



Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

The Guest Speaker for October's Meeting

At our next meeting (Saturday 14 October, 10:00-16:00), we'll be joined by Nottingham-based milliner Giulia Mio for a talk on millinery and the process of designing and creating a hat. A description of the talk is below, and Giulia has noted that she is planning to make it quite an interactive talk, bringing along tools, materials, finished hats, and silk flower samples. Giulia is planning to demonstrate making a silk leaf - and there may be time to get hands on and have a go.

The talk will start at 2pm and there's no additional fee to attend (only the standard entrance or visitor fee).

***What is a Milliner? The Secret Life of Hats* Talk with Giulia Mio (14 October)**

A quick introduction to what a milliner is, the history of the trade and differences between commercial, handmade and couture millinery

The talk will be on the creative process, how a bespoke hat is designed and made, the skills involved, and the materials used. There will be a particular focus on flower-making, from the designing to the painting, shaping and assembling.

Some tools of the trades (like wood blocks, silks, feathers and other materials) will be on display, and they will be available for the public to touch. Couture hats will also be on display, showcasing the different styles and techniques.

At the end of the talk, Giulia will answer questions from the public and show some techniques in action with a little demonstration of flower-making in silk and in leather.

<https://giuliamiomillinery.com>

Chair's Letter

In August I was one of eight members of our Guild who spent a week at the Association Summer School, held this year in Shropshire. This was my fifth Summer School and every bit as enjoyable as previous ones, with the best food ever! I spent the week tapestry weaving with Alasdair Duncan and 13 other students, most of whom were exceedingly good already. It's such a joy to spend a whole week not having to think about food, with 5 days studying, evening entertainment, and always someone you know to sit with whether in the bar or at mealtimes. Special mention to Janice for volunteering long ago to be on the organising committee and thank you to Janice and the rest of the gang for your company - Charlotte, Jane, Janet, Kate, Tina and Wendy. Summer School runs every two years so if you fancy it start putting money away now if you can!

Rachel

Summer School

Here I am at Harper Adams University in Newport Shropshire for my 5th Summer School. This year I'm learning to spin flax. There are 8 of us from the Birmingham Guild- maybe a record .

Met my tutor, Riitta who is Finnish and I took all my stuff into the workroom which is actually the bar(same as my Shibori class 2 years ago when we ended up in the bar)- do you notice a theme? Monday it was beginning of flax workshop. We learnt to make and dress our distaffs (broomstick with cone on top to wind flax around

ready for spinning). It may not sound much but flax spinning works very differently from wool spinning but I got the idea eventually and spun about 10g of flax which then needed boiling in soda crystals and grated soap. Then it was

rewound into skeins otherwise it sticks together. Every time flax is washed it becomes softer.

It is woven into linen of course and used to be grown all over the UK and Ireland but not any more. Also all the flax mills are closed but there is interest in flax and linen again as it the least wasteful fibre of earth's resources.

I have grown some in my garden this year and am hoping to process it into fibre to spin.

- Wendy Simpson



September Meeting – Learn to Spin

Our first meeting after the Summer break was a Learn to Spin Day for members and visitors. We were delighted to welcome some visitors and even more pleased to enrol 2 new members to our guild. Welcome to Beth and Cristina. It was a great turn out of our members too even though some were at the Knitting Convention and others were on holiday. As usual I forgot to count but there must have been around 20 members.

Carolyn and Gill helped visitors and members to use a spindle and Gemma taught several visitors to spin. It was lovely to see the pleasure on the faces of new spinners!



<http://wsdbirmingham.weebly.com/2023-blog/learn-to-spin-day>

Speed dating with Spinning Wheels

What fun we had at guild today! 12 members brought in their spinning wheels and members and visitors had a try on each one. I had no idea we had such a variety of different wheels belonging to our members. Not only was it useful to try out different wheels, but new members and visitors could 'try before they buy'. As members moved around and tried the different wheels, everyone chatted about the pros and cons of each wheel so it ended up as a social occasion too, with lots of chat about spinning and much more. This was such a good idea and very successful.



Theresa and Jackie with an Ashford



Gemma with an Ashford Joy



Gemma with a Spinolution Pollywog



Poppy with a Majacraft Rose



Ruth with a Babe Fibre Starter



Rachel with a Folding Lendrum

- Wendy Simpson

From our website: <http://wsdbirmingham.weebly.com/2023-blog/spinning-speed-dating>

It's not just us!

The Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers runs itself with a committee of volunteers. We are associated to the National Association of Guilds of Weavers Spinners and Dyers, which is a charity (no paid staff) with over a hundred other Guilds across the UK (usually just called The Association). As well as providing the insurance necessary for our meetings and demonstrations the Association oversees three national events any of our members can participate in. Each is held every two years and moves around the country with no set venues. Information is on <https://www.wsd.org.uk/>

Summer School

This has just happened in summer 2023 and will therefore happen again in 2025. It's held usually at an agricultural college or other smaller higher education institution in August. The brochure will be published the autumn before (ie Sept 2024), with the list of upto around 18 workshops and tutors. Most are weaving, spinning or dyeing, but there are also adjacent courses like felting, basket making etc. The courses are a full week, and you can list upto three. Applications have to be submitted by the end of December with a deposit, and places are allocated by ballot usually in January (so you might not get your first choice, or a place at all) The total residential cost in 2023 was just shy of £800 for 7 days full board, 5 days tuition and evening entertainment which I think is very good value (look at the cost of external workshops if you doubt this), plus the company of about 250 other Guild members. There are bursaries available and a lower non-residential cost where you have to sort out your own meals. Our Guild secretary sends the info out to all members, we have the brochure at meetings, and you can always check online. The Saturday is always a free Open Day when anyone can go and view each workshop's results, plus a trade fair.

National Exhibition

This will next happen in 2024. There are usually two sections – one is juried which means sometime around May you submit a photograph of your woven/spun/dyed piece with a feelie piece and a small group of selectors whittles it down to about 150 ish objects to actually display. I was totally chuffed that all four of our Guild's submitted items in 2022 were selected. There is a nominal charge to submit with an additional charge if your piece is selected (in total it was about £10 per piece). There is usually also an Open section where there is a theme and all pieces submitted are displayed. In past years this has been 6" rings, bags, bookmarks and our Guild covers the nominal entry charge for our members. In September 2022 the Exhibition was in Leigh, Greater Manchester, and a group of us had a Grand Day Out day by train to see it. If the venue normally charges an entrance fee then this is in place otherwise entry is free. It is usually on for a fortnight.

Conference

This will next happen in 2024 after a fantastic weekend in Worcester in June 2022. This is for maybe 80 members (depends on the venue/set up), and applications are first come first served. There will be lectures. In 2022 there were workshops too but I am not sure if this will happen next time. The fully residential cost was £230.

The Journal

Not an event but a quarterly magazine which is currently £18 per year for Guild members. We do have a copy in the Library, and you can subscribe yourself at <https://www.wsd.org.uk/the-journal/>

- Rachel Lemon

Woven from the Field

This exhibition celebrates the lives and creative work of two women who weave with materials grown sustainably on their land.

Rosalind Stoddard and Sue Kirk

31 Oct to 11 Nov 2023

The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (RBSA) Gallery

4 Brook Street, St Paul' Square, Birmingham B3 1SA



Handywoman by Kate Davies

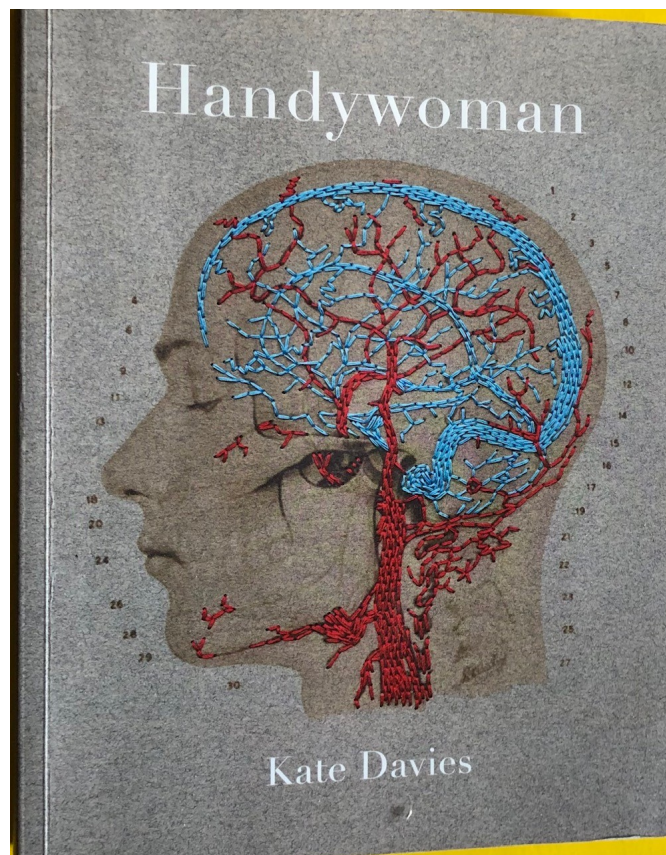
I borrowed this book from Tina as I wanted to read about Kate Davies as I really like her designs and have knitted a couple of them. I hadn't realized that she had had a stroke when I first saw her designs.

She had a stroke in her 30s and this is a book about how she dealt with it and learnt to live with its effects.

I mostly enjoyed the book although I felt some parts were rather long and I often had to look up the meaning of words although that might just be me! The braiding chapter made me rethink what plaiting hair was all about and sent me to google to see the paintings she mentioned. It was fascinating.

I cried at some parts and especially loved the final chapters when she talks about the wonderful women in Shetland and how she came to design her owl sweater and later how long it took her to knit the hare and tortoise sweater.

It's a story that reinforces the positive and healing effects of knitting – something many of us already know.



- Wendy Simpson

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) - 13 January 2024

We hold our AGM in January each year. The day starts with social time, and at 11.00am there will be a talk by the members who went to the Association of Guilds Summer School in 2023 about the courses they took and showing some of their work completed there (hopefully).

At 2.00 our chair & committee members will convene our AGM. The items generally on the agenda include:

- Any proposed changes to membership fees for the next year
- Topic for our Open Day annual challenge
- Voting for new committee members & Guild representatives to national committees.
- Any items from the Association of Guilds requiring a response from us.
- Voting on any changes or updates to our constitution.

The agenda and information for the AGM will be circulated to all members in advance.

On the last page of every newsletter is the list of committee members. If you are interested in serving on the committee please speak to any of them to ask about named roles or to serve as a supportive member.

Our newsletter editor is retiring at the end of this year and we will be seeking a member to replace her. If you are interested in producing our quarterly newsletter speak to Tina or Rachel Lemon, who was the previous editor.

Found on Facebook and some spinners may find useful:



Spinners in the UK Marketplace

Bob Grainger · 3 d · 🇬🇧

I make and sell a number of replacement spinning wheel parts and accessories: Drive Bands, Brake Bands, Treadle Connectors, Tension Knobs, Orifice Hooks, Oil, Corded Footman, etc., for Ashford, Louet, Kromski, Haldane and other wheels. I also have a personal collection of around seventy spinning wheels(!), and am currently refurbishing all of them. I initially started making up the parts for my own wheels, but then thought it would be good to make them up for sale, supplying them quite a bit cheaper than original-branded products. These are all available from my secure website/online shop, plus my Ebay, Etsy and Folksy shops (links on my website). I only post within the UK.

Thank you for reading, Bob Grainger

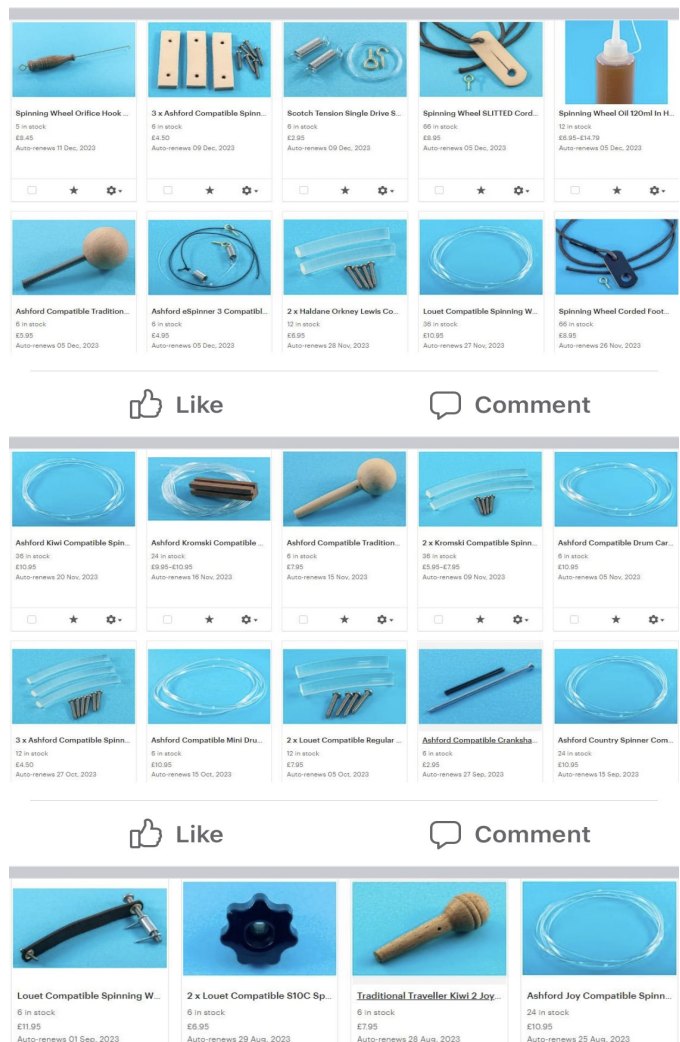
Website/Online Shop and links to my Ebay, Etsy and Folksy listings:

[\[www.FromFibreToFinish.com\]](http://www.FromFibreToFinish.com)(<https://www.fromfibretofinish.com/>)

Download my full Product List (PDF):

<https://www.fromfibretofinish.com/support/from-fibre-to-finish-product-list.pdf>

WSD Autumn 2023



Dates for your Dairy

14th October: What is a Milliner? The Secret Life of Hats Talk with Giulia Mio

11th November: Hand Painted Pouch Workshop with Deborette Clark

9th December: Christmas Party

13th Jan 2024: Annual General Meeting

2023 Committee Members

Chair: Rachel Lemon

Secretary: Amanda Davis

Treasurer: Sarah Cage

Assistant Treasurer: Ruth Weston

Programme Secretary: Charlotte Powell

Librarian: Judith Evans

Demonstrations Co-ordinator: & Website Editor Wendy Simpson

Safeguarding: Janice Price

Newsletter Editor: Tina Helfrich

Other members: Cyndi Husband, Kate Batchelor, Gill Nakasuji

Staying in Touch



BirminghamWSD@hotmail.co.uk



www.wsdbrum.weebly.com



**Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers
(private group)**



**Birmingham and District Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers
(public group)**



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