



Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Newsletter October 2025

From the Chair

It's my favourite time of year. I love the colours of autumn, and the cooler weather is the perfect excuse to stay in and be creative. I have a number of projects on the go (nothing new there) so that I can work on whatever is most appealing in the moment.

When I'm not making, I'm thinking about the next project that I want to start, and whether or not I already have the things I need. It could be said that I'm contemplating "wool gathering", a phrase that came up recently when Lyn was trying to think of the word for picking up bits of wool caught on a fence. Sarah found the following bits of information:

"wool caught on a fence". For a Shetland-specific term, you might use "[hentilages](#)" or "[hentilagets](#)," which describes little tufts of wool caught on the landscape. "Woolgathering" was an actual 16th-century job where people would gather loose pieces of wool that sheep had snagged on bushes, thorns, and fences.

The term evolved to mean "indulging in idle daydreaming" because the task of collecting wool required aimless wandering and could appear like purposeless thought. Today, the word "woolgathering" is almost exclusively used to describe absentmindedness or daydreaming."

Whilst you're thinking about your next project you could be wool gathering and wool gathering. How about applying this way of thinking to this year's Chair's Challenge that was launched at the September meeting?

Kate

Recent meetings

July - Have-A-Go at Sprang
with Anne Hughes



Sprang is a technique of interlinking sets of threads under tension to create a stretchy fabric. This technique is found throughout the world in different cultures and can be used to make almost anything from belts to beautiful garments. For more information go to:

www.sprangart.com



www.solrhizaarts.com/the-technique-of-sprang

Anne received lots of thanks for her work in preparing for the day and her patience.

September: Have-A-Go at textured weaving

Angela brought some of her rigid heddle looms set up for balanced weave.

Using a pick-up stick allows



the weft to

go over 3 threads and under 1 or over one and under 3.

Anne H produced some lovely results with different sequences and colours on her own loom.

Experimenting with this technique kept most people busy

Mike also had a go at Brocks Bouquet, which involves taking the weft round groups of warp threads.



Guild Demonstrations

With the West Oxford Fun Day, Rollright Stones, Oxford Storytelling Festival and Combe Mill events since the last newsletter, we've enjoyed a busy summer schedule. For those new to the Guild, outside events are a great opportunity to promote spinning, weaving and dyeing, and the Guild as a welcoming, inclusive place for people to connect/reconnect with these crafts - and of course, to spend a fun day with fellow guild members.

At the West Oxford Fun Day, a lively local community event, there was lots of interest in spinning and weaving. Sarah W has made a huge number of warped cardboard looms for children and adults to have a go on and take away, and we were kept busy. It is wonderful that children are able to go home with a piece of weaving, and if the Guild has a spate of new members in a few decades' time it may well be because their interest began when they



were given the materials to weave a little table mat when they were young! Spinning with Janet (who was dressed for the heat) was also popular - most of the children who tried it were of an age to believe in magic, and happily took home a twist of spun wool to show off.



We always enjoy The Rollright Stones Family Day, and Sandie's Great Wheel fitted in nicely with the other attractions, which included a wood bodger, archaeologists, astronomers, and a dowser.



It is rewarding to see repeat customers, and as soon as we were set up children who had had a go with us last year came over for some spinning and weaving. Sarah W has introduced card woven bags - there was a taker, and we are hoping to see

the finished results at next year's family day!

Another development in making our crafts accessible has been Sally C's drop spindles made from sticks and plastic jar lids. As usual, the sheep models, each one a different breed made from the appropriate fleece, were a great hit.

It was a pleasure to be invited to display at the last ever Oxford Storytelling Festival at Waterperry. Outside events also offer the opportunity to team up with like-minded crafters. Tamara and Helen were with the Outside Dyers and between them they gave an excellent display of the vast range of colours that can be obtained with natural dyes, from electric yellow and red socks to a more muted hedgerow feel. There was a lot of interest and chats as well as the chance to listen in on a couple of stories and meet a town councillor with a mushroom hat.

The Combe Mill Crafts and Skills day is another event that is a great fit for us, and again we were lucky with the weather. We had a good turn-out of members, and in addition to two types of weaving, 4-shaft loom and band weaving, we were able to provide a varied representation of spinning: the Great Wheel, drop spindles and Mike on the e-spinner. The displays of work were much admired, and as ever, there were lots of great conversations with members of the public interested in our crafts.



The outside events team depends on members kindly giving us stuff. If anyone has any weaving needles - flat wood with an eye and a pointed end - they would be gratefully received (contact Sarah W).

Thanks to Janet F for all her work in co-ordinating these events, and if Outside Events seems like something you would like to get involved in, do please let her know. Karin P

Summer School 2025:

It was with some trepidation that I arrived at the AGWSD summer school at Queen Margaret's University (near Edinburgh) last week. I had booked to go on the course "Exploring texture on an 8-shaft loom" but I was unsure that I had sufficient skill to follow the course. True I have used an 8-shaft loom to follow patterns from the VAV magazine and other sources but ask me what a "Bedford cord" is or "crepe weave" and I am lost without a book to refer to. Also. I am conscious that I don't come up with original designs of my own but rely on following patterns or adapting what others have done successfully.

But I need not have worried. I positioned my loom (an Ashford borrowed from Lyn as mine was a bit too big to fit in the car) at the back of the class of 15 next to an experienced weaver called Beryl (Cheshire Guild) who was an absolute scream and so felt immediately more relaxed. Charlotte

Grierson, the tutor, encouraged us to look at our source material (mine was a picture of a Scottish mountain) and examine the different textures in the picture. We also looked at textures in the room around us – on the walls, floors etc. She then got us to try out various textural weaves, first in our warp yarn and then in a variety of specialist yarns which she had brought with her.

We had all warped up our looms with 6m warps at 24 ends per inch – 8 inches wide – 3 inches of dark yarn to match a colour in our source material, 2 inches alternating (dark, light, dark, light etc) and 3 inches light. This meant that we were getting multiple effects from each weave that we used. I used a 17/2 lamb's wool from Uppingham Yarns -so soft when washed and Uppingham Yarns were so helpful in matching the colours that I wanted. Charlotte provided us with a booklet of some key weaves to try and introduced a new type of numbered notation which was a revelation and so easy to follow.

As the week progressed, we all became more and more daring – mixing and matching weave structures in the same section – or alternating picks between weave structures or reversed weave structures.



I particularly enjoyed the 6/2 twill woven in one direction with one colour interspersed with 6/2 twill woven in the opposite direction with another colour which produced a lattice like effect as follows:

Pick	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Colour
1	1	2	3	4	5	6			A
2	1	2	3	4	5			8	B
3		2	3	4	5	6	7		A
4	1	2	3	4			7	8	B
5			3	4	5	6	7	8	A
6	1	2	3			6	7	8	B
7	1			4	5	6	7	8	A
8	1	2			5	6	7	8	B
9	1	2			5	6	7	8	A
10	1			4	5	6	7	8	B
11	1	2	3			6	7	8	A
12			3	4	5	6	7	8	B
13	1	2	3	4			7	8	A
14		2	3	4	5	6	7		B
15	1	2	3	4	5			8	A
16	1	2	3	4	5	6			B

Each number in the grid represents a lifted shaft.

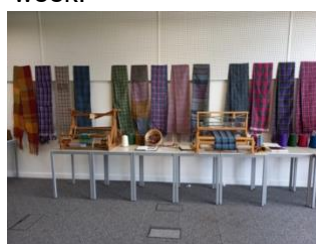
At the end of the week, we cut off our samples to display on the Saturday for others at Summer School to view. There was so much to see.



There were at least 18 different classes – as well as the textures on 8 shaft looms, there were spinning classes (fine spinning and colourful textured yarns), Indigo

dyeing, natural dyeing, braiding, card weaving, basketry using dried leaves from the garden, weaving on a warp

weighted loom (like the Saxons did!), felting and many more. I loved it and I especially loved seeing all the wonderful creativity on the Saturday when we got to go around all the other classes to see what they had been doing all week.



Scarves woven at the beginners weaving workshop: Designing Tweed and Tartan.



Colours created at the natural dyeing workshop "Beyond the Rainbow"

Another feature of summer school are talks and evening events. This year there were two talks: The first was by Dr Carey Fleiner and was about her experiences with experimental archeology (using a warp weighted loom) at the Campus Galli site in Germany – where they are creating a pre medieval village/series of buildings using technology available at the time. Carey's talk was accompanied by lots of pictures and she made it extremely entertaining with stories of things that had happened. The second talk was by Susan Crawford and was about the Vintage Shetland project – Susan runs a knitting and wool shop in Cumbria but has a vast collection of historical knitting patterns which she has re-worked in modern language and published in a series of books. One of her projects was to visit the Shetland archive where people have deposited old knit-ware and Susan has used these historic garments to create new knitting patterns based on them. But she has now gone beyond this and has researched the people who donated the garments and who wore them. This was fascinating – one story she told was of a doctor who had donated his father's jumper – which had originally been knitted for him by his aunt at the start of the Second World War. His father had been a bomber pilot and had felt that his jumper had kept him safe like a lucky

talisman so much that he had kept it all his life. It makes me look at garments we have in a new light – the history and love behind them – and why we keep them.

In terms of the facilities at Summer School, these were great – we all had ensuite student rooms which were quite spacious and were fully catered (which was wonderful as far as I was concerned as it meant we didn't have to shop or to cook – I loved it all).

The next Summer School is in 2027 and will be in the South West of England – venue to be arranged. If you have the opportunity to attend, please go. You will have a wonderful experience and meet some amazing people. I fully intend to keep in touch with Beryl!



Postscript: As a bonus – my husband and I stopped in Galashiels on our way home to view the Great Scottish Tapestry. This is a series of embroidered panels which depict the history of Scotland – a bit like the Bayeux Tapestry. It was amazing – so much detail and too much to view in the

2 hours that we had spare – but I am glad that we went and would thoroughly recommend it.

Sarah Williams

Sarah returned the loom to Lyn at the September meeting with the warp. Looking forward to seeing Lyn's weaving on it



Swedish Adventure

In June I went on a weaving course at Capellagården, a wonderful place in Sweden. I had spent the previous week with a friend who lives on an island off the west coast. I was there for the fun Midsummer celebrations and we also visited two inspiring exhibitions - one of Swedish textile design and the other an artist's studio with some amazing woven wall hangings.

The course was on Öland, an island off the east coast. Capellagården was set up as a craft school in the 1960s on an old farm. The land is gardened organically, providing food for the excellent meals. Full time students are resident

during the year, studying a wide range of traditional crafts, and summer courses are run June through August. This year there was a choice of pottery, ceramic glazes, colour theory, natural dyeing, wood turning, building maintenance, free embroidery, landscape painting, screen printing, singing, felting and many more... See the website:

<https://www.capellagarden.se/kurser/>

One of the weeks is taught in English - I missed that but managed fine with friendly help on hand at all times. My Course was Väva fritt i ram - Weave free in frame. Courses on the big floor looms take two weeks, as does the lovely Natural Dyes course, but I was very happy with one week of basic tapestry weaving.



After a morning of learning the core techniques, we could move on to our own projects in any kind of frame we chose, with our young teachers always ready to guide and advise. They had brought plenty of interesting examples to inspire us: weaving on squares of polystyrene board, weaving wool round stones, and we had access to the school's library for reference. Teaching days were eight hours long but studios were open from 6.30am to 11pm, giving plenty of time for practice and experimentation. The atmosphere was buzzing with creativity.



First day's weaving

Though what I managed to produce over the four days of weaving was not very impressive, I really enjoyed the process of weaving and was pleased with what I learned and the potential for creativity. The garden and unique landscape of Öland, with its iron age forts and burial grounds and

the massive pink limestone plateau covered with wild flowers, were a delight and a great source of inspiration.

I have come home full of ideas - far too many to accomplish! And I'm eager to consolidate and develop my skills and practice my new-found love of weaving. I had a wonderful time and would recommend Capellagården to you all.

Liz Roberts

Show and Tell



Karin P's cardigan jacket to wear with jeans. Handspun – mostly Welsh mountain Cross plus a commercial silk boucle. Hand dyed – nettle, Indigo and Kool-Aid. Woven –

based on Strickler number 713, Sewing pattern – based on a pattern by Susan Khalje.



Lyn W dyed 200g of sock yarn, in a slow cooker using acid dyes. Knitted into a hitchhiker shawl (125g), and woven into a scarf on a rigid heddle loom, 7.5 dpi (75g).

Programme

October 18th Guild

Being Creative with Your Stash

An inspiring and fun talk by Wendy Usher

on how to integrate your beautiful work into useful items for yourself, gifts or to sell.

November 15th Guild

Cath Snape from Beechwood Crafts will give an 'all things spinning' talk based on her book with Alison Daykin 'Inspired to Spin'.

November 16th Workshop

Colour Blending for Spinning. Cath Snape will be showing how to use hand carders, drum carder, and blending board.

December 20th Guild

Christmas lunch and **Chair's Challenge 2025 – Dye a Bundle**

This year the challenge is to create something using all the materials in your bundle and whatever else you want to add to it. You have all the freedom to use the materials in any way that you want because you will have included one of our core skills simply by dyeing the bundle.

The bundle contains a variety of bits and pieces, more than enough Dylon dye and salt to fix it. You won't know what colour you have until you start the process. **DO NOT UNTIE THE BUNDLE** until it has been dyed!

Dyeing instructions

There are several options for dyeing so choose whatever you think will be best for you. You do not need complicated equipment for this challenge. Follow one of the methods below (or use one of your own) to dye the bundle. You can place additional materials in the dye pot at this stage or you can use the exhaust. Just make sure that it is hot.

When you have dyed your bundle, and any extra materials, allow to cool before removing from the dye pot. Then allow to dry before rinsing in cold water to remove any excess dye.

Method 1: Place the bundle in an old ice cream tub cover with water. Cover the pot with cling film and pierce a couple of holes in it. Heat the tub in the microwave in 5min bursts on high until it no longer changes colour.

Method 2: Place the bundle in an old saucepan with enough water to cover. Heat gently and simmer for 20mins.

Method 3: Place the bundle in an old ice cream tub and pour over boiling water from the kettle.

Method 4: Place the bundle in slow cooker with hot water from the kettle. Heat on high power for about 30mins.

Challenge notes

- This is NOT a competition. It is Show & Tell with a theme.
- Please bring your work to show at the meeting on 20 December with a note of your name and how you decided what to do.
- Your work does not need to be finished!

Happy creating

Kate

Safety Reminder: It is recommended that you do not use utensils with which you cook food for dyeing

Plans for 2026

For 2026, we have talks lined up by Nicole de Rushdie who has written a book about recreating Bronze and Iron Age clothes. and by Romily and Flow of The Outside Dyers, with the possibility of a workshop with them. We are also hoping that Sally Pointer will do a workshop.

We have been pondering as to whether members would be Interested in a group trip to somebody's studio for a workshop rather than have people come to us at the hall.

Tamara and Helen

Outside Events

Sat 25 October 10.00 - 16.00.

Autumn Fair at Harcourt Arboretum

The Guild will be demonstrating.

www.obga.ox.ac.uk/event/autumn-fair-harcourt-arboretum-0

Friday 31st Oct to Sun 2nd Oct
www.abingdoncraftfair.org.uk

Details and information on wider events can be found at Journal Website [Diary \(journalwsd.org.uk\)](http://Diary(journalwsd.org.uk)) and at [UK yarn festivals: dates and details for 2025. \(beingknitterly.co.uk\)](http://UK yarn festivals: dates and details for 2025.(beingknitterly.co.uk))

Committee

Kate Gardener - Chair
Sue Greenwood - Secretary
Mike Foster - Treasurer
Liz Roberts - Membership Secretary
Anne Hughes – Library, Website
Angela Pawlyn - Newsletter Editor
Sarah Allan
Karin Piggott
Felicity Record
Co-opted:
Tamara Cartwright-Loebl - Programme Secretary
Helen Allen - Programme Secretary

Other responsibilities

Lyn Wymer - Equipment
Emma Pilley and Helen Allen -Sales Table
Janet Farnsworth - Outside Events

From the Editor.

Many thanks for the contributions to this newsletter. Sarah's article reminded me that it is time I did some more experimenting with my eight shaft loom.

I aim to take pictures of all the Show and Tell items. I will include them if I receive the accompanying description. Please either email to newsletter@oxfordwsd.org.uk. or put them on the Guild's What's App page

The deadline for next issue is 6th January. No need to wait until then to send me input.