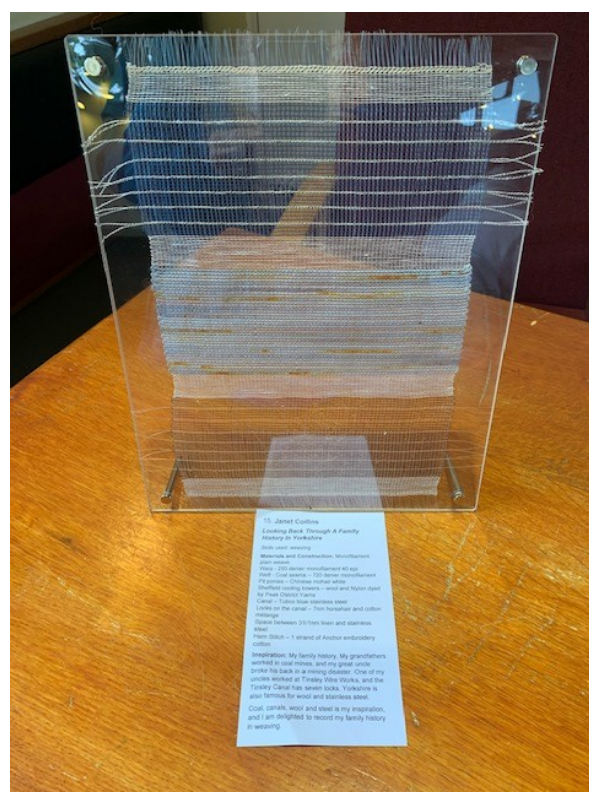




Birmingham & District Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

Some of the entries to the AGWSD Exhibition 2022 by our members



Chair's Letter

Winter is a perfect excuse to spend time with our crafts – the days are short; there's not much to do in the garden; and sitting with a load of knitting or crochet on your lap means you benefit from the added insulation. If you have an unknown number of projects you can use the end of the year as a cut-off date for finally sorting them, unravelling things you no longer love or doing the last bit of sewing up you've been avoiding for the last three years.

For newer readers, I have a system of logging in all my yarn and fibre, and logging it all out again (whether spun or knitted, given away or sold). As long as I end the year with less than I started my conscience is clear. At this point I can tell you I still need to spin at least 665g – it's possible that is what I will be doing between Christmas and new year.... However you approach your choice of craft, it is a hobby and therefore none of us should feel guilty about not finishing a project or the amount of time we spend on one.

Rachel

Christmas party – 10th December 2022

What do you need to know? We will be sitting down to eat a bring-and-share lunch together at 12.30. Please bring

- ***food to share**, and if it is home-made bring a legible ingredient list. Please take any leftovers home with you. Food can be savoury or sweet and not need heating up.
- ***Red or green cloth table cloth** – the Meeting House tables are functional and need covering. We may not need all that are brought but we'd prefer too many than too few. I'm sorry you will need to take it home dirty as we can't put it through the washing machine for you.
- ***Cash for the raffle**. We will have about 5 rather nice prizes. Tickets will be £1 each and you can add as many as you like to the pot for specific prizes so you can't win something you haven't chosen!
- ***After lunch** we will have a colour play session – no one needs to bring any equipment though if you do spindle spin you may wish to bring one.
- *Own spinning/weaving/knitting/crochet/other craft to do while socialising if you like

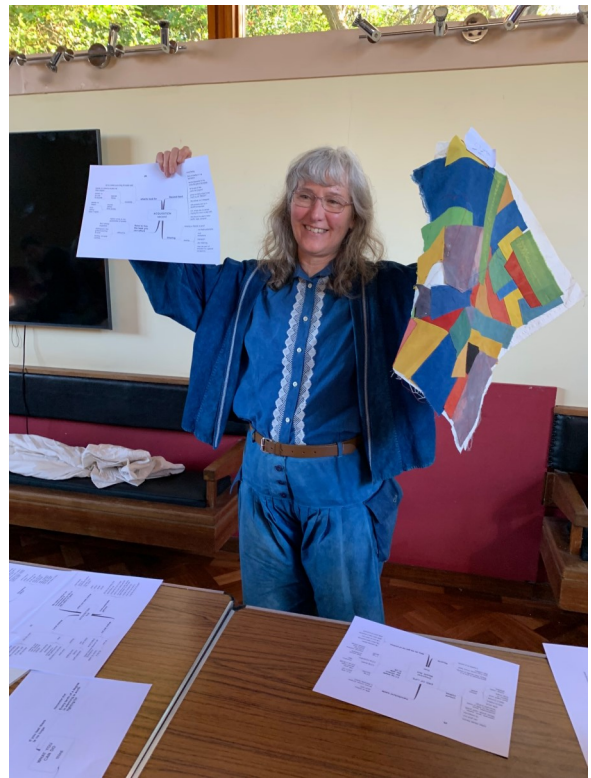
HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE



Sustainability and Textiles

Here is Teresinha Roberts, talking to our guild at our October meeting. It was an excellent turn out with 26 of us looking forward to this long awaited talk. Tereshina is passionate about this subject and she certainly made everyone of us think hard about how we can live more sustainably. Some of it was very hard to listen to - but Tereshina was able to give us some positives about the best way forward.

First a little bit of background about Tereshina, She was born in Brazil and both her grandfathers were tailors. At that time most of her clothes were made by local seamstresses. She moved to Malawi after meeting the man who would become her husband in the Amazon. In Malawi there were no clothes shops (yes really!) and everyone made their own clothes. So Tereshina began to make her own clothes in a country where women wore dresses and Tereshina only had trousers when she arrived.



Here in UK our consumption of clothes is very high. Teresinha was able to explain that we love a bargain as our brains are wired to make us feel good if we feel we are getting a good bargain. So this contributes to the high consumption. She explained very much better than I can how this works. (I also apologise for anything in this account that is not accurate - it will be my fault, not hers). She was able to back up all her statements with figures and reports. Another reason for this high consumption is the very cheap price of clothes. Many clothes are made in sweatshops in parts of China where the workers are low paid and she explained that this is modern day slavery. If the price of clothes made in sweatshops was increased by just 1% it would mean that the workers could earn a decent wage.

To tackle climate change we need to reduce this consumption to 10% of what we use now. This is obviously a huge reduction.

60% of clothes are now made from artificial fibres. The process to make much of this is energy intensive, using loads of water and harmful chemicals. Polyester makes up a large percentage of this and although it is durable and very easy to wash and care for, it sheds microfibres which can end up in our water. Recycled polyester sounds good but it is often poor quality and sheds even more microfibres. Viscose is a fabric that feels like silk but is made from cellulose which comes from forests. In the process of making it, 70% of the wood

is wasted! It is also a very polluting process and that is why we don't like it being made here, so we prefer it to be made in China and India. Bamboo might sound better but its production method is very similar to viscose. Tencel and Lyocell are a little better but it is hard to check out the process accurately when it is made in China.

Tereshina went on to talk about natural fibres but sadly there are problems with most of these too. Cotton is a great fibre that we all love - it is comfortable and dyes well and looks goodBUT.... Cotton pickers are not treated well and it uses lots of water (as do most other fibres) and then we must consider the dyes and how these are produced. Cotton that is grown in Africa is very good as they have a suitable climate. However there are no subsidies there as there are in America and other cotton producing countries, meaning that African cotton is expensive.

Linen is a very good fibre but as it is very labour intensive, it is also expensive. Happily, wool is another good fibre as long as it is local and not produced on the other side of the world using questionable farming methods.

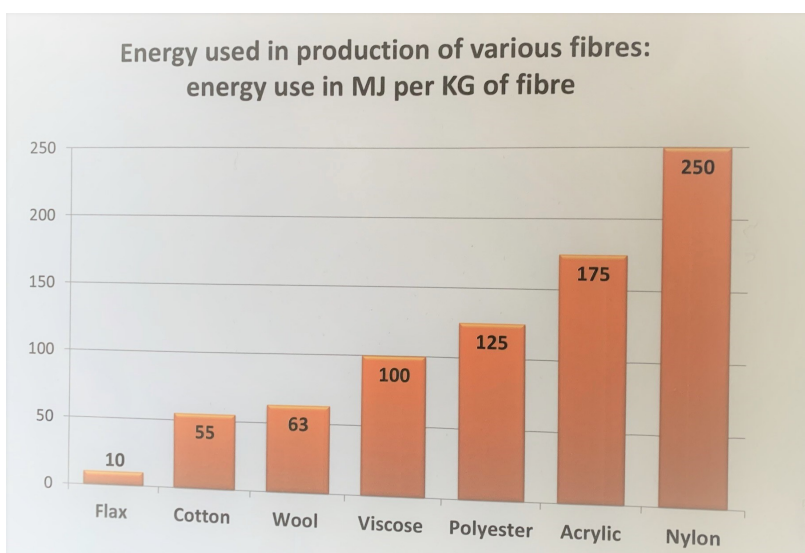
Here is Tereshina's list of what we can do to help reduce climate change.

1. Reduce our consumption to 10% of current consumption
2. Use what we already have
3. Make our own clothes
4. Knit
5. Share stash - will it outlast us?!
6. Only buy durable
7. Mend
8. Wash clothes less frequently

- Wendy Simpson, wsdbirmingham.weebly.com

And lastly.....

If a piece of cloth is big enough to wrap 3 beans, keep it and use it (Japanese advice)



Resources

[Cotton: A Case Study in Misinformation](#) by Transformer Foundations

[The #Talking Climate Handbook](#) by Climate Outreach

[The Great Green Washing Machine](#) by VERONICA BATES KASSATLY and DOROTHEE BAUMANN-PAULY

Elisabeth would like to be remembered to anyone who knows her. She has finally made the move to the edge of Huddersfield to a bungalow shared with her daughter.

Spin in Public Day



We celebrated Spin in Public Day outside The Shed in Cotteridge Park on Saturday 17th September. Wendy and I arrived at 11.00 am and a bit later Amina and Tamaader joined us.

We had several people stop by to see what we were doing including a mother and daughter from Ukraine who are staying locally.



Save the date for 2023— 16th September

The Knitting and Crochet Guild

The Knitting and Crochet Guild meets on the third Saturday of November, January and every month in 2023 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Birmingham City University, The Parkside Building, 5 Cardigan Street, Birmingham B4 7BD. [BCU Campus map](#)

On arrival at the BCU, please head for a space called 'The Shell', which is just off the atrium. We are now able to reduce the charge for the meeting to £3.00 per person. For any queries on the day, please call Karen Smith on 0777 6094019.

The topic for 21 January 2023 will be Steeking taught by Janet Collins. Steeking is the technique of knitting on circular needles and then securing and cutting through the knit fabric to create an opening.

Temari Workshop with Nicola Davis

We had a brilliant workshop on Saturday with Nicola Davis of The Twisted Thread. I think most of us had never heard of Temari Balls before the workshop. Nicola explained a little about their history to start.

Temari has origins in China and then spread across



Japan. A long time ago Japanese ladies would use waste strips from kimono making to make balls and children used them in games. This would have started with ladies from upper class backgrounds as the fabrics were very expensive. In the 19th century when cotton became available, more people started making them but eventually this went out of fashion as the use of rubber for making balls became popular. The craft has become more popular in recent times and temari ball making is part of Japanese culture and heritage. As such we should respect the Japanese tradition when we make temari balls.

We (there were 14 of us in the workshop) started with a polystyrene ball which Nicola had already completely wrapped with wool. We then wrapped it with polyester thread, so that the ball was completely covered. This had to be random wrapping and at first it seemed that it would never be completely covered. However we all managed it reasonably quickly. We chose our own colours which was quite

time consuming! We then had to do a bit of measuring using a strip of paper so we could divide



the ball into sections - imagine an orange. The top and bottom were the North and South Poles and we added an equator, all marked with gold thread which we sewed onto the ball with a temari needle which was long and bendy. Here we are constructing our balls using pins as markers. We made a star pattern. Perle cotton (number 8 I think) was used for the stars and again we all took time

to choose our favourite colours. The pattern looked very complicated at first but Nicola was an excellent teacher and soon had us all sewing the design correctly. I made mistakes, but mostly managed to unpick them. - Wendy Simpson



Wendy's homework



Workshop results



Our 2023 Programme & Meetings

Date	Main Activity	Agenda
14 January 10:00-16:00	AGM	Knitting Holiday Talk Yarn Swap 14:00: Annual General Meeting of the Guild
11 February 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 September 10:00-16:00	Informal Meeting	Learn to Spin Drop-in Sessions (Learn to spin sessions for visitors and members)
14 October 10:00-16:00	Talk	14:00: What is a Milliner? The Secret Life of Hats Talk with Giulia Mio (https://giuliamiomillinery.com/)
11 November 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 December 10:00-16:00	Informal Meeting	Christmas Party and Bring and Share Lunch

January 14th

January's meeting will have a yarn/fibre swap. The idea is to bring along about 100g of something nice that you no longer want and pick up someone else's unwanted.

- 100g ish of either nice yarn (eg handpainted sock yarn) or 100g nice fibre
- Item must be predominantly natural fibres (sock yarn tends to be 25% nylon which is fine)
- Label item with fibre content
- You can view the items until 1pm but not take anything away...

Everyone involved will select at the same time – 1pm. If two or more people want the same item then we'll be tossing a coin

2.00pm Annual General Meeting— to receive our Annual Report, to elect any new Committee members, to vote on any items sent down from the national Association of Guilds, to vote on any items proposed from our committee and to agree the theme for the Guild Challenge for our annual exhibition.

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/>

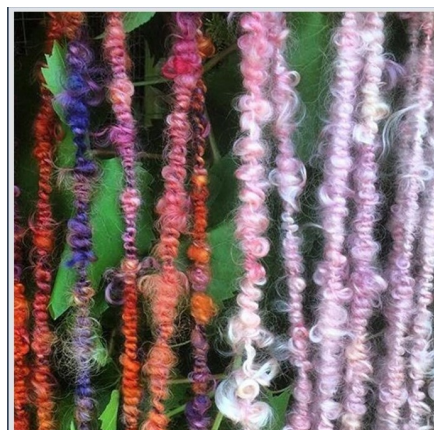
March 11th

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.

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>



AGWSD Summer School 2023 - 13 - 20 August at Harper Adams Uni

This time last year I answered a call for volunteers to help plan summer school. Little knowing what I had let myself in for, I took on the role of the treasurer. We have had planning meetings every fortnight and have visited the venue, Harper Adams in Shropshire, it is lovely with great facilities. Choosing who to invite to be tutors was quite challenging trying to get a good range of weavers, spinners, dyers and some wild cards. The brochure went out in September and we have about half the number of places filled.

Our next challenge will be allocating places, weaving looks like it is a popular choice. So if you haven't booked yet **get your application in by the end of December**, I still need to do mine!

If you have never been before it's a great opportunity to learn new skills and make new friends. Those who have been before can tell what a great experience it is.

- Janice Price

Outing to AGWSD Exhibition In Leigh Spinner Mill

A group of 6 of us from guild went to the Guild Exhibition at Leigh Spinners Mill on 6th September. It was a bit like the song as we went on a train, tram and guided bus, leaving New St at 10 am and arriving at the mill around 1pm. Thanks to Kate and some assistance by her brother in law we arrived without any problems at this amazing building. We quickly found the cafe with the help of a member of staff (or he might have been a volunteer) who helped us negotiate the old fashioned lift. We had lunch and met Jane in the cafe. The staff were lovely. We found the exhibition on the 3rd floor and spent nearly 2 hours admiring the skills and creativity of many of the members. Here are some of the photos I took, not in any particular order. Of course we checked out our members' exhibits first!

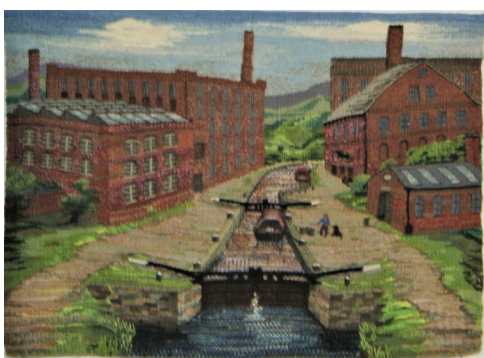


We arrived back at home around 8 o'clock, very tired and hungry. It was a good day with lots of time for chatting and knitting too. I hope Charlotte has finished her Dad's scarf in time for his birthday!



Wendy's Jumper

- Wendy Simpson



Staying in touch with WhatsApp

This outing was organised informally via our local Guild WhatsApp group. This is a private group which allows members of the Guild to stay in touch and share projects and information between our monthly meeting. 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.

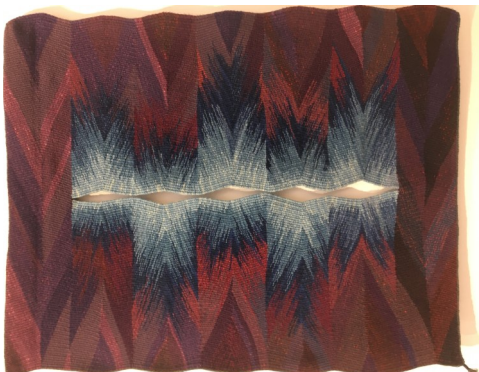
Tapestry Weaving Exhibition by

In November I was fortunate to visit the Royal Birmingham Society of Arts (RBSA) to see an amazing exhibition of tapestry weaving. The Exhibition called Heallreaf 4 included the work of 36 textile artists from 11 different countries. Heallreaf (pronounced hair – ll – reff) is an Old English word which means tapestry hung in a public place.

The tapestries were tremendously varied in size, subject and shape. What united them was a fantastic display of skill, imagination and patience. Each piece would have taken months if not years to produce and the skill in making such exquisite works of art is breathtaking.

Please look at the website <https://www.heallreaf.com/> to find out more about the history of tapestry weaving and to see all the works on display. I have chosen a few of my personal favourites here.

Liz Chester is the artist who produced a realistic portrayal of a group of children looking into an aquarium where the contents of the aquarium had just swum away. For me 'Watcha Looking At?' (150 cm x 94 m) could be a metaphor for how many of us felt looking out of our windows during lockdown.



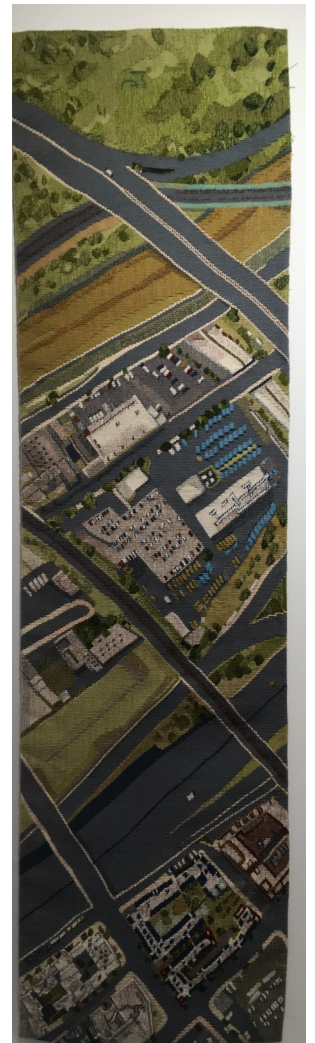
'Ice Break' (60cm x 90cm) by Janette Gross is beautiful and at one level, self explanatory. However, I found myself loosing myself in the piece.

My third choice is influenced in part because I had the pleasure of meeting the artist Melanie Cros and her husband on their brief trip to Birmingham from their

home in Paris. The more Melanie described her career as a student and weaver in Paris the more her work came to life for me. She showed me the, incredibly neat and tidy, back of her work and a photograph of her loom in the living room of their apartment. 'Echo Park Los Angeles' (42cm x 150cm) was woven as part of a much larger piece and inspired by the home of a dear and close friend. Inspirational!

I will be aiming to do some tapestry weaving myself in the new year with a new respect for the craft.

-Janet Collin



2022 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: Wendy Simpson

Newsletter Editor: Tina Helfrich

Public Social Media Editor: vacancy

Other members: Judy Preston, Janice Price, Cyndi Husband

Information for 2023

2023 membership subscription 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/>

Anyone who wants to stand for the members representative to the committee needs to let Mandy or Rachel have their names before the AGM in January.

Staying in Touch



BirminghamWSD@hotmail.co.uk



www.wsdbrum.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)