

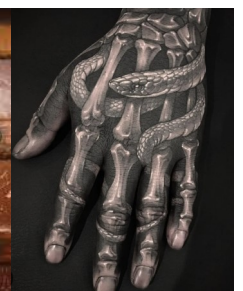


Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

Guild Challenge for May 2023

Is

Handcoverings



Chair's Letter

Dear Friends,

I love this time of year when the days are getting longer day-by-day. It makes me feel so much more enthusiastic about Doing Things and Learning Things. Obviously our Guild has formal learning in its workshops, but there are other forms of learning too. We have a library full of books on practical and historical aspects of our crafts and related ones. We have equipment to borrow so you can try a craft without forking out lots of money to find you absolutely love it, or perhaps it isn't really for you. And most of all we have each other to learn from, in all our informal settings whether it's watching someone do something you haven't yet tried, or asking someone about the object they're carrying or wearing.

On Guild days when there's a speaker we have these get-togethers in the morning, and on workshop days for those not in the workshop itself we have these gatherings all day in the lobby area. And sometimes it's the serendipitous learning which most inspires us.

For the next couple of months I shall mostly be working on my handcoverings for the Competition, and a knitted elephant, Elijah by Ysolda, for my niece's baby. And re-learning how to sew my half-finished temari ball from November's workshop...

Rachel

2023 Guild Challenge is Handcoverings

This year's challenge for our annual exhibition is handcoverings as voted on at the AGM.

So where will your inspiration come from?

Just remember it must include at least one of our guild crafts— Spinning, Weaving, or Dyeing— It must also be able to be displayed on the table for visitors to vote for their choice! So it will be best if is not dyed directly on your skin but possibly knit or crocheted in handspun or hand dyed yarn, or created in bobbin lace, weaving or possibly macramé.

2023 Membership

2023 membership subscription renewals for adults is £25 due by our March meeting.

Anyone who wants to subscribe to the Association of Guilds of Weaver Spinners and Dyers' national quarterly magazine The Journal can do so via their website

<https://journalwsd.org.uk/>

January meeting report

A new year and a new holiday talk from Rachel - of course! I joined the guild 9 years ago and this is an annual treat I wouldn't want to miss. This year she went to Sweden via Norway. She flew to Norway straight after the Guilds Gathering in Worcester in the summer. She went with Helen and they arrived in Trondheim to visit Kirsty, a friend met on a previous summer school. Their last visit had been cut short because of the pandemic. They spent a week there with Kirsty in her house with beautiful views. They visited a mill (Rachel loves mills!) and a folk museum during the week and also sat and knitted while looking out at the view.

Kirsty then drove them on to Gothenburg in Sweden for their summer school week. It was a long journey and they stayed at a sheep farm enroute. With 100 sheep all with bells Rachel was surprised that she slept really well that night in a very basic hut (no plumbing or electricity).

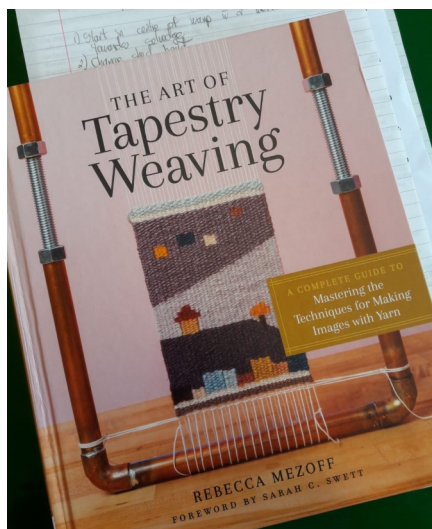
They were staying on an island near Gothenburg, pronounced Chorn, and Rachel and Helen took part in about 5 workshops. They had a little difficulty with the language as the whole week was in Swedish, which neither of them speak. Usually the summer schools have English speakers too. However they didn't let it stop them taking part in everything although Rachel thinks there were some finer points that they may have missed.

Workshops include one about knitted pockets that didn't show, one to make angora wrist warmers, one that was about knitting tramlines, a woven knitting one and a Viking inspired pattern of cables around corners. These all make more sense when you see the photos. She doesn't like the wrist warmers as the kit she was given was not her favourite colours. Some of the tutors were well known and Rachel was really excited about working with them. She also learnt nålbinding during an informal afternoon and she loved it although admits to still not being able to cast on. I thoroughly understand that as I learnt it too in an online guild workshop during the pandemic and that was definitely the hardest part. I made a bag, pencil case and mittens which are great but I still can't cast on properly



AGM

Here is a short summary of main points from the AGM. We elected 3 new members onto the committee as 3 members are standing down. Kate and Cyndi are rejoining and welcome to Gill. Thank you Carolyn, Judy and Cyndi as treasurer. We agreed on a safeguarding policy, researched and led by Janice, who had worked very hard on the policy - thank you Janice. We listened to the yearly reports and agreed on a few changes. Most important of all we voted on our yearly competition topic. Gradients, jewellery and water were rejected and our new competition title is HAND COVERINGS. This was suggested by Rachel and we now need to make something for our Open Day in May. Of course it must include at least one of our disciplines of weaving, spinning and dyeing.



The Art of Tapestry Weaving

by Rebecca Mezoff

This recent book is excellent both for beginners and advanced tapestry weavers. Rebecca also has an excellent blog with several useful tips on www.tapestryweaving.com and a great YouTube channel.

I found her information on the “meet and separate” technique essential for tapestry weaving.

-Teresinha Roberts

Online resources recommended by:

Judy Preston

Katy Russell is a tapestry artist in Scotland, and this video is an interview about her work for the Maritime Museum on *Woven Waves: The Jutland Tapestries* .

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTuNbXa8MmQ>

Completely different work, more abstract is that of James Koehler in US. Rebecca Mezzoff describes his work this video tribute to him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKLMAPNGJvE&t=595s>

Rebecca Mezzoff. *Change the Shed* is a regular live presentation - a very informal chat with those who sign in - It can be watched later- as i do. Pacific Time doesn't suit me really. It will restart in February when she returns from teaching in Taos. Rebecca is a well known online tutor in tapestry weaving. I gained a lot from her courses before i studied at West Dean College. I am now following her Design for Tapestry Course - slowly getting through it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-qw0la0jMo>

Rachel Lemon

Kate Davies (knitwear designer) was an academic before designing and writes a very thoughtful blog which from 30 Oct 2022 to mid February 2023 has been running a theme of colour. There was a break for Christmas, but each Wednesday's post is by a guest and Friday's post is an essay by Kate <https://kddandco.com/>

Amanda Davis

A good FaceBook group to join is UK Spin-a-holics.

Two articles about research into wool scouring agents by James Longdraw Perry

<https://fossilfibers.wordpress.com/2023/01/10/introduction-to-common-wool-scouring-agents/>

<https://fossilfibers.wordpress.com/2023/01/24/method-and-results-of-testing-common-wool-scouring-agents/>

Online resources I found during recent lockdowns

During the Covid lockdowns I started roving the internet for resources to help me improve my spinning and also vloggers to inspire me.

I first found a website called [The Sheep Spot](#) which had an advertisement circulated by Spin Off magazine. There are various types of membership starting at The Flock, which is free, and now up to The Guild, which is an annual subscription.



My initial membership was in **Breed School** which is a year long course spinning a different breed fleece each month. You get 150 grams of prepared fleece, notes about the breed, videos of spinning techniques and assignments for specific spinning techniques to use each month. Students share photos and comments about their spinning online. The course is generated from Ontario, Canada so interactive zoom and live video sessions tend to be late evenings in the UK but weekend sessions are frequently early evening GMT. I have vastly improved my consistency in spinning and my knowledge of fleeces on this course.

The next step is **The Sheepspotters Society** course for newer and self taught spinners which is a year long subscription. Each month the lessons and tasks vary including a Spinning Wheel Spa to help you service your wheel and challenges such as trying new-to-you fibres.

I have now advanced to **The Guild**, the newest membership level for experienced spinners, which includes weekly zoom Sit and Spin sessions to share what you are working on and to ask questions of the other members.

Sasha Torres is the owner of Sheepspot and also has a series of podcasts called The Sheepspot Podcast which are free on most podcast services.

One of my other discoveries was [Josefin Waltin](#), a Swedish spinning teacher with a YouTube channel, website and blog about Swedish breeds and their fleeces as well as classes on spinning techniques. On Patreon she has Q&A sessions and monthly postcards about what she is currently spinning or fleeces she is processing and all are in English. Her blog is at watlin.se and includes links to her YouTube videos, courses and lectures and information about her live webinars. Several of her videos are lovely as mediations as they feature her spinning and weaving in locations around Sweden. She also creates with other crafts and shares her experiences with embroidery, discovering jug covers while bingeing the Downton Abbey series, and the history of tie-on pockets used by Swedish women in earlier centuries.

Another favourite vlogger from Sweden is [Cias Bod](#) who does a monthly hour long video blog in Swedish and an English language version. She amazes me with her knitting output while also working full-time in care and support. She spins and talks about other crafts, and although she doesn't have lessons, watching her spin is restful and soothing. She also has a Patreon channel where she shares her patterns.

- Tina Helfrich

Birmingham Knitting and Crochet Guild

Lots of people knit during WSD meetings so I thought you might like to hear about the latest news from the Knitting and Crochet Guild.

Meetings happen on the third Saturday of each month. Everyone is welcome and you do not have to be a member of the National Guild (although at £25 a year you might decide to join).

The meetings take place at Birmingham City University, Parkside Building, 5 Cardigan Street B4 7BD from 10am to 2pm. Please bring £3 donation, something to 'show and tell' (everything is of interest and it is not a test), lunch and a drink (not compulsory) a project to work on if you have fidgety fingers.

At the February meeting we will have a special treat as Barbara Smith is bringing a suitcase of items from the Guild's collection for us to hear about, look at and handle (wearing specially provided white cotton gloves). So what I hear you ask is the KCG collection?

The Guild has collected about 2000 items relating to hand knitted, domestic machine knitted or crocheted, with some combining these techniques. Briefly, the Collection consists of

knitted and crocheted items;

tools and accessories;

yarns and shade cards;

publications (books, magazines and pattern leaflets & booklets).

In age, the Collection contains items ranging from pre-Victorian to late twentieth century, which vary from museum-quality pieces to pieces representative of 'everyday' domestic production typical of the mid twentieth century. There are samples of regional patterns such as Shetland and Aran and 'designer' pieces from the 1980s when knitwear was high fashion story about each of those items. Her talk will refer to extensive research, amusing or surprising information and much to ooh and ahh over. Photographs for personal use will be permitted. Do consider joining us and for more information or encouragement please e-mail birm.branch.kcg@gmail.com.

- Janet Collins

Grayson's Art Club is at the Midlands Art Centre

Grayson Perry's Art Club exhibition is at the **mac** in Cannon Hill Park until the 16th April. Booking is essential and tickets are pay what you can.

One of the exhibits is a knitted model of Sandringham Castle made by Margaret Seaman, a 92-year-old great-great grandmother from Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, to raise funds for local hospitals.



- Kate Batchelor

AGWSD's Summer School

The excitement for Summer School 2023 is starting to build up. Emails have been popping into people's inboxes telling them what they will be doing. Although I am part of the team planning the event I had no idea what my allocation would be. From sending my application in, I changed my mind about what my first choice should be thinking I hope I get my second one which I did – serendipity! Nuno feltmaking here I come. So at the dyers picnic in June I will be colouring some fleece to use in my creations.

Those of us who are going will have a range of different experiences to show and tell you about afterwards. Wendy Simpson will be honing her flax spinning skills; Charlotte Powell and Janet Collins will be learning weaving with stripes from Margo Selby; Tina Helfrich will be learning to needle felt 3D figures; Kate Batchelor is going to be making paper; Rachel Lemon will be learning to weave words in tapestry weaving.

The team are still planning, we are booking in suppliers who will be at the trade fair which anyone can come along to, perhaps a day out for other Guild members. We are also working on the evening activities, not just the speakers and of course optional trips out. All in all it should be a great summer school, lovely location, making new friends and seeing old ones, having dedicated time to learn new skills, experiment and create, sound's idyllic to me.

- Janice Price

Dyeing and Botanical Printing Workshops from Judy's Dye Garden in Sutton Coldfield.

Introduction to Botanical Printing

Dates ; April 1st, May 6th, July 1st, 12th

August

Botanical Printing with Natural Dyes and Indigo Dye enhancement

Dates: April 14th: June 3rd: 13th August

Natural Dyeing Workshop

Dates: April 22nd: June 11th: 5th August

Cyanotype Printing - An Exploration

Date: Friday 5th May



You see examples of her work on Instagram @judypreston403 or read a review of some on her courses on [Craft Courses](#).

To book or enquire contact Judy at judyannemarieston@gmail.com or phone her on 07908 219834

Sewing
for
Pleasure





— THE —
CREATIVE
CRAFT
SHOW

at the NEC, 16th — 19th March 2023

Steeking at the Knit and Crochet Guild

I went to KCG in Birmingham City Centre on 21st January. It's always the third Saturday in the month(the one after our guild). It was the first time I've been although I've been a member for a while. I went because it was going to be about steeking and Janet Collins was teaching. It didn't disappoint. Five us from our guild were there. We started off with a show and tell by the 15 or so members present. There were some brilliant garments.

We had to take a simple mug cosy we had knitted so we could practice steeking on it. Janet had made a beautiful cardigan which needed steeking and she cut it at the meeting as we all watched and held our breath! It didn't fall apart and she demonstrated how to steak on a mug cosy by crocheting an edging each side before cutting. We all duly steeked our cosies with no disasters!

I would recommend going to the meetings if you like knitting and crochet.

-Wendy Simpson



Janet Collins demonstrates steeking on her hand knit cardigan.



Founded in May of 2002, the Online Guild was originally established to meet the needs of fibre and textile artists unable to be involved in their local guilds. Since that time, our membership has grown to over 400, representing a truly worldwide community.

Through the Internet, members of all skill levels meet for fibre related discussions and the opportunity to learn and share new skills and techniques.

By utilising a private members-only website, we are able to participate in ongoing fibre and textile related discussions, access a virtual library of extensive fibre and textile related topics and resources, and enjoy online programmes and workshops. Our programme schedule offers a wide variety of opportunities both to learn and to teach. Past programmes have included kumihimo, triloom weaving, silk spinning, tapestry weaving, freeform crochet, indigo dyeing, felting, sewing with handwovens, and several rare breed challenges.

If you want to know how the Guild is set up to deliver workshops and disseminate information online please see [here](#). Or speak to a member at our local guild meeting—Wendy, Carolyn, Sarah, Tina and others, The Online Guild is affiliated to the UK Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers. Membership includes an annual subscription to the Association's quarterly publication, "The Journal."

TUTOR LED EVENTS

- One one-month longstanding workshop to start the year
- Three workshops that span a six-week period – one for each of the core skills areas.
- Two illustrated talks spanning a fortnight each
- Three one-month workshops on topics that are less closely related to the core skills
- Festive Greetings activity to end the year.

2022 ONLINE GUILD PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Month (duration)	Workshop Programme	Annual Challenge
January (one month)	UFO Workshop	Water
February (one month)	Sprang	
March/April (6 weeks)	Spindle spinning	
April (two weeks)	Flax in a historical context	
May (one month)	Damask weaving for re-enactment	
June/July (6 weeks)	Basic historical looms	
July (1 week)	Annual Guild Discussion Week	
August	Free	
September/ October (six weeks)	Foraged dyes from temperate zones	Challenge items posted on line
October (2 weeks)	Spanish rare breed sheep	
November (one month)	Modular knitting	
December (one month)	Festive Greetings	

Spinning on an Indian book charkha

A small book shaped box, where everything needed is packed into a small space, which I can use for spinning - that is a very satisfying combination for me!



For a long time I had fancied the idea of spinning cotton with an Indian book charkha so I was delighted when Ann Shingles wanted to be rid of hers a couple of years ago. I have tried it out without much success, but when I came across an online *Spin-Off* course **How to Spin on a Charkha with Kate Larson**, I thought that would be a nice start for the year. The course comprises how to videos and background information as well as troubleshooting, and links to other articles.

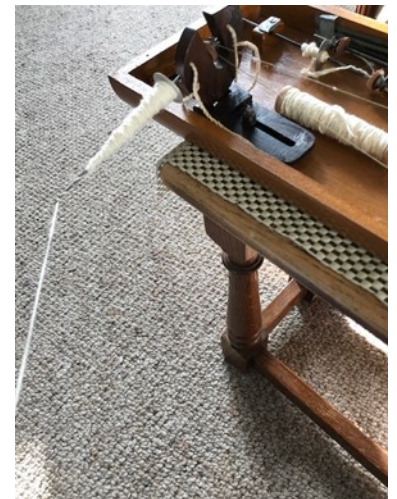
I learned that In India, the term charkha refers to spinning wheels large and small. The book charkha came about as a result of a competition organised by Gandhi in 1929 to design a spinning wheel that was small, lightweight, and portable. Some of the criteria for the contest were:



It must be in such a way that a lady shall be able to work with it for eight hours at a stretch without great effort put in.

The machine should be strong and well-made and with time-to-time servicing it should be capable of running for at least 20 years without any stopping. (First Steps in Charkha Spinning JOANNE NAKONECHNY)

The fibre is spun 'off the point' of the spindle and is wound directly onto it, rather than onto a bobbin so has more in common with a great wheel than our bobbin-led wheels. The main wheel turns an accelerator wheel which is attached to the spindle by the drive band.



I don't think I would have got started without the help of the course, it is quite an idiosyncratic little machine and I think it's going to take many hours of practice to spin constant usable yarn but I am enjoying the challenge!

<https://learn.longthreadmedia.com/courses/how-to-spin-on-a-charkha>

- Carolyn Arber



Our 2023 Programme & Meetings

February 11th

Carpet Cool! 250 Years of Kidderminster: Design Talk with Dr Anthea Harris-Fry & The Museum of Carpet

Written and presented by historian Dr Anthea Harris-Fry, this talk explores Kidderminster's trailblazing place at the forefront of design in the carpet industry. It charts the evolution of carpets from the elaborate hand-loom patterns of the eighteenth century through the industrial revolution to the designs of the present day.

Highlighting famous designers such as William Morris, Charles Voysey and Lucienne Day and their influence on the carpet industry, the talk explores how design reflects and shapes the world around it. It weaves a picture of the impact of industrial advances and social and economic changes over the past 250 years on design, as consumer tastes and architectural practices evolved. Harris-Fry also asks how changes in our preferences and ways of life might shape carpet design in a post-pandemic world.

Capturing the global evolution of art and design throughout the Victorian period to the swinging sixties and beyond, it centres its discussion on design in Kidderminster, the pioneering 'carpet capital of the world'. <https://museumofcarpet.org/>

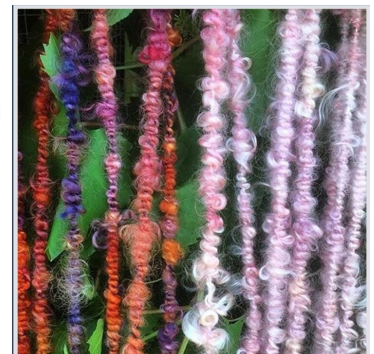
March 11th

Art Yarns Workshop with Sue Kimber of Farm Crafts

We will start with uncarded dyed fleece, spun roughly to loosen our hands up. We will then do some thick and thin with spiral ply, moving into bee - hives. After that we will look at core spinning and different ways to ply for different results.

Sue can also demonstrate bubble ply and/or tail spinning.

Sue will supply fibres and plying thread but attendees are welcome to bring their own fibres too, tops, roving and uncarded fleece will all work!



April 8th

Weaving with Waste with Sarah Cooke

Description: "I start the sessions showing examples of my own weavings using unusual materials (waste which often gets thrown away). Then you learn how to warp up a simple frame loom, and to do plain weave.

Then the fun begins! You have a chance to weave with all sorts of different materials, such as plastic packaging, old phone cables and beads, fabric off-cuts, string etc. By the end of the day you will have made a wall hanging, table mat, small bag or covered a notebook.

The day is suitable for beginner weavers, and more experienced weavers will enjoy the freedom of these unconventional materials.

You can see more of my own weaving on my website, <https://www.sarahcooke.co/>



October 14th

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.

Date	Main Activity	Agenda
11 Feb 10:00-16:00	Talk	14:00: Carpet Cool! 250 Years of Kidderminster Design Talk with Dr Anthea Harris-Fry & The Museum of Carpet (https://museumofcarpet.org/)
11 March 10:00-16:00	Workshop (Extra Cost)	Art Yarns Workshop with Sue Kimber of Farm Crafts (https://www.instagram.com/farmcrafts/)
08 April 10:00-16:00	Workshop (Extra Cost)	10:00 – 16:00: Weaving with Waste Workshop with Sarah Cooke (https://www.sarahcooke.co/)
13 May 10:00-16:00	Open Day	Annual Open Day & Exhibition
10 June 10:00-16:00	Dyeing Day	Dyers Picnic
08 July 10:00-16:00	Informal Meeting	Spinning Wheel Speed Dating (Try spinning on a selection of different wheels)
August		No Meeting
09 Sept 10:00-16:00	Informal Meeting	Learn to Spin Drop-in Sessions (Learn to spin sessions for visitors and members)
14 Oct 10:00-16:00	Talk	14:00: What is a Milliner? The Secret Life of Hats Talk with Giulia Mio (https://giuliamiomillinery.com/)
11 Nov 10:00-16:00	Workshop (Extra Cost)	10:00 – 16:00: Hand Painted Leather Pouch Workshop with Deborette Clark of B18 Leather (https://b18leather.co.uk/)
09 Dec 10:00-16:00	Informal Meeting	Christmas Party and Bring and Share Lunch

2022 Committee Members

Chair: Rachel Lemon

Secretary: Amanda Davis

Treasurer: Sarah Cage

Assistant Treasurer: Ruth Weston

Programme Secretary: Charlotte Powell

Librarian: Judith Evans

Safeguarding Officer: Janice Price

Demonstrations Co-ordinator: Wendy Simpson

Newsletter Editor: Tina Helfrich

Public Social Media Editor: vacancy

Member Reps: Cyndi Husband, Gill Nakasuji, Kate Batchelor

The Guild's WhatsApp Chat Group

If you use WhatsApp (a free app for mobile phones) or want to stay in touch between meetings, we have a private group which allows members of the Guild to stay in touch and share projects and information. If you would like to be added to the group please contact Carolyn Arber with your mobile phone number and she will add you. You can drop out of the group at any time.

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)



[wsd brum \(Instagram\)](https://www.instagram.com/wsd_brum)