



Newsletter of the Berkshire Guild of Spinners, Weavers & Dyers

BERKSHIRE YARNS

No. 156

August 2019



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER.

Dear Member,

I have been spending time searching for interesting speakers for the programme and I have been looking at Guild programmes across the country. Most Guilds have far less activity than Berkshire. Many only meet for a couple of mornings, or evenings, each month and many do not have visiting speakers at all.

Whilst most of us are in the holiday season and enjoying these balmy summer days, your committee is working hard to put together a programme of speakers, workshops and fun to entertain you through the coming year.

My call to you with this newsletter is an unapologetic request for you to get involved and help with the Open Day in October. Search out your projects for the 'Show of Work' and do volunteer to help on the day. We need tea makers and spinners and weavers, to give our visitors a nice day. See my notice at all the meetings to put your name down.

Our last Open Day, in 2017, was such a good day; let's make sure this year is just as good.

Happy crafting

Roz Jones
Chair

MEETING AND WORKSHOP REPORTS

My experience at the Guild Dyeing Meeting – Sarah Cook

I am a novice dyer and took some Corriedale tops to dye; I hadn't a project in mind so I was just experimenting. I had 200g of wool, 100g I had made into rollags and the rest was still in a 'snake'. I decided to dye the 'snake' with Goldenrod and bought some extract from Debbie as well as the relevant mordant and used the all in one method to dye the wool. I then had to keep the dye pot at a specific temperature for 1 hour, this proved a bit hit and miss as I was sharing a thermometer with at least three other people. I wasn't that happy with the yellow colour I had created as it looked a bit insipid so decided to dye the rest of the wool, which was in rollags with Madder, again using extract and mordant from Debbie and the all in one method of dyeing. I read in the instructions provided that if I added citric acid to the dye pot I would get a more rusty colour so I decided to dye 50g in Madder alone and then 50g in the same dye pot but with some citric acid too. However I didn't read the instructions properly so soaked the rollags in citric acid and water before I added them to the dye pot rather than adding the citric acid directly into the dye pot. Oh well, mistakes happen. The end result was red for the first 50g and a slightly orange red for the second 50g which may well just be due to the fact that it went into the dye pot second. Again the lack of my own thermometer to keep the temperature constant may have affected the outcome.

In all cases I let the wool cool down in the dye water or other similar temperature water in the case of the first 50g of madder dyed wool, hoping to avoid any felting problems. This worked well for the Goldenrod but there was a lot of sediment left in the bottom of the Madder dye pot which the wool sat in as it cooled which made it harder to wash clean and I think stuck the wool together a bit.

The end result after I washed, dried and carded the wool was 100g of luxuriously glossy yellow wool and 100g of not so glossy red and red/orange wool. The different coloured wools felt different too with the yellow feeling softer.

What have I learnt?

- 1) I need a thermometer of my own to regulate the temperature correctly
- 2) I shouldn't allow the wool to cool down in the dye bath if there is dye residue left in the pan.
- 3) The all in one method of dyeing works well.



ANNUAL DYEING DAY REPORT – 20TH JULY 2019 Denise Neville

These are my memories of our July dyeing experience this year - I didn't take too many notes as I wasn't aware I would be writing a report ;).

Before the day I wound off a number of 25g skeins of 2/16's undyed lambswool, which I labelled up to aid identification at the end of the meeting. I also soaked these skeins in water for 24 hours beforehand.

Well, what can I say, Debbie in her usual well organised manner had all possible requirements/ ingredients neatly laid out with copies of her detailed instructions to get us all going; along with a wide selection of our Guild dyeing equipment ready to go in the kitchen. (Tea/coffee took up residence in the entrance lobby for the day – although there may be some colour similarities between the tea/coffee and some natural dyes, we didn't want to run the risk of anyone carrying out an accidental taste test! ☺) So, short of bringing along the fibres we wished to process and dye, you could dive in and make progress very quickly. Even if you hadn't mordanted aforementioned fibres, there was a recipe to follow for mordanting and dyeing simultaneously, the all-in-one method.

I briefly thought through my planned dyeing exercises (lots of room for error here ☺ ☺ ☺), which included the fact that I was not being 'led' but 'doing it myself'. I scanned the instructions Debbie had laid out and surveyed the different natural dye types on offer – powder, dried plant material, assorted mordants – and decided on a relaxed approach for the day – choosing the madder powder so I would not have to carry out any sieving out of plant material after making my dye bath. I chose to use madder as it is a natural dye I have little experience of; and apparently can get a variety of interesting shades of warm red/orange colours. On reading Debbie's notes re. madder dyeing it noted the various shades you can achieve following slightly different processes; so I decided to try firstly Skein no. 1 in a dye pot with NO mordant, then I would add the alum/cream of tartar mordant, keep the dye pot temperature to on or round 60°C, and carry out a few exhausts to hopefully achieve some different shades.

I brought a single ceramic hot plate to use, set it up in the kitchen, amongst a hum drum of much eager anticipation and discussion about our varied intentions. All seemed good humoured, positive and calm ☺.

As I was completing my first experiment (dye bath with no mordant), I had enquiries to add extra fibres to my dye pot, which we did after discussions to understand and decide how to adjust the mordant and dye quantities to hopefully ensure worthwhile shades. I believe the fibres would have come out far paler had adjustments not been made. Thus we added a proportion more alum/cream of tartar (mordant) and madder powder in relation to the weight of the extra fibres. We were all happy to 'see what would happen'.

Now everyone in the kitchen was working together brilliantly, helping each other out with timings, stirrings, and temperature checking; ensuring that refreshment and toilet breaks could be had. As the time passed colourful skeins of yarn and bundles of fleece started to appear and get hung out to dry.

By the end of the day, my madder dye pot had produced a skein of unmordanted dyed yarn, followed by a mixed selection of yarn and fleece which once simmered for a good while remained in the pot to cool until the end of our meeting, as results can improve the longer fibres remain in contact with dye, even when cooling. Yarns and fibres were returned to owners towards the end of the meeting and I unintentionally brought mine home unrinsed.

There was also a massive clearing up exercise at the end of the meeting which all went smoothly and I hope didn't leave anyone too exhausted.

On my arrival home, I started to rinse my second madder dyed skein (no.2). I couldn't believe the amount of colour that was washing out, so I quickly stopped, caught the rinse water and started a new dye pot at home! Not liking to waste anything ☺. I then unbelievably went on to dye 3 more skeins of substantial colour Skein nos. 3, 4 and 5 - please see photograph.

I'm looking forward to seeing more results at our August/September meetings and possibly having a bit more discussion about these results.



FUTURE GUILD MEETINGS

Meeting	Type of meeting	Description
21 st September	Speaker – Paul Henry	'Fleece to Pleats' – a talk about sheep/fleece/weaving/dyeing/tartans and how to make a kilt. Samples and examples to see and touch
19 th October	Open Day	See below
16 th November	Speaker – Alison Ellen	'Fibre, Material and Stitch' – experiments with knitting with plants and comparison with 'normal' fibres. How knitted stitches can alter fabric, and how different fibres also affect the way stitches work.

OPEN DAY AND SHOW OF WORK 2019

Plans are progressing for the Open Day and Show of Work, at our Guild meeting on 19 October 2019. There is a draft plan of the layout, to give you an idea of what to expect on the day and how the hall will be arranged.

This year will have a spinning-weaving challenge running through the day. The challenge is to take washed fleece, card spin and weave it into a cushion. The fleece will be a coloured breed, to give some nice colour and blending opportunities and the finish will be 'country', so that all levels of spinning and weaving ability can be included. The loom will be pre-warped.

For the visitors, a weaving and a tapestry loom will be set up and two guild wheels. This means that you don't have to worry about novice work upsetting your project on your wheels or looms.

The sales table will take all items; however do consider what will be attractive to visitors, as well as members. Perhaps; kits as well as finished products, home-made bread, jam, chutney, home-grown produce or plants, nicely presented and well labelled (for the sales team to manage).

In the Meeting room the Show of Work will be arranged in groups/topics. Novice projects, skilled/advanced examples, Competition entries and winners, spinning, weaving, dyeing, felting, knitting ...You get the idea. Please search your stash and projects. So long as the item was not displayed in the last show, it will be happily considered. We do want a nice, well stocked show for the visitors and it is fun for members to get a good look too!

This year we will have tables and chairs in an informal cafe area by the kitchen, for visitors to sit, rest, take tea and cake. This will take the pressure off members to 'entertain' and hopefully visitors will take more tea and rest between shopping and viewing. We will charge for tea and cake this year, with takings going to charity.

SUMMARY-

DATE – 10 October 2019 11am- 2pm.

SET UP – 10am

DOORS OPEN – 11am

LAST VISITOR ENTRY – 2pm

TAKE DOWN – 4pm.

SHOW OF WORK – Committee Room

DEMONSTRATIONS, CHALLENGE & MAIN GUILD MEETING - Main Hall

MEET AND GREET & VISITORS BOOK – Reception area

CAFE – next to Kitchen hatch.

VOLUNTEERS LIST -

This list shows the number of volunteers needed in each area indicated in brackets. Times and tasks will be provided nearer the time.

Stewards for Show of Work:(6) in pairs for 1 hours shifts

KITCHEN Making teas and washing up.(4)

Sales Table (3) Talking to buyers, taking cash.

Weaving/tapestry looms (4) Helping visitors to trial.

Meet and Greet (3) Greet visitors and direct to areas of interest.

Challenge (7)

– Carders – 2, Spinners -3, - Weavers -2

Display set up (6) Set up display on Friday Evening.

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SHOWS WE ARE ATTENDING

Co-ordinator: Sarah Rose

Members are needed to help at the following venues.

Each event really needs to have three members attending, to help with informing the public as to what we are doing as we spin, and to safeguard equipment when members leave the stand to stretch their legs.

Show venue	Date
Henley Show	Saturday 14th September ; All day event
Wokingham Heritage Event	Saturday 14th September - All day event
Swallowfield Show	August Bank Holiday Weekend (25th / 26th August)- 2 day event

GUILD GROUP MEETINGS:

All the day-time groups meet at Charvil Village Hall.

Here are the dates for the next few months.

Spinning Group *Co-ordinator Lesley Dunn* 10am-1pm (Alternate Wednesdays)

Dates: 11th & 25th September, 9th & 23rd October, 6th & 20th November

Weaving Group *Co-ordinator Mary Paul* 10.15am – 1.15pm (Alternate Thursdays)

Dates: 5th & 19th September, 3rd, 17th & 31st October, 14th & 28th November

Dyeing Group Dates: *Co-ordinator Debbie Cogger* 10am – 3pm

The Dye Group meets on the weekend following the main Guild day in October, January and April (the July dye meeting being on our Guild day).

As has been mentioned before, for the dye Group to have access to the kitchen, we have to book the main hall, which means there is loads of space to do 'stuff'. So if you need space, peace, company, or a break from the family/house/garden/life, you are very welcome to come along. It's a great opportunity to indulge in any activity - there is no requirement to restrict yourself to guild skills, anything goes!

So come along for a day, or a few hours.

EVENTS

National Exhibition 5-20 September 2020

Theme : “Coal, Cotton, Canals”

Venue Leigh Spinners Mill, Park Lane, Leigh, WN7 2LB.

Date 5th – 20th September 2020

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

The open, un - juried section. Theme - 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 be not exceed 6 inches/15cms in diameter.

We 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.

Your name and guild must be clearly marked on the back, and our aim is to have a key so you can work out who has made each piece.

Juried section. Theme - “Coal, Cotton, Canals”

This can be interpreted as broadly as you like.

Take inspiration from colour:- for example, the purples of mauvine dyes from coal, or the bright reds, greens, yellows, and blues of canal art. Have a look at industrial architecture or include some cotton in your piece.

This may be useful : https://www.singhtwins.co.uk/exhibitions_current-and-forthcoming_sof.html

Your piece will be accepted whether or not you are inspired by the theme, providing that it conforms to the Criteria, which are on the WIP. Please, also make sure you include a feelie piece (8x12cms) or a skein of yarn if you are submitting spun yarn. These, along with a good quality photo, are essential for the Selectors to make their decisions.

KEY DATES

Entries for Selection (feelie pieces and A4 photos) to be posted about 25th May to arrive no later than June 8th.

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.

More information:

<https://wipagwsd.wordpress.com/national-exhibition-2020/>

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chair and Speaker co-ordinator	Roz Jones
Minutes Secretary	Claire Ruben
Membership Secretary	Helen Westhrop
Communications with members	Jay Montague
Treasurer	Debbie Cogger
Member led workshops	Jackie Chadwick
Equipment co-ordinator	Carolyn Mansi
Demonstrations co-ordinator and show marketing	Sarah Rose
Assistant speaker coordinator	Patricia Mills

NON COMMITTEE HELPERS

Facebook page	Carol Crowdy and Sue Malvern
Website Coordinator	Mary Paul

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES: Copy – to be sent to sarah@ksr.me.uk

Publication date: 16th November 2019

Copy deadline: 4th November

Have you something to say about our fibre world? Then tell the Guild about it.

Please send your contributions to Sarah (sarah@ksr.me.uk)

