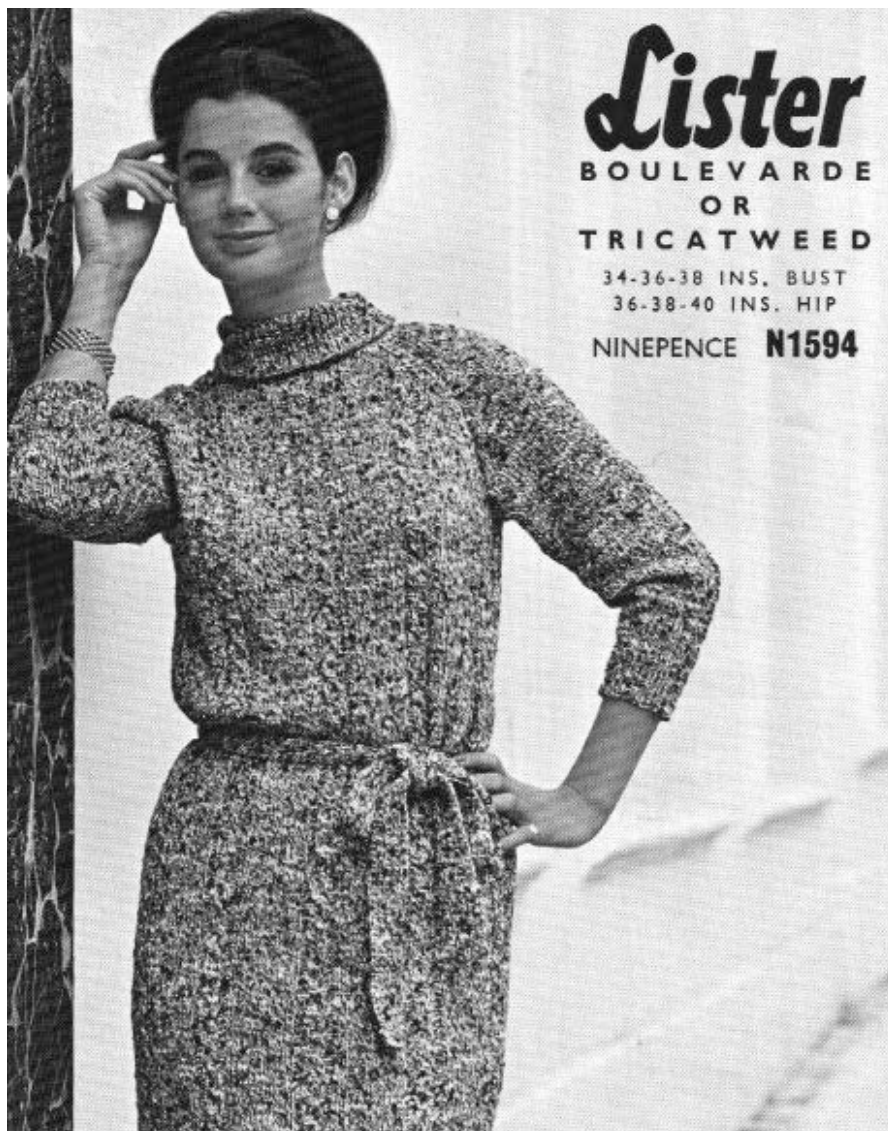


The Sheep Geek's Gazette

January 2012

nottingham and district guild of spinners, weavers and dyers



Having bred the lambs, sheared them and spun the wool, here's a vintage dress to knit

Secret Santa

At the AGM this year it was decided to do away with the Secret Santa at the Christmas Fuddle and instead make a collection for the charities that were agreed at the 2010 AGM, these were Fine Cell Work (FCW) and Stewart Groome, who uses textiles with people who have been diagnosed with autism..

I've included the information from the FCW web site:

"Fine Cell Work is a charity that has proved the extraordinary can happen, even in an environment as bleak as prison." Times leader December 2009

Stitching a future

FCW trains prisoners in paid, skilled creative needlework undertaken in the long hours spent in their cells to foster hope, discipline and self esteem. This helps them to connect with society and to leave prison with the confidence and financial means to stop offending

Our Vision

We wish to build FCW as a sustainable social business and charity with the prisoners as stakeholders in the enterprise. We are aiming to become more embedded in the prison system and to guide the prisoners towards formal work training and qualifications and to match them up with organizations that can provide supporter employment on release.

Our Values

- * Respect, inclusiveness and compassion
- * Engagement of individuals to improve their skills and realize their potential
- * Creativity
- * Teamwork
- * Volunteering and contributing to the wider community
- * Discipline and businesslike approach
- * High quality products



This is an example of their work, 'Blue Duck needle point cushion. £75

Lincoln photos

These are the photos that were taken at Lincoln and should have been in the last newsletter. Clockwise, Lincoln Guild's blanket; examples of the stonemason apprentices' work; some beautiful carving; a selection of natural dyes; the view from our cell.



The Experiences of a virgin fleece sorter

Dear Editor,

I was encouraged to read about your efforts in sorting a fleece in your last issue. I have recently tackled my first fleece and know only too well that it is not as easy as it looks. I was given a fleece by a good friend, Trudi Macagnino, who used to live at Hockerton and who'd had this plastic bin bag stuffed with a fleece in her garage for a couple of years. She needed a good home for it when she moved to Devon so she thought of me. (I do miss her, lovely lady). I already had a small hebridean which I'd kept in a box in the garage for about two years. I had never been brave enough to tackle it before now. So I finally screwed my courage to the sticking point and determined that I would sort and wash both fleeces on the next dry day. Wow, hard work or what.

Mistake number one was trying to do both fleece on the same day. Second was only having an hour or so spare in the afternoon. Naively I spread some newspaper onto my kitchen table, donned rubber gloves, and then tipped Trudi's fleece out. I don't know the breed of sheep, I can only tell you that it is white and on the large side. My heart sank as the fleece unrolled, filled the table, spilled out onto a chair and down to the floor. Poo everywhere. Not so much a sheepskin rug as wall to wall carpeting. Must have been the same breed as your elephant. I couldn't sort it properly because Scooby (my wacky Welsh springer spaniel) was making a nuisance of himself (mistake number three you will have spotted was not shutting the dog out of the room), and also because it all looked pretty much the same somehow. So everything is mixed in together. I did a little better with the hebridean – much smaller, and I'm hoping I will be able to suss out the good from the poor when I'm carding it.

Then came the washing. What a palaver in the utility room sink. Wet fleece everywhere and it smelt worse than the dog. I didn't dare try to dry it in the washing machine but carrying armfuls of wet fleece out to the garden to dry was messier than anticipated. By the end I looked like I was competing in a wet T shirt competition and had to get changed. But Trudi's fleece looked so beautiful drying on the garden table – as though someone had heaped clouds on there. Now I just have to card it all! Two large eco friendly bags are sitting in the utility room stuffed with washed and not quite sorted fleece and I only have hand carders and a drop spindle. But thank you for reminding me that, for sheep geeks, there are no rules – anything goes.

Karen Winyard

*“If woollen fleeces spread the heavenly way,
Be sure no rain will fall that day.”*

Glastonbury wool festival

We announced to our two sons that we were going to Glastonbury for a festival. They were interested! 'That sounds great....are you sure it's you?' We replied, 'Glastonbury Wool Festival'. This was followed by a huge eye-roll and a knowing nod, but at least we'd been 'cool' for a few seconds!

It was definitely for us, but mainly a 'me' kind of thing.

Glastonbury Wool Festival took place on Monday 5th September. It was timed to coincide with the beginning of National Wool Week. The event was a town-wide wool festival hosted by The Somerset Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers along with the Freemen of Glastonbury. It was well organised and compared to some of the other events I've been to this year, more 'low key'. This added to my enjoyment, as I was able to chat with lots of people as well as stall holders.

The event began with sheep and alpacas being walked down the main street, by the Freeman, which was enjoyed by the people watching, especially when the sheep were a little worried, and popped into the nearby 'Boots'! They were then enclosed in pens in the square for us to go and pet and admire.

Next came the start of the challenge, announced by The Town Crier, a 'sheep to shawl' demonstration in a day. A Shetland sheep was sheared and the fleece presented to the Mayor, who's task it was to run it to the Town Hall, which he promptly did. Inside were members of the Somerset guild, who set to work sorting, carding and spinning the fibre. This continued throughout the day, on the stage of the Town Hall. Inside the Town Hall there were various stalls, exhibitions and demonstrations taking place; spindling and inkle loom weaving to name a few. It was fascinating to chat with a spinner using a great walking wheel that she'd made herself. There were tempting goods on offer and I did succumb to a short...ish list of things that I had to have! No fleece this journey! Other halves were well catered for with a café, and a 'well being' area if they'd needed it.

The event was rounded off in the evening with a 'knit and natter' session and the results of the completed challenge. It was a huge accomplishment and I was full of admiration for the commitment of all the teams working together.

This was only the second time the event has been run. I'd enjoyed my Glastonbury festival, even if it was only 'cool' to me!

Sue Routledge

Australian sheep dogs



A vital workforce, there are about 200,000 working farm dogs in New Zealand. Without them, the costs of farming sheep and beef cattle would be much higher, because it would be difficult to muster extensive areas of hill and high country.

New Zealand heading or eye dog. ‘Heading’ means going round a flock of sheep. These dogs are bred from the border collie, this is an upstanding, long-legged and smooth-haired speedster that goes around and heads stock, and eyeballs them at close quarters to hold them. It is discouraged from barking. This dog is at its best with quick-reaction, close-quarters work such as catching or shedding (separating) sheep. It is usually black and white, although there are some black and tan strains, as well as red or amber, with or without white.

Border collie Imported by the first shepherds from the Scottish borders, the border collie is black and white, long-haired breed. It shows ‘strong eye’ like a predator, ‘claps’ (drops down) on its belly, and crawls along while stalking stock. However, on New Zealand’s large farms that practice makes it very difficult for both sheep and shepherd to get a good view of the dogs – for instance on rough pasture with stumps and scrub, and in the open spaces of the high country and mountains.



Huntaways are big, strongly-built dogs used for everything – heading, hunting, forcing sheep into pens and backing (jumping on their backs), as well as working them in yards and woolsheds. All huntaways are bred to bark, and are selected for a loud, deep bark rather than yapping. Their size and shape varies

widely. Coats may be long and shaggy or smooth-haired, and are usually black and tan.



Bearded collie or beardie. Long-haired and with a beard, this breed from Scotland can be grey, white or black-and-tan. Beardies are good-natured and tireless, and despite their long hair they work well in hot conditions. They are good yard dogs, skilled at moving stock onto trucks.

Kelpie. Some have suggested that this Australian breed is part dingo, but this is not the case, and kelpie breeders resent any mention of it. An all-round working dog – the equivalent of the huntaway – it was selected from strains of border collie taken to Australia by early British shepherds. These tough dogs are either black or chocolate-brown. In New Zealand, kelpies work with both sheep and cattle.

Australian cattle dog. Also known as the blue heeler, Australian heeler or Queensland blue heeler, this is the toughest of all farm dogs, bred to ‘heel’ and ‘nose’ cattle (nip them hard) in order to stop and turn them. Their genetic origin contains ‘black bobtail’ (a very short tail) and dingo (to eliminate barking) as well as kelpie, blue merle collie and dalmatian.

Bred for success

Almost all sheepdogs imported into New Zealand between 1910 and 1930 have a dog known as Old Hemp somewhere in their pedigree. Born in 1893, he was bred in Northumberland, England. His sire was Roy – good tempered, easy moving and not crouching too much. His dam, Meg, was extremely strong-eyed. With these combined traits the dog became an outstanding worker and trials dog. His talents were passed on to over 200 pups, and all major British dog trial winners had his genes. These provided a source of sheepdogs for New Zealand.

Record breaker

On the 23rd of September Ruth Gough of Wingham Wool Work, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, UK set the record for the world's longest continuous thread spun in an hour. Coming in at 99.45m this was verified by the official adjudicator and Ruth was presented with the official Guinness Certificate. The thread was a 2-ply yarn made of Shetland fleece, entirely prepared and spun by hand. Ruth spun the yarn on an Ashford Traveller in high gear before swapping to an Ashford Joy for plying.
Congratulations Ruth

Transcription from a Radio 4 programme on etymology

“.....was like a comb pulled through wool untangling the knots, the latin for a wool card was carmen (nothing to do with the opera) and was exactly the same as heckling. Heckling is, or was once, was the process of removing the knots from wool. Sheep are notoriously ‘lacksa daysacle’ about their appearance, so before their wool can be turned into a nice warm jumper it must be combed. It’s easy to see how combing wool and teasing out the knots can be used metaphorically for combing through an oration and teasing the orator, but the connection is far more direct and goes to the Scottish town, Dundee.

Dundee was a radical place in the 18th century. It was the local centre of the wool trade and was therefore overrun with hecklers. The hecklers were the most radical workers of all. They formed themselves into what today would be called a trade union. Every morning when most workers were heckling, one of their number would stand up and read from the daily news. They thus formed strong views on all subjects and when politicians and dignitaries tried to address them, their speeches were combed over with the same thoroughness as the wool.

Thus heckling.”

It’s odd how things happen, after doing the article in the last newsletter about Guernsey sweaters, I bought a beautiful scarlet, genuine guernsey in a charity shop. I can now confirm they are *very* warm, wearing mine, walking along the North

Norfolk coast, in a howling gale and driving rain, (we were on holiday!) I was too hot!



On the same holiday one day in Sheringham car-park there was a mural on the wall depicting a fisherman's wife knitting *their* version of a guernsey.

Chairman's report 2011.

The Guild welcomed several new members, some experienced spinners brought along by members and some new spinners. There is always someone who will stop their own work and give time to start a beginner on their spinning experience. Many thanks to those willing folk.

We had a great dyeing day at Patchings, the sun down as the collection of coloured fleece was draped over the clothes horse grew and grew. We demonstrated at Queen Elizabeth's Endowed School Gala; A Thousand Years fo Traditional Crafts at Lincoln Castle and Cathedral and Lowdham village show. Spinotts spin all over the place and spread the word about our Guild. We also had interesting workshops from Linda Rudkin and Jennie Parry. The committee always welcome suggestions for speakers or workshops.

We are in the black as far as our funds are concerned and the committee are gradually buying new books for the library, and we have offered a bursary for members learning new skills that could be passed onto the Guild.

My thanks for the on-going work of our librarian, Patricia; to Angela for holding the committee together as secretary, Chris for keeping us in tea, milk and biscuits, and Sue Relf who was a great support to me, they all retired from the committee ths year. Welcome to Odette and Liz Harrison who have joined the committee.

Jane Ashley. —

Cumberland Sauce

- 1 orange, skin cut into matchsticks, juiced
- 1 piece of stem ginger
- 50ml/2fl oz ruby port
- 150grms/5fl oz redcurrant jelly
- lemon juice only

Preparation

- To prepare the orange skin, peel the orange with a potato peeler, then lay it flat and pare off the pith, like skinning a fish, (not that I ever have)
- Put the orange zest in a small saucepan, cover with 10fl oz water and bring to the boil for 6-10 mins, then drain and set aside.
- Bring the orange juice, redcurrant jelly, port and lemon juice to a simmer in a small saucepan. Cook for 8-10mins over a low heat or until the jelly dissolves.
- Stir in the orange and ginger strips and continue simmering for a further 2-3 mins until the sauce is slightly darker and syrupy. Remove from the heat and leave to stand at room temperature. The sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.

This is a Hairy Biker recipe. It taste absolutely gorgeous, but I fancied using it more as a relish than a sauce, and mine didn't thicken much on cooling, so I added cornflour. As I'm not sure of it's keeping quality I added a note to the label to store it in the fridge once open and it seems to be OK.



2012 Charity

I don't usually buy knitted toys, but I fell for a knitted giraffe, made by a women's co-operative in Africa, called Kenana. I looked them up on google and felt this might be a suitable charity for 2012. I've down loaded their information for you to have a look at.

The Kenana Story

The Kenana Story



At the foot of the rising ground, which forms the Western wall of Kenya's magnificent Great Rift Valley lays the tranquil farming community of Njoro. There, a group of Kenyan women, growing larger every day in number; gathers wool from the Kenana Farm and now all neighboring farms as the need demands. They wash, dye with all natural plant dyes, and mothproof with natural Pyrethrum Flower (like a daisy) all of the wool and then spin it on old bicycle wheels! They then produce the most precious hand knit animals available.

Unemployment runs 60-80% and those who have work are respected and looked to for the support of their extended family. Agricultural work is easier for the men to come by than the women-folk. Kenana Knitters was formed with the social aim of giving much needed income to local families, allowing the women to work. The success is ten-fold of the hopeful anticipation, thanks to our customers like YOU!

Starting with just a dozen women, the group has now grown to over 300 knitters and 400 spinners; and is increasing on a daily basis! More wool is needed than Kenana Sheep can supply, so we now buy wool from sheep farmers all over the region! The beneficiaries grow daily. It is an exciting adventure and one has never seen a group of happier women in the world.

The women gather daily to knit and the speed of their flying fingers is not affected by the constant buzz of conversation. They are good at what they do, and they LOVE their work. Each lady signs her name to the story card that accompanies the product as she completes a piece.

With your support of their products, we now have a health facility on the farm and all ladies have been tested for AIDS and had all of the necessary “lady” health exams. When school opens, each Mom can now fully pay the tuition for her children! We’ve built a new large kitchen facility for lunch, and also with drying racks for the wool to dry on, when the rainy seasons hit. My emails of thanks to the knitters had been passed around for them to read and slowly the ladies came forth, admitting they could not read. May 2005, we set up a Literacy Program, offering different levels of reading lessons needed by the women. Reports are: “Every lady learning to read, has become a taller person, with pride”. Many of them needed glasses to see the pages (we wonder how they were knitting so well)! So again, thanks to our customers, we were able to purchase eyeglasses for all of the ladies. How exciting to part of this!

This project has been the most rewarding and self-fulfilling project any person could ever be part of! The ladies are an active part of society now and their self-pride is so beautiful to witness.

THIS IS WHAT OUR WORK IS ALL ABOUT!! THANK YOU!

For more information about the Kenana Knitters check out:

www.kenanaknitters.com

About Kenana Products

Each Kenana Critter or product is signed by the woman who knitted it. Please



keep in mind that all of these items are entirely handmade and therefore, will always be variations in sizes and patterns. No two pieces are ever exactly alike which makes each piece unique. The one constant is quality. We make every effort to provide the best quality handicrafts available to the American market.



2) Spinning the wool



3) Dying the wool-making the natural dye bath

Every color is mixed and stirred with natural flowers, roots and/or leaves, resulting in magnificent colors!

4) Mothproofing

In order to insure proper mothproofing of all of our natural wools, we treat the wool with Flower DS. This product comes from the Pyrethrum Flower (of the Daisy family).

I think this would be a good project to support, but what do you think?

2012 Project

Architecture is the project for 2012. We thought this would give you a wide choice of inspiration, 3D, build a house made out of wool; there are texture, colours and patterns in walls and old buildings. We'd like to display these at our Open Day in October, so get inspired!

Ongoing project

A 6 ins square made in any of our skills to go towards a blanket that we can use to display when we demonstrate out. (See the Lincoln photos.)

Association project

This year the association want us to use a 6ins diametre hoop, (we have a supply of these, price 60p) to illustrate the theme of "Olympics", but not using the 5 olympic rings or the official olympic logo as a subject. All work submitted will be displayed, on the payment of £3.50. We can send them off together. They need to be in by May.

A jewel of a woolen mill in Scotland



Based on a tributary of the River Spay, lies the rickety, water powered woolen mill, known as Knockando. The building has seen the production of cloth, blankets and knitting yarn since 1784. Originally there was a single storey, thatched cottage that was used as a woolen mill and a croft. In the 1700s the price of cattle was high, so the income from the beasts and output of the mill made a reasonable income for the family.

The whole valley was associated with the textile trade. At one time the mill was used as a wark mill, using the water from the burn to full cloth made higher upstream. Whole families, often living in primitive peat hovels, survived scouring, carding, spinning and weaving cloth.

With the introduction of victorian looms there was considerable prestige associated with the cloth made at Knockando. But perhaps not the pleasantest place to work, the power of the machines shaking the building, the roar of the water wheel and the pervading smell of oil.

When more machinery was needed, the originally small building was extended by knocking down a wall here or building an extension there. Until recently the building was a hotch-potch of wood and tin, hot in summer and cold in winter.



Duncan Stewart started to work at Knockando in 1919/1920 and was joined for a few years by his son Graham. Graham remarked that his father wore the same clothes summer and winter all his working life. Graham did not follow his father full time in the mill, and in 1975 Hugh Jones came to work there..



The colours used to weave the cloth, earth, heather, water and sky produced ideal cloth for the clothes worn by gillies and game keepers, a kind of camouflage, perhaps the fore-runner of the kakhi worn by the military.

To-day tweed is a fashion item and is seen being worn by fashionable people around town as well as country workers.

The mill had become very dilapidated over the years and the Knockando community has raised £2.5 million to restore the mill. Rotten window frames have been



replaced, walls re-plastered, ceilings mended and roofs made weather proof, even original wall paper has been re-hung, to sympathetically restoring the mill to its Victorian glory.



Restoring the building has only been a part of the project. A new building will provide a visitors' centre and an education room. It is hoped that a new generation will come along to learn and carry on the textile skills, making Knockando not only a productive mill, but also an exciting visitor attraction and an education centre.

A new Olympic sport?

Experts in New Zealand are calling for sheep shearing to become an Olympic sport, arguing that top wool-clippers are world-class athletes.

[The New Zealand Farmers Federation](#) claims shearing is now a bona fide sport that deserves international recognition.

The call comes as the World Shearing Championships are set to be held in Mastertown, on New Zealand's North Island, in March.

Federation spokesman Jeanette Maxwell said in a statement: "Surely, time has come to elevate shearing's sporting status to the ultimate world stage?"

"One way would be to make shearing a demonstration sport at a Commonwealth Games, if not the Olympics itself."

Ms Maxwell said competitive shearers clip up to 700 sheep over an eight-hour period - a feat that has been likened to running two marathons back-to-back.

"I can also testify to the physical effort shearing takes... (Top shearers) are athletes who take it to another level," she said.

The New Zealand's government's [elite sports funding body SPARC](#) already recognises shearing as a sport, providing it with grants to help run competitions.

New Zealand has a human population of about 4.4 million which is outnumbered by a national sheep flock of around 40 million, according to Statistics New Zealand.

Some collective nouns

Eaglesconvocation

Cormorants.....gulp

Finches.....charm

Lapwings.....deceit

Committee members

Jane Ashley	Chairman	01909 509 487 ejaneashley7@yahoo.co.uk
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Paula Duckworth	Treasurer	01636 683 135 polly.duckworth@googlemail.com
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Liz Harrison		0115 916 3716
Patricia Dyson	Librarian	0115 920 9719
Jane Ashley	Newsletter	01909 509 487

Meetings are held at Lambley Village Hall, Catfoot Lane, from 10am to 4pm

Workshops and speakers start at 11o/c.

There is a large car-park and easy access for disabled people. Visitors are always welcome and may attend 2 meetings free of charge.

Membership is £20 a year starting in October, and £3.50 a meeting.

Programme for 2012

Jan 26th	Jacket potatoes and Dorset button workshop
Feb 23rd	Spinning, have a go at the fancy yarns demonstrated on the video
Mar 31st	Helen Neale workshop
Apr 28th	Weaving
May 26th	tbc
June 29th	Dyeing Day
July 28th	Workshop, Hand-spun, now what! Show and tell.
Aug 25th	Do your own thing
Sep 29th	Val Bryant workshop
Oct 27th	AGM and open day
Nov 24th	Dabble Day
Dec 15th	Fuddle and christmas decoration

