



Birmingham & District Guild  
of Weavers Spinners & Dyers

# Are You Seeking a Spinning Wheel to Love

and that will love you too?

Make sure 11.00 am Saturday 8th July is  
in your diary and you arrive to join in

## Spinning Wheel Speed Dating!

And don't forget to bring your wheel  
along to make new friends.

Date for diaries

Saturday 19th August - Summer School Open Day at Harper Adams College, Newport, Shropshire.

**Advance warning** - Guilds Gathering weekend conference will be at Bicton College, Devon, 12-14 July 2024. The theme will be ***The Riches of Wool***. More info to follow.

### The Great Tapestry of Scotland

My mum and I had one of our sightseeing holidays, just the two of us, in Peebles in April. Peebles is a lovely little town with walks along the Tweed in both directions. We were lucky with the weather which always helps! Our favourite trip out was to Galashiels to see the Great Tapestry of Scotland which is housed in its own dedicated building with a cafe. There are 160



panels stitched by over 1000 people covering the history of Scotland, made in 2012-3. Many are famous episodes - you'd expect to see the battle of Bannockburn in there - but there is also a

great deal of social history and culture. We only had 75 minutes there which was not enough so after working my way from 12000 years ago upto Mary of Scots I just whizzed round taking photos of all the textile-related panels I could see! If you're in Edinburgh you can catch a train down to Galashiels and I'd allow two hours there with a tea break in the middle



No idea but isn't it gorgeous?



This is walking the woven cloth (I did this once at Woolfest).

**Spinning Wheel Speed Dating, Saturday 08 July**

**Complete this form and return to Charlotte or Mandy**

**Or contact Charlotte ( [powell2317@hotmail.com](mailto:powell2317@hotmail.com)),**

**or Mandy Davis ([davisamanda2@sky.com](mailto:davisamanda2@sky.com))**

<b>Brand</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Volunteer to bring along</b>

Our July meeting will feature spinning wheel ‘speed dating’ from 11am, with the opportunity to try spinning on a selection of different wheels. A question sheet will be available on the day so you can record your thoughts about the different wheels as you go. Guild members who can bring their spinning wheel along for other members to try are asked to let us know the make and model in advance. A spinning wheel sign-up form will be available at the dyers’ picnic, or email Charlotte ([powell2317@hotmail.com](mailto:powell2317@hotmail.com)). Members are also asked to bring along any spare clean wool fibre.

Also, an early reminder that we’ll be advertising Learn to Spin Drop-in Sessions at our 09 September meeting and will be looking for guild members willing to show visitors and members how to spin on a drop spindle and/or wheel.

**Spinning Wheel Speed Dating, Saturday 08 July**

**Wheel Testing Notes**

Wheel Name										
How much did I like this wheel? (1= lowest / 10 = highest)										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
What sort of yarn does this wheel like to spin?										
Could I use extra components to set this wheel up to suit my needs (extra flyers etc.)										
Would I want to bring it along to guild every month?										
How much space would it take up in my home?										
How much yarn does the bobbin hold?										
How easy is it to change the bobbins?										
How does the treading action feel?										
Additional Notes										

## **A Tapestry Loom added to Guild's collection of tools.**

I took a tapestry loom home and have created a warp and, with the help of Colin Squires, produced the cords that help weaving. If members wish to have a go at tapestry weaving they could 'hire' the loom from the Guild. It will be available at the July Guild meeting. At the meeting I will pass the loom to Sarah the custodian. Sadly, to aid with storage of the loom in it's original box, the warp etc might have to be removed. Please let me or Sarah if you want to take the loom for £5 a month to try tapestry weaving.

## **Open Day – results in numbers compared to last year**

A good attendance – 23 members, including two of our honorary members, and 48 non-members (last year 24 members and 39 visitors)

### Finances

Tea money £65.20 compared to £62.90 last year

Percentage from crafters £21.99, compared to £22.93 – only 3 members had items for sale this year compared to 5 last year. There were also donations for sale from several members, both years.

Donations raised £17.10 compared to £19.43 last year (when we had a lot of Reg Horton's things).

Less competition entries than last year (only 8 instead of 11) – even though I did two (again). Rachel won, Gemma was second, and my figure of eight mittens were third.

Exhibition - numbers based on the number of labels I produced, but there are always a few more items which are brought on the day: This year 15 members exhibited – a total of more than 59 items (I didn't do labels for all the workshop items). Breakdown by skills: 14 spinning, 39 weaving, 12 dyeing, 15 "other" – temari balls, embroidery, knitting etc. (Total numbers by craft won't add up, as some things used more than one of our skills.)

Last year I did labels for 9 members, a total of 27 items. 13 spinning; 12 weaving; 13 dyeing, and 14 "other".

All in all a good day – even though it quieted in the afternoon, with no visitors arriving after about 2 – we started closing things about 3, and even I was home about 4.20, with all my display stuff. Thanks again to all the people who helped – especially partners who helped set up on Friday night and pack up on Saturday afternoon.

*Sarah Cage,*

Treasurer, and member of the organising committee

## Open Day and Exhibition

May 13th was our annual guild Open Day. We were pleased to welcome more than 40 visitors and friends to see our exhibition of work and watch demonstrations of spinning, dyeing, weaving and carding. Many of you had a go at some of our crafts and we hope you enjoyed it and would welcome any new members into our group. Lots of you enjoyed home made cakes and drinks and bought items for sale from our sales table.

This is always a great day for us to show off what we do and to chat about our crafts. Some of us made entries for our annual guild competition, which, this year was entitled 'Hand Coverings'. Everyone who came was invited to vote for their 3 favourites and this year the competition was won by Rachel, with Gemma and Sarah coming second and third. Do look at the photos below to see our entries and winners.



It was a tiring day for our organisers and members, so thank you to everyone who helped in so many different ways.

- Wendy Simpson

Writing on our Guild blog

<http://wsdbirmingham.weebly.com/2023-blog#:~:text=Yesterday%20was%20omour,many%20different%20ways.>



## Dyers' Picnic 11 June

From our blog

Yesterday we had another fantastic day experimenting with natural and acid dyes in Sarah's garden. First we should thank Sarah and Peter for getting out furniture, stoves, dyeing equipment (there's lots) and putting up canopies so we could have a great day sheltered from the sun or rain. As it turned out we definitely needed shade as it was so hot!

Sarah had 6 pots going at a time on her camping gas stoves outside, with natural dyes in them and everyone was encouraged to bring small skeins or fibre to make samples from each. These needed to have been pre-mordanted with alum (for most of the natural dyes) for good dye take up. There was walnut, wellingtonia, weld, apple leaves, lichen, artichoke leaves, annatto berries, indigo, sweet woodruff, logwood and cochineal. We made a huge variety of colours - natural dyes can be as bright as acid dyes. See photos below.

We all brought a contribution for a Bring and Share Lunch, lots of home made salads, quiches and wonderful strawberries and some delicious cheese scones I am told.

Rachel taught ways to use acid dyes on skeins of yarn for sock making. She showed how to dip and dye several colours at once and also how to paint the colours directly onto the wool. (Photos below) The wool was then steamed inside plastic wrap or bags in Sarah's fish kettle for 30 mins to set the colour. We then had to refrain from opening them and seeing what they looked like as its better to leave them to cool overnight before unwrapping.

Tina showed us how to add dyes to yarn cakes. These are just balls of wool wound on a wool winder into 'cakes'. I had a go at this and it was great fun. I steamed the cakes and took them home to dry and they look lovely - all ready to make some very colourful socks. They are super-wash merino which I've never used before and it feels perfect for socks. The method for adding the dye was to roll the outside in a dye and then add other colours to the inside with a syringe. Everyone was hot and tired at the end of the day but went home happy with some great samples to use. I'm sure Sarah was even more tired, but I think she was going to relax with a swim in her pool and then it was 'leftover food' for tea, so hopefully no more work! Thank you Sarah.



## Remembering old friends

As a Guild we sadly lost Brenda Nightingale and Reg Kings in 2021 and on the 1st of November of that year on a very wet day, a few of us went to honour their memories by planting Spindle tree saplings at a lovely wild area in Scribers Lane, Yardley Wood just over the Road from the allotments. This morning 18 months later the sapling I brought home with me from those that were left over is in leaf, mine is in a pot and will never achieve the magnificence of one planted in the wild, but I hope to have it for many years. I am reminded of Brenda particularly whenever I walk down my garden, next to it is a garden stake in the shape of a rams head made by my son in metalwork class when he was at school, a fitting tribute to the love of all things woolly by our departed friends. I never really knew Reg very well, but Brenda and I often used to sit and chat at Guild meetings, I learnt a lot from her, she was very knowledgeable and shared that knowledge willingly, she often spoke quite bluntly when she felt you weren't doing something right, I remember her telling me off for the way I was combing some fibre one day saying I would hurt my shoulders if I continued to do it that way and promptly showing me how to do it correctly. I miss her and wished I had known her for longer than I did, but I will always remember her whenever I see 'Brenda's spindle tree' in my garden.



*-Amanda Davis*

## 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