



Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Newsletter January 2026

From the Chair

Happy New Year! 2026 has started with my favourite winter weather: cold, dry and bright. I love to see the clear blue sky and be able to wrap up warm in all my lovely woollies. It's good running weather too!

This is my last contribution to the newsletter as Chair. My tenure is coming to an end at the AGM in March and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped to make the Guild a success. If I make a list I will miss someone so please know that all of your contributions have been recognised and are appreciated, however big or small. Thank you!

I also want to celebrate the range of expertise within the Guild. We are privileged to belong to a group where everyone is willing to share their knowledge and offer support to others, including leading the Have-a-Go Days. I have learned a lot over the time that I have been a member of OGWS, most of it from other members. Thank you again for sharing so generously.

Your responses to the Chair's Challenge at the December meeting were really impressive. It was lovely to see how each one of you had used the dyed materials to create something unique. Your work truly reflected the collective creativity and skill of the Guild.

Being open and creative is who we are as individuals and as a group, but sometimes our ambition gets the better of us. I think of this as the creative equivalent of "your eyes are bigger than your belly"! This can lead to creation of a different kind: stash building. The January De-Stash Sale is an opportunity to rethink and rebuild. It's a time to rehome what is no longer bringing you joy to make space for things that will spark your imagination.

And finally, as I have already mentioned, the Guild will be needing a new Chair at the AGM. It doesn't matter how long you have been a member or whether you are an expert in any of the core skills. It's an opportunity to support everyone on their creative journey, and it could be you!

Kate.

Recent events

Being Creative with Your Stash

In October Wendy Usher gave us many ideas about how to use left-over materials to make useful items.



Some of the things she made with pieces of left over weaving.



She also used them to decorate things like this:



She uses a sewing machine to make garments out of larger bits of weaving.



Wendy showed us a number of pictures using fabrics. The one on the right inspired Louise's entry for the Chairman's Challenge.

This bit of weaving using left over yarns inspired Sarah W's Chairman's Challenge.



Inspired to Spin

In November Cath Snape (Beechwood Crafts) talked about her journey from achieving the National Certificate of Achievement for Spinners to writing the book.

Cath had been a spinner, like most of us, for a little time but realised she wanted to know MORE about this craft. The word MORE in this case is to learn all the different ways to spin fibre. After all there are many different fibres from wool, mohair, goat, rabbits, silk and more. Vegetable fibre flax, cotton, hemp etc. All are dealt with differently.

The best way to dive into this fascinating subject was through the National Achievement. Big step. First to find a mentor who would guide her way through the journey. Then to ask spinners, pick their brains and also to get as much encouragement as she could. Libraries are one way but sometimes it's quite confusing as we all have our own way of spinning.

It took her a long time to achieve her goal but she persevered and passed. That was great but on reflection she decided there was not a book out there which gave clear instructions on most of the subjects you needed to know.

After a great deal of soul searching and discussion with Alison Daykin, a spinner and weaver and her mentor for the certificate, they decided to write a book hence the book called INSPIRED TO SPIN was published. To my mind it the best most comprehensive book ever written.

Carole Thorpe.

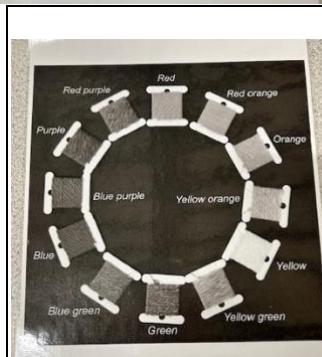
50+ years a spinner and still learning!

Colour Blending Workshop

What a fabulous inspiring day and weekend! From the talk on Saturday to the Sunday workshop of blending colours on various carding tools, to create beautiful mounds of fluff to craft with.

Cath started with a little chat about what the day ahead of us would involve. We first looked at samples of colour wheels created by blending

initially the three primary colours and their resulting knitted samples, then there was the numerous other possibilities by blending colour by changing the percentage of coloured fibres put on the carders.



One interesting point Cath made was when using the colour wheel to decide on a blend or colours you might in future want to put together, a rule of thumb is to stay in one half of the wheel. If you wander into the other half you are more likely to create the mud we all try so much to avoid. That solves that old problem!

Then to start the actual play time Cath gave us bags with the primary colours in with black and white included. The first blended samples were on hand carders to create small rollags of the secondary colour ways i.e. red x yellow = orange and so forth. The primary colours were also carded with either black or white fibres to show the shading difference as well (It was amazing how this simple task could wow one's senses and possibilities).



Having mastered and enjoyed this process Cath moved to the creating coloured rovings on a drum carder. The first of the lovely ideas Cath showed us over the day started with 5 way colour blend, remembering the above colour wheel "don'ts".



This was done by layering the colours on the carder lifting it off the carder as a batt and pulling the batt apart into 4 lengths and putting it back on the carder so the colours were more striped.

Once this was completed, we removed our new coloured fibre from the drum by dizzling it off. **Note** - dizzling is a process whereby you use something with a hole in it i.e. milk bottle top, shell, knitting needle size gauge and so forth to move around the carder to make long thinner rovings.



It was a day of discovering colour and fibre. How to use different methods to create different types of rovings to create the yarns and fibres you want.

We used hand and drum carders as well as blending boards. Different techniques on how these tools can be used and how to remove fibre from them. Cath gave us all her 100 percent attention and was so enthusiastic about the creations, you came away feeling buoyant and that you could achieve anything, but as we all know practice makes perfect.

As we had seen on Saturday, Cath showed us some of the finished yarns and creations, she had made from her wanderings into colour play which inspired us all.



Thank you, Cath for inspiring our creative sides to flourish.

Sarah A

Christmas meeting

As usual we had a delicious bring and share lunch.

We also enjoyed seeing many lovely entries to Kate's Chair's Challenge. Sarah A and Lyn had wrapped bundles of small pieces of yarn, fabric and some other bits and pieces as well some Dylon dye in some white cloth. See October Newsletter for the suggested methods of dyeing the bundle.



Anne H



Bob



Carole



Diana



Emma



Janet



Liz M



Louise



Pauline T



Pippa



Sally



Sam



Sandie



Sarah A



Sue C

OGSWD Outside Events Autumn 2025

We ended the year's programme with two suitably Autumnal Events, the Apple Day Festival at the Peace Oak Orchard in Eynsham and the Harcourt Arboretum Autumn Fair.

The colourful OGSD gazebo was a popular draw at the Eynsham event, with plenty of people of all ages keen to have a go at the activities on offer and find out about the items on display.



Mike and Rhonda with some young visitors keen to try out spinning and weaving at the Apple Day Festival.



At Harcourt Arboretum we also had a busy day with lots of young visitors.

As well as weaving on card looms with Sarah W, they did some "Wild Weaving".



This involved weaving vegetation found on site into frames which had been prepared at the previous Guild meeting. It kept Tamara and Helen very busy.

Janet was busy helping people of all ages to have a go at spinning (Wearing boots was a good idea as we had some heavy showers!) Visitors also enjoyed watching Sandie using her Great Wheel.



Karin and Angela



As it happens, my "Chair's Challenge" bundle dyed a lovely bluey green colour which also made me think of fish and the sea. Sarah A gave me some dogwood which I bent into the shape of a simple fish and then I used the wool and strips of fabric to create the warp and weft of the fish adding other yarns and bits and pieces as I created them. Some of the fish are now displayed in the form of a mobile which will be hanging in my house for Christmas.

Show and Tell

Pippa writes: Last May Liz Roberts very generously hosted an 'Introduction to Dyeing' day for Emma, Helen and I.



We took pre-soaked fleece along and dyed them in either brown onion skin or nettle, I took white and grey Corriedale fleece to see what effect the different base colour would have. The onion pot produced a lovely golden yellow on the white fleece and a soft olive green on the grey; the nettle produced a fairly undistinguished leek soup colour on the white fleece and something a bit greyer on the grey! However, the pure joy of creating more colours came when I dipped them in a pot of indigo in the afternoon for varying amounts of time, it was magic, especially seeing the beautiful sea-greens that the nettle base provided. It was such a fun and inspirational day, and so lovely of Liz to share her knowledge and skills with us. I got 11 different colours by the end of the day.



Lyn's waistcoat has been knitted in miscellaneous handspun oddments. It is based on "Building Blocks Vest" by Amanda Richardson (pattern on Ravelry), but with a couple of changes.

Angela fell for this superfine Merino for sale at £1 a ball at a charity shop. She wove the finer scarf at 30 epi. She wove the second scarf using three strands of yarn for both the warp and the weft with the warp set at 15 epi. It was much quicker!



Affiliation Fee

We pay an affiliation fee of £5 per member to the National Association (AGWSD).

For this we get the following benefits:

- Inclusion in the umbrella public liability insurance scheme;
- Provision of a page dedicated to your guild on our website - see www.wsd.org.uk/the-guilds/list-of-all-guilds/
- A listing of your group's contact details in our quarterly magazine, The Journal for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers;
- Reduced subscription rates for the Journal for your members;
- An AGWSD newsletter that is published every 4 weeks;
- Access to a curated list of speakers;
- A network of Area Links which fosters closer co-operation between the member guilds in various areas of the country. These enable your group to be kept abreast of activities going on with other member guilds that are within a reasonable distance to you;
- Reduced fees for your members for chargeable AGWSD events such as the biennial Summer School and the Conference;
- The opportunity to have your member's work included in the biennial National Exhibition;
- Access for your members to all parts of our education programme: - Foundation Certificates (FC), Certificates of Achievement (CoA) and Certificate of Advanced Textile Studies;
- Access to bursaries towards the cost for summer school, the conference and towards study costs for the CoA;
- Access to the Stuart Groom Memorial Library
- Access to general advice on all sorts of topics eg: policies, GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), etc
- The ability to participate in running the AGWSD - eg participation in the AGM, volunteering for the AGWSD, etc.

Mike Foster

Programme

17th January. De-stash Sale

21st February

Tamara and Helen will talk about their trip to Morocco. Including Berbers and Knots

21st March. AGM

18th April

Nicole De Rushdie will talk about her book Bog Fashion, which is about re-creating bronze and iron age clothing from archaeological finds.

Outside Events

Guild members will be at Hill End Easter Family Day in early April.

Information on further events involving Guild members will be in the next Newsletter.

Until 31st January Shuttle III, a large woven hanging by Margo Selby, is on display at the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham

13th to 25th July British Tapestry Group's 20th anniversary exhibition
Morley Gallery, London

Details and information on wider events can be found at Journal Website [Diary \(journalwsd.org.uk\)](http://Diary (journalwsd.org.uk)) and at <https://beingknitterly.co.uk/uk-yarn-festivals/>

Committee

Kate Gardener - Chair

Karin Piggott - Secretary

Mike Foster - Treasurer

Liz Roberts - Membership Secretary

Anne Hughes – Library, Website

Angela Pawlyn - Newsletter Editor

Sarah Allan

Felicity Record

Co-opted:

Tamara Cartwright-Loebel - 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.

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 April.

No need to wait until then to send me input.