



Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Newsletter December 2022

From the Treasurer

This quarter Sue has handed the reins to me to say a few words. I am much happier with numbers, but let's give it a go. Where has this year gone? It seems like yesterday we were just starting the year tentatively to see how long face to face meetings would last. Thankfully we have made it through to the end of the year. It has been lovely being back in person. Fingers crossed it continues!

Pippa has joined the committee this year as programme secretary and has been doing an amazing job putting a programme together for 2023, (see final page) I believe she has a number of ideas for 2024 already, but please let her know if you have any more. So, thank you Pippa for picking up the task and taking it to the finish post. We start in January with a de-stash sale of anything craft related. (I know we said we couldn't sell husbands, but mine is very good an untangling wool, does that count as craft related?).

Can I also say a big thanks to Anne Hughes for the amazing work she has done getting the library in order and everything on the website. There are so many gems in those cupboards.

I will be spending my time off work over Christmas looking at what I have achieved in spinning and knitting this past year (sadly not much) and trying to work out what to do next year. I was thinking it might be fun to see how many WIP's I can manage to finish next year. Anyone want to join in? So, I will sign off and wish you as peaceful and stress-free Christmas as possible.

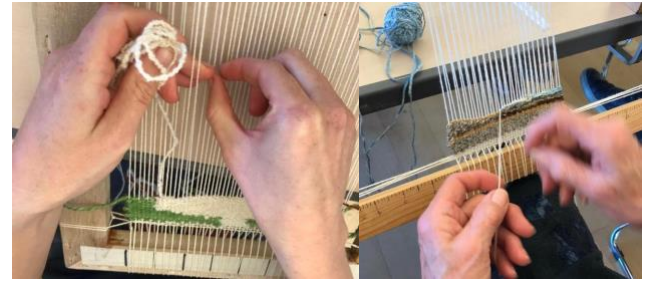
Kaye Davis

HAGD Tapestry Weaving with Amanda Henriques

At our November meeting lots of members took the opportunity to do some tapestry weaving. Many



thanks to Amanda who had prepared twenty frames for the session.



Several people took their frames home to do more work. Please bring the results to a Guild Meeting so we can have photos of finished pieces in the March Newsletter.

Spinning for Socks

At our October meeting Helen Burgess gave us an interesting talk. She started her talk by pointing out that socks have a job to do – whether



for walking miles or keeping our feet warm. She bought lots of socks to look at and handle. Useful hints and tips included: Tying some yarn round your ankle for a day so see if it irritates you. We were also introduced to concepts that were new to a lot of us:

- Sproing –the springiness in the spun yarn – it allows the finished sock to stretch and result in a good fit – we tested different yarns for sproing by gently pulling a sample to see the difference between the resting and stretched length.
- Ping – twang a short length of yarn and listen for a ping – a ping is good!
Helen also subjected some yarn to ordeal by Excalibur –a length of yarn was rubbed vigorously with a wooden sword –a weak yarn broke whilst a strong yarn survived.

We discussed plying– many of us thought that a sock yarn needed to be 3 ply to give a round construction which would last longer in a hard-

wearing sock. To some extent Helen refuted this – especially if Navajo plying is used. She does spin 3-ply with moderate twist in the singles and a lot of twist in the plying.

Helen said that there are no hard and fast rules when spinning for socks – and encouraged us to experiment. She and her husband stayed in the afternoon to advise on spinning and look at people’s attempts at making their own sock yarn.

Sue Clegg



Colour perception

Many thanks to those of you who completed my survey at the September meeting.

I had wanted to do it since I received the June 2020 Journal! To my surprise scores for it and two sections from it ranged from 1 (awful) to 5 (lovely). Colours next to each other on the colour wheel received the highest scores and those that were further apart got low scores. Do email me if you would like the full results,

Angela Pawlyn

Dyeing at Diana’s Farm

In September we were very grateful to Diana to be able to use her barn to give members the opportunity to have a go at indigo and natural dyeing.



Amanda Henriques had pots set up for dyeing with walnuts, onion skins and eucalyptus.

Having agreed to do indigo dyeing, Angela was very grateful to Liz Roberts both for her expertise and for bringing equipment. We got some lovely results with indigo by tying pieces of cotton round stones and broken limpet shells and dipping them in the vat.



In the vat, the insoluble blue form of indigo is reduced to a soluble form which is a pale yellow.

As the fabric is removed it reacts with the air and changes back to the blue form. This photo shows Rebecca’s piece before the change was completed. It is a shame that it cannot be stopped at this stage! However, lovely greens can be obtained by overdyeing yellow with indigo.

Hats for Farmers.

“Knitting Wool Hats for Mental Health” came to my attention when reading a small article in the NFU Countryside magazine.



It is a nationwide campaign to support rural mental and physical health, especially during the winter months when life is more challenging. “That makes sense!” I thought and a very worthy cause. A woolly hat on your head keeping you warm before you start with the added benefit of an emergency number that will give you instant access to someone who cares and can help. No brainer!

This campaign is an association between British Wool and Farming Network (FCN) charity, encouraging farmers and the public to knit a woolly hat from British wool whether it be commercially mill spun or hand spun, it does not matter. Promoting our fabulous sheep history, farmers and mills in Britain to boot. Also knitting a hat, as we all know, will help destress!

When you have knitted said hat you can then sew in a label that has the FCN Helpline number on this is in both English and Welsh. These can be sourced from the fcn.org.uk/wool-and-wellness site or from me as I have quite a few still to hand. West Yorkshire Spinners (WYS) have also provided a pattern and some yarn on a first come first serve basis if you want to get hold of them through the above website.



Thus far, with the member’s contributions, I have sent out 10 hats and I know others have taken labels to sew in and send themselves. Congratulations and thank you.

Sarah Allan

An Old Hattersley Loom on Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Travelling around the Outer Hebrides (Vatersay, Bara, South Uwist, North Uwist, Harris and Lewis plus the Shiant Isles) we arrived in Stornoway in Lewis.



We came across this rusty old loom outside a shop (sadly now closed) where Harris tweed used to be sold. The last time we were in Stornoway, in 2019, the shop was still open and it was owned by an elderly gentleman – very knowledgeable and amenable - and the shop was a chaotic treasure-trove of hundreds of bolts of Harris tweed and other items. A treasure-seeker's delight!



We were also lucky enough to find a Harris weaver – at work in his garage in the back streets of Stornoway. He had a lovely loom powered by his 'cycling' pedal power to operate the loom, shuttle etc. Although living on Lewis – he said his cloth is classified as a genuine Harris tweed as he's working in his own home and the loom is not powered by

anything other than human power (those are the criteria apparently). It was interesting talking to him.... So much so, I forgot to take any photos!!! **This is what the Hattersley loom should look like:**



We also saw the pin winder which went with the loom.



Jenny Butler

Rosie's Recipe for dyeing with food colouring

Stainless steel or enamel pan

- 3" to 4" of water – enough to cover the fleece
- ½ cup of white vinegar
- 1 eggcup of washing up liquid
- 1teaspoon of salt

Wash fleece or wet spun skeins and put into pan. If using liquid food colouring, sprinkle over fleece/yarn

If using paste colouring, dissolve a small amount in water and sprinkle over.

Several colours can be used for a random yarn For a more solid colour, dissolve dye in the pan before adding the wool.

Bring to the boil, then simmer for 45 minutes.

Rinse and Dry

Enjoy and Experiment!

Using a Rigid Heddle Loom.

At the November meeting Mike and Rhonda were introduced to a rigid heddle loom. Angela had brought two looms. She had set one up with the warp threads spaced so that once the weft was woven, they would no longer be visible. We used that to practice. The weft was made up of two yarns of different thicknesses and colours which gave a lovely result.



The second loom belonged to the Guild. We had two colours of wool that we had spun from our flock of Portland sheep: a natural yarn and an onion dyed yarn. We had saved up our onion skins following the dyeing workshop in September which gave us enough dye for about 100g of yarn – we are going

to need to eat a lot more onions this winter to dye enough yarn to finish this piece of fabric! Angela showed us how to warp-up the loom with the two colours of yarn. Mike was a bit fidgety and thumbs but with us got there and he was able to begin weaving. The first few inches used the onion dyed yarn and demonstrated how different patterns emerged as a result of how the warp had been organized. He was then shown how to use two shuttles,

It is easy to make errors but Angela showed him how to fix them. We both enjoyed it but feel that this is more likely to be Mike's thing, with Rhonda concentrating on knitting and crochet. Mike has borrowed the Guild loom to continue with his first piece of fabric and we are busy finding onion recipes so that we can do some more dyeing to have enough yarn!

Mike and Rhonda

I was very impressed with the speed Mike made both in warping up the loom and starting weaving. It is also very pleasing to have sheep owners who want to spin and use their wool. We get too many people expecting members to volunteer to spin their fleece for them. Angela

Washing Fleece

I was trying to spin some over processed commercial fibre and struggling when someone at the Guild said to me: "You'd be better using Jacobs fleece that you have. Just get on with it - pick out the best bits and have a go at washing it, you don't have to process all of it.", The approach I took was quite simple

1. Pick out and align similar length/colour staples.

2. Put them carefully into net washing bags & tie up each end with rubber bands, so each batch looked like an oversized round toffee.
3. Part fill a large plastic bucket with hot tap water, a kettle of boiling water and the recommended quantity of Unicorn Fibre Power Scour.
4. Drop two bags of wool at a time into the water and leave to stand for 30-40 minutes.
5. Squish gently but not much (to avoid felting).
6. Put in washing machine on 'drain & spin' cycle for 10 minutes (I stop the cycle short).
7. Drop into slightly cooler water & squish slightly.
8. Assuming water runs clear when lifted out repeat the spin cycle.

I then put it outside on a sheet of medium, plastic-coated wire mesh.

So far this has given me good results from about 8 batches. It feels fluffy & is easy to card and MUCH easier than the commercial fibre to spin.

Tim Chapman

Editor - I look forward to receiving your tips on this subject

Programme for 2023

January: De-stash sale

Sarah Allen and Kate Princep Please note

1. It is an ALL Craft de-stash. This means any materials, equipment or finished items that members want to move on.
2. Please ensure every item is properly packaged and clearly labelled with price and the full name, or initial and surname, of member selling.
3. To remember with pricing that the Guild takes 12% (as usual) commission.

If members are not sure what they should charge please ask for help but also remember if you do not want it going home it has to be realistic.

4. Cash, cheque and cards taken.

February How Wool Shaped the Cotswolds.

Talk by Liz Mitchell.

March AGM

April

Ellen Moore, a young weaver based in Oxford. She creates pieces made with plastic and more traditional fibres.

See Ellen's Instagram:

www.instagram.com/moorewoven



May. HAGD with Janet Farnsworth Visible Mending and Embellishments: 'Make unique items from your dull, old or damaged clothes.'

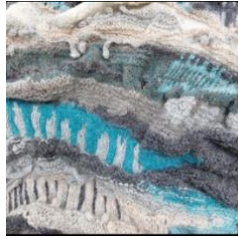
June:

Talk by Delia Salter Textile Narratives from a Northern Land: Iceland.

She is an experimental knitter and also does some felting, See Delia's Instagram:

[deliasalter](#)

And see her exhibition (date etc below)



June 25th,

Workshop with Janet Farnsworth and David Knights: Make your own spindle and then spin with it. See November 2021 Newsletter

October Talk by Debbie Tomkies

Creating a dyeing record/experimentation, Followed by a workshop on Speckle Dyeing on the Sunday.

Dates for the rest of the year to be arranged.

HAGDs offered

Anne Hughes: Bobbin Lace

Amanda Henriques: Wool combing/Blending Hackle

Angela Pawlyn: Weft faced weaving on rigid heddle looms

Workshops:

We have agreed to holding workshops on a different Sunday than the weekend of the guild meeting, unless the outside person is giving both a talk and workshop,

The following have been offered:

Anne Hughes - Chainmaille

Alison Ellen - Knitting: using over spun singles.

Claire Bullock, felter. www.clarebullock.co.uk

We will also have a show and tell by Liz Mitchell on Weaving Embellishments.

Outside Events

Until 15 January

Echoes of Iceland – Delia Salter with 3 other artists
Allen Gallery, Alton GU34 2BW

www.hampshireculture.org.uk/event/echoes-iceland-exhibition

Until 17 January

Exhibition featuring Nancy Fuller (ceramics) and Maria Sigma (weave)
Flow Gallery, London W11 2RP

Until 12 March

Kaffe Fassett: The Power of Pattern
Fashion and Textile Museum,
London SE1 3XF

Until 23 March

Colour with Kaffe Fassett at Hidcote
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

22-23 April

Wonderwool Wales

Until 21 May

Explore a Forest of Woven Sculptures
by Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz.
Tate Gallery, London

Further details and information on wider events can be found on Journal Website [Diary](#) (journalwsd.org.uk)

Guild Library

Thank you to everyone who responded to my queries about outstanding book loans, and special thanks to Kaye Davis who helped me audit the library during September's meeting. The library catalogue currently has 220 items listed - mostly books, but there are a few DVDs too. We also have many issues from a variety of magazines.

We have recently received a large, generous donation from David Nutt of many back issues of The Journal. There are a lot of very early editions and it's a great opportunity to delve back into the history of the magazine. These issues are available to borrow at a reduced rate. There are two new additions to the library this month: Pin Loom Weaving - 40 Projects for Tiny Hand Looms, and Pin Loom Weaving to Go - 30 Projects for Portable Weaving, both by Margaret Stump. Don't forget that you can borrow the Guild's Pin Loom along with the books!

Borrowing an item from the library - book, DVD, or magazine - costs 50p per item per month. Please write in the loan book when you borrow AND when you return an item.

Anne Hughes

New members

A warm welcome to the following who have recently joined the Guild:

Petula and Heather Banyard

Sarah Tozer

Barbara Dixon

Zoe Parsons

Denise Warner

Committee

Sue Clegg – Chair

Kaye Davis - Treasurer

Mel Odell - Secretary

Pippa Purnell - Programme Secretary

Amanda Henriques - Membership Secretary

Chris Cowley - External events co-ordinator

Pauline Travis - Catering

Anne Hughes - Library and Website

Other responsibilities

Sales Table - Sarah Allan

Newsletter Editor - Angela Pawlyn

From the Editor.

The deadline for next issue is 6th March. No need to wait until then to send me input. Please email to newsletter@oxfordwsd.org.uk.