



Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Newsletter February 2022

From the Chair

It was a great shame that we were not able to meet in December for our usual shared lunch, or in January – but things are looking hopeful now for opening our doors again. We are going to meet at Beckley on February 19th, all being well, and are planning the March meeting and AGM as an in-person meeting too. Having said this, things can change fast, so please do check for email/WhatsApp updates before you set off in case things have to change at the last minute.

We are asking that people take a lateral flow test before the meetings, if they can, and we will be wearing masks in the hall whilst we are moving around. We will keep the hall well aired, so bring a jumper.

We will keep the Round Robins going until we meet – and put them into abeyance after that. I hope that we won't need to reinstate them this time!

When we are settled into a routine with in-person meetings Alison Meakes, the Programme Secretary, will start to put in some Have a Go Days – if you want to volunteer, or have thoughts on what would be useful to have a go at, please let her know.

We will be sending out the papers for the AGM ahead of the March meeting – look out for an email. Finally, Membership Fees are due now – you should have had the email with the form and instructions on how to pay – if not, please let me know and I will resend to you. You can also pay with cash or a cheque at the February meeting.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in the coming months – it will be lovely to get back to our usual meetings.

Sue Clegg,

Golden Anniversary

The Guild was set up in 1971 by Phyl Wager and Patricia Baines who attended a spinning and weaving course taught by Jessica Archer. At first meetings were held in their homes. David Nutt has written the history of the Guild in three booklets which are in the Guild Library. Angela is looking forward to studying them and recording highlights in future newsletters.

Anniversary Fibre

To mark the Guild's 50th anniversary, the Committee asked Chris Cowley to source and dye some golden fibre. She prepared a blend of Blue Faced Leicester/Polwarth and silk and used a mix of yellow and brown acid dyes to create the colour. She posted 100g of the fibre to all members in May 2021. A good lockdown project for us all.

Cath Smith made this young ram with the Golden Fleece.



She also crocheted this Hotel of Bees Shawl by Christina Haddingh. It was a well written pattern with you tube links for the trickier bits. She loved spinning the anniversary yarn and the charcoal is a lovely blend from another talented independent supplier - Velvet Sixpence.



Sue Clegg found the fibre was a joy to spin and made it into a fairly hefty DK weight yarn. She made a cowl with some dark green yarn which bought from an Indy Dyer. She knitted it in the round and used the dark green for eyelet rows.



Amanda Henriques calls this, 'The Optimist', or, "My glass is half full." The top part is tapestry woven with the spun fibre and zwartbles. She felted the fibre for the lower part and embroidered it with yarn spun from the fibre.



This lovely shawl is first piece Kaye Davis has created with her homespun yarn. She used it as a single which allowed the variations in colour to show up well.

Lyn Wymer used the gold fibre with the same amount of Ryeland, dyed grey with Landscape dyes. She blended/plied them together in various combinations to end up with six different yarns. She wove the scarf on her Samplelt loom, at 7.5 dpi.



Linda Whiter's Scarf

The warp is a variegated tencil. The weft is hand-spun plied wensleydale which I spun from Diana's fleece (left over from knitting a sweater) wound together with a singles spun golden fleece.



Sarah Allan's birthday gift for her Stepdaughter. She blended the gold fibre with Angelina, spun and plied it. Lyn Wymer the spun the black and rust colour



Greet used a pattern from Elizabeth Lovick's book: Magical Shetland Lace Shawls to Knit. It consists of 6 different lace patterns. She used the anniversary fibre on its own and in a blend with brown Corriedale. The other colours are blends she used for spinning practice Some of the hand-spun is probably a little thicker than you would normally use for lace knitting, it doesn't show off the holes as well, but has a nice feel to it.



Stash Sale at the November meeting



Sarah, Lyn and I were busy all day with a steady stream of customers. It was lovely to have the opportunity to see what others have had hiding in their cupboards and attics and a lot of items changed hands. There was quite a variety of craft related goodies that were not directly linked to our three core skills but there was no limit on what could be sold. I'm confident that everyone went home with a bargain but not necessarily with less than they had when they arrived. We made £73. The new card reader made it easier for members to spend their money.

Kate Prinsep

Good Books

Liz Roberts recommends **This Golden Fleece by Esther Rutter**

A wonderful social history of knitting and wool, structured around a year spent touring the British Isles - Shetland, Suffolk, Yorkshire, Wales, Cornwall - knitting a project from each area month by month. It is full of fascinating facts and inspiring stories.

Sarah Allan recommends **"The Fleece and Fiber Source Book"** by Deborah Robson and Carol Ekarius

A good source of information compiled by the authors about all the breeds plus their spin ability and uses for the fibre artist.

It's smaller companion is a pocket guide just of the



breeds but is very handy when she is out and about checking on the breed specifics or finding information for anyone at shows or when teaching.

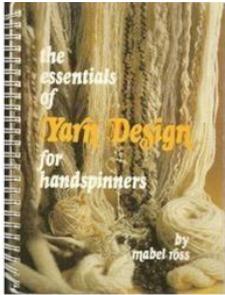
Anne Hughes recommends

Tablets at Work by Claudia Wollny - the new bible of tablet weaving that covers just about everything. It's a very comprehensive book covering many techniques and styles of tablet weaving, with over 900 patterns to go at. Suitable for all levels of ability. And

Applesies and Fox Noses - Finnish Tablet woven Bands by Maikki Karisto & Mervi Pasanen. This is a lovely book on Finnish Iron Age bands that covers techniques unique to Finnish tablet weaving.

Sue Clegg recommends **The Essentials of Yarn Design for Handspinners** by Mabel Ross

Sue and Jacqueline Smee were introduced to the book by Ruth Gough at Wingham Wool Work on a two day course. Ruth uses the tables in the book to teach her students how to plan, spin and ply fibre to make the yarn of their choice. These tables are a



brilliant guide to how to spin and ply consistent yarn to the thickness you are wanting.

The book which was published in 1984 is out of print and can be an expensive second-hand buy (There was one for sale via Oxfam for

£60.00) *Angela has a copy which she would have bought the Stash Sale if she had come!!*

Angela recommends:

Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom by Syne Mitchell.

An excellent introduction to the rigid heddle loom which inspired her to carry out lots of experiments with textured weaves. And

A Handweaver's Pattern book by Marguerite P Davidson. An extensive source of 4 shaft patterns which encouraged her to experiment with overshot weaves. *Not for the beginner though. Can anyone recommend a book on the basics of 4 shaft weaving?*

Novels about spinning

I have recently read *Spinning Silver* by Naomi Novik, which is a complex retelling of folk tales, probably from middle Europe and spinning features heavily. However, the book that has the best spinning story is *Precious Bane* by Mary Webb. One of the characters gets engaged to be married and all the women in the village get together with their spinning wheels. They spend the morning spinning in order to spin enough yarn to call in the weaver to make the bedclothes, and the afternoon gambling at cards betting with cakes. The book is quite old, published in 1924, and is supposed to be an accurate record of customs in rural Shropshire.

Janet Farnsworth

Little Acorn Crafts (www.littleacorncrafts.co.uk)

I have been running Little Acorn Crafts full time for just over 3 years and my main focus is on dyeing my own yarn and fibre from commercially prepared skeins and tops. Like most spinners I have a large quantity of raw fleece which I process into combed tops and carded batts. If I am making up the batts with dyed fibre, I enjoy mixing it with a variety of other fibres, which could include, silk, Tencel, bamboo and ramie.

A guild workshop with Debbie Tomkies inspired me to have a go at dyeing, and since then I have developed my own methods to dye the yarn. I enjoy nothing more than playing around with colours.

In the autumn of 2019, we decided to extend the space I was using as it was too small to dye on a larger scale especially as I had started thinking about exhibiting at the yarn and fibre shows. Luckily, we managed to finish the shell of the extension and get it plastered just before the first lockdown in March 2020. Most of that lockdown was spent decorating. The extension has enabled me to have a small shop and we also have a monthly Craft, Coffee and Chat and I am just starting to get a range of fibre-based workshops up and running.

Chris Cowley

Needle Felting

I had a lovely day teaching these two wonderful ladies in December. Sarah and Kate took to 3D needle felting like they had done it all their lives! It never fails to amaze me how poking some fibre with a barbed needle can produce such a huge range of felted makes. Hopefully I'll be able to run another workshop for the guild or do a have a go session at the hall before long.

Cath Smith



Go to [Hedgehog and Hoot – Needle Felting Workshops, Supplies and Kits](#) for information on her other workshops and “shop”

Other members who sell and/or teach

Diana Bird keeps sheep and sells Wensleydale fleece and Zwartbles fleece. More information at www.chiltongroundsfarm.co.uk

Chris Seers and Sarah Allan sell prepared fleece and hand-spun yarn. Go to <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/WychwoodSpinner>

Angela Pawlyn teaches weaving at home and at Ardington School of Crafts Go to www.angelapawlyn.co.uk

A useful tip from Liz

If you're a member of Oxfordshire libraries and use their online Libby, they now have magazines available including Handwoven and Spin-Off to borrow for 21 days. Go to the library's website [Library app | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Synthetic Dyeing

Whilst I find natural dyeing fascinating, I have to use chemical dyes to produce colours such as turquoise for weaving Scilly seas. Acid dyes can be used for wool and fibre reactive dyes for plant-based fibres. Either type can be used on silk. I prefer to use acid dyes on silk as they can be kept in solution for a considerable time, whereas fibre reactive dyes have to be used in a few hours of mixing. Acid dyes require simmering in a water bath whereas the fibre reactive dyes I use do not require heat. See an article by Stuart Smethurst in Journal 234 (Summer 2010) for more information on dyes available for use at home.

I learnt the basics of both types of dyeing during a day's course with Janet Phillips when she was living in Oxfordshire. I dyed a silk warp randomly with fibre reactive dyes by laying in out in a length of gutter and applying various colours with a syringe. I have since use this method with acid dyes by laying the warp on cling film and then wrapping in tightly and simmering it in a water bath. I more often use a dip Ikat method which I was taught by Marin Weatherhead back in 1990 when I used it on some curtains.

Angela Pawlyn

A shoutout for Ashfords and Frank Herring

My four-year old Samplelt loom's side panel had been gradually warping out alignment and the cloth roller was getting close to falling out. I couldn't see any way of straightening it, so wrote to Ashfords one weekend for advice. I had a quick reply from Frank Herrings, their UK distributors, asking for a photo and by the Thursday they'd let me know a replacement side panel was being posted to me. What a brilliant service.

Liz Mitchell

Outside Events

8 -9 April

Tubular band weaving workshop by Susan Foulkes at Pitt Rivers Museum.

<https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/event>

18-24 April

Colours of Peru 2022

An exhibition of tapestries by Maximo Laura.

Dorking

<http://www.wovencolour.co.uk>

23-24 April

Wonderwool Wales

Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Powys

<http://www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk/>

7-29 May

Oxfordshire Artweeks

City 7-15, South 14-22, North 21-29

24-28 May

A Textile Garden for Fashion Revolution at the Chelsea Flower Show

30-31 July

Summer Wool Festival, Bedfordshire -

- <https://summerwoolfestival.co.uk/> - used to be known as Fibre East -

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A touring exhibition of international hand-woven tapestry.

13-24 September

Oxmarket Gallery, Chichester,

1-12 November

RBSA Gallery, Birmingham

Information on wider events can be found on

Journal Website [Diary \(journalwspd.org.uk\)](http://journalwspd.org.uk)

and at <https://thefeltbox.co.uk/dates-for-wool-and-fibre-festivals/>

Committee

Sue Clegg – Chair

Kate Prinsep - Treasurer

Mel Odell – Secretary

Alison Meakes – Programme Secretary

Amanda Henriques – Membership Secretary

Chris Cowley – External events co-ordinator

Sam Austin – External events co-ordinator

Pauline Travis - Catering

Other responsibilities

Sales Table -- Sarah Allan

Website -- Anne Hughes

Newsletter Editor--Angela Pawlyn

From the Editor.

The deadline for next issue is 6th June. No need to wait until them to send me input. Please email to newsletter@oxfordwspd.org.uk.



