



Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

New Year, new members and new committee

Let me introduce myself as your new chair.

I learnt to spin on a spindle in 1993 while dressed up as a Tudor at a living history reenactment, and went on to learn about 16th century dyes at the same place. At some point I saw Guild members demonstrating at Cannon Hill's Nature Centre and went on to join around 1995 and was immediately commandeered to be newsletter editor. 18 years later I passed that job over to Tina's capable hands, having for 6 of those years doubled up as secretary.

During all these years the Guild has stayed the same (speakers, workshops, demonstrations) and changed (venue and members). I mostly spin on a wheel nowadays, and attend National Association events where I can. I've done a little bit of weaving but it doesn't speak to my soul. My dyeing with acid dyes is quite slapdash and the stash I have of cochineal and indigo picked up on textile holidays sadly neglected.

Despite many workshops I remain a much better knitter than spinner. I love that our Guild's members have so many different skills and tastes, and that from its beginnings in 1949 our Guild has always encouraged learning and long may this continue.



Rachel Lemon

Dear friends,

It was lovely to see so many of you yesterday at our Guild meeting. It was really nice to see Reg who spent about an hour with us and has promised to come back to see us over the Summer, he bought loads of equipment which all went to good homes.

Also Joy Gough's daughter Catherine Sharp came and gave us some inkle looms and photos and slides etc. that belonged to her mum who before her death was a member of our Guild for many years. This equipment also went and over £60 was raised for Guild funds.

Now to get to my reason for writing, someone asked me to see if there was an Inkle loom available and I have brought one home with me, the only problem is I can't find the e mail and have no idea who asked for it, so if it was you, can you please drop me a line and I will bring it to the meeting in March.

Thank you to all members who have paid their Guild subscriptions, and a gentle reminder to those who haven't that the cut off date is our March meeting for payment before you cease to be a member. You can pay by cash or cheque at the March meeting or by BACS into our account.

I hope you are all keeping warm on this horrible wet and windy day. Have a good weekend.

Regards,

Mandy

Amanda Davis (Secretary)

Reg Horton

How nice it was to see Reg at our last Guild meeting. He was looking fit and is recovering well from his fall and broken hip. He has now decided to give up his craft work and very generously donated his equipment to our guild.

Reg has been a member of the guild for over 30 years and apparently joined at the same time as Rachel. Mainly a weaver, he always participated in guild activities especially the Open Days where he would demonstrate and encourage people to have a go on one of his many home made looms. His flower looms are legendary and visitors to our open days left with a complimentary flower.

He made a lot of equipment for sale and was also sometimes asked to repair a spinning wheel. Reg is a carpenter by trade but switched to teaching and taught at Yardleys school for 14 years. His home is a testament



to his skills with hand made wooden furniture upholstered in fabric woven on his handmade loom plus the curtains are handwoven too.

His talents also extend to the kitchen as Reg makes a wonderful sponge cake - what a man!

We will miss his regular attendance at Guild meetings but he has promised that as a life member to keep in touch and visit us when he can.

Kate (Reg's number 1 fan)

Reg's Sponge Cake Recipe

2 eggs - whisked together for 25 seconds
4 oz margarine

4oz caster sugar

5oz S.R. Flour

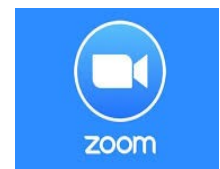
1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp vanilla essence

Mix all ingredients together in a mixer and add 1tbsp lukewarm water at end. Divide mixture into 2 tins and bake for 16 mins at 190 c

At our February meeting we offered a Zoom session for members wishing to hear the talk

about Summer School 2021 and who wanted to check in and catch up. This feature can be added to future meetings. If you wish to zoom into a future meeting please let Mandy know by email to BirminghamWSD@hotmail.com at least 48 hours before the meeting so we can bring the camera, laptop and hook up. The room where we meet has a 60" television mounted on the wall so everyone can see anyone wanting to join in on Zoom.



Chair's Letter

Apart from the stormy weather I love this time of year with the days finally lengthening noticeably, and snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils bursting into bloom (if you think I'm imagining things I've been in London this week - there were swathes of daffodils).

The first half of this year's programme is us-time, while speakers and workshops have been booked for the autumn. We are mindful that members are not all comfortable with coming back to the Meeting House, and that the Meeting House as private property may apply stricter rules than the government requires.

For me it's sheer delight to spend the day with woolly friends.

Rachel

Saturday 14 May - Guild Open Day and Challenge—Make-Do-And-Mend

We're looking forward to welcoming the public and friends for our annual open day. This is the day to bring your finished woven, spun or dyed objects to display. As you're allowed to show the same thing at two Open Days if you brought items to November 2021 you can bring them again. Our sub committee Sarah, Judy and Mandy will be coordinating things so please sign up if you are able to the tasks which need to be shared to make it a relaxing day for all. The competition theme this year is Make-do-and-Mend and your entry needs to include some weaving, or spinning, or dyeing at the very least.

TOUR OF BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY TEXTILE DEPARTMENT

Birmingham WSD have been invited to a tour around the Textile department at Birmingham City University.

It will be an afternoon, but date not scheduled just yet, as I need to know roughly how many people would like to attend. No cost.

We have gradually built up better links with the staff and students of the Textile department and this is the latest development. Face coverings are mandatory.

If you are interested in putting your name down, please contact Judy Preston judyannemariepreston@gmail.com



Guild 2022 Programme

12 March	Textile Taster
9 April	Informal Meeting
14 May	Open Day & Exhibition
11 June	Public Event for WWKiPD
9 July	Talk by Louise Cottey
August	No Meeting
10 September	Talk by Nilupa Yasmin
8 October	Talk by Teresinha Roberts
12 November	Nicola Davis
10 December	Christmas Party

WWKiPD World Wide Knit in Public Day was started in 2005 by Danielle Landes. It began as a way for knitters to come together and enjoy each other's company. Knitting is such a solitary act that it's easy to knit alone somewhere and sink into your work without thinking about all the other knitters out there. Neighbours could spend all their lives never knowing that the other knits.

We hope to join up with Yarningham at a public park to share in knitting and spinning together.

Louise Cottey is a weaver who with Liz Croft set up The Loom Shed in Cullompton, Devon. She is an accomplished weaver and will be talking to us about "Weaving My Wedding Dress".

"My weaving life has taken me through design jobs, interesting commissions and creating my own collections of scarves, wraps and blankets. Whilst motherhood has slowed my weaving production rate, you will be able to find my work at contemporary craft fairs around the country. "





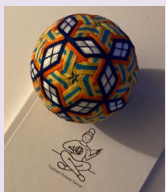
- photo from the mac

Nilupa Yasmin recently had an exhibition and workshops at the Midlands Art Centre (mac) in Canon Hill Park. She will be coming to our September meeting to talk about her work and to teach us her paper weaving technique.

“Nilupa Yasmin's work consists of beautifully handcrafted and digitally woven artworks. The artist uses this creative process as a means of

contemporary storytelling to carefully interlace cultural identity, loss and belonging with her own South Asian heritage.”— *from the mac website.*

Teresinha Roberts will be talking about **Sustainability in Textiles**. She has been a member of the Birmingham Guild for many years but also runs Wild Colours at the Custard Factory in Digbeth. She specialises in textiles and natural dyes. During the current pandemic she has been busy at her allotment in Walsall growing mulberries to feed her silk worms, and growing flax to spin and weave her own linen.



Nicola Davis is a member of the Japanese Temari Association and the UK Embroiderers' Guild. Do reserve this date to join us for this unique Christmas bauble making workshop, using traditional Japanese craft skills. Her website is The Twisted Thread..

Talks generally start at 2.00pm after a morning to chat and craft together.

Workshops are all day (10.00am-4.00pm) and they frequently book up quickly as numbers are generally limited to 12 or less.

Workshops fees vary by tutors fees and travel costs so do enquire early to Charlotte Powell.

Christmas Party Our December meeting is a time to chat and craft in the morning and a festive shared lunch at 1.00pm which might include singing, games, puzzles or bring your handmade decoration. We have also previously had a handmade gift exchange if members wish to have a lucky dip.



Online dyeing workshop

Debbie Tomkies, who did a sock dyeing workshop for us a few years ago, is running a pilot online dyeing workshop on 8th March 6.30pm-8.30pm.



Additional tickets released for our pilot live, online event – a two hour hand-dyeing workshop!

Our first live, online hand-dyeing workshop sold out within 48 hours so if you missed out, we've released some more tickets to give people a chance to join us!

All proceeds from ticket sales are going to buy items for Don't Walk Past group, a small, local organisation that offer practical support to those unfortunate enough to find themselves homeless.

During the live session, you'll be able to dye-a-long with Debbie and ask questions/ share your progress if you wish. If you can't be there live, a recording will be available for a couple of weeks so you can catch up later and follow along at your own pace. https://www.dtcrafts.co.uk/stec_event/online-live-handyeing-session-dont-walk-past-group-8-march-evening/

Shirts versus T-shirts by Teresinha Roberts

Cotton shirts and T-shirts are made of different types of fabric. Shirts are made of woven fabric which has threads running at 90 degrees to each other (their threads are the warp and weft in a loom). T-shirts on the other hand are made of jersey, which is a type of knitted fabric, made with many interconnecting loops.

In my opinion, cotton shirts are more sustainable than T-shirts. Shirts are more durable because woven fabrics are easy to mend with a patch, whilst the edge of jersey fabric tends to roll, making it difficult to mend.

The life cycle of a shirt is also more sustainable, you can save the buttons for later use in a button jar, and you can give the fabric a new lease of life as patchwork quilts or cushions. There is not much you can use a worn out T-shirt for, apart from cleaning cloths.

It is not difficult to find pure cotton shirts, but T-shirts often come with a percentage of synthetic fibre (e.g. lycra) which makes T-shirts more difficult to recycle than shirts.

I welcome your comments on the text above. Please email me at info@wildcolours.co.uk or send me a message via WhatsApp.

Looking ahead to Easter

[Original article](#) *The New York Times*, 27 March 2021

Margaret has shared an article on natural dyeing for Easter eggs she found on the internet from the *New York Times*. If you are an avid natural dyer you may already use these dyes or some of them can be sourced in your kitchen such as:

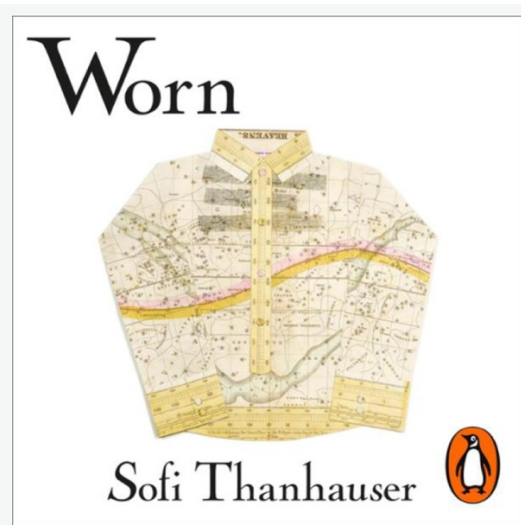
- yellow onion skins from roughly 8-10 onions
- red cabbage, roughly chopped
- ground turmeric
- beets, chopped
- frozen blueberries



The history of decorating eggs goes back thousands of years with an engraved ostrich egg over 60,000 years ago was found in South Africa. The article includes recipes for creating the dyes but be warned this is not a quick process and the eggs must soak in the dye bath for several hours in order to get the bright spring colours.

A History of Fashion and Clothing Production

— the good, the bad, and the new hope.



Earlier this year Kate sent out an alert on WhatsApp about a book being featured on Radio 4 titled “Worn” by Sofi Thanhauser.

I found the first chapter on BBC Sounds and enjoyed the first chapter on the history of clothing and fashion. So I used one of my Audible credits to buy the audiobook and listened to it over a few days. Each chapter focuses on the history of a different fibre and the production of cloth and clothing in different eras. Sadly the history of modern clothing and the development of fashion is not a pleasant one. But she does end on a kinder note in the final chapters where she focuses on smaller companies producing modern smaller batches of clothing and looking at the campaign to promote the resurgence of wool and

cooperatives.

I had not heard of Fibresheds before but they are regional cooperatives which are being set up to promote the use of locally produced wool and fibres by networking local farmers with local mills and crafts people to spin and use the fibre produced. Although they started in the United States there are now Fibresheds in 4 regions of the UK. The nearest to Birmingham is South West England Fibreshed in Bristol.

- Tina

2022 Committee Members

Chair: Rachel Lemon

Secretary: Amanda Davis

Treasurer: Sarah Cage

Programme Secretary: Charlotte Powell

Librarian: Judith Evans

Demonstrations Co-ordinator: Wendy Simpson

Newsletter Editor: Tina Helfrich

Public Social Media Editor: vacancy

Other members: Judy Preston, Janice Price

Textile Tasters 12 March

Members will be sharing their skills with you at our next meeting. Come along and have-a-go at making Dorset Buttons, or pin loom weaving, or needle felting, some cordage to make looped bags, or Japanese braiding known as Kumihimo. Rachel will be teaching different cast ons and cast offs for knitters. And there will be spindles and wheels to spin on. Come to make a lanyard for you guild name badge!



Staying in Touch



BirminghamWSD@hotmail.co.uk



www.wsdbrum.com



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