



Devon Guild of Weavers Spinners Dyers

January Newsletter 2018



Chairperson's Report:

“Welcome, wonderful Weavers, Spinners and Dyers to another exciting year of learning, sharing and exhibiting our craft. Your new committee is looking forward to an inspiring and creative 2018.”

Isabelle Jourdan

Meet your Committee:

Chairwoman, Isabelle Jourdan:

After many years of searching, Isabelle found her craft in weaving, which allows her the freedom to express her creative passion for colour, texture and patterns.

The ancient art of weaving takes her into a life-long obsession with Mythology, Legends, Archetypal Psychology and Folk Art. Isabelle's art contains the symbolic meaning of creation and life.

Isabelle

Joint Secretaries Karen Ball and Jackie Millichap:

I have just joined the committee as joint secretary and webmaster with Karen Ball.

I have been 'crafty' since I was tiny; learning most crafts from my Grandmas and mum. I came to wool spinning early 2016 in response to my Welsh farmer Brother in law's comment about how little he was being paid for wool fleece (welsh mules) and we wanted to see what we could do with the fleece....a lot it

how little he was being paid for wool fleece (welsh mules) and we wanted to see what we could do with the fleece....a lot it seems! British wool is now my new passion and I want to encourage others to take the same path by talking, demonstrating, teaching and doing.

Jackie

I moved to Devon in 2012 and bought half a dozen Jacob sheep with the intention of spinning their wool. I was very interested in the natural colours and using them in my knitting, particularly of Aran patterns. I went to an introduction course and from there bought my wheel. Since then I have been hooked. I mainly prepare and spin wool from my own flock of both Jacobs and Lleyn sheep. I have also bought a weaving loom and started weaving with commercial yarns and now use my own spun yarn for both warps and weft. I have been a member of the Guild for 3 years, but have been attending regularly for 1 1/2 yrs. I have enjoyed being involved in demonstrating weaving at a number of events including Buckfastleigh, the Mid Devon Show, Bickton, Exmouth and Branscombe fetes.

Karen

Treasurer, Paul Ashton, BSc MCIAT:

I have been coming to Guild for eighteen years most of that time just pottering around, nothing wrong with pottering. I took on the Certificate of Achievement for Spinning when I was made redundant in 2011 passing September 2016. The skills I have picked up as well as spinning include crochet, knitting, cording and rigid heddle loom weaving. I have been your treasurer since 2013 and was programme secretary 2014. I was involved with organising the National Exhibition in 2016 and have attended Summer School three times. Last Summer School I learnt sock knitting, I need to practice this before I forget how to do it.

It has been a pleasure to organise your accounts and I look forward to the years ahead.

Paul

Programme Secretary: Sue Heathcote

I can't remember when I joined the Guild, probably about 6 years ago. I had just got my spinning wheel, and needed help to learn how to use it properly, so joined the Guild. I have enjoyed the spinning workshops which have taught me much.

Having thought that weaving looked very complicated and difficult, I 'somehow' got into weaving when I bought an Ashford Knitters Loom, and have thoroughly enjoyed using that. Just over a year ago I went to a weaving course down in Totnes, and used a Louet 8-shaft loom, enjoyed the challenge, and amazingly managed to buy the same Louet loom online. But with moving house last year, my looms have been packed and not much learned! But with a craft room now, I shall be busy!

This is my third and final year on the Committee that I was persuaded to join. Initially I was only in charge of the Fleece and Fibre Day in July, but my job description changed when one of the committee members resigned due to family problems, and I found myself as Programme Secretary! I think I was the least suitable person, as I did not know (and still do not know) the 'big names' in the Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing world. However the previous committee were very kind taking pity on me, and helping me out! The worst was hoping to get lots of 'yes' replies to emails, and instead getting, 'sorry, no can't do that date!' Anyway, a programme has emerged, and I am sorting out 2019s now. I have enjoyed working with the Committee - past and now present.

Sue

Jo Williams

I was born in Exeter to a family of knitters and was taught to knit by my great-grandmother and grandmother when I was about 7 years of age.

For most of my life I've had something on the needles but became completely inspired and reinvigorated while on holiday in the Orkneys in 2010 where I've been visiting regularly since. As some of you will know I'm slightly obsessed with all things North Ronaldsay, which stems from seeing this wonderful little breed of sheep trotting along the beaches, my visit to the mini mill there (amazingly the whole thing was imported from Canada) and from cramming my suitcase with their yarn, rovings and tops. I came home, dug out one of my drop spindles and that was that.

I was introduced to the Guild by a friend Polly, a weaver, who I met while working for the National Trust at A la Ronde in Exmouth where we are both still volunteers.

After borrowing the Guild's Ashford Joy for a few months I finally succumbed and bought myself a spinning wheel (a Kromski Fantasia) and am certainly not an expert but like to think that my skill might increase in proportion to the hours I put in. I still have a soft spot for my drop spindles though!

My other interests are rowing with Exmouth Pilot Gig Club, Nordic walking and anything outdoorsy really.

Jo

Sarah Otton:

I'm 43 and have 5 children. I home school my 3 youngest and started learning to spin because I wanted them to see how things were done and still are. I also really, really wanted to find something to do with my spare (not much I can tell you) time. I purchased my first spinning wheel in January 2017 and showed up at my first meeting at the Devon Guild with no clue on how to spin. Many guild members have shown me how and I have been addicted since. So much so I entered the Guild's 'skills competition' in October and got second place in the Shetland Challenge. I have so much to learn here and will continue my journey with the Devon guild.

Sarah

Jae Burgin: Committee member without a portfolio (!)

I have been a knitter since age 4 or 5 and I have always been one to go back one step further than needed so I learnt to spin on a spindle about 12 years ago, got hooked and after the first few jumpers decided it would be quicker if I learnt to spin on a wheel.

I joined the Devon Guild almost as soon as I moved to Devon in 2007 and found where I wanted to be.

I now weave and dye my own yarn as well. Chemical, not so much of that witchcraft stuff with plants and onion skins.

I do not have a job on the committee, as such, I just like to have my say! So I organise the Wonderwool trip, October's Skills day and, help out where needed if I can't talk my way out of it!!

I am in my second year of my second stint on committee, and would encourage everyone to volunteer, I'm proof that you don't have to take on one of the BIG jobs, just be there to support those that do.

Jae

Sheilagh Robson:

I was taught to spin some 35 years ago, but only spun for a couple of years before moving somewhere too small to accommodate a wheel - until a chance encounter at Spin a Yarn in Bovey, got me knitting and I decided to take up spinning again about 5 or 6 years ago. I still regard myself as a novice!

I have become very interested in natural dyeing, after a week at Summer School in 2017 - and now I can often be found with a cauldron on the go (the pointy hat hasn't come yet).....

I'm trying hard not to be drawn into the dark art of weaving yet as there aren't enough hours in the day to fit in the spinning, dyeing, walking, cycling, yoga, gardening, chain sawing etc as it is.

However watch this space, I may be dragged kicking and screaming into it at some stage.

Sheilagh

Terri Bate:

I joined Devon Guild in 2008, a few years after having learning to spin with a drop spindle and after completing a wheel spinning course run by Guild Member Mary Mallett. I've been a knitter since I was a child and wished I'd learned to spin then as well because there's SO much to learn I'm still learning and totally addicted to all things fibery. I'm also a fledgling weaver and dyer.

This is my second stint on the Committee and (for my sins) this time round I have taken on editorship of the Newsletter.

I have always yearned to travel but married a non travelling spouse. When I retired and the dog died I finally got to scratch the itch by cycling much of the way to Australia to visit my sister, knitting and spinning along the way. I got back last September, after 17months, and am just about coming back down to Earth.

I also love drawing and painting with watercolours, and my cartoons were to be seen regularly on the back of the now defunct 'Yarnmaker' magazine.

Terri



January Guild Meeting Report:



Last Saturday Pat and I went to the January meeting of the spinning guild. We started off at the same time as the committee members, but we put the tables out and put the kettles on and put the milk out. There is always someone who has come a long way and would like a hot cup of tea or coffee when they arrive. When the hall is set up ready for everyone to arrive we go back into the kitchen and fill up the urn and start cutting cakes and getting things ready for when most people want a drink and a piece of cake. This week we could see we wouldn't have many cakes and we hoped it would be enough. It was very pleasant talking to everyone as they came for their drink and thanking people for the cake they had brought. Then we were relieved and went to sit down and start our own spinning. Pat was having a few problems with her tension, but Pam soon helped her put it right and we

both continued to enjoy our morning. We said there was a real buzz in the air this week. There wasn't a speaker, but people were talking to friends, going round the room and talking to other groups.

At eleven o'clock a group of people met on the stage to discuss the AGWSD Foundation Certificate support Group being started by the Guild. There seemed to be about a dozen or so discussing what was required of them and I believe they have agreed to meet every month for a short time to support each other. Neither Pat nor I feel this is something for us at the present. We both sat with our spinning until about two, when we decided to pack up and go home.

Vicky Bundy

Editor's note - Vicky kindly agreed to report on January's meeting for the Newsletter. It would be very helpful if there could be a volunteer from our members to take it in turns to do the same for each meeting/workshop throughout the year please. Or, beware! Terri will choose someone! Thanks in anticipation. Reports can be as brief or as long as you like - pictures and illustrations also welcomed.

The Ingenuity of our Members:

1) Making a Drop Spindle from a Fidget.



I was intrigued to see Sue Pritchard's top whorl drop spindle at the January Meeting: she had made it from a Fidget!

Wikipedia tells me that Fidget Spinner is *'is a toy that consists of a ball bearing in the centre of a multi-lobed (typically two or three) flat structure made from metal or plastic designed to spin along its axis with little effort. Fidget spinners became popular toys in April 2017, although similar devices had been invented as early as 1993.'*

Sue had taken a fidget (quick glance at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) tells me that they cost circa £2 - £6, though one can obviously pay more!) and removed its centre. She had then inserted a foot length of sanded dowelling rod.

The dowelling rod had been glued in place and more glue used to seal the ball bearings to stop them rotating. A cup hook had been screwed into the top and voila! - A very reasonably priced top whorl drop spindle - albeit quite heavy.

by Terri Bate



2) DOG GROOMING TOOLS for FIBRE PREP

by Amanda Trick



Dog brushes (a.k.a. slickers) and combs can be cheap but useful additions to your arsenal of fibre prep tools. Either can be used to comb through clean locks but the brushes are most useful as substitute flick carders to open the ends of a lock:

1. Protect your clothes with a piece of leather or, if sitting at a table, use an old chopping board/place mat so you don't scratch the tabletop.
2. Hold a lock at the butt end and, if it's long enough, wrap it round your fingers to improve your grip.

3. Bounce the teeth of the brush against the tips of the lock and they should open and fan out. You may opt to 'brush' instead of 'bounce' but keep it gentle.
4. Turn the lock so that you are holding it at the tip end and repeat Stage 3.

Weak and damaged fibres and second cuts are removed and you are left with airy locks with aligned fibres from which you can spin fine, consistent yarn.



Retractable dog brushes/slickers make removing the fibre waste a complete doddle:

Push the button on the back of the brush ... the pad moves forwards and the teeth retract so it's quick and easy to swipe the waste fibre from the pad.

and **ANOTHER** good way to save money from Amanda T :WEAVING - TEMPLE 'HACK'



If you're not keen on shelling out for a Proper Grown-up Weaver's temple but want to try something that helps in preventing 'draw-in' ... **knitting machine weight hangers** are surprisingly effective.



I bought my set of four 3-claw hangers on eBay for just a couple of pounds, though I had to wait a while for them as the seller is in China.

In a rush of blood to the head, I also bought a set of two slightly larger 4-claw hangers but I haven't yet woven anything heavy enough to warrant using them.

Method:

1. Tie one end of a length of firm, non-stretchy cord through the hole in the weight hanger.
2. Ensure the cord is the right length to go over the side beam of your loom and about halfway down to the ground ... make a slip knot and slip over one end of the S-hook.
3. Repeat Stages 1 and 2!
4. Hook the weight hangers into the selvages of your fabric and dangle the S-hooks over the side beams.
5. Add as many washers as you feel necessary but make sure you have the same number each side. I think the maximum I've used is four each side but I have yet to weave anything more substantial than a wide throw/scarf.

6. Advance the weight hangers frequently as you weave.



S-hooks with
washer weights



Warning: do make sure you buy blunt ended S-hooks rather than the sharp Butchers' hooks I bought by mistake ... ouch!

Credits: I wish I could claim that this was my idea but I think I first came across it on the Ravelry 'Warped Weavers' forum.

Amanda



(Gratuitous sheepy picture of Blossom the Ryeland and Synnu the Suffolk/Shetland Mule - Terri)

A Warm Welcome to the following new members:

Colette	BIRKETT		Exeter
Jeanette	CROUCH		Paignton
Amanda	DARRAGH		Branscombe
Callie	GAUNTLETT		Milverton
Barbara	HEATH		Newton Abbot
Sue	MALLET		Seaton
Elizabeth	McLOUGHLIN		Exeter
Sara	PARNELL		Ashburton
Charlotte	UNDERWOOD		Plymouth
Jan	WALKER		Drewsteignton
Paddy	YONGE		Okehampton
Victoria	STICKLER		Lyme Regis

In memory of Astrid Grensted



I was very sorry to hear from a friend at Guild that my long time friend, Astrid Grensted had died recently. She and her sister, Marian Dawson came to England to live from Scandinavia and they joined the Devon Guild in the early 1990s and soon became popular members.

They took over the task of producing the Newsletter, a very onerous task as many of you will understand as promised copy is hard to come by. Many people say they will write articles but somehow, the rest of living gets in the way and it gets put off. Astrid and Marian continued until they eventually handed over the production to Kay Balmforth. For all the hard work they both did for the Guild the then committee suggested that they be made honorary members for life in 2000, thus not needing to pay an annual subscription. This is an honour not given away lightly. I believe that if I were to name our honorary members today most of you would not recognise more than a couple of names. The last time I saw them both was on Fleece Day in April 2016 and they were still smiling and delighted to see us thriving although many people they had known were no longer with us because of old age and not able to drive or because they had already passed on. I would like to think that we could remember past members who gave so much of themselves in years gone by to help new, younger members. If it wasn't for them we might not have a Guild to come to today.

Thank you Astrid for being you and leaving behind such happy memories for those of us who were fortunate enough to know you as a friend.

Brenda Patten

OAT BISCUITS Recipe

I include this recipe for oat biscuits because it's my 'go to' when asked to contribute to our Guild refreshments or when I'm running a workshop. It's quick, not at all messy - no 'rubbing in' of fat, and very, very simple. It's versatile - add chocolate chips or raisins if you like. Most importantly of all - the biscuits are tasty (if not that healthy!). I also love it because the amounts of oats, flour, fat (and sugar - but see note below) are all the same so easy to remember - even for a doofus like me. To summarise the recipe - mix dry ingredients together. Melt fat and liquids - add to dry ingredients. Dollop spoonfuls on a lined baking tray and flatten slightly. Bake for 10-15mins (depending on whether you like chewy or crunchy). This is a good recipe for children to make too.

Terri (with a little cribbing from BBC Good Food)



Ingredients

1. 75g (or 3 1/2 ounces) wholemeal flour
2. 1 tsp baking powder
3. 75g (or 3 1/2 ounces) porridge oats
4. 75g (or 3 1/2 ounces) sugar - NB I HALVE or even deduct two thirds of this amount and they're still very sweet!
5. 75g (or 3 1/2 ounces - does one see a theme developing?) butter
6. 1 tbsp golden syrup or honey
7. 1 tbsp milk
8. (NB - I usually double up on the ingredients to make some for the biscuit tin at home too).

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Line a baking tray with baking parchment.
2. Sift flour into a bowl. Mix in baking powder, porridge oats and sugar.
3. Melt butter, syrup/honey and milk in a saucepan or in the microwave and stir until heated through.
4. Add to the premixed dry ingredients. Mix well combined.
5. Spoon onto a baking tray and shape into rounds.
6. Bake in preheated oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Leave to cool for 5 minutes before removing from tray.

AGWSD National Exhibition 2018

The Scotland, Northern Ireland and the On-line Guilds are looking forward to hosting the National Exhibition 2018. We are fortunate in that Strathclyde University (Glasgow) are giving us the use of their fine exhibition space.

Any submission for the National exhibition by our members needs to come through Devon Guild. Any member wishing to submit a piece, the Devon Guild will pay for the first submission put forward. Further submissions will be at the expense of the individual.

There is no specific theme for selected items for the exhibition and we hope for a wide range of submissions.

To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the birth in Glasgow of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, an influential Scottish architect, artist and interior/furniture/textile designer, the non-juried items will be a piece of textile jewellery in the style of Mackintosh, mounted on and fitting within a 12cm square of black card.

Entry Criteria: Items need to encompass at least one of the crafts of weaving, spinning or dyeing. Other crafts can be used to augment the work. The item need not be made into an article: a length of hand-woven cloth, skeins or balls of handspun yarn and hand-dyed yarn or cloth are all acceptable.

Submissions will be sought in two categories:

Selected Work:

Closing date for submission of photographs is **21 April**

1. Submissions will be selected anonymously by a panel of expert selectors in their field (who will remain anonymous themselves until the exhibition).

2. Sample/feelie piece needs to be secured to the entry form. Such pieces do help the judges and will be used in the exhibition for handling by the public instead of them attempting to touch the real thing. Entries without a feelie piece will not be accepted.
3. Entry fees are in two stages: There is an initial small fee per item for submission (£3), which pays for the selection process. If pieces are selected an additional hanging fee (£7.00) is payable which pays for equipment for hanging and return postage.
4. Guild Secretaries and successful entrants will be informed which items have been selected and where they are to be sent prior to the exhibition.
5. Submission photographs must be good quality.
6. Photographs are limited to no more than two A4 sheets of good photographic paper.
7. It is essential that nothing in the photographs can identify the entrant.
8. Photographs and samples of unsuccessful submissions will be returned if there is a SAE in the package. Successful submissions will be asked to provide a digital photograph for inclusion in the catalogue.
9. Submissions are limited to **two entries per person** and joint submissions are permitted.
10. There is no limit to the number of submissions by each Guild. All the submission photographs must be sent together in one envelope from the Guild Secretary, along with the feelie pieces.
11. The decision of the selectors is final.

Open Section:

Non-juried Work “Charles Rennie Mackintosh jewellery”.

Closing date for submission of items is 23 June.

1. Jewellery item to be mounted on and be with-in the area of a black card or board 12cm square.
2. All entries will be displayed if accompanied by the appropriate information on a label (please do not stick label on the front of the black square) and the hanging fee.
3. Items will not be for sale and will be returned to Guild Secretaries after the exhibition.
4. The hanging fee for jewellery item will be £3 per item.
5. Jewellery can be of any textile nature, for example, they could be spun, dyed, felted, knitted, crocheted, tatted, woven, braided – whatever shows the creativity of the entrant.

See

http://www.wsd.org.uk/pdfs/National_Exhibition_SUBMISSION_DOC.pdf
for entry forms and further information/time line.

It would be fabulous to see lots of entries from Devon Guild this year.

2018 Woolly Events.

Bicton Lambing Sunday

Sunday 18th March Bicton College

A day promoting many different Arts and Crafts. The Guild will be represented.

Buckfastleigh Wool Gathering

Sunday 18th March (Buckfastleigh Town Hall I think) 10-4pm

Isabelle Jourdan has a stall at this event and will also be promoting the Guild. If anyone would like to help steward, please see Isabelle.

Run by South Devon Woolworks in celebration and support of our vibrant and diverse working wool community in Devon and the South West.

Edinburgh Yarn Festival

15 - 17 March 2018, Edinburgh Corn Exchange

(classes from Friday 19 January)

A celebration of all things related to yarn, wool, knitting, crochet, spinning, weaving and felting. A fantastic market place with around 100 selected vendors, great workshops and a host of other attractions

www.edinyarnfest.com

Cornwoolly

18th March 2018 at Heartlands, Pool Cornwall

This year, they expect about 40 traders and have far more space for all things woolly.

www.cornwoolly.co.uk

Wonderwool Wales (SEE JAE for combined coach/entrance tickets!)

28 - 29 April 2018, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells

Promoting wool and natural fibre production and its use.

Exhibitors and trade stands covering all aspects of felting, knitting, weaving, spinning, crochet and textile art with raw materials, equipment, books and finished products for sale. Competitions and a range of hands-on workshops.

A list of accommodation and camping in the surrounding area is available on the Wonderwool website.

www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk

Woolfest

Fri 22 and Sat 23 June 2018, Cockermouth, Cumbria

Woolfest was founded to provide a showcase and a celebration of the best of wool and wool crafts.

The event is all about creativity and design with beautiful quality, amazing colours and skilled craftsmanship.

www.woolfest.co.uk

British Wool Show (formerly British Wool Weekend Show)

Friday 10 and Saturday 11 August, York Auction Centre, Murton Lane, Murton, York, YO19 5GF

Supporting the Campaign for Wool.

Exciting treasures to discover; wool from fleece to finished items and other items you will need to spin, weave, knit, crochet, hand dye, cross stitch, embroider or make felt.

www.britishwool.net

Fibre East

28 - 29 July 2018, Redbourne Community College, Flitwick Road, Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2NU

The seventh Fibre East, giving those in the Eastern, Midlands and Southern Regions an opportunity to join in an event which aims to encourage and promote British wool and natural fibres.

The college now provides an indoor venue.

www.fibre-east.co.uk

The following article was written by your editor, Terri Bate, in response to the Fleece Study started by our neighbouring Guild, Peter Tavy. I thought Devon Guild members might be interested in the results too. The first breed's fleece examined was that of the JACOB SHEEP...

JACOB sheep



Originating in the Middle East and believed to be the oldest breed in the world - they were mentioned in the Old Testament Book of Genesis. They were brought to the Iberian peninsula from North Africa by the Moors in 8th century AD, from whence they were introduced to the British Isles in Elizabethan times as ornaments in the Country Estate Parks of the landed gentry. Once rare, there are now circa 8000 breeding sheep in the UK, thanks to the efforts of the Jacob Sheep Society.

The Jacob Sheep combines two characteristics unusual in sheep: it is piebald – dark-coloured with areas of white wool – and it is often

polycerate or multi-horned. The sheep most commonly has four horns. Other positive aspects of the breed are as follows:

They are Prolific

90% born alive is a realistic lambing percentage. High lambing percentages are to be expected, particularly to ewes lambing later in the season.

Easy Lambing

The breed is noted for its easy lambing attributes, which is ideal for novice or first-time sheep keepers or for those whose time is limited. This is also a benefit where saving labour on the farm is desirable.

Good Mothering Qualities

Jacob ewes show consistently good mothering qualities and many will successfully produce sufficient milk to rear triplets without resorting to supplementary feeding.

Hardy and Long-Lived

Easily over wintered outside and attracting few disease problems. Jacob sheep also attract less foot problems than many breeds. Having good feet and high health status allows Jacob sheep to keep breeding for many years. Ewes rearing lambs for 7 years or more are not uncommon.

Carcass Quality and Flavour

Ideally suited for deep freeze or farm-gate sales. The exceptionally full flavour and leanness is retained even in hogget carcasses. Customers supplied direct always come back for more, preferring Jacob lamb to product sourced from regular outlets, often being prepared to pay a premium price for this quality. When crossed with any of the popular terminal sire breeds, the Jacob ewe produces fast-growing lambs capable of meeting the exacting standards of today's retail trade buyers.

Wool and Skin

They also produce high quality wool which is excellent for spinning and weaving. The unique colour of the wool makes every garment or woven item individual. The tanned sheepskins make very desirable rugs and the skins can also be used to make a variety of other goods.

JACOB WOOL:

The Jacob sheep is classed as an improved breed of coloured sheep. The fleece is popular with spinners and weavers alike and the natural un-dyed colours of its wool make distinctive garments.

There are two colours which make up a Jacob fleece: dark brown and white. The ratio of the two colours varies vastly between sheep and fleeces can range from almost all brown to all white with only small patches of brown.

The fleece of a Jacob is light, soft, springy and open with little lanolin and varies in crimp and fineness. Jacobs are shorn once a year, usually in the spring and the medium-fine wool is sought after by handspinners if it is free of kemp (brittle wool that does not accept dye and also minimises the value and quality of wool).

When preparing Jacob fleece for spinning and during spinning itself, the colours of the fleece can be separated or blended to produce a yarn of various shades ranging from nearly all white to grey to nearly all black.

British Wool Marketing Board Grades

- 350 - Selected (Fine) Bradford Count 54 – 58
- Micron Count 25 - 27.5
- 351 – Jacob Bradford Count 46 – 52
- Micron Count 30 – 33
- Staple Length 75mm to 180mm (3” to 7”)
- Good degree of springiness
- Average weight of fleece 2 - 3 kgs (4 - 6 lbs)

(credit to Wikipedia and the Jacob Sheep Society for all the above information)

Peter Tavy WSD Guild Fleece Project:

The fleece we examined at PT guild meeting was beautiful - open, springy, and relatively VM (vegetable matter) free. It had already been skirted. It wasn't the softest Jacob I've encountered but it was certainly heading that direction. Each lock was wonderfully crimped.

Staple length was fairly even all over the saddle, sides and neck -at around around 3"-4" long - but some locks were shorter as they came from closer to the leg region - at around 1".

I took a mix of brown and cream fleece - at around 50/50 - and from the side and saddle area mainly.

Fibre Prep:

I washed my sample by first soaking in a bucket of warm water with dash of Fairy Liquid detergent, then rinsed with three lots of same temperature water. I put the wool fleece in a net bag and spun dry in the washing machine before leaving bag hung up to dry thoroughly.

Fibre Prep:

I washed my sample by first soaking in a bucket of warm water with dash of Fairy Liquid detergent, then rinsed with three lots of same temperature water. I put the wool fleece in a net bag and spun dry in the washing machine before leaving bag hung up to dry thoroughly.



Once dry, I sorted the fleece into three piles - cream, black-brown and a much smaller pile of grey (or white/black which I couldn't be bothered to separate). I also removed any obvious short cuts and VM (not much of either).



Don't have access to hand carders at the moment (having loaned them out with my Schacht wheel while I was away), so I used a drum carder to make batts as I wanted to maximise the 'woolly' qualities of the fleece. The fleece was given two passes through the carder. I finished up with three batts of cream and the same of black with one batt of grey.



and this is where hubby and son decide to pose as ZZ top members...



I'm always amazed at the heap of dust and VM that falls out when carding:



Spinning:

I used my Lola Lendrum wheel to spin the batts, aiming for long-draw and DK weight. I'm a little rusty at spinning on a wheel - not having had much practise for the last 18 months - so the resulting yarn is quite uneven but got better as I went on.

I used the 6:1 ratio flyer.

Each batt was torn down the centre lengthwise then torn into smaller chunks to roll into 'faux-lags' or imitation rolags. I spun from these initially but found I got more even results by predrafting these rolags into thick ropes about 3" in diameter.

I spun the cream fleece first - and got a rather flat (as in not as woolly as I'd have liked) 4ply-DK weight yarn. Disappointed with myself, I overcompensated and spun the grey into a much fluffier chunkier aran weight yarn. A small amount of the grey and cream was plied together, and then the remaining grey was andean plied to itself.

The black/brown fleece was spun in a similar manner to the cream but was more successful - in that it was airier and loftier and DK -

obviously my long draw technique improved as old skills came back. As I spun, I'd remove any pills of wool or VM I encountered but still missed some. I even found the remains of a beetle at one point.



Black and Cream yarns were plied together for a small amount of tweedy yarn, then andean plied to make about 40 gram of cream and 40 g or brown/black.



These latter were noted to be overplied when taken off the bobbin... All the skeins were rinsed with eucalan then thrashed against the wall outside before drying again (a favourite method of finishing).

When the yarn was finally dry, I wound the skeins into balls and was AMAZED at how this thrashing/fulling treatment restored loft and springiness to the yarn - even the cream yarn I was initially disappointed with. They are all looking more like DK weight or even aran weight, and are light and fluffy. They are also still very uneven - but that just adds to the charm as far as I'm concerned.

There should be enough to make a hat - and knitting cures a load of spinning faults in my experience. I'll file a small sample with this document and take another to the Guild for the project, as promised.

I'm looking forward to exploring more breeds of sheep over this year.



Follow up - picture of the finished hat, with a small and exceedingly cute Jacob sheep knit by Jae Burgin sat on top:



On T'Internet:

Recommended (by your editor, who is a paid up subscriber for the vast sum of £5 annually) **Sheila Dixon's Hand Spinning News.**

Sheila trawls the net for items relevant to Weaving, Spinning, Dyeing and Knitting - with lots of eye candy. There is a free version on line at <http://hand-spinning-news.com/> or you can have a longer version posted you direct a few weeks before the shorter free version is published for (as mentioned above) £5 annually.

Also - see our own website at

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

For the programme, current committee members and contact details AND a new members' only page.

Editor's note

Any articles relevant to our three main topics of interest - Weaving, Spinning, Dyeing - for future newsletters will be welcomed.

Please submit to tutley.mutley@gmail.com or see Terri at regular meetings.