

Threads

The newsletter of the Lea Valley Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers

February 2021 - The Lockdown Edition

It has been a long time since we were able to meet due to the current pandemic. As you know, it was necessary to curtail our meetings to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It was fabulous that so many people were able to meet at the Spinning in the Churchyard event in August but doesn't that seem like a long time ago?

The Committee are hopeful that normal meetings will be able to resume later this year, meanwhile, read on for some news, some information about how to keep in touch right now and about planned activities for 2021.

Revived Weaving in Orkney

... and a belated thank you.

When I stood down as Secretary at the 2018 AGM, the Guild gave me an extremely generous cash gift. I really didn't know what to say, I was so shocked. I didn't spend the money for ages as I wanted to use it for something worthwhile. Towards the end of 2019 I spotted a request for crowdfunding to revive the weaving industry on Orkney. I pledged nearly the whole amount towards the project, the reward for which would, eventually, be a hand-woven scarf. By 9 January 2020 they had successfully raised £13,085 with 141 supporters in 37 days.

The Orkney Cloth Company is a start-up weaving business, founded by India Johnson. After completing a degree in Fine Art from Newcastle University in 2018, and a graduate weaving placement in Orkney, she decided to set up her own cloth weaving business to revive the weaving industry in Orkney. Their aim is to create sustainable hand-woven products which support traditional craftsmanship and the local community. They hope to revive the traditional weaving industry in Orkney, through training and weaving workshops and by creating small collections of blankets and scarves on a double width loom, eventually weaving lengths of cloth to sell by the metre.

In her request for crowdfunding, India said that weaving ceased in Orkney over 20 years ago, due to reluctance to invest in larger, double-width looms. She was keen to buy a second-hand, double-width loom: the Griffith Loom, enabling production of wider blankets, multiple scarves and lengths of cloth. Pledges towards the project would help fund the loom, and any extra money raised would go towards further weaving equipment, such as a sectional warper to help get the yarn onto the loom. A wider aim is to invest in traditional skills and craftsmanship, helping younger people get into the textile industry by offering training and mini workshops using the Griffith loom; helping young people to see the potential in working in the textile industry in Orkney.

My lovely grey hopsack scarf arrived last summer. I don't know whether the Orkney Cloth Company will survive and prosper but, at least, I have a new scarf with an interesting back story! The work can be seen at <https://orkneycloth.com/>. So, my thanks to everyone.



Mary Hicks – January 2021

Activities for 2021

AGM

Our AGM was deferred from October until **April**. This year the meeting will necessarily be held in a virtual manner over the internet using Zoom. Full instructions will be included in an invitation closer to the time.

Spinning for Socks

We started spinning for socks in our first couple of meetings in 2020. Hopefully you have continued and are ready to dye your yarn. The current plan is to use our **July** meeting at the Farm to dye the yarn ready for making up into socks later in the year. This event is held outdoors and we will follow the government advice in place at that time regarding social distancing, wearing of masks and so on. Thanks as usual to Sue Prior for hosting this event.

Spinning in the Churchyard

We are hoping that this will take place as usual in **August** in the Churchyard at St. Peter's in Roydon. Again, this event will be held outdoors and we will follow the health and safety advice in place at the time.

Guild Competition 2020

2020 was the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Guild. Our guild competition was to have the theme "Ruby". We are moving this competition and, hopefully, the celebration to this year. The challenge is to make Something Red – it can be any form of handicraft but since we are spinners, weavers and dyers it would be fabulous if you used those skills in your piece.



Keeping in touch

Zoom

We are planning to meet 'virtually' for a few months until safe gathering resumes. This will commence with two drop in sessions in March for us to 'Show and Tell' what we have all been doing during 2020. (Zoom details to follow)

Facebook

We have a **Facebook** group where many members have been showing their work, chatting along and sharing information of interest. Search for "Lea Valley SWD" and click on the Join link. One of the group admins will then admit you to the group – this may take some time, so please be patient.

Ravelry

If you prefer **Ravelry**: we also have a group – "Lea Valley Guild SWD".

Dates for your Diary

Event	Date	Time
Show and Tell Zoom (details to follow)	Saturday 6th March 2021	10:00 am or 2:00 pm
Guild AGM Zoom (details to follow)	Thursday 8 th April 2021	7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Dye Day – Sock Yarn Dyeing Workshop Bucklers Hall Farm, Perry Green	Saturday 3 rd July 2021	10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Spinning in the Churchyard St. Peter's Church, Roydon	Saturday 7 th August 2021	10:00 am – 4:00 pm