



The Devon Guild
of
Weavers, Spinners and Dyers



photographed by Bob Croxford

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Letter from the Editor

Jenny the Chairman has not been well recently and has not been available to write up the usual "chat". We hope she is better very soon.

What a wonderful few weeks we have had, thanks mainly to summer at last and to the enthusiasm and help with the shows from so many Guild members. We have reports from those of us who have thoroughly enjoyed Jill Denton's felting course, the talk by Martin from P&M Woolcraft, buying lots of fleece from John Arbon's mill, the Edinburgh Yarn Festival and a super day out at Wonderwool Wales.

Jane Yarrow has put in a huge amount of effort organising our stands at the lambing day at Bicton and the Devon County Show. There were many beautiful hand-spun items by our creative Guild members on the display stands. We now have the Mid Devon Show to look forward to as well as the Rose Fair at Rosemoor. Also in July there is the Open Day and Fleece Day organised by Sue Heathcote. We don't need any more fleece of course, but won't be able to resist! All friends and family are welcome to come to this.

The Programme on our website (<http://www.devonguildwsd.org.uk/programme.html>) also tells us of more delights to come - this month Art Yarn talk and workshop with Janet Phillips of the Threshing Barn and in September Heather Firby of TOFT alpacas will be the speaker. From 8th to 18th September the Association's National Exhibition will be installed at Killerton. Attention all you great knitters and crocheters - we need more stuff! The Collaborative Project is looking good already thanks to Isabelle's creativity and the lovely little miniature flowers, birds and wildlife so far produced.

Finally, in this month's newsletter we have the list of new and returning members to the Guild, collated by Sue Clowney our membership secretary. We look forward to chatting to them all.



Artist: Jean Luc Cornec

A Warm Welcome to our new Members of the Guild

New Member	From
Karen Ball	Lympstone
Lorraine Conibear	Exeter
Gill Gunter	Crediton
Christine Hall	Rackenford
Melinda Jarret	Newton Abbot
Suzanne Kerwood	Aylesbeare
Jenny Pankhurst	Goodrington
Welmoed Perrin	South Tawton
Sue Sedgman	Exeter
Helen Sims	Stoke Canon
Kate Wickenden	Exmouth
Cass Woolner	South Knighton
Rejoining the Guild	
Elizabeth Kent	Newton Abbot

The Devon Guild's special charity - The Devon Air Ambulance Trust (<http://www.daat.org/>)

The Trial Raffle at the Guild's February meeting of a single prize of one craft item was, according to the tick list, very popular.

The following meetings we decided that two or three prizes would be better. But this does rely on us all. We can only offer as prizes what we have been donated.

The Guild's title is for weavers, spinners and dyers but as the majority of us enjoy other crafts as well, any appropriate tools, yarn and fleece would be very acceptable donations. If we get enough similar crafts items, we can then determine at the end of the trial period whether this change meets with everyone's approval.



A very special thank you to Sue Clowney, who over time has donated dozens of her free range eggs to the raffle. As the eggs are no longer given as prizes, Sue has sold them to some very happy customers and has kindly donated the proceeds of £15 to the charity.

Remember all profits go to the Devon Air Ambulance. So please support us in the future as you have so generously in the past.

Thank you.

Margaret Graham

Tutley Mutley's odyssey to far-flung Australia

Like you probably, I am a compulsive follower of Tutley Mutley's great bicycle riding adventure through Europe. If you have not been following her labyrinthine meanderings through France, Germany, the Czech Republic and currently Vienna, then do look at her blog at <https://www.facebook.com/tutleymutleytextiles>



Terri posts almost every day but this depends on finding a free Wifi connection. The further east she goes, the more sporadic these posts will become. She describes her journey through the eyes and ears of an artist, admiring the architecture, fashions, nature and most importantly, people. She has developed a network of craft friends who recommend more craft friends further along her journey. They help her navigate her trusty bicycle "Morwenna the Thorn Raven" through villages and streets with unpronounceable names. Getting lost on

industrial estates and making do without proper maps seem to sap her energy but the craft folk she stays with are always overwhelmingly welcoming. She becomes part of dozens of families and recounts their stories, ideals, beliefs and lives.

But the cream on the cake is the "Daily Draw", where she captures water-coloured images of memorable things she has seen that day.

And Terri is knitting too, and exchanging techniques and skills with her hosts. When she has no bed for the night, she hunts around for discrete clearings in woods just off the road and makes a covert camp. She recounts the strange noises and voices she hears through the night which adds real drama to the journey. With so many online maps, it is easy to see her picking her route along back-roads where traffic is not a threat. She tries to use the enormous Eurovelo cycling network. One of its routes (Eurovelo 1 - Atlantic) even passes through Devon from Plymouth to Ilfracombe. At this moment she is looking for Eurovelo 9 - Baltic to Adriatic.

Just looking at this enormous network makes me long to get back in the saddle and go explore new parts of the world at a really sensible pace. Of course there are problems like bad weather and unknown languages, but the thrill of cresting the next hill and seeing another new landscape really comes across in her adventures. This is armchair cycling at its best.



Nick Johnson

What has the Guild been doing?

**Saturday, 13th February - Talk: Textiles by Jill Denton followed by:
Sunday, 14th February - Workshop: Valentine's Day Felting Making**

Following Jill Denton's talk and having seen (and more excitingly been encouraged to touch) her vibrant felt art and gossamer fine nuno-felted clothing the previous day we were all eager to have a go at our own projects. By the day's end we were far from disappointed!

Jill is a generous and knowledgeable teacher. She was energetic in managing to tailor-make each of our experiences and we were enabled to produce delectable and versatile fabric whether we were novices or had some earlier experience of creating felt. From selecting our colour palette; to laying out our bubble wrap; to "wetting out" our fibres; to determining when our creations were complete and ready for rinsing, Jill was always available to help and advise. And her expertise and patience, together with her irresistible enthusiasm for felt, meant that we all gained in craftsmanship and confidence through the day.



Liz showing one of the techniques



The very, very pleased participants

Using pre-felts that were offcuts from Jill's work assisted us in gaining sharply defined edges or more subtle colour variation in our own pieces.

Several of us who had already been on adventures in the medium of felt agreed that we had learned from Jill new "tricks" in encouraging fibres to "go in" and "shrink" in the desired direction throughout the day.

It's a rare workshop where all participants are genuinely delighted with the work they carry home with them but this was undoubtedly one such learning and practical success. I don't doubt that some kitchen sinks and plastic protected table tops will be in action in all our homes again soon!

Liz Drummond

Saturday, 12th March - Talk: Carding with Martin Reeves of P&M Woolcraft

(www.pmwoolcraft.co.uk)

An interesting talk by Martin showing us all sorts of different carders and carding machines, some very expensive but perfect for anyone with a business selling hand blended and carded fleece. We all enjoyed buying lots of fleece and crafty things from the vast range of items P & M had brought with them.

Saturday, 9th April - Talk: The Mill with John and Juliet of John Arbon Textiles

(www.jarbon.com)

Unfortunately John and Juliet could not be with us on the day, but we once again thoroughly enjoyed buying the lovely fleece from the Mill. We hope they can come along and give us a talk on the Mill at a later date. Some of us did take one of the tours at the Mill's open day on 10th May 2016.

Sunday, 20th March - Bicton Lambing Sunday

We were invited to the event this year which was held on a bitterly cold day. Our stand and display were located in a common room, with large leather sofas and overlooking a lovely formal garden. Our first visitors arrived at 9:30 a.m. and a continuous stream of children and adults sought respite from the cold to lounge on the sofas and be entertained by our demonstrations.

Children queued to have a go at drum-carding, great interest was shown when their chosen colours were blended and each child was given a small sample. Jane Alexander was kept busy spinning on an Ashford Joy and Pam Brown demonstrated the blending board. We answered lots of questions and by 4 p.m. we felt tired and cold but agreed that it had been a very successful day. The highlight for many was seeing lambs being born at the farm. I ventured out briefly, saw some tiny lambs but no "live" action. I soon returned to the warmth of the common room.



Hello!

Thank you to members who provided items for the display. Thanks also to Anne Lickess who helped set up the display with me, and Pam and Jane for their excellent demonstration skills.

Jane Yarrow

Tuesday, 22nd March - The Edinburgh Yarn Festival

The Edinburgh Yarn Festival now in its third year was held on the 16th and 17th March 2016 at the Edinburgh Corn Market, which is situated about twenty minutes by bus from the centre of Edinburgh, it also has a limited amount of parking at the venue.



The venue itself was smaller than I expected. It had a variety of traders selling mainly hand-dyed wool in a rainbow of colours, which ranged from £12 per 100 gram to £23 per 100 gram. This was the main content of the venue, as there was not much diversity in the stalls.



I counted one stall with handmade felted goods, one button stall, although one or two other stalls had a selection of buttons on them and one stall selling expensive knitting needles at £8.00 per pair and one trader selling spinning wheels only (no accessories). All the traders were helpful, friendly and filled with enthusiasm for their products with plenty of inspirational knitting designs.

John Arbon was there selling a selection of merchandise including rovings, which were selling like hot cakes, as he was the only one selling them and of course another Devon designer, Belinda Reid-Harris, with her own inspirational designs.



Designer Kate Davies had a selection of her own designs also including Fairisle Yoke designs cardigans and pattern books available to buy. Her designs are also available on Ravelry.

I stayed a couple of hours, and managed to spend plenty of money, well it would be rude not too wouldn't it?

There was also a supplier from Bradford, Yarn Undyed.com, selling a range of reasonably priced yarn for dyeing in range of weights from lace to chunky.

It was an enjoyable way to while away a couple of hours including stopping for tea and of course cake.

Kate Wittenden

Sunday, 24th April - Guild Trip to Wonderwool Wales - A Festival of Welsh Wool and Natural Fibres

(<http://www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk/home.html>)

We were the stalwart 42 woolgatherers of fleece and fleecy things from all over the West Country heading for 11th annual festival at the Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells.

Actually we needed 44 people to break even to pay the coach and entrance ticket, but everyone contributed a little bit more, much to the relief of the Devon Guild who were financially backing the trip.

The coach started very, very early at 6.30 am in Bovey Tracey, then on to Exeter, Tiverton and Taunton picking up members from the Cornwall, Devon and Somerset Guilds, Devon Weavers Workshop, Ravelry and many different knitting and spinning groups. Everyone was on time, although I had a slight panic at Exeter having missed counting two of the Bovey early birds who were seated right under my nose on the coach.

Luckily for us at this time of the year it was a sunny day with just a slightly sharp wind. The journey to Wales was spent peacefully chatting, knitting or catching up on some sleep for those who had been up at 5 am. A stopover and going through the toll at the Severn Bridge were the main events on the motorway until we got into Wales and travelled through some beautiful Welsh scenery.

When we arrived at Wonderwool it was easy to see why some people went for the whole weekend - it was impossible to see it all in one day. There were hundreds of exhibitors and trade stands including some of our well-known favourites, John Arbon, P & M Woolcraft, Winghamwoolwork and Sara's Texture Crafts among others. It really was an Aladdin's cave for anyone who loves crafting with textiles and, as the website says, covered all aspects of felting, knitting, weaving, spinning and crochet along with textile art with raw materials, equipment, books and finished product.

A few years ago now a friend and I had knitted 20 fish with metallic yarn for Alison Murray's amazing knitted installation, 'Above and Below the Waves', which had been set up in Hall 3 - they were still there!

So many workshops and impossible to get to them all - dyeing with Koolaid, scrumbling (a fast and furious way to use Free Form Knitting and Crochet to create all kinds of weird and wonderful things), Mapuche weaving from the indigenous people of Chile to name a few.



Above and Below the Waves

By the end of the day we were worn out with looking at everything and spending too much money. I couldn't resist a gadget for a weird new way of spinning called a Bogway Handspinner and sold by a Dutchman in a huge hat. That I'll be able to get hold of spinning with it is unlikely.

We arrived home quite tired but having felt that we had enjoyed a marvellous day out. The group were all from very different areas of the West Country, but everyone chatted together, met up for coffee and at the end showed off their purchases and recounted what they had seen and done. I felt as though the best part was that I had thoroughly enjoyed their company.

Chris Johnson
19th to 21st May - Devon County Show
(<http://www.devoncountyshow.co.uk/>)

Our Guild gets invited to attend a variety of events throughout the year and each one is different. Will members remember to bring their bags of precious handspun, woven delights in time for the show? They always come up t....ps. Sorry can't bring myself to write that word in the current political climate!

This year we had a colourful display which truly represented all our disciplines. The backdrop was enhanced by eye catching tapestries courtesy of Isabelle Jourdan and indigo dyed fabric banners by Anne Lickess. Knitted shawls, scarves, fingerless mittens and 50 gram challenges decorated the tables. A carousel frame (formerly of Inspirations Exeter) was decked with skeins of handspun yarn. A basket of Amanda's finely spun and hand dyed yarns provided a tempting allure to visitors at the front of the stand. Samples of fleece and fibres were on display along with natural dyed batts, skeins and indigo dyed scarves.



On Thursday, Squibby brought along her great wheel and took up the prime position as 'front of house' attracting visitors. Spinners were kept busy answering questions, the blending board and drum carder were in constant action churning out colourful samples ready to spin. Drop spindles twirled and occasionally fell to earth. Some tried their hand at spinning and children enjoyed trying out the drum carder. The mechanics of the weaving loom were explained, Nick proved to be very knowledgeable in this area. Dignitaries were introduced and given a whistle stop tour of the stand. Sheepy tales were exchanged with visitors. One Show 'official' was intrigued by the rose fibre and my explanation of its origin. He returned the next day with a VIP particularly to see the rose fibre again or had he googled the fibre to check if I had been talking a load of rubbish!

Who knows sometime you have to 'wing' it and hope you sound convincing.



The weather changed on Saturday, it was wet and cool but that did not deter the visitors or our guild demonstrators who entertained, educated and welcomed everyone to our stand. At end of the day we were relieved to pack up, load up our cars and leave the site without the help of tractors. A glass or two of wine was welcomed or perhaps some needed a hot chocolate, feet up, knitting needles clicking

and thoughts turned to that next spinning project.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to another successful show. A special thank you to those newbies who volunteered their services, I hope you made some new spinning friends.

Jane Yarrow

Unmissable Forthcoming Events 2016

10th-12th June - Contemporary Craft Fair, Bovey Tracey

(<http://craftsatboveytracey.co.uk/>)

18th-19th June - Rose Craft Fair, Royal Horticultural Society Rosemoor

(<https://www.rhs.org.uk/>)

23rd July - Mid Devon Show

(<http://www.middevonshow.co.uk/>)

30th-31st July - Fibre East, Mid Bedfordshire (venue to be announced)

(<http://www.fibre-east.co.uk/>)

From the Guild's Programme

Saturday, 9th July - Open Day and Fleece Sale

August - possible day outing (to be arranged)

8th - 18th September National Exhibition at Killerton

Saturday 10th September - Heather Firby of TOFT

Sunday 11th September - Sunnylands Room

Members Dyeing Day using One-fix acid dyes



Creative people bake cakes

From: 'Ten Poems about Knitting'

The manly art of knitting

When my father taught us to knit
he held the needles like fencing swords,
told us how Cary Grant never dropped
a stitch in *Mr Lucky*; we listened
to the clack of his pins, while watching
Ipswich Town come undone.

He'd show us crowds and corn fields;
immaculate rows of purl stitch, binding off
with stories of Captain Scott knitting
his way through the Antarctic winter.
In the evenings he reminisced
about old episodes of *Knit with Norbury*.
He carried his crochet hook like a
penknife;
would think nothing of leaving the office
to fix a dropped stitch; he gave us
a copy each of *The Manly Art of Knitting*.

In summer, we threw ourselves into the
surf
diving through loops of brown waves.
When we were bullied he told us to think
about the big centre forward who knitted
the world's longest football scarf. That
summer
he led us to Normandy, threw open the
doors
to the great hall at Bayeux and cried:
'This, is this what you call women's work?'

Christopher James

Tips Page At Last - newsletter idea from Bruce

A happy afternoon washing fleece

I am not a lacey person. I don't wear lacey clothes and prefer spinning heavier yarns, so I was surprised to find myself the proud owner of a quarter of a Bowmont Merino fleece.

The quarter was made up from pieces from all over the fleece, so quite a variation in quality. Even so, the fibres are microscopic and wonderful. What a challenge!

How to prepare it? Clean it first, Jane Yarrow offered to come and assist me so we could wash it while the sun still shone. A selection of bowls, baskets, seed trays and a salad spinner and we were off.

We tried three experiments to find the best and kindest way to wash it.

The first involved separating individual locks and loosening the tips which were very black and hard. We lined the locks up in two seed trays, stacked one on the other and a spare to prevent the locks floating away. They were dunked in my big, old, invaluable stainless steel sink with hand hot water and a squirt of "Ecover Delicate", left for 40 minutes.

In the second test we took a pile of fleece and Jane teased out the black, hard ends while keeping the fleece intact. This we put in an 8" high basket and immersed it in a bowl of the same mixture as above and left it to soak while we prepared the third test.

In this one, I combed out the ends of some separated individual locks and laid them in another of the seed trays, and added it to the two already in the sink.

We then made tea and biscuits and spent a happy half hour looking at the wonderful dyeing Jane did at Summer School.

We took the first seed trays out of the sink, leaving the last test in for a few more minutes. When this last batch were done we replaced the dirty water with clean, lukewarm, and put the trays in to rinse, they were clean but the washing had not touched the tips.

For the second test, the clump of fleece, we gently lifted the basket out, changed the water to rinse. The tips were looser but still grey at the end and some of the dirt had coloured the fleece for 2cms.

The third test, the combed out tips, was clean but still a little grey at the ends.

We carefully took the seed trays and basket out of the rinsing water and squeezed the excess water out. Then we laid the individual locks in the salad spinner and whizzed them. It works a treat! We did the same with the fleece and remaining locks and laid them out in the sun to dry.

We enjoyed the challenge but I am of a mind to remove the tips and try the test again. We would be interested to hear how the other quarters of the fleece fared.

Jane Alexander

More tips on washing fleece without felting

The words Grandmother and eggs come to mind as I write this but I have found that a number of novices have asked me about washing fleece and newly spun skeins of wool to set the twist and then seem surprised at my answer. I suppose in these days of manmade fabrics and washing machines they have never really heard of wool matting if the temperature is too hot.

At college, where I did weaving as my speciality in my Art Course we had a lovely teacher, Miss Champness, who had two favourite sayings. One was, "Everyone needs a cup of tea and a biscuit at eleven o'clock", as she put the kettle on for us all (this was in the middle of the last century before the American coffee habit had reached our shores. The second was, "Treat wool as you will your babies. Both are delicate. Neither like boiling or extremely hot water. Start your wash with water and soft soap flakes. The water should be comfortable for you to put your bare hands into. Gently squeeze the wool between your fingers then leave the wool to soak for a minute or two. Never wring out the wool or towel your baby too vigorously after rinsing.

Baby will probably need just one rinse but the wool, whether it be fleece, a skein or a knitted article needs three rinses at least, each one in water at a lower temperature than the previous one." Later I added a liquid fabric conditioner to my final rinse so that it smelt nice when being knitted up. Years later Miss Champness went on to become a contestant on Brain of Britain on the radio and I used to go up to London to cheer her on at the recordings. She got through to the semi finals I believe.

Brenda Patten

Another method of processing Bowmont fleece

This needs patience and a real desire to process Bowmont fleece. Bowmont sheep are 75% merino and 25% shetland. This fleece will form nupps if carded and doesn't like wool combs. Take a lock at a time and slap with a dog comb, flick carder or similar to break open the lock. Discard any bits, cut off the ends if too matted as anyway this will be a weak spot in the spinning.

Wet thoroughly in hot water. Remove and soap well with any ordinary old soap, rub quickly to clean the dirt and oil out of the fleece. According to Margaret Stove (New Zealand master knitter of shawls for royalty), the fleece won't felt if it is well soaped. Immediately rinse in the same temperature fresh water and dry. On top of an aga works well, outside on a towel if not windy or another gadget is a home laundry hanging sweater clothes drying rack (£2.99 from ebay.co.uk). The fleece will puff out when dry; it is one of the whitest fleeces when washed and one of the softest and least itchy when knitted. So worth the effort.



sirbenfro.blogspot.com

National Exhibition 2016 - 'Threads in Time'. 8th to 18th September at Killerton House

The garland we are making for the National Exhibition will be ready by the next meeting for its next stage; the attaching of the Devon Wildlife pieces which the Guild members are making.

After struggling with the idea of making the core of a garland, we came up with the idea of using thick cotton tights. "Make it as long as you can," Amanda said.

The tights were stuffed with local (Devon only) sheep fleece then bound in several places with string, so it can be draped around a wicker model without kinking. The next step was to cover the garland core with carded fleece, which was attached using a felting needle. At this stage it looked like a Jacobs sausage ☺. Now the garland is being decorated with sheep locks of several different breeds (Devon/Cornwall Longwool, BFL, Texel/Romney X, Hebridean, Gotland and Mule).

The next step requires the attachment of the Devon Wildlife pieces to the garland structure. I am bringing the garland structure to the next meeting and ask you to attach the pieces as you see fit. Using either a felting needle, sewing needle (and thread) or maybe you have your own idea.



So it's over to you all to do your part in creating a beautiful garland which we will be proud to display.

We are in need of more wildlife pieces, especially colourful ones to fill the garland.

Isabelle Jourdan

From Amanda's email round-up

"If you have already made something ... we have bought some brooch pins to attach the flora and fauna to the garland and would be very grateful if you could retrieve your offerings from the box on the Welcome Desk and sew a brooch pin onto the back. Needles and thread will be provided but bring your own if you prefer."

Committee Now Serving

Chairman:	Jenny Arnold
Secretary:	Amanda Trick
Treasurer:	Paul Ashton
Programme Secretary	Christine Hart
Events Co-Ordinator:	Jane Yarrow
Newsletter Editor:	Chris Johnson
Membership Secretary/Journal:	Sue Clowney
Fleece Fair Co-ordinator:	Sue Heathcote
Webmaster:	Amanda Trick
Committee Members:	Norma Sanders Vacant