

Lea Valley Guild of Spinners, Weavers
and Dyers

Threads



January 2020

Members of the Committee 2019/20

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|---|------------------------|
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| Vice-Chair vicechair@leavalleyguildswd.uk | Michele |
| Secretary secretary@leavalleyguildswd.uk | Asela |
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| Publicity Officer publicity@leavalleyguildswd.uk | Deb |
| Programme Secretary programme@leavalleyguildswd.uk | Sue Prior |
| Committee Members committee1@leavalleyguildswd.uk committee2@leavalleyguildswd.uk (Outside Events) | Audrey Chris & Teri |

Guild Website

leavalleyguildswd.weebly.com

Social Media



@weehgswd



weehgswd

National Exhibition Projects

After our success four years ago, it would be nice to have the Lea Valley Guild represented at the 2020 Exhibition so here are some ideas we could develop.

Open Section: "Still Waters"

A textile piece in any discipline to fit within a 6inch/15cm ring. A metal ring, a wooden embroidery ring or a cardboard circle covered with dyed and embroidered fabric; are all appropriate. Everything submitted will be displayed, but it must not exceed 6 inches/15cms in diameter.

They envisage the rings being displayed hanging against a wall, one above the other, possibly from a long horizontal pole, so they will need a small hanging loop at the top and bottom.

Sue and Teri are aiming to acquire some 6"/15cm rings, which will be available for members to embellish using any of the above techniques.

Juried Section: "Coal, Cotton, Canals"

Hilary, Michele and I had a brainstorming session to see if we could formulate a plan for a group project. We have come up with an outline plan, which will give us a starting point for discussion. From past experience, I know that a few ideas on the table are much more productive than an open discussion to initiate proceedings.

Cotton: We could use cotton as our fibre content. Cotton spinning is different from wool as the staple is very short. We could use cotton in a variety of states such as both hand spun and commercial cotton yarn and cotton fabric such as lawn, muslin cambric and calico.

Coal: From the mid-nineteenth century, synthetic dyes were produced from coal. I have made enquiries from some dye suppliers but their dyes are no longer coal based. We understand that they still use aniline dyes for wood and leather so this avenue may still be open to us.

Canals: With the constraints of time, it is probably wise to avoid a complicated final piece to complete the project. One idea to represent canals is to take a photo and crop a narrow vertical strip from it. We could then make a wrapping with the yarn using the colours from the cropped photo strip. This could be one photo or a group of photos mounted carefully on a board.

Key Dates

Entries for Selection (feelie pieces and A4 photos) to be posted about 25th May to arrive no later than June 8th. *(This means that the project needs to be ready by May 25th)*

Selected items to be posted about 29th July to arrive no later than 12th August.

Rings to be posted about 5th August to arrive by the 19th August.

Lesley Ottewell

Tips for Submitting work to the National Exhibition

Jennie Parry, the new President of the Association recently came to the Come and Weave Group of the Cambridgeshire Guild to talk about getting work accepted for the National Exhibition. In the past, some members have been disappointed not to be selected and didn't want to risk further rejection so here are some of her tips for giving yourself the best chance to have your work chosen.

- Don't submit scarves – the selection committee are always inundated! Think of more unusual items and it is often easier to find a space for smaller ones.
- For the initial stage, send good photographs taken in good light. Jennie showed us a couple of photographs she had sent in and

they had been taken with her mobile 'phone, using a selfie stick! She emphasised over and over that attention to detail is really important so, if you have incorporated a nifty little design feature or fastening, make sure it is visible in the photograph.

- Make sure you send a “feely” piece.
- Packaging: - Jennie has often used plastic boxes with clip on lids from the Really Useful Box Company to send her pieces in but also showed us homemade boxes made from two sheets of cardboard cut from strong boxes with kitchen roll inners taped to the two outer edges to create space in the centre for the work. The whole thing was tied with ribbon and parcelled up. It looked good but I should have asked if it provided enough protection, having seen the way parcels are treated by delivery drivers. I am not sure whether they would hold up to having a weighty box thrown on top!
- Because a lot of Jennie’s work is fancy takadai braids and small bags she likes to mount them herself on Perspex sheets with a hanger to indicate which way up they should be displayed or instructions to put them on a flat surface. She has various methods of attaching the braids to the Perspex – a set of three were coiled like snakes. Before placing the pieces in the box for sending she uses turban cotton (easily found in Leicester where she lives!) to wrap them in. This is lightweight and inexpensive. Incidentally, Jennie’s Braids and little bags were absolutely exquisite – beautifully designed and executed – many had lovely details which were not necessary to the design but added that extra something.
- Consider the exhibition space. Jennie has had work selected but not hung purely because when it came to hanging there just wasn’t a suitable area.
- In 2020 the exhibition will be in Leigh Spinners Mill in Lancashire. Jennie suggested considering the building and its purpose when

planning what to submit. The theme is Coal, Cotton, Canals so they are hoping that will inspire you, too.

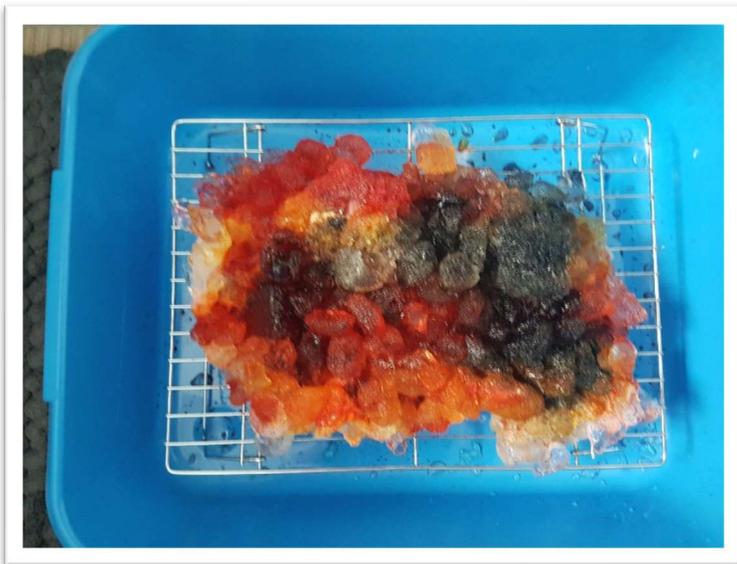
Sue Prior

Ice Dyeing

Having heard about ice and snow dyeing, I thought I'd give it a go. This was more of an experiment than a scientific method, but I was pleased with the results.

I washed a silk scarf and then gave it a diluted vinegar bath for 30 minutes.

I put it on a cooling rack, covered it in crushed ice and then sprinkled on powdered Kookaid: grape, cherry, orange and black cherry.



I left it overnight for the ice to melt and for the liquid to soak in.



The final step was to heat it in the microwave to set the dye, before rinsing and ironing.

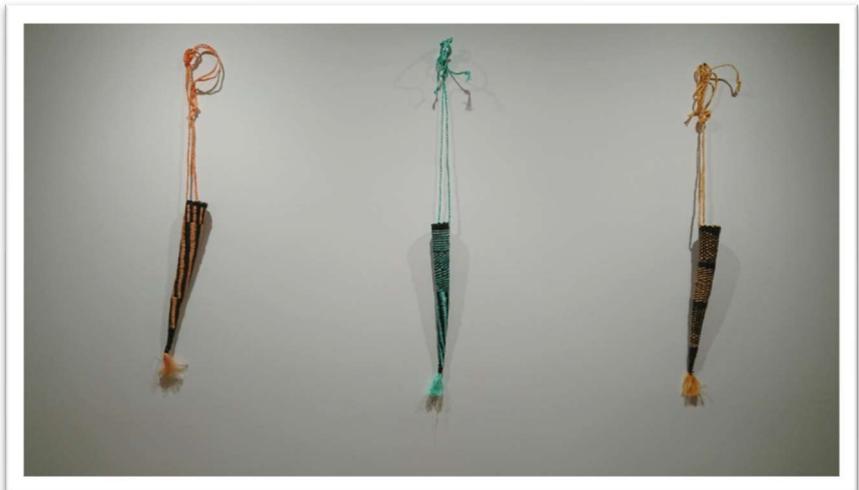
Asela Ball

Lois Walpole Exhibition “Weaving Ghosts”

I went to see this exhibition of weaving using found objects from beaches in Shetland. Lois Walpole’s great grandfather was a crofter on Yell and would make his own baskets and rope from materials found around his home – straw, rush, etc. The marine debris and goods that are washed up on the beach now are often plastic and are known as ‘ghost gear’. The discovery of plastic is what brought about

the demise of rural basketry traditions and they are therefore, inextricably linked.

The exhibition consisted of functional, abstract and conceptual pieces using these found items in combination with traditional basketry skills.



Through this artwork Lois questions whether protecting the environment is important to us. And by reusing items left as litter on the beaches, questions our attitude to consumerism that makes us decide when something is rubbish.



In close up:



The exhibition was held at Broadway Gallery in Letchworth.

Audrey McNeill

Festival of Wildlife, Panshanger Park, 27-28 July

I was lucky; I was there on the Sunday. Hilary and Michele had to set up in pouring rain on the Saturday but by Sunday it was merely just dull, drizzly and windy. Still, we were in a good solid marquee so sheltered from the elements. Finding the actual festival site was quite tricky as it's a 1,000 acre site with tracks going in all directions and not signposted for the likes of tradesmen! However, having gone down one incorrect muddy track I was sent in the right direction by a lady walking her dog.

The Festival was held in a large, wind-swept field but it had a very nice 'feel' and all the stallholders and visitors were charming. People came properly dressed for a hike in the country and were interested in what we were doing. Despite the weather, there were lots of visitors and we were kept busy all day. The only other craft being demonstrated was wood carving but there were badger, bat and bee people there, some clothing and card stalls and an amusing guy from St Albans selling wholefoods. There were several food outlets and I had some excellent hot samosas for lunch.

Panshanger Park is beautiful. It lies roughly parallel to the A414 between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City and is managed for both people and wildlife by Tarmac (the owner), Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Herts County Council. Owned by the Cowper family from the late 17th to the early 20th century, the Panshanger Estate was shaped around the Mimram Valley following advice from Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. Panshanger Park is registered as a Grade: II* park and garden by Historic England. Since the 1980s, the park has been owned by Tarmac and parts have been quarried for sand and gravel. Much of the site has now been restored to arable farming and a range of valuable wildlife habitats including a new section of chalk river and a number of lakes. Recently, Longhorn Cattle, as envisaged by Repton, have been introduced and more of the

site will be opened up as the remaining extraction processes come to an end.

This is the second year that we have been invited to demonstrate at the Park, and I am very glad I went along. It was a most enjoyable day.

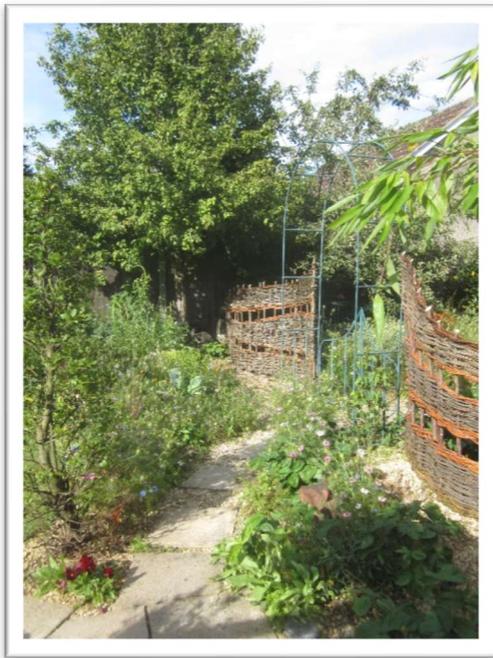
Mary

Willow Fencing

Billy & I have been wanting to divide our garden to allow our chickens to roam in safety - away from potentially marauding Jack Russels/feline articles, and I'd seen lovely pictures on Pinterest of artfully created willow fences. I enquired around and found Wasseldine Willows who were prepared to come to us with the materials, and to teach us on site how to make our fence. So finally last month Guy from Wasseldine turned up one sunny morning with a trailer full of willow and hazel stakes, and we got stuck in.



He started off with the setting out of the hazel stakes - we drew a line in the earth and tapped them in at 6 inch centres and then we started to weave. There are two techniques - both of which I was familiar with from tapestry weaving. Guy wove the first layer of twining - and then set me to work for the second layer. We then went onto standard weaving - which was surprisingly easy to do and quicker than it looks. I had a go, then Billy took over, and Guy and I set out the fence on the other side of the central arch. We had to take occasional breaks, as it was a fierce sunny day - we drank plenty, and had to regularly hose down the willow under sopping wool blankets to keep it moist and workable.



We decided to use different colours of willow - using yellow for the twining and having breaks in the weaving. The fence was in a wave shape on the ground and also vertically - being higher near the arch and toward the house. The strips of weaving between the gaps were also of different thickness, which meant we had to add partial rows to build up sections - just like in

tapestry woven panels. The design was very organic - we stood back and discussed how we should proceed at regular intervals, which was a pleasing way to work.

It was a lovely day with a patient teacher, and at the end of it the fence on one side of the arch was completed, and the other was side set out ready for Billy & I to complete over the following days - whereupon the weather changed, and it rained repeatedly - every time we went out to do some weaving! Although this was not entirely a bad thing - we needed to keep the willow wet after all!



Billy took to weaving with willow - and was probably better at it than I was by the end. We are so pleased with the finished fence - it's not just a divider for the garden - it is definitely a feature which adds to the feel of the garden. I look forward to growing a few pretty things up it just to add to the cottage garden feel.

Michele

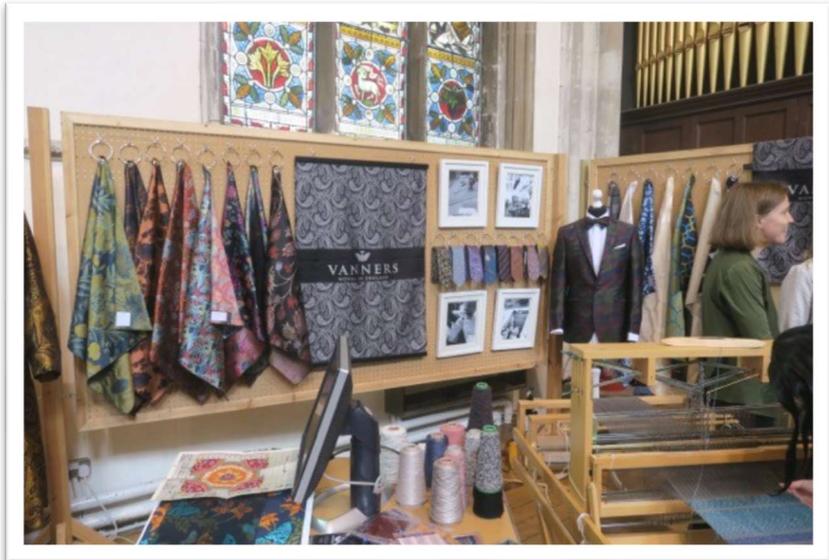
Sudbury Silk Festival

In September our guild meeting was a visit to the Sudbury Silk Festival. Sudbury in Suffolk has a long tradition of silk weaving that stretches back to the 1780s. By 1844 there were four silk manufacturers with 600 silk looms between them and it is still a thriving industry today with five silk weaving companies: Gainsborough Silk Weaving Company, The Humphries Weaving Company, Stephen Walters & Sons, David Walter Fabrics and Vanners Silks.

We were able to visit mill shops and showrooms as well as exhibitions.

Here is just a taste of our day.

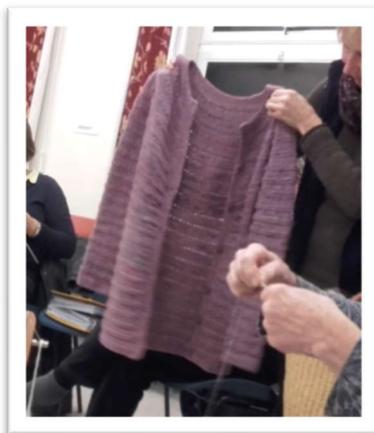
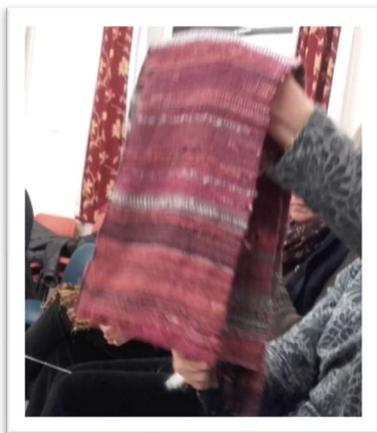




Photos by Lesley Ottewell

Show and Tell

At our November meeting it is traditional to show our work for the year. Here is a selection of pieces made by members in 2019.







Photos by Hilary Hedderick

Guild Competition 2020

Time to get your thinking caps on. This year marks our 40th Anniversary and so the theme for this year's competition is "Ruby".

Your 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.

The competition will be held at our AGM on Thursday 8th October, 7-9:30pm

Crafting with Phormium



I was intrigued when I saw Michele making crocheted coasters from phormium.

My mum has loads of them in her garden in Cornwall. When I spent a couple of days with her I made a couple of baskets,

including this one. The possibilities seem endless once you start playing. They also dry to very pretty colours.

Teri Malakouna



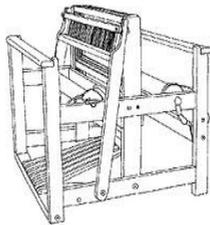
Threads

If you would like to contribute to the next edition of Threads or would like to add some information to our website, please contact the Publicity Officer.

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

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 from the Guild please contact a member of the committee.



Monthly meetings in Roydon village.

Please see website for up to date details.