietly supported by David in every aspect of Guild life. I became Secretary not long after I joined, when it was decided that the Guild should

take part in Oxford ArtWeeks. This was going to be a big undertaking but fortunately we had David, together with David Nutt, to organise the putting together of and erection of the stands needed to display the Guild's exhibit. This was a task in

itself as they were very heavy pieces of equipment and, without his muscle and patience, I think we might still be there trying to figure out what went with what and where. David ferried equipment all over the place and was always there to give advice whenever needed - not bad at washing up either.

Over the years he attended nearly all our meetings with Jill and later on Pat joined them. David would tackle most things BUT when I asked him to knit a square for a blanket we were making to auction for charity he said "that's a step too far".

Many of you may not know David that well as with failing health for the last couple of years he has sat in his car whilst Jill and Pat attended the meeting, only coming in for his lunch. There are those of us, however, who have had the privilege to know him for quite sometime, who loved and respected him very much. He will be sorely missed by us all. I still miss my monthly hug!

Carole Thorpe

Nalbinding Nálebinding Naalbinding Nadelbinding Needlebinding (Part I)

Early History

It is without doubt, and quite reasonable to conclude that nalbinding as been in existence since the early prehistoric times and possibly well before that. Ancient historical facts depend on archaeology, and archaeology depends on the survival and discovery of fabric remains. Climatic conditions determine the survival of artifacts. For example, constant, wet boggy soil will preserve fabrics well, also constant dry conditions will too, but the changeable climate of the northern and Southern Hemispheres does not, thus plant and animal fibres, (the fibres that would have been used in those times), rotted away quickly. The oldest recorded textile finds are from a cave in Israel; Nahal Hemar, which are nearly 10,000 years old.

Whilst fibre fragments have not survived, there is still evidence from impressions made in clay pots, that this technique was used also as decoration. One such place that I have found whilst visiting the museum, is on the Isles of Scilly, where pieces of pottery, decorated in this way, were dated back to the early Iron Age. (See photo Halangy Cliff)

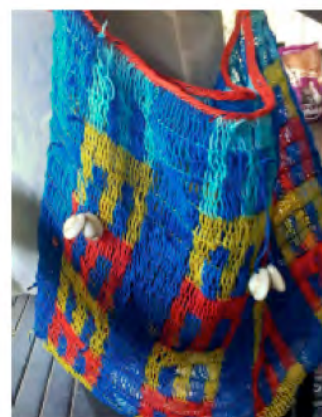


The earliest needles discovered, date back 30,000 years; before the invention of needles, it is possible that garments, constructed from animal skins, were laced together, using flint as a sharp tool

to pierce the holes. Spinning tools were not necessary for producing yarn; sinew from animals was used as sewing cordage. Bilum, a technique invented in Papua New Guinea. Cordage is made by rolling or twisting plant fibres on the thigh, then making a netting type fabric to construct bags and back carriers. Women carry bilums on their backs with a carrying strap across their shoulders to transport heavier items, also their babies. See photo.

Another factor to take into account when considering the age of nalbinding is whereabouts in the world it was used first; ie. who invented it? Again, we do not know the answer to this but there is evidence from fragments that have been discovered in graves, caves, peat bogs and burial sites all over the world, that suggest that this technique was being used for the construction of textiles. With major trade routes not having been established so early, it is likely that the same or similar processes were developed across the world at the same time, in their requirements for making clothing, nets, sieves, basketry etc., as people became more sophisticated in their lifestyles.

We know that the Norse and Roman invaders were nalbinding their clothing, from the excavations and fragments discovered across Britain. There is the famous Viking sock in the museum that





was constructed by using the Coptic stitch. Many such items exist in museums all across Europe, proving the existence of nalbinding during Roman times.

So, what caused nalbinding to die out? Knitting was thought to have spread from the Mediterranean region during the Middle Ages. It became the preferred method of producing 'stretchy knit' garments, simply because it was faster than nalbinding. The first knitting machine was invented in 1589 by William Lee.

It could produce 600 stitches per minute! It is hardly surprising therefore, that knitting superseded the slow, sewing technique of nalbinding.

My own belief is, that as the knitting technique uses yarn from source i.e. cone or ball and that it is formed by slip loops interlocking each other, it would naturally be faster to execute and subsequently mechanise. Whereas, nalbinding is produced and has developed from a knitting technique i.e. the yarn is cut from the source and pulled right through the loops with a needle, just as you would sew*. This slower and more laborious method lost out to knitting in the desire to create garments more speedily and prolifically in the need to meet the increasing demands for hosiery etc.

*Note; nalbinding cannot be unraveled like knitted work.

Pauline Shelley

Even more textile art

'Textile Art' is the big thing now - quite literally - the first thing you see when you get inside the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition is what must be the biggest piece of *passementerie** ever. It fills the octagonal central space of the galleries. It is a knitted and crocheted tours de force by Joana Vasconcelos called 'Royal Valkyrie'. It sets the scene, for it is not alone.



There are lots of textiley things this year - a knitted portrait of Grayson Perry (who curated the exhibition) by Rod Melvin, a crochet body in glorious technicolour slumped in a corner ... 'Body' £2,900 Crochet Iryna Hauska' ... reads the label! No red dot - yet? [now sold - you are too late!], another portrait by Rod Melvin, a rug transforming into a bear 'Red Bear' by Debbie Lawson

Go to the RA web site and run through the fully illustrated catalogue. Even if you went up to Piccadilly to see them you were sure to miss something - there was so much going on.

And, in the Students' Show, now finished, there was yet more - which I will write about elsewhere.



David Nutt

* The art of making elaborate trimmings or edgings of applied braid, gold or silver cord, embroidery, colored silk, or beads for clothing or furnishings (Wikipedia)

Pin Loom weaving

Following the 'Have a go' day in June, and the excellent teaching from Anne about pin loom weaving, I borrowed a pin loom from the Guild (photo 1) and got going!



I used some multi-coloured Merino wool yarn, and created an iPhone cover. This took 4 woven squares, and I doubled over the top ones and made the seams more secure by the large cross-stitch feature (photo 2). I had big internal seams to ensure a snug fit for the iPhone, but the squares could be used for the larger type of iPhone quite easily I think using the maximum width.



Anne showed us the possibilities of various weaving patterns for the Pin Loom - but I chose just plain weaving for this project. I took the pin loom up to Mull (so easy to transport!!) and also created some coaster mats using 2 woven squares with felt inside, all sewn together. They are quick and easy to make.

Strangely the two sides of the iPhone cover came out different colours... but I'm pleased with it.

Jenny Butler

Spinning for BBOWT

As you probably know BBOWT give us fleece for demonstrations and in return we go to the Wildfair in Oxford and Countryfile Live in Blenheim.

This year the Wildfair was really beautiful: there were falcons and wild flowers and insect friendly flowers in beautiful beds as well as stalls talking about hedgehogs, insects and all things wild and natural. The spinning was very popular with both children and adults, some of whom had done it last year with us and were keen to display their skills, but unfortunately we didn't have a weaver.

Countryfile was hot, very hot and a lot of the team who wandered off to look at the show came back to our gazebo for a bit of shade. There were plenty of children wanting to have a go and when I came back from my wander round I found that the HOBs {husbands and boyfriends} had been seconded into demonstrating too. They did a jolly good job and at the Harcourt Arboretum show there were several children who had done spinning at Countryfile who were keen to have another go.

Personally I love doing these events and I am really grateful to everyone who comes with me making it as stress-free as possible. This year I have turned up to find the stall set up and ready to go or I have disappeared off to get my car and come back to a stall completely dismantled, ready to pack into the car. Thank you all so very much.

Janet Farnsworth

"**The Golden Thread: How Fabric Changed History**" by Kassia St Clair is currently Book of the Week on Radio 4 and on iPlayer (and, of course, in book form!). It takes us on a journey from the earliest known threads of 30,000 years ago to the super-threads for today's extreme activities: exploring space, reaching faster speeds, climbing highest mountains. Interwoven with this is how the image of thread and its twist have entered our languages, and how it has had unexpected uses and consequences.

Royal Academy Rugs plus

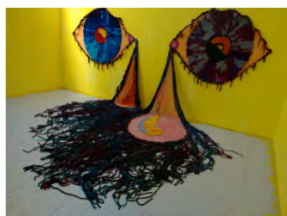
There is always something interesting being explored at the RA Schools exhibition. This year my textile oriented eye was intrigued by the work of a couple of students.



Mark Corfield-Moore has a fresh take on the hand woven carpet. There were 5 in his show. The one illustrated, I think, is called 'The Tourist'. It is woven in dyed cotton and is 201 x 161cm and gives the impression of being ikat. [I found the group labelling a bit confusing]. The one on the floor was obviously 'On Hand and Foot', an

interesting new take on the traditional Tibetan Tiger rug.

'Crying Carpet' was a mighty installation occupying a wall and a large amount of floor of a couple of crying eyes. It is made of rug canvas, rug and merino wool and spray paint, 137 x 400 x 310cm.



David Nutt

'Fun on the Farm' or 'In praise of the Oxford Guild'



A scorching, hot and sunny day in July saw Guild members prime themselves for a day of fleece-to-scarf challenge at Diana's Chilton Farm. Four teams beavered away being creative; carding, spinning, weaving, knitting, felting and all things in-between.

Everyone behaving impeccably as you'd expect from 'The Guild' !!

Well, was it the sun...? Was it brain fever...? Perhaps even dehydration or sunstroke....?

When it came to the judging time, the tone was definitely lowered and got lower.... Such behaviour!

We had our scarf models strutting their stuff and pelvic thrusting in the required *haut couture* manner..... somewhere along the line we had people who declared their love for 'a nice set of fluffy balls', we had a groin thrown in (groyne apparently....), and the innuendoes flew around. Perhaps hysteria was the diagnosis.... Whatever the case it was such good fun; such laughs to be had.

A really great day. The teamwork and friendliness of the day was apparent for all to see. What a fabulous Guild to belong to. I feel privileged to be a part of it all.

Jenny Butler

Meeting Reports

21st July 2018: We all had a fabulous day at Diane Bird's farm on the Bucks/Oxon borders. When we arrived we were divided into four groups and asked to make a scarf from the fleece provided plus any embellishments we brought with us. We all spun, wove, knitted, crocheted, sewed our socks off. It was an amazing experience, both competitive and collaborative. The end results were mostly stunning and it was clear that a little forward planning by at least one member of the team paid dividends! As last time we visited Diane, the weather was lovely. This makes such a super summer meeting. (Also see Jenny's wonderful piece about the meeting on this page)

19th September 2018: Textiles Tell Stories. Claire Blackburn spoke about her work in textiles, using them in various ways to reveal stories about people and places she knows, in particular the Cornish fishermen she grew up with. She uses a variety of techniques from machine embroider, through felting and sewing to embellish articles and add her narrative. She has a long-term project based on a found set of photographs of unknown people which she is planning to use as material for further textile work.

Wychwood Forest Fair and Harcourt Arboretum Autumn Fair

These were our last two outdoor demonstrations this year.

Wychwood has to be my favourite. The venue is perfect, spacious but still loads of attractions, I love the localness of it all and the fact that it helps maintain such a delightful part of our county. After last year's deluge, we had the pleasant surprise of a perfect summer's day - sunny and not too hot. Our pitch was right by the entrance, a really good spot. As always, children were fascinated by it all and eager to have a go, but adults less so, although we did have several who might become guild members. When not demonstrating, there were all the other stalls to explore: the dog show, Morris dancers, music, food, wood turning, falconry, and heavy horse demonstration. A perfect day, in a perfect setting - what more could you want!

Our last outing of the year was to Harcourt Arboretum for their Autumn Fair. Right up to the moment the gates opened it looked like we might be in for a wet day, then the clouds parted and we had sun that lasted until just after we closed! How's that for providence? It was incredibly busy with lots of things to interest

younger children and trails for them to follow. We were placed on the main path, opposite the food stalls



(the smell of cooking sausages accompanied us for most of the day!). I don't think we stopped carding and spinning the whole day and fortunately we had plenty of wheels and people. Janet and I set up wild weaving looms, incorporating leaves and grasses from the arboretum and I was asked many times "why?". My answer was "because I could" - that seems to be a sound reason to try out something new and I was pleased with the result. My highlight was a young girl who found a peacock feather and gave it to me to weave in, so kind of her.

And that's it for another year!

Liz Mitchell

Plea from the Editor

You may have noticed over the last few issues that I have four stalwarts who invariably manage to find something for me to include in the Newsletter: ie Jenny, David, Janet and Pauline. For this I am so very grateful.

BUT what about the rest of you? It would be lovely to include something about **your** project(s). I know there are many in the

Guild who are making beautiful things that we would love to hear about. It doesn't need to be more than a few sentences and perhaps a photo and, as I have always said, I can help.

Editor

Dates for your diary:

OGWSD Programme 2018/2019

2018

20th October 2018: Introduction to Tapestry Weaving – Have-a-Go Day with Jill Carey. Using basic small frames we will explore the main techniques of tapestry weaving. Then we can look at ideas for simple designs and the fun and freedom of creating something more complicated or just crazy!

17th November 2018: Andean Sling Braids – a talk by Rodrick Owen. Rod is a collector and maker of braids from around the world and, due to technical problems was only able to give an ad-lib (but nevertheless fascinating) talk when he visited last year. Now we have the chance to hear and see what we missed at his last visit. This will be our final meeting at Stanton St John.

15th December 2018: NB this and all future meetings are at Beckley Village Hall. Christmas Lunch, Christmas Have-a-go Day and Chairman's Challenge display. Please bring food to share for lunch.

2019

19th January 2019: Board of Trade Design Register – Dr Dinah Eastop. The Board of Trade Design Register is a huge collection of nearly 3 million designs and their registration records, dating 1839-1991. Dr Eastop has a 40 year background in textile conservation. Her current focus is material culture, both materiality and social aspects. She is interested in processes of 'making' and how such processes are represented and passed-on.

16th February 2019: Beautiful Cloth – Saori Weaving

17th February 2019: Workshop at Forest Hill Village Hall: Beautiful Cloth – Saori Weaving Workshop **BOOKING REQUIRED.**

16th March 2019: AGM and display of members' work.

Workshop dates 2019 - all in Forest Hill Village Hall

17th February : Saori weaving

17th March : Creative Weaving and embellishment (members led)

19th May : Spinning Workshop

22nd September : Natural Dyeing Workshop

17th November : Weaving Workshop

Other Events

- until 27th January, Anni Albers exhibition, Tate Modern, London
- until 27th January, Fashioned from Nature, V&A Museum,

London

• Yarnporium: 2-3 November 2018, London, England. Website: yarninthecity.com/about-the-yarnporium/

• Stitch Fest: 3-4 November 2018, Civic Hall & The Grove School, Totnes, Devon. Website: stitchfest.co.uk

• Festiwool: 10 November 2018, The Priory School, Hitchen, SG5 2UR. Website: festiwool.com

• Nottingham Yarn Expo: 10-11 November 2018, Nottingham Conference Centre, Burton St, Nottingham NG1 4BU. Website: nottinghamyarnexpo.com

• Textile Fair: Sat 17 November 2018. Compton Verney, nr.Banbury. Website: <http://www.comptonverney.org.uk/thing-to-do/textile-fair-3/>

• Winter Woollies: 2 December 2018, Home Farm, Nanpantan, Leicestershire, LE11 3YG. Website: facebook.com/events/1995223417187681

• The London Textile Fair, 9/10 January 2019, London N1 0QH. Website: thelondontextilefair.co.uk

• Waltham Abbey Wool Show: 20 January 2019, Marriot Hotel, Old Shire Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3LX. Website: walthamabbeywoolshow.co.uk

• Unravel: 22-24 February 2019, Farnham Maltings, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7QR. Website: craft.farnhammaltings.com/portfolio/unravel-festival-knitting/

• The Spring Knitting and Stitching Show: 28 February – 3 March 2019, Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, London, W14 8UX. Website: theknittingandstitchingshow.com/spring

• Wonderwool Wales: 27-28 April 2019, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SY. Website: wonderwoolwales.co.uk/en

• The Handmade Fair, Ragley: 10-12 May 2019, Ragley Hall, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5NJ. Website: thehandmadefair.com/ragley

• Wool @ Junction 13: 18-19 May 2019, Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5RE. Website: wool-j13.uk

• Shipston Wool Fair: May 2019 (date tbc), Sheep Street, Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire, CV36 4AB. Website: shiptonwoolfair.co.uk

• Woolfest: 28-29 June 2019, Mitchell's Lakeland Livestock Centre, Cockermouth, Cumbria, CA13 0QQ. Website: woolfest.co.uk

• Fibre East: 27-28 July 2019, Redborne School and Community College, Ampthill, Bedford, MK45 2NU. Website: fibre-east.co.uk

Committee

Chairman	Helen Richardson
Treasurer	Kate Prinsep
Secretary	Jacqueline Smee
Membership Sec.	Jenny Butler/Linda Whiter
Programme Sec.	
Members	Jane Rouse, Claire Blackburn, Janet Farnsworth

Other responsibilities

Sales Table	Kate Prinsep / Caroline Goss
Guild Equipment Librarian	Anne Hughes Linda Whiter
Newsletter Editor	Liz Mitchell
Website	Anne Hughes

Notes from the Editor: Thanks to everyone who has sent me items for inclusion. Please keep them coming.

To catch up on events between newsletters, check programme etc, visit our web site www.oxfordwsd.org.uk or Facebook. Copy: Items for the next newsletter must reach me before **31st December 2018**. E-mail to newsletter@oxfordwsd.org.uk or give me your copy at a Guild meeting.