

# The Sheep Geek's Gazette

January 2018



This was spun up by visitors to the Guild stand at the Nottingham Yarn Expo, November 2017.

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## Hello, and a very happy new year to all Guild members!

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After years of sterling work, Jane has passed on her green eyeshade and sleeve protectors and is taking a well-earned rest from composing and editing the newsletter. The Guild owes her a great vote of thanks for keeping the newsletter going and filling it with such a terrific combination of sheepy, yarny, foody and sometimes just plain off-the-wall information to amuse and educate us. So many thanks Jane, you are quite an act to follow!

This is the Notts and District Guild of Spinners, Dyers and Weavers newsletter, which means it is for all the members. So – here comes the plea – if you visit any event, read an article or book, or see something that you think would interest the members, please put a few lines together and send it to the editor. We have a very wide range of interests, skill and talent within this group of people, and if it interests you, it's likely it will do the same for others.

2018 is the centenary anniversary of two momentous events – the ending of the Great War, and of Womens' suffrage, if they were over 30. (It took another 10 years for universal voting rights for anyone over 18, so that will be another celebration to look forward to!)

What, if anything, do we, as a Guild, want to do to mark these milestones? Many events are being organised to honour the soldiers of the First World War; Wonderwool Wales hopes to have a curtain of poppies, one for every fallen soldier (for more information and several poppy patterns, see their website <http://www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk>). Closer to home, local Nottinghamshire libraries will be collecting woollen poppies to make a massive field - details later.

There will be events to remember the suffragettes who fought so hard too, to win for women the right to full participation in democratic politics - it could be argued that they are still needed, a hundred years on. So please, give this some thought, and maybe we can have a discussion at a meeting this spring?

The calendar of events is as comprehensive as I can find at the moment; however if you see or hear of a fibre/textile/yarn event/show/exhibition coming up, please let us know, so it can be included and hopefully enjoyed by some of us.

All efforts will be gratefully received, so don't be shy, and share your yarn adventures with us! I hope you enjoy this issue, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sheila Markham, Newsletter Editor: [smmarkham@hotmail.com](mailto:smmarkham@hotmail.com)

## Upcoming Yarn Events around the Country

### February 2018

***Unravel*** 16-18 February 2018

Farnham Maltings, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 7QR

<http://craft.farnhammaltings.com/portfolio/unravel-festival-knitting>

### March 2018

***The Spring Knitting and Stitching Show*** 1-4 March 2018

Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, London, W14 8UX

<https://www.theknittingandstitchingshow.com/spring/>

***Edinburgh Yarn Festival*** 15-17 March 2018

Edinburgh Corn Exchange, 11 New Market Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1RJ

<http://www.edinyarnfest.com/>

### April 2018

***Spring into Wool*** 7-8 April 2018

The Grammar School at Leeds, Alwoodley Gates, Harrogate Road, Leeds, LS17 9NA

<http://www.springintowool.co.uk/>

***Wonderwool Wales*** 28-29 April 2018

Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SY

<http://www.wonderwoolwales.co.uk>

### May 2018

***The Handmade Fair, Ragley*** 11-13 May 2018

Ragley Hall, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 5NJ

<https://www.thehandmadefair.com/ragley>

***Wool @ Junction 13*** 12-13 May 2018

Lower Drayton Farm, Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5RE

<http://wool-j13.uk/>

## Summer School 2017

I arrived early at Summer School so I had plenty of time to look round the extensive gardens and find the Gardener's Question Time (GQT) Shed. It was small and full of rubbish, so clearly it only becomes the GQT shed on special occasions. I should have notified them of my inspection in advance! Could only give an E minus and "must try harder" mark. I also had the chance to find the equestrian centre on the Sunday morning and watch the show jumping – so many beautiful horses. A definite A plus for that one. Arriving early meant that I got to know Janet the Convener and her helper Dot. There were only 2 of us early birds and we made ourselves useful setting up the reception area for the following day.

Parking restrictions meant it was a trek to get to the accommodation hall – but I had taken my trolley. What foresight! I was miffed to find I had several sets of stairs to climb to get to my room – no lift. Trolley not quite so handy after all. I learned from my last Summer School that Marigolds, cloths etc. would likely be required. Bullseye on that one. All I can say is I was glad I checked the top of the wardrobe before putting my bags up there. Don't ask! It wasn't as bad as Sheila's, she had to change rooms!! My fridge had a mind of it's own. No matter how low the setting everything was frozen solid. At least I could switch it off when I was in the room – it made such a din – and be sure everything was still frozen. Positively charming.

There was the usual massive queue for the first meal on Sunday. Sheila and I were reasonably early. By the time we left after eating and nattering to others on our table, some poor souls were still queuing. It did get much better after that. Although there were several of us from the Notts Guild, our paths didn't cross often as we were well scattered around the site. It was great to sit with different people at meal times and chat about the different courses and our craft in general. The whole set up was very companionable and it was great to meet up again with folks I had met at the previous Summer School. For those who didn't book lunch there were some good supermarkets nearby.

We had a short meeting with our tutor and classmates on Sunday evening and got more of an idea of our programmes. I had a brilliant tutor and bunch of classmates this time round. The time absolutely whizzed by. There was so much to learn and keep me busy all week.

We had quite a few visitors to our riotous classroom to see what we were up to. I popped into the equally jolly felting class next door and met up with some former classmates. They approved of the new tutor. Many classes welcomed visitors. The weavers seemed to prefer quiet to maintain their concentration.

Evenings had a range of options – back to the classroom, the bar, feet up in your room or the organised event. Janet the Convenor was most mysterious about the first speaker. All she would say was that we would really enjoy it, but no name or idea of the talk was given. I had a seat on the front row and had a great view of the speaker's most amazing thigh-high, red patent platform boots and black and white quilted skirt and top. The top and skirt were eventually discarded and she finished her talk dressed as a Bunny Girl. From start to finish she made us scream with laughter, and I really do mean scream, while also showing off the most amazing range and number of quilted bedspreads and other items. As Janet explained, she felt that if she had said there would be a talk on quilting very

few people would have turned up. I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I have seen some great comedians in my time but I have never actually **screamed** with laughter before.

The poor chap who spoke on the history of sheep the following night just could not compete.

The Fashion Show was very well attended. Andrew Johnson, a previous convenor, and Janet were the joint comperes. There wasn't an actual raised catwalk this time. I modelled my handspun swagger coat and fielded quite a few questions about it. So people could get a better view of it I was asked onto the compere's platform. I then rushed off to get changed so I could show off my nuno felted red evening dress which I had started to make at the last Summer School. That meant I missed some of the items on show. The dress also prompted questions from the audience and yet again I had to climb onto the platform. I received so many lovely comments about the two items and requests to take photos of them. I got a standing ovation from my classmates the following morning; I said they were a good crew. Andrew Johnson, who sported a kilt during the week, gave us a glimpse of what he wore under his kilt – a very colourful handspun, hand woven pair of shorts, which all too soon were hidden back beneath the kilt. There were a few gasps as he whipped off his kilt, I can tell you. When he put his kilt back on, the smelling salts were returned to many handbags. There were a great variety of items from Jenny Parry's takadai collar to handspun and woven shawls, ponchos, jackets and bags.....

Wednesday afternoon was a chance to have a break from classes if you wanted to. I joyfully carried on papermaking. Organised trips were available and enjoyed by those who went on them.

The silent auction on Thursday created a lot of interest and sales. There was so much on offer and of course the chance to sell a few things.

The trade fair started on the Friday evening and gave students the opportunity to view and buy lots of fleecy goodies and an amazing range of other treats before it was made available to the general public on Saturday.

Saturday was busy with visitors to the classrooms and a chance to go and view others' completed work. Some classrooms were a bit off the beaten track and missed out on visitors. The range of work was amazing. I particularly liked the variety of dyed material in the printmaking class. There was a rush then to pack up all the paper I had made (over a hundred sheets) and help the tutor to clear and vacate the classroom. Phew!

The Gala Dinner and Grand Raffle provided a fitting end to a really successful Summer School.

All too soon it was Sunday morning and time to wrestle the paper, shopping and bags back down those stairs and down the long track to the car park. I had chance to catch up on the Archer's Omnibus on the drive home in fine sunny weather. What a great week.

It was different from the last Summer School I went to. Much better from the tutor and amount learned angle. Janet's hands off/ you are adults, sort it out yourself approach worked really well. Catering could have been better— **no butter** from Thursday!! Weather was good. Would I go again? Yes, if there is a course I really want to do. The next one is in Leeds, so it isn't too far to travel, and I know the potential challenges. Forewarned is forearmed!

**Patricia Dyson**



## **Beautiful Cloth Saori Studio Opening**

Back in October 2017 I was invited to the opening of the Beautiful Cloth Saori Studio in Napton, Warwickshire. I'd like to think that I was personally selected for an invitation, but suspect it was simply because I signed up to the Beautiful Cloth email list at Fibre East in the summer!

Having been convinced for many years that weaving wasn't for me, I've surprised myself in the last year by getting into Saori weaving. If you're not familiar with Saori style weaving, it was developed in Japan in the 1960s and its overall philosophy is to promote freestyle weaving with no rules or restrictions. In Saori, you just weave what you want to with complete freedom and creativity; there are no patterns to follow and no mistakes, so perhaps that's what attracted me!

I'd seen Saori looms in action at Woolfest and Wonderwool in the past, and last year I booked on a two hour taster session at The Saori Shed in Diss, Norfolk. One of the unique features of Saori looms is that you can buy pre-wound warps for them, making it quick and easy to get weaving. At the end of the two hours I'd created a colourful wall hanging, and was well on the way to getting hooked. I went back again in the summer to learn some more techniques and to consider how I might go about funding my own loom.

At Fibre East in July, I got talking to Amanda, the owner of the Beautiful Cloth studio, who told me that she'd moved to the Midlands from Hampshire and was looking for suitable premises to house her studio. So when I got the invite to her studio opening in October, I thought I'd go along and check it out, as Napton's a darn sight closer than Diss!



It was a very informal event – no ribbon cutting, no lengthy speeches or anything like that! Amanda had set up three looms for people to play on and everyone was keen to have a try. There were quite a few people there from the Warwickshire Guild so it was nice to chat to them. There were plenty of drinks and nibbles to be had, although I had to stick to the fruit juice as I was driving.

There are four registered Saori studios in the UK: Beautiful Cloth; The Saori Studio in Diss; Wayward Weaves in Stroud and Saorimor on Anglesey. The owners of the four studios have each been trained in Japan in order to gain registered status, and all of them offer workshops and looms set up ready for use, as well as acting as stockists.

So if like me, you thought weaving wasn't really your thing, Saori weaving could be the method that changes your mind too! We'll be exploring it during our May meeting, but if you can't wait until then you can find out more at:

Beautiful Cloth - <http://beautifulcloth.co.uk>

The Saori Shed - <http://www.thesaorished.co.uk>

Wayward Weaves - <https://www.waywardweaves.co.uk>

Saorimor - <http://saorimor.co.uk>

**Angela Donaldson**





## Nottingham Yarn Expo 2017

Way back in February, a new Yarn show was announced – Nottingham Yarn Expo! I immediately got really very excited and mentally started saving my money, having previously been to Yarn Dale and bought many lovely things! I mentioned it to Angela at the February Fun Day and she emailed and asked if they would host us – they messaged back and said yes!

Several months passed and we collected together many items made by Guild members to put on display. We warped up a rigid heddle loom for the public to try out and also painted our Ashford Traditional to stand out and look pretty, also for public use.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November, at approximately 6.20am, I left home. It was still dark and damp. Having been awake most of the night as I was too excited to sleep, I was pretty tired already!

At 7.45am, after some tea and a doughnut (good nutritious breakfast) I made it to the Conference Centre at Nottingham Trent University. It is situated very close to the Royal Concert Hall tram stop, so nice and easy to get to. I was shown to the area we would be occupying, expecting a smallish space, but instead we were given a very large area in the Old Chemistry Theatre. When Angela turned up (miraculously with most of the stuff packed into her Smart Car), followed shortly by Kate, we went about setting up our display. An hour later and it was looking really good – we had space to hang items in the windows, three tables and a display board, covered in our work and it was a glorious site to behold!

Other Guild members then turned up to (wo)man the stand and I left them to it, in order to get some serious shopping in with my friend.

As it turned out, there was no floorplan available for visitors, so nobody really knew where we were, as we were tucked away from the main exhibitors, alongside a marvellous exhibition from





the NTU students. We tried to remedy this on the Sunday with our own handmade signage and lots of furious Instagramming! Much fun was had trying to stick a notice up in the lift before the doors closed! We de-camped into the hall outside the Chemistry Theatre, which was slightly warmer and a wee bit more visible from the cafe. There were plenty of sofas and chairs around, so it was a nice place to stop and chat.

As a visitor, I thought the venue was wonderful. It was bright and modern, with good access and lifts to all floors. Because it was so spacious, there was a far more relaxed atmosphere than I had noticed at Yarndale in comparison. There was no feeling that you were being herded in any direction – there was time to actually stop and look at everything. It was lovely to be able to talk to people that you had only met online as well as to meet up with old friends. The cafe was very reasonably priced, although I don't think they were expecting as many people as turned up!

I think the signs we put up on Sunday did make a bit of a difference as we had a few more visitors. Quite a few were regulars at Knit Nottingham, so I knew them previously. I think we have one potential weaver and one spinner amongst them.

The loom proved to be very popular, as they always are at outreach events, as it is so easy to jump on and have a go with the minimum of training. At the end of the day we cut the fabric off the loom and the piece produced is beautiful! It will eventually get made into a wall hanging that we can display at future events.

Packing up was so much quicker than setting up, as always, and by about 4.30 we were off. It was a fairly exhausting weekend, but so much fun and I enjoyed every minute of it.

If the show goes ahead again next year, I hope they have us back again! Thank you to all those who turned out to help, and all those who allowed their work to be displayed or came to visit during the weekend!

**Carla Cawser**



## Guild programme 2018

27 January	Spuddle lunch and January Sale.
24 February	Colour blending workshop.
24 March	Island of the Ancestors: A short talk on the textile techniques of Sumbar.
21 April	Dabble Day: a number of different workshops, where members of other local Guilds will be joining us.
13 May	Dyeing Day at the Hope and Elvis Studio at Welbeck Abbey.
26 May	Freeform Saori weaving workshop.
30 June	Summer Sale and Do Your Own Thing.
28 July	Tapestry weaving with Averil Otiv.
25 August	Paper Basketry with Averil Otiv.
29 September	Small socks workshop.
27 October	Drop spindling workshop.
25 November	AGM and Open Afternoon.
8 December	Christmas Fuddle.

## Contact your Guild Committee

Chair:	Angela Donaldson	ruddington@hotmail.com
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The Guild website has lots of useful information about Guild meetings and outreach events. Check it out at:

**<http://www.wsdnotts.co.uk/>**

And don't forget the Members' Only area of the website, where you can find the Guild contact list, the loan equipment list and lots more. If you can't remember the password for the Members' Only area, ask one of the committee.



# WHERE TO FIND US

The Guild meets at Phoenix Farm Methodist Church,  
Wollaton Avenue, Gedling, Nottingham, NG4 4HX .

