



THE ASSOCIATION OF GUILDS OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS AND DYERS

Reg. Charity No. 289590 Website: www.wsd.org.uk
Vice Presidents: Peter Penneck, Jenifer Midgley

President: Jenny Balfour Paul
Life President: Paddy Bakker

Newsletter November 2015

Association News

Please note there will not be a newsletter in December. The next one will be January. I am sorry but due to work commitments I will not have time to arrange it.

National Exhibition 8 – 18 September 2016 Killerton House, Devon

The South West Region is looking forward to hosting the National Exhibition 2016. We are fortunate to be at Killerton House, a National Trust property in the heart of Devon.

It has the largest collection of costumes in the National Trust with over 10,000 pieces dating from the 17th Century. The title of the exhibition reflects our collaboration showing quality pieces, old and new. The Association will use the downstairs rooms in the house for the National Exhibition.

Killerton uses the rooms upstairs for their own costume exhibitions. The theme of their exhibitions changes every year. In 2016 the theme will be "Fashion to Dye For".

Killerton is centrally located within the region and is just 20 – 25 minutes away from the beautiful cathedral city of Exeter. There are many other National Trust properties in the region. Accessibility is good at Killerton with a buggy to take people from the reception area to the house. The gardens are lovely and there is a restaurant and plant centre.

An information pack was sent to guilds on 28/10/15. Please ask your guild secretary for more information from it.

Dressing Gown Challenge

The Association would like to say a huge thank you to the Guilds that took up the challenge for this very worthy cause. The dressing gowns were presented at Knitting & Stitching, at Ally Pally on Friday 9th October to the Director of Knit for Peace, Dame Hilary Blume.

Our thanks also go to Jenifer Midgley, who so kindly collected all the dressing gowns up and delivered them to Ally Pally. A no mean feat as they were all very bulky and heavy.

Also very grateful to the Guild members and their friends and family members, who volunteered to wear some of the dressing gowns for the presentation. We caused quite a stir when we paraded them both outside and in the halls. So many people taking photos on their cameras and asking who we were and what we were doing. The presentation was made in the Panorama Room, next to the cafe. Those who were wearing them had to carry an extra one but with some gentle persuasion enough people, sitting having coffee, were 'press ganged in to wearing the other dressing gowns, so a photo could be taken.

Dame Hilary thanked us for the kindness of all those who made the dressing gowns and said some were so beautiful she 'coveted them for herself' but sadly, she said there is a desperate need for these and many, many more and they already know where these are destined for.

We can all vouch for these gowns being really very useful, as they were far too warm for us on a sunny October day. Dressing gowns are so much more sensible than blankets because these needy people, who live so close to most of us in pretty awful, lonely, damp conditions, can keep them on all day and sleep in them too, whereas a blanket falls off when you stand up.

We have since heard that several of those who 'volunteered' to wear a gown went to KfP stand afterwards to ask how they could get involved.

TwinSpin

Since July, when TwinSpin was launched on social media, there has been a steady stream of two/three enquiries a day, every day, from all over the UK of people wanting to learn to spin, which is fantastic news. It would be great if all those Guilds who have had their own events and/or have been passed these enquiries if they could let us know how many new members have resulted from this campaign. Photos also welcome.

It has not been an easy campaign to manage, as obviously all Guilds are autonomous and have their own criteria regarding membership but hopefully the outcome will be new members. This campaign was launched solely for the benefit of Guilds, as we know whilst some Guilds have a healthy membership, others are struggling and some have even sadly closed, as a Guild.

Campaign for Wool have stressed that they are very happy for Guilds to carry on using the poster, they designed for us, so if you are planning your events calendar for next year please feel free to include a TwinSpin event.

It is amazing the power of social media, as we have also received enquiries from South Africa, France & Ireland. We found some spinners in South Africa and sent the contact details to her and have since heard she has joined a local group.

Please send your reports to twinspin@wsd.org.uk

Three new speakers have been added to the speakers list,

Bee Weir based in Frodsham, Cheshire and recommended by Leek and Alsager Guilds

email beryl.weir@btinternet.com

Lecture on Freestyle weaving – a fun talk involving dressing up members of the Guild in Bee's woven garments.

Two Workshops on Freestyle Weaving and Freestyle Knitting and Crochet

Karen Haggis based in St Andrews, Fife and recommended by Edinburgh Guild

email karen.haggis@macunlimited.net

Lecture on Nepalese textiles with examples – nettle, cotton and wool

Janice M Lawrence based in Coulsdon, Surrey

email janicemlawrence@gmail.com

Gives several lectures on Ancient Peruvian Textiles, Modern Andean Textiles, Mexican Colour & Design, Penguins to polar bears (landscape of the poles and embroidery inspired by them), A Canvas to Cover (history of canvas work) and Putting on the Glitz (changing styles of beaded surface decoration). She also gives workshops on Machine Embroidery. Janice sponsored the biscuits at this year's Summer School for which students were very grateful!

For more details guilds will need to contact the speakers direct.

Guild News

The Shuttleworth Collection at the Bucks Guild

On 7 November 2015 we are having a speaker that might be of interest to your members.

Meet the Honourable Rachel Beatrice Kay-Shuttleworth and learn of her life at [Gawthorpe Hall](#), Padham in the late 19th and 20th centuries, and of her passion for textiles which led to the creation of a collection second only to that of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Question her about her fascinating family and their beautiful Tudor home.

Eleanor Jolley brings Miss Rachel down from Lancashire, where she leads sessions at the Hall or in schools designed to inspire children about geography, history, design, ceilings, stable doors and chickens.

This promises to be an excellent talk and we'd be delighted to welcome members of your guilds from 2.30pm on 7 November. The meeting will be held in the Barn Hall of the Amersham Community Centre in Amersham on the Hill. There is ample parking or, if you come by train (Chiltern Railways or Metropolitan), it is a five minute walk from the tube station.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have further questions.

Regards
Martina

Buckinghamshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

www.bucksd.co.uk

[Facebook](#)

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Exhibitions

The Fabric of India

- **When:**

Sat 3 October 2015 – Sun 10 January 2016

- **Where:**

Room 39 - Exhibition Space - at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

EXHIBITION: The highlight of the V&A India Festival, this is the first major exhibition to explore the dynamic and multifaceted world of handmade textiles from India.

The exhibition showcases over 200 objects from the 3rd to the 21st century, including Tipu Sultan's spectacular 18th-century tent, a stunning range of historic costume, highly prized textiles for international trade and cutting-edge fashion by celebrated Indian designers. The Fabric of India brings together the best of the V&A's world-renowned collection alongside renowned masterworks displayed for the first time.

Supported by Goodearth

With additional thanks to Experion and Nirav Modi

Part of the V&A India Festival

From Addicted to Sheep

You may have heard about the indie documentary *Addicted to Sheep*, a 90 min observational documentary about a family of tenant hill farmers who try to breed the perfect sheep in the North Pennines (See trailer here <http://www.addictedtosheep.com/trailer/>).

Synopsis

*In the North Pennines, tenant farmers Tom and Kay spend their days looking after their flock of prized sheep, and hoping that this will be the year they breed the perfect one. Director Magali Pettier, herself a farmer's daughter, follows a year in their lives, capturing both the stark, stunning beauty of the landscape, and the brutally hard graft it takes just to survive. Their three children are growing up close to the land, attending a school entirely comprised of farmers' children, thoroughly immersed in their remote rural world. As the seasons change the couple help birth, groom, nurture and sell their sheep – even when the odds often seem stacked against them. A treat for the senses, *Addicted to Sheep* allows us to experience life on a hill farm – without having to get mucked in ourselves. Written by Carol Nahra*

The film has had over 100 screenings, 16 of those were Q&A screenings and new screenings are being booked every week. 12 screenings were sold out and we have had many full houses too. We have over 30 screenings still to take place and 9 of those Q&A screenings.

We are extremely pleased with the response we have had so far. Although the film does not cover directly issues about wool, it is mentioned. The film has proved to be popular with knitters/weavers and wool lovers. It is still being shown around the country and we are planning to release it on DVD and online ASAP. We wondered if you would be able to mention it to your followers. All our screenings are listed on our website <http://www.addictedtosheep.com/screenings/>. We are adding new ones every week so please do keep checking.

We would love it if you could share it with your followers. If you have any questions, please do get in touch with me by email or phone on 07817918038 if you would like to show the film.

Request for information

I contact seeking information that I hope your organisation may provide.

The information I seek pertains to the ancient usage of the distaff and spindle, themselves. Items used prior to the usage of the spinning wheel.

The questions may be answered by anyone within your organisation or who may know of someone for which may answer, or I may contact.

Although there seems to have been a number of variations of distaff design, I provide examples to the type I enquire, as attachments.

Questions:

Suggesting the practice of weaving being primarily a maiden's vocation, had then the distaff, it self, become a symbol denoting the feminine sex?

Considering ancient betrothal practices, prior to our current swapping of wedding rings, was the distaff an article possibly gifted to the bride by the groom?

In storing the distaff and spindle, during times of non-use, was there a common method in ensuring the spindle would not become separated and thus subsequently lost. I.e. tied together, spindle inserted and resting within the distaff -somehow?

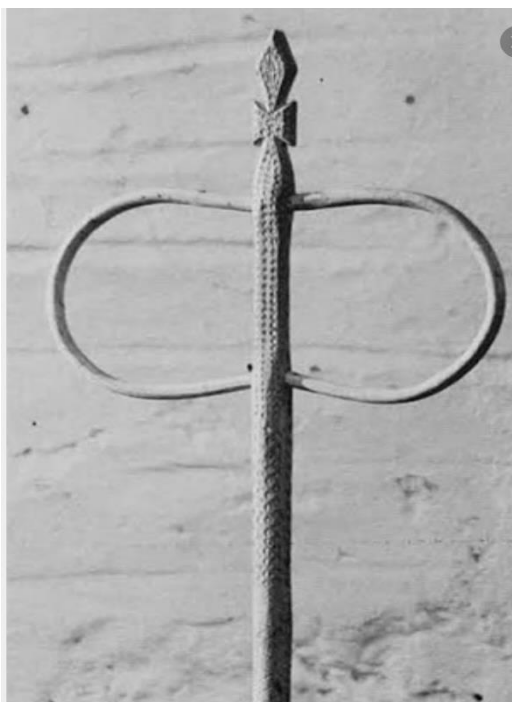
And finally: We are familiar with adages of the Three Fates and thus the association pertaining to weaving and life's lot. Was the distaff, in ancient times, perceived as a symbol of "life" itself?

I sincerely hope you find my quires a refreshing teaser and that you, or someone you may know, are able to shed some light upon my little quest for knowledge.

With kind regards
Shane Gower

graflix1@gmail.com

Graflifdesign



Links/pdf to other sites and/or info

[Crafts council news](#)

[Crafts council round up](#)

[Voluntary arts](#)

[Australian tapestry workshop](#)



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ASSOCIATION OF GUILDS OF WEAVERS SPINNERS AND DYERS website:

<http://www.wsd.org.uk>

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com>

If any guild wants to let me know about their upcoming events, speakers or guild workshops, please email the information to info@wsd.org.uk. Please note the subject box “guild newsletter”