

*West Essex & East Herts Guild of  
Spinners, Weavers & Dyers*

# *Threads*



*June 2016*

## Members of the Committee 2015/16

<b>Chair</b>	Carolyn Green
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Lesley Ottewell
<b>Secretary</b>	Mary Hicks
<b>Treasurer</b>	Cate Barnett
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Asela Ali
<b>Programme Secretary</b>	Sue Prior
<b>Committee Member</b>	Chris Lane

**Guild Website**

[www.westessexeasthertswsd.weebly.com](http://www.westessexeasthertswsd.weebly.com)

## Guild Programme 2016

<b>Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July</b> <b>10am onwards</b>	Visit - London Cloth Company
<b>Saturday 13th August</b> <b>10.00a.m. - 4.00 p.m.</b>  <b>Harlow Museum</b>	Spinning in the Museum Gardens
<b>Saturday 10th September</b> <b>10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.</b>  <b>Widford Village Hall</b>	Weave a Tapestry bag on a box
<b>Thursday 8th October</b> <b>7.00-9.00 p.m.</b>  <b>Harlow Museum</b>	Annual General Meeting and Competition: Dye A Bundle

**We look forward to seeing you soon**



## Forthcoming Meetings

### Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> 10.30am

We are having an 'away day' for this meeting. Daniel Harris has kindly allowed us to visit his **London Cloth Company** on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July at 10.30.

There has been a list for this event for some time. We have sufficient numbers for this visit to be viable but a couple of cancellations have given us some spare places if anyone wishes to go. As I need to pay on the day, please could you let me have any outstanding balance before then.

This small business is to be found just south of Thornwood Common. Take the road from Harlow towards Epping. Just after Thornwood Common, take a left turn into Woodside. After about a quarter of a mile there is a small industrial estate. There is a one-way system in operation, so you need to take the second entrance. The weaving shed is in the far right corner as you look from the entrance. Park where you can.

I will be there from 10.15. The visit is scheduled to last for an hour but Daniel is an enthusiastic talker and is likely to give us more time.

He may have some fabrics for sale so be prepared to spend.

We are then going on to The King's Head in North Weald Bassett, which is close by. This is part of the Vintage Inn chain, which serves meals at a reasonable price. I will need to book in advance so must know beforehand, how many will require lunch.

I have maps for those who need one.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> August 10.00am – 4pm

### **Spinning in the Museum Garden**

This is always a pleasant day, when we take advantage of the walled garden beside the museum. Bring your wheel or any current project and sit and chat as you work. We often have visitors to the garden and they like to watch us work. If you have anything of interest to show, bring it on the day. We can always find somewhere to display it.

If anyone needs advice about the Bag on a Box challenge, bring you questions to this meeting.

There will be tea and coffee during the day but you will need to bring a packed lunch as usual.



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September 10.00am – 4pm at Widford Village Hall

### **Weave a Tapestry Bag on a Box**

You will need to have a strong cardboard box of a size suitable for making a bag. It could be useful if you have it warped up already to save time. Use the August meeting to clarify any questions.

# GUILD CHALLENGE 2016

## 'DYE A BUNDLE'

The Guild challenge for presentation at the October 2016 meeting is a test of creativity. Create anything you like using some of each of the items in your bundle. You don't have to use everything and may add other things to complete your chosen work of art/craft. So far the colours discovered and shared:

Sue Prior, Mary Hicks –	sunshine yellow
Chris Lane, Carolyn Green –	pale apricot
Michele Turner –	mostly purple
Asela Ali –	shell pink
Audrey McNeill, Nina Hedderick-Reid –	turquoise
Sue Pulham –	green
Kathryn Ehrich –	cranberry red
Hilary Hedderick –	pink
Lesley Ottewell -	olive green

The following is what were in the bundles:

Cotton fabric	Boucle yarn
Silk fibre	Cotton chenille yarn
Wensleydale locks	Fine crochet cotton
Mohair fibre	
Hemp yarn	
Mohair/wool/cotton mix yarn	
Cotton yarn	
Sock weight wool yarn	
DK wool yarn	
Wool boucle yarn	
Warping cotton	

## January meeting: Carding and Blending

This turned out to be a lovely meeting. There was a drum carder on the table, some hackles clamped to the same table, some small wool combs, hand carders, a flick carder and a blending board. They were either part of the Guild's collection of equipment or members had brought them in.

I have a drum carder but can no longer find anywhere to clamp it at home but the blending board was a revelation. I managed to make ten rolags from the tops I had brought with me. They were a mixture of gold and terracotta shades of merino tops.



Michele Turner showed a few of us how to lay the fibres on to the board and then remove the sheet of fibres using two sticks.

The ten rolags weighed 80g, which I spun at home. For the first time in years I was able to spin a fairly thick single yarn, which I then plied back on itself to give me a chunky yarn, which I plan to use for my 'Bag on a Box' Project.

I have since borrowed Hilary's blending board to continue creating yarns for the project. I now have five balls of yarn in the gold/terracotta colours with each ball having a slightly different variation of the combined colours.

This process worked best with wool tops rather than fleece as it has already been combed out. Where I added fleece, I found that I had to be quite sparing. I also found that if I applied too much wool, it became hard to pull out the fibre from the rolag with the result that my spinning was slow with too much twist. I had to treadle very slowly to accommodate this. However, I found that this sorted itself out during plying and gave me a firm thread with a high twist. Once I had learned to put less on each time, the fibres pulled out evenly and gave me really good blends.



This has broadened my scope for spinning and I plan to get a board of my own as soon as I can.

Lesley Ottewell

## **Guild Member Craft preferences**

At recent meetings the Committee has been asking for feedback on what makes your experience enjoyable and rewarding as a member. Chris has kindly been gathering the data and we are presenting a snapshot of the latest feedback for your information and comment. We expect this to be an ongoing exercise with several opportunities to express your interests and help us organise the right speakers/ workshops and mix of meetings.

8 votes	Basket making (including one request for coiled wool) Dyeing
6 votes	Weaving (incl. one for colour, design, loom dressing, shaft switching techniques, transparencies in linen structures)
5 votes	Felting
4 votes	Buttons Knitting Spinning
3 votes	Batik Fastenings Hat making Plying Tapestry Weaving
2 votes	Crochet Lacemaking Passementerie

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 2 votes | Printing  |
|         | Tatting   |
| 1 vote  | Braids/Bands                                    |
|         | Embroidery                                      |
|         | Fleece  |
|         | Looms   |
|         | Pattern adaptation (comment –is this Lesley’s?) |
|         | Rag rug making                                  |

### RESPONSES TO ‘WHAT WOULD MAKE THE GUILD EVEN BETTER FOR YOU?’

- 3 requests- More demonstrations/practical sessions
- 2 requests- More outings/visits (Perhaps one a year/in addition to meetings)
- 2 requests- More opportunities for skill/sharing/learning skills from other members (day with a theme & share techniques –like Jan 2016 carding and blending)
- 2 requests- More crafting/working together

## *Colours to Dye For*

Lavenham Guildhall – Sat 9<sup>th</sup> July, 11am -4pm

The Lavenham Guild will reveal the secrets of dyeing, using natural (and some surprising!) media, re-creating the famous Lavenham Blew.

## What is Batik?

Batik is both an art and a craft, which is becoming more popular and well known in the West as a wonderfully creative medium. The art of decorating cloth in this way, using wax and dye, has been practised for centuries. In Java, Indonesia, batik is part of an ancient tradition, and some of the finest batik cloth in the world is still made there. The word batik originates from the Javanese *tik* and means to dot.

To make a batik, selected areas of the cloth are blocked out by brushing or drawing hot wax over them, and the cloth is then dyed. The parts covered in wax resist the dye and remain the original colour. This process of waxing and dyeing can be repeated to create more elaborate and colourful designs. After the final dyeing the wax is removed and the cloth is ready for wearing or showing.

Contemporary batik, while owing much to the past, is markedly different from the more traditional and formal styles. For example, the artist may use etching, discharge dyeing, stencils, different tools for waxing and dyeing, wax recipes with different resist values and work with silk, cotton, wool, leather, paper or even wood and ceramics.

Batik is historically the most expressive and subtle of the resist methods.

By The Batik Guild

## March Meeting: Necklaces



This was not so much a workshop as a play day for adults. I showed everyone what could be achieved with some well-made cords and introduced my stash of odds and ends for everyone to dip into.

How to proceed:

- Use small lengths of hand spun yarn and impart extra twist to the existing single of plied thread and then ply it back on itself or with a different similarly over-twisted thread.
- Start with the fibre, spin a high twist thread and ply it with the same or a different high-twist thread. If using a variety of fibres or colours it is worth carding them together first.
- Use commercial knitting or weaving yarns and re-spin them to give extra twist in the same direction. Yarns can be 'S' or 'Z' twist so do check. If your thread kinks then you are right. Again ply with itself or another thread.
- Some weaving yarns are quite fine so take a few at the same time and spin them together with a high twist and ply as before.
- To add a bit of glamour to your cords, try adding some metallic threads at the spinning stage. They seem to vanish at first but will show once plied.

The cords are quite quick to make, as you only need enough yarn to fit comfortably round your neck about ten times.

- It might help to thread the beads on at this time. If you have a loop at one end of the cord, attach a needle and

cotton to make it easier to fit the corn through the hole in the beads.

- Decide how long your cords need to be and make enough for the necklace. Distribute the beads evenly as you go. You could use a niddy noddy and halve them or wind round a book. ( a hardback is better as there is a space for you to cut the threads without damaging the pages)
- Make sure the threads are lying evenly.
- Bind the ends tightly before you cut them as they could start to unravel. Trim the ends back to the binding taking care not to cut it.
- Check first that bound end will fit into the barrel of the clasp and glue it in place with quick drying transparent glue.

I had really enjoyed making my own necklaces as family Christmas presents and was delighted to see the results from the workshop.

What did I get from the day? Apart from the smiling faces of people who had something finished to take home, it changed the way I spin. I have always been a 'soft' spinner for knitting but I can now spin a much better thread for weaving. My warp threads break far less often and the weaving has better definition.



By Lesley Ottewell

## Ickworth Wool Fair

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June saw the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Wool Fair hosted by the National Trust at Ickworth in Suffolk. Not far from Lavenham and with a rich history of sheep farming, this was an ideal venue for the small event. Tickets were discounted for NT members.



Based in a field near the house there were several tents surrounding a central area, a marquee and picnic area. The stalls were selling yarns, some raw sheep and alpaca fleece, pottery, paintings, sewn goods, and traditional wood crafts. Morris Dancing and ....took place.

It was nice to make contact with the Bury St Edmunds Guild of Spinners, Weavers & Dyers in their matching aprons, and to see some familiar faces from the Lavenham Guild and the Knitting and Crochet Guild. There was live sheering of a small

Suffolk flock and a group of baby alpacas that I could not fit in my car so I did not bring home!



Those who are regular attenders to Fibre East would have been pleased to see the travelling sheep show, the Wool Bed company, Purl Alpaca, Spincity (with a variety of hand-dyed vegetable based roving that is called 'mock cashmere' ), Watercolours and Lace and Deramores. A pleasant day out, especially good for children, and easy on the purse – but for re-stashing I would recommend Fibre-East!

By Asela Ali

## Spinning a Yarn

It really all began on Sunday 12 July 2015 at Little Berkhamsted Fete and Craft Fair, where Hilary, Chris and Sue Pulham were demonstrating that afternoon. On Monday, Hilary received the following e-mail from Ed Kinge:

*Hello Hilary*

*I met you at the Little Berkhamsted fete and you kindly let me video your spinning. I have burned the footage to DVD and I will leave a disk for you at the Harlow museum. It's only about 30 seconds but it gave me the idea that the various activities of your guild could make an interesting short film. I am a member of Potters Bar Film Makers and make films for national and international amateur film festivals and competitions. Do you think your members might be interested in co-operating? The finished film would of course be available for your own guild publicity. Summer is not a good time for film making with holidays and other things going on but Autumn could be good for me if your members are agreeable.*

*Kind regards,*

*Ed Kinge*

Hilary forwarded the message to me and I forwarded on to the Committee for comment. Comments ranged from “Ooo-er!! perhaps we should volunteer Pat - she has experience in front of a camera”, through “heaven help us” to the rather more positive: “it would be really useful on the website” and “this is a really exciting proposition”. So, with some trepidation, I responded to Ed that we thought a film could be very useful for our website and could aid publicity for our crafts. I also attached a copy of our programme and waited for further

developments. Ed wrote back about a month later to say that, after a rather hectic summer, he was getting back into film-making mode and that his colleague, Sally Reed, had a stall at the Epping Horticultural Show at St. Johns Church on Saturday 29 August, where we were also scheduled to demonstrate. I have no idea how Ed knew we were at this show, maybe he or Sally telephoned me, but I cannot now remember. Anyway, Ed suggested that we meet up to arrange a convenient time to discuss how we could progress the project.

Sally and Ed are both retired but previously worked together at a school in Essex. Sally is a photographer who sells photo cards, hence her stall in Epping, but also works with Ed on films. Unusually, I was the only Guild member spinning at the Show, as the date clashed with another event, so there's rather too much footage of me treadling away in rather nasty shoes! However, it was nice to meet Sally and she was very careful to check with me that I was happy for her to film.

After some email correspondence and checking of dates, we agreed the next meeting would be at Harlow Museum on the afternoon of Thursday 24 September. In the meantime, Sally caught up with Asela, Carolyn and Michele at Mill Green Museum Autumn Craft Fair, our last demo of the year, on 13 September. We were lucky that the weather was all right for the get-together at Harlow as we decided to meet in the garden to take advantage of the better light. Carolyn, Michele, Rachel, Sue and I spent a nice couple of hours carding, spinning and chatting while Sally filmed what we were doing.

Following this, Sally arranged with Sue to visit the farm and meet her sheep and there is some very nice footage of Sue's dye garden and Sue dyeing yarn in her kitchen. Sally and Ed

were both present at the Museum for our AGM in October so most Guild members make, at least, a fleeting appearance. The very last footage was shot at Asela's in November when Asela and I provided some off-the-cuff narrative. I must say I thought the finished film was very well-edited to fit my somewhat halting narrative, even down to the cake crumbs!

Ed and Sally plan to enter the film for the British International Amateur Film Festival next year and I wish them well. It will be great to hear in due course how the film fares. If you would like your own copy, Ed will be happy to make additional copies of the DVD for £2 each. I think it gives a very good overview of what we do and portrays the Guild as friendly and welcoming. I particularly liked Ed and Sally portrayed in the flock at the end!



## ... and finally,

### **“I need a break...**

...from the job as Secretary and will not stand again at the AGM in October. Nine years in the role is long enough and I'd be very grateful if someone would offer to take it on, at least for a couple of years. It's not particularly onerous but it would be good if it were approached through a new set of eyes. It could be split, if necessary, with someone taking responsibility, say, for keeping notes at Committee meetings and liaising with the National Association, and someone else responding to queries from the website and organising people to demonstrate at the various events we attend. I'd be happy to offer advice but it really isn't difficult.

I think the job gives a great insight into what's going on in the world of our crafts, and if you're interested you can pick up all sorts of bits of information that would otherwise probably pass you by. That's what I would miss most but I would still like some time off - to just turn up and spin!”

By Mary Hicks

## 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](mailto:palmsnpeacocks@gmail.com)

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

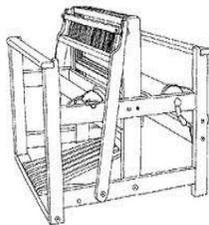
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If you would like to propose a speaker or workshop or would like us to come and demonstrate, please contact our Programme Secretary.

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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