



# ***BERKSHIRE YARNS***

***Newsletter of the Berkshire Guild of  
Spinners, Weavers & Dyers***

No. 132

July 2011

[www.bswd.org.uk](http://www.bswd.org.uk)

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## **My first words from the chair**

Hello, my name is Mary. I'm lucky to follow Matty as the chair of the Berkshire Guild. She has been a wonderful leader and gotten members of our guild motivated and energized in new directions. Matty is going to be a hard act to follow though. I'm a bit of a procrastinator and not nearly as organized as Matty as those who know me know well. I've got my work cut out for me.

On the other hand I have had many generous offers to help from the members that have heard me saying "What I have gotten myself into" by taking on the job of the chair. Believe me, I'll take those volunteers up on their offers. We need a Publicity Officer and an Equipment Officer. Any takers?

"We've" had a wonderful exhibition this year. Lesley T shouldered most of the burden and responsibility for arranging the exhibition and its success. I'd like to thank Lesley and all of her helpers. There were several members that really helped out in the hanging and taking down of the exhibition, filling in when there were problems with the stewarding rota and also keeping track of the shop keys and opening and closing the shop front where we had the exhibition. The stewards who came in and "manned" the display were also a great help. From the comments in the visitor book explanations about the work from the friendly members were really appreciated. Of course without the spun, woven and dyed contributions there would not have been an exhibition at all.

We do have a good committee with some new members already taking up the posts we decided on at our first committee meeting. Some members are taking on different commitments from those they had in the past.

Our summer challenge is Happy Holidays. This could be your summer vacation or other holidays during the year. Summer holidays have started already for some of us and I know that some members are going to be missing meetings. If you do go away keep an eye open for fibre related things. You never know

what you may find out there to report back to us later or you could write an article about it for the newsletter.

I'll be away for the July colour dyeing day which I have really enjoyed in the past. Those of you who are there please bring your results to the September meeting to show members (like me) who are unable to get to the July meeting. We will be having an informal meeting in August, meeting at Charvil Village Hall. There is no set programme, just show up and spin or knit and have fun.

I'll close this message by saying I hope I don't disappoint you as the new chairperson and look forward to the coming year's programmes and to working with you.

*Mary*

## **Mavis**

We were all very sad to hear from her daughter that Mavis died suddenly on Thursday May 12<sup>th</sup>. She had successfully completed her course of hospital treatment a week prior to her death and was resting at home supported by her daughter Jacqui, her son Chris and six grandchildren.

Mavis moved from Maidenhead to Wokingham to be close to her daughter in 2003 and although her first priority was always to her family she was anxious to rebuild her social life in the Wokingham area. Knitting was always great passion for both Mavis and Jacqui and in fact it was Jacqui who spotted an advert for BSWD, and in particular for the bi-weekly Spinning Group, and they both promptly joined the Guild and purchased Spinning Wheels.

I soon learnt that Mavis was an expert craftswoman and she was always willing to take anyone who needed help under her wing, she also gave us the confidence to try different methods of knitting and spinning and, more importantly in my case, the encouragement to actually complete projects. In time I learnt that she was also gifted at beading, lacemaking and patchwork

but when she discovered freeform knitting from a Guild Workshop nothing could stop her and knitting patterns were discarded and, as my husband called it, her 'Joseph coat of many colours' was born.

Mavis supported the Guild and many of her other Clubs and Associations by demonstrating her skills at shows and local schools. In addition she joined us in demonstrating spinning at the Duchess of Kent Palliative Care Centre where she encouraged many of the day patients to try their hand at spinning. I will always remember an elderly man, who was fascinated by the wheels, and I think by Mavis, and they spent nearly an hour together while she successfully taught him to spin.

Mavis joined us for four trips to the WoolFest at Cockermonth and in fact we had booked for this year but it became obvious that it would have been too close to the completion of her treatment for her to attend. But that didn't stop her from giving me a shopping list and telling me not to forget to rebook for next year! We also went on the 2010 trip to Norway and Mavis was very much looking forward to the return visit by the Norwegians in 2012.

Mavis was a very special friend to many others and myself and we will miss her.

*Dreda*

### **April Meeting**

This meeting was a slightly different format from usual and started in the morning with a talk by Patricia Ackroyd of Ackroyd & Dawson.

Patricia is passionate about reviving the British wool industry as most British wool is now exported and not used in this country. Wool garments are an extremely small percentage of the whole but wool is a natural fibre and it could be used much more.

Patricia showed us examples of her earliest attempts at producing a garment in this country and gave an insight into the

problems she encountered. A jacket was passed around which was surprisingly lightweight to wear and was lined with another natural fibre – linen.

Ackroyd & Dawson aim to design, develop and produce superb quality cloth and goods made exclusively with 100% British materials, labour and talent, manufactured in mills located in the British Isles.

Patricia also told us that the new ‘washable wool’ is produced using very harsh chemicals which completely change the wool itself. She has also produced small tablets of natural soap (shaped like sheep!) which if used will ensure that wool garments are washed in the most natural of ways.

Following this Sue M gave the Guild some ideas on design, especially in relation to this year’s competition subject; ‘Beautiful Berkshire’.

Sue’s knowledge was based on a City and Guilds course which she completed a few years ago and she had brought along a huge number of very interesting items which she had produced while doing the course.

Sue started by encouraging us to produce lists of items which could be used as a starting point. These lists included landscapes and geology (ie rivers, woodlands, parks and the downs), architecture (stately homes, Reading Abbey, mills, churches), wildlife (trees, plants, deer, birds), and others. She went on to discuss likely source materials such as our own photographs or drawings, magazines, postcards and leaflets. She then went on to explain how the source material, could be used as a starting point for a design. using techniques such as colour analysis, paper strip weaving, rubbings, and collage. It is not necessary to use all the colours in the source material. Just a small portion of the picture or collage can be selected.

It was arranged that we would practise some of the techniques at a workshop at the May meeting. (See report)

I would like to thank Sue very much for a very informative talk with lots of ideas to build on and develop.

*Sarah*

## The Basildon Tapestries

Creating the Basildon Tapestries was a whole-Guild project started in January 2010. This arose from a combination of ideas: Lesley D had said that it would be really interesting to do something that enabled all of us to contribute; Barbara had suggested that we might look to establishing links with the local National Trust. Lesley contacted Basildon House, our local National Trust property. Basildon House also provided the focus for our shared project. The aim was to spin, then dye yarn and use it to weave tapestries inspired by the National Trust house at Basildon Park. There had been some earlier planning sessions and Lesley Dunn had agreed to 'project manage' the first stage which was the spinning of yarn. She asked Elizabeth to produce designs for the tapestries. Elizabeth reduced these to two, one based on the interior of the house and the other on the surrounding parkland and lodges. The plan was to be actually weaving them during the National Hand Weaving and Hand Spinning Week, which is held during the first week of May, a time when we traditionally go out and about to demonstrate our skills to the public.

Lesley sourced some Blue Faced Leicester tops which she packaged into 50g bags and handed out to members of the Spinning Group, along with sample yarn as a model. The yarn was worsted spun and then plied.

While the spinners spun, the designs that had been developed as full colour paintings by Elizabeth were converted into outline 'cartoons' 16 inches wide that would be placed behind the tapestry warps to guide the weavers. Elizabeth and Matty warped up two frame looms, each big enough to stand independently. The warps were doubled, set at 4 ends per inch, which could be separated to 8 ends per inch to enable better curves and more detail. The images (buildings, trees, pillars, 4-poster beds etc.) required sideways weaving so the initial weaving would be the left side of the completed tapestry. Using the cartoons some basic outlines were drawn onto the warps to help positioning images.

Once the yarn had been spun, another group of Guild members, led by Sue



M, worked out from Elizabeth's two paintings the colour palette that would be needed. Green turned out to be the dominant colour especially in the parkland scene. Having got the full colour palette, Matty and Elizabeth then spent an afternoon selecting from Elizabeth's yarn hoard to find a range of colours that matched it. The sett required doubling of the weft, so more colours could be produced by using two different yarns together. This enabled fewer different dyes to be used.

Using the selected yarn samples, various Guild members dyed appropriate quantities of the hand-spun yarn. Synthetic (acid) dyes were used because it was important that they be light fast. By April we had an enormous basket of wonderful coloured yarn – and we were ready to go!

During the first week of May 2010, the tapestry frames on stands were taken to Basildon Park and to Windsor Royal Shopping Centre. In both places members of the public were encouraged to watch and to ask questions about the project – and all the time Guild members took it in turns to weave. By the end of the week substantial areas of both had been woven. Matty and Elizabeth then each took one tapestry home to arrange completion.

Elizabeth's was admired by many visitors as a part of her display on the Whiteknights Studio Trail. She wove the third section of the house – Red Bedroom, Green Drawing Room and their framing pillars. Matty found ways to represent the rolling landscape, hills and woodland that surround the buildings.

Janet, who was actively involved in the weaving process, and Linde then added some embroidered embellishments to the tapestries for details too small to have been woven, These 'fine tuned' the images beautifully with the addition of small flowers and a clock tower to the parkland tapestry and lampshades, mirrors frames, banister rails and wall decoration in the interiors tapestry..

Last of all, Matty cut both tapestries off the looms, blocked and mounted them before taking them to a professional picture framer.



In May 2011, the tapestries were presented to Basildon Park as a gift from the Guild. They are hung in the

Second Hand Book Shop in the Stable Block by the car park, where they provide a bright and colourful addition. Lesley Dunn has compiled a photographic record of the whole project which is now in the Guild Library.

This was a really interesting project – at times a bit fraught but providing lots of opportunities for all members of the Guild to contribute skills, knowledge and enthusiasm. The final tapestries are a lasting testimony to the collective achievement of Guild members.

*Matty*

## **Tadek Beutlich 1922 - 2011**

Some of you may own, or have borrowed from the Guild library, Tadek Beutlich's book on tapestry weaving. An obituary describes him as 'a strikingly innovative textiles artist, an inspired teacher and a gifted printmaker.'

While he was studying painting and drawing he saw an exhibition of French tapestries at the V and A, at which weaving techniques were demonstrated. He abandoned painting for textiles and started to weave on a simple frame, using the limited colour range of cheap darning yarns available just after the war – white, grey and black.

*Marjorie*

## **Our trip to the Reading Scrap store**

Thanks to an earlier talk some of us had heard of the scrap-store concept. Waste from business and industry is collected and people can come in and buy the waste to create things. What is available varies depending on what the local businesses make, have leftover and can't use.

On Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of June Patricia B and I went to the new Reading Scrap Store. It has only been open a few months but had interesting items there. There were partially used bottles of poster paints, paint brushes, glass paint, and small rolls of wire for crafts, lots of card board, empty CD cases, paper, balls of

yarn, balls of twine and lots more. There was too much to list everything here. We got some clear plastic bottles that will be good for solar dyeing. I got lots of post-it notes for my husband. Patricia got a duvet to make Gracie a new doggie bed. We were given a bundle of willow wands that I hope we can use, perhaps for a future guild workshop.

Non-members pay £3 per shopping bag of most materials but there are some things that are priced individually but reasonably. Patricia said that the Bristol scrap store has lots more selection. It has been around longer but this new shop has more coming in and is just getting started.

There are group and individual memberships. Group membership is £30, Individual membership is £15. A group membership can have many membership cards and is a better deal for the guild as there are already more than 2 members interested in a years' membership. A carrier bag of the bulk items only costs £1 if you are a member.

Getting there from the M4 is easy. Go north on the A33 (Basingstoke Road), across 2 small roundabouts and at the next **big** roundabout (after the Madjeski Stadium) take the right exit (East) onto Bennet Road. I didn't actually see the road name when we went but the Scrap Store is on the left hand side of the road as you head east. Look for the big bright blue fence on your left as you go down the street. Go in the first opening and stop at the gate. You need to press a button for security to let you in. Park and go into the security trailer. They will give you directions to the scrap store on site. This is a big place where recycling lorries are coming and going so be very careful. The scrap store is only a small part of the site.

Opening times are Tuesday 11am-1pm and Thursday from 2-5pm. Reading Scrap Store, 19 Bennet Road, Reading, RG2 0QX

*Mary*

## **Practical Design with Sue**

Our starting point for this session on Practical Design was our source material. Most of us came armed with a picture but there were a few amongst us with interesting objects. Sue asked us to look very closely at the colours we could see in our picture or

object and then we made a colour grid of 6x6 inches using coloured pencils, being careful to get the same proportion of colour from our source onto the grid. We were then given three sheets of A3 paper and took wax crayons corresponding to the colours in our grid. Then we rushed off to make a variety of rubbings, inside and outside the hall. This time, we were concentrating on the texture and pattern that we could create, as well as combining our colours. Back inside, we made a colour wash with water colour paints which we quickly sponged over the rubbings to accentuate the wax patterns underneath.

Whilst these were drying, we ate our lunches and we were able to see whether we had achieved a pleasing result with our morning's work. Some of the results turned out better than others, but this is all part of the process of designing. When our paintings were dry, we cut them into measured strips using the Fibonacci sequence, and wove the paper into a pleasing pattern. Sue then asked us to match our chosen colours to those in some old magazines which we then made into a colour collage to find the most pleasing colour combinations. Unfortunately, time was rushing by and some people didn't quite finish off completely but said that they would carry on at home. Everybody seemed to be enjoying the session and I heard quite a few people saying how much fun they had had cutting and sticking etc, so, thanks very much to Sue for a very enjoyable and informative morning.

*Gaynore*

## **Leading tapestry artist Máximo Laura planning first visit to UK**

Máximo Laura, one of Peru's most celebrated artists, will be visiting the UK for the first time this summer. Laura (pronounced Lara) will be demonstrating at Art in Action, Waterperry House near Oxford from 21st to 24th July.

Laura works with bold colours and designs to create stunning works of art in the form of hand woven tapestries. He predominantly uses fine alpaca yarns which hold vibrant colours,

blending the yarns to achieve subtle colour changes. The use of these yarns, together with the texture techniques he has developed characterises Laura's original style.

Laura's designs are completely original and he says "My work is nourished by symbols, stories, traditions, rituals, experiences, and by permanently returning to admire the iconography of ancestral world cultures, especially Peruvian culture – which are extraordinary and fascinating. These experiences inspire me to discover, explore and absorb contemporary visual arts, which exist lavishly, choosing the one that moves me and fits the direction of my visions of totem images, of symbolic characters and landscapes, and of my experience; developing ancestral patterns that are essentially Andean".

In January 2011, the Government of Peru declared him a "Living Human Treasure" – this is a very high accolade. Laura is also a Grand Master of Peruvian handcraft.

Laura's work is achieving international recognition and is included in some very prestigious collections such as:

- The World Bank, Washington DC, USA
- Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Washington DC, USA
- The Coca-Cola Company, Lima, PERU
- Museum of the Americas Miami, USA

Woven Colour has been established to promote Laura's work in the UK and is delighted that he will be participating in this prestigious Arts and Crafts event. Images can be seen on both [www.wovencolour.co.uk](http://www.wovencolour.co.uk) and [www.maximolaura.com](http://www.maximolaura.com). While the website images show the designs and colours, the true beauty of his work can only be seen 'in the fibre'.

Art in Action aims to represent the best in visual arts, and presents artists who have high standards of artistic skill and creative design. It aims to create a relaxed and friendly environment where artists and craftspeople can demonstrate and discuss their techniques with the public. Go

to [www.artinaction.org.uk](http://www.artinaction.org.uk) or call 020 7381 3192 for event and booking details.

## **May meeting, competition and AGM**

This meeting was busier than most AGMs as we had the stimulating workshop on design by Sue Manston either side of lunch and the business meeting. The AGM saw the end of terms of service for the chairman, Matty, treasurer, Janet, membership secretary, Joan, and committee members Mary and Jan who were all thanked for their efforts. Fortunately for us all Mary was unanimously elected to serve as our chairman for the next year and Patricia M and Paula were voted in as committee members, although there are still vacancies if any members would like to help out on the committee. My experience on the committee has been very rewarding and challenging in equal measure. It has been an opportunity to get involved in interesting projects and to encourage members to participate in the many and varied meetings, workshops and groups that we have arranged.

The competition this year was on the theme 'Beautiful Berkshire'. As we know from the design workshop this can lead one in many different directions as was reflected in the 14 entries we received. The finished items ranged from scarves, shawls and tapestry, to rugs, cushions, table runners and felted pictures and hangings. The core skills of spinning, weaving and dyeing were all covered as were knitting and felting. The variety of exhibits showed the many interpretations of the theme and although this was at the heart of the design, the connection for some observers was somewhat tenuous! Thanks to the 11 members who submitted items. Let's hope that more of our 65 members rise to the challenge for the competition in 2012!

We should remember that any Guild is only as good as its members, so if you have any ideas for meetings, speakers, workshops or themes for the competition or any challenge, then please make sure you tell a committee member. They can only plan a programme that you will enjoy if you say what you would

like to do. Please remember that they are not mind-readers and that there are many needs to be met. If your preference has not come up yet, remind them and maybe it will be included soon, as the programme is planned and speakers are booked for a year ahead. Offers to run sessions at our members' days are also greatly appreciated.

The future is in your hands!

*Janet*

## Competition Results

### Beautiful Berkshire

**1st Place Armada Plate** – Soft woven wrap by Elizabeth, based on the subtle colours of Berkshire landscapes.

**2nd Place Shepherds Crook** – Scarf, woven by Gloria, inspired by stones in a local pothole, with many toning colours.

**Morton Prize for Originality** – Scarf, woven by Gloria, based on the colours and textures of a Berkshire bluebell wood.

## We've Spinning to Dye for!

Why do we have an exhibition?

Displaying our work is encapsulated in the Guild's aims of striving for improvement in our crafts and of our own ongoing learning, plus the intention of educating others about what we do. The Berkshire Guild's 2011 exhibition seemed to take a long time to arrive and then to be over in a flash. In fact, in just over two weeks. It was open for just ten days and was visited by a very impressive 250 people. This was many more than visited either the exhibition in Bracknell in 2007 or the one in Maidenhead in 2009 and may have been due to its location on one of the main shopping streets in Wokingham. The *MoreArts, Wokingham* organisation is very active in the town and there is something happening at its main exhibition centre at 43 Peach Street most of the time, so we were lucky to be able to secure a good slot in the timetable to take advantage of their high profile to raise our own, and vice versa. We had planned to hold an interactive event with workshops and demonstrations taking place in the premises next door to the exhibition but unfortunately the workshops just did not take off and, after the first week, the remainder of the programme was cancelled. Nevertheless, the exhibition itself was a great success with items submitted by 17 guild members on display, demonstrating skills in spinning, weaving, knitting, crochet, tapestry weaving and dyeing. Furthermore it was a treat to see such a variety of products on display from handbags to shawls, a tea cosy, pictures, a bedspread, a knitted doll, cushions, rugs, a table runner and

fingerless gloves. This variety presented a challenge to the hanging committee but also made our task much more interesting than that of the hangers of some recent national exhibitions which have had large quantities of very similar items. We knew, for example, that Joanna wanted her “friendship” bedspread to be displayed as flat as possible and not hung; we also had cushions and a doll and a tailored suit woven by Brenda so we created a little bedroom scene in which to display those items. We also had the “Cohesion Tapestry” created by the Big Weave with members of various Day Centres around Wokingham, which provided a splash of colour in the opposite corner. Pieces from the “bits bag” challenge, the Beautiful Berkshire” and “Strictly Come Dancing” competitions and other items were also around the room. As well as the variety of objects and techniques on display we were able to exploit the tonal properties of some subtly coloured items and some bright ones so we were able to maintain the interest of visitors as they moved from area to area. This was only possible because of the large number of items we had available and it was really helpful to have so much beautiful material to work with. I cannot thank my fellow hangers (Janet, Mary and Marie-Claude) enough; they did a splendid job, and Janet’s catalogue was brilliant.

Thanks also to everybody who submitted their precious items for display – especially Shirley and Lesley P, whose beautiful and valuable shawls created a lot of interest. And a big “Thank you” also goes to all those of you who volunteered to give workshops or who acted as stewards. Without all of your help there would not have been an exhibition this year.

*Lesley T*

**"Brilliant. I love it. I want to weave!"**

One of the many encouraging remarks from the visitors' book at the exhibition. Here are some more:

"I am SO glad I came along this road today. How I wish that children and young people would learn more about how things were done before all the "robotic" technology took over. It's all very well moving ahead but we should never allow the old skills to die. PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR GOOD WORK!"

"...This exhibition is ravishing, ranging from robust rugs to exquisite spider-web lace. Thank you for making such beautiful things."

"Wonderful range of work, beautifully displayed. A great showcase for the Guild!"

"Lovely display and very friendly people."

"A fascinating exhibition, a joy for everyone."

"An impressive array of varied and beautiful work."

"Divine styles, colours, techniques, all good." "Smashing exhibition."

"Truly inspiring." "An excellent display, very professional."

Thank you, Mary, for copying those out.

**The Cockermonth Wool Fest 2011**

The Wool Fest is always a special occasion for me and an event that never fails to excite, inspire and educate.

This year it was even more special as we had organised to meet up with a group of Norwegians from our friendship guild in Bærum.

The group of intrepid Viking travellers were; Annechen, Helle, Ellen, Svanhild, Karin, Bodil, Bjørg, Lotte and Helg.

The Berkshire team who by some miracle had managed to pack themselves and their knitting and spinning equipment into three cars were Janet, Debbie, Lesley T, Dreda, Pat B, Denise, Helen, Else and Helene.

We arrived at the Ousebridge Hotell by the lovely Bassenthwaite Lake late in the afternoon to find the Norwegians on the hotel porch in light drizzle enjoying a round of English lager. Nobody in Norway cares if there is a bit of rain when one is having such a nice time. Already the knitting was out, needles clicking furiously as they were taking in the lovely Lakeland views.

It was lovely to see our old chums again and nice to meet some new members as well. As often happens when likeminded people meet there was instant bonding between the two groups as we went into a frenzy of Norwegian, Danish and English.

The Ousebridge Hotels' new landlady Claire turned out to be a gem. Having been invaded by the knitting hordes she grasped the nettle with both hands and made us very welcome. Meals were organised so that our group could eat together and we were allowed unrestricted use of the residents' lounge for our craft activities. Soon complimentary bubbly was flowing and we all enjoyed delicious canapés as we did our own version of show and tell.

I think it is safe to say we all enjoyed the Wool Fest. With its myriad stalls there is something for everybody. This year there were several stalls with "hands on" opportunities, lovely livestock to admire and plenty of wonderful fleeces for sale. Many stalls were displaying arrays of brightly dyed yarns made from various fibres and interesting patterns, as well as buttons and bows, pattern books and ready crafted items for sale.

The musical entertainment this year was particularly jolly. My favourite was a man playing a big solemn looking harp,

accompanied by bagpipes, a fiddle, musical spoons and a lady bashing a small hand-held tambourine!

The farmer's wives in the canteen did us proud with their lashings of "tattie pie" hotpots and enormous slabs of yummy homemade cakes.

Having spent all day Friday at the Wool Fest some of us decided to branch out and take in the Saturday farmers' market in Keswick . The Norwegians went mad and set out to save the British economy by buying everything in sight... Dreda managed to lure her husband Graham into a rowing boat on the Derwent, and a small group bravely set out for the famous" Pencil Museum." Janet, Pat and Helen were deeply moved by the coloured crayons of their childhood, not to mention the display of the biggest pencil in the world ! I guess you have to be British to understand such emotions!

The time to say goodbye is always sad ...The Norwegians set off for Manchester and their flight across the North Sea and we packed our cars to the hilt with all our purchases and trundled down south.

We all appreciate the friendship that has developed between our two guilds over the years. We agreed it had been a most enjoyable stay and felt enriched and inspired by the experience. We had learnt a lot from each other, had fun and enjoyed the beautiful lakes together.

*Helene*

## **June Fleece Day**

Members arrived at Pearson Hall for the June meeting, to find baskets filled with fleece from twelve sheep breeds and one other animal.

The fleece had been collected and prepared by Denise, with help from Mary and Gloria. The fleece was labelled, and very well

presented to make our mouths water, as the instructions were to 'spin, and guess which breed of sheep the fleece were from'. Oh yes! We were to be scratching our heads and racking our brains for the rest of the day.

Cards were available on which to write the breed names, with notches at the edge to hold either a couple of staples or a small spun skein.

We had lots of fun trying to guess the breed names. Denise had provided a board with the breed names clearly written up. This did help, but the spinners amongst us were quite bemused, and I, for one, did not name the twelve correctly!!

As we spun, many remarks were heard - "Lovely. So soft. Could spin more of this. Don't like this one", etcetera.

During our enjoyment, or frustration, in trying to work out what the fleeces were, Denise gave us time to relax, with a demonstration of her Picker. It is a piece of equipment for teasing fleece prior to spinning. Her enthusiasm to own a Picker, had led Denise to purchase one recently.

The Picker is a piece of equipment NOT to be handled casually, as Denise demonstrated, as she donned a pair of thick gardening gloves before placing small amounts of fleece at the rear of the Picker and feeding it through. She held a horizontal handle on the upper section, and swung it to and fro, to produce open fibres.

The Picker IS dangerous and must be treated with respect. It contains vicious-looking blades on the lower and upper sections. It makes hand-carders docile in comparison. We all watched in fascination and wonder if Denise is going into Fibre Production, or starting a Mini Mill in her house.

At the end of the afternoon, the answers were given regarding the fleece.

Who got all the fleeces correctly named?

It was a most interesting exercise. Maybe it could be repeated next year with the baskets differently numbered.

I have a feeling we shall have forgotten which fleece was which, and we shall still be scratching our heads !

Well done Denise, and thank you.

Names of the fleece were:

1. Teeswater
2. Gotland
3. Alpaca
4. Cotswold
5. Portland
6. Lincoln Longwool
7. Shetland
8. Beulah Speckled Face
9. Oxford Down
10. BlueFaced Leicester
11. Ryeland
12. Boreray
13. Corriedale

( No 8 Beulah Speckled Face is a lovely fleece to spin!)

*Lesley D*

Lesley has more technical information about the fleeces which there was no space to include, so do ask her about that.

### **Committee 2011-12**

Chair	Mary
Secretary	Sue
Treasurer	Linde
Speakers/Workshops	Gloria
Membership/Data Protection	Patricia M
Speaker Hostess	Patricia B
Library	Paula
New Member Hostess	Sara
Publicity	Vacant
Equipment	Vacant

The following roles are performed by non-committee members

Website	Matty
Demonstrations	Lesley D
Newsletter	Marjorie
Sales Table	Helene

### **News from the Groups**

#### **Monday Evening Group**

MEG meetings are held on the first and third Mondays of the month from 7.30-9.30pm at the Bradbury Centre, Wokingham Methodist Church, Rose Street, Wokingham.

#### **Spinning Group**

The Spinning Group meets every Wednesday fortnight from 10:00 am to 13:00 pm in Pearson Hall Pearson Road, Sonning, RG4 6UL. This is an excellent way to learn how to spin as the meetings are very informal and there is plenty of opportunity for one-to-one help and guidance.

### **Weaving Group**

The Weaving Group: meets every Thursday fortnight from 10:30 am - 2:30 pm for "practical" weaving meetings

### **Weaving Group update**

I'm writing this just as the Guild exhibition in Wokingham has ended. It was wonderful to see so many different items in one place. Many of these were woven and I've had the chance to see some of them from the very beginning as they were being planned, warped and then woven and finished by our talented members.

At the weaving group some of us have started exploring the "Summer and Winter" patterns and are trying to reach an understanding of how they work. This is with the goal of how to use them for our own designs. I know that I wouldn't have had a chance to understand how this complex pattern is woven without the help of others in the group. I'm still a long way from understanding how to use it in my designs but I have been doing some "Summer and Winter" weaving and getting the predicted results from the pattern I have been following. So far, so good. I'll press on.

Has the exhibition got you thinking about weaving yourself? If you are free and want to join us we meet on selected Thursdays from 10:00am – 1:00pm.

The future weaving group meeting dates are 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> July, 11<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October.

*Mary*

## Places to Go

Until 31 Aug . Horrockses Fashions Basildon Park.

In addition to the Guild Tapestries there is an exhibition of Horrockses dresses, suitably displayed in the rooms of the house. A real nostalgia trip.

24-30 July OKRA Textile Artists. Includes work by our own Trish Vickers. Cow Byre Gallery, Manor Farm, Ruislip, HA4 7QL

And a brief reminder of events mentioned in the Journal which you might be able to build into (weave into?) summer holidays or excursions

21 – 24 July Art in Action. Waterperry.

10 – 14 Aug Wiltshire Guild Annual Exhibition. Bradford on Avon

20 – 21 Aug Fibrefest 2011 – Devon. Bicton College, Budleigh Salterton

5 – 10 Sept Bedfordshire Guild Exhibition. Dunstable Beds.

17 Sept – 30 Oct Ancestor Bags. Sue Hiley-Harris' woven sculptures which we heard about at our March meeting. Bankfield Museum, Halifax

## Note from the Editor

I am immensely grateful to those of you who agree to write articles and reports for the newsletter. I haven't had to resort to thumbscrews yet. Your personal views make for a lovely variety of styles and opinions. A tapestry of words, maybe?

I have included in the Places to Go section some exhibitions which may be of interest. If you go to any of them, or to any other craft related event how about making a few notes while you are still bubbling with enthusiasm. Then your article for the newsletter would virtually write itself and October's edition could be full of Guild members' summer activities.

Items for the **October** issue should ideally reach me by the **September** meeting but if you miss that, please send them anyway; [rhodson@waitrose.com](mailto:rhodson@waitrose.com) 0118 966 3843

## Dates for Your Diary

### July 2011

18th July	Monday Evening Group
20th July	Spinning Meeting
28th July	Weaving group

### August 2011

1st Aug	Monday Evening Group
3rd Aug	Spinning Meeting
11th Aug	Weaving group
15th Aug	Monday Evening Group
17th Aug	Spinning Meeting
20 <sup>th</sup> Aug	<b>Main Group Meeting</b> An informal meeting at the Charvil Hall starting at 11.30
25th Aug	Weaving group
31st Aug	Spinning Meeting