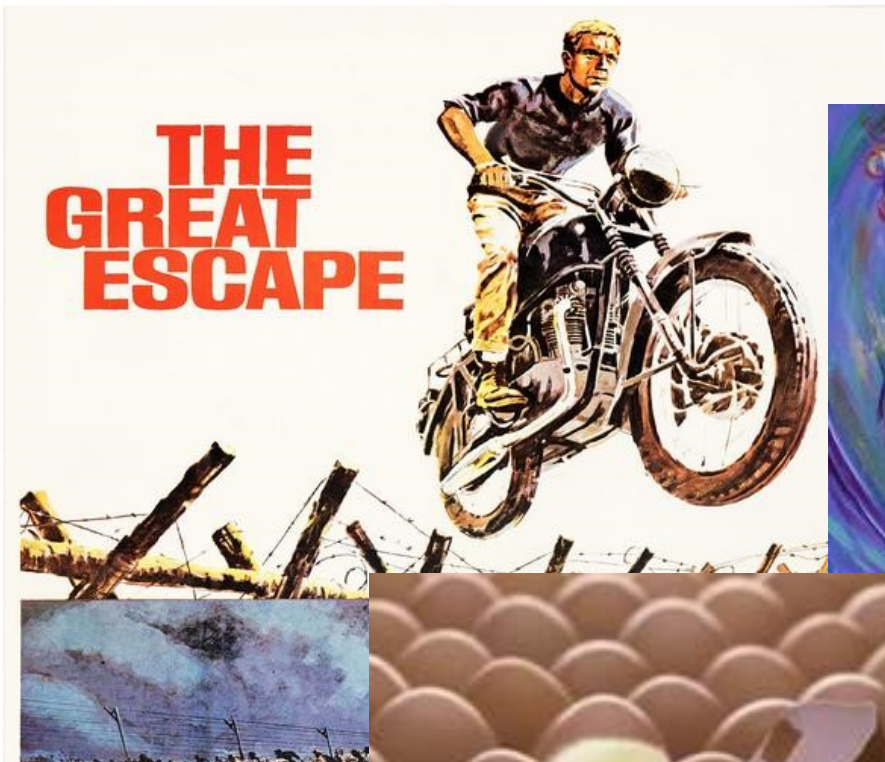


WSD

Birmingham & District Guild
of Weavers Spinners & Dyers



Chair's Letter

Dear Friends

I find I am very pleased to know that you are all 'out there' and keeping in touch. We have 27 members signed up so far and thanks to everyone for being part of the guild, whether or not you are able to come to our zoom meetings. Thanks to Tina for keeping us connected by producing such attractive newsletters.

We are so very sorry to hear of the sad death of Reg Kings, a stalwart of the guild, along with Elizabeth, for many years. I didn't know Reg well, but well enough to know that he was a kind and gentle man. Our love and thoughts are very much with Elizabeth and her family.

On a much happier note we wish Reg and Jean Horton many congratulations on their 60th wedding anniversary.

We are planning to hold our exhibition/open day in November rather than as originally planned in May in the hope that we will be able to meet then. If all goes to plan and we are able to meet in gardens, we hope to hold our Dyers' Picnic, hosted by Sarah in her garden in June. If the Covid road map is followed on the dates specified, we will be able to return to Cotteridge Meeting House in July.

Are you planning your Great Escape? We might not manage that till the summer so in the meantime why not dream of one for our annual competition? Charlotte will compile entries into a slide show which will be shown at our May meeting. We are still calling it a competition as it would have been, but it won't be judged, it would be lovely to have lots of entries.

Wishing you all a happy Easter.

Carolyn

(Joint Chair)

Very best wishes

Carolyn

2021 Committee Members

Chair: Carolyn Arber & Amanda Davis

Secretary: Amanda Davis

Treasurer: Cyndi Husband

Programme Secretary: Charlotte Powell

Librarian: Judith Evans

Demonstrations Co-ordinator: Wendy Simpson

Newsletter Editor: Tina Helfrich

Social Media Editor: vacancy

Other members: Sarah Cage, Judy Preston, Janice Price

In memoriam – Reg Kings

Reg Kings was an engineer by background – and this showed in how absolutely meticulous he was in anything he made.

He and Elisabeth joined the Guild in about 2001. Reg enjoyed making equipment like an inkle loom for himself, and was possibly more interested in the equipment itself than what it could do! I took advantage of his good nature and asked him to make me a Woolly Board for drying jumpers on, from only a rather rough sketch. Being a perfectionist with only limited information to work from meant this was a challenge for him, but it works perfectly and I think of him every time I use it.

He was a quiet, kind man who was unquestionably interested in other people – someone you could always have a proper conversation and chuckle with. I will miss seeing this lovely man at Guild meetings.

Kate Batchelor

Here is my cushion collection all finished this week. The stranded colourwork cushion was started at Summer school 2019. It is knitted in the round with steek stitches and then cut and finished with a buttonhole rib. The eco print of leaves was done 3 or 4 years ago and discovered in my samples box! The 2 picture cushions were made by transferring the images, painted by my daughter, onto fabric using Lazertran paper. I particularly like the blue one 'A typical British Summer' as it's mounted on a bit of indigo dyed muslin which looks like sea. It was satisfying to recycle various pieces of fabric.



A Good Read

I've recently listened to the audible book *A Single Thread* by Tracy Chevalier and really enjoyed it. It has a link to the textile world in the form of embroidery and there are some interesting facts about Cathedral Broderers. It made me realise how important it is to be welcoming to new members in our own Guild. Set in Winchester just after the Second World War, the storyline and characters kept me engrossed - overall it's an easy and enjoyable read or listen.

Looking forward to Easter

Having knitted 12 baubles before Christmas (out of a planned 24), I'm now working on an Easter knit along - knitting 12 eggs! I'm slightly behind (with 4 knitted so far), but they are really quick to knit so I'm expecting to manage the complete set this time.



Once the eggs are complete, I've decided to attempt to knit a vintage swimsuit pattern - wish me luck! I'm assuming it will be suitable for lying on a beach, once we can travel again, if not for swimming.

Other than that, I launched my first PDF sewing pattern in February & am working on the next patterns - with the aim to release 4 or 5 in total this year.

- Charlotte

Mandy Davis



Some lovely fibre I've bought from World of Wool, the pink is Corriedale, the purple a mixture of tweed mix, Merino and Bamboo, I aim to spin them fine then ply in a barber pole 2 ply.

Stratford Guild Spin-along Invitation

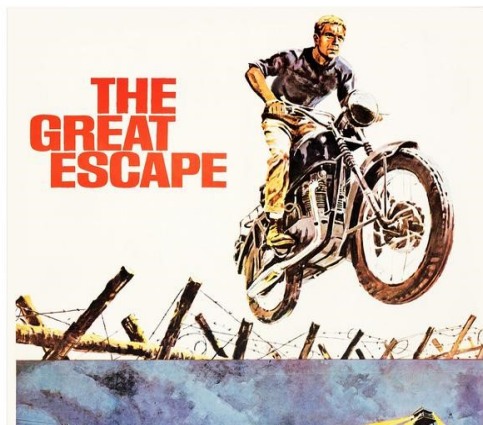


The Spring 'Spinalong' (well, technically a 'craftalong!'), will run between Thursday 1st April and Wednesday 7th April. During that week we are encouraging any members and guests who want to take part to set themselves a challenge or two (I will be aiming to make sure I spin a bit everyday day, but other suggestions could be to finish an outstanding project, learn a new technique etc), - but no pressure so - you can take part as much or as little as you fancy. The main idea is to just encourage us to do something crafty during that week. We aim to have zoom meetings to catch up on each day with a final show and tell on the Thursday as follows:

- ✪ Thursday 1st April 2 pm - 4 pm
- ✪ Friday 2nd 10 am to 12 noon
- ✪ Saturday 3rd 2 pm - 4 pm
- ✪ Sunday 4th 3 pm - 5 pm
- ✪ Monday 5th 2 pm - 4 pm
- ✪ Tuesday 6th 7 pm - 9 pm
- ✪ Wednesday 7th 7 pm - 9 pm
- ✪ Thursday 8th 10 am - 12 noon

Contact: Anna Stocks, Chair on [wsdstratford@gmail](mailto:wsdstratford@gmail.com)

Coming Soon



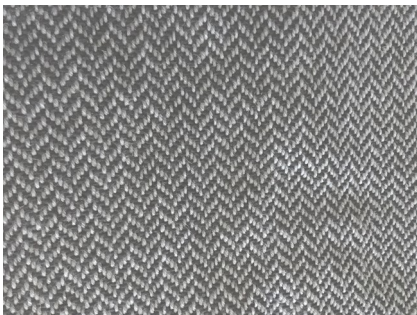
A Challenge
A Celebration
A Creation
Spin It
Weave It
Dye It

For Christmas and Birthday 2019 I was bought a Schacht Baby Wolf eight shaft floor loom which I adore learning to use. That is not an overnight task and I continue to learn how we can be best of friends. There is a photograph of the loom as it arrived in our house folded for storage. I rejected the warp as seen in the picture and began to learn how to warp it from a video by Janet Dawson.



I had already created a 6 m warp using a pale blue 5ply wool intended for Gansey knitting. Here are a couple of photos of about 3m of fabric I have woven with a variegated knitting yarn and, using the same warp, at least 2m of fabric using the dark blue 5ply Gansey yarn.

My next warp is already on the loom and is a similar length but this time using Cottolin to make tea towels. I had the Cottolin in the house and so it was an obvious choice. Cottolin is, as the name suggests a blend of Cotton and Linen and is, I am reliably informed from a professional weaver, a joy to work with. Watch this space and listen for the colour of the language as I put this advice to the test.



I will be happy to share when the loom next comes out from under the stairs and occupies centre stage in middle of our living room.

Janet Collins

Looking for a Good Home

On a completely different and yet totally related subject I have 1 loom to dispose of. I would be pleased to provide photographs to anyone who is interested. There is a limit as to how many looms a woman needs after all!

I have an 8 shaft Ashford table loom with stand for sale. This has a weaving width of 24" and whilst I believe it is worth £500, I will consider all sensible offers. It is a well-used and much-loved piece of equipment which deserves to go to a good home.

Please email me janetwcollins@outlook.com or ring 07989445091.

TAPESTRY WEAVING



Like many crafts, I started with a sampler using whatever yarn I had to hand. I learnt from a book initially, and progressed to a 3 day course, learning online with Rebecca Mezoff, followed by a two year foundation diploma on Tapestry Weaving at West Dean College near Chichester.

I have approached my learning, much as i do with printmaking, practice practice practice, with sampling and experimentation so while i have a box full of small sampled projects, i have only a few finished projects. Im happy with that approach because for me woven tapestry slows me right down, in a full and fast paced world. Someone sad to me recently 'but its just warp and weft' — it so much more!

Beginners generally start by learning to weave stripes - blocks of colour, shapes, joining shapes, outlining shapes, various line marks, and blending colour , moving colour through a piece. Colour blending can be done through types of hatching, pick and pick, shifting tone, through gradual change of the weft bundle. All good stuff to learn, and i'm still learning.



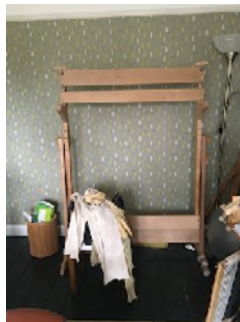
Then comes, the skill (or not) of translating an idea or image to a woven tapestry. Knowledge and experience of sett, warp, and weft, scale etc come into play. Understanding the bead shape and size as it wraps around a warp and is beaten down is crucial to being able to translate a design.

Then there is the look and consistency of the weave which is often about skill in maintaining a consistent tension, maintaining the right amount of weft between warps to avoid draw in (or the opposite) along the width of the piece, looking at how the weft turns on the warp and using/exploiting the slits in between in a consistent way. Exploring how sett influences the weave - the number of warp ends per inch - the size of your warp - the weft thickness or assembly of fine warp threads to make a bundle - and how that works to achieve a wet faced weave (coverage of warp)



I'm attracted by mark making and drawing and lettering within woven tapestry - thats partly what slows me down. But in the past year of my

course at West Dean - delayed due to Covid, I have called a halt to the process of translating an image into tapestry and gone back to basics of the structure of the weave - exploring the rules means you can successfully break the rules



It is within these rules that we learn, that we can then start to break the rules in manipulating the warp or weft, add supplementary warps to create more three dimensional work. I have a large wooden frame which works great, but i do have a Mirror loom too with a shedding device, and now an Ashford upright loom for large

projects. I particularly look forward to this one, as it needs a second person to assist in warping up - not great during Covid restrictions.

Work to look at that excites me — and there are, of course, many many more!

UK weavers

Archie Brennan Scotland, but lived and worked latterly in US. Archie is credited with promoting tapestry in the Pop Art world of the 60's - since his death last year, a retrospective of his work will be exhibited in Edinburgh, at Dovecot Studios, which is one of two centres of excellence in Tapestry weaving, including West Dean in England. Both of these centres train the apprentices that continue the art and skill of Tapestry weaving, and produce commissioned work in collaboration with artists as wide as Tracey Emin, Barnara Rae, John Piper, and Henry Moore. <https://dovecotstudios.com>

Jo Barker - a great colourist <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=jo+barker+tapestry&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

Joan Baxter there's a nice video here, from which you might get links to lots of other youtube videos on tapestry artists work. <https://youyu.nr/zLJ9G9fjkDU>

Katherine Swailes and Carron Penny of <https://www.weftfaced.com>

US based

Sarah Swett Rebecca Mezzo James Koehler

European based weavers

Aino Kajaniemi (Finland) there is a great interview with her here: <https://zoneonearts.com.au/aino-kajaniemi/>

British Tapestry Group website <https://www.thebritishtapestrygroup.co.uk/>

American Tapestry website <https://americantapestryalliance.org/>

- Judy Preston

WhatsApp with WSD

We have a WhatsApp group for sharing messages and photos with each other. The app is free and you can add it to your mobile phone and contact Carolyn to join in.



Memorial Trees

As a Guild we remember our members with a planting of a tree. Last year during the Covid 19 shutdown the tree planting for Joy Gough went ahead but only family could attend. Sadly the feedback I received from Trees for Life was that nobody attended.

As we are in a similar situation this year we have held back on planting a tree for Brenda Nightingale, as she was such an avid River Cole and Chinnbrook Conservation Group member our friendly Rangers at Lickey Hills will be planting Spindle tree to remember her at Scribers Lane. I shall keep everyone updated as to progress.

Sadly a second tree planting will take place later in the year to commemorate the memory of Reg Kings. As arrangements can only start to begin after lock down eases in April I have no more news at this time - *Cyndi Husband*

The Great Escape

Even though we have decided to hold our open day in November rather than May in the hope that we can meet in person, we will still have our annual challenge (not competition at the moment) as an online slide show at our May meeting. I hope you're getting your thinking caps on and your hands busy!

Please send a photo of your creation to Charlotte (by the 30 April and she will create an exhibition to be shared at our May meeting on Zoom on 8th May and a printed copy will be sent out with the June newsletter.

So start thinking, designing and crafting what The Great Escape

Our 2021 Guild Challenge



Happy Easter Everyone!

I've started some gardening now my grandson is back at school and it's good to get out on a warm day. I've been working on my great escape project so I can't talk about that!

My online workshop to make body products was ok but nothing to get excited about. I'm going to join Stratford's Craftalong as they have invited us. Not quite sure what I will be working on- maybe starting some spinning and samples for a new Fairisle sweater for my husband (I think I'm addicted to Fairisle at the moment)

Do look at the website if you haven't already - I'm updating it each month.

- Wendy



Cyndi—Keeping Busy in a Lockdown year—

A few ways I spent my time in lock-down 2020/21 At this time for me, it is all about using up stash.

The wooden branch came off the beach at Wisemans Bridge in 2017, been hanging around a while. Feather spines made of cotton sash cordage and macramé knotted onto bar. Larks head knot. Using the same knot, I tied short lengths of cotton string alternately all down the five lengths. Pull tight, push up and comb out, tease to shape trim, add hanging cord and enjoy. 100% natural fibres and materials.



Some years ago I took the time to draw out 3 card beret looms and put aside, 2020 winter seemed to come early and colder than I expected after so hot a summer. Leading up to second lockdown I had been sorting out my yarns with a view to weaving a rug and sending the remainder off to charity shop and share with knitting friends; then lock-down. Time to turn to

something useful, I am on my third beret already, just such fun to make and gift, have been knitting simple leg warmers as well when we had so much snow it sounded like a good idea. Love legwarmers and ankle warmers.

The landscaping of the garden had taken up most of the year, constructing a fence along the top was stop/start as each metal 2 part post had to be sawed to length and this was quite tiring and a bit boring compared to the rockery and pond.

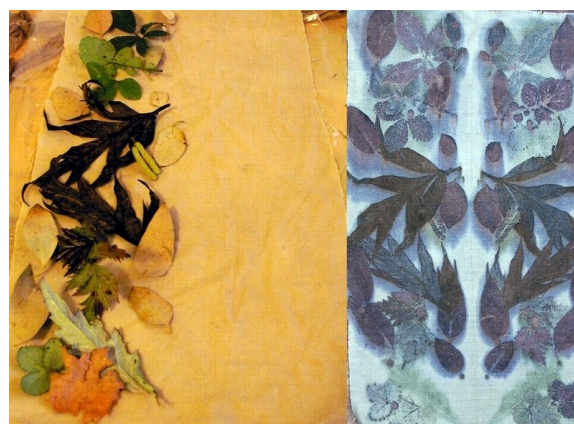
Another project was to change the garage mural from Halloween to 'Shroom' Town.



Eco Printing with Carolyn Nixon

Here are some notes on the ecoprinting course which I did with Carolyn Nixon.

The course was Foundation skills for ecoprinters, an online course over 4 weeks, exploring the basic processes for ecoprinting using plants from the garden and a simple iron mordant, on silk and linen fabrics. Very clear information - a combination of text (which we got as a pdf at the end) and videos, with more released each week.



We started by "auditioning" leaves on fabric dipped in an iron solution, to see which of the leaves we had would give a print with iron. Progressed to making arrangements of the leaves we'd tested, and doing mirror images and ghost prints, using barriers to avoid prints where we didn't want them. There was a lot of support from Carolyn and from other course members on the Facebook page, where we shared our results and got advice.



I've ended up with a silk top and a remade cotton/wool shirt, printed with leaves from my garden, and some fabric for a skirt. Plus a silk scarf, a 1m square piece of silk twill (shawl?), a long cotton scarf and a lot of smaller samples which would be good for machine embroidery.

Best wishes,

Sarah



Knitting for Spring time

As the theme is spring, then a green garment should suffice.

I thought Kate Davies's Carbeth cardigan pattern would suit the dresses I have sewn, as they need something cropped. In contrast to my last few garments this is knitted bottom up, so I knitted the body to the armpit. I knitted a sleeve to the armpit. I knitted the second sleeve almost to the armpit then had to accept I needed to weigh my remaining green wool as the amount left in the stash didn't seem enough.



You can guess from the picture; I had to re-think. The joy of Ravelry's immense database is Other People's Knitting and a couple of pages in there was the thing which saved me – a cardi with different coloured arms. More stash hunting ensued and I found some wool spun at Coldharbour Mill many years ago (possibly in the main mill which is driven by steam), which has hints of green. The sleeves were quickly reknitted, along with the most enormous neckline I have ever made or worn.

My button stash is along the same colour lines as my wool stash, and after consulting with Helen Tomes about which buttons to use, I settled on two sets of Dorset buttons in different colourways. However many buttonholes I make there are rarely the same number of exactly matching buttons in the tin! The end result weighs a whopping 840g.

And following March meeting's discussion on drinks I feel the need to share that New Lanark, the fabulous World Heritage site, sells not only wool spun in their mill, but gin. I have a parcel containing both winging its way to me.

- Rachel Lemon

Update from Sarah Cage

I've not been doing much textile work - busy renovating our spare room (was a "box" room - full of boxes of things from clearing out my parents' house in 2012), and finishing off the front garden after we had our drive done



before Christmas. But here is a picture of our front garden, after my work on it (doesn't show the



amount of work - all the soil sieved to remove rubbish, then original plants put back), a picture of me sponging the hall wall (needed redecorating after we had the kitchen done in 2012) and a picture of the almost-finished box room. You're welcome to use all (or none) in the newsletter - I'm now doing the Online Guild 3-D tapestry workshop, so hopefully next month will have a more textile-oriented picture to give you!

Apart from that, we have seen the grandchildren, and are both well and vaccinated (first dose) - hoping that we will feel happier about going out when we've had the second one. In the mean time I am doing the Rowheath Spring Craft Fair this week (22-27 March) <https://www.facebook.com/rowheath.pavilion/photos/a.436104069896613/1769557413217932/> - online only, which means sales via my Etsy shop.

The Welsh Guilds of
Weavers, Spinners & Dyers
@Virtual Wonderwool Wales
24th-25th April

Online Lectures and Talks
Raising money for
Welsh Air Ambulance &
Macmillan Cancer Support



See the list of speakers and book
your ticket at

allwalesevent.wordpress.com/virtual-wonderwool/



Silks from Spitalfields to East Anglia
Talking Textiles with Mary Schoeser

Online Zoom Lecture



Mary Schoeser, one of the leading authorities in the field of textiles and Huguenot silk weaving, will be giving a fascinating talk featuring designs by James Leman and Anna Maria Garthwaite, together with the work of later weavers who brought silk weaving to East Anglia.

Tuesday 20th April 2021 – 12-1pm

Tickets: £8
(including booking fee)

To book, visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) or email:
team@huguenotsofspitalfields.org

www.huguenotsofspitalfields.org

And now a few words from our Treasurer

A bit about Workshop costs and entry fees

Membership for 2021 is £20 and when we return to Cotteridge £2 on the door for members and £5 for visitors. This entry fee covers refreshments and is over and above the costs of a workshop.

If things open up in April we plan to meet for the bi-annual dye day at Sarah's, we previously brought items to contribute to a shared lunch and Sarah provided refreshments. Entrance £2 and £5 applies as we have the costs of the dyes. Sarah will no doubt provide details of what we need to mordant for natural dye application and we hope Rachel will be acid dying

Two workshops have been booked for the autumn;

September 11th Julie Hedges 3D structures, ply-split braiding another opportunity to learn this type of braiding, £20 members £30 non-members maximum of 12 participants

October 9th Fiona Morris Patchwork knitting £20 members £30 non-members for a maximum of 15 places.

You still have plenty of time to check out their styles via the internet and book your place. I suggest we hold off payment until we know we are able to go ahead.

Guest Speakers at our Zoom Meetings

At our February meeting we were joined by Adaku Parker from Dovetailed in London to speak to us about African waxed fabrics. She shared her story of changing her career from being a barrister to opening her own fabric shop and becoming a textile designer creating bags, clothes and accessories. This year she celebrated her first full year in business. She gave a short history of the development of waxed fabrics which went from Africa to Indonesia with the Dutch East India Company and then to the Netherlands. If you missed the talk or



just want to hear/see it again the video is on the web at https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/wHh3rPFU_HUFTYQnIKVrR-RPTStbY76PYk_bzspWlcwok2yVNjlv3w_YAgoG_Al.qt5helP04h-J7za5?



We were pleased to welcome John Parkinson from iinouio to our March meeting. John's company is the only remaining "shoddy" factory for recycling old wool into new yarns in the UK. He gave us a history of the sector as well as clear detail of the process. They sell their yarn online and welcome any feedback and photos of products made with their yarns. The recording of his talk is available online at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/gLx1opYpj7jgLzltSKFttCQ2p9OLQ5shpRB_2AoQDHC5viGAJNPfohSVZ59NMP31.nW4wH6ZJ3utSBYxO?

Spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) (Our memorial Trees)

Industrious, delicate, colourful. The spindle is at its loveliest in autumn when its leaves turn russet and its pink and orange fruits ripen. Wildlife loves its leaves and fruit, and aphids flock to it, bringing with them an array of their predators.

Spindle is a deciduous native tree, and mature trees grow to 9m and can live for more than 100 years. The bark and twigs are deep green, becoming darker with age, and have light brown, corky markings. Twigs are thin and straight.

Identified in winter by: the vivid pink fruits which have bright orange seeds. Buds and twigs are angular and green.

Spindle is an ancient-woodland indicator. If you spot it while you're out exploring, it could be a sign you're standing in a rare and special habitat.



Credit: Gary K. Smith / naturepl.com

The leaves are eaten by caterpillars of moths, including the magpie, spindle ermine and scorched, as well as the holly blue butterfly. The leaves also attract aphids and their predators, including hoverflies, ladybirds and lacewings, as well as the house sparrow and other species of bird. The flowers are a rich source of nectar and pollen for insects such as the St Mark's fly.

Mythology and symbolism

The spindle's botanical name, *Euonymus*, is from the Greek 'eu', meaning 'good' and 'onoma', meaning 'name'. This is said to have meant 'lucky'. However, in some areas, it was also thought that if the spindle flowered early, an outbreak of the plague was on the way.

It is easily identified in winter by its vivid pink fruits.

Credit: Steven Kind / WTML

Uses of spindle

Spindle timber is creamy-white, hard and dense. In the past it was used to make 'spindles' for spinning and holding wool (hence its name), as well as skewers, toothpicks, pegs and knitting needles.

The fruits were baked and powdered, and used to treat head lice or mange in cattle. Both the leaves and fruit are toxic to humans – the berries having a laxative effect.

Today, spindle timber is used to make high-quality charcoal for artists. Cultivated forms of the tree are also grown in gardens for autumn colour.

Information c/of Woodland Trust who provide the trees to Trees for Life who then plant the Tree locally.

Can you match the fibre to its inspiration?



Fibre 1
Polwarth &
alpaca



Fibre 2 Merino,
Corriedale and eri
silk, mohair locks and
angora with a
mattering of sari silk



Blue Ringed Octopus



Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher



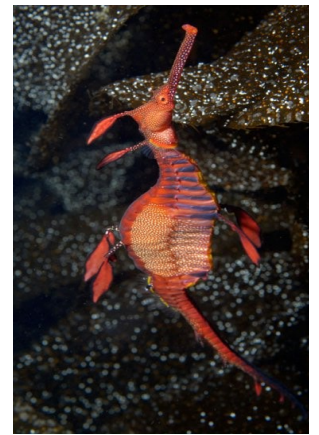
Fibre 3
Merino, linen &
mulberry silk



Fibre 4
Polworth,
Wensleydale
& mohair



Sundo Flying Lemur



Weedy Sea Dragon



Fibre 5 Corriedale,
Baby camel, Penduncle silk
& Bluefaced Leicester



Fibre 6 Baby camel
& tussah silk



Emerald Vine



Lilac Breasted Roller
(Kenya's national bird)

Last September I joined a fibre club—the Flora and Fauna Fibre Club to be exact. Rachael Prest offered monthly mailings of fibres blended and dyed based on a plant or animal. I have enjoyed learning about the inspiration for each bundle. I am now looking forward to spinning them at the Stratford Spin-A-Long from 1-7 April. Can you match them? I will check your choices sent via email or if you phone or mail them through to me. Hope you enjoy the challenge.

- Tina

An Inking into how the Newsletter is created

It starts with **You**—all the members— who submit news, stories, tales, advice or recommendations. So far these come mostly via email, although during this pandemic several members have sent in letters with their updates. I gather all the emails and their attachments in a folder together. Because the words come in an assortment of formats I copy and paste their contents in Word documents first.

I then open the newsletter template in MS Publisher 2013. I have some items pre-set in the template and as I import the various stories, reports and pictures I workout the layout, frequently moving things around so the long stories are interspersed with short items and trying to make sure I set in any events, posters or items of interest so they will be seen.

My laptop is a computer of very little memory, therefore I am asking when you send in your words if you send it via email, please send it in MS Word or RTF as an attachment. Otherwise just type it into the body of the email. If you use snail or Royal Mail then just write it out and I will type it directly into the newsletter. Photos, pictures or drawings are easiest to use if they come as jpegs, or tiffs, or pngs. But they can also be paper photos or prints and I can scan them in and return them to you by post.

Sorry to report that PDFs are the least helpful format as I cannot edit them and copying and pasting takes a lot of time and patience and is not always successful. If you wish to control the layout of your article attach a pdf to show me the layout , but send the words and photos as separate attachments please.

Once the newsletter is all complete I save it as a PDF and then print booklets for those members unable to access the electronic copies and email it to all the other members.

Thanks for all your help with keeping everyone in touch and informed.

- Tina

Staying in Touch



BirminghamWSD@hotmail.co.uk



www.wbdbirmingham.weebly.com



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