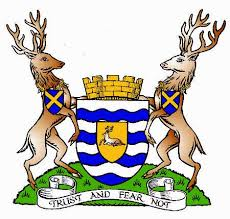
### contacts

West Essex & East Herts Guild of

Spinners, Weavers & Dyers



#### **December 2014**

#### Threads

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chair | Carolyn Green |
| Vice-Chair | Lesley Ottewell |
| Secretary | Mary Hicks |
| Treasurer | Cate Barnett |
| Publicity Officer | Asela Ali |
| Programme Secretary | Sue Prior |
| Committee Member | Chris Lane |
| Guild Website  www.westessexeasthertswsd.weebly.com | |  |
|  |  |



**Members of the Committee 2014/15**

**Guild Programme 2015**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **January - Saturday 10th**  **10am-4pm**  **Harlow Museum** | **Spinning workshop and Bring-and-Buy**  **Guild Challenge: ‘Make do and Mend’** |
| **February -Saturday 14th**  **10am-4pm**  **Widford Village Hall** | **Spindle Spinning workshop**  **Carol and Pete Leonard** |
| **March - Saturday 14th**  **10am-4pm**  **Harlow Museum** | **Weaving workshop**  **Shibori scarf project** |
| **April - Thursday 9th**  **7pm -9pm**  **Harlow Museum** | **Talk by Connie Flynn on her**  **Shetland experience** |

**We look forward to seeing you soon**

**GUILD CHALLENGE**  
  
**In line with the current trend to ‘Make do and Mend’ the challenge for his year is to up-cycle a garment of your choice spending no more than £10 in the process. For example it may be turning a jumper that is a bit snug into a waistcoat or embellishing over the worn bits of a favourite skirt.**

**We look forward to seeing your creations at our January meeting.**

**Meet the Quiltmakers**

**National Trust Magazine, Autumn 2014**

Charlotte Eddington and a team of volunteers at Killerton, Devon, have spent the last 2 years hand-sewing 336 leaves, 140 apples, 84 blossoms and 20 bees into a quilt destined to raise funds for Killerton’s historic textile collection.



The quilt’s central design is taken from the stained-glass window in the chapel, and the bluebells and fungi are from the 300 hectares of woodland. The bees live in hives in the orchard and feed on the blossoms, helping to pollinate the apple trees. The orchard has over 60 trees making award-winning cider and other produce.

The quilt is made entirely by hand using 11 techniques – needle-turn applique, braided applique, embroidery, beading, fabric-painting, oven-baked calico, raised embroidery, burnt cutwork, couching, hand quilting and Suffolk puffs. Some of their techniques have been unorthodox. They achieved the blotchy effect on the fungi by dipping the calico in coffee and baking it in the oven!

They are keen to pass their skills to the next generation; running workshops so children can make their own quilt piece and then they join then all together. The volunteers also go to the local primary school to teach textile skills.

You don’t need to be a textile expert to start quilting. If you can thread a needle and sew in a straight line you’ll pick the rest up as you go along. It can be challenging, or something relaxing to do while watching TV or sitting in the garden. It’s a hobby that’s definitely on the up and the volunteers have been amazed by how many people have been visiting Killerton specifically to see the quilt.



If you are a keen quiltmaker or would just like to embellish a piece of work with a lovely bee motif, you can create a ‘Killerton bee’ using calico, felt and beads by visiting the webpage:

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/killertonbee](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/killertonbee)

**Book Review**

*Tips for Knitters by Debbie Bliss*

*ISBN 978 0-09-192761-5 Priced at £8.99*



Having attended Fibre East and the Knitting and Stitching Show without a shopping list this year, my stash boxes are overflowing. Logic determines that I need to complete all my projects so that I have some winter clothes and more space in the boxes so this book was manna from Heaven!

I usually refer to the back of my several knitting magazines to remind myself how to complete basic tasks, but this book showed me that the ‘basics’ in the magazines really are! The book explains in detail what types of yarns are best for different projects, gives a comprehensive equipment list, and translates from American!

The methods for increasing, decreasing, fixing mistakes, colour knitting, seams and care of finished garments are clearly explained with diagrams. It is certainly helping me improve my skills and I am more confident that my seams look less ‘handmade’! … A good little stocking filler.

**Nuno Shawl Workshop, September 2014**

We had two visitors at our September workshop in Widford Village Hall, one of whom found out about the workshop through our website. I think this is the first time this has happened so the system must be working!

It’s always nice when one of our own members can lead a workshop to teach us something new and this was no exception. ‘Nuno’ is a Japanese word meaning woven material and the technique of nuno felt involves the tangling of wool fibres with a woven structure.

Asela was well-prepared with a vast roll of bubble-wrap, thin plastic sheeting, plastic bottles with holes in the lid and soap. We had brought various lengths of see-through fabric, wool tops, other bits and pieces which we hoped to incorporate and a pool noodle (a piece of equipment new to me!). Asela demonstrated the ‘classic’ way to felt fibre into fabric, with soap, water and elbow grease and we all set to with gusto, inspired by the wonderful samples Asela had.

Felting is not a particularly quick process and some of us were treated to a short-cut with Asela’s electric sander! Later in the day when we were recovering with a cup of tea and slice of cake Asela demonstrated her own nuno felting method which uses water, Fairy liquid and the electric sander, thereby eliminating the elbow grease! I think we all decided this was the way to go forward in the future...

**

*Asela’s first nuno sample was mending a moth-eaten silk georgette scarf that her father had bought her mother in Paris in the 1950s.*

Well, as ever, everyone produced something entirely different and individual and we all ended the day with a useable shawl or scarf and lots of new knowledge and ideas.

I had another go the following day on my kitchen work surface (which was not really ideal) and managed to produce a scarf which someone actually bought from me. I was utterly amazed! Many thanks to Asela.

By Mary Hicks

**The Knitting and Stitching Show and the Stranger on the table! by Chris Lane**

Asela and I offered to cover the Guild stand at The Knitting and Stitching Show at Ally Pally on the 9th October and I can only speak for myself but I had not fully understood the enormity of taking responsibility for a Guild stand at a national show attended by so many enthusiasts and experts in their field.

Mary had ploughed through mountains of pre-show paperwork and provided us with as much information as possible but even she was surprised when just the day before she discovered that we were expected to present an hour long public demonstration! Mary also managed to round up some support for us so that we could leave the show in time to attend the AGM that evening. Stephanie Edwards and Jan Slater agreed that they could take over around lunch time to allow us time to shop before heading for home.

Asela drove and we arrived at the venue in good time to familiarise ourselves with the stand, wheel, spindles, sale items and leaflets however there on the table was a rather complicated looking loom that neither of us had ever seen before. What were we to do? Help was at hand, within 10 minutes of the show opening, whilst we were still puzzling about the 'stranger' on the table, an experienced weaver appeared out of nowhere and introduced us to our inkle loom. She ably demonstrated how we might weave a belt or a braid and went on her merry way with our gratitude ringing in her ears. Our own efforts were interesting to say the least but we understood the basics of the loom.

As soon as the show got underway we were pleased to have so many interested and knowledgeable people visit the stand and several spinners, weavers and dyers from Guilds around the country came and spoke to us. We also introduced some complete novices to spinning on the wheel and spindle and even to a little wobbly weaving on our friend the inkle loom.

The demonstration was beginning to loom (pardon the pun) larger in our minds as the day wore on. What were we to do if Stephanie and Jan had got held up? It was clear that the inkle loom was barely going to feature if we were responsible for a demonstration so we hatched a sketchy spinning focussed plan 'just in case'. However it was not needed, Stephanie and Jan arrived as promised and saved the day by producing a well-attended professional demonstration out of the hat. We were very grateful to them.

Asela and I had a very enjoyable and busy day, we learnt a lot and had time for some retail therapy before heading back for a quick bite to eat before the AGM.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qstJKh98zy0&list=UUd9QG4LSY6vjevgukSycgdA>

**Touring Exhibition of Fleece to Fibre - the Making of the Large Tree Group Tapestry**



Victoria Crowe’s celebrated painting, *Large Tree Group* (1975), was chosen by Dovecot Studios to be woven into a large tapestry as part of their centenary celebrations. The Studios had previously collaborated with Victoria Crowe in 2007 on *Two Views* tapestry, which was commissioned by the Duke of Buccleuch. The *Large Tree Group Tapestry* was completed in 2013 after hundreds of hours of careful work by Dovecot’s Master Weavers. Using only un-dyed wool sourced from around the country, the tapestry is presented at the heart of the *Fleece to Fibre: the making of The Large Tree Group Tapestry* exhibition. The tapestry was first shown at Dovecot Studios in summer 2013 as part of the Fleece to Fibre exhibition, which proved to be one of the most popular shows in Dovecot’s history to date.

*Fleece to Fibre: the making of The Large Tree Group Tapestry* explores the process behind the project, tracing the journey from sheep through to yarn and then into the completed tapestry. Some 70 producers across Great Britain, from small-scale crofters to large estates, provided wool from diverse sheep breeds then spun by a range of specialists – again from individual spinners and small groups to commercial operations on a semi-industrial scale.

Accompanying the work is a series of commissioned photographic portraits from renowned Scottish photographer, Alicia Bruce, which celebrate the diversity of those people who have contributed behind the scenes to this complex project. Portraits of Victoria Crowe and the Dovecot weavers sit alongside those of some of the owners and caretakers of the sheep, as well as the spinners whose work was integral to the tapestry. *Fleece to Fibre: the making of The Large Tree Group Tapestry* celebrates the diversity, skill and ingenuity of artists, designers and makers who choose to work with yarn and textiles. A selection from Paul Farnham’s series of photographs, published in *Beautiful Sheep* (2008) highlights the range of sheep breeds that produced the un-dyed wool used in the creation of this unique collaborative tapestry.

Since it’s unveiling in Edinburgh in August 2013, the *Large Tree Group Tapestry* has been acquired and gifted to National Museums Scotland by Sir Angus Grossart, and is made available for tour as a result of their flexibility and cooperation.

**Fleming Collection,** London, England  
29 October – 14 February 2015  
[www.flemingcollection.com](http://dovecotstudios.com/www.flemingcollection.com)



Knit for Peace UK is an initiative of the [Charities Advisory Trust](http://www.charitiesadvisorytrust.org.uk/cat-about). It grew out of projects developed in Rwanda and India, which brought together women of traditionally hostile communities (Hutu and Tutsi war widows in Rwanda and Muslim and Hindu women in the slums of Delhi) to knit clothes for street children and orphans. We paid the knitters and distributed the clothes through local NGO’s.

Knitters in the UK asked if they could knit for those in need, and we discovered there was a huge need for knitters to have someone to knit for. Once we said we would distribute donated knitting we found we were inundated.

Our policy is to encourage people to give, whether it is time or money. We now distribute regularly to over 80 outlets, including hospitals, women’s refuges, refugee drop in centres, prisons, community groups, and hospices as well as to developing countries. We never sell the clothes; we send them where they are needed. We also pass on donations of yarn and needles to enable people on low incomes to knit. The operation has grown organically, and we estimate we have over 11,000 knitters.

#### [Jamie](http://www.knitforpeace.org.uk/2013/07/30/whoops-we-made-an-error/jamie-2/)

If you are an individual or group looking to give knitted items to a good cause then have a look at our [Projects and Patterns](http://knitforpeaceuk.wordpress.com/projects-and-patterns/) page where you’ll find a range of free patterns to use. You can use any pattern you would like and knit any item you fancy.

Have you got any spare needles, yarn or other knitting related paraphernalia? We can use them in our work with marginalised sections of society, to help set up new groups and keep the needles clacking!

If you can donate please send to:

**Knit For Peace  
Radius Works  
Back Lane  
London NW3 1HL**

**Please include a**[**knitted goods recording sheet**](http://www.knitforpeace.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Knitted-Goods-Recording-Sheet-2014.pdf)**with your parcel so that we know who has sent us what!**

**Show & Tell 2014**

This year was a bumper crop with a first handspun, hand-knitted and natural dyed hat and the selection of felt and knitting items pictured here from two of our newer members.

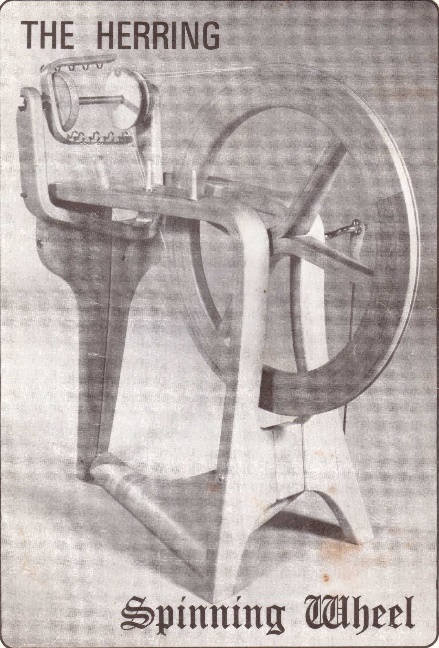
All the attendees at the Nuno workshop brought along their shawls and talked through their experiences.

Pamela and Lesley brought along a variety of handspun and home designed knits that were going to good homes. Asela’s Mum sent a woven bag from Barbados and herself showed a crocheted dress.



Hilary showed us a cactus with unusual flowering habits and we suspect next year she may have dyed some yarn with it!

***FOR SALE OR…..***

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One of our members has a Frank Herring wheel for sale, as her house is not big enough for more than one wheel so it has to go!

She is happy to give it to someone or maybe swap it for something if they would feel happier about that.  There are about 8 or so bobbins to go with it and also the original instruction book.

Please contact:

[sue@rspulham.co.uk](mailto:sue@rspulham.co.uk)

**GUILD BANNER**

When I joined the Guild in the early 1990s the banner project was already in progress and, as I was a very new member, I didn't expect to get involved - everybody seemed to know what they were doing. There was even a 'Banner meeting' one Saturday when I first saw it and all those present were busy spinning and making things with the idea of getting it finished, I think I did some Navajo plying. However, it faded into the background again, only occasionally being referred to, until a few years ago I risked an inquiry and there was a brief revival of interest although, I think, some felt it was just a cosmetic frippery which had no real purpose.  
Nonetheless, for some reason, I have always felt it a worthwhile project. I have seen the banners of other Guilds and thought we, too, could have something that represented what we are, what we do and what we stand for.

When I stood up at the 2013 AGM and, again, mentioned the banner, I dared suggest that I would take over and declared I would, if at all possible, produce a finished article by the same time in 2014. I also said I'd be happy to project-manage the creation and invited submission of designs and/or offers of practical assistance. Asela was absent from that meeting but she knew about the declaration and signed up immediately as part of her ‘publicity’ duties. We started pushing ideas about, design, materials, and manufacture. Probably half our year was spent on planning but gradually our ideas condensed, evolving as we went on.

Asela produced the base felt and printed off the script at the desired size. I knitted i-cords from my stash of hand-spun natural fibres to fit the printed letters and pinned them to foam blocks. We had planned to spin the yarn for the woven border but, with time running out, the discovery of some very suitable commercial yarn at Fibre East cut out that job. Asela chose the dyes and I dyed the commercial yarn with some hand-spun wool I planned to use for a kumihimo braid. This took me three days as I only had equipment to hand for two colours at a time but the results were pleasing. Funny how they are my colours!

Asela then had the job of weaving the border. We picked a fine day and had a warping-up session at my place using the Ashford quick method for the fifteen feet of warp. I then warped my marudai with the hand-spun, dyed yarn and made a flat braid to edge the border.

We were now at a point where 'all' we had to do was assemble the parts. This was probably more work than all the preparation. About this time we both had rather pressing commitments in our lives, a holiday I originally planned for September had been moved to October which meant I couldn't be at the AGM so, already, my declaration to produce the banner at that meeting was not going to be fulfilled. However, Asela soldiered on without me and got on with the very tricky job of transferring the lettering from foam to felt. I'm glad I didn't have to do it!

Urgent last minute meetings were arranged and everything was pinned on and tweaked. I sewed the woven border and braid onto the felt base and added a flannel backing, not the one we planned but my sewing skills failed me on that. We had, by now, found some of the work made for the original banner, including four little sheep which we can attach to the felt as a tribute to those members who were involved so many years ago.

Whilst I completed the backing, Asela very quickly used up the leftover yarns to crochet a matching basket to hold our programmes and started work on another container to use the excess woven band – very much ‘make-do-an-mend! So, with much trepidation, I transported the new banner to the November meeting, a month later than intended, but, what better time than Show-and-Tell?



We like to think it represents all we do and believe in. It will, we hope, stand over us when we appear as a Guild and demonstrate the aspects of our craft to good effect.

**By Carolyn Green**

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| **Calendar of Upcoming Events** |
| Waltham Abbey Wool Show  Sunday 18th January 2015  [Marriott Hotel,](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/lonwa-waltham-abbey-marriott-hotel/) Old Shire Lane, Waltham Abbey |
| Stitchtopia Festival  20th – 23th March 2015  Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire.  AGM Association of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers  18th April 2015  Conway Hall, London. |
| Fibre East  25- 26 July 2015  Redborne School & Community College, Bedford |
| Wingham Woolwork Week-end  31st October - 1st November 2015  Village Hall at Lavenham |
|  |

**… and finally,**



The Web Information Point (WIP) is available to all Guild members from the Association website ([wsd.org.uk](http://wsd.org.uk/)) under the Members tab.  It contains details of, for example, the Certificate of Achievement, Association events, job descriptions and health and safety issues.

**Log in details -**

email address: wip@wsd.org.uk

password: agwsdwip2012

THREADS

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of Threads or would like to add some information to our website, please contact Asela Ali at palmsnpeacocks@gmail.com

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Lead Workshops will need to be booked through our Treasurer and paid for in advance.

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If you would like to propose a speaker or workshop or would like us to come and demonstrate, please contact our Programme Secretary.

**\*\*\***

To borrow equipment or books from the Guild library please contact a member of the committee.

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Monthly meetings at Harlow Museum

Muskham Road

CM20 2LF

