



# THE ASSOCIATION OF GUILDS OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS AND DYERS

Reg. Charity No. 289590 Website: [www.wsd.org.uk](http://www.wsd.org.uk)  
President: Jenny Balfour Paul Life President: Paddy Bakker  
Vice Presidents: Peter Penneck, Jenifer Midgley

## Association Newsletter, January 2017

### Association News

#### Public Liability Insurance 2017

The Public Liability insurance document for Guilds for 2017 is stored on the Web Information Point (WIP). The WIP is accessed via the Association website (<http://wsd.org.uk/members.php>); Guilds who are unable to access the WIP should contact [secretary@wsd.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wsd.org.uk).

#### Association Badges

Enamel Association badges are available again and will be on sale at the AGM, and at the Association stand at Wonderwool Wales (22/23 April 2017) and Woolfest (23/24 June 2017). Badges cost £5 each and can also be purchased by post. For mail orders, please send requests to Hilary Miller, Hafan, Llandegfan, Menai Bridge, Anglesey LL59 5PW. Postage & packing costs are: up to 10 badges £1.10; up to 20 badges £1.55. Cheques should be made payable to the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers. For larger orders or payment by BACS please contact [hilary\\_miller@btinternet.com](mailto:hilary_miller@btinternet.com).

#### Family Arts Standard

The [Family Arts Campaign](#), a national collaborative initiative to increase the level of families engaging with all kinds of art and culture, have been in touch with the Association with the following information, which may be of interest to Guilds:

*The [Family Arts Standards](#) provide guidance and accreditation for organisers of cultural events, arts organisations, practitioners and groups or associations to better welcome families. As well as providing a useful set of guidelines for event organisers, the Standards are a mark of quality for families looking for cultural activities to enjoy together.*

*It is entirely free and very easy to sign-up- [almost 500 groups or arts organisations](#) are already Standard-holders. By doing so, the Family Arts Campaign can help them to promote events and activities through our national communications.*

*To sign-up, just email Family Arts Campaign Manager [jenny.daly@thealbany.org.uk](mailto:jenny.daly@thealbany.org.uk)*

#### Cornwall's Proposal re Novice Entries for National Exhibitions

In support of their proposal, submitted at the last AGM, to create a specific Beginners/Novice Section in the National Exhibition, Cornwall Guild recently circulated to Guild Secretaries some suggestions regarding how this might be implemented, including the possibility that the section should not be juried and that all entries should be accepted.

The Association supports the need to encourage and inspire beginners in weaving, spinning and dyeing but thinks the following needs to be taken into consideration:

- Like all Association events, the National Exhibition is totally dependent on the goodwill of members around the Country, to give their time to organising, fund raising, preparing and

producing a catalogue, setting up & dismantling, parcelling up and returning every item, plus stewarding and demonstrating for the duration of the event.

- The National Exhibition (NE) does not attract an income and is again dependant on willing volunteers to source sponsorship and or grants. This new criteria could require funding to be increased. Average funding to date required £8-10,000.
- Renting venues is prohibitively expensive, including charitable rates, i.e. one Town Hall was asking a Guild for £14,000, for a month long event, with no guarantee of any footfall. We therefore need someone to host for free and this new suggestion could potentially require a much larger space than previous venues.
- On average, the juried section displays some 150-200 pieces and this can already place pressure on available space in venues.
- To have an open novice section, where everything that is submitted is hung, could overwhelm the juried section and could have a negative effect on NE events displaying the best of the best.
- For those taking on the responsibility of organising and hanging the event, an additional open section could create additional workload. The last four exhibitions have taken several volunteers three days to hang, and another two days to take down, pack up and post back to Guilds.

As such, the GPC would like to offer some possible alternative suggestions:

- 1) There should be a limited number of novice entries with a set number for spinning, weaving and dyeing and these would be juried. Maybe 15-20 max.
- 2) Novices submit their work on the normal forms, indicating their novice status and these are all put 'into a hat' and the first 15 would be chosen (five for each craft) These wouldn't be juried and would constitute no more than 10% of the juried section and would be identified as such.
- 3) Alternatively, there could be a totally independent novices exhibition at the AGM.
- 4) There could be a separate novice section in the unselected themed section.

Guilds are quite obviously the key to nurturing and encouraging their own members and many already have local exhibitions, which are an ideal starting point for every novice. With the regions now becoming more coherent, there could be opportunities regionally, for novices to exhibit together, so that they slowly build their knowledge and expertise and also gain confidence in what they are doing and this may encourage more to exhibit, than asking them to 'jump feet first' and enter the national arena.

It has been agreed by the GPC that the 2018 National exhibition plans are too advanced to ask them to take on a new untested criteria, and maybe Region C should decide if they feel able to take on a Novice section in some form in 2020? This could be seen as a pilot for future events, which could then be evaluated & refined.

*Region C includes Alsager, Cheshire, Leek & District, Merseyside, North Cheshire, North Shropshire and members of the Online Guild in this region.*

We would like to again thank Cornwall for taking time to put their ideas forward.

If you have any preferences on the above or any further thoughts please email [secretary@wsd.or.uk](mailto:secretary@wsd.or.uk).

## Revamping the Conference

Here is some background information to this:

The Conference in Lincoln in 2016 did not reach its break even numbers and The Association had to pick up the shortfall, albeit a very minor amount.

Peter Penneck, Convenor, then instigated a survey amongst Guilds, as to why they didn't attend the AGM and or conference.

We did get feedback from some Guilds and various reasons were mentioned, including distance, cost, dates, etc. but there were many who simply didn't feel talks were of any interest to them and some did say they would prefer workshops.

We have also checked records and find that it doesn't seem to make much difference on the number of Guilds attending the AGM if we have it as a stand-alone or alongside a Conference.

Summer School 2015 introduced short courses and whilst these were successful in the numbers of members who participated, they were incredibly time consuming for the Convenor and their team to organise. They were also felt to be disruptive for those doing full weeks and caused some tutors major problems, trying to work with participants already up and running and having to help those who joined the course mid-week, with some not at the level required for the course.

Neither 2017 nor 2019 will have short courses but we are very much aware that there are members who are unable to attend Summer School for reasons of time and or cost (although all members can always apply for a bursary).

With all of this in mind, the GPC have discussed revamping the conference and would like to offer some possible ideas, which we would very much like Guilds to discuss and bring their thoughts for discussion at the AGM in April.

Possible ideas:

AGM should be a stand-alone event each year and no longer part of the Conference. We feel it should be in London, for ease of transport and then alternate years in the North, somewhere also on a good train route, to enable all Guilds to attend at least every other year. It was suggested at the GPC that maybe it should be at a venue that could offer us an interesting exhibition, guided tour and or talk after the AGM business, i.e. V&A has been mentioned although we have yet to make contact. We would also like to find a similar venue for the alternate years.

We felt it important to get views of Guilds/members before making anyone spend hours researching possible venues, if delegates do not feel it worthwhile to have an interesting venue.

Conference would then be a stand-alone weekend/long weekend event.

It could be a series of mini workshops one or two days or a mix of several evening talks, followed by related workshops the following day/s. These don't have to be our core skills but could be a mix of these and other fibre related courses. There could be complete beginners courses as well, in our core subjects.

We also feel it could be a great opportunity to hold some of the Foundation Spinning Certificate Workshops. It might even be a great opportunity for mentors and candidates of the Certificate Achievement to meet up for training and discussions.

We don't feel that this will have a negative impact on our traditional summer school attendances but that it will enable other members, who have yet to enjoy the delights of attending Association workshops to participate. The Conference takes place on alternate years to Summer School, so shouldn't have an impact. If Guild members are genuinely asking for short courses, which seems to

have been the general thread in several online discussions, this could be the opportunity they seem to be asking for?

We are sure Guild members will have lots of really good ideas on all of the above and are hoping for a lively but positive discussion at the AGM. We hope that all Guilds will want to be part of the discussion and therefore would like to suggest that all Guilds try and send at least one delegate to the AGM. If for any reason you are unable to attend but would still like to put ideas forward please send them to [secretary@wsd.org](mailto:secretary@wsd.org) and they will be put towards the discussions. We would like, if possible, to get a consensus of ideas, so that those regions for 2020 and beyond will know what it is they have to organise.

Obviously we feel it will be far too late to change 2018 Conference, as plans for this are well advanced, so it would be really very useful to have the thoughts of region D who could well be organising a revamped Conference in 2020.

*Region D Guilds are Birmingham & District, Cotswolds, Coventry & District, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shrewsbury, Stafford Knott Spinners, Staffordshire Moorland, Stratford upon Avon, Walsall Spinners, Worcestershire and Online guild members in this region.*

## **Summer School 2021**

This may sound like a ridiculously long way off but researching appropriate venues does take time and the sooner a region starts that initial process, the easier it is for them to find suitable venues, to meet the long list of criteria a Summer School has.

*Region H, which includes Bury St Edmunds, Cambridgeshire, Diss, Lavenham, Middle Essex, Mid Norfolk, Norfolk Countryside, Norfolk & Suffolk, Rampton Spinners, Southend, West Essex and East Herts, Worstead, and Online guild members in this region are in the calendar for 2021.*

No region is left to cope on their own and the GPC are always more than willing to send someone, with previous knowledge of Summer Schools, to attend site visits, to help with this process.

Convenors from previous events, whether it is Summer School, a Conference or National Exhibition also support those going after them and are always on hand with friendly and helpful advice. There is also a wealth of information on the Association WIP site, with contracts, templates, forms, so you will not be reinventing the wheel.

Obviously every venue is unique and will present itself with both pluses and minuses but the sooner a region identifies a venue, the easier it is to discuss and overcome any issues.

Angela Colbridge  
January 2017

## **Journal News**

### **Journal Diary: Reminder**

If you would like your Guild event to be publicised in our Diary pages, please remember that we work several months in advance of publication date, and send us details as soon as possible to Colleen Pope at [diary@thejournalforwsd.org.uk](mailto:diary@thejournalforwsd.org.uk)

### **Current Issue of the Journal**

The current issue of The Journal, issue 260 Winter 2016, contains articles on the following:

- Nuair bha mi og' (When I was young)
- The Peruvian Textiles Study Group
- My Everything Skein

- Turkey Red
- [Cloth Finishing](#) (Free Download)
- Spin and Dye – or Dye and Spin – to Weave

### **Coming in the Spring Issue of the Journal**

Gardening gloves ready? With a wealth of practical information, The Dye Plant Garden is the ideal place to start planning new adventures with natural dyes - as authors Susan Dye and Ashley Walker confirm, 'using home-grown colour in a piece of textile art or functional clothing is without price.'

Tapestry weavers will be inspired and entranced by Ros Wilson's work under the skilful guidance of Máximo Laura in Peru, whilst three of the graduate award winners at New Designers 2016 describe their skill development experiences during their studies, and their plans for the future. Jane Lucas gives spinners detailed advice on preparing and spinning alpaca fibre - and then combining it with other fibres in interesting and innovative blends.

Our Exhibition Reviews include three reports of the much acclaimed National Exhibition, held at Killerton House, Devon, last September - from the perspective of a Dyer, a Spinner and a Weaver. And Janet Maher, the Exhibition Convenor, provides a fascinating insight into the work involved in planning a national event, concluding that 'the hard work is more than offset by the lovely relationships that have been formed across the southwest Guilds'.

But before our feature articles you will find moving tributes, from friends and colleagues, to the late Stuart Groom, ex-Chair of the GPC. He was a remarkable man, a tireless voluntary worker on behalf of the Association, now very fondly remembered but missed by so many across the country.

.....to be published 24th February. If you don't already subscribe, you can do so very easily, online at [www.thejournalforwsd.org.uk](http://www.thejournalforwsd.org.uk)

Christina Chisholm, Chair, Journal Editorial Committee

### **Recent News from Guilds**

Noted that The Association stand at the **Knitting and Stitching Show** at Alexandra Palace in October 2016 was set up by Michele Turner from the West Essex & East Herts Guild. Items displayed on the stand were also from West Essex & East Herts Guild, and Mid Herts.

### **Current & Upcoming Events & Exhibitions**

***Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery***, until 05 February 2017 at The V&A, London

Explore a selection of the most outstanding examples of English Medieval embroidery. Featuring surviving examples of exquisite craftsmanship, this exhibition reveals the artistic skill of the makers and the world in which they were created.

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/opus-anglicanum-masterpieces-of-english-medieval-embroidery>

***Collect***, 02 – 06 February 2017, at the Saatchi Gallery, London

See and buy contemporary museum-quality ceramics, glass, jewellery, wood, metal and textiles from established and emerging artists and makers represented by over 37 of the world's finest galleries.

<http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/collect/>

***Weaving Futures***, until 18 February 2017 at London Transport Museum

Highlighting the importance and potential of woven textiles to the London Transport system.

Resident artists and designers will explore the role of textiles in modern transport now and in the future.

<http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/whats-on/exhibitions>

**20 Years of Stitch and Textiles on the Wirral with the Wirral Embroiderers' Guild 20th Birthday Exhibition**, 25 January – 05 March 2017 at the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead

<http://williamsonartgallery.org/portfolio/20-years-of-stitch-and-textiles-on-the-wirral/>

**Dyeing Now: Contemporary Makers Celebrate Ethel Mairet's Legacy**, until 16 April 2017 at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft, Ditchling, East Sussex

A project to catalogue every natural dye recipe from Ethel Mairet's influential publication with the help of artists, craftspeople and students from across the country and beyond.

<http://www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk/event/dyeing-now/>

**Manchester Antique Textile Fair**, 30 April 2017 (10:00-16:00) at Armitage Centre, Manchester, 2017 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Manchester Antique Textile Fair, plus the 100th Anniversary of Lucienne Day, who was President of the Textile Society

<http://www.textilesociety.org.uk/events>

**Josef Frank Patterns–Furniture–Painting**, until 07 May 2017 at Fashion and Textile Museum, London

Explore the work of designer and artist Josef Frank (1885-1967) in the first-ever UK exhibition of his textiles.

<http://www.ftmlondon.org/ftm-exhibitions/josef-frank-patterns-furniture-painting/>

**Festival of Textiles 2017**, until 07 May 2017 at Fashion and Textile Museum, London

A series of displays, talks and workshops.

<http://www.ftmlondon.org/ftm-exhibitions/festival-of-textiles-2017/>

**Entangled: Threads & Making**, until 17 May 2017 at Turner Contemporary, Margate, Kent

Features over 40 international female artists who expand the possibilities of knitting and embroidery, weaving, sewing and wood carving, often incorporating unexpected materials such as plants, clothing, hair and bird quills.

<https://www.turnercontemporary.org/exhibitions/entangled-threads-making>

**Black Sheep The Darker Side of Felt**, 08 May – 02 July 2017 at Beacon Museum, Whitehaven Showcasing technically-brilliant and contemporary feltmakers.

<http://www.nationalcraftanddesign.org.uk/whatson/#black-sheep-the-dark-side-of-felt>

**'Simply Special' Summer School, 13 - 29 August 2017**

<http://www.wsd.org.uk/news.php?id=57>

**Here & Now**, 01 Apr – 04 June 2017 at MAC Birmingham; 23 June – 01 October 2017 at the Holburne Museum

Curated exhibition of contemporary tapestry. Alongside British tapestry weavers, the exhibition features international artists from Australia, Norway, Latvia, Japan and the USA with over 20 artists represented overall.

<http://www.nationalcraftanddesign.org.uk/whatson/#here-and-now>

**Campaign for Wool, Wool Week**, October 2017

<http://www.campaignforwool.org/>

**Made in the Middle**, until 25 November 2017 at various venues

Touring exhibition which showcases and sells some of the best contemporary craft and applied art from across the Midlands.

<http://craftspace.co.uk/made-in-the-middle-2016/>

**Elsewhere on the Web**

- [The London Loom](#) launched a pop-up in east London offering workshops in Japanese freestyle weaving until 03 April.
- [2017: Year of the Handknit Hat](#).
- Blacker Yarns are hosting a knit/crochet along. Full details on their [Ravelry Forum](#). You can knit or crochet any design using yarn from Blacker, and there is a meet-up at the Edinburgh Yarn Festival.
- [A knitter from Maryland made the headlines this week for his hobby: taking self-portraits dressed in jumpers that match the landscape](#).
- [A peek inside Madrid's Royal Tapestry Factory](#).
- Listen to the curator of *Entangled: Threads & Making* at Turner Contemporary on [Woman's Hour](#).

### **Other Newsletters**

- [Crafts Council Newsletter](#)
- [Voluntary Arts Newsletter](#)
- [Craft & Design Newsletter](#)
- [Craft Industry Alliance Newsletter](#)

### **Contact & Social Media**

If you have an item for inclusion in the next monthly newsletter, please sent to:  
[newsletter@wsd.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@wsd.org.uk)

If you have an event/exhibition for inclusion in the next issue of The Journal, please send to:  
[diary@thejournalforwsd.org.uk](mailto:diary@thejournalforwsd.org.uk)

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