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September 2017



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All email to: secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk

✉ Copy deadline for June issue is Friday 3rd November 2017. Please email Janet Maher at secretary@somersetguildwsd.org.uk

Front cover: Some lovely dyed mohair locks at the Fleece Fair

Message from the Chair

Hello Members,

I cannot believe it is September – where did the summer go! The time seems to have whizzed by and there has been a lot going on. Lots of members have been out demonstrating all over the county. Although we did not meet in August we did have a workshop at the beginning of September where 11 members learned more about using a rigid heddle loom.

Personally I had an amazing summer as I attended Summer School and was fortunate enough to get a place on Amanda Hannaford's Fleece A Day course. I came back buzzing and that feeling has stayed with me. I did get so excited that the zip to my purse became loose and I bid for and won some Peter Teal wool combs in the silent auction. They are beautiful though and I have already combed some Exmoorino from the Fleece Fair and produced clouds of combed fleece ready for spinning.

I also attended the Taunton Flower Show as a steward and was very pleased to see that one of members had been given a very special award in the textile section (see the item further on). It did make me think that we could enter many more shows as a Guild member. Based on the entries I saw, we would stand a good chance of winning awards and would raise the profile of the Guild. The textile sections of these summer shows are very attended.

Our Study Group for the Foundation Certificate and Certificate of Achievement begins this month and we plan to meet monthly. The Guild also has a busy couple of months ahead with competitions, speakers, workshops and interesting sales tables.

It is time to start thinking about the next National Exhibition. This will be held next year in July at Strathclyde University, which is very close to the mainline station in Glasgow. In 2016 we entered 8 pieces for the selected section of which 6 were selected. Closing date for the selected section is mid April. There is also an open section and, given the Glasgow connection, will be a piece of jewellery in the fashion of Rennie Mackintosh – it is the 150th anniversary of his birth in 2018. See more in the Newsletter.

With cooler evenings comes the urge to be near wool and spin, knit or whatever – I cannot wait.

**Janet Maher
Chairperson**

Tea and Coffee Rota 2017

The tea rota for the remainder of 2017 is below. If you cannot fulfil your turn, please make arrangements for someone else to be there. Please let Caroline Maltby know of any changes.

	10.15 – 12.00	12.00 – 1.30
Oct	Linda Mckenna/? Need volunteer	Muriel Osbourne/? Need volunteer
Nov	Sally Bail/Karen Dumbill	Kathy Wright/Yvette Jones

Guild Competitions 2017

Following our long break, just a reminder about the next two Guild competitions. All have the same theme, which is: **“At The Seaside”**

As always the competitions will be held at Guild meetings in the months of:

Spinning – October

Weaving – November

National Exhibition 2018

The National Exhibition 2018 will be held at Strathclyde University in Glasgow between 16 – 30 July 2018. The location is very close to the main railway station in Glasgow so easy to get to. Buses run from Glasgow Airport to the Centre and some cheap deals can be had from Exeter Airport.

The closure date for selected items is 14th April 2018. There is no theme for this section. Judges look for more than the technical skill when assessing – I learned that watching them last year! They also look to see if the item shows thinking about colour use, structure and texture – all the things Janet Crowther talked to us about.

The open section (this means it is not judged) is a piece of jewellery in the style of Rennie Mackintosh. It will be mounted on a 12cms piece of black card/board. We will need to know how many pieces will be entered into this section by the end of February 2018. The actual items are only needed by the beginning of June.

As always, the Guild will pay for the entry and hanging fees for items in both sections.

Let us see if we can achieve more than last time: 8 entries to the selected section and 15 to the open section

Janet Maher

Annual Fleece Fair 2017

The sun shone all day and people sat outside relaxing. We had more visitors than ever before and gained a number of new Guild members as a consequence. We sold less refreshment than normal and this could have been to do with the warm weather or because we brought the whole day back by an hour to start at 9.30am instead of 10.30am. The pattern of flow of people was the same as in previous years with the peak around 11.00am and the numbers reducing after 12.30pm. People did not seem to want lunch so maybe we need to rethink what we have available. Overall, sales and entrance was similar to last year with refreshment sales down.

We had 13 different fleeces available as well as the people selling yarns, tops and equipment. There were more Guild members at the Fleece Fair than usual and all enjoyed the £1 discount they received as a member.



Buying fleeces and examining a fleece



Soay and Exmoorino fleece above, Jacob to right





Demonstrations clockwise from top: Extreme knitting, floor inkle, drop spindle with distaff, pin loom, four shaft table loom, drum carding and spinning with wheel

A Brief History of Lace Making: Margaret Flux

15th July 2107



Margaret Flux is well known to Somerset lace makers as a local expert and speaker on this subject so we were very grateful to be able to welcome her to the Guild meeting in July, especially as we are looking forward to our own workshop on flax spinning in October.

Margaret was just four years old when she and her family were bombed out of their house during WWII and all her toys were destroyed overnight.

She decided not to try and replace the toys but to take up a hobby instead. She taught herself to do tatting and has never looked back. Of all the various forms of lace making, this is probably still her favourite, although she is obviously more than proficient in the other types, as she demonstrated.

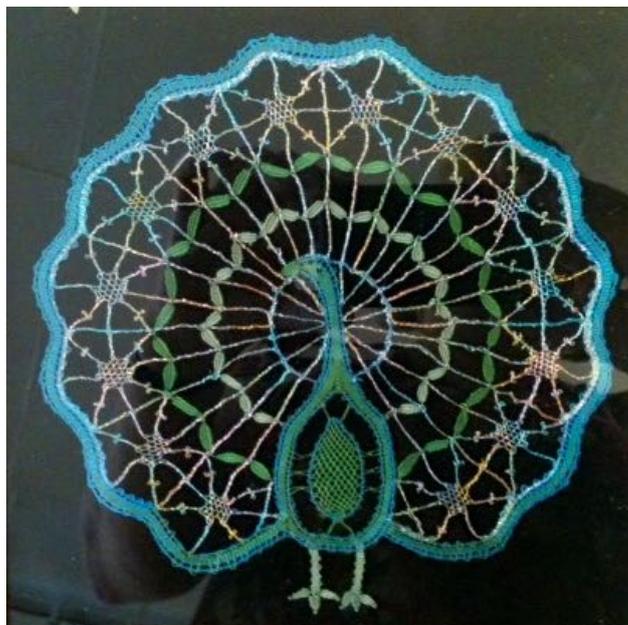
The origins of lace making in this country are hazy but were probably prompted by the very heavily embroidered and bejewelled costumes worn at the Tudor Court. These garments could not be laundered and so were worn over a series of linen undergarments, which could be washed. The cuffs of the undergarments stuck out beyond the sleeves of the costumes and were initially finished with a sort of blanket stitch that was gradually embellished and lengthened to become a feature of the outfit. One of the earliest forms, Bedford lace, is basically plaited, and *punto in aria* is a needle-made lace that developed in Venice and was usually heavily starched. The techniques were soon picked up by ladies' maids at court and became very widespread. A lot of the later Tudor lace was actually knitted and starched but when Scottish James 1 came to the throne the starching stopped and fashions became more sombre.

During the Civil War the Commonwealth puritans frowned on such frivolities as lace and people largely stopped making and wearing it (although portraits of Oliver Cromwell show that he managed to wear a little). With the restoration of the monarchy, Charles II returned from the French Court and soon discovered that there was no source of lace in this country to replace his as it wore out. He imported lace-makers from abroad to set up over here and to teach the English. This was mainly pillow lace technique using fine linen thread wound on bobbins. Needle lace continued, notably in Ireland. As knowledge spread, lace making was taught to poor girls in the dame schools but the only people who made money were the dealers who bought lace by the yard from the cottage lace-makers for a pittance and sold it to the rich. The best lace

still came from Europe and it was brought back from Italy by young men on the Grand Tour or even smuggled into this country in barrels of brandy.

Around England, lace developed differently in different regions; Bedford, Buckingham and Honiton being notable examples and it continued fairly steadily until the Victorian era, when lace became much showier – the width of ladies' crinolines meant one could not see fine detail from so far away! Black lace became popular with the Victorian obsession with death and mourning.

The industrial revolution brought machine-made lace and Nottingham lace almost destroyed the traditional industry. Many pieces of hand-made lace which had been treasured and stored away were sold during World War II and taken home as souvenirs by American soldiers and it was not until 1960s that a group of English women decided to try and revive this beautiful craft by researching the techniques. They then published a number of books and held classes.



And thank Goodness they did! Lace-making is now alive and well in this country and Margaret brought along a number of beautiful and prize-winning examples of her own work to show us, employing a variety of different lace techniques (shown above).

Some of us even had a try at a simple bobbin technique and guess what – it was really very narrow weaving!

Lesley Took

Award at Taunton Flower Show

5th August 2017

Taunton Flower Show is an annual event where there is a competition marquee. There are lots of sections in the competitions from photography and textile art as well as the usual flowers and cooking. This year one of our members, Hilary Tudgee, was awarded first prize in the class she had entered, as well as being the judges' overall choice for Textile Art. Their selection was across nine classes.



Hilary recommends entering the competitions to all Guild members. Her entry was a lovely tapestry called "Hint of Klimt". You can see the relevance of the title above.

On the left, Hilary can be seen working on the tapestry.

Paddy Bakker: Retrospective Exhibition

Paddy Bakker, Life President of the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, and Life Member of this Guild, is holding an exhibition, a retrospective of work over her lifetime. Paddy is not just a renowned weaver but is also an accomplished potter.

Paddy Bakker – Retrospective Exhibition

Cloth & Clay

An exhibition of textiles & pottery

Monday 23rd to Saturday 28th
October 10am – 4pm daily

The Friends Meeting House
13 Bath Place Taunton TA1 4EP

Enquiries: 01823 325345



Guild Demonstrations

Since the last Newsletter Guild members have been busy attending lots of demonstrations:

Bath and West Show
Bincome Fair
Brymore Fair
Wedmore Street Fair
Newton St Loe Open Farm Day

Mid Somerset Show
Yeovil Show
Yesterday's Farming
Quilting and Textile Show



Demonstrating at the Quilting and Textile Show

Rigid Heddle Workshop

3rd September 2017

Eleven Guild members attended the workshop. After learning to warp the loom using a warping peg followed by tying on and spreading the warp, members learned to use pick up sticks and hand manipulated lace techniques. The weave patterns created were:

Warp and weft floats
Windowpanes – a basic waffle weave
Leno lace
Brook's Bouquet
Danish medallions
Spanish lace

We worked a very full day and achieved a great deal.

For Sale

Frank Herring Spinning Wheel £150 o.n.o



Wheel made in the 1960's. Needs a good home due to ill health of owner.

Hand carders and three bobbins included. All in working order.

All reasonable offers considered.

Contact: Julie Bull on
01823 284157 or
07899 031157

Programme 2017

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

21st January

Design: Colour, texture and pattern
Janet Crowther
AGM 11.00am
*Chairperson Challenge: "Animal" using
Jacob fleece*

18th February

My weaving
Adam Jordan
Committee Meeting

18th March

Textiles of Japan
Jennifer Hughes

19th March

Shibori workshop

15th April

Members Skills Day
Soup and Bread Lunch

20th May

Breeding coloured sheep in
New Zealand
Fiona Gardner
Committee Meeting

17th June

Fleece Fair
Craft demonstrations

15th July

Lace making: bobbin and shuttle
Margaret Flux

19th August

Rigid heddle workshop: warping and
making a sampler of different patterns
including lace
Janet Maher

16th September

"Just an Inkling"
Ann Dixon
Dyeing competition
Committee meeting

17th September

Inkle weaving workshop

21st October

Flax to linen: spinning workshop
Margaret Knight
Spinning competition
Soup and Bread Lunch

18th November

Colours of Scotland: dyeing traditions
Carole Keepax
Weaving Competition
Committee meeting

16th December

Social event
Shared lunch and Secret Santa