

Edinburgh Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

Newsletter

October 2023

The September Meeting: We enjoyed a lively meeting at the Church Hall, with many new members attending for the first time. There certainly was a temptation or two on the de-stash tables and more than a few members succumbed. Thank you to those who helped to set up the hall, and stayed behind to clear everything away at the end. Your help is much appreciated.

This meeting also saw the first get-together of the Spinning Interest Group under the co-ordination of Laura Baigrie.

Many members took the opportunity to renew their membership with the Membership Secretary.

We used the Hall's refreshment supplies for the first time, and this proved successful.

Several members signed up for the dyeing day, which you can read more about below.

The October Meeting: This is our dual meeting. Some members will be travelling to Shotts for the dyeing day led by Joanne Roberts. There are a few spaces left on the dyeing day. If you want to go, please contact me (Jane Howorth) as soon as possible: janehoworth@live.com

If you have not yet paid for your place on the dyeing day, please do that at your earliest convenience. The cost is £8. Payment should be made to the Guild's bank account (see page 2 for details). Put your surname, initial and DYE as the reference.

You can find more information about the dyeing day on page 4 (This serves as a reminder and is the same information that appeared in the last newsletter). Members who are not going on the dyeing day can meet as normal in the Centenary Room at Craiglockhart Hall, for an informal, "chat 'n' spin" session between 10.30 and 3.00 (please note regular start time, and not the later start time as previously advised).

The November Meeting: We can look forward to a talk from Carmen Wright at this meeting. Carmen has a large collection of Japanese Edo and Meiji period paper stencils which will form the focus of her talk and she will be sharing her knowledge about how these stencils were used by dyers to produce patterned textiles.

The Weaving Interest Group will also be meeting on this day.

Name Badges: If you have a name badge, please wear it at meetings. It helps new members in particular to learn who is who. If you do not have a name badge, please ask Sam Case (Membership Secretary) to make you one.

Your contributions for the November newsletter can be sent to me at janehoworth@live.com

Deadline for contributions: 1st November

Guild News

A Reminder that all Guild members need to renew their membership by the end of October at the very latest if they wish to continue in membership with the Guild.

If you have already renewed your membership for the coming 12 months, thank you. If you still need to pay, please make your payment by bank transfer if at all possible. If you need to pay by cheque or cash (cash preferred) please see the Membership Secretary at the next meeting. The annual membership fee is just £25.

The bank account details for the Guild remain unchanged and are:

Account name: Edin Guild Weavers Spinners

Sort code: 80 11 20

Account number: 00233082

Reference: Your surname and initials

All members should fill out the annual membership form to enable us to maintain accurate records.

Guild Committee News: We lost three long-serving committee members in September when Frida Bleakley, Sheena Guz and Erika Hollingdale decided to retire from the committee. I am sure the membership would like to join the committee in thanking them sincerely for their many years of work and service to the Guild.

The vacancy for the position of Guild President has been filled by Jane Buxton, who was nominated and elected to that role at the September committee meeting. This now leaves vacancies for the Equipment Coordinator and Librarian roles, both of which Jane was doing previously. The committee will address this.

Laura Baigrie volunteered to serve on the committee and was co-opted at the September committee meeting. Following an appeal from the Secretary during the September Guild meeting, three members stepped forward to offer their services to the committee. The committee is delighted to inform all members that Karon Gilhooley, Carmen Wright and Ravana Eagleheart have now also been co-opted to the committee.

Weaving Interest Group: I am pleased to let you know that John Palmer has agreed to become the informal leader/facilitator of the Weaving Interest Group. I'm sure he will do a great job.

The Scottish Handcrafts Championships

The schedule for the 2024 Scottish Handcrafts Championships classes at the Royal Highland Show has been published. Several of our members were very successful in the 2023 competitions.

There are too many handcraft classes to include in this newsletter, but these are the classes likely to be of most interest to members:

Section D: Crochet Theme: Summer

17. A Summer Hat

18. A Summer Bag

Section E: Knitting Theme: Autumn Walks

19. Adult's Cardigan using two or more colours. Any ply

20. Boot socks. Double knitting

21. Pair of Mittens. Any size, any ply

22. Neck warmer. Any ply

23. A Shawl in fine lace knitting

Section F: Handspinning, weaving and Dyeing

Theme: "Shear Bliss"

24. 2 ply extra fine Hank of Shetland Yarn for lace knitting. Hand spun from Shetland Sheep. Include a sample of fleece staple.

25. Three hanks of Hand spun yarn using different natural fibres and dyes inspired by "the Seasons" mounted on card identifying plant sources.

26. Hank of fancy yarn i.e. slub, loop or spiral. Specify intended use and include a small worked sample.

27. An article in homespun yarn- knitted, crocheted or woven.

28. Purse or make up bag using handwoven material

29. Table runner using own handwoven or handspun material

You can find the full list of classes at:

https://www.royalhighlandshow.org/media/xcuo3pf4/rhs23001-handcrafts-class-list-2024_preview_2.pdf

The Dyeing Day

(This is a repeat of the information contained in the September newsletter)

Our thanks go to Joanne Roberts who has organised this.

The day will be held in Shotts, at the home of a friend of Joanne's.

The day costs £8 per person, and is only open to members. Numbers are limited to 15, and are on a first come, first served basis.

There is a lot of information about the dyeing day on the pdf sent to you along with this newsletter.

Those members who are not going on the dyeing day have the opportunity to come along to the Centenary Room at Craiglockhart Church Hall for a relaxed, spin and chat session between 10.30 – 3.00.

Here is a little information on dyeing to get you started:

Space-dyeing

Space dyeing is also known as hank or skein painting. The wool is soaked in a citric acid solution then the dye is applied to the wet or damp wool. The dye can be applied by brushing, dropping or spraying to produce a multicoloured effect and can be added in blocks or blurred into each other using co-ordinating or contrasting colours. Once the dyes have been applied the wool is wrapped in plastic (or a microwave dish) and "cooked" in the microwave. Using this process and if followed correctly there should be very little waste dye in the washings.

The dyes and mordants are included in the cost, below are some websites for un-dyed materials, the dyes are suitable for animal fibres:

https://www.laughinghens.com/search?page_size=96&sort=rank&q=Undyed

<https://www.georgeweil.com/fibres-carders-combs/undyed-wool-fibres/>

<https://www.winghamwoolwork.co.uk/wool.html>

<https://www.dtcrafts.co.uk/product-category/undyed-yarns-blanks/all-yarns/>

Please also bring disposal gloves to wear, a clean bucket to soak your fibre in the citric acid and plastic bottles or jam jars to mix your dyes. Please bring a test piece of fibre to start with.

Workshop at Tweed Guild

The Tweed Guild has been in contact: They have a few spaces available at their forthcoming workshop on 28th October and have thrown open an invitation to our members. Here is the message from the Secretary:

We have a few spaces on our October workshop “Pattern Design for a Fitted Garment” which some of your members who knit or crochet garments from their homespun yarn may be interested in joining. The fee for the workshop is £15 for Guild members. The following background to our tutor Samira may be of interest to your membership:

Samira Hill is a professional knitting and crochet pattern writer, designer, technical editor, and teacher of knitting and crochet professionally to children and adults throughout the Scottish Borders and beyond for the last 10 years. She has studied the links between archaeology, heritage and knitting, and spoken at various events on The Archaeology and History of Scottish Knitting.

She designs unique patterns and has created her own label of Eildon Hills Designs. Local to the Scottish Borders, her label reflects the ideas of nature, the outdoors, walking, sightseeing, changing beauty, and the Scottish Borders landscape.

There is some “homework” for participants which Samira has specified:

- produce a swatch 15cm x 15cm in stocking stitch or your chosen pattern using the yarn and needles you plan to use for your garment
- measure and record the number of stitches and rows over 10cms at the centre of your sample
- wash your sample
- measure and record the number of stitches and rows over 10cms at the centre of your sample after washing and compare fabric and tension

There are some materials that participants will also need to bring to the workshop:

- Tape measure
- Pen
- Paper/notebook
- Calculator/phone
- Sample and comments & measurements
- Garment you wish to replicate if there is one

Tweed Guild meet at Bowden village hall, a few miles south of Melrose. Please contact them on tweedguildwsd@gmail.com if you would like more information, or to book a place.

A Rigid Heddle Adventure

John Palmer hired the Guild's rigid heddle loom last month – and put it to good use. Read on to find out what he got up to.

"I recently hired the Guild's rigid heddle loom to use in a 'craft and chat' session at a community event. Marie helped me to warp it up to produce a scarf of approximately 60 inches long, 10 inches wide. I took along to the session a range of complementary colours in roughly equal weight wool, most of which was recycled from charity shops.

"Overall, 11 people, young to youngish, were encouraged to have a go at weaving with the loom. They were completely new to weaving and were allowed to choose which colours to use and how much of it to weave. I guided them through the basics of the weaving process and encouraged some experimentation in their weaving.

"We made an impressive start on the first day and so I invited the most keen participants to meet at my house the following weekend to see if we could complete it. Four turned up and made really good progress, and then I finished it off.

"Wow the finished thing looks amazing!! What a fantastic group project. And I can't believe how quickly it was finished (11 days)!" Just about sums it all up."



Odds and Ends:

It's the Vikings!

... or maybe not. Apparently, if there wasn't any wool, there wouldn't have been any Viking invasions either, because outfitting a warship and its crew took 1000 sheep or more!

Here's a fun, five-minute read to find out more:

<https://hakaimagazine.com/features/no-wool-no-vikings/>

Flax Talk

There is a talk of potential interest at 10.30 on 1st November at the Eric Liddell Centre 15 Morningside Rd (Holy Corner).

Hosted by the Morningside Justice and Peace Group, Colleen McCulloch, Independent co-ordinator and former Soil Association Scotland farming lead, will be discussing: 'How does growing flax for linen relate to the climate & what we eat?'

<https://morningsidejandp.org/>

Items Wanted:

Our member Lindsay Girvan is on the search for a **Brother chunky knitting machine with ribber attachment**.

If you have one lurking unused in a cupboard or perhaps under the bed, please contact janehoworth@live.com to be put in contact with Lindsay.

The Nettle Dress

There has been a lot of publicity about a film called *The Nettle Dress* recently, including an article in last week's Guardian. The film chronicles the time a man spent collecting, preparing, spinning and weaving nettle fibres, before sewing them into a dress.

Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQNqxezDsJ4>

The full film is being shown at various cinemas around UK, but Aberfeldy is the only Scottish venue.

Shop Watch

1

Another ingenious IKEA hack. This one concerns a £5 saucepan lid organiser, Variera, that can be used for holding spools of yarn that won't stand up on their own. This will of course keep them upright and stable, which is a great help when winding a warp. The organiser is telescopic, and you can unscrew the vertical pins to make space for very large cones too.

<https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/p/variera-pot-lid-organiser-stainless-steel-70154800/>



2

If you haven't yet come across the US magazine, Little Looms, then take a look at their website at <https://littlelooms.com/> The magazine focusses on projects for rigid heddle, pin, inkle and other types of small loom. Some of the magazine articles are also published on their website. That's got to be enough entertainment for one coffee break.

3

Another favourite coffee-time website is <https://www.nancysgracefulfibres.co.uk/> Here you will find a small but delightful mix of fleece and fibres, equipment and second-hand wheels for sale. This is also the home of the Bogway spinner, should you feel the need to acquire one. The second-hand wheels are particularly interesting, as the website tends to sell more unusual wheels. There are about 4 Timbertops wheels for sale currently, and one of them is made out of yew. Beautiful.

Your contributions for the newsletter are always welcome. Send them in by the first of the month. The Newsletter is published in the first week of the month.