



Nottingham and District
Guild of Spinners, Weavers
and Dyers.
Newsletter Autumn 2008

Hackles, a mediaeval form of torture?

The example Mary brought to the July meeting was a vicious looking tool, a row of thick metal spikes anchored to the table, it's practical use however, not to torture but to untangle fleece or efficiently mix coloured fleece.

Before using the hackle, the butts, the fleece next to the sheep's skin, and the tips, must be kept separate. As the fleece is pulled through the hackle, it is combed into parallel fibres. The small, rough bits are left behind, not wasted! but put aside to be used later.

The fibres are pulled through at an angle, first to one side, then the other, producing at the end a roving. The rovings are laid on top of each other to form a plank, which in turn is pulled through a diz, a disc with holes in, to draw the fibres together, and then wrapped around a knitting needle or piece of dowling, ready for spinning, with the wrap facing you.

Metal hackles are hard to come by these days, though I did find examples of hackles made from those plastic combs used for very curly hair.

Notice Board.

The textile workshop, 678, Mansfield Rd, Sherwood.

Various evening and day classes are run at this Workshop; crochet and knitting, dress making, felting, patchwork and quilting for example.

There is also the opportunity to run workshops as tutors. Margaret can give you more details about this if you're interested.

For more general information about the workshops contact Karen on 0115 9603337 or 07809 158606

The Bingham woolshop.

The owners of this shop are planning to retire and are looking for someone to rent the shop and business. Interested? Karen can give you more details.

FOR SALE.

1. **A Lonet loom**, Combo 70, 4x4 with 8 shafts and 10 pedals and is 70cms wide. Price £250. inc. bobbins, but there are no sticks.

The owner lives in France, but the loom could be brought to this country in early October.

Contact; Judy Teale, Nantevil en Vallee.

Tel. 00 33 5 45 30 73 25.

2.Alpaca fibre for spinning.

A family run farm in S. Wales are selling their home produced alpaca fibre.

Contact;

www.AmazingAlpacas.co.uk

Amazingalpacas@aol.com

01291 650655

“The Button Maker” by Sarah Beaman.

This is a gem of a book that I came across on Amazon when looking for books on Dorset buttons.

My imagination was caught by the passages in Tracy Chevalier’s new novel ‘Burning Bright’ (a book I also highly recommend) describing a mother and daughter making buttons together-cartwheels, high tops, and singletons were dangled before me and I immediately wanted to know how to do it too.

The “Button Maker” does have instructions for cartwheels and singletons, but it has so much more. Buttons out of bottle tops, shells and stones, seeds and rubber; knitted, crocheted, fabric and woven ribbon buttons.

Lovely pictures, clear, concise instructions and an easy style make this book a joy for anyone with the button bug.

One of my earliest pleasures as a toddler was playing with my Mother’s button box, making up stories for them as they all had their own characters.

I read “Burning right” just after my Mother died, so finding “The Button Maker” brought back a lot of good memories and associations with it and I am looking forward to making buttons in all sorts of different ways while remembering my Mum.

I have already started by making buttons out of beads for my project piece using unusual materials, and have been collecting bottle tops to try those out next.

Karen Winyard



The Tex Count method to get the right yarn for that final project **Debby Channing**

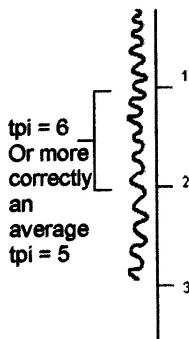
In the July Meeting Mary Bell explained how to use the Tex Count, to help choose or design the correct thickness of woollen yarn to suit the end project. The Tex count of a yarn is simply the mass (g) of yarn per length (km).

This talk was equally applicable to spinners, weavers and for those that use alternative sources of woollen yarns for knitting or crochet patterns. For many spinners the problem of designing an appropriate yarn for the final product can be a thorny issue. I am sure every spinner has struggled at least once to produce yarn that is the right thickness for the knitting or crochet pattern to be used. The problem is that the woollen fibre varies in so many different ways, in length, diameter, crimp and in how bulky it becomes after washing. These variations are essential to take in to consideration before even choosing the wool to spin for the project. The character of the wool dictates the type of yarn made and the final product. A large diameter fibre with almost no crimp will form a thick yarn ideal for rugs and a yarn with a small diameter and high crimp will be perfect for a very fine lace shawl.

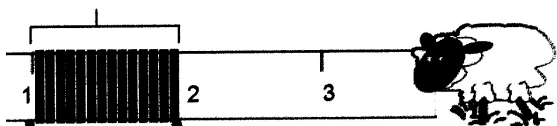
There are a few different methods or approaches in designing a yarn, appropriate for the final project. There is the use of the Tex count as Mary described which considers the mass and length of yarn. There is also the method referred to as 'spinning to the crimp', described in the previous issue of The Newsletter, which considers the characteristics of the fibre in order to maintain the natural elasticity within the yarn. The use of the Tex count produces a yarn with a lower twist per inch than when spinning to the crimp. A final method, resulting in a yarn with a high twist per inch, followed by the Woollen Industry, uses the equation:

$$\text{Twists per inch} = 106/\text{square root of Tex count}$$

The Tex count method uses the table below to plan the final yarn. Twists per inch (tpi) should be the average tpi. See opposite. The wraps per inch (wpi) is the number of times a yarn is wrapped round a ruler in a one inch space. The yarn must not be too tightly compressed; instead it should sit just touching neighbouring strands. Heddle dents per inch (dpi) in this case refers to the number of warps threaded up per inch in the width of material on a loom.



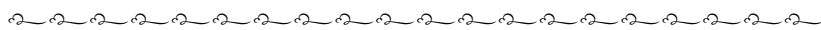
Wpi = 14



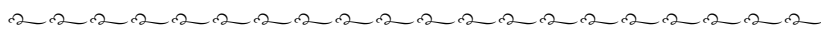
Yarn name	Approx. Tex in final two plied yarn	Plied wpi	Singles tpi	Heddle dpi
2 ply (Lace)	190 (singles 100)	18	10	9
3 ply (Fingering)	250 (singles 125)	16	8	8
4 ply (Sport)	340 (singles 170)	14	6	7
Double knit	480 (singles 240)	12	4	6
Aran (Fisherman)	720 (singles 360)	10	3	5
Chunky (Bulky)	1080 (singles 540)	8	2	4

The East Bridgford Show, June 28th 2008.

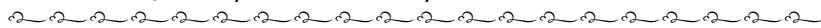
The day dawned bright and sunny and the showground was well signposted in the village, so far so good. I should have known better. First off, no tables, we had ordered 2, "It's first come, first served." I quietly panicked. Fortunately a nice a very nice man found 2 for us and we were off.



Most of the folk who offered to demonstrate their skills seemed happy to stay all day, rather than just stay for an hour I suspect it's an excuse to officially spend all day on their craft. A big space was made for the spinners, and they were soon happily whirring away. The weavers did not fare so well, table space was limited, it felt very crowded and it was difficult for visitors to see their work.

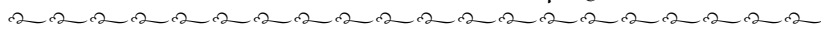


We used the marquee walls as display areas, but my knots were rubbish and the displays kept falling down! and visitors to the local history group next door kept falling over us.



This may sound like a succession of disasters, but it was a good day. The public were interested in everything, drop spindles, inkle loom, weaving sticks, weaving and spinning Guild members talk about their craft at the drop of a hat!

Our efforts can't have been that bad, we were invited to the Lowdham Show on the strength of the display at E. Bridgford.



Jane Ashley

Future Shows.

Having chatted to members after the E. Bridgford and last year's Newark shows, I have put the following suggestions to the committee.

- Have more demonstrating space and less static displays.
- Ask for a maximum of 2 articles for display from members.
- Nothing previously displayed to be offered again, this doesn't mean newly made, just new to display.
- Have a portable, static display demonstrating the wide range of skills in the group.
- Have a workshop on hand that children can take part in if required.
- Form a show sub-committee to organize shows particularly if the Guild decide to attend more shows. This might prevent someone being 'volunteered' at the last moment!

What do you think?

Jane



An American Heirloom.

Dee brought in a tiny sample of carpet which had been uncovered during the renovation of a house in Quillcote, Maine. The house had been the home of American writer Kate Douglas Wiggin, (1856-1923) the author of "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm." The carpet had been woven using button thread as the warp and tiny rolls of fabric for the weft. Dee experimented and was unable too reproduce anything as fine.

The scale of the work would not have looked out of place in a doll's house.



The Lincoln Longwool Sheep

Historically the Lincoln Longwool Sheep was a very important breed of sheep to the economy of Lincolnshire when it was bred for its wool, the majority of the wool going to tapestry makers on the continent.



Up until the second world war, the hard wearing wool was used for carpets, tapestries and outdoor clothing. Post war, the number of Lincoln Longwool Sheep declined as natural fibres were replaced by synthetic ones. By 1971 there were only 15 flocks left, kept by enthusiastic owners, and the annual Heckington Show, near Boston in Lincolnshire is the big showcase of the Lincoln Longwool's exhibiting season.

The Lincoln's wool varies in length, from 4ins to 18ins. (This information comes from the breed's Association brochure, so I assume it is correct, but that sounds VERY long to me.) The

wool has a quality count of 38-44's. B.Q.C.* It's lustre makes it brilliant when dyed and the fleece is popular with hand spinners.

Commercially the wool is for wigs, [white dreadlocks?] worsted and carpets to-day.

The head is white, it's dark ears point slightly forward and it has lovely long curls falling over its eyes. There is a black variety, which isn't really black, but has a dark head and legs and a generally grey colour.

It's a very heavy sheep, an average ram weighs 23 stones and a ewe 13 stones, but is said to be 'very docile and easily managed, even without a dog Lincolns are easily managed, since they can hear the sound of a food bucket from 200yds.'

*Quality count. In the UK. the quality of wool is measured using the Bradford Quality Count.(B.Q.C.) The number refers to the number of hanks, (560yds) long which can be spun from 1lb of wool.

Laundry tips

**If you spill red wine or dark sherry on a light coloured carpet, mop with white wine immediately to counteract the stain.*

**After washing a sheepskin rug, fluff it up with an Afro style comb.*

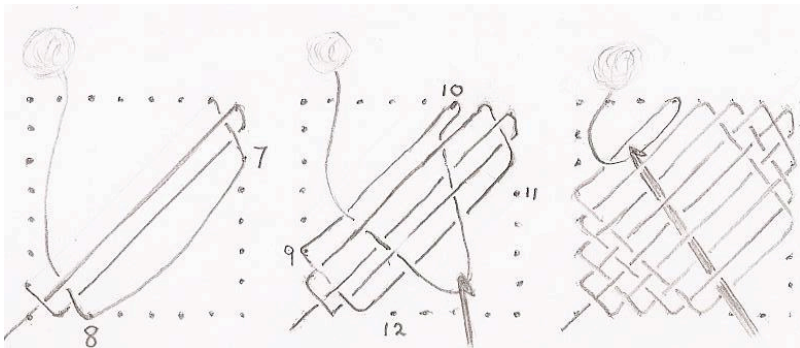
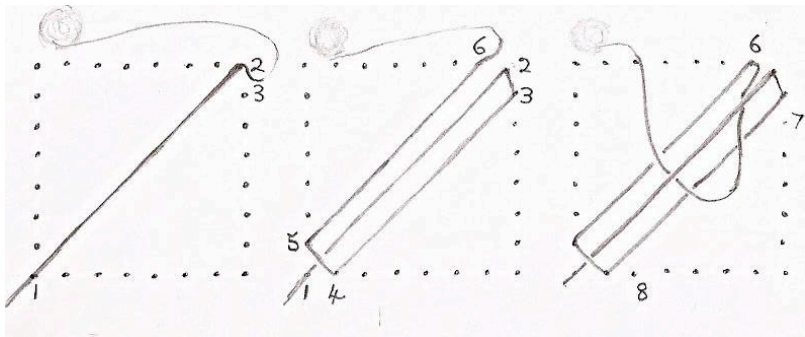
Warp and woof.

The old word for weft was woof, much nicer.

'Loop Weaving ?'

I don't know an official name for this technique. It uses a continuous yarn so is not strictly weaving but it is intriguing to do and very quickly produces an interwoven 'fabric' finished on all sides. For explanation these diagrams represent a square frame with 8 pegs/nails along each side 1 cm apart, this will give a very open structure not absolutely symmetrical but easy to start with, increase the size to your own choice.

Mark the pins along....the bottom	from left to right	1, 4, 8, 12,
16 ...		
..... the right side	from top to bottom	2, 3, 7, 11,15
...		
..... the left side	from bottom to top	1, 5, 9, 13,
17 ...		
..... the top	from right to left	2, 6, 10, 14,
22 ...		



Do not pull the yarn too tight. The work grows in from the sides, weave the final row with a single thread across the diagonal from top left corner to bottom right corner. Lift your piece off the pins around the edges. Triangular frames also work well.

Sue Relf

Prospective programme for 2009.

Jan. 31st- D.I.Y. and jacket potatoes
Feb. 28th-Fabric jewellery
Mar. 28th-External speaker
Apr. 25th- Dorset buttons
May 30th-D.I.Y and internal workshop
June 27th-As May+ E.Bridgeford Show
July 25th- As May
Aug. 29th-Freeform work
Sept. 26th-External speaker
Oct. 31st- A.G.M. and project
Nov. 28th- Show
Dec. 19th- Fuddle.

We felt that the May, June and July meetings would be an opportunity for those of us who want to upgrade our spinning and weaving skills to work with the more experienced members of the Guild.

People seem to enjoy being able to just come along and do their own thing for a whole day.

Numbers tend to be lower during these holiday months, and if we arrange formal workshops, it can mean a huge amount of work for the person presenting it and perhaps not many at the meeting.

Laundry hint.

After washing a sheepskin rug, fluff it up with an Afro style comb.

Dates for 2008

October 25th	A.G.M. and project
November 22nd	Open Day.
December 14th	Christmas fuddle

Treatment for rheumatism.

A drastic but effective method of obtaining relief is by whipping the affective part with a bunch of old nettles. [I've not actually tried this.]