

[www.somersetguildwsd.org.uk](http://www.somersetguildwsd.org.uk)

**November 2014**



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**Chair**

Janet Maher  
07703 829068

**Treasurer**

Caroline Murray-Gourlay  
01935 862629

**Secretary**

Willow Iredale  
07811 864529

**Librarian**

Miranda Hewitt

**Notice Board**

Jan Arthur

**Newsletter**

Janet Maher  
07703 829068

Talitha Clarke  
01823 669322

All email to: [secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk](mailto:secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk)

✉ Copy deadline for June issue is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Please email Janet Maher at [secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk](mailto:secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk)

Front cover: Silk moth as shown by Tereshina Roberts at our January meeting

## ***Message from the Chair***

**Hello Members,**

As this is my first message as Chairperson, I thought it would be useful to think about what I wanted to achieve in my term of office over 2015. I have three simple goals:

- Increased participation by members in Guild competitions
- Increased member participation in demonstrating our craft at outside events
- Ensure we have an equally diverse and interesting programme for 2016 as we have for 2015

I also want us all to learn something new and have fun doing it over 2015. The buzz at the February meeting was fantastic and I hope we can keep this feeling.

I know many people are apprehensive about entering Guild competitions. For some it is thinking their work is not good enough, for others it is not wanting to be in a spotlight. For those who do not want the spotlight, we have agreed entries can be anonymous on the table with a number. I can award the prize quietly after the event once judging has taken place. For those who think their work is not good enough, we can only encourage you to have a go.

I am aware that we have some superbly skilled weavers and spinners in the Somerset Guild and their work is stunning. We also have a lot of people - like me - who are middling and quite a few new members just starting out with their craft. We created the novice section of the competitions to support members in the first two years of weaving, spinning and dyeing. It is tough for new members to risk it if those with improving skills do not have a go. For this reason the whole committee committed to putting in entries to the competitions. We love to see all levels of skill as it shows how people progress.

I have also made a Chairperson challenge to encourage people to participate. This time is for a beanie hat: anything goes from hand spun to bought yarn – woven hats – berets and caps count as well. Our President, John Arbon, will be with us in April when we want to see the beanies at the Guild. John will judge the entries and has donated a £10 voucher to spend with him in April or at his mill sale in May. Please have a go!

All of the reasons for not entering Guild competitions apply equally to members demonstrating at outside events. You do not have to be expert to demonstrate. Indeed, there is merit in not being expert as, if we want to encourage the public to participate and join us, they need to see that we welcome people at all levels, beginners included.

Let me know if there is more we can do to make these things easier for people.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said “Every artist was first an amateur.”

Janet Maher  
Chairperson

## ***Ad Hoc Guild General Meeting***

Following our AGM meeting in January, two committee members have found it necessary to stand down for reasons unrelated to the Guild. Therefore, we will need to elect two more committee members.

There will be a short ad hoc General Meeting at the April Guild meeting to elect the new committee members. We have two nominations currently. If you know of anyone who wishes to stand please let me know as soon as possible.

## ***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 (Guild Secretary) know of any changes.

S Bail H Rabbage	March	C Wright R Warren	July
J Rees vacancy	April	H Bonney J Warde	September
T Simmonds N Sanders	May	M Biggs J Maher	October
L Took A Stuart	June	J Arthur S Fovargue	November

## ***Somerset Day Cloth***

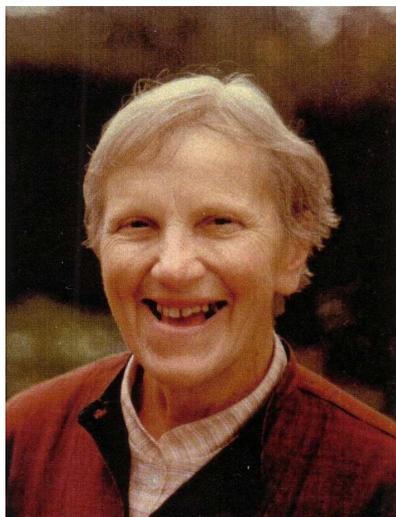
Fox Brothers are sponsoring a competition for Somerset Day (11<sup>th</sup> May) to find a new woven cloth. The cloth will take inspiration from the industry, people, landscape, towns, villages and history of Somerset. The competition closes on 1<sup>st</sup> May and the winner will be chosen on 11<sup>th</sup> May. The winning design will be woven into a Fox cloth and form part of the Fox Collection. The winner receives a length of the prestigious cloth once woven by Fox.

The entrant must consider the yarn, colours, design and potential end use of the cloth. The design needs to be commercially viable and show an understanding of the cloth woven at Fox Brothers. Entrants must submit mood boards showing how they came to their final design.

- Maximum 1 entry per person
- Entrant must have a Somerset postcode
- Three A3 Boards maximum
- Maximum colours in warp 6 and 4 in weft

More details on Guild website

***Eileen Chadwick***  
**Who died on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 aged 97 years**



It is with great sadness I have to report the death of our past President Eileen Chadwick. Spinner – Weaver – Dyer – Farmer – Teacher and (I hope she would not mind me adding) Friend.

She was born in Kent and moved to Cambridgeshire in 1925. Educated at the Perse School, she went to Northamptonshire Agricultural College in 1935. Later in 1946/47 she went to Sweden where she formed English Study Circles, which enabled exchange of language and culture. Her interest in the strong textile traditions of Sweden took her on to learn to weave.

On returning to Britain she studied at Summer Schools, which led her to a City and Guilds Advanced Weaving Certificate. In 1950 Eileen went to Howell's School for Girls, Denbigh, to teach Weaving, Spinning and Dyeing, where she stayed for 22 years. The three crafts were then included in the school curriculum and some girls chose to take them to 'O' level examination.

In 1970 Eileen and her friend Marjorie Downing set up studios in weaving and music, respectively, in Nether Stowey, Somerset. Residential courses were held each year until 1986. Theo Moorman co-tutored many of the courses. During the 70's Eileen and Theo taught at Gloucester College of Art and Design. In 1980 Eileen's well-known book on Handspinning was published by Batsford. She gave up teaching in Gloucester but remained a close friend to Theo and became a Trustee of the Theo Trust for Weavers, which was set up in 1985. Sadly Theo died in 1990.

Eileen was a very productive weaver in the 1990's, selling cushions, wall hangings in silk and linen, mostly using the Theo Moorman technique which she continued to develop in three dimensional panels. She also used ikat, which she learned while tutoring with the kasuri expert Jan Tomita. Until recently she lived in Spaxton on the Quantock Hills where she loved to walk her dogs.

Her experience was highly valued as an assessor and moderator in the early days of the Certificate of Achievement. She was also an active member of the Somerset Guild of Craftsmen.

Eileen travelled widely and turned up at my house one day with one of her pupils just to show her some fine spinning that I had done. She always encouraged people and said that keeping simplicity in structure will show the hallmark of quality and beauty.

She will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of meeting her. I consider myself very lucky to have known her and I am the proud owner of her flax wheel.

Margaret Knight

# Christmas Guild Meeting 2014

6<sup>th</sup> December 2014



For the first time in some years we held an Xmas social gathering. There were 25 members present to share food, a Secret Santa and plenty of fun.

Onesies were the name of the day – even if it did get very hot for some! There was a grand array of food and drinks that members had taken time to make.

As well as a Secret Santa, we had some secret onesies. Can you tell who this is on the right – and it is not Brenda Hamblin! (*The answer is on the back page*)

Some of us had an enjoyable session putting together an old loom with Caroline, our Treasurer.

Everyone brought a Secret Santa gift to the value of approximately £5. From the 'ooh's' and 'ah's', most people were pleased with what they got.

Based on the positive feedback we had, we will do it again this year. Having time to sit, chat, relax, spin or do whatever seemed to be just the thing for the time of year.



## Member Discounts

As Guild members we are fortunate enough to receive discounts on purchases at a number of retailers upon production of a membership card. The list of retailers will be kept on the website for future reference:

Frank Herring, Dorchester	10%
John Arbon Textiles	10%
Yandles, Martock	15%
Bredons, Taunton	discretionary linked to purchase value

We also have Guild membership at Yeovil Scrapstore where lots of unusual items are available – often offcuts of fabric, fibre and card available.

## ***Silk and The Silk Route: Teresinha Roberts***

17<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Teresinha introduced her talk with some basic facts about what makes silk special: drape, strength and lustre. These qualities are added when silk is blended with other fibres without them. Silk is an extruded fibre not grown. Because of this, silk thread can be very long. Under a microscope silk thread looks like a glass rod, triangular so acts like a prism. The more silk is plied, the less the lustre as the prism effect is lost.

Silk worms and spiders make silk. Spiders make different types of silk: silk for webs, sticky silk for wrapping prey and flying thread. The process of silk making by spiders is 'pulltrusion' as they use their back legs to pull out the thread. In the past silk from spiders was used for sutures and clotting blood in wounds. The human body accepts spider silk easily. It is very fine: human hair is 60 microns, tussah silk 20 microns, mulberry silk 10 microns and spider silk is 2 microns.



Spider silk is stronger than steel. Only 50grams would be needed to circle the earth. Spiders that make silk are solitary by nature and will not produce in large groups or the wrong environment. Because of the medical value, research is taking place to splice spider genes with goats, using goat milk so that fibre could be extruded. This had not yet been achieved but would be invaluable in nerve grafts. It would also make biodegradable fishing lines a possibility. A coat from the Golden Orb spider (habitat is Madagascar) recently exhibited in the UK cost £0.5 million to make.

Silk cocoons have been used for 5.5 thousand years. Silkworms were domesticated in Stone Age China at the same time as pigs. At that time people ate millet rather than rice and had hemp. They were capable of spinning silk at 130 epi to produce fine fabric. China kept the secret about silk for thousands of years – people were killed for giving away the knowledge.

The silk route was not a whole route as such but lots of caravans that did between 20 and 30 miles trading as they went. The price of silk increased along the route so was very expensive by the time it got to Europe. Camels were used in the caravans.



In the UK James I planted lots of mulberry trees to compete with Chinese silk. Sadly he had planted black mulberry when the silkworm prefers white mulberry!

One mulberry tree with 15kg of leaves will feed 300 silkworms. Teresinha has her own silkworms that feed on small mulberry trees she has. In a cocoon only one third is the silk cocoon, the rest is the pupa. Eight grams of silk and 5kg of leaves are required to make a 12 gram silk scarf.

There are two basic types of silk from silkworms – mulberry and tussah. Teresinha has mulberry silkworms that come from tiger moths. Silkworms are the only domesticated insects. The order of development is egg → larva → pupa → moth.

The larva feed every four hours for five days and then they stop and moult. After resting for several hours, they start to eat again. They do this four times. At five weeks old they stop eating and spin the cocoon within a network that can support it suspended. The cocoon is covered with a gluey substance called seracin. After 2 – 3 weeks the moth emerges through a little hole at the top of the cocoon. The female moth gives out pheromones that attract the males. They lay the eggs and die after four days. In the UK this process can only take place in May when it is warm enough and there are enough leaves around.

Once the moth has emerged, long silk thread is not possible – it cannot be reeled so the pupa is killed to keep cocoons complete. However, hatched cocoons can be used to produce silk tops.

Silk can be spun direct from silk hankies – the trick is to keep hands far apart. Silk cocoons can be dyed and spun into multicolour yarn. Silk waste with the sticky seracin is still a cheap way to get silk and is used for making silk paper.

Tussah silkworms eat oak leaves – they like the tannin. They are from the far north of China. Only 1% of silk is tussah. The tussah silkworm is very tame. The silk they produce is beige in colour due to the tannins. It is often called wild silk but the worms are grown in poly tunnels so not really wild. Tussah silk is much easier to blend than mulberry.

In fibre blends at least 30% silk is needed to produce the feel of silk, 50% is better. Because plying removes lustre, Teresinha tends to use singles yarn. She fulls it slightly and knitting it up stabilises the yarn.

Teresinha outlined the features of some of the silk fabric that can be purchased:

- Pongee is 5mm thick and has good drape
- Habutai is 8+mm thick and less translucent
- Dupion is thicker
- Chiffon is only 3.5mm thick but is highly twisted like crepe

Clothing is often made from Habutai with 10mm thickness.

Teresinha recommended the Silk Museum in Macclesfield for a visit.

Janet Maher

## ***My Life in Textiles: Reverend Andrew Johnson***

21<sup>st</sup> February 2015



Reverend Andrew Johnson has been associated with Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers for an impressive 47 years. He began life in Faversham, Kent, convenient for visiting the Victoria & Albert Museum. His family were greengrocers and the young Andrew was expected to engage in the town's social events. At 11 he attended a coffee morning for the local historical society and met a Miss Saunders, who also happened to bring her inkle loom. Andrew sat at this loom throughout the event and wove the entire length of warp. After this introduction he would regularly cycle to her studio where he fell 'hook, line & sinker' for weaving.

After 6 months, Miss Saunders took him to a Guild meeting where he bought his first 39', under slung floor loom. This added to his crafting repertoire having knitted since he was 4, crocheted since 4½ and was given a lace pillow aged 10.

When studying for O'levels he wanted to go on to Leeds University but instead attended an interview at Farnham to do his Foundation year. When working on his degree Andrew wanted to do lace work as his supporting subject, which meant the college finding him a suitable tutor, with whom he designed and made an award-winning butterfly. In his 3<sup>rd</sup> year he was asked to do an alter front for Tenterden church. He replicated the colours from the windows using silk pile and an inlay technique.

For his first year out of college Andrew worked for Gawthorpe Hall giving 6 different lectures about the Rachel K. Shuttleworth collections including patchwork, history, Chinese & lace work. After finishing his Briggs Fellowship, he was asked to give 113 lectures on textiles around the country. This gave the opportunity to visit the cathedrals.

Andrew was contacted to go and work on St Helena. This involved several months learning new skills such as tanning and leatherwork before flying out to Ascension Island to get the boat to St Helena.

He was there for 3 years and made an alter front, cassock & stole for their church during his stay. Of the 4,500 people, only around 40 were inclined to make lace to be sold off of the island.



After travelling around South Africa trying to hawk the St Helena lace, Andrew returned home expecting to join the church but was advised to wait. He was then offered workshop space in Northern Ireland around the time of the Kilkeel bombing so he was regularly stopped at army check points to have his person and vehicle searched. He

gained some work experience with a Norwegian tweed weaver. The next 6 years were spent working more in interior design, hand-making curtains with a drop of up to 4½m and also some Mothers' Union banners.

A friend suggested that he enter the Dublin 'Show-case' craft fair so he put together a collection of waistcoats but the production cost made them too expensive to sell at a trade fair.

To 'break ones tension' Andrew became involved with operetta productions, which led on to Tai Chi and circus skills. These were cross divide workshops where kids from either side would teach the other skills such as diabolo, juggling, stilt walking and then take shows around Belfast. Andrew never quite mastered the unicycle but still enjoys stilt walking, even making his own 16-foot high costume.

Finally a call came for a selection conference within the church, which meant wrapping up his textile business just as it was taking off. He would take his knitting to the group sessions and soon had requests from the others for stoles.



The summer between years 2 and 3 of study was spent in Pune, Delhi & Bangalore looking at Indian imagery in Christianity, particularly inspired by Johti Sahi & the batik studio.

During his 3<sup>rd</sup> year at theological college he had a 5-week exchange to St Michaels in Llandaff, where he met his future wife. She proposed by letter in the February, then he proposed with the family ring, on a rug, which survived the Luftwaffe, but they still needed to ask the Bishop and her family. They were married in Llandaff cathedral and as they were both at theological college were joined by Pagans, Christians & Buddhists. Andrew's sister made the silk wedding dress that he then decorated with grape vines. It has now been made into a chasuble.

Since being married Andrew has woven more alter fronts, a 25yd hall landing carpet, 5' rug for the living room and started curtains for their previous house. Having now moved they need re-orientating and a border added to fit the new windows.

His piece of advice on leaving was to weave a linen towel as they are 'way better' than terry towelling.

Willow Iredale

## ***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**

#### **Intermediate Course: Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March**

For those spinners who want to:  
Design yarns and colours  
Learn long and short draw techniques, also how to use ratios.  
Plus any spinning problems they may need solving.

#### **Beginners Course: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April**

For total beginners or those wishing for a refresher course.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Fancy Yarns Workshop: Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

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

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Fancy Yarns Workshop: Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May**

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](mailto:spinner54498@btinternet.com)  
Tel: 01460 54498

**There will be more workshops later in the year - watch this space!**

## ***Guild Competitions***

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

Please do enter, all skill levels wanted. There is a Novice section for each competition as well as an Improver Section.

## ***John Arbon Textiles: Mill Open Weekend***



## **For Sale**

### **Weaving Accessories**

#### **Mild Steel Reeds**

36	inch (92cm)	8dpi	£12.00
34	inch (86.5cm)	9dpi	£12.00

Bundle of about 100 metal heddles (new) 8.5 ins (21.5cms) £5.00

36 inch peg loom (never been used) £12 (sold in aid of Macmillan nurses)

Contact: Lesley Stimpson on 01934 822218 or [silvermoor.mohair@btinternet.com](mailto:silvermoor.mohair@btinternet.com)  
Collection from Banwell near Weston-super-Mare

### **Beautiful 100% wool yarn – free at Guild meeting**

Talitha Clarke has been selling lovely wool cheaply for the past few Guild meetings. She now needs to get rid of what is left so cones will be available at the Guild meeting. Anything left will be burned so come and get some!

## **Programme 2015**

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

17<sup>th</sup> January

**AGM 11.00am**

**The Silk Road**

**Tereshina Roberts**

21<sup>st</sup> February

**My Life in Textiles**

**Reverend Andrew Johnson**

Committee Meeting

21<sup>st</sup> March

**Ikat Weaving**

**Helen Price**

19<sup>th</sup> April

**Finishing Techniques for Knitted  
Garments**

**Edna Gibson**

*Soup and Bread Lunch*

16<sup>th</sup> May

**Indigo and Travel**

**Jenny Balfour Paul**

Committee Meeting

20<sup>th</sup> June

**Fleece Fair**

18<sup>th</sup> July

**Skills Day**

19<sup>th</sup> September

**Asian Braid Making**

**Jacqueline Carey**

Dyeing Competition

Committee Meeting

17<sup>th</sup> 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*

5<sup>th</sup> December

**Social Event**

Shared lunch and Secret Santa