

## Programme 2012

Meetings begin at 10.30am  
at Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall  
Talks begin at 1.45pm

21st January  
**The House of Hemp**  
Jane Pasquill

18th February  
**Farming in the Blackdowns with  
Gotland Sheep**  
David and Lyn Barlow  
Committee Meeting

17th March  
**Fibres around the World**  
Tania Alcock

21st April  
**My work with Felt**  
Yuli Somme  
Committee Meeting

19th May  
AGM  
**Historic Knits**  
Joyce Meader  
Dye Competition

16th June  
**Fleece Fair**

21st July  
**Members Day**  
Committee meeting

15th September  
**Spinning through Time**  
Val and David Bryant  
Committee Meeting

20th October  
**Quantock Weavers Day**  
Melanie Venes  
Weaving Competition:  
'Thick and thin'

17th November  
**Skills Day**  
Committee Meeting

## November 2011



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***New Members: From 1st June 2011:***

June:	July:	September:
Miss Sam Osbourne	R Beale	Mrs Deborah Hills
Mrs Anne Osbourne		Ms Laura Reeves
Mrs Sarah Dewfall		

Apologies for an error in the last Newsletter. The names listed as new were, in fact, members who have been in the Guild some considerable time.

<i>Chair</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
Jan Newton	Barbara Spicer	Emma Gowing
01823 669163	01278 691264	01761 452913
jammynewtt@yahoo.com		

<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Notice Board</i>
Miranda Hewitt, 01884 820263	Jan Arthur 01749 890266

<i>Newsletter</i>	
Talitha Clarke	Janet Maher
01823 669322	01823 481373
talithaclarke@yahoo.co.uk	janet.maher@homecall.co.uk

✉ Copy deadline for February issue is 13th January please email Janet Maher: [janet.maher@homecall.co.uk](mailto:janet.maher@homecall.co.uk)

Front cover: Finished samples from the Natural Dyeing Workshop

## Coming in February 2012

Whitehall Gotlands: A talk by Mr Barlow

Mr Barlow shall be visiting us this coming February to give us a talk on his herd of lovely Gotland sheep. He has spoken to us before about how he set up his farm, but has more to tell on how this has developed. An added bonus is that he will have sheared his flock and shall be able to bring some fleece to sell!



Here is an excerpt from his brochure....

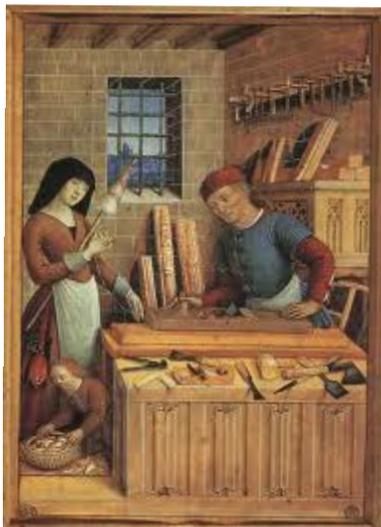
“Viking Sheep”

Gotland sheep were originally developed by the Vikings more than a thousand years ago on the island of Gotland in the Baltic. They are a member of s primitive group called Northern Short Tailed sheep which includes the Shetland, Icelandic and others. The Vikings kept them for their meat and pelts, which they used to keep warm in the cold Nordic Winters. Today Gotland sheep are prized for their lustrous curly fleece, which grows naturally in shades from a pale silver to a dark silver grey.

Mr Barlow has the following products:

- Gotland Fleece
- Gotland spun wool
- Hand knitted jumpers, waistcoats and other knitted garments
- Woven rugs and throws
- Gotland suede skin waistcoats, hats, slippers
- Gotland meat, which is lean and tender with a close-grained texture





When we return in January you may like to bring your distaff there will be some red and white ribbons to tie to your flax or your wheel if you don't have a distaff. Lesley Blythe-Lord shall be visiting us that day and she will be bringing her distaff and flax. If anyone who wants to know how to dress a distaff with flax Lesley will be happy to demonstrate.

Talitha Clarke

## For Sale

Glimakra Gobelin Tapestry Loom

6ft x 4ft with a 39inch weaving width

Top and bottom beam

OIRO £400, little used

Trish Secrett – Charstock

(Chard Axminster)

01460220985 best to call evenings or weekends.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL MEMBERS: CHANGE OF VENUE FOR JANUARY 2012 MEETING

We shall be meeting at Creech St Michael Village Hall in January 2012. The Hatch Beauchamp village hall is closed for the refurbishment of the kitchen. We shall be using Hatch Beauchamp Village Hall in February and for the rest of the foreseeable future.

### How to get to Creech St Michael:

Coming from junction 25 of the M5 follow the 358 going through Henlade as you would if going to Hatch Beauchamp. As you reach the edge of Henlade and just before the dual carriageway starts, there is a crossroads and Creech St Michael is signposted to turn left. \* Follow this road into the village and you will cross a hump back bridge. The road goes round to the left and shortly afterwards you will see a large Baptist church on the right. Turn right immediately after the church then immediately left into the Village Hall car park. The Village Hall is sign posted but the entrance sign is not clear. The entrance is the same as the Medical Centre.

Coming from the Ilminster direction you will come to a crossroads just at the end of the dual carriageway down from Thornfalcon as you enter Henlade. Turn right and follow directions from \* above.

If you are coming from the Bridgwater direction down the A38, you will turn left just after you pass Monkton Elm Garden Centre on your right. Follow this road (which crosses over the top of the M5) until you come to a mini roundabout. Take the last exit signposted Creech St Michael. Drive along this road into the village for 1/4 mile going over numerous speed bumps. You will go past some shops on the right. As you reach the Bell pub (on your right) you will see a left turn ahead. Turn here and immediately left again into the village Hall car park. The entrance to the car park is the same as for the Medical Centre.

**Parking:** There is a car park outside the hall and we are assured there will be enough space for us.

If you get lost on the day, please call Janet on 07870 175961.

## News From The Chair

Hello folks,

We are well and truly into the Autumn now and shops are full of Christmas ideas, although my garden has not got the idea that it should really be calming down. We still have flowers on the courgettes and we pulled the runner beans up because we really could not face another one. The real benefit of Autumn and Winter for me though is that I can sit and knit or fiddle with some yarn for hours on end and not feel guilty. Mind you staying awake seems to be the challenge these days.

I went to the Big Knit Expo in Exeter today and really enjoyed myself mooching around seeing familiar faces and trying hard not to spend too much money. There are some truly amazing creative people out there, just doing their own thing and on the whole very beautifully. There were some lovely yarns on sale by traders from Reading, Brighton and Eastbourne as well as some local people too. It was great to see people with their spinning wheels and lots of people knitting in the café area. I bravely poked my nose into the Children's Knitting Room which was good fun, yarn all over the place but some keen knitters in the making.

By the time you read this I hope you will have enjoyed the shared soup lunch. I shall be doing battle with a pumpkin very soon which I hope will be a Winter Warmer. There is no meeting in December as you all know and our January meeting will be held at the Village Hall in Creech St Michael as our usual venue is having the kitchen refurbished. Please tell folks who may not have been able to join us in November if you see them. We try to send the Newsletter to those who are not able to come but we do occasionally miss someone.

Barbara, our Guild Secretary, has kindly given me a copy of our insurance schedule which I am happy to copy for people if they would like it. We are covered for Public Liability when Guild members represent the Guild at public events. There is also cover for product liability if products produced by a member cause injury to the buyer. In addition to the main insurance we have a subsidiary cover which covers items up to £500, which essentially covers the library books and other items stored in the garage. Equipment such as spinning wheels, looms, items for display etc., have to be covered by the individual member's own insurance and these items must be covered for use outside the house i.e. all risks. If you have any more concerns please catch either Barbara or myself and we will try to help.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the Seasons Greetings and a wooly New Year

Jan Newton

## Distaff Day



When I worked in a cotton mill/museum in Cheshire, we would always celebrate St Distaff's day on the 7<sup>th</sup> January. I would wrap a white ribbon around the center shaft of my spinning wheel to signify that I was single and my mum would elegantly wrap her flax with a red ribbon to show that she was a married woman. The caretakers would muck about and call us names and we would throw water at them in return. It was only last month that I discovered that there is in fact no such saint and that the whole event was a celebration of a return to work after the break at Christmas.

St Distaff's Day was never a holiday but was always recognised on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, the day after the feast of Epiphany. It is also known as Rock Day, a rock being another word for a distaff and the distaff being a medieval symbol for

"women's work". Women would resume their everyday work and the men would play jokes on them, for example attempting to set fire to their flax as they were spinning!



It is mentioned by Robert Herrick in 'St. Distaff's day, or the morrow after Twelfth-day' from Hesperides

## Useful Websites

It is some time since we have reviewed useful websites. As we now have quite a few new members, we thought it would be useful to list a few that are most popular with members. If any member has a favourite to share, let us know.

### **youtube.com**

It is amazing what people put on YouTube but for starting in spinning, weaving and dyeing there are some great videos. Whilst books may be the main way of learning, seeing someone else do something can be really helpful. I found it particularly helpful for hand carding fleece.

### **interweave.com**

A reference website for crafts of all kinds. Interweave produces and edits books and journals for all of the Guild crafts such as Spin-off and Handwoven. If you want to know about any aspect of spinning, weaving and dyeing, Interweave will have a book or journal about it. The cost of postage from the USA can add to buying resources but if you find a book you want, you can often get it cheaper on Amazon. They also do lots of e-books and journals. Membership is free and there are quite a few small freebies to get one started.

### **ravelry.com**

Ravelry is a community site, an organizational tool, and a yarn and pattern database for knitters and crocheters. Free to join.

### **scottishfibres.co.uk**

Supplier of spinning, weaving and dying equipment, parts and materials (fibres and dyestuffs). They are competitive in price and speedy on delivery.

### **fibrecrafts.com**

Comprehensive range of equipment and consumables. They do carry a very wide range of materials for all our Guild crafts. Not the cheapest supplier though and worth shopping around once you have found something on their site - you may get it cheaper elsewhere.

### **pmwoolcraft.co.uk**

Similar range to George Weil (Fibrecrafts other name) yet more competitive in price. Good for dyestuffs. Very friendly if you want to find out something and speak to them. This is a personal favourite site of mine.

### **texereyarns.co.uk**

Wide range of fibres and yarns for spinning, weaving and dyeing. Very competitive prices on some yarns. Regular reductions on end of ranges.

Janet Maher

## Natural Dyeing Workshop - Barbara Spicer

15th October

Following on from the hugely interesting talk given by Barbara last month about natural dyeing, we put it all into practice by trying our hand with natural dyes using a variety of mordants. The weather was mild so we were able to conduct the actual dyeing outside in the car park - much easier for cleaning up!



Barbara brought along wool that she had pre-mordanted with one of the following:

- Alum
- Iron oxide
- Copper sulphate
- Tin chloride

We then prepared wool samples. For each natural dye we were trying, we prepared five samples of wool - four from each of the above mordanted samples plus one unmordanted.

The natural dyes we used were logwood, brazilwood, turmeric, hazelwood, sloe berries and walnut. Each dye was set to simmer and we plunged in our samples. The effects of the different mordants on the wool was amazing. A wide range of colour hue could be produced simply by changing the mordant. Examples of the results are shown in a colour wheel on the front cover of the newsletter. As walnut does not require a mordant and produced deep browns, these are not included in the sample colour wheel.

From the top clockwise the dyestuffs are: tumeric, hazelwood, brazilwood, sloe berries and logwood. The mordants used in each dyestuff batch were (again clockwise): no mordant, alum, iron, copper and tin. The general effects were:

- |        |                                   |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Alum   | - brightens the final colour      |
| Iron   | - 'saddens' or darkens colours    |
| Copper | - deepens the hue                 |
| Tin    | - gives a clearer, sharper colour |

When Barbara was talking about natural dyeing she referred to some useful source books that some members may be interested in. They give much more detail of the chemical reactions involved and how dyes were used historically. These books are not available in the Guild library.

*A Manual of 18th Century Textile Dyeing:* John Edmunds (2006)  
ISBN 0953413349

*Historic Dyes Series N°2: History and Practice of 18th Century Dyeing:* John Edmunds (1999) ISBN 0953413314

*Historic Dyes Series N°3: Medieval Textile Dyeing:* John Edmunds (2003)  
ISBN 0953413322

*Indigo Textiles: Techniques and History:* Gösta Sandberg

## Wool Modern: Talk and Demonstration

28th September

When Chris Thierry, Chair of the South and South East chapter of the Textile Institute International, (amongst other titles) asked me if I would give the keynote talk for the Institute at Wool Modern – The Campaign for Wool Exhibit at La Galleria in Pall Mall, this year – I was indeed honoured. The topic was to be the History of British Wool. This could be presented in a myriad of ways, most, I thought, looked like lengthy dissertations and a history lecture that would put people to sleep (I was never one for chronological lectures).

While pondering the matter the unsung truth glared up at me from the pages that I was reviewing and from what I personally knew to be true – this history was about the women who started in their homes with drop spindles and worked forward into the mills, at spinning Jennies and at the looms. In every aspect of the industry an army of skilled women were to be found. It also occurred to me that the audience would never, in all probability, have seen a hand spinning or heddle loom demonstration, nor would they have had the chance to try their hand at it.



Since these skills were the backbone of Britain becoming the wool capital of the world, I seized the opportunity for the Guild and asked Carol Mellish, Marilyn Biggs and Janet Maher if they would like to come up to London and demonstrate the drop spindle, the spinning wheel and the heddle loom as part of my talk and then offer a “have a go”

Dear memory,

I was ten years old, when I first started weaving (at school), my first sample of weaving was a small clutch bag. At that time we had a lady, from the Channel Islands, who rented one of the shops on the Town Bridge, (Chippenham) her name was Miss Joan Woodhall. In the window she had a length of Harris Tweed, also a large painting of a fisherman, with his crab pots by the sea shore, it was lovely. She also made things in felt. My mum took me along to see if she could teach me weaving. After seeing what I had made at school, she said she did not really teach, but because of what I had done, she would give me lessons. So I went after school, for nearly two years. In that time she showed me how to weave and set up a big loom with four peddles. I wove a length of Harris Tweed, it took us a long time and a lot of patience. The she sent for my loom and taught me to set it up and weave, keeping the edges straight, the skilled bit. During the war I was making scarves for friends in the forces and my family and friends. Its been a long time since the war and my loom has given me many many happy hours.

I was going to make it to collage, to take exams. I had done all the practical skills, I wanted to teach it. But war came and that stopped everything. Miss Joan Woodhall was sent back to the Channel Islands, she was here one day and gone the next, it was very sad. Because I would have liked to have met her once more, its been a long time since the war.

I was married in '52, had a boy and a girl, lost my son but I have a wonderful daughter. I tried to teach her weaving, but she did not have the patience, Barbara was always outside, her life is horses, that's her love in life. Another love in my life was pottery, I went to Chippenham Collage for 15 years went there determined to make something on the wheel, as soon as I did, there was no holding me. I have given most of them away now, but still have some of the best ones. I am not able to carry one weaving anymore because I am ina residential home for elderly care (Kingston House). This is why I have decided to pass it on, I am so glad I have found somebody to give it a good home. I have also got three prize cards to put with itand a sample of my work.

Doreen Ann Wooton

10-10-11  
Aged 84

After visiting us last month and giving the guild her loom, Doreen was thrilled by the amount of spinners we have here and is thinking of taking up spinning... I think we may see her visiting us again!

## Donation to the Guild

We have received a very kind donation from Doreen Wooten. This lovely lady came to the Guild meeting in October to give us her heddle loom that she no longer uses. She is holding a scarf she made on the loom.



The loom is very compact and will be perfect for taking to demonstrations and for teaching.

The following letter was given to us by Doreen:

On the 28th of September off we went to London. My relation, Peter Ackroyd, OBE, a director of the Campaign for Wool, opened the evening with an introduction about the global progress of the Campaign and about the exhibition in the Gallery. Despite the room being rather small and the evening very hot, it was packed with Savile Row tailors, designers, garment merchants, everyone who was someone representing the London textile trade. There were a number of students from some of the textile colleges as well.

The talk seemed to be well received, particularly with the Savile Row tailors fighting over my sample of cloth (!) – good fun. When I had finished speaking, no one left, everyone rushed forward toward the stage area where Carol, Marilyn and Janet were. Everyone wanted to see more and try and have a go. This was really amazing – but not surprising. The upshot from this was that it made such an impression that when the Textile Institute next hosts its annual exhibit of the collections from the top students of the leading textile colleges in 2012, we are invited to sit in the middle demonstrating our skills and offering a “have a go”. It is a wonderful opportunity for the Guild, not only to promote the existence of the Guild but also to showcase the incredible diversity of skill that exists amongst the membership. I believe the seed is now sown that will promote the Guilds as a resource for the British skill and knowledge bank that has not been lost but is alive and well. The first year I attended it was at the HM Treasury House and last year it was at the Foreign Office. I wonder where it will be next year?

Patricia Ackroyd

## The Longest Thread Competition

This competition is an international contest inaugurated in 1986 for the “Longest threads of raw wool hand spun and plied to weigh 10 grams”. The record for the longest thread is recognised by The Guinness Book of Records. Through the spinning of a thread of raw wool, spinners throughout the world are linked in friendship and greater understanding and encouraged to improve the length and the quality of the spinning. Threads are presented in a ball for measurement. Weighing and measurement is witnessed in a public centre. Quality is considered to be of great importance. There are four sections in the contest:

- A. The longest thread of raw wool hand spun on a spinning wheel and plied to 2 ply from 10 grams
- B. This section is for those who wish to participate in the “Friendship Thread” but do not wish their thread to be measured
- C. Junior Spinners Contest is the same as for adults but in two parts - C10, 10 years and under and C16, 16 years and under
- D. The longest thread of raw wool spun with a hand propelled spindle and plied to 2 ply from 10 grams of raw wool

The competition is a biennial event linked to the Bothwell Biennial International Highland Fibre Festival. Ashford, Australia have regularly donated the prizes and winners receive a certificate. There is a small entry fee. The fees for the "Friendship Thread" are donated to charity. The results for 2011 are listed below:

#### Overall World Results 2011:

1st	Jan Zandbelt	The Netherlands	1005.678
2nd	Wim Cars	The Netherlands	925.765
3rd	Clarence Bartlett	Australia	796.679

#### Hand Propelled Spindle:

1st	Flo Kinnear	Scotland, UK	218.242
2nd	Cheryl Fletcher	NSW, Australia	180.831
3rd	Dean Rivett	Tasmania, Australia	144.216

#### Winners From Each Country:

Australia	Clarence Bartlett		796.679
England	Amanda Hannaford		652.726
Ireland	Heather Underwood		111.645
Wales	Sandra Dawn Cleaver		336.767
The Netherlands	Jan Zandbelt		1005.678
Norway	Olaug Strommersen		60.284
Scotland	Flo Kinnear		218.242
United States	Lucy Parks		143.711

#### Current World Record

1st	Naoko Tamuro (Spindle)	Kyoto, Japan	1,468.61
2nd	Ernest Jensen (Wheel)	QLD, Australia	1,210.92
3rd	Carol Robinson (Wheel)	QLD, Australia	1,103.58

Congratulations to Amanda especially as she is so well known to us at the Somerset Guild!

The next competition will be in 2013. Do we have anyone who is willing to take on this challenge? Could our Guild make the Guinness Book of Records?

## Give Fleece a Chance: Knit a Sheep

This is an invitation to get involved in the "Give Fleece a Chance" project. The project needs wool producers, spinners and knitters. This is a collaborative project to create a flock of sheep using wool sourced from the South West of England. The main aim is to connect the community of wool users together: knitters, spinners, felt makers, weavers and dyers.

The project is collecting the names and details of as many South West wool or yarn producers as can be found. Do you know of someone with fleece or yarn? Please let the project organisers know. Pass on the details of this project to anyone you think may be interested.

#### Wool Producers

Do you have or know anyone with fleece to spare and where you know where it came from and the breed. The project wants to hear from you.

#### Spinners

Get some fleece and spin a DK or Aran weight yarn, single or plied. Send it to the project organisers or knit a sheep. It is important to know where the wool comes from and what breed of sheep.

#### Knitters

Get some locally sourced undyed natural wool yarn and knit a sheep.

If you wish to take part in the project and want to know more, get the pattern for knitting a sheep or get hold of some yarn to knit a sheep, please contact:

Claire Crompton  
Broadleigh  
Albaston  
Gunnislake  
Cornwall  
PL18 9AN

Telephone number: 01822 834356  
Email: ukfleece@yahoo.co.uk