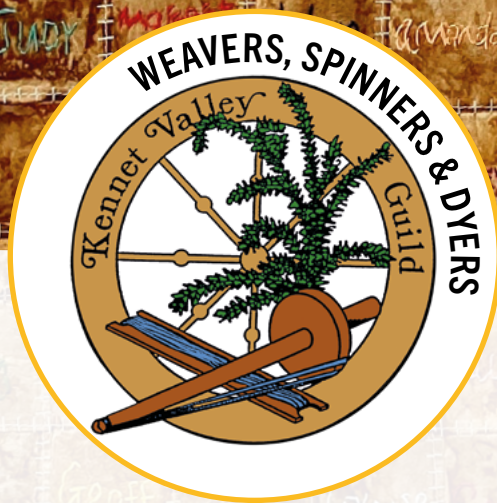




The Shuttle

September 2025

kennet-valley-guild.com



@kennetvalleyguild

Guild meeting dates for your diary 2025

Sat 4th Oct / Guild Meeting

AM: Social.

PM: My Textile Journey - a talk by Guild member, Jennifer Thompson.

Picking up my first knitting needles at 5 with my Nan, learning new crafts for and with my children (in school and my own) through the 60s and 70s, following my dreams and learning about textiles with City and Guilds and HNC and beginning a new, fantastic and ongoing journey after joining the Guild.

Sat 1st Nov / Guild Meeting

AM: Social.

PM: Daniel Harris of the London Cloth Company - talking about his weaving career and the purchase and restoration of the derelict Elvet mill in South Wales.

Sat 6th Dec / Guild Meeting

A social Christmas get together with a shared lunch.

PM: Annual Fashion Show. Fun and games.

Guild Meetings 2025

The typical agenda for a Guild meeting is:

10.00 am	Hall open for sociable crafts
1.00 pm	Guild Business Meeting
1.30 pm	Show and Tell
2.00 pm	Speaker

**Please wear
your name
badge!**

Some meetings are different, and as such are noted above. Please check so as not to be disappointed.

Members are requested to follow any requests with respect to social distancing, masks and similar. Please help your Committee by putting your own and your neighbour's chair away at the end of the day.

Thank you - The Speaker & Workshop Team

Chairman's Chat

Hello Everyone,

Have I really been Chairman for 5 months already? AND so busy!

April was the AGM. May was the spinning and weaving competitions and I had the daunting task of Judging the spinning. Make a skein using blended fibre. It was such a close call between Maureen and Sue in the xperienced class. Hollie won the beginners class and did a brilliant job spinning her skein too. In fact all the skeins were worthy of winning and I hope everyone that entered their skeins are proud of their results. Well done all of you.

June was a talk about Flax with Simon and Anne from Flaxlands. A fascinating talk and a workshop in the afternoon. I finally managed to master a skein of flax from a strick. Maybe masterpiece is an overstatement. I made a skein that held together. I had great fun. Some of us met up with Simon again at TRAD boat rally where he put on a good display and rowed up and down the river with his wife and dog in their linen rowing boat. (Not a linen rowing boat it has a technical name which escapes me)

July we again had a great talk by two Vikings. Totally fascinating. I did have a quiet giggle because with our increased awareness of health and safety I did wonder how the risk assessment would read... Man with two axes, spears, swords...

August was the fleece sale. Anne did such a good job or rounding up people to sell and there were people to buy. I think there were lots of happy people. I did a somewhat frazzled talk about what to look for in a fleece. I say frazzled because only the day before a vet had come to see some of my sheep and came out with the dreaded word Bluetongue. This is a truly horrid disease. At the time of writing we are still waiting for test results and keeping our fingers crossed.

August meeting saw entries for the Guild exhibition trickle in. I know we are going to have a spectacular exhibition. By the time you read this the Exhibition will be in full swing. Please do make sure you go to Newbury Museum for a look. The September Shuttle will tell you about all the exciting meetings to look forward to.

Linda Scurr - Chairman

Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

Chairman's Notices

Taking care of each other

You may know already but we have a Guild Member who has a severe peanut allergy as well as some others with special food requirements and mobility issues.

Many processed foods, baked goods, sweets, and even some savoury dishes can be prepared with peanut oil or may come into contact with peanuts during processing. Even trace amounts of peanuts can cause a severe reaction, including anaphylaxis.

The Committee will be doing their level best to make sure that nothing offered at the hatch could trigger a reaction, but we also ask you respectfully to abstain from anything that could likely cause a problem.

In all honesty, there are 30 other days in each month to eat anything you wish. Let's take care of each other and enjoy our creative time together stress free.

Shared lunches

In the spirit of taking care of each other, Members with special food requirements and disabilities will be invited to make their selections first.

A quiet word...

I know that most of us, especially those with hearing aids, realise that the hall has very bad acoustics.

I would like to remind everyone to please turn off your phones (or put on silent) and be quiet during talks and business meetings. Squeaky wheels, clackety knitting needles, rattling teacups, and even the odd whisper can make it very difficult for some of us to hear.

Some speakers are ok with being interrupted with questions during their talks, others not. There is usually plenty of time for questions at the end of most talks.

Food for thought

When looking to the future don't forget the glories of the past.

This was written on the side of a proper, good old wooden Helter Skelter. It is a reminder that the Guild provides us with an opportunity to learn and share our skills.

If you have a skill to share or one you want to learn please speak up.

If anyone has questions about any of this information, please contact Linda. Many thanks.

Email: kvgchairman@gmail.com

Guild Talks & Workshops

Hello Everyone,

I hope you have enjoyed the programme of talks and workshops we have put together as our first year of programme planning comes to an end. We have started approaching potential speakers/tutors for 2026/2027 and already have several recommendations to follow up.

Whilst we have some of our own ideas we would always welcome your suggestions, whether that is from talks you have attended or workshops you may have done elsewhere. The programme is for all Guild members so we aim to create a programme that will appeal to as many people as possible.

Any suggestions would be welcome so please speak to myself, Jennifer Thompson or Lynne Harper. Thank you.

If you would like to see the 2025 programme list online, use the QR code to view the Diary and Events page on our web site, or via kennet-valley-guild.com/diary-and-events



Anne Reddan - Programme Team Lead

welcome

to our new Guild members

A very warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the Guild since the last Shuttle was published.

Please look out for Christine, Serina and Elaine at Guild meetings, introduce yourself and have a chat.



Christine Fenton

Serina Groenewald

Elaine Midwinter

Show And Tell 2025

June

Maureen Taylor's handwoven jacket.



Pat Snook's dyed fleece. Dyed with lichen.



Lynne Bond's felted tea cosy for her daughter, knitted from her stash of tapestry wools.



July

Kat's and Trixie's dyeing experiments with natural dyes. Tagetes and Alum, onion skins and Alum, Oak leaves, sticks and Alum, Logwood and Madder.



Lynne's decorative Chinese knotting.



August

Debbie Bliss silk yarn dyed warp and twill weave jacket by Pat Foster. Toggles from China.



Jenni Philips - silk and linen fabric swatches dyed with aluminium lactate mordant and fustic.



Linda's agave fibre brush, hand tied with black nylon. Made during a workshop at the Royal Welsh Show.



Jennifer Thompson - Show And Tell Coordinator

Guild Trophies 2025

Hi everyone, just a quick reminder about upcoming trophies.

The next one will be the trophy for the Exhibition with the winner being chosen by the Mayor.

In October we have the Diddy trophy, presented by Meg in memory of her mum. This is for ANY knitted item made from hand spun wool but it has to include cable/ Aran stitches.

In November we have the dyeing trophy. It is really heartening to see so many members becoming interested in the various types of dyeing. There is no theme or requirement for this years trophy other than that it is dyed. It would be interesting for members if entries had a brief note attached identifying the type of dye process e.g. natural, chemical, food colours, sun prints, sun dyeing, flower pounding, cyanotype dyeing, 'buried' dyeing. Looking forward to seeing lots of entries.

The Christmas trophy, presented at the December meeting, is for anything you have made using any one, or a mixture, of our core crafts and is voted for at the meeting by members.

Jennifer Thompson - Trophies Coordinator

The Guild Exhibition - 3rd-21st September 2025

When you receive your September edition of The Shuttle, the Guild Exhibition, 'A Canopy of Trees' will be in full swing.

Please do come along to the West Berkshire Museum, Gallery 5 and see the fabulous show of creative work that Members have worked so hard on.

Thank you to everyone, beginners through to experts, who committed to the effort and to all of the Stewards who have offered their time to interact with the public and tell them about our traditional crafts and the Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers.

We couldn't have done any of it without you!

The Museum is open Wednesday - Sunday 10am-4pm.

Full report in the next Shuttle.

Nicky Duncan, Julie Fraser, Sue Davies and Janet Dunbar.

Exhibition Committee 2025

Jean Goodsell

Another Guild treasure has gone off to spin in the sky. Whenever I think of Jean Goodsell I have such wonderful happy memories.

Jean was always happy, always smiling and always knitting something.

I remember Jean most for demonstrating at Newbury Show sitting alongside Anne and Val. Jean would enter the competitions and so often she would be sewing up the last seam or adding the last button just a few seconds before the judging started.

Jean was a very good gardener and worked at Hilliers, before it was Hilliers. It was years before I found out that Jean had access through gardening to a massive mulberry tree

that I had always admired in Curridge. I would drive past on my way to Guild and say “Ooh! Look at that beautiful tree. I love Mulberries!”

Jean’s legacy of spinning and demonstrating will carry on because Hollie is now the proud owner of her wheel and has already taken it out to demonstrations.

Rosie, Yolande and I went to Jean’s funeral. Jean arrived in a horse drawn carriage pulled by two beautiful black Friesian horses. That was something Jean had so often talked about over the years.

Thank you Jean for the joy you brought to so many and for all the wonderful memories.

Linda Scurr

Fleece Sale - August 2025

A big thank you to everyone for helping to make our first fleece sale such a successful event.

Thanks to Linda for her informative talk and demonstration on skirting a fleece and to the everyone whether buying, selling or just enjoying the occasion.

I hope that you enjoyed the day as much as I did.

Anne Reddan



Fleece Sale Report

Author: Serina Groenewald

On the 2nd of August, I was anxious to get to the Guild meeting promptly. I couldn't bear the thought of missing out on buying myself a fleece!

Little did I know what abundance of choice and variety there would be, and, after putting into practice as much self restraint as I could, I left with two gorgeous fleeces. I easily could have left with four! I really appreciated the variety of prices, making the sale accessible for any budget. Timing it nearer the end of summer was also brilliant, as I now have plenty to be getting on with for the coming cold months.

Thank you for organising it, Anne, and I look forward to the next one. I feel incredibly lucky to have found such a vibrant community of inspirational people to connect with and learn from.

Thank you to everyone at the Guild for being so welcoming. I look forward to the future!

How to store your fleece

I spoke at considerable length at the August meeting about how to choose a fleece and briefly how to wash a fleece.

I forgot to say anything about how to store it!

Please DO NOT store your fleeces in plastic bags. I know a lot of people do and they will tell you it's ok. IT ISN'T. Fleece needs to breath.

If it gets too hot, moisture will seep out. That moisture has no memory so it won't go back where it came from. The resulting damage is invisible but some parts of the fleece will become too dry and brittle and some parts may become fusty. Fleece can carry 50% of its own weight in water without feeling wet.

Ideally store fleeces in paper bags. You can make a paper bag out of newspaper. Moths don't like newspaper. Carrot sacks work well but remember they aren't moth proof.

Linda Scurr



Hamish visits Glenbogle

After spending some time off from his writing Hamish decided to write up his recent trip north. He headed away from the heat to stay with J in his fabulous new house in Inverness with views across the Moray Firth to the Black Isle. It was not a restful break!

After two days driving up Hamish enjoyed a cooling walk along the Caledonian canal looking at the swing rail bridge and waving at the yacht that manoeuvred its way through the first lock.



The next day Hamish J and P decided to head to Aberdeen for the Tall Ships Race. The 4 carriage train was crammed, standing room only. The harbour was filled to the brim with beautiful ships from around the world and the crowds were enjoying international food too. In the middle of the water was a paddle boarder, he did not appear to have a paddle but he did have his bagpipes and was playing them to entertain everyone. Hamish hoped he didn't fall in and

soak the instrument - ooh the expense. The end of the day found Hamish heading back to a crowded station for the train home but it only had 2 carriages. The station staff counted people on to it and stopped passengers as soon as all the seats were full. Unfortunately there were still hundreds of people on the station concourse who were left behind, then he heard that the remaining two trains that evening were cancelled so heaven knows how people got home...

Hamish's friends' clan home is Dunrobin Castle so it only seemed right to visit it even though his friends were 600 miles south. It is a fabulous castle right on the sea with beautiful knot gardens and this is where Hamish, J and P headed to watch a falconry display. On their way home they stopped at Dornoch and took the opportunity to visit the cathedral where Madonna got married as well as the small airfield at the edge of the village.

A visit to this part of Scotland couldn't take place without a trip to Hamish's favourite wool shop Baa in Stonehaven. After a walk along the Broadwalk across the top of the beach decorated with metal sculptures made by a local artist Hamish headed in to town where he met with friends he hadn't seen in person since his stay in Aberdeen in 2022 although he chatted with them on Zoom weekly. He was greeted with tea and cake and one of his

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Naturally Dyed Wool: A First Foray into Colour from Nature

Author: Kat Holmes

There's something fun about creating colour from plants, bark, leaves- and even onion skins. It feels quietly



meditative. I recently fell down the rabbit hole into the world of natural dyeing with the Natural Dyeing King kit from DT Craft & Design.

The kit came with everything I needed to get started: powdered extracts of Lac, Tagetes, Madder, and Logwood, two mordants (Aluminium Potassium Sulphate for animal fibres and Aluminium Acetate for plant fibres), plus gloves, a spoon, and clear instructions for the reasonable price of £27.

Tagetes: Sunshine in Fibre

I began with Tagetes extract, which is made from marigolds - specifically African, Aztec, and American varieties. It's known for producing warm yellows, golds, and soft greens. I used 100% cotton yarn from the Women's Institute, pre-mordanted with Aluminium Potassium Sulphate for 45 minutes. When I added the Tagetes dye, the yarn took on a gorgeous golden hue. It was simple, fun, and honestly a little addictive.

Layering Colour: Logwood, Lac & Madder

Next, I experimented with more of the extracts. Using the same cotton yarn and mordanting method, I tried Logwood, which gives deep purples and greys; Lac, a resin-based dye that yields crimson and plum tones; and Madder, a classic red dye made from roots.

Each extract brought out something different. The cotton reacted in slightly unexpected ways - sometimes more muted, sometimes more vibrant. But that's the beauty of natural dyeing: no two batches are exactly the same, and each skein feels like it has its own personality.

From the Kitchen Cupboard to the Forest Floor

I then moved on to animal fibres, specifically Merino and Polwarth wool (spun by my wife, Trixie) again



mordanted for 45 minutes in Aluminium Potassium Sulphate. For dye, I turned to something more humble: onion skins. I saved them up in a jar over the course of a few days to a week. They gave me rich, earthy golds and soft browns- warm, familiar colours that felt both rustic and comforting.

One of my favourite experiments came from combining Lac and onion skins, then leaving the dye jar outside in the 30-degree summer heat for a

few hours. The result? A colour with real depth - dusky, warm, and unlike anything I could've predicted.

Lastly, I tried Alpaca yarn (again spun by my wife, Trixie), dyed with oak leaves and twigs we gathered from the woods near our house.



A Week Off, A Few More Jars...

During a week off work, I decided to lean further into the process - experimenting not just with the dye kit but with a few household bits and bobs too.

This time, I used Aluminium Acetate as the mordant for my plant fibres,

One jar held a bundle of spinach-dyed cotton. After mordanting for 45 minutes, I left it to soak in the spinach dye for over a week. The result was a delicate, pale tone

- gentle and fresh, if a little faint.

I also tried nuts (a Christmas hangover nobody wanted to eat) and Madder with the WI cotton, which gave a richer, warmer hue.

The onion skin experiments continued too - this time using brown onion skins on cotton without boiling or simmering. While some dyers recommend heating the dye, I simply



added water, dropped the yarn in, and let it sit in a mason jar for a week or two. On wool, I got a rusty golden-orange; on cotton, a sunny yellow.

A few more tests followed:

Blackberries by themselves, post-mordanting with Aluminium Acetate.

Blackberries with baking soda, which changed the tone entirely - slightly moodier and more purple-grey.

And then beetroot, which was a bit of a surprise. Despite its vivid colour when raw, once boiled, the



dye turned brownish. I ended up adding a touch of Lac extract, and it brought the colour back to life, shifting it into a rosier, richer tone.

This entire experience has been great fun and full of surprises. Every jar, every fibre, every tweak of time or temperature brings something new. The colours aren't always what I expect - but they always feel alive.

Natural dyeing, I'm learning, is a beautiful balance of creativity, and patience. It's slow. It's tactile. And it's strangely addictive. I've already got my eye on nettles, avocado pits, red cabbage and maybe even some late-summer elderberries next...

My favourite book to use has been: *Wild Colour: How to Make and Use Natural Dyes* (Hardback) by Jenny Dean.

jennydean.co.uk



Spinning the Dog

Author: Linda Scurr

Many years ago I spun my brother's Pyrenean mountain hound and Mum knitted a scarf. This scarf was admired by all. Especially all the dogs in Battersea Park when it got wet in the rain. Most fibres you can wash once and they smell acceptable. NOT dog. You need many washes to make a dog smell good.



Many years have gone by and I have again been asked to spin a hound again. This dog is a Bernaise Mountain dog and black. And it smells! The fibre arrived just as we were blessed with a good week of weather so I sat outside in my field gateway. I usually spin in the field but Jacob, my assertive sheep was having none of it.

As I sat in the gateway I got a very mixed reaction. Fascinated dogs, terrified dogs and some very strange dog owners and walkers. Again some were fascinated, some walked by without even noticing. Some liked the idea and some said YEUCH! One couple walked past and then peered back through the hedge with one saying to the other 'that's unusual' I had to stop when the horses went past to avoid them doing the dance. Some people jogged past looking as if they were on their last legs. I really don't understand jogging.

I was thinking YEUCH too.

It was dusty so I had to spin in a face mask.* It spun very nicely indeed but was a dusty looking dull grey colour. How I wished I could add some other coloured fibre to brighten it up. . a bit of sheeps wool or silk? I persevered and eventually had 6 skeins. Enough for a scarf.

* A word of warning...

Most sheep wool contains lanolin, a grease which lingers in the fibre even after it has been prepared. It also has a structure where dust will stick to this and comes away in the washing process. Things like Alpaca and dog don't have the ability to retain the dust and it flies off in all directions. This isn't good so please wear a mask when handling the fibre.

Two Days at Flaxland

Author: Anne Reddan

Following a visit by Simon and Ann of Flaxland to the guild in February I was keen to learn more about using flax so enrolled on a two day workshop in June at their premises on the outskirts of Stroud.

In February, June seemed like a long way off but time flew by and in the first heatwave of the year I met with my fellow students. Tea and coffee were offered but we all opted for cold drinks instead. Our first day was all about preparing flax for spinning. Luckily Simon has an outdoor classroom, mostly in the shade where we could break, scutch and hackle with no need to sweep the floor afterwards. This 'room' is on a small island in the River Frome which runs along the bottom of their garden. Simon bought half the island and built a bridge to connect his indoor and outdoor teaching areas. As well as being an outdoor classroom the island was also our favourite place to have lunch, with dappled shade, log seats and running water shallow enough for a paddle.

After lunch we were all wilting, even with all doors and windows open. Luckily at the entrance to the studio there was another teaching space, open on two sides, which contained half a dozen hackling units. After using hand tools in the morning which are sufficient for processing small amounts of flax we tried the hackling



units which speed up the process for larger quantities. This made short work of my handful of flax and it was satisfying to be able

to pull the fibres through the finest times on the comb and admire the long, almost silky fibres that were left. The shorter fibres, the tow, which are left after combing can be carded to make rolags and I watched, slightly horrified, as Simon grabbed a handful of tow and proceeded to run it through a old drum carder. The resulting rolag could be spun but I think I would prefer to make rolags with hand carders!

We were all melting by the end of the day, so on the way home I called in to a supermarket in Cirencester to buy a chilled drink and took great pleasure from strolling up and down the chilled and frozen food aisles, occasionally opening a freezer door to enjoy the cool air on my head and face!

The second day of the workshop was thankfully slightly cooler but still warm and this was devoted to loading our distaffs and practising spinning with a spindle, an e-spinner and a spinning wheel. It was good to have a choice as we each had our favourites. At the end of the day our linen was



wound off to take home together with the twined flax we had made earlier. I also brought home a small bag of tow which is just waiting to be carded and spun.

I would thoroughly recommend this workshop to anyone who is interested in growing and processing flax. Simon is passionate about learning all he can about flax and he is eager to share his knowledge with each new group of students. He is also very industrious having built his studio which is a large

wood cabin, complete with mezzanine floor over the main room and a woodburner in a small area in one end of the building. Outside he has constructed a balcony overlooking the river and the bridge goes from the balcony to the island. It was a wonderful set up, akin to a very large Wendy house with its own island, and a perfect spot for a studio.

For further information about growing, processing and workshops:
flaxland.co.uk

THIS EVENT HAS
ALREADY TAKEN PLACE

Garage Sale!

**Pat and Dorothy are holding a
Garage Sale on Saturday 13th
September**

The following items will be
for sale:

- Weaving supplies
- Art supplies
- Household goods
- Gardening supplies including garden pots

A HORN cutting table and a HORN sewing cabinet are also available. If you are interested in either of these or have any queries, please contact us.

Ukraine Effort

**As you know we send items to
Ukraine for refugees and for
soldiers. There is a desperate
need for amputee socks both
for arms and legs.**

I will be printing out and bringing some patterns to the Guild meetings but in the meantime you can find a pattern at <https://suzies-yarnie-stuff.blogspot.com/2009/11/amputees-residual-limb-covers-aka-stump.html>

Although we ask for dark coloured, woollen socks for soldiers on the front line, for the amputees, we ask for the softest, brightest acrylic yarn you have please.

Thank you for everything that you donate. It is very gratefully received.

Jennifer Thompson

Another Summer On The Road

Author: Edel Izquierdo

For those who have not yet met me, My name is Edel. I am a relatively new member, joining in Feb. I am lucky enough to be a freelancer working across many different roles, from installing art installations to crewing music festivals. I also have my own business, Edelectic Crafts. This is a space for my love of wood carving and fibre craft to collide and flourish. As well as selling handmade fibre craft tools and naturally dyed yarn (dyed by my partner Hannah), I also give people taster sessions in spinning with a drop spindle. My work takes me all over the country (and sometimes beyond).

Some members showed interest in my Spring and Summer travels and suggested that maybe others in our community might be too.

So here's a little taster of my adventures...

Spain

I always take as much fibre crafts as I can while travelling and visiting my family is no exception. During waterfall walks in the southern Spanish mountains, I enjoyed getting to know my new Basque spindle while spinning Shetland fibres.



One of the days, my Dad asked for some help in the kitchen to prepare a large family meal. We couldn't help but notice the amazing colour (that was tannin rich for sure) emerging from the water. Well, one thing led to another and we managed to steal the precious liquid for a solar dye experiment in the beautifully intense springtime sun.

Pembrokeshire

Once back in the country, we departed for West Wales to celebrate a friends birthday. We spent lots of time rock-pooling, admiring the beautiful coastal wildlife, and of course walking. On one of our walks we came across a gorgeous cove so took a moment to rest our legs and relax in a stunning environment accompanied by my Dealgan spindle and some jacob fibre.



Berlin

I had intentions to spend my free time spinning but my work schedule didn't quite allow for this. Although I didn't get any spinning time in, I did manage to go on a huge night walk discovering the city and seeing the sights in the tranquillity of the night.

Woodbridge

Luckily for me on this trip my partner was the one who was working hard, so I had time to settle in to van life, wood carve for my shop, investigate the

ancient history of the place and of course lots of time for fibre craft. As well as visiting the workshop where the Sutton Hoo replica is being made, I walked along the river to discover the ancient site of Sutton Hoo for myself. They have a beautiful little dye garden; a lovely example to help people get to know some native colourful plants. They also have a textile section of the museum. Unfortunately, the only type of spindle on display was an Ashford rather than a historically accurate one. Perhaps if the hot weather hadn't been so relentless, I may have had the energy to engage in conversation about this but by that point in the day it was definitely time for a cold pint in my own personal knitting bubble.

Lowestoft

While my partner was stage managing the main stage of First Light festival, I spent a lot of my time walking along the beach (surprise, surprise) with a spindle in hand. There was a lot of confusion and/or intrigue from locals as I walked and spun but nobody had the confidence to ask questions. So I allowed them just simply to observe as I walked on by.

Gate To Southwell Festival

Finally the first Edelectic event of the year had arrived and we were bubbling with excitement. Great



conversations were had, much cider and beer was drunk and of course much fibre was spun while demonstrating my handmade spindles.

Although we were sad when the festival ended, we had the chance to head just up the road to spend some time with a friend in her woodland. I used all the singles I had spun to create a 3 colour 3 ply jacob yarn (white natural, grey natural, white natural dyed with almond skins). This yarn was to be a thank you gift for Offcutz for some cherry and ash wood given to us at GTSF. Belle is a hugely talented weaver and, much like us, travels festivals with her leather working partner Jac (not forgetting little Bodie who brings all the smiles to their stall).



Priddy Folk Festival

It was our first time at Priddy and despite the roads melting and the government warning people to stay inside we still experienced the great spirit of this festival. I have never seen so much morris dancing in my life but with such intense heat they really kept the morale of the field alive. Our stall was next door to an amazing mandolin maker which meant we had



the delight of constant live music. We enjoyed introducing people to the world of spinning and helping some more practised hands go from the wheel to the drop spindle.

During the festival, a local encouraged us to visit a gorge while in the area; smaller (and quieter) than



Cheddar Gorge. She was adamant that it was the perfect place to be on a scorcher of a day and she was not wrong! It was such a beautiful and inspiring walk. After ascending to the gorge my partner and I decided to take a rest break in the gorge to cool down. Of course this was the perfect opportunity to get my spindle out for a dose of fibre crafting. The perfect way to end our time in the Mendip Hills.

Cornwall

We had a very rare weekend free in our summer diary and decided to visit a friend in Southern Cornwall we had not seen in years. On one of the days she had to work, she dropped us off at the top of the path leading to a beautiful secluded cove only known by locals. With a handful of verbal instructions we began our adventure. We may have taken a detour but eventually arrived in this beautiful

peaceful place. Greeted by a local sea loving dog and his humans, we proceeded to find the perfect spinning spot. When I could no longer feel my bottom, it was time to brave a dip in the sea!

Green Gathering



It was the first time at this festival for us and we weren't sure what to expect. I was overjoyed to give

so many spinning tasters and be part of the start of so many people's spinning journey. We spent the weekend sharing and exchanging knowledge with many like minded folk.

After the enriching weekend, we headed up to the Wye Valley for a few days. It took me 3 days to ply all the singles from the festival!

Next stop for us, as I am writing this, is Folkeast festival.

Hope to see you all in October with more stories to tell!

edelecticcrafts.co.uk



Ed: if you've been on a weaving, spinning, dyeing or related crafts adventure recently, tell our Members all about it in the December Shuttle. See the back page for details of how to submit your article. Thank you!

And yet more teabags...

Author: Jenny Goss

I recently entered a quilt made out of your teabags into The Festival of Quilts at the NEC Birmingham. It's the biggest quilting show in Europe, featuring workshops, talks, demos, Textile Galleries from world-renowned artists, one of the world's largest quilt competitions, a huge range of quilt materials, 200+ brands to shop from, and so much more! About 700 quilts in various categories are entered into the competition each year.

I am not a quilter, so as with most of my projects this was another labour of love but one I am very proud of.

One of the judges in my category chose my quilt for a judges award.



Title of Piece - Passings

My wall quilt is a celebration of life - of those who have gone or didn't stay long. The machine stitch was chosen to give the impression of a crochet blanket to offer comfort when faced with loss or sadness. I chose used teabags for my cloth as a cuppa can often be the best form of therapy.



John Arbon Mill Open Weekend June 2025

Author: Julie Fraser

Every year John Arbon Textiles (JAT) opens its Mill to the public. This is the third year running that I have been lucky enough to attend.

In early June, each year JAT offer tours of their Mill, talks and workshops (which are held in South Molton Town Hall in North Devon).

During the weekend we attended two talks and a tour of the mill.



Our first talk was from Sonja and Helena, the owners of JATs who talked about how the Mill Open Weekend special yarn range,

Mineralogy, had come into being and we had the chance to squish the tops and the spun yarn. I am holding the Malachite Magic colourway.

This yarn was designed by JAT customers who had the chance to choose type of fleece, colourways, and names. The yarn is made from 75% Corriedale, 17% Grey Exmoor Blueface and 8% Romney. I did manage to bring three skeins of the 4ply home with me to make a short-sleeved top – watch this space!

After the talk, we perused the marketplace, full of JAT yarn, but also other vendors with yarn, buttons, and stationery.

The next day we had a tour of the Mill. We were taken through each of the steps from sourcing the local fleece to worsted spun yarn.



JAT are working to source more of its fleece from local farmers. This was followed by a delicious lunch at the Town Hall. Our last event was a Q & A chaired by Sonja of JAT with four knitwear and crochet designers which was very enjoyable. (Fay Dashper-Hughes, Laura Penrose, Sophie aka the Knit Purl Girl and Along Avec Anna).



Since returning to knitting over the past few weeks, I managed to complete this vest top using JAT

Harvest Hues worsted weight yarn that I bought at this year's trip.

At last year's trip I managed to buy a lot of JAT mini skeins from the bargain bucket section and have made these delightful little creatures from Cinthia Vallett's book Mouche & Friends.



Marie-Claude Cousin Talk - June meeting

Author: Maureen Taylor

At our June meeting the speaker, Marie-Claude Cousin, talked about her lifetime passion for colour, aspects of colour theory and how renowned artists have applied colour in their work. This was followed up by an afternoon workshop about card winding, in which many of those attending the meeting took part.

Marie-Claude, all dressed in white (she explained that if she'd dressed in colours it might have detracted from how we visualised what she showed



us) talked about primary colours, and how there is a difference between primary colours red, yellow and blue on paper, canvas etc, and optical primary colours (red, green and blue) such as on our computer and phone screens.

Marie-Claude went on to talk about various artists and how they used colour. In particular, for me anyway, Mondrian and how he framed blocks of colour in black. From there she described how using different colours as frames affects how we see the bigger picture. She talked of hues, tints and tones, of optical illusions and much more.

In all, a fascinating hour immersed in colour.



Sorry Maureen...

In the June Shuttle, the photo of Maureen Taylor's Chatelaine was incorrect - we featured her beautiful green cross-body bag. Well, here's the Chatelaine in all its glory! Everyone needs one of these don't they?



Viking Textiles with Drakos Dottir & Lognar

Author: Carol Hubbard



Jen Heath, known also as Drakos Dottir, and her partner Duane (aka Lognar) visited us dressed in full

re-enactment mode as Vikings.

Sometimes, they can be called upon to be Saxons, or Medieval people, but their preferred mode is as Vikings - sometimes with weapons (more on this later). They, and others, show the general public what it is like to live the life of our ancestors at the Ancient Technology Centre, Cranborne.

At this point I should make it clear that Jen was very emphatic: there is no such thing as A Viking. It is likely that “viking” refers to the action of going viking...what they did, rather than who they are.

As to where they went: there are early accounts of landing in Portland in 789 CE. Possibly blown off course, so an accidental landing. Evidence of settlements is hard to determine.

As to their antipathy towards Christians, Charlemagne slaughtered 4,000 people in Saxony, who had refused to convert. This might give good reason to target churches and monasteries - although, of course,

they were an obvious source of wealth.

Or was it simply land envy? Most of the people we call Vikings come from areas where there was not enough agricultural land to go round growing populations, so there was a push to migrate.

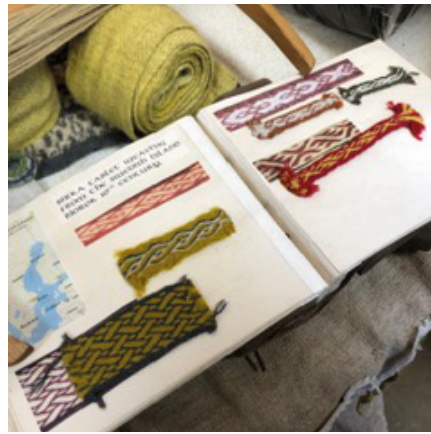
In England, the end of the “Viking” era was the defeat of Harald Hardrada in 1066, which also marked the end of the Saxon kings, with the Norman Victory at Hastings in the same year. Although, technically, Normans were Norse men, probably Vikings themselves!

Moving on to Weapons: it was a costly business, becoming a professional warrior; but essentially, they were the same people as were in the fields. The most important tool was the axe. All had access to common land, so were equipped with their own spears for hunting boar and deer. Helmets were very much used to inspire fear. Knives were only worn by freemen: if you had a sword, you were a member of the Warrior class in today's money, this would run to £75,000-£200,000! Chain mail wasn't a light option, weighing in at around 21lbs, and running to £250-300,000.

Both men and women would wear linen as the garment next to the skin.



It is less likely they wore wool, as linen is easier to wash. We know cotton was used in the Ancient world, as it has been found in Egypt, but owing to the difficulty in preserving ancient textiles, we really only know from imprints or from images of processing.



Many women wore their wealth as beads or other forms of jewellery: this is different from Saxon women. Jewellery often showed how in these times they hedged their bets, religion wise: pendants may have a cross on one side, but Thor's hammer on the other!

Men wore leg wraps, to hold their trousers in, and both wore nalbinding socks and leather shoes, fastened with toggles. Belts may be tablet woven, or leather: bags were carried by both men and women. Jen's was made from squirrel, with woven inserts.

Fabric was dyed with woad, madder, and weld, and some purple from logwood is also likely.



Evidence of the practice of textile production is scant: scraps of indentations, largely from burials in Scandinavia have yielded

some patterns, which are painstakingly reconstructed. There is a sock from York, and a mitten from Iceland: a woven tunic from the Arctic circle and art from the ship burial - all providing indications of what the textiles were like.

We do know that Viking ship sails were made from wool: 70m² which would be provided in strips by communities to their Jarl. Presumably there would have to be quality control, or the sails could be very uneven!

All in all, it was a fascinating insight into both the world of the re-enactor, and the history of the Viking age from a textile point of view. There was much more than I could fit into this account, but I have tried to pick out the salient points of both sides.



Nålbinding in action at the workshop

ancienttechnologycentre.com

The Royal Welsh

Author: Linda Scurr

Every year I go to the Royal Welsh show. I take my fleeces to enter into the fleece competition and enter far too many Handicraft classes. 13 this year. Syd (Sylvia) fairly new member came along too and it was nice to go round the show together and independently. We met up at the rural craft section at the end of the forestry section where FREE classes were being held. We both made a brush each. So nice to sit



relax and achieve something. Syd made other stuff, a dragonfly and willow wind spiral. I was fascinated

by watching the clog maker, and two ladies making woven baskets out of dainty hazel and chunky Ash. I joined a talk about baskets. Actually just one basket, a Welsh cockle pickers basket. I never knew there was so much to learn about ONE basket! There was a contemporary basket section with many unusual baskets, some made with unusual and found items, cloth and braids etc woven in. My attention was caught by a wool and willow coffin. It looked so comfortable. I now know that I don't have to worry about my fibre mountain, I could take some of my stash with me! I wonder how many kilos of rovings go into making one coffin. Not sure there is room for anything larger inside than a drop spindle though!



A Canopy of Trees

kennet-valley-guild.com



**An exhibition of work by
members of the Kennet
Valley Guild of Weavers,
Spinners & Dyers.**

**3rd - 21st September
2025**

Gallery 5, West Berkshire Museum, The Wharf, Newbury RG14 5AS

A Lambing Like No Other

Author: Linda Scurr

My fascination with sheep started over 30 years ago when I adopted a black sheep called Rammy who had been rescued from a council house in Slough. Rammy was quickly followed by Minty a white sheep. Shall we say Minty escaped from a pub garden. Slowly my flock grew and grew. Some sheep rescued, one or two rustled, a few bought and even 3 that my cat brought home at crack of dawn one morning. So now we have a flock of over 50.

We have bred a few sheep over the years too but this year's lambing was like nothing we had ever done before. Previously we have bred from very large very friendly ewes that come to call and follow you everywhere. This year we lambed from our newest arrivals 6 Manx Loaghtan's. Manx means from the Isle of Man, Loagh means mouse and Tan means brown. Our mouse brown sheep from the Isle of Man are little and feral and very quick on their feet. Despite spending hours trying to befriend them with buckets of food they are best viewed on the horizon with a pair of binoculars.

It is all down to chance. I acquired the Manxies by chance. I demonstrated at a farm open day and was told 'they will go for meat if you don't take them with you'...so here they are. We had no intention of breeding from them. They are small and our ram is massive... But...just by chance we had discussed that IF we bred from them perhaps we could borrow a Shetland ram from someone. NO we are not going to breed

from them.

NO we don't need to...NO!

Normally David goes to the feed merchants but on this occasion I went. Purely by chance I spotted Geoffrey the Shetland Ram FOR SALE at a very sensible price on the notice board. Geoffrey is a very handsome chap so he too came to join the flock.

Geoffrey is adorable. He runs up to meet you and climbs up the fence to be hugged. Then he backs off, charges and demolishes the fence posts with an outbreak of enthusiastic head butting. Fence posts break as easily as match sticks. Note to myself NEVER buy a ram with damaged horns.

Eventually the time came for Geoffrey to meet his girls. We plastered his chest with a very fetching shade of yellow oil and let him loose. This is a shock to most people - Keeping a diary! The yellow oil rubs off and leaves a mark on all of the ewes he visits. Make a note of the date as each ewe gets covered in yellow and the lambs will be born 147 days later...146 because Manxies are small and one day earlier if they are having twins. It is that precise.

Well done Geoffrey, Job done, sit back and wait. It was only a couple of weeks before the lambs were due that I had a return visit to the farm in Kent the Manxies came from. Hind sight is a wonderful thing. I mentioned that we were lambing any minute now and someone said ' Good luck with the one way fencing' Manx lambs are very small. They find their way out through the tiniest of gaps but NEVER find their way back. Hence, one way fencing. We set to

and blocked every hole we could think of but the lambs were small enough to go through the stock mesh. It was like trying to keep water in a sieve. Reuniting the lambs with their mothers was my job and it was a full time job. 24/7. Day time this wasn't a problem but after dark in the pitch black trying to reunite black lambs with dark brown ewes and without a torch was a challenge to say the least!

On the third day of continually reuniting ewes and lambs we had the heartbreak of losing a lamb. Mother ewe was screaming loudly, HELP! I've lost my Laaaaaaamb! There was no characteristic return bleat from the lost lamb, that signals bad news, total silence. David and I spent ages looking frantically everywhere to no avail while mother ewe stood and wailed but then to our relief just as we had almost given up all hope we spotted the lamb curled up fast asleep behind a patch of nettles exactly where the daft old ewe had left it. Another problem we had was one we hadn't experienced before. One of the ewes was a baby snatcher and fought off every new mum trying to steal her new born lambs. This turned out to be a very time consuming exercise too. Who belongs to whom? At one point we actually had a very confused lamb trying to suckle off a Shetland pony.

Considering the challenges, lambing went very well. 6 ewes had 9 lambs all fit and healthy and one ewe is still waiting for her lambs to arrive.

The lambs turned out 7 black from the Manxies and 2 white from Soosoo our Poll Dorset Jacob. We had 6 boys and 3 girls. People are worried about what

will happen to the boys. Don't worry the lambs all have names and are destined to make wool. We don't make lamb chops.

If you put a black and a white sheep together you know you will get black, white, black and white or grey lambs. SO what happens if you put ginger Manx ewes to a coloured Shetland ram? Shetlands have posh words to describe their colouration. Geoffrey is a Muskett, sponget, Jugglet, Sockett colour which translates to mottled grey with white socks and red eye patches. All of the Manx Shetland lambs (abbreviated to MASH) were born black but their colouration will change. Two seem keen to stay black but the others are slowly showing their red Moorit colouring and two have paler muzzles. I am wasting so much time watching my beautiful lambs and wondering how they will turn out. Time will tell...If all goes well, a year from now I should have some exciting fleeces to spin and If the boys turn out anything like their father there will be plenty of fencing to fix.

In the meantime a new acquisition for my lambs is a trampoline. I am surprised by how many people think the lambs are going to jump up and down on it. I am even more surprised that so many people think that I am going to jump up and down on it. To clarify the situation, the trampoline provides a mobile sun shade for the lambs that choose to sit underneath it and I can recline gracefully on my back listening to birds and watching the clouds drift by...Not a bounce in sight!

EXHIBITION

FREE ENTRY

Renewal & Reinvention

New textiles by the
London Guild of
Weavers, Spinners
and Dyers

11-22 November 2025



75th Anniversary

Monday-Friday 12.00-17.00
Saturday 13.00-17.00

Morley Gallery
61 Westminster Bridge Rd,
London SE1 7HT

**M MORLEY
GALLERY**
morleygallery.com

londonguildofweavers.org.uk

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Craft Socials

Weavers' Chat

The Guild weavers normally meet at Speen Parish Hall, Newbury, RG14 1RJ on the 4th Saturday of the month.

It is called "Weavers' Chat" but braiders are welcome with inkles, marudai etc and lace makers with pillows, as these are all forms of weaving.

All Guild members are very welcome to come along to see what we are doing and find out what weaving is all about.

All meetings run from 9.30am -1.30pm.

Subs: £4.00 towards the hall hire fee.

Dates for 2025:

27th September and 25th October.

The final meeting for 2025 will be 22nd November from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. with a shared lunch.

Please let me know if you are coming so that there is enough milk, biscuits and maybe cake!

Rosie Price:

Many thanks.

Aldbourne Braid Days

The next Aldbourne Braid Day is Sunday October 5th. The final date in 2025 is Sunday December 14th.

The cost is £8.00 per head per day.

Biscuits, cake and hot drinks are provided free of charge.

Please contact me for directions and so that I can keep an eye on numbers.

Sal Shepherd

Moulsford Spinning & Craft Group

We meet on the 3rd Thursday of every month at Moulsford Pavilion from 6.30pm - 10pm.

There are usually spinners, weavers, felters, a basketmaker and knitters there so do come and join us.

Moulsford Pavilion, The Street,
Moulsford, OX10 9JD

Linda Scurr or Rosie Price:

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 issue of
The Shuttle is Monday
10th November.**

**Please send your articles
about Guild talks, workshops,
your weaving, spinning and
dyeing projects, travels, yarn,
fibre and subjects that you
think would interest Guild
members to Nicky Duncan at
kvshuttleeditor@gmail.com**

**Photos should be high
resolution and sent as
separate files.**

Many thanks!

Front and back cover image:
Passings - a hand dyed and
embroidered used tea bag
quilt by Jenny Goss.