



of
*Weavers, Spinners
and Dyers*

The Shuttle

September 2020

Website: www.kennet-valley-guild.com

Facebook: @kennetvalleyguild

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of the Shuttle is still in the same format as last month, as we are still not printing copies. With no meetings, the cost of posting hard copies would very high, and so we are relying on most members accessing the on-line copy. We are only printing copies for those with no access to the internet. So, I still have more freedom in format than usual.

We have also tried to encourage members to send information about what they have been doing in lockdown, not just spinning, weaving, or dyeing projects. With no meetings, this may help us to keep in touch with each other.

We still have no idea of when we will be able to meet again, so I entreat you all to send me items about how you're keeping sane and busy during the next three months ready for the next edition. We will certainly not be back to normal meetings before the end of the year, so the next Shuttle Issue, will definitely still be in this format.

Lynne Harper, Shuttle Editor

FOR YOUR DIARY

11 th September	Zoom Spinners' Chat: 10:30 start
18 th September	Zoom Weavers' Chat: 10:30 start
Fri 2nd October	Guild Zoom Meeting: 10:30 start 11:00: Many Sources of Inspiration – One Project. Speaker Lorna Goldsmith
Fri 6 th November	Guild Zoom Meeting: 10:30 start 11:00: Estonia Textiles. Speaker Sue Malvern This will talk about weaving, spinning embroidery and many other aspects of textiles.
Sat 5 th December	Guild Zoom Meeting: 10:30 start Christmas Fun! Bring along a mince pie to eat in company, a festive drink (alcoholic or otherwise), wear your Christmas jumper and a party hat. Also, a small thing you've made in lockdown for a show and tell instead of the usual fashion parade.
Dates and times for other Zoom 'Chat' sessions are decided monthly, please watch your emails for details.	

GUILD MEETINGS

Guild meetings 'in the flesh', at Greenham are cancelled until further notice. All of the planned events, as seen above, are currently to be held on Zoom. If you want to join any of these, please let Nicky, the webmaster, kvgwebmaster@gmail.com know so that she is able to send you an invitation to the events.

GUILD DEMONSTRATIONS and GUILD COURSES

In view of the Covid-19 situation there will be no demonstrations, or workshops/courses this year, however we hope that this will be back to normal in 2021, so watch out in forthcoming shuttles for more information.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Dear Everyone

I hope you are all well and keeping safe - where does the time go? Another 3 months has flown by. I know some of you have been venturing out and or meeting family and friends.



I seem to be very busy especially as I've been popping down to Devon to see my dad. It's great that we can put him in our bubble. As well as seeing my dad we can also fit in some canoeing. The sea has been relatively calm, so we have managed some superb coastal trips. We saw some young cormorants (identified by my brother in law) that looked just like penguins. They have white tummies and stand very upright. We also saw a pair of peregrine falcons which were nesting on the

cliff. No young to be seen. We also had a very misty atmospheric paddle among the sea stacks off the coast from Sidmouth.

On the Guild front things are ticking along very nicely with our various Zoom meeting. The separate spinners and weavers' chats are great for a good gossip. Please feel free to join in any of the chats for as long or as little as it suits you. Saturday 5th September will be our first with an external speaker (see full details elsewhere). A massive thank you to Nicky Duncan for all her help, support and organisation of the meetings. After polling all the members to whether a Friday or Saturday would be more popular: of the 28 replies 3 could only do a Friday and 4 could only do a Saturday, the rest could do either. It was decided to keep the weavers and spinners chat on a Friday morning and to alternate the monthly meetings between the Friday and Saturday to try and include everyone.

We are also looking into membership and journal subscription renewal so keep your eyes out for an email soon

I have been knitting a lovely cardigan which is now finished and I'm now blocking it. I bought the most gorgeous hand dyed Merino wool at Unravel. For years I used bits of foam and loads of pins, but on talking to some keen knitting members of The Guild I've treated myself to a jumper board. So, I've spent a part of an afternoon this week wrestling my damp cardigan onto the jumper board!

I've been spinning some fibre I got from Jennifer to make I don't know what and now I've

got to ply it. It's been sitting on my bobbins since March but now I need the bobbins to spin some yarn to knit a seal. I may be having a senior moment and be repeating myself but here goes, my husband made me a blending board so I could blend the fibres to make a mottled seal. So, I've produced some rolags ready for spinning. I now know why you need more than 4 bobbins!



Glass coasters with Maggie's picture

I've also been busy with my glass. Six coasters, of our dog Maggie, are ready for my daughter's birthday. Tony (my husband) is working away in the garden bashing bits of bronze rod to make supports for my latest vase. He hits it hard and then anneals it by heating it up. He really enjoys himself.

A huge thank you to Jenny Gribble. We have now managed to make 2 sour dough loaves and kept the starter alive. The loaves don't seem to hold their shape very well, any suggestions?

Hope you all stay safe and it would be lovely to see you on a Zoom meeting

Louisa Homden

COLLECTION OF MEMBERSHIP FEES 2021

We have now reached that time of year when we remind you that we will soon be collecting membership fees for 2021. As with everything else this year, we have had to make some changes to the way we normally do things so please read the following carefully.

JOURNAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 2021

The Committee has agreed that we will not be taking out a group Journal subscription for 2021 but will be encouraging members to take out an individual subscription directly with the Association. A discounted rate is available if you are a Guild member and this will cost you £18 per annum (including postage) instead of £16 and will ensure that you get your copy promptly.

After the lockdown, the Committee agreed that for the remainder of 2020 the cost of postage of Journals would be met from Guild funds. This is currently £1.40 per copy. With no income at the moment we cannot continue to do this for 2021. By taking out a direct discounted subscription for 2021 the postage comes out at only 50p per issue and is therefore the cheapest way for individuals to pay postage

We suggest that you wait until you have received your December issue before taking out your 2021 subscription to ensure continuity of issues. The online subscription form can be found at:

<https://journalwsd.org.uk/subscribe>

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2021

The collection of 2021 membership fees will begin in **October 2020** with a deadline of **20th November**. This will ensure that everyone will be covered by the Guild insurance ready for the start of 2021.

At the last AGM in 2019, it was agreed that the Guild would absorb the cost of the 25p increase in Association affiliation fee for one year with a discussion on the increase of membership fees to take place at the 2020 AGM. Current circumstances have meant that we have had to postpone the AGM to next April so the membership fee will only rise this year to cover the cost of the increased affiliation fee.

The membership fees for 2021 are:

Individual:	£20.25
Family:	£25.25
Senior Citizen:	£15.25

Payment

We would prefer that as many fees as possible are paid via a bank transfer directly to the KVGWSD account although we will accept cheques from those who are not able to pay in this way. **We will not be accepting cash payments this year.**

Membership Forms

All members will be required to complete a new membership form for 2021. We are currently exploring the possibility of completing an online form to save postage, but a paper copy will also be available.

Details of how to make a payment and copies of the membership form will be sent out via a Guild email (or by post for those who do not have email) before the 1st October. Please check your emails regularly!

Janet Dunbar

SHOW-AND-TELL

July Lockdown Zoom Show and Tell

On Friday 3rd July we had our first ever 'Zoom' Show and Tell which proved to be a great success. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces after such a long break. There were more than 20 members logged in to the session and we were ably kept on track by Nicky and Louisa.

Everybody has been very busy during lockdown and it quickly became clear that it would be impractical to list all the projects completed or in progress so instead here is just a flavour of the meeting.

Many participants have been taking the opportunity to dig deep into their stash and use

things long forgotten or to complete those UFO's that have been haunting us. Rosie dug out and spun a Jacobs fleece acquired from Gill Meadows 10+ years ago, Yolande has finished a tapestry and Daphne is crocheting a multicoloured waistcoat using oddments of handspun yarn left over from previous projects. Some have completed large projects. Pam was relieved to finish her crochet rug which involved making over 130 motifs – a real marathon. Lynne Harper has woven a length of herringbone tweed to make a jacket for her husband.

Lots of knitting and crochet has been going on with socks featuring highly. Janet is well into her sockathon with pair no. 6 underway. She is now a convert of the 'magic loop' technique. Maggie, Yolande, Lesley and Rosie have also been producing socks. Jennifer has rediscovered crochet thanks to her husband who has made her a finger splint to compensate for a missing tendon on the vital tensioning finger. The result is a series of blankets for her grandchildren and a 3D 'seashell' basket. Sue Davis is making a crochet blanket which will feature cute creatures – so far a fox which will be joined by a raccoon, an owl a hedgehog

New ideas have been tried. Pat Christmas has been having fun dyeing yarn with crepe paper and is also having a go at spinning art yarn. Louisa is knitting fair isle and trying steeking for the first time. She is not looking forward to the cutting!

It looks as though we have a head start on our 2021 exhibition 'I must go down to the seas again' with projects already completed or underway. Freya is spinning skeins on the theme 'sunset over the sea' and Lynne Harper is spinning yarn to embroider onto a woven background to represent images from the poem "Cargoes".

There was a discussion about blocking completed projects. Stefanie showed us her interlocking foam mats which are sold as playmats for children but are great for blocking items of all sizes. Maggie had a splendid free-standing wooden jumper board which came from Jamieson and Smith of Shetland. Janet swears by her sock blocker which is being well used at the moment.

Of our core skills there has been plenty of weaving – Nicky is exploring the idea of designing on the loom with her rigid heddle loom and Rosie is still making 'Jeremiah' scarves; spinners have been busy as already mentioned and Maggie was spinning some corriedale/silk from Hilltop Cloud as we were zooming; Lesley has been keeping her granddaughters entertained with tie-dyed T-shirts.

On top of all this activity many members (Louisa and Jan Slater to name just two) have been helping the Covid effort by making scrubs, masks, bags and other items for the NHS.

I know I have been unable to mention everything shown during our meeting but this is nothing to do with the quality of the work and much more about the quantity of items and my poor note taking – I never learnt shorthand. I hope that sometime in the near future we will be able to see a lot of these projects and many others for real – fingers crossed!

Lynne Bond

GUILD TROPHIES

No trophies have been awarded since the last shuttle, it is difficult to see how to do this when we cannot meet, as photographs wouldn't show all necessary for judging. Feel is such an important part of the items that we produce.

It looks as if we won't get the chance to meet again this year, so it is likely that the trophies for 2020 will be left, and the next awards will be in 2021.

Jennifer Thompson

The Kennet Valley Guild Embraces Zoom

We have held quite a few meetings on Zoom. There are two types of meetings, the chats, and the Guild Meetings. The former meetings are fairly unstructured, and we sit spinning or weaving, or doing other craft while connected to each other via zoom. It's a bit like a social spin, but instead of sitting next to each other, we see each other on the screens. It can be a bit chaotic, as only one person can be heard at a time, and sometimes more than one are trying to speak. (I can hear your astonishment at that thought.)

The Guild meetings are different. They are held on the Saturday that would be a Guild meeting, or the previous Friday, and are more structured. The first one was a show and tell, and there was a lot to show as it had been so long since we had all seen each other. At the second Guild meeting five members, including myself, gave short talks, and at the next one, we will be having a talk on spinning nettles.

Both types of meeting are good fun, so 'come along' and join us and try them out. Just send an email to Nicky and she will send you an invitation, I hope to see you there.

Lynne Harper

ARTICLES

Spinning Kala Cotton

India has grown and exported cotton for millennia developing world-leading expertise in spinning, weaving, dyeing and printing very fine cotton cloths such as muslin. But the history of cotton in India is fraught. British exploitation of Indian expertise in cotton manufacture underpinned the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire, ruining the local industry. In the early twentieth century Mahatma Gandhi set about reclaiming cotton for India in his campaign for independence, promoting the home spinning and weaving of cotton, as part of the



Weaving
in Khamir

Swadeshi movement. Nonetheless, by 1947 cotton grown in India was dominated by American strains (e.g. *hirsutum*), and since the beginning of the 21st century by genetically modified crops. And as everyone knows growing cotton is detrimental to the environment. In particular, it consumes an enormous amount of water.

That's the reason why coming across Kala cotton at the NGO Khamir (<https://www.khamir.org/>) in the drought-prone Kachchh region of Gujarat was very interesting. Kala is the brand name given to an indigenous or desi cotton called wagad (*G. arboreum*). It produces a small boll, the fluffy clumps surrounding seeds that become cotton fibre. The yield is low, and its staple is short. The makes is coarse. But it is also resilient, only needs rain, not irrigation, doesn't need pesticides and has little need for fertilisers, so it's cheaper for a farmer to produce, compensating for its lower yield.

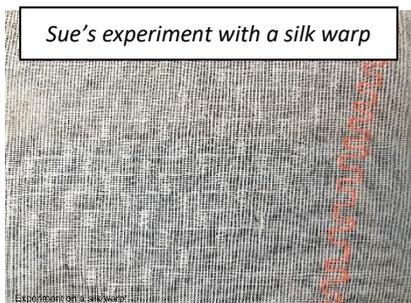
Khamir have promoted wagad, arranged to have it certified organic, given it the brand name Kala, and developed new ways of spinning and weaving this cotton - it's difficult to weave. And now they support about 2,500 farmers and around 250 weavers in a production chain that is local and interrelated. They've found markets for their cloth with contemporary designers in urban centres.

At the end of a long day on a textile tour of Gujarat, visiting different producers and workshops, we dropped in on Khamir. I found their beautiful finely woven scarfs, that had a slightly coarse feel, in the shop. I went in search of the weavers, and then I asked at the shop if I could buy some of the cotton yarn. That's how I came to lug a 1.45kg cone of my precious cotton for the rest of the trip. It cost me 400 rupees, or about £4.50.

I obviously had to try weaving this, but unfortunately lockdown arrived. I had calculated its yield as 35710m/kg. So, it's very fine, and as it's a singles yarn not very strong and quite pesky - it plys back on itself at the slightest opportunity. Weavers at Khamir size the yarn before using it in a warp. But lock-down has made flour a bit scarce! Instead I've been weaving it on a 2/60 silk warp, sett at 15 epcm - about 45 epi. It's proved difficult to find the right beat, and I've sometimes woven some picks of cotton, with one of 2/60 silk. It benefits from being lightly starched when washed

and finished. Some of my work involves extra weft patterning. I've got a very long way to go before I can match the expertise of the weavers at Khamir. The experiments continue!

Sue Malvern



Member's Other Hobbies

An occasional series, which started with Louisa's Glass work. If you have a hobby in addition to the times consuming Spinning/Weaving/Dyeing please write an article for future Shuttles, and let others learn about what you do, and why it appeals to you.

Teleidoscopes – Jennifer Thompson

When I gave up full time teaching I was finally able to do something that I had hankered after since I was a little girl. I joined a City and Guilds course in Embroidery. My nan had been a wonderful embroiderer as had her friend, 'Aunty' Doris. I still have one of her tablecloths and the back is as beautiful as the front.

My introduction to the course was a bit of a shock. My friend was about to start Part 2 but needed a lift to Calne because the course had recently moved there from Chippenham (which was easy to get to by train). I had a car!!

So, she very kindly, arranged for me to do my Part 1 in the Part 2 class! I almost gave up at the first hurdle. They were all amazing, producing innovative work the like of which I had never seen before. I could do running stitch, back stitch

and chain stitch! However, my friend (who needed the lift badly) persuaded me to carry on and it was wonderful. I loved my Fridays which gave me the opportunity to forget for a whole day, every week, all the teaching I was doing and everything going on in a household with four teenagers.

I very quickly decided that interpreting nature was what I really enjoyed and spent a very happy few years doing just that

amongst all of the other techniques we were learning. One of my favourite items is still the lamp I made to represent a rainforest flower. It is stitched on a metal

mesh base that I made on a blacksmithing course. Stitched with silk and rayon threads and peacock hurls.



Rainforest Flower lamp

Inspirations and work in progress



After City and Guilds three of us decided to do an HNC in stitched textiles at GLOSCAT. We had to choose a main project to work on through the two-year course alongside all of the other sections. I chose 'A country lane'. There were lots of dyeing experiments, designing from natural shapes and objects and designing items for my daughters' weddings but one of my favourite parts was my work on **Teleidoscopes**. A Teleidoscope is like a Kaleidoscope but without an object chamber.

Instead you look through the glass prisms at the world around you. I decided to make what could be described as vignettes which would incorporate the scope and also the objects to look at. I chose to interpret the Four Seasons although, even



Winter ↗
 ⇔ Autumn
 Spring ↘



today, I am still working on Summer because I can't get the embroidered silk flowers and leaves to look the way I want them to. Bindweed is proving particularly difficult

I made contact with some scope makers in the USA and also, very serendipitously, met a scope maker at a craft show in Duxford. He very kindly sold me the components to make the mirrored innards and also some of his 'seconds'. He makes scopes from recycled wood but if he isn't satisfied with the finish they become a waste product and he won't sell them to the general public. This suited me very well since I was going to cover the wood over

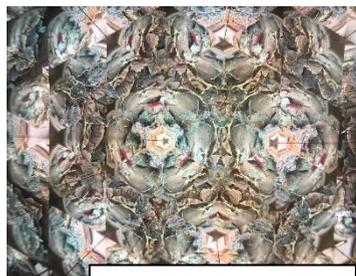
anyway and I wanted to be stitching, not cutting mirror glass.

All of the flowers, leaves, berries etc on my scopes are made from dyed and painted silk. The natural dyeing



View through Spring
 Taleidoscope

experiments came in very useful but silk paint also gave me good results, so



View through Autumn
 Taleidoscope

I used a mix of the two techniques. The scope covers, meant to look like small branches, are made from batting and stretchy velvet which is dyed, bonded, painted, soldered, and

embroidered. I was aiming for a realistic look and was very pleased one day when someone tried to brush away the small twig brooch I was wearing, thinking that I had a twig caught in my coat.



1st attempt at Silk flowers

I really enjoy looking through my scopes. The photos taken through the eyepiece don't really do it justice but will maybe give you an idea of what my aim was.

I still love experimenting with bits of silk and wadding to make flowers, berries and fruits. Ongoing projects include conkers, acorns, snowdrops and the elusive Bindweed. Nature is very beautiful and extremely hard to replicate but I am having good fun trying!

GUILD EXHIBITION 2021 - 'I must go down to the seas again'

Don't forget next year's exhibition, we need something to look forward to. We may be able to do more now, but Winter is coming, so those of you who have been concentrating on your gardens so far during Lockdown will be able to spend more time spinning, weaving or dyeing in the coming months.

Remember, although the title theme for the show is shown above, it covers any aspect of 'Sea'. So you can think of

- seashores – piers, icecreams, punch and judy, rock pools, sand castles.....
- marine life – real or fantasy
- weather – stormy seas, sunny seas..
- industry – dockyards, oil wells, ships....
- coast – cliff views, beaches, coves, marshes...
- anything else vaguely sea related



Louisa's Ply Split Jellyfish

Your inputs can be simply inspired by the theme (using colours, shapes, texture...) or could be more direct, for example a tapestry of a scene). However, all items should, ideally, be either spun, dyed, woven, or any combination of the three. Note, we take the concept of weaving broadly, so it could be lace, braids etc.

I know that some members are already working for this, and some have finished items, so don't be left behind. It's very easy to procrastinate – I'm an expert at it – but it is less stress if you get started early (or so I'm told!)

As usual, there will also be a place for items that do not directly relate to the theme, but it would be great to get a lot that do.

Lynne Harper

SEAMEN'S SCARVES – a GUILD PROJECT for the EXHIBITION.

Thanks to our on-line profile, Nicky has been contacted by a company who had purchased some fibre for a purpose (we don't know what!) and has now finished with it. They want to get rid of it, and wondered if we, the Kennet Valley Guild, would be interested. It is wool prepared and ready for spinning – 9 Kg of it! (Rosie, does this remind you of anything?) it is all white, so could easily be dyed. Nicky wondered if this could be turned into some form of Guild challenge. At the same time I had been reading about Seamen's scarves, as a project related to our theme, and the two sides seemed to naturally go together. How? you ask.

Nicky has offered to split the fibre up into 300gm backs, which should be more than enough to provide yarn for a scarf. The scarves are not large and the basic patterns are very simple, so it should not take too long to spin and knit one. The original colour is not suitable as it would get too dirty, so the yarn will be dyed. You can dye your own, or there are several members who are willing to dye yarn for others to then knit.



*9 Kg wool fibre
for spinning...*



SEAFARER'S SCARF

When choosing colours we are asked to remember that most mariners are men, and their work environments can get dirty. Seafarers and mariners tend to love bright colours and the only colour stipulation is to avoid pastels, as those delicate colours show too much dirt and grime. However, we can add strips, any other colour combinations. The simplest scarf, shown here, can be managed by beginner knitters, but there are more complex patterns available.

The common detail in the designs is the rib around the neck, which provides extra warmth around the neck without extra bulk. You can find then patterns on Ravelry, on the site of the Seamen's church <https://seamenschurch.org/christmas-at-sea>, or elsewhere on-line, and I have a book with many patterns in of which I can share details if you are interested.

We would like to have a display of the scarves in the exhibition, and then send them off for the 2021 Christmas at Sea, so will make sure that anyone interested has the details, and can provide the pattern to the simple scarf shown.

If you are interested in taking a bag of the fibre to join in with this challenge, please let Nicky know so that she can work with you to provide you with a bag of the fibre (– or more if you wish). If you are willing to knit, but are not a spinner, or you don't feel up to dyeing the fibre, please let Nicky or me know and we will put you in touch with someone to work with.

This is not a competition, but a Guild project, and I look forward seeing to the results.

Lynne Harper

Local Sheepwash



*Lincoln Longwool
Sculpture*



My son and family recently moved to a small, rural village called Branston about 4 miles from Lincoln. Imagine my delight whilst exploring the surroundings when I came upon a beautiful sculpture that was commissioned in honour of The Lincoln Longwool Sheep. It is called "Lincoln Longwool Sheep heading for the Sheepwash" and is by James Sutton.

The Sheepwash referred to was situated on the other side of the road where the brook still runs through. It was excavated in 2006 and many of the walls and structures found to be in good order.

It was in 1896 that permission was first given by the Parish Council for the 'washdike' to be used for the washing of sheep. The area was also hired out for other purposes, such as the Branston 'Feast'. In the 1930s its function was declining, and the Parish Council minutes of 1930 lists suggestions for a discontinuance of sheep washing and replacing the area with seats or swings and other amenities for youngsters. Naturally, the farmers were reluctant to give it up, with its final demise not until 1948. Not surprisingly today it is part of the carpark although some of the features of the original structures have been incorporated or represented on the new surface.

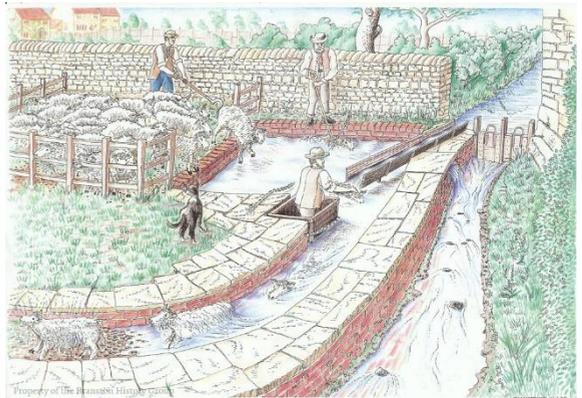
Information boards tell us that it was a popular amenity and could be hired out as follows.....

1896 – 6d per score for parishioners and 8d per score for others

1923 – 9d a score for residents and 1shilling a score for outsiders

1933 – 7s 6d per 100 for ratepayers and 10s per 100 sheep for non-ratepayers.

It was indeed a lovely surprise to find such a 'woolly' connection with my family's new home. All information taken from the display boards on site



Pam Caine

MEMBER'S LOCKDOWN NEWS/TALES

Hamish Tours de Fleece.



*The results of Hamish's
Tour de Fleece*

Although Boris would like us all to get on our bikes Hamish decided to take the woolly option and got on his spinning wheel for part one of the Tour de Fleece which took place from June 27th until July 18th. He joined the spinners in a Ravelry group and along with the other participants posted his results every day. The event was a lovely relaxed event unlike some on Ravelry which were very competitive - one spinner produced 5 miles of yarn!

The Tour included rest days and challenge days just like the Tour de France and these were timetabled so everyone could have a break as wanted. Needless to say Hamish "forgot" to follow this time table and just spun away to his heart's content although there were two days when life got in the way and he didn't spin at all - these were his rest days!

Hamish got through a chunk of his spinning stash with a bag of Gotland that he'd forgotten he had, 2 bags of gradient Corridale/mulberrysilk/ nylon in Aurora from Hill Top Cloud and the merino/silk that he had solar dyed earlier in lockdown. He also polished off two skeins of Shepherds Hut mixed fibres and has managed to lose one of them. He is looking forward to Tour de Fleece part two In August as an excuse to spin everyday again.

He also managed to knit two pairs of socks and a cardigan.....

What has Rosie been doing in Lockdown – Rosie Price

As you would expect the first bit was spent weaving lots of scarves but that stopped as soon as the weather warmed up.

For years I had said I would spin one of the many fleeces that seem to be breeding in my garage and now finally I am doing just that!! I found the most wonderful Jacob fleece, bought from Gill Meadows probably at least 10 years ago, which has been in a black plastic sack on the

back shelf. It is in great condition and NO moth. The staple is about 2 ½ -3 inches so I have flick carded it, 4 hours yesterday!

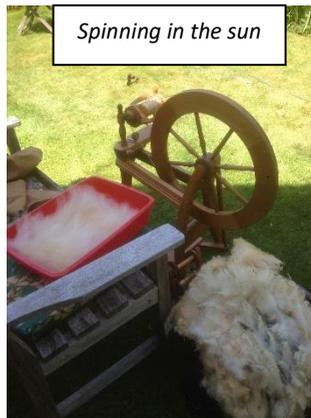


Prepared fleece

*Fleeces waiting
for work*



I remember Jan saying take time over the carding and it will repay you as the spinning will go well and how right she was. Started in the middle of July and have nearly finished the white and am starting on the brown/white. 21 skeins of varying sizes are in the box waiting to be washed. Wash it all at the same time Jan said, must be over 30 years since she said that so memory is still good!!!



Spinning in the sun



Working outside

Certainly the wonderful weather has helped, 34 degrees was a bit hot although it did mean I was out spinning at 8.20 one morning!! The plan is to keep going while the weather is ok, as all carding has to be done in the garden. I am hoping to weave at least 1 blanket for the children. Madness or what?!

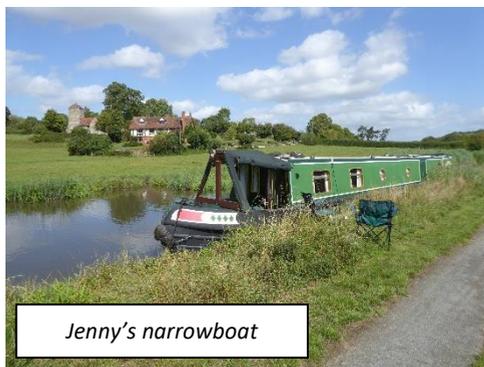
Thank goodness we have our wonderful hobby to get us through this difficult time. Do try to join us for the Zoom meetings it is lovely to see everyone and hear what they have been doing. Nicky will help you,

kvgwebmaster@gmail.com. Hope to see you soon.

What I've been doing – Jenny Gribble

Here we are in the 'new normal' but some things are like they used to be.

We have not been away on the boat this year and have been missing it so in the middle of August we got away for 4 nights, met up with boating friends and enjoyed picking damsons and blackberries from the hedgerows. In addition to blackberry and apple pies and damson jam we have been making chutneys from beans, courgettes and cucumbers. We now have the beginnings of a glut of tomatoes so that will be our next preserving project. The boat is moored on the Worcester and Birmingham canal with Oddingley church in the background.



Jenny's narrowboat

We met up with our Bristol grandchildren and their Dad at Buscot Park after 6 months

which was lovely, they remembered us!! and had grown.



Completed cushion

On the craft front I completed an 'old fashioned' needlepoint I was given by my sister-in-law and made it into a cushion with a homemade braid, made on the Madurai, using the same colours. A jacket for friends a little girl was completed using a different style pattern.



Child's jacket

My main project for the last couple of months has been to improve my spinning. I would like to be able to spin yarn and use it to knit and weave. Rosie and Louisa recommended the book *Yarn-i-tec-ture* to help me on my way. I have just received it and it will be my bedtime reading.



Spinning inspiration

I invested in a quantity of Corriedale tops and am very pleased with the results. I am also carding and spinning a black alpaca fleece which I hope will eventually become a jumper for Bernie.

Winter is approaching so we will need to be indoors, but we are lucky to have lots of crafts to keep us busy. Hoping to see everyone again soon.

His Country needs Hamish.

On a horrendously hot day in August Hamish arrived at the village hall in the picturesque village of Crawley near Winchester to take part in the filming of an episode of "In The Factory". He had been invited to be part of the "Comfort Committee" knitting socks for World War 1 (re-enactment) soldiers. Given the mid-thirties temperatures Hamish was hugely relieved not to have to dress up in period costume. The "Committee" consisted of 6 knitters, sitting socially distanced, as well as programme presenter Ruth Goodman and knitting history expert Joyce Meader. As Hamish and the other knitters patiently





Hamish – and Ruth!

knitted their way through army green wool on 4 double pointed needles (circular needles weren't patented until 1918) Joyce talked Ruth through her exhibition of WW1 knitting, patterns and knitting equipment.

Filming is not one continuous event but stops and starts as the light changes, an aircraft goes over or someone's phone goes off but both Ruth and Joyce showed an amazing ability to pick up the thread of their talk again but word it slightly differently so none of us got bored. Ruth is a knitter and the conversation and filming continued as she joined us producing the socks whilst we listened to a knitting song designed in the 1910s to encourage

the knitters. Hamish thought that the song was such a dirge that it would surely encourage the knitters only by their being promised that it would stop! A 78 disc was played on a vintage gramophone with the tune "Pack Up Your Troubles" which everyone sang along to, but the knitting song was played on an iphone, the film will not show this!

The point of the film is Kitchener Stitch. At first the troops in the trenches had to make do with the seam created by a three needle cast off along the toes of their socks but along with the wet conditions, mud and trenchfoot this caused a lot of discomfort and foot problems. General Herbert Kitchener (Secretary of State for War 1914-16) became aware of this and asked that a different finish be found. It is not sure whether he devised or inspired a grafting method that was developed to give the smooth finish needed and this became known as Kitchener Stitch. Joyce had some examples to show the difference and a small sample for Ruth to try the graft herself. Unfortunately, the sample was only 12 stitches and was in a bulky, splitty yarn so Ruth struggled. She took the instructions away with her, however, so Hamish is hoping to see her results when the show is televised.



Hamish with war patterns



Pack up your troubles...

The final section of the filming was of troops setting off on a march. Joyce had knitted a sock with a seam and another with grafting and Hamish understands the plan was to get the soldiers to see which one they found the most comfortable. The poor chaps were dressed in wool uniforms in heat so strong that the officers waxed moustache was melting so it was decided they would only march a few hundred yards. Hamish wondered if this would give the same

effect as several months of trench warfare. He is looking forward to the show's airing to find out.

Hamish thoroughly enjoyed his day, it almost felt like life was getting back on track, and learned several interesting facts including that the Tudors used a circular toe on their socks which were knitted toe up or top down depending on the knitter. He also found out that a gramophone and its trumpet can be carried on a motorbike. Fibre crafts are so educational.

What I've been doing – Sue Bramwell

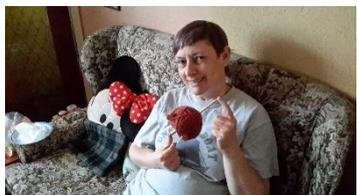
I have been busy, and here are some of the results:



Some mixed fibre on a Turkish spindle, and the finished yarn which will likely become mittens.



My current spinning project, Shetland roving, spun on my Haldane Shetland.



Another Turkish spin. I used this one to try different winding on methods.



The grey is a new-to-me fibre. Portland batt.



My first successful attempt at solar dyeing using Dr Oetker gel. I had tried Tesco food colouring, but it rinsed out

Phew, not everything, but the most interesting bits I hope. Stay safe. Sue.

Spinning Dyed Silk Rovings – Lesley Dunn

I have a few bags of dyed silk from the Katie Weston Dyeing Day that I did with Kennet Valley Guild. After two years, I decided I had better get a move on to start spinning the bags of rovings stashed in my craft room, so not to feel guilty that I was neglecting it all. Make room, said my conscience. (Ha ha!)

I had begun to make a start during one of the earlier Berks Guild spinning group meetings but was getting in a bit of a tangle spinning straight from the roving. Not a good idea. I had halved the whole length, which was good, as I can spin two bobbins with each the same amount. Taking my wheel out on the patio to begin to spin, I had one of those eureka moments when I realised that I could try cutting short lengths and carding those. It worked! I continued cutting and carding and got a basketful of respectful silk 'chunks' to spin. (See below)

One thing, I put pieces of kitchen roll in between to separate the colours. Not too good an idea, as the silk attached itself to the paper. But, carefully peeling back the paper towel, it worked. The silk did sort of squish together, but as I lifted the top piece, it gently came away. I tried gathering the piece to hold. Bit of a mess doing it that way. But putting the length on my knee and lifting one end to join, actually fared better than gathered. The spinning thin became a lot easier, like making a mini roving as I spun. So that's what I do now.



The silk: cut, carded and waiting to be spun

Note! Do not card outside when there is a breeze!

PPS. Deary me, it goes on for ever. No way does silk want to be a thick yarn.

Beginner's Blunders – Nicky Duncan

I really love weaving but as a beginner, I'm prone to making mistakes...

Blunder 1 – fine 100% acrylic warp

The yarn was fine, and I fancied a fine warp for my next weaving experiment. It warped up ok on the 24" rigid heddle with no particular issues. However, once I began to weave the set up, I realised how 'sticky' the yarn was.

Subsequently, I had to check every shed throughout the project to make sure that the fibres were separated properly. I won't do that again!

Blunder 2 - always check that the project yarn is available before going too far

After warping, and leaving a centre gap, which I thought I might sew an extra thick fancy yarn through at the finishing stage, I was keen to get started.

I'd chosen King Cole Opium Palette White Russian - a random coloured fancy yarn with very obvious thickness variances from thin cord to open woolly texture. I used it on my pin loom and it looked very



Weaving with King Cole Opium Palette White Russian

promising. I wove about 8" and feeling happy with the result went online to buy some more.

Oh dear! This yarn was so popular that there was absolutely none to be had online or in my local shops. I really wanted to weave so waiting simply wasn't an option - I threw in the towel and went to Plan B.

Plan B was to consign the project to pure experiment and get some pick up sticks to try various patterns and textures within it but it seemed like the world had run out of pick up sticks for a 24" rigid heddle - honestly I think the universe was conspiring against me!

On to Plan C...

Blunder 3 - old yarn on a cone might have faded...

Having been given a large cone of a beautiful heathered 25% wool 75% acrylic mix in my favourite green/blue colourway, Plan C was looking good.

However, on filling my shuttle stick a second time (I was already 6" into the revised weave) I realised that the colour was much deeper. The cone must have been sat in sunlight for part of its life and the outer layers were faded. Another lesson learned when using up ancient yarns.

Blunder 4 - fill the gap

The gap that I had originally left in the centre of the warp to thread a thick yarn through just wasn't working at all with the faded cone yarn, so I hatched a plan. Sue Malvern's book she'd bought about weighted looms inspired me to tie a double thread to the beam and hang it over the back with some pebbles to weigh it to the correct tension. This actually worked quite well although it took me a while to make it less obvious.



Final, acceptable result

Blunder 5 - unequal selvages

On the right side the selvage was very 'thin' but on the left it became quite noticeable and actually really nice. I still can't work out why this happened, but I will pay attention to causing the threads to cluster a bit.

Blunder 6 - the one at the beginning and the end

In my frustration about not being able to use my original yarn of choice and my impatience to get on and just weave something, I'd forgotten to hemstitch a line at the start of the weaving. Luckily, I still had the error sections of weaving in place and so I was able to do it retrospectively. It took ages to deconstruct the original fancy yarn section after the work was off the loom. I couldn't bring myself to cut it.

Every cloud...

This piece has tested me it's true but has taught me so much too. There are a few things

I've decided I love and will aim to get more of these into my future weaving projects.

- **Heathered yarn:** I just love the subtle mixes within these yarns and have ordered some gorgeous ones for my stash.
- **Tabby/Plain Weave:** It's very simple, but just looks so good. I like the fact that it's balanced and so versatile.
- **The weighted thread:** I'd love to try more weighted loom experiments. I knew that all of the stones with holes in them I've been collecting for years would come in handy one day!
- **Noticeable Selvedges:** I really like the way a wide selvedge looks on a piece of cloth.

The way things are going, Beginners Blunders could well become a series! Happy weaving everyone. Nicky :-)

Lockdown Friend – Pam Caine

I was lucky enough to win the raffle in February and chose to have an African Violet with a lilac frilly-petalled flower. I assume some very green fingered member had grown it. I just wanted to say how lovely it has been. It started flowering just as lockdown started and has continued to do so ever since, so has been my lockdown friend greeting me from the kitchen windowsill every morning.



Friendly African Violet

Many thanks to whoever brought it in for the raffle!

What's on my loom? – Lorna C Goldsmith



Black Weaving

Being a bit distractable, it often happens that I end up working on more than one thing at the time, never mind the knitting project that waits for bouts of TV watching. I have just finished a largish black piece using leather (40x60 cm). It was very enjoyable weaving that, I loved the way the rug yarn worked with boucle mohair and lurex weaving yarns. Now to work out how to hang it.....

At the moment I am working on a small white tapestry that is at a sett much finer than I usually use and it is slowly, very slowly, progressing. I

am not the most patient person in the world, and as I work as well I like to feel I am achieving something in my spare time, which is why I usually work on something a bit more chunky that builds up more quickly ('quick' is a relative term in tapestry weaving to say the least!). Although the



Fine Sett White tapestry

fineness of the white tapestry is interesting, it is quite flawed - I have been using homespun yarn mainly, all manner of fibres in the weft, but mainly wool and silk. Homespun can at times be uneven and so it splays out the warp and has surprisingly made the piece wider as the weaving progresses, rather than narrowing which is the most common problem in tapestry weaving). And if I think about the weaving speed, or lack thereof, this piece is



Greens sample tapestry

quite testing: weaving for say, 3-4 hours in the afternoon on this piece which is about 21 cm wide I manage just about 3-4 cm across its width – so either I am a slow weaver or the thing just demands a different way of thinking about making. The making process itself becomes the thing, I can't force it or become too impatient for it to be finished.

To move things on a bit I am therefore also weaving a sample in greens with a bit of blue, brown and purple at a more sensible sett. I am quite excited about this, as it is in preparation for something large. And here I am striving for a thicker weft that leads to a bigger bead and a statement textural effect. But more about that in October's talk, *Many Sources of Inspiration – One Project*.

What I've been doing – Elly Drew

I'm not a word Smith, preferring to let my actions and activities speak for themselves. Since lockdown started I have struggled to stay focused on one project and with an initial plan to use up my stash of craft supplies to make space in my room for spinning I have slowly progressed.

Finished off my epic Kaffe Fassett project for 2019, it needs hanging then I can photograph it properly. Then I started making a few Christmas presents. However, I couldn't wait for Christmas so arranged a Hermes collect and deliver. I know how important post has become for me, so I wanted to share a bit of that joy. I had managed embroidery, knitting and crocheted items. I admit I could not compete with play doh for a 2 year old - oh listening to him explain his creative process with the play doh garden set I sent him was a joy. I can see creative journeys in our future.

I had set aside a rather large pile of yarn which, when held, 'did not make me happy', so I despatched that to a local care home whose residents were running low on yarn.

As soon as there were signs of spring I was out in the garden, using crochet and a rose arch as a support for runner beans. I dual-purposed an obelisk as an art easel and spent time in the garden painting. I seem to have spent most of this summer #undertheshadeofthemagnoliatree and sharing photos on Instagram #LuvElly (hence the hashtags). I still haven't embraced zoom. Its low rated security has been a turn off for me.

I have experimented with needle felting to repair a jumper and for miniature artworks, knitted socks and jumpers, I started a Keiran Foley shawl, it was meant to be a knit along with a friend, but she still hasn't started. English paper piecing is now part of my weekly routine, got to have a long-term project. Yesterday I finished my first patchwork quilt started 17 years ago.

A friend of mine decided to de-stash her yarn as she had lost her knitting mojo so I adopted her small stash and knitted her a Stephen West Penguino cardigan before sending the rest of the yarn to the care home. Interesting to work in someone else's colour palette.

My next plan is to create a box of my novelty yarns wound onto pirns. I have tried to make pirns before, but my yarn just seems to slide off. September I'm starting an online course with The Mercerie, 'homage to the granny square'. I'm hoping to have the space to be able to blend and spin my own yarn for this one. I continue with my 52 stitched stories project and have enjoyed following the Facebook group. Strangely, I have used so much of my stash, but I don't seem to have made all the space I was planning for. Stay safe, Elly.

BIRTHDAYS

We normally acknowledge birthdays that are happening in the following month during our Guild Business meeting each month, Unfortunately we have missed the last 3 months, and will miss the next 3 months, So, on behalf of KVGWSD, I would like to wish all our members felicitations for their birthdays.

Other Snippets gathered by the Editor

Lots of people I have heard from have been spending a lot of time in their gardens or walking thorough parks/countryside, but the following are some bits of news apart from that.

- Marion wanted to point out that the picture of the loom in the last shuttle was of Margo Selby's big professional loom, not Marion's own.
- Carol Hubbard has finished her first weaving sampler (done in two parts) and also started learning to use a spindle. She also gave a very interesting talk on her dyeing activities on the August Guild Zoom meeting.
- Sally Sheppard has made many shawls and blankets, including some for Rosie's charities, and some for gifts.
- Freya has been spinning and using the yarn to knit a long knee-length woollen jacket, this is on hold for a while until she can obtain some more of the fibre, as she slightly underestimated the amount needed.
- Sue Davies has been moving on from simple corner-to-corner crocheted blankets, to some that, while still crocheted in the corner to corner fashion, contain pictures of animals.

If you haven't sent any information about how you are getting on, remember that there is another Shuttle in December, and I'd love to hear from you, even if it's only a couple of lines, or a phone call. Any photos will be wonderful as well, but it helps to have a few words to go with them.

CRAFT SOCIALS

All below are currently cancelled, but we hope that sometime in the future they will be able to start again.

Aldbourn Braid Days

Aldbourn Braid days are cancelled until further notice at the moment.

Please contact **Sal Shepherd** for details.

Weavers' Chat

The Guild weavers normally meet at Speen Parish Hall, Newbury, RG14 1RJ on the last Saturday of the month. Currently we are limited to only meeting online. (See earlier in the newsletter.) It is called "Weavers' Chat", but braiders can come with inkles, marudai etc and lace makers with pillows as it is all weaving. In fact all Guild members are very welcome to come along to see what we are doing and find out what weaving is all about, either virtually, or in reality once the situation changes.

Moulsford Spinning & Craft Group

In normal times we meet on the **3rd Thursday of every month** at Moulsford Pavilion. There are usually spinners, weavers, felters, a basketmaker and knitters there so do come and join us. For more information contact **Linda Scurr** or **Rosie Price**

Social Spinning

This is a regular gathering in a member's home where you are welcome to turn up with your spinning wheel, spindle or whatever! It is always advisable to check with the host to ensure that there is no change before setting off. For more information contact **Chris Fletcher**.

Newbury Crafters

Newbury Crafters normally meet on the **3rd Saturday of every month** at Speen Parish Hall, Newbury, RG14 1RJ from 2 – 5 pm. Come along to this social afternoon with your own craft project and meet people with other craft interests for an exchange of ideas.

For more details contact **Sue Davies**

The copy deadline for the December 2020 issue of the Shuttle is 29th November 2020. The email address is kvshuttleeditor@gmail.com