

www.somersetguildwsd.org.uk

June 2015



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✉ Copy deadline for June issue is Friday 4th September 2015. Please email Janet Maher at secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk

Front cover: Example of double ikat weaving – both warp and weft

Message from the Chair

Hello Members,

At last the better weather is with us. At the moment my crafty pursuits are squeezed as I battle to bring my garden to some sense of order - not too tidy, but equally not too many weeds. There is nothing nicer than picking your own salad and spinach and then eating it fresh! I hope the rest of my vegetable efforts bring the same rewards.

One of the key aims I set out in the last Newsletter was to increase the number of entries to our Guild competitions. The Chairperson Challenge for the April meeting was a beanie created by members. Well, you all did the Guild proud with 27 entries. John Arbon was suitably impressed and tried on a few. There is more about the competition later in the Newsletter.

There was a request from members to give people more idea of how to approach the theme set for competitions and how to present entries on the day. There is a piece later on, which I hope will give some guidance. I also hope this means that more of you will enter future competitions.

More members are coming forward to ask for things they would like to see on the Guild programme or for mini tutorials on topics. To this end we had a very successful mini tutorial on how to examine a fleece, what to look for when buying and how to divide it into sections for using. Jean Field covered alpaca and Carol Mellish did sheep fleece. I hope this will encourage more people to come to the Fleece Fair and buy fleece. There is nothing so satisfying as knowing you have made something from scratch.

We have a list of topics that members have asked for on the Skills Day in July. We will cover what we can on that day or will arrange further mini tutorials at future Guild meetings. Please ask if there are topics you want to know more about. We can only offer taster sessions at the Guild meetings but will always organise workshops if there is enough interest.

I do hope you will support the Fleece Fair. It is the largest source of income for the Guild in the year. We can reinvest income from a successful Fleece Fair into having good speakers and workshops next year.

I wish everyone a lovely summertime and creative crafting.

Janet Maher
Chairperson

Tea and Coffee Rota 2015

The tea rota for the rest of 2015 is below. If you cannot fulfil your turn, please make arrangements for someone else to be there. Please let Janet (Chariperson) know of any changes.

C Wright R Warren	July	M Biggs J Maher	October
H Bonney J Warde	September	J Arthur S Fovargue	November

Guidance for Guild Competitions

Following requests for more guidance, I have jotted down a few thoughts that I hope will help. These ideas are just a few and there are many ways to approach competitions. I go through a number of steps:

- Note down anything at all that springs to mind as I think about the theme. For example, if the theme was Halloween, I might note down witches, ghosts, pumpkins, apples and candles. Sometimes I use friends and family to stimulate ideas. Then I try to find a photograph that includes these things. For Halloween, I might 'Google' the words Halloween, witches and pumpkins to see what gets thrown up. I look for images that portray a scene I like. I also use Pinterest
- Once I have my photo, I design my entry for the competition. For dyeing, I will think about what fibre and what colours to pick out the key parts of the photo. For spinning, what thickness in the yarn and how it will be plied to bring in the elements of the photo. For weaving, what weave structure, yarn and colours reflect the photo

Once your competition piece is created, there are considerations about presentation to show off your work to best effect and to help the judges decide:

- Print a copy of the photograph you used for inspiration
- Stick it to a piece of card with space for a title and some words about the piece
- Note down what you did – if dyeing note which dyes you used, if spinning which techniques used and the same for weaving
- In all cases, note the fibre used

A final point is to have a good look at what others do for competitions especially the ones that win. We all learn by observation. Remember that the competitions are as much about how you interpret the theme in your creation as it is about your skill. Also remember we have Novice sections for all three competitions. Have a go – once the first competition is over, it gets easier.

The theme for Guild Competitions in 2015 will be **'Winter'**. As always people can interpret the theme in any way they like. The competitions dates are:

Dyeing:	September Meeting
Spinning:	October Meeting
Weaving:	November Meeting

Bristol Cloth Competition

Hot on the heels of Fox Brothers, is a competition for a Bristol Cloth. Bristol Textile Quarter CIC, Botanical Inks, Fernhill Farm, Dash + Miller Ltd and The Bristol Weaving Mill Ltd are joining forces to produce the Bristol Cloth. The winning Bristol Cloth design will encapsulate the beautiful, diverse city of Bristol, while also referencing traditional woven design. The Bristol Cloth will be appealing to local designer-makers, local brands and retailers as well as the general public with end use being for accessories, outerwear and/or interiors.

The yarn for the design will be Shetland 2/14NM (not provided) and 12 e.p.i in a natural palette of colours. The loom to be used will be a 16-shaft dobbie.

The winner receives a 5m length of the prestigious cloth.
Closing date: 31st August 2015

For more details: www.bristolcloth.co.uk

Chairperson Challenge: Beanie Competition

Guild members surpassed themselves for this competition with 27 entries at our April meeting. There was a fantastic range of beanies, hats and berets. John Arbon, our President, was the Judge. He kindly donated a £20 voucher to use in his store. John commented that there were so many excellent examples, he wished there could be more than one winner. He did choose and it was a lovely hand-dyed, own design Fair Isle beret made by Julia Jones.

Thank you all! There will be more challenges later in the year.



The winning beanie and Julia receiving her voucher from John

Ikat Weaving: Helen Price

21st March 2015

Helen lived in Japan for several years. She told us about her journey and how she lived in a temple in Kyoto. The monks at the temple bought her first loom for her and she went to a traditional school of Kasuri to learn about this form of dyeing and weaving.

Ikat is practised all over Asia and Africa. It means a fabric that has been woven with fibres dyed specifically to create patterns and images in the fabric. The nature of ikat is that the design can look blurred. Kasuri is a distinctly Japanese style of the form. The name kasuri, which derives from the verb kasuru means to graze or brush against. Kasuri can be ikat of both the weft and the warp. The threads can be a solid colour or resist-dyed, and the weft thread is resist-dyed in a specific pattern and dyed with indigo (also other colours) to form a picture when the cloth is woven.

Each of the four islands in Japan has a different Kasuri style. Helen focussed on what she learned around Kyoto. She commented she learned through perseverance going also to an international textile school. She paid for her training by teaching English in Japan. She learned how to do a number of traditional patterns: cross, flaming arrow and parallel cross to name a few.



Arrow Design



Double Ikat Design

Kasuri can be classified in a number of ways:

By the direction in which the tied-dyed yarn is applied

- Tate gasuri in which only the warp is tied prior to setting the threads onto the loom
- Yoko gasuri in which only the weft is tied before weaving
- Tate-yoko gasuri where both the warp and weft are dyed to form double ikat

By colour

- Blue Kasuri. Kon gasuri in which the white resist is on an indigo blue ground.
- White kasuri. Shiro gasuri, the inverse of kon gasuri with a white background.
- Brown kasuri. Chia gasuri in which brown is used instead of indigo.
- Iro gasuri'un where several colours are used – see right



By technique

There are many techniques used to create kasuri. The cloth is classified with different names depending on the method used.

- Tegukuri gasuri describes the tying of the yarn by hand.
- Surikomi gasuri where the dye colours are applied directly to the bundles of stretched yarn with a spatula.
- Itajime gasuri is created by placing the arranged yarns between two engraved plates. These are bolted tightly together so when immersed dye, the pressure of the raised points act as a resist.
- Orijime gasuri. This is a complex weave in which a strong warp is set on a special loom. The weft is beaten hard before dyeing resulting in a fine dotted pattern.
- Hogushi kasuri. A warp is set onto the loom and coarsely woven with a temporary yarn and then printed. After printing the cloth is tied and wound onto the back beam of the loom. After threading the cloth is woven with a plain weft, the coarse temporary weft being cut as it goes.
- Kushi-oshi gasuri where the warp is placed on a special printing board and printed with a block printing technique. After printing the dyed warp on a loom it is woven.
- Fukiyose gasuri in these cloths the threads are dyed with a dip-dye technique.
- Bokashi gasuri is made by twisting or plaiting the yarn in a way that parts of the yarn create their own resist.

Japanese ikats are generally weft ikats or double ikats. Helen explained that double ikat is a very complex process where warp and weft have to be measured accurately to get the tie-dye correct. All pieces are worked out in advance, often plotted on graph paper. For those interested, there are some Japanese videos of the double ikat process on YouTube. The language is Japanese but the videos are self-explanatory.

Throughout the talk Helen showed us some wonderful pieces in single warp and weft ikat, double ikat and several coloured items not done with the more common indigo. The photo on the front of the Newsletter shows double ikat weaving in progress. The talk was fascinating despite the slide holder falling out of the projector and mixing up all the slides. Helen gave us a reference if any are interested in going further:

Japanese Ikat Weaving by Jun and Noriko Tomita. (Routledge and Keegan Paul)
ISBN: 0 – 7100 – 9043 - 9

Janet Maher

Afghan Adventure: Amanda Hannaford

How do you manage to get yourself invited to teach spinning in another language, on what seemed like the other side of the world? It all started at the very end of November last year, when I happened to see a message to the Association secretary with the first line reading “I am hunting for a professional Spinner, skilled in tutoring, who would be interested in becoming involved in a project to train women in Kabul to spin Afghan Cashmere”.

My first thoughts were what a wonderful opportunity to teach women from another culture, then would my husband mind me deserting him for couple of weeks, and then, was it safe there? I was told that if it was not safe they wouldn't have asked and the situation would be reviewed as the date for departure got nearer. So, I agreed to go.

After jabs and getting my visa application done in January, I took delivery of a lovely squishy parcel of cashmere, which with a couple of friends, was to make samples. From my sample spinning I decided the easiest and fastest way (the ladies wouldn't be hobby spinners, but doing this as a way to help with their family's income) to produce nice quality yarn from the very short cashmere fibre was to card it and spin longdraw from rolags. We needed a robust easy-to-use wheel that had a fairly high ratio. The specifications of the Bliss wheel from Woolmakers were ideal and ten were ordered.



The streets of Kabul



Fatima and Maryam

One of the company directors, who lives in the UK, travelled out with me. He dropped me at the house of another director who has lived in Kabul for twenty years, who looked after me for the duration of my stay. There were no problems on the way out, unless you count security in Kabul airport having to open my companion's case to investigate the metal tines on 20 pairs of card clothing! We decided at the last minute to buy the cloth from Wingham Wool Works and take it for a local carpenter to make up the carder backs.

I arrived to find my accommodation was in a nice comfortable house, a spacious double bedroom for me, and all mod cons! The locked gates and barbed wire all around the garden wall we'll gloss over for now!

Before I left, I was told that it was still cold, so to bring warm clothes. There had not been the usual steady winter snowfall, bringing fears that there would be droughts later in the year because. Unfortunately, just after I arrived they had the whole winter's worth of snow in the mountains in a couple of days. This caused havoc in the remoter regions bringing down the main power line feeding the country, causing city-wide power-cuts, still ongoing as I write this almost a month later. The house I was staying in was lucky, having its own generator; meaning not only could we have lights and TV in the evening, but the water pump still worked for our morning showers.

I was provided with the services of a translator, a young girl of eighteen, who's English was very good. The poor girl was completely stumped on the first day by all the new spinning terms, but took it all in her stride, and by the end of two weeks she knew almost as much as those I was training and had also taught me a few words in Dari.

Also, you don't walk anywhere in Kabul. I had to have a young man to drive me everywhere. It took a little while to get used to that, as well as the driving in the city. There appear to be absolutely no rules, with every man for himself (local women don't drive) with lots of honking and dodging of potholes, cyclists, pedestrians and the odd flock of fat-tailed sheep. Again I was extremely lucky in the choice of driver, a well educated young man, who was determined to chat the whole time to brush up his English and he made the daily drive very interesting by explaining everything we saw. I had the added treat towards the end of my stay of being invited to meet some of his family and have a traditional Afghan meal with them, seated on cushions on the floor. The after-dinner entertainment was watching his brother's recent wedding video, which was a fascinating insight into their culture, with a chance to see their beautiful traditional wedding outfits.

On the first day of class I discovered that the Hazara ladies I was to teach were very skilled at spinning coarse wool into beautiful smooth even thread on the most basic of spindles. They also mostly understood the basics of using a spinning wheel. After the first day we abandoned the rather coarse wool fibres they were used to, and for the next week concentrated solely on the cotton fibres provided. With this fibre I taught the ladies to make neat even rolags with the hand-carders. I then introduced them straightaway to the English woollen longdraw technique, which in my opinion is the fastest and most even way to create a fine lightweight yarn from short fibres. Some of the ladies took to the technique immediately with amazing confidence, others needed slightly more coaxing; but by the end of our week with cotton all but one lady had mastered the technique, with varying levels of proficiency. My one failure, although keen and eager to spin, just could not be persuaded to give the longdraw a go.



So during our week of cotton spinning, we got the inevitable lumpy, bumpy and over-twisted yarns out of the way, and by the time we introduced the cashmere, the ladies were able to produce fairly even, well-twisted and nicely plied, balanced yarn in the thickness I asked for. I also explained how the spinning wheel ratios worked, and left the ladies with most of them working comfortably on a 12:1 ratio, with the instructions to the supervisors that the ladies themselves would be the best judges of when they were confident to change to working at the fastest (18.5:1) setting.

The Hazara ladies' determination and willingness to learn really surprised me and made my task both enjoyable and much easier than I'd expected. At the end of the two weeks training we had a group graduation photograph taken, with them all proudly clutching their hard-earned certificates.

Other highlights of my stay were the shopping trips and lunches in local restaurants on my days off (Friday is a public holiday in Afghanistan). I was taken to an antique fabric shop, which was filled floor to ceiling with local textiles; some beautiful old natural-dyed lkats particularly caught my eye. Next door I found a lovely old spindle that just had to come home with me, and the bag I was given to put it in, made from woven strips of fabric which look to be old and again naturally-dyed, was almost more interesting than the spindle itself. The other shop that I loved, and visited on several occasions, was the Ganjina shop which gathered together all sorts of locally made products. Beautiful hand embroidery in geometric patterns, locally made rugs and carpets, hand-woven silk made up into beautiful clothing (I got to visit the silk weavers workshop) and handmade jewellery from local gemstones. This was a real Aladdin's cave for a textile enthusiast.

On the last evening I was asked if they invited me back would I go? I answered yes without hesitation! OK, the city is filthy, imagine the worst pictures of India you've seen and that will be about it. There were seas of mud everywhere when it was wet (it did look quite pretty in places in the snow), then when it is dry there will be dust to mingle with smog and car fumes! No grass that I could see, the few flocks of sheep and goats that live in the city browse on the rotting veg on the rubbish heaps. But the people more than make up for all that, everyone I met was lovely!

For more information please visit:

Qaria Cashmere <http://www.qariacashmere.com>

Ganjina <http://www.shoppingtogo.org/index.php>

Amanda Hannaford

Finishing Techniques for Knitted Garments: Edna Gibson

21st February 2015

Edna told us about some of the history of knitting and how only men were admitted originally to the Guild of Knitters and that women were only allowed if they were widows of members of the guild. It was only in Georgian times that knitting became a hobby or was done for pleasure by women.

Starting at the beginning of a knitting project, Edna advised us to do a tension square of at least 8 inches and let it rest for 24 hours before measuring it. (Not something that I have done before as I am too impatient – but I will be doing in future!)

I think that we all have our own favourite ways of doing things and tend to get stuck in a rut. Edna challenged us to find out what would be the best method for the item that we were knitting. She showed us different effects we could get if we used alternative techniques across a range of features of knitting:

- Casting on methods
- Casting off methods
- Selvedges – seam or edge
- Shaping techniques
- Picking up stitches
- Seaming – knitted, grafted and sewn
- Darning in ends
- Blocking

The interest in the room went to a new level as we all looked at Edna's knitting and thought about how we could use her ideas in our own knitting.

She told us to think about what we wanted our knitting to look like and find a way of doing it. Lots of questions followed Edna's talk, the answers to which we all found interesting and she recommended 'The Knitters Handbook' by Montse Stanley to help us.

Now, where are my knitting needles?

N.B: From the interest in the room, a practical workshop will be arranged in the programme for 2016 (Janet Maher)

Marilyn Biggs

Courses and Workshops

Spinning Workshops

Location: The Spinners and Weavers Workshop
Sweethay Studio, TAUNTON. TA3 7HG

Times: 10.00am – 3.30pm

Cost: £40 per workshop - a deposit of £20 is required when reserving a place

Only four places per workshop

Beginners Course: Friday 28th August

For total beginners or those wishing for a refresher course.

1st Fancy Yarns Workshop: Friday 2nd October

This course covers spinning: Knickerbocker - Tufted - Slub - Cloud - Seed or Knop - Snarl yarns and designing a yarn of your own!

2nd Fancy Yarns Workshop: Friday 23rd October

This course covers spinning: Crepe - Bouclé - Rose - Navajo plying and designing a yarn of your own!

All fibres are included – but bring along anything that you may want to use of your own.

Tea, coffee, soft drinks and biscuits are provided but please bring along a packed lunch.

Wheels can be borrowed with prior notice

For booking and more details contact: Margaret Knight

3 The Beacon, Ilminster. TA19 9AH

Email: spinner54498@btinternet.com

Tel: 01460 54498

For Sale

Dryad Loom



Four shaft table loom:

External Width: 60 cms (24 ins)
Weaving Width: 50 cms (20 ins)
Depth: 60 cms (24 ins)
Height: 47 cms (18 ins)

Price: **£150**

There are also spare heddles and threading equipment

Contact details: Mrs Elizabeth Dunn
Tel: 01582 460222
Mob: 07860 810119
Email: dunn.apl@btconnect.com

Inkle Loom, Card Weaving Loom and Rigid Heddle Loom

Standard size inkle loom: **£20**

Card weaving loom: **£20**

Rigid heddle: **£20** (The loom is cms wide. It is very old yet perfectly functional for someone wanting to start weaving)

Contact Janet Maher on 07703 829068 if interested

Lace Making Lessons

Jan Newton and Talitha Clarke recently ran an auction of promises for the Nepali Childres Trust. Jan has supported the charity for some years. Since the earthquake, the children are living outside under canvas. The monsoon starts in July and funds are needed to make essential repairs to their building and buy food/ water.

Six lace making lessons have been offered for auction by Mrs Lovelace Carr. The winner of the auction would need to travel to Wellington for the lessons. The suggested starting price is **£20** for these lessons. If you are interested, please make a bid. This is a bargain if you want to learn this craft. Jan is away at the moment so please submit bids to Janet Maher: secretary@somersetquildwsd.org.uk

The lessons will go to the highest bidder.

Programme 2015

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

17th January

AGM 11.00am

The Silk Road

Tereshina Roberts

21st February

My Life in Textiles

Reverend Andrew Johnson

Committee Meeting

21st March

Ikat Weaving

Helen Price

19th April

**Finishing Techniques for Knitted
Garments**

Edna Gibson

Soup and Bread Lunch

16th May

Indigo and Travel

Jenny Balfour Paul

Committee Meeting

20th June

Fleece Fair

18th July

Skills Day

19th September

Asian Braid Making

Jacqueline Carey

Dyeing Competition

Committee Meeting

17th October

**Felting Workshop: Nuno or
Experimental Landscapes**

Tracey Martin

Spinning Competition

Soup and Bread Lunch

21st November

Primitive Sheep of the British

Mary Gibbings

Weaving Competition

Committee Meeting

Soup and Bread Lunch

5th December

Social Event

Shared lunch and Secret Santa