

The Sheep Geek's Gazette

April 2012



*Nottingham and District Guild
of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers.*

Ethnic garments

Black and white Bogolanfini (mud cloth)

Date: 1970 Courtesy of Judy Edmister

This three-piece man's outfit is traditional for the Mali of Western Africa. The upper body cover is left open on the side in traditional African style to facilitate ventilation. The

wrapped lower body covering is made of seven strips of hand woven cloth woven by men on a double heddle loom. The skullcap is traditional in design and form.

The production of mud cloth starts with plain white cotton cloth strip-woven by men. The narrow strips are then sewn together. The fabric is then soaked in mordant-bearing mulch leaves. The mordant (tannin) soaks into the fabric that takes on an even

yellow color. The mud dye process is complex and time consuming. After fermenting the dye in a covered pot for about a year to turn the dye black, iron oxide in the mud reacts with the tannic acid from the mulch to produce a colorfast dye. The resulting pattern is painted around the light colored or white design motif.



Don't try this at home.

Sheep droppings boiled in milk were once recommended in Ireland as a cure for whooping cough.

The Story of the Golden Fleece



In Greek mythology, the golden fleece was the fleece of the gold-haired winged ram. It appears in the story of Jason and the Argonauts when Jason has to find the fleece and prove his claim to the throne of Iolcus.

The ram had been sired by the god Poseidon upon a nymph, Theophane. The story goes that Poseidon carried Theophane off to island where he turned into a ewe, so he could 'have his way with her' among the flock where Theophane's other suitors could not distinguish her from the other ewes!

There have been many theories to explain the story of the Golden Fleece, for example it could signify the introduction of sheep husbandry to Greece from the east. A more widespread theory refers to a method of washing gold from streams.

From the 5th century BC in Georgia, sheep fleeces, sometimes stretched over wooden frames, were submerged in the stream, and flecks of gold washed down from deposits upstream and collected in the fleece. The fleeces were hung up to dry before the gold flecks were shaken or combed out.

Yet another idea comes from references to purple or purple-dyed cloth. The dye was extracted from the snails of the Murex species and was highly prized, clothing from the purple dye indicated wealth and high position and gold is also associated with wealth so purple and gold often occurred together.

Delice au chocolat

(Pierre Hermé)

Moist cake/

dessert serves 4-6

4 eggs separated

150g castor sugar

150g butter

200g dark chocolate

2 soup spoons flour (approx 40g)

100g Almonds (grated)

Heat oven to 220°C

Whip the egg yolks and sugar together to create a thick, pale mousse

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Melt butter and chocolate over hot water

Add chocolate to mousse - folding in.

Fold in flour and almonds.

Whip whites and fold in.

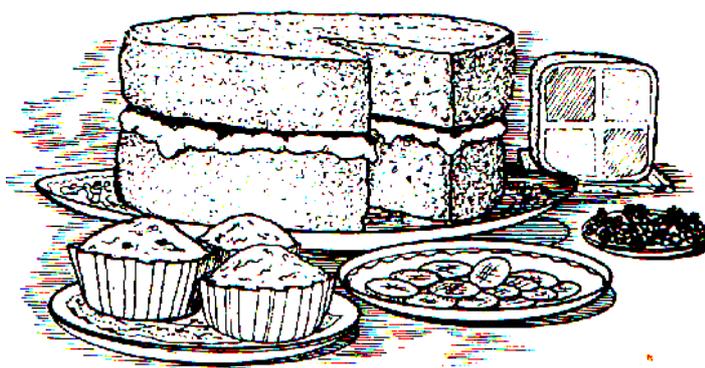
Bake for about 20 min in 8" cake tin, greased and floured.

Test - top should look set and cooked -inside slightly moist is ok

The cake may collapse a bit as it cools

Remove when cool.

Odette



I know this article has already appeared in a newsletter in 2008, but as we have some new members since then I thought it might be worth printing it again.

HOW TO IDENTIFY UNKNOWN FIBRES.

Just as many sheep are now a mixture of breeds to produce “meat boxes on legs” so many fibres are mixed to make yarn “fit for purpose.” The burning test is probably the easiest to do at home, but be careful, hot residues and flames spell danger.

The flame test will readily separate fibres into 1.protein, 2.cellulose, 3.synthetic chemicals

1.Protein fibres. This group can be either animal, eg wool silk mohair, casein(milk), or plant, eg soya. All these contain nitrogen in their molecules , and this latches on to acid type dyes. Many also contain sulphur that gives the characteristic ‘bad egg’ smell on burning.

Wool smoulders and goes to a black crushable bead smelling of burnt hair. It does not burn.

Silk smoulders readily and goes to a black bead smelling of feathers. If the fibre is weighted with chemicals the bead will glow like red-hot metal.

Soya, casein and hairs react like wool.

2.Cellulose fibres. This group are plant in origin eg. cotton, linen, bamboo. Viscose is made from waste wood pulp, and acetate rayon from waste cotton linters. These fibres need hot Procion dyes or cold fibre-reactive dyes as they only contain carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. They are much more inflammable and need extra care.

Cotton flares up readily with a yellow flame leaving a very little grey ash. Cotton mixtures are very popular, for example with terylene to make polycotton, and these react very differently, confusing the results.

Linen flares up and burns with a yellow flame leaving a grey ash.

Viscose rayon reacts as cotton

Acetate rayon is made from waste cotton with chemicals added. It flares up, but then melts into a black bead which crushes and gives off an acid smell.

3.Synthetics. Made from chemicals derived from coal and petroleum, they are too complex in molecular structure to dye easily.

Polyamide-nylon.This runs away from the flame and melts into a very hard smooth bead. The white smokey vapour smells of celery and the flame is orange. It is the only synthetic that readily dyes with acid dyes.

Polyester-terylene. This is difficult to set alight, but then burns with a yellow flame, giving off an aromatic smell and black smoke. It then fuses to a hard bead that is very hot.

Polyacrylic-acrilan. This shrivels from the flame and melts to a soft black tar-like bead.

These tests can be useful to try and identify bargains from charity shops or fibres without their labels. Textiles can be also be tested in this way, but only test a small piece and be very careful. Try these tests on known fibres first, which gives a benchmark for comparison.

Mary Bell

Terms used to describe cloth

Linsey-Woolsey : a fabric made of mixed linen and wool.

Murrey : mulberry or purple-red colored cloth.

Pennystone : a coarse woollen cloth, always sold in white.

Perpetuana : a durable woollen fabric with a twill weave.

Philip and Cheney : a worsted material.

Rash : a wool fabric, usually twilled. The term covered a wide variety of goods -- some close-cropped, some shaggy.

Say : thin woolen stuff or serge, of twill weave.

Stuff : a general term for worsted cloth, it could be twilled or plain, often made of common wool. Stuff was found in black as well as every other colour.

Taffaty : silk or silk and cotton cloth, often in bright colors

The Yarn Market in Dunster Somerset



The Yarn market was built around 1590.

The octagonal structure has a central stone pier which supports a heavy timber framework which carries a slate roof with central wooden lantern surmounted by a weather vane.

Dunster had become a centre for woollen and

clothing production by the 13th century, with the market dating back to at least 1222, and a particular kind of kersey or broadcloth became known as 'Dunsters'.

Kersey is a kind of coarse woollen cloth that was an important component of the textile trade in Medieval England. It derives its name from kersey yarn and ultimately from the village of Kersey

Suffolk, having presumably originated in that region. However the cloth was made in many places. It was being woven as early as 1262, when regulations prohibited the inclusion of Spanish wool in kerseys.

Kersey was a lighter weight cloth than broadcloth. English kerseys were widely exported to central Europe and other places: a surviving business letter from the end of the 16th century recommends to trade kerseys for good wine on the Canary Islands.

Kersey yarns were spun in large gauges (thicknesses) from inferior carded wool, and made thick and sturdy cloth. Kersey was a warp backed, twill-weave cloth woven on a four-treadle loom.

As a rule, half the relatively small, numerous and closely set warp ends [threads] were struck with a big kerseyweft in a two-and-two, unbalanced and highly prominent twill. The rest of the ends were simultaneously struck in a one-and-three twill, so they appeared mainly on the back of the cloth, while the back-warp stitches on the face of the cloth were concealed among the face-warp threads. One of the secrets of weaving a good kersey lay in combining the adequate stitching of the weft by the back warp with the concealment of the back-warp stitches.

The back of the cloth was napped and shorn after fulling, producing a dense, warm fabric with a smooth back.

Around 1590 George Luttrell, of the Luttrell Family constructed the yarn market to shelter traders and their wares from the rain.

One of the roof beams has a hole in it, a result of cannon fire in the Civil War, when Dunster Castle was a besieged Royalist stronghold for five months under the command of Colonel Wyndham. Following the damage, it was restored in 1647 to its present condition.

Flatulant sheep

Scientists believe that too much flatulence can affect global warming. Scientists in New Zealand are studying this behaviour in sheep. They have fitted the sheep with measuring devices at both ends to monitor their possible affect on global warning.

Clever clogs

Dialect words to describe those people who put on 'airs and graces.'

Nosism, (1829)----- was the use of the royal 'we' in speaking of oneself.

Peel eggs (c.1860)-----was to stand on ceremony.

Gedge (Scotland, 1733)-----meant to talk idly with stupid gravity - or to claim to know more than you do.

Ultracrepidarian (1819)----- was one who made pronouncements on topics beyond his knowledge.

Gaw-rabbit (Scotland,1911)----- was speaking confidently on a subject on which one is ignorant.

Like the back of a cigarette card----- (UK slang, 1930s) meant to pretend to greater knowledge than one has. The cards had a picture on the front and a potted history on the back.

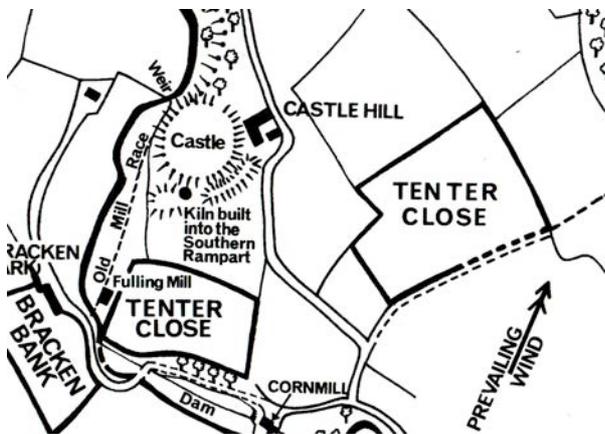
Field names indicate former industrial activity

A *tenter field* indicates that fulling was carried out nearby. Other clues are references to kilns and bracken, particularly if they appear close together or near a tenter field.

From late medieval times bracken was burned to provide potash, which was used by the fuller as a detergent. Potash soap gave the

cleanest wool and cloth for dyeing and its production in the Lake District enabled Kendal to become an important dyeing centre.

The map shows the site of the old fulling mill at Pennington, near Ulverston. Bracken was close at hand and was burned in the kiln built downwind from the tenter fields. This grouping of fulling mill, tenter field, kiln and bracken occurs in numerous places on the western side of Britain.



ref. "The Woollen Industry" by Chris Aspin

Fulling

Fulling involves two processes, scouring and milling (thickening). Originally, fulling was carried out by pounding the woollen cloth with the fuller's feet, or hands, or a club.

In Scottish Gaelic tradition, this process was accompanied by waulking songs, which women sang to set the pace. From the medieval period, however, fulling often was carried out in a water mill.

These processes are followed by stretching the cloth on great frames known as *tenters*, where it is held onto those frames by tenterhooks. It is from this process that the phrase *being on tenterhooks* is derived, as meaning to be held in suspense. The area where the tenters were erected was known as tenterground.

Scouring

In Roman times, fulling was conducted by slaves working the cloth while ankle deep in tubs of human urine. Urine was so important to the fulling business that urine was taxed. Stale urine, known as "wash," was a source of ammonium salts and assisted in cleansing and whitening the cloth.

By the medieval period, fuller's earth had been introduced for use in the process. This is a soft clay-like material occurring in nature as an

impure hydros aluminium silicate. It was used in conjunction with wash. More recently, soap has been used.

Thickening

The second function of fulling was to thicken cloth by matting the fibers together to give it strength and increase waterproofing (felting). This was vital in the case of woollens made from short-staple wool but not for worsted materials made from long-staple wool. After this stage, water was used to rinse out the foul-smelling liquor used during cleansing.

Fulling mills



From the medieval period, the fulling of cloth often was undertaken in a water mill known as a fulling mill, a walk mill, or a tuck mill. In Wales a fulling mill is called a pandy, and in Scotland, a waulk mill.

In these, the cloth was beaten with wooden hammers, known as fulling stocks or fulling hammers. Fulling stocks were of two kinds, falling stocks (operating vertically) that were used only for scouring, and driving or hanging stocks. In both cases the machinery was operated by cams on the shaft of a waterwheel or on a tappet wheel, which lifted the hammer.

Driving stocks were pivotted so that the foot (the head of the hammer) struck the cloth almost horizontally. The stock had a tub holding the liquor and cloth. This was somewhat rounded on the side away from the hammer, so that the cloth gradually turned, ensuring that all parts of it were milled evenly. However, the cloth was taken out about every two hours to undo plaits and wrinkles. The 'foot' was approximately triangular in shape, with notches to assist the turning of the cloth.

Fearsome phobias

nelophobia	is the fear of	glass
dystychiphobia	"	accidents
hodophobia	"	travel
pognophobia	"	beards
trichophobia	"	hair
kyphobia	"	stooping

Shropshire sheep

Origins. Developed during the 1800's through crossing breeds native to the West Midlands and Welsh Borders. The Shropshire Sheep Breeders Association claims to be the oldest sheep breed society in the world.



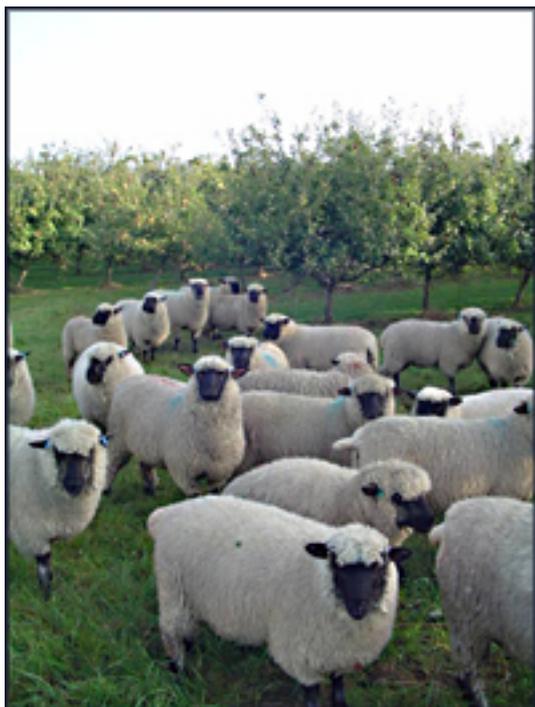
Characteristics. A medium sized, adaptable downland sheep, with black ears, face and legs. It has white wool on the cheeks and foreheads.

Fleece. The fleece is soft to handle, is white/cream in colour, with a staple length of 6-10cms and a micron range of 31-33. The main use of the fleece is blended with finer wool to make cloth and knitwear.

Sheep in Trees

THE USE OF SHROPSHIRE SHEEP IN TREE PLANTATIONS AND COMMERCIAL FRUIT CULTURES

By Pippa Geddes and Raimund Kohl



One of Britain's oldest sheep breeds, the Shropshire Down, has recently come to the attention of fruit growers seeking to minimise applications of herbicides in tree plantations and vineyards. The use of Shropshires for controlling weed growth between trees can reduce agrochemical pollution of groundwater and replaces the need for mowing.

The sheep can also help to reduce the spread of fungal diseases by consuming the fallen leaves and, as renowned producers of meaty lambs, Shropshires also deliver another valuable income stream for the farmer or grower. Whereas most other breeds of sheep strip bark and foliage from trees, the Shropshire has a well established reputation for being “tree safe”, particularly in conifer plantations.

The compatibility of Shropshires and conifers was first identified more than 20 years ago by Graham Allan, a Scottish shepherd who lives and works in Denmark. He developed and promoted the system of grazing sheep in trees in Denmark and other northern European countries, including Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the UK.

New Guild Equipment

Two new pieces of fibre preparation equipment have recently been bought by the Guild. They are a blending hackle (with diz) and a box picker.

The hackle can be used to mix and blend colours and fibres. It creates a lovely, open, hand-pulled roving that is suitable for spinning, felting and weaving in peg looms etc. It is for blending clean prepared fibres. There is information on using a hackle to blend in the books by Deb Menz. More information can be found here:

<http://www.winghamwoolwork.co.uk/woolcombs> And I've found a demonstration of how to use the hackle for wool blending on Fibrewish wool and fibre hackle.

The second piece of equipment is a Kaydessa Box Picker.

This is a portable, rectangular wooden box picker that helps to open up clean fleece prior to carding.

More information, including a Youtube video of how to use the picker, can be found here:

<http://woolpickers.com>

We are intending to introduce both these pieces of equipment in July along with a few guidelines for safely using the equipment.

Sue Routledge.

A rhyme about cutting nails.

Cut them on Monday, cut them for health.

Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for wealth.

Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for news.

Cut them on Thursday, a pair of new shoes.

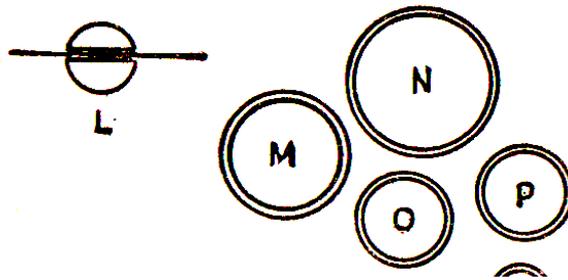
Cut them on Friday, cut them for sorrow.

Cut them on Saturday, see your true love tomorrow.

Cut them on Sunday, your safety seek,

The devil will have you the rest of the week.

How to be a perfect hostess. 1950s style



Place setting for a formal dinner

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| A. Fish fork. | J. Soup spoon. |
| B. Meat fork. | K. Oyster fork. |
| C. Salad fork. | L. Menu card. (optional) |
| D. Place card. | M. Water glass. |
| E. Napkin. | N. Champagne glass. |
| F. Plate. | O. Red wine glass. |
| G. Salad knife. | P. White wine glass. |
| H. Meat knife. | Q. Sherry glass. |
| I. Fish knife. | |

And remember, don't attempt a formal dinner without a maid- it can't be done gracefully, and both the hostess and her guests will be jumpy and ill at ease.

Committee members

Chairman	Jane Ashley	01909 509 487 ejaneashley7@yahoo.co.uk
Secretary	Alison Fretwell	01636 523 360 alison @topgreen.co.uk
Treasurer	Paula Duckworth	01636 683 135 polly.duckworth@googlemail.co
Librarian	Patricia Dyson	0115 920 9719
	Odette McCartney	01623 61 722 s.mccartney@virgin.net
	Liz Harrison	0115 916 3716
Newsletter	Jane Ashley	

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

May 26th	Ann Dixon inkle loom workshop.
June 29th	Dyeing Day venue to be confirmed. NO meeting at Lambley.
July 28th	Show and tell and knitting ideas to use up your stash. Hackle and picker available
Aug 25th	Do your own thing.
Aug 27th	Lowdham Show
Sept 29th	tba
Oct 27th	AGM and open day
Nov 24th	Dabble Day
Dec 15th	Fuddle and Christmas fun