



of
Weavers, Spinners
and Dyers

The Shuttle

December 2024

Website: www.kennet-valley-guild.com

Facebook: @kennetvalleyguild

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed 1 st Jan	<p>Guild Zoom to Welcome the New Year. 11.00 – 12.30 If you are interested in joining this, please ensure Nicky Duncan knows, so that she can ensure you have a Zoom invite.</p>
Sat 4 th Jan	<p>Guild Meeting January Mini Workshops 10.30 – 12.30: Morning 13.30 – 15.30: Afternoon Workshops More information later in the Shuttle</p>
Sat 1 st Feb	<p>Guild Meeting AM: Introduction to flax growing and processing from seed to fabric – Simon Cooper PM: <i>Either:</i> Workshop on preparing fibres for spinning, dressing a distaff for use with spindles of spinning wheels, working on drop-spindles and spinning wheels. (max 20 students) <i>Or:</i> Social, for those not taking part in the workshop</p>
Sat 1 st Mar	<p>Guild Meeting AM: Social PM: tbc</p>
Sat 5 th Apr	<p>Guild Meeting & AGM – Shared Lunch AM: AGM PM: Social</p>

GUILD MEETINGS

The usual agenda for Guild meetings is:

10.00 a.m.	Hall open for sociable crafts
1.00 p.m.	Business Meeting
1.30 p.m.	Show and Tell
2.00 p.m.	Speaker

Some meetings are different, and as such are noted above. Please check so as not to be disappointed.

Members are requested to follow any requests with respect to social distancing, masks and similar. Please help your Committee by putting your own and your neighbour's chair away at the end of the day.

The Speaker and Workshop Team

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Hi everyone, I hope everyone is well and that you are looking after yourselves and all keeping up to date with your vaccinations. I am up to date with mine so hopefully will miss out on any nasty bugs.

Since our last Shuttle I have had a very busy time with my family getting organised for the wedding. A great day was had by all. The in laws came down from Durham a few days before the wedding and were able to help with the final preparations. My daughter (Ellie) made all the decorations, signs and table settings and many other touches to the venue. She did a fabulous job using dried flowers, beautiful vases and candles etc. The night before the wedding we met up with some of the relatives who had come down from Durham. We had a lovely meal out together and it was a great opportunity to meet them before the big day.

I spent the night before at my sister in laws air B and B on her livery yard near the venue. The bridesmaids, bride and I spent Ellie's last night as a single woman at the house celebrating with champagne and a lovely girlie evening chatting and feeling very excited about the wedding. We went to bed at a reasonable time as we had an early start to the day.

Arriving at the venue was so exciting and the staff were so welcoming and helpful. The makeup and hairdressers were absolutely lovely and made us all look our very best. The photographers were amazing and agreed to recreate a photo I had with my own mother on my wedding day. All dressed up and ready to go I went along to the building where Ellie was getting ready. When I went in the room she was looking absolutely stunning, I cried as soon as I saw her it was such an emotional moment for me. I didn't expect to feel so happy and overwhelmed. We did the photo shoot and then I left her in the capable hands of her father, I'm sure it was an unforgettable experience for them both.

I made my way to the wedding party waiting for their first glimpse of the bride. As I walked to my seat I still felt so emotional. There was a wedding singer who Ellie had won (seems weird I know) but her voice was magical we obviously didn't know how she would work out, but we needn't have worried she had the most wonderful voice and sang all the requested songs. I cried whilst waiting for Ellie to walk down the aisle (I'm almost crying now just thinking about it) some of the songs were full of family memories which mean so much to us. The actual service was also very emotional; Ellie cried coming down the aisle but soon felt comfortable as soon as she saw Kieran. They had a very special ring bearer (Seamus their dog) who was so well behaved and didn't bark he was an absolute star.

The food was so delicious and there was such a happy atmosphere all day and into the evening. My husband's speech went down very well everyone enjoyed it and the humour within it. It was reported that some of the guests said it was the best wedding they had ever been to so that made me very happy to know how much the day was enjoyed.

In my much younger days I lived in New York for a number of years working as a nanny for a British diplomat. I spent many happy and exciting years with them. It was the end of an era when it was time to return to the UK. On the way back to the airport I remember taking the last view of the skyline and telling myself to never forget that moment and the wonderful memories I have of my time there. I have never forgotten that moment and how I felt but it was time to move on. We kept in touch for a number of years, but they were of course posted to other countries. I often thought about them and wondered how their lives turned out.

I was so surprised to get a message from them as they had been wondering about me too. I was so happy to hear they wanted to meet up. They had retired and settled in the Cotswolds, so we made our way to see them a couple of weeks ago. Strangely I felt a little nervous about seeing them as it had been so long since I saw them last (30 years or more).

As we arrived at their house, they came rushing out to meet us it was so exciting to see the children all grown up and one of them a mother herself. We had a wonderful day catching up and I'm sure we will meet up again and they would like to meet my family so that's something to look forward to.

I think I only have one more chairman chat before I retire from the role so sorry if this is too long for some of you. Keep crafting

Pat Christmas

GUILD DEMONSTRATIONS

For details of Guild Demonstrations, please refer to the Demonstrations Folder available at the Guild meetings or email Stefanie at kvgdemonstrations@gmail.com.

In 2024 our members demonstrated our skills at a number of shows, including Uffington, Southern Wool and the Newbury Show. Much fun was had by all, and our stalls were of great interest to visitors.

The demonstrating season has finished for this year but we are already organising next year's shows so you will soon have the opportunity to sign up for more demonstrations.

If you would like to attend a Guild demonstration day, please listen for details of upcoming events, and let the Demonstrations Secretary by email (kvgdemonstrations@gmail.com). It is essential that the Demonstrations Secretary knows that you will be attending to ensure that you are covered by Public Liability insurance. Please note that the KVGWSD will under no circumstances be responsible for any theft, loss or damage caused to personal belongings. This includes use of equipment on Guild demonstrations. Each Guild member will be responsible for their own equipment. They should check their own house contents insurance policy to see if they are covered for use of their equipment anywhere outside their homes.

Stefanie Rachmann-Davies, Demonstrations Secretary

SHOW-AND-TELL

There was no 'Show and Tell' in September due to low numbers, or in October due to the BlackJack Challenge samples.

November Carol Hubbard brought in her completed Blackjack weaving. Her three challenges were; to use blockweave, to include checks and to incorporate ribbon. She used three shades of green ribbon to create a 3D effect 'tumbling blocks' design.

Trixie Holmes showed us a reversible cowl which is her first attempt at stranded knitting. The pattern, found on Ravelry, is called the Initiation Cowl by Hannah Mann. The yarn used was King Cole Homespun DK which includes alpaca and wool.

Amanda Connell was also trying something new – Baltic Inkle weaving which uses a thick yarn to pick out a pattern over a thinner background, in this case cream pattern on chocolate brown. This was intended as a guitar strap for her brother but turned out a bit too narrow. A wider strap is already being woven.

Lynne Harper showed us a sample woven on her narrow width portable loom which she uses when out demonstrating. The structure is a deflected doubleweave given a two-dimensional effect by varying the number of picks per pattern. The inspiration came from a book called 'Woven Optical Illusions' by Stacy Harvey-Brown and Katharina Kronig.

Lynne Bond

GUILD TROPHIES

Trophies awarded since the last Shuttle

Oct 2024: Hawkridge Trophy

Sue Bramwell

Nov 2024: Dyeing Trophy

Amanda Connell and Christine Hilmi

Upcoming Trophies

Dec 2024: Christmas Fashion Show

April 2025: June Young Trophy

October this year saw the Hawkridge trophy being presented. This is for items spun and created from Jacobs' fleece, although it has been expanded to fleeces from other British breeds. Sue Bramwell won the award with an amazing bag.

I was sorry to miss the November meeting and seeing the entries for the dyeing trophy.

Many thanks to Anne and Lynne for organising it in my absence. I've had the entries described to me and I'm looking forward to seeing the photos. Many congratulations to the winners, Amanda and Christine.

As you all know, we will be choosing the winner of the Christmas trophy at the December meeting but after that there are no more trophies until April when the committee will choose the recipient for the June Young Trophy for service to Guild.

Jennifer Thompson

Dyers Trophy

Four items were entered for the Dyers Trophy at the last guild meeting and all were very different. Sue Cray entered examples of her flower prints on cotton fabric made during the Flower Pounding mini-workshop in August. The clear prints and the bright colours of the flowers were a happy reminder of warm summer days. Also, from the mini-workshops there was an entry of rolags dyed with Kool-Aid in shades of green, aqua and purple.

Carol Kennedy entered her eco-printed and dyed fabric. This was woven on a re-assembled Weavemaster loom using wool and cotton yarns. It was bundle printed with sycamore, eucalyptus and blackberry leaves then immersed in a nettle dye bath. This resulted in overall muted shades of both leaf prints and cloth. Amanda Connell and Christine Hilmi entered four skeins of madder-dyed yarn, hand spun from commercial fibre. These were mordanted with Alum and dyed with madder root and all from the same dye pot.

It was a difficult decision but after much consideration the judges agreed that the trophy should be awarded to Amanda and Christine for their skeins of madder-dyed yarn. The judges were impressed but the distinct shades of colour achieved. Thank you to everyone who entered items for the dyers Trophy, your varied contributions were appreciated, and I hope that this will provide encouragement to enter your dyed items when the trophy is next presented in a years' time.

Anne Reddan

GUILD WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

We have three workshops/courses to tell you about this time.

January Mini Workshops: There will be the normal January Mini-workshops at the January Guild meeting. Yet again our members are willing to provide 2 hour long mini-workshops at the Guild January meeting. Each one will cost £1, which will be collected on the day at the workshop.

It is possible to sign up for up to two workshops, one from the morning group and one from the afternoon group. You do not have to join in with the workshops, the normal

Guild social spinning/knitting/crochet/etc. will be going on at the same time.

It is also possible to sign up for only one. There will be a limited number of attendees on some of the sessions for practical reasons, but there will be a 'waiting list' and it is worth checking on the day, in case those on the list have been able to appear. Most places will be taken after the December meeting, but if there is enough interest, it may be possible to repeat them later in the year, so please, sign up on the waiting list if you are interested, at either the December or January meetings.

4th Jan Mini-Workshops:

Morning, 10.30 – 12.30

1. Bargello
2. Spindle Spinning for beginners
3. Finger Weaving
4. Ragrug Hearts

Afternoon, 13.30 – 15.30

5. Macramé Tree
6. Using a Lucet
7. Chicken Scratch Hearts
8. Double Sided Knitting

I would like to thank all the tutors for volunteering to run these sessions. Please, if you have signed up for one, try to get there, or let the tutor know if you can't make it. They put a lot of effort into preparing, and it is very bad manners on the participant's part, and disappointing to the tutor, if someone just does not turn up.

Flax spinning and how to dress a distaff: A workshop on preparing fibres for spinning, dressing a distaff for use with spindles of spinning wheels, working on drop-spindles and spinning wheels will take place on the afternoon of the February Guild meeting. This will be for a maximum of 20 Students. If you wish to use a spinning wheel you will have to bring your own, but the tutors will bring spindles and distaffs for up to 20. To sign up for this course please see the list at the back of the hall.

Weave Course: Rosie is holding another Weaving course in the first few months of 2025. The course will be six Saturdays over January, February and March. They will all be held at Speen, and 3 of them will occur at the same time as a Weavers' Chat. For more details please contact Rosie Price.

Welcome to New Members.

Welcome to the following members who have joined the Guild since the last Shuttle was published. Watch out for them at meetings, and please talk to them and introduce yourselves to them.

Jo Phelps	Kat Holmes	Trixie Holmes
-----------	------------	---------------

Farewell

We regret to record the passing of the following Guild members:

Linda Moss
Dennis Walker

Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones

MEMBERSHIP FEES 2025

By the time you read this, you should have paid your membership fees for 2025, but there may well be a few of you who haven't for some very good reason. If so, please remember that without paying the 2025 membership, your membership will lapse on the 31st December 2024.

The membership fees for 2025 are the same for 2024, and are:

Individual: £21

Family: £26

Senior Citizen: £16

Details on how to pay, and copies of the membership form were sent out via a Guild email. In case you have lost the email, the details are included here. We accept Cash (only at meetings), Cheque or Bank Transfer, although if you are posting/emailing your subscription, please include a membership form.

The Bank Transfer details are:

Account name KVGWSD Sort Code: 30-95-89 Acc. No. 03235047

Please use as reference the first 2 letters of your forename then your surname (e.g. LYHARPER).

To Pay by Cheque, please make cheque payable to KVGWSD. Cheques can be posted, with a membership form to the Treasurer, Jenny Goss. Her contact details are on the Guild Official list on the inside cover.

To ALL Members

Have you been to an interesting exhibition or talk, taken part in a thrilling and inspiring workshop, started/completed a project that would be of interest to others in the Guild? If so, then please write a short article about it, include pictures, and send it to the editor. **Don't wait until asked** – do it straight away while it is still in your mind.

ARTICLES

October Meeting: Ecclesiastical Embroidery – Tricia Goodchild

At the October meeting we were treated to a really interesting talk on church embroidery by Tricia Goodchild, one of our own members. I had been looking forward to this very much since I became very interested in church embroidery after studying for City and Guilds and an HNC in stitched textiles years ago.

It is always interesting to hear about someone's journey towards and into their crafts and (Trish) did not disappoint. Like a lot of us, I'm sure, she started sewing and knitting for her toys as a child. Years later a friend trained for the ministry and Trisha told her that she would love to make stoles for her. The only problem was that she had no idea where to start. Fortunately, a talk by the head of the embroidery group at Christchurch, Oxford started her on her journey in church embroidery.

Stoles are very symbolic and are generally embroidered/ decorated with pictures and symbols meaningful to the recipient. The church has four seasons and each one has its own colour. Green symbolises renewal and life and is the everyday colour. White represents light and life and is worn at ordination, Christmas, Easter, baptisms and weddings. Red represents the blood of Martyrs and the Holy Spirit and is worn on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost and Festival of the Holy Martyrs. Purple symbolises hope and expectation and is worn during Lent and Advent.

The first stole that Trisha made for her friend Cara was a white one for her ordination. We were very lucky that she was able to borrow the stoles she has made since then to bring to show us and they were quite exquisite.

After beginning with stoles (Trish) decided that the Frontal and Lectern Fall in St. Nicholas church on the Wasing estate was looking tired and sad so she made new ones incorporating designs from the old ones and a ceiling painting in the church. Her journey continues and she is now one year into an eight-year project to help to embroider a kneeler to be placed around the shrine to St. Frideswide, the patron saint of Oxford, in the cathedral. I wonder if she anticipated that a throwaway comment offering to make a stole would lead her on such a fascinating journey? Many thanks for such an interesting talk.

Jennifer Thompson



**SHOW
and
TELL**

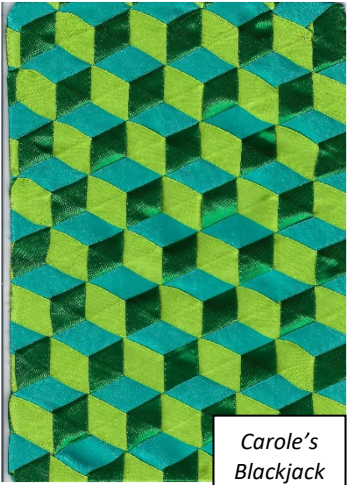
NOVEMBER



Tricia's Cowl



Lynne's deflected
doubleweave



Carole's
Blackjack



Hawkrige Trophy



Hand woven in blackwaste loom which
was in - extensive cotton - wool
for 1000 years. Both
washed with potassium persulfate and potassium
bichromate

TROPHIES



Kool And Dorris
with Pat Christmas



Dyers' Trophy



Shawl - Blending - we
did it in the wool
they did not - dyeing





Southern Wool Show



Trcia's Stoles





**Latest
Refugee
Package**

**Pumpkin Patch
Demonstrating**



***Ritual
Reimagined***



***Jan and John's
Jumper Sheep***



October Meeting: The re-enactment life of a Spinner and Weaver – Maureen Taylor

So, how did that re-enactment thing happen? It wasn't something I'd even considered, but - - about 20 years ago I was working for the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit as a temporary finds assistant (clearing the huge backlog of finds from their excavations). Part of the job was to supervise the volunteer pot washers; one lunchtime, having eaten, I was sitting drop spindling when one of them came over to me and commented that her efforts on a drop spindle always turned out like thick lumpy rope. She asked me if I could help her improve, and I was invited to dinner one evening where she and a friend were all ready with their drop spindles. It was then I invited to take part in one of their Iron age re-enactment events (at Palace House in Newmarket, a lovely 17th century building) which I really enjoyed - - - and that was it, I was hooked...

I attended a few events with their group, then joined one called 'The Guild of Historical Interpreters'. This led me to take part in all sorts of events, in all sorts of places – Ancient Egyptian, Iron Age/Romano-British, Medieval, Tudor, Victorian in museums, country parks, National Trust properties, and at medieval and multi-period shows – Dover Castle, Framlingham Castle, Basildon Park, Ham Hill, Wandsworth Museum, Devizes Museum, and even the Banqueting hall in Whitehall!!!

At the Baptist Chapel in Tewkesbury (housed in at 15th/16th century timber-framed building) photos were taken, and my drop spindle and I featured in a publicity leaflet as a result – fame at last!! That drop spindle travelled to every event with me over the coming years - -

Just a few of the places, along with some memorable incidents.....

- Wretton in Norfolk, where we had a timeline set up, in the correct order, around the village green, starting with then palaeolithic and running through nearly every time period up to the 1940s.
- Kenilworth Castle, where we were allowed to pitch our tent inside the remains of the medieval chapel. And where we were medieval nuns for the weekend. This was also where I got to play with a great wheel for the first time.
- Glastonbury recreation ground, where I had a wonderful view of the tor over the back of my medieval tent; and where Emily, my granddaughter (aged 9 or 10 at the time) told everyone that she was my slave and that I made her sleep in the woodpile (her very modern tent covered with a large sheet of canvas).
- Devizes Museum, where we were ancient Egyptians, and for a change I was making bead and cord necklaces with the children, and where Kevin, our storyteller, aka Ezra

the Ranter, was at the opposite end of the museum to me and on the floor below...and I could still hear every word he said!!

- Lacock Abbey where, once again, I wasn't spinning, but doing some Opus Anglicanum, and where we did our scripted re-enactment of 'The Making of a Nun', written by one of the group – the story of the 12 year old daughter (or might have been niece, history is not certain) of John of Gaunt, who was so disliked by her new stepmother that she was sent away to Barking Abbey to become a nun. That same weekend one of our nuns was punished for heretical comments – she was dragged away to be walled-up, just a small hole left for food etc to be passed through, had some of the public a tad worried....

And then there is the 'idiot' element of the public attending medieval fairs and other events –

- Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (Huntingdon), where there was a reconstruction Iron Age roundhouse that some of us slept in, and which the local council insisted had to have an emergency exit!!!! If we hadn't covered that up with blankets, sheepskins and the like, our little fire in the middle might well have flared up and set fire to the whole thing!!!
- This was also where a father and son opened up two wooden chests in Mark's tent (one containing his modern clothing and possessions, the other with all his knives and other sharp implements). They were politely asked to desist, whereupon they informed Mark that, as the chests were visible they had every right to rummage through Mark's personal belongings!!! We almost had to call the police that day!
- And Wandsworth Museum where a mother informed her daughter that putting her hand through the spokes of a spinning wheel (mine as it happened) wouldn't hurt her at all
- Colchester Oyster Fayre where a father and son came along and told the son that our fire wasn't real because H&S wouldn't allow real fires, when we told them we were cooking our lunch over that fire he told us that our food was holographic as well – words fail me.....

And where is the spinning, weaving and textiles in all this?

At almost every event I was doing something textile related, whether it was drop spindling (always had a few spares for people to have a go), sitting at my inkle loom (again I often had a second one set up for people to play with), doing some embroidery, knitting, sewing or whatever else you might think of. OK, so the inkle loom isn't medieval, or anywhere near it, but I could get away with it as a trader, in order to demonstrate how braids were made. As a historic (mostly medieval trader) I always demonstrated something that related to what I was selling, whether it was my beadwork, hand-spun yarns or handwoven braids – and there were many occasions where people went away not only having purchased something from me but having learned something new.

Sadly I've now come to the end of an era, and have, after 20 years or so, had to hang up the period clothes, pack away the tent for the last time and say a fond farewell to it all.

Maureen Taylor

November Meeting: Get Weaving on the Body Tensioned Loom – Rebecca Connolly

An inspiring talk, providing complete beginners to experienced weavers with ideas & motivation to have a go. With all the flexibility, we should all look forward to seeing lots of exhibits in the show & tell over the coming months.

Rebecca would describe herself as a Woven Textile Designer / Handweaver. She first set up a studio in 2015 with a floor loom, which she has yet to use the full width of. Deviating from her original business ideas of creating textiles & garments. She spends much of time teaching, running workshops & increasing the value of farmers flocks.

Many courses don't teach the basic key skills of setting up a loom, seeing the gap in the market and basing some of her ideas on back strap weaving. Came the ideas on Body Tension Loom. During the talk she demoed setting up the loom, direct method or off loom for the warp, different sized heddles or flat weaving. With the Body Tension Loom, you can do a balanced weave, tapestry or inkle, with a flat weave you can also create many different patterns.

For more details: <https://rebeccaconnollydesign.com/>

Ruth Bradd

My Friend, Linda Moss

Many of you will have known Linda and Albert Moss from the past, when they used to attend Guild meetings, and collect money for the Sales Table. Some of you who have joined the Guild in recent years will not have had the privilege of knowing them.

Linda was born in Austria and came to the UK on her own when she was 18 years old. Albert was born in Lambeth in London; he met Linda at a dance and the rest, as they say, is history. They have one daughter, Christine, two grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Crafting was Linda's love in life; she tried practically every craft in existence, but she particularly enjoyed knitting socks and making peg loom mats. Albert was constantly by

her side and helped with demonstrations, the Newbury Show, and many other occasions; they loved to encourage people to take up crafting. Albert particularly enjoyed and taught inkle loom weaving and braiding.

In 2007 they set up Newbury Crafters which continues to meet on every third Saturday of the month at Speen Hall. I first met Linda and Albert by chance in 2008, when my personal circumstances changed, and I moved to Newbury from East Garston. My relationship with my partner had broken down, and I was at a low ebb. I happened to call into Crown Needlework in Hungerford and on the way out I looked at their noticeboard. There was an advert for Newbury Crafters which was to take place the following day. I am not gregarious by nature, but my sensible head told me to go along. When I arrived I was made to feel so welcome by Albert, and Linda made sure I was able to take part in the craft project that was taking place on that afternoon. I carried on going from then on; this led me to join Kennet Valley Guild. Until then the only real craft that I could master was knitting; however, over the years I have learned to spin, peg loom, crochet, natural and chemical dye fleece, and many other crafts including braiding.

I can remember the excitement of participating in the 2nd Newbury Coat which involved the challenge of making a coat from fleece to final garment within 24 hours. It was quite a logistical challenge; I had not learned to spin then so I helped out by carding fleece on a drum carder. All good experience.

Over the years, my friendship grew with Linda in particular, mainly through our love of crafts. She was so generous with her time and enthusiasm and could always be relied on to encourage my efforts and highlight “areas for improvement”. Sadly, Albert passed away after a short illness in 2017; we were concerned for Linda as she and Albert had been inseparable until then. Despite her personal ailments (which were many) Linda’s fortitude shone through and she carried on with the support of her family. After Albert passed away I saw more of Linda, and over the last few years I visited her every Sunday afternoon; we would eat cake, talk, drink tea and knit or crochet, and show each other what we had been doing over the week. Linda also loved her garden, and the many birds that came to lunch at her bird feeders. I can recall helping Linda to make a raised bed for strawberries and vegetables; despite Linda being in her eighties she still did much of the heavy lifting. As a reward, Linda used to pick flowers and give me raspberries and rhubarb to take home to make into jam. We often used to sit in her back garden during the summer, amongst her tubs of flowers, watching a squirrel trying to pinch the bird seed by hanging upside down on the feeder, or watching a woodpecker knock its beak against the trunk of a tree. Quite often Christine would join us with her knitting or crochet project.

I could reminisce about Linda for much longer as both she and Albert gave me so many precious memories that I will never forget. I’ll bring this tribute to an end by saying that for me it is the end of an era, but I will always carry these special memories with me, with love and gratitude for having known such a special couple.

Sue Davies

Pumpkin Patch Demonstration

This weekend I had the pleasure of providing a spinning wheel demonstration at a local Pumpkin Patch. Eleanor Gilbert, or as she is often known, *Berkshire Farmgirl*, has established a Pumpkin Patch each autumn on her arable farm based in Curridge, West Berkshire. Eleanor and her family open up the farm to the public for an opportunity to pick your own pumpkins and corn, grown on the farm, enjoy a maize maze, Horse and Carriage rides and provide a raft of other traditional autumnal activities for all the family. This year I was asked to provide a spinning demonstration in-keeping with traditional rural crafts, so I took along my wheel, wool in various process stages and “fill-the-gap” looms for older children to enjoy.

There was a really varied demographic of visitors to the farm but everyone who stopped by to chat loved seeing a wheel in action, something that many had never seen before. The children loved exploring the wool textures between different sheep breeds and the fill-the-gap looms were a huge hit, as always. The day was really enjoyable with lots of interest in spinning, weaving and dying alongside a handful of interested ladies who may well be seen soon at our next Guild meet.

Hollie Gavin

Jan and John’s Jumper Sheep

I picked up the scissors and I broke out in a sweat. My hands began to shake. I was about to commit a major crime in the art world. I was about to destroy a masterpiece by one of the grand masters. Not like throwing beans at the Mona Lisa. Not like adding my own graffiti tag to a Banksy. This was going to be far worse. Total destruction - and I felt uneasy. Surely it can never be right to destroy someone else’s artwork. However there was no going back now.....

Jan and John Shailes were founder members of Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers back in the 1970’s. They were both a great inspiration to so many, passing on their knowledge and teaching people to spin. Jan wrote a book about spinning and together Jan and John made amazing things with the wool they spun..... two such items found their way to me. Two jumpers lovingly spun and knitted with a label proudly sewn into the neckline, ‘*Handcrafted by Jan and John*’, exclusively for you. Sadly, both jumpers had seen better days and were badly damaged by moths. There was no hope of darning the holes and they had been destined for the bin long before I got them. (Rosie Price gave them to me and set me the challenge to do something Thank you Rosie!) I shoved them in the washing machine, fairly hot, and they shrunk beautifully.

Now I had the task of working out what to do next? I have a pattern (Simplicity, 1980's) for a toy sheep and thought it would be a fitting use for the jumpers. The wool handspun in natural colours had come from sheep and would now be returned back into being a sheep. I am guessing here, that *The Sheep* were probably bred by John and Jan but the fleeces may well have come from either Linda and Albert Moss or Dawn and Maurice Duce who also bred and kept sheep for their varied colours and perfect fleeces for hand spinners.

This is where my hands started to shake making the first cut, lining up the pattern on the sheep to match the carefully matched patterns in the jumpers. Navigating round the moth holes, making sure I cut the pattern correctly. There was not enough fabric to make mistakes. Cutting out the pieces took over 2 hours as I checked over and over again to make sure I was doing it right. It was a case of measure several times and cut once.

Next was the daunting task of sewing all the pieces together. 26 in total all needing to be lined up and sewn together in the right order..... I had made one of these sheep before and the piecing together is not easy. A very fiddly job with no room for mistakes.

At this point I am still plucking up courage to get the sewing machine out. Should I hand sew everything? No. My stitching wouldn't be strong enough. Time to dust off the old Bernina which was my 21st Birthday present..... Old jumpers, old pattern, old sewing machine and old me!

Several months went past before I plucked up courage to get the sewing machine out. I had a whole day to concentrate. The 26 pieces to sew together were carefully laid out and there was a set of instructions. What could possibly go wrong? LOTS! The ears and tail* gave me the biggest challenge, followed by getting the legs the right way round and the face the right way up. In the end it took me 4 hours and I know the end result is far from perfect. BUT I am pleased with the result and my jumper sheep will hopefully be around for many years to come and serve as a reminder of dear friends and people that were such an inspiration and had so much influence on helping me develop my crafting skills.

Without the likes of Jan and John, Linda and Albert and all the others that set up the Kennet Valley guild more than 40 years ago we wouldn't have the wonderful guild we have today. We are so lucky to be able to craft together, make friends for life and learn new skills.

*p.s. Yes I know the tail points up for goat and not down for sheep but at least I got the ears the right way up!.....

Linda Scurr

THANK YOU FOR DRINKING SO MUCH TEA

Some of you may have noticed that over several months, at the end of a Guild Day, I went home with all your used teabags. The result is now on show...

I have called the piece RITUAL REIMAGINED.

Bags are the residual items from the worldwide ritual of tea making in the modern era. The motivation behind my work is the transformation of discarded 'waste' products into something beautiful in their own right.

'A bird does not sing because he has an answer. He sings because he has a song'
(attributed to Joan Walsh Anglund)

For me the artistic process need have no more meaning than this.

I attend an Advanced Textile Course, and we have a biennial exhibition at the Cornerstone Gallery in Didcot. I looked at the bowl of used teabags on the counter and thought there must be something I could do with these... I decided on a lampshade and worked backwards... over 400 used teabags were repurposed for this project (yes, I made the beads too...) there were many stages and many, many hours involved but I really enjoyed this labour of love.

I will be at The Gallery on the 18th December, 11-3 if anyone wants to pop along.

Jenny Goss

Latest Refugee Parcel

On Monday I sent an 11kg parcel to Christian Hope International in Romford. As you can see from the photo there were some wonderful things which will keep them warm now the weather is getting colder. Thank you to everyone who made things I know they will be much appreciated.

Thanks also to everyone that gives me clothes, bedding, towels and paracetamol for the Friends of Ukraine in Tilehurst, Reading. I am amazed at the amount of donations they receive from the local community. I think it is because they have a lorry that goes direct to Ukraine every few months.

Later this month I will go to the Royal Berkshire hospital with knee rugs and premature baby outfits, just another couple of baby things to finish! Hopefully I will be able to make a start on the handspun knee rugs next month.

Everything we give makes such a difference. Thanks again

Rosie Price

Southern Wool Show.

Once again, the Guild was warmly welcomed back to The Southern Wool Show, held annually at Newbury Race Course at the start of September.... and what a show it was!

Situated in our usual spot, on both Saturday and Sunday, we greeted show visitors with the gentle hum of spinning wheels, clacking shuttles and clinking knitting needles, surrounded by an impressive showcase of beautifully spun yarns, weaving, hand dyeing and knitting.

Enthusiastic visitors embraced the opportunity to mingle with our friendly Guild members and many stayed for lengthy conversations around all things wool - from processing to finished articles, with the opportunity to try spinning and “fill-the-gaps” weaving, which was a big hit for the younger visitors at the show.

Our charity knit-a-square was a success as always, with both familiar faces who attend every year to broad aged-ranged newcomers having a knit and natter. This created a fantastic environment for inspiration, sharing passions and honouring our traditional crafts.

Stepping away from our creative corner and into the vendor areas you would find yourself in the ultimate haven for wool, fibre and yarn craft enthusiasts, with over 80 stall holders from all over the UK, displaying impressive products celebrating the art of handmade creativity. Each vendor brought a unique perspective and a wealth of experience to the show, creating a vibrant and diverse community of makers, bringing with them raw rare-breed fleeces, dyed fibre, skeins of intricately spun yarns in every hue imaginable, felting, needlework & haberdashery and equipment for beginners to more experienced crafters.

On exiting the show the charity magazine stall, supported by both donations and volunteering from Guild members, was incredibly popular, with the show confirming a total of £764 raised for the wonderful charity Naomi House & Jacks’ place. Thank you to all who contributed to this successful fundraiser.

On a final note, as a relatively new Guild member, in a world that is increasingly dominated by mass-produced goods and impersonal shopping experiences, the show serves as a refreshing reminder of the joy and satisfaction that comes from creating something with your own two hands. It is a celebration of craftsmanship, creativity, and community, and a testament to the enduring appeal of wool, knitting, and fabric crafts in a fast-paced, digital age.

The Southern Wool Show is not just a place to buy supplies – it is a hub of creativity and innovation, where ideas are exchanged, skills are honed, and friendships are made. With so much interest in our Guild, I very much hope to be able welcome many newcomers at our October meet.

Hollie Gavin

CRAFT SOCIALS

Aldbourne Braid Days

The next Aldbourn Braid Day is December 8th. The dates for 2025 are February 2nd, April 13th, June 15th, August 17th, October 5th and December 14th. All are Sundays. In addition, the Braid Society AGM is at Aldbourn in 2025, it will be on the 25th of October.

The cost is £8.00 per head per day. Biscuits, cake and hot drinks are provided free of charge. Please contact me for directions and so that I can keep an eye on numbers.

Sal Shepherd

Weavers' Chat

The Guild weavers normally meet at Speen Parish Hall, Newbury, RG14 1RJ on the last Saturday of the month from 09.30 – 13.30. The next meeting will be 25th January 2025. Other dates for 2025 are 22nd February 29th March, *no meeting in April*, 31st May, 28th June, 26th July, 23rd August, 27th September, and 25th October. All these meetings from 9.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. The final meeting for 2025 will be 22nd November from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £4.00 to cover the cost of the hall.

It is called "Weavers' Chat", but braiders can come with inkles, marudai etc and lace makers with pillows as it is all weaving. In fact, all Guild members are very welcome to come along to see what we are doing and find out what weaving is all about.

Please let me know if you are coming so that there is enough milk, biscuits and maybe cake!

Rosie Price

Moulsford Spinning & Craft Group

We meet on the **3rd Thursday of every month** at Moulsford Pavilion from **6.30pm – 10pm**. There are usually spinners, weavers, felters, a basketmaker and knitters there so do come and join us.

For more information contact **Linda Scurr** or **Rosie Price**

Newbury Crafters

Newbury Crafters normally meet on the **3rd Saturday of every month** at Speen Parish Hall, Newbury, RG14 1RJ from 2 – 5 pm. Come along to this social afternoon with your own craft project and meet people with other craft interests for an exchange of ideas.

For more details contact **Sue Davies**

The copy deadline for the March 2025 issue of the Shuttle is 9th February 2025. The email address is kvshuttleeditor@gmail.com