



Edinburgh Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

NEWSLETTER

January 2024

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024! We hope you've enjoyed the festive period, and are looking forward to the year.

January meeting

The next meeting of the Guild is on Saturday 20th January, in the Centenary (small) room at Craiglockhart Parish Church, from 10:30 until 3:00.

This month we are 'spinning the blues away', and the spinners' interest group will be meeting at around 1:30.

Spinning the Blues Away is an optional all-day activity, a light-hearted, fun way for spinners to get together and chat while they spin. We aim to start by 11.00.

If you want to take part, bring along 50 grams of ready-to-spin fibre, wrapped up in a 'mystery' parcel. This can be any kind of fibre, prepared as roving, rolags etc, so that the recipient of your parcel can start spinning straight away. To exchange our fibre, we will have a lucky dip, so that everyone who contributes a parcel will receive another in return.

We hope to be able to spin and ply our fibre on the day, so bring along your wheel or spindle and any extra equipment you'll need, such as a lazy kate. At the end of our session we'd like to have a little display of the yarns we have made, so that we can all enjoy looking at and admiring each other's work

December meeting

The December meeting was a busy one, with an SGM, festive gift exchange, fuddle lunch, and tree decoration competition.

Members contributed a huge array of delicious food which was enjoyed by all.



Karon Gilhooley won the tree decoration competition (by popular vote) with her needle felted dog, made using dog-fluff.



The minutes of the SGM will be circulated separately.



Weavers' Interest group

The WIG met during the November meeting, and John started the discussions by asking members why they come to the Guild and what they want to get out of the Weaving Interest Group. The themes that came out of the subsequent discussion were:

- Sharing the joy of creativity - sharing what we produce; asking questions of each other about how we did it; and helping with learning. Two of the members present were very new to weaving, and were given much encouragement to 'have a go'.
- Sharing knowledge of learning materials, resources and courses. (See below for a subsequent list of valuable books).
- Sharing knowledge and samples of different materials. One member, Sheila, shared how she weaves primarily with bamboo yarn, because it is easy to put on the loom and work with, and it has a lovely drape in woven items. She also is learning to spin bamboo and likes producing and using yarn of different thicknesses and slubs, as this gives texture and profile to what she weaves.
- Is development of a swap-shop possible?

A significant theme of the discussion was that members come to the Guild meetings, and are interested in the WIG, because it gives a sense of community, and members enjoy sharing interests with like-minded people. The group discussed how this sense of community could be enhanced, and raised the following suggestions:

- Developing a joint project which we could all work on together.
- Each member of the WIG could learn a portable weaving skill, which can be brought to Guild meetings and worked on during the general guild meetings.
- Sign up to an online course and support each other in doing it.
- Set up our own learning; e.g. ask the committee to arrange a workshop on a topic of our choosing.
- Exploring the possibility of turning the EGWSD WhatsApp account into a community account, with a WIG group within it.

The group also discussed the purpose of our weaving; what are we weaving, who for, and why? Sheila shared that she is primarily a maker, and that she sells much of what she makes at craft fairs, so she always has an eye for what the public will want. The group were all wide-eyed at her productivity!

Learning Resources

For the rigid heddle weavers:

Hands on Rigid Heddle Weaving by Betty Linn Davenport is very comprehensive; explains how to wind a warp and put it on the loom.

The Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving is similarly comprehensive but explains the direct warping method. It's widely out of stock but George Weil have copies at a sensible price. Beware second hand copies of old edition, especially if from America, from where postage is astronomical

Inventive Weaving on a Little Loom by Sine Mitchell.

Weaving Made Easy and *Handwoven Home* both by Liz Gipson for project based learning (her Yarnworker online resources are also really good).

The Weavers' Idea Book - Creative Cloth on a Rigid Heddle Loom by Jane Patrick, which goes into different weave structures in a bit more depth.

For those starting on a shaft loom:

Learning to Weave by Deborah Chandler. She covers all the basics of winding a warp and dressing the loom in minute detail and then takes you on to a whole lot of different weave structures. You won't need another book for a long time.

For the more experienced / adventurous:

Handweavers Pattern Book by Anne Dixon.

A Weaver's Book of 8-Shaft Patterns edited by Carol Strickler.

Designing Woven Fabrics and *Exploring Woven Fabrics*, both by Janet Phillips who gives a very clear explanation of interlacing and weave structure, highly recommended.

The next WIG will be during the February meeting of the Guild.



Spinners' Interest Group

The Spinners' Interest group last met in September, and discussed 'fancy' and 'art' yarns. A few members brought different examples, which were duly examined and admired by the group. Members discussed the techniques used in those examples, and others that they would like to try.

Members also discussed the definition of 'art' or 'fancy' yarn, which meant different things to different people. The meeting ended with a number of members declaring an intention to try some examples of fancy/art yarn, and bringing these to the next interest group.

All members, regardless of experience or skill, are encouraged to have some fun spinning these sorts of yarns, and bring them and the experience of spinning them to share at the January Spinners' Interest Group.



Retreats: Nearly Wild Weaving

Irene Evison and Anna Wetherell of Nearly Wild Weaving have shared information about two retreats they're offering this year:

1. EINN NA TALMHAINN, FIGHE NAN SGEUL / SINGING THE LAND, WEAVING THE STORIES

An exciting new venture for us, collaborating with Joan Baxter, a wonderful tapestry weaver familiar to a number of you, and Mary Ann Kennedy, a fabulous musician specialising in Scottish traditional music and the Gaelic language, to provide a creative 'retreat' linking music and weaving - and we'd love you to join us! We'll be based at Mary Ann's music studio, Watercolour Music, near Fort William in Scotland. The retreat will run from **8th to 12th April 2024**, with accommodation available from 6th April for those that want it. It will be a creative melting pot of a week, intertwining music and song, wool and weaving, landscape and language.



2. SACRED FIBRES: TEXTILES OF THE HIDDEN HIGH HIMALAYA



For those of you interested in travelling further afield and fascinated by textile cultures elsewhere in the world, perhaps this is the trip for you. It will take place **30th September to 15th October 2024** and is designed as an immersive journey into the textiles of the villages of the Humla region of northwestern Nepal; a window into rich but little explored cultural heritage and a journey of personal creative development and inspiration in a stunning mountain environment.

Further information about Nearly Wild Weaving and the retreats can be found at [Nearly Wild Weaving](#).



Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed at the start of February. Items for inclusion can be sent at any time to edinburghguildwsd@gmail.com. Show us what you've been working on, share the name of the book or website you found really useful with everyone, tell us about really cool exhibitions or events you've been to or you've found out about!