

Nottingham and District Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers.

The Sheep Geek's Gazette

Autumn 2010.



Dye Plants on the front cover.

1. Walnut *Juglands regia*

Parts used, the green husks encasing the nuts, July-October, gives a dark brown colour.

2. Oak *Quercus robur*

Parts used, acorns and bark gives a brown to black colour.

3. Alder *Alnus glutinosa*

Parts used, the young shoots give a yellow-brown and the male catkins, a light green.

4. Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtallis*

Parts used, berries give a pink to purple.

5. Weld *Reseda luteola*

Parts used, the whole plants gives yellow.

6. Heather *Calluna vulgaris*

The flowering tops give a golden yellow.

8. Golden -rod *Solidago canadensis*

Parts used, the blossoms give a gold.

9. Braken *Pteridium aquilinum*

Parts used, the young shoot give a light green

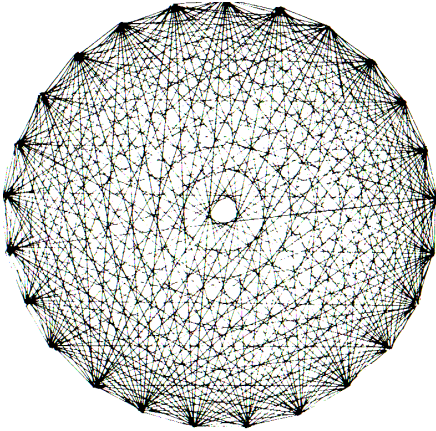
ref. 'Plants with a purpose.' Richard Mabey.'

Collars.

Simpler forms of collars are now universally worn by men and women; the state of the collar, it's cleanliness and it's general appearance, is considered to be one of the tests as to the character of the wearer.

String and nail pictures.

On the rare occasion I go to a carboot sale, and before that, to jumble sales, there always seemed to be a string and nail



picture for sale. These were very popular in the 1970s, and I came across an article in “Imaginative Weaving” by Jacqueline Short, and it brought back memories of big flares, big hair and big collars. Does anyone else have these memory joggers? I was

going to write out the article but it sounded as boring to read as it must have been to work the design.

It's the law. (In America, where else!)

1. In Louisiana, biting someone with your natural teeth is “simple assault” biting them with false teeth is “aggravated assault.”
2. In Florida a man may not be seen in any kind of strapless gown.
3. In Louisiana, it is illegal to rob a bank and then shoot at the bank teller with a water pistol.

Flax, the plant and it's history.

Flax, *Linum usitatissimum*, is the raw material from which linen yarn and cloth is made. It's an annual, upto 36ins high and the



Linum austriacum

fibres run the whole length of the plant. These long fibres are harvested by 'retting',- controlled rotting- originally achieved by soaking the stems in water, ponds, rivers or retting dams. In Tudor times there went out a decree from Parliament forbidding the retting of flax in rivers to protect the fish life. (*and we thought pollution was a modern problem.*)

The earliest references to the use of flax were in Swiss lake dwellings around 8000BC, and in ancient Egypt 4000BC where linen was used for clothing, funeral clothing, furnishing fabric and sail cloth.

In the 17th century, Ireland was an important source of woollen production, which they exported to England, much to the annoyance of the English parliament. To counteract these exports, the Earl of Stafford, Lord Deputy of Ireland, encouraged linen production by importing high quality flaxseed and new looms into Ireland, and then prohibited the export of Irish wool to England

Flax spinning.

Many years ago, when the guild met at the Community Centre in West Bridgford, we were told we were to have a 'spinning flax' demonstration by Mr. Gordon Hocken, a knowledgeable man who had joined our guild from the Oxford Guild. We knew he would show us something special.

Before the meeting, we were given a list of items to bring and Gordon would order enough flax for us all. We were told we would need a four foot length of bamboo cane, a cord long enough to tie round the top of the flax and around our waists, plenty of newspaper, lots of cello-tape, a good stout apron and a heavy terra-cotta plant pot if possible. We should also bring enough ribbon to plait around our finished flax 'distaff.' That list certainly got our imaginations working long before the meeting as nobody at that time knew anything about the subject.

On the day itself, Gordon told us to put on our aprons and sit around him in a ring and he would give us each a 'strick' of flax. Looking at it, it reminded us of long blonde ponytails. We were told to tie the middle of our cords to the top of the strick and then tie the cord around our waists, letting the flax fall in front of our aprons. Taking the flax in his right hand and moving it onto his left knee, Gordon showed us how to draft

off the flax in a thin, gossamer layer by moving it across to the right knee, then he repeated the process by taking the strick in



his left hand and spreading another thin layer over the top of the first. He continued in this way until the flax was spread into a

semi-circle on his knees. We followed suit and soon we had something resembling Gordon's flax. Untying the strick and our aprons, we laid the whole thing on the table and went on to making our distaffs.

We were told to mould layers of the newspaper around our bamboo canes and secure it firmly with cello-tape. By taking each sheet of paper down the cane, we managed to make a cone shape which was then placed onto the flax. The flax was rolled around it and the ribbon criss-crossed round and tied with a neat bow at the bottom. Gordon had suggested all the married members to bring red ribbons and all the unmarried, green. Since his demonstration, I have heard the colour should be the other way round but the tradition seems to be lost in the mists of time and I doubt it really matters these days.

Spinning the flax was interesting. We upturned our plant pots and stuck the cane through the hole in the bottom. It was then



easier to place at the side of our spinning wheel. Those who'd forgotten their pots had to cello-tape the cane to the top of the table which proved problematic. We were told, if we wanted a fine thread, we had to have a cup of hot water nearby as we needed to wet our fingers first as we spun. With the distaff on the left side and the water placed conveniently on a nearby chair, we wet our left hand fingers and drew some flax from the distaff. Spinning with an S twist onto a cotton lead-in thread gave a lovely smooth yarn.

I tried spinning with a Z twist, but, although the finished yarn was satisfactory, it was not as smooth. Some members found it quite difficult to spin but Gordon told us all to slow down our treadling. Flax is not the best for knitting, but is a brilliant weaving yarn so he told us to use the larger whorl on our wheel if we wanted the yarn for weft and the smaller one for warp as it made the yarn stronger

I haven't forgotten Gordon's advice but if you want to know more, I see Fibrecrafts are selling a book on Flax Spinning by Patricia Baines and they sell water retted line flax for £3.58 for 100gms. A link to the Rootsweb page on flax and linen is also



A distaff and a spindle

shown with more information on this lovely fibre.

Dee Duke. *ref for pictures. "The Ashford Book of Spinning" Anne Field.*

Wikipedia A distaff and spindle.

Spinning in Public.

Over the last few months we have been visiting various cafes, bars and places of interest around Nottingham armed with drop spindle, spinning wheels and plenty of fibre.

We have been well received everywhere and have attracted great interest at each venue. Youngsters have been taught to spin on drop spindles, the use and workings of the wheel have been demonstrated and many questions have been answered.

‘Do you live in Nottingham Castle?’

‘That’s cool! What is it?’

‘Look, she’s making a scarf ’

We always attract an audience, many of which are camera-touting tourist and our photos must appear in many holiday albums around the world. Recently at Nottingham Castle, a large group of Chinese students were fascinated by the process, many insisting on having their photos taken with us whilst one of them tried to explain that they did a similar thing which involved a square frame and moving hands and legs at the same time. We are still working that one out but did wonder if he meant weaving on a large loom.

Many younger children don't seem to get the connection between sheep and wool and are often horrified to find that the soft fluffy stuff came from a sheep, sometimes their young teachers/nursery workers are just as bemused.

This guerrilla spinning team has made appearances at Wollaton Park, Nottingham Castle, Nottingham Contemporary Café, Lee Rosies, Broadway, various music festivals including City Pulse and One World, Mela and Pagan Pride to name just a few.

If anyone wants to join us on our travels (have bus pass, will travel) please let us know either at the guild or through spinnotts on Ravelry.com

We are the ones with the black T-shirts.

Peter and Sue.

Golden Facts.

*A lump of pure gold the size of a matchbox can be flattened into a sheet the size of a tennis court.

*Absolutely pure gold is so soft it can be molded with the hands.

*An ounce of gold can be stretched into a wire 50 miles long.

Rambo

A couple returning from a country walk found their home rams shacked. Burglars? Vandals? No. The randy ram had escaped from his harem of ewes in a local field and seeing his reflection in the patio window had taken on his 'rival,' smashing his way into the house and found 'rivals' in the flat screen T.V. mirrors and glass cabinet. He did £7,000 worth of damage.

News item on "To-day" 16/09/10.

“It’s in your hands.” The impression you make upon your circle is often, literally in your hands.



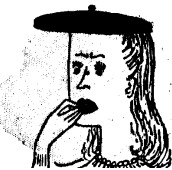
A mouth-covering habit betrays a lurking inferiority complex and tends to give the impression that you’re ashamed of your teeth.



According to our pet psychologist, nose rubbing means subconscious dissatisfaction. In any case it’s neither pretty nor polite



“Men never make passes at girls who wear glasses” is true only when they twiddle, bite or fidget with them constantly.



Nail-biting denotes trouble. Take calcium rich foods, have professional manicures, and if necessary, consult a psychiatrist.



Scratching your head is ugly and insanitary, leave it to the typical stage yokel.

The above article was taken from “The Home Front. The best of Good Housekeeping. 1939-1945.”

We will be watching you from now on!

Masson Mills. 1783-1999+

Venue. Working Textile Museum.
Matlock Bath, Derbyshire.

Opening Times. Mon-Fri 10am-4pm. Sat 11am-5pm
Sundays 11-4pm.

Cost OAP £2.00 for the museum.

There is access for disabled people.



Working Textile Museum

The Showpiece Mills of Sir Richard Arkwright Matlock Bath, Derbyshire

The Unbroken Thread of over 200 Years of Textile History

Masson Mills, magnificently situated on the banks of the River Derwent at Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, were built in 1783 as the showpiece mills of Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the water frame and 'Father of the Factory System,' when at the height of his entrepreneurial power. These internationally famous buildings now open their doors to visitors to experience over 200 years of textile history.

Masson Mills were the oldest mills in the world in continuous production until 1991, and now the old machines will work again, thus continuing the tradition of enterprise. Families whose members have worked at Masson Mills for generations are still represented on the workforce, continuing the unbroken thread of employment directly back to 1783. It is said that Sir Richard's ghost treads the rooms of the old mill. Certainly if his spirit is to reside anywhere, it must surely be here at his beloved Masson Mills.

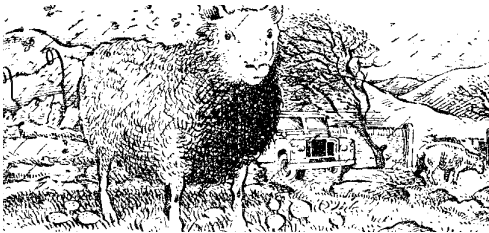
Masson Mills Working Textile Museum houses a unique and comprehensive collection of authentic working textile machinery.

When I visited there was only me wandering around with all the old machines standing silent. The method for producing cotton yarn is the same as we use for fleece. The cotton is fed into a 'scutcher', which beats and flattens the cotton, followed by the carding machines, (which are huge!) The carder produces 'slivers' which are silky smooth fibres, rather like rolags. The slivers are finally fed through the channels of the 'doubler' before being spun. One thing I did learn, a 'pirn' is a thinnish piece of wood with mettle ends which carries the yarn in the shuttle. It was a good visit, with things to buy, and the obligatory tearooms, the downside, the rest of the building is shops! (*I hate shopping.*)

Sheep foil cattle guard

Hungry sheep on the Yorkshire Moors taught themselves to roll 8 feet across hoof-proof metal cattle grids to raid villagers' valley gardens.

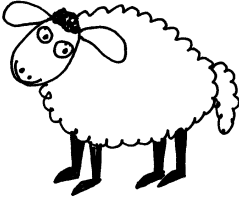
According to a witness, "They lie down on their side or sometimes their back and just roll over and over the grids until they are clear. I've seen them doing it. It is quite clever, but they are a big nuisance to the villagers."



[Source: BBC News, July 2004]

Sheep as milk machines

Sheep have been raised for milk for thousands of years and were milked before cows. The world's commercial dairy sheep industry is concentrated in Europe and the countries on or near the Mediterranean Sea.



Sheep milk is highly nutritious, richer in vitamins A, B, and E, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium than cow's milk. It contains a higher proportion of short- and medium-chain fatty acids, which have recognized health benefits. For example, short-chain fatty acids have little effect on cholesterol levels in people. They make milk easier to digest.



According to a German researcher, sheep milk has more conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) than the milk from pigs, horses, goats, cattle, and humans. CLA is a cancer-fighting, fat-reducing fat. The fat globules in sheep's milk are smaller than the fat globules in cow's milk, making sheep milk more easily digested.



Sheep milk can be frozen and stored until a sufficient quantity of milk is available to sell or make cheese. Freezing does not affect the cheese-making qualities of the milk.



Sheep's milk has a higher solids content than goat or cow milk. As a result, more cheese can be produced from a gallon of sheep milk than a gallon of goat's or cow's milk.



Greek Spinach Pie.

using sheep milk feta.

2lb fresh spinach, washed trimmed and finely chopped.

2 med onions, finely chopped.

2 garlic cloves, crushed.

2 eggs.

2 chicken/veggie cubes.

salt and pepper.

8ozs chopped ham/nuts of your choice. (We use chestnuts.)

6ozs feta cheese, diced.

2ozs butter.

12 large sheets filo pastry.

2tbsp sesame seeds.

Put the spinach and just the water that clings to it after it has been rinsed, in a large saucepan.

Add the onions and garlic and cook for about 10mins until spinach is tender and liquid is evaporated.

Crumble in the cubes. Beat together the eggs, nutmeg, salt and pepper and stir into the pan. Add the ham or cheese and mix well together.

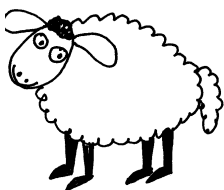
Melt the butter. Brush a shallow 11ins square tin, with butter and line with a sheet of filo pastry. Brush with butter and repeat with 5 more sheets.

Spread the filling evenly over the pastry then top with the remaining 6 sheets of pastry, brushing each layer with butter.

Trim and neatly fold in the edges. Brush with butter and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Bake at 190c, 375f or gas mark 5 for 40mins until golden.

This quantity will serve 36 small pieces or 4 as a main dish.



An Adventure in Krokbraad.

Altar rail runner for Kelvington Church, by Chris Jesson.

In conclusion:-

The weaving is done and the final tidying up of the loose ends complete. This stage was made easier by carrying most of the main colours, (when dormant) through the selvedge during weaving. This also gave added strength to the finished product. The final measurements were 11ft 3ins x 12ins. which included 12 rows of tabby in the linen warping thread each end.

Warp threads were then threaded back for 1ins singly and then collectively plaited in blocks of 3. Both ends were then glued to a strip of inch wide tape to make the ends extra secure. It is hoped the runner will last at least 50 years. As the runner will be used for kneeling, I bought a strip of underfelt to go beneath



it on the step. The runner has been in use now for 3 months and between services it is rolled up and kept in a plastic bag.

A Few Suggestions on how to be the Perfect Week-end guest.



“Do bring this basic wardrobe for the average week-end, city or country: one evening dress, two day-time costumes (a suit and a casual linen or print frock). For most country week-ends, a pair of flannel slacks, a tailored shirt or sweater and flat heeled shoes are also necessary.

Don't call for the maid except in an emergency. Never ask the maid to press your clothes, shine

your shoes or any extra favour, -unless it is absolutely necessary. Do tip the maid however if she has done any extra chores for you, such as pressing or mending clothes. Tip

her just before departing and unobtrusively, never in front of the hostess. About 2 or 4 dollars is usual.”*



ref.. "You, too, can be The Perfect Hostess." by Maureen Daly. Printed in 1950.

**anyone know what 4 dollars was worth in English money in 1950?*

More spinning techniques from Angela.

Twists Per Inch.

The ratio between the drive wheel and the flyer determines the speed of the wheel, and how many twists per inch (tpi) goes into the yarn. For instance, if you want to spin a medium yarn with 10tpi, place the drive band in the groove of the whorl size closest to 10:1. What this means is that one revolution of the drive wheel will put 10 twists in one inch of the yarn.



Therefore, if you draft one inch of fibre, hold it for one revolution of the wheel before drafting another inch of fibre and letting the yarn wind onto the bobbin, you will consistently spin a 10 tpi yarn. If you wanted 5tpi you would draft 2 inches of fibre to one wheel revolution. But if you treadle 2 revolutions in 2 inches, you will still be spinning 10 tpi yarn. This is the way you control the amount of twist in the yarn.

Drive Ratios.

Understanding drive ratios will help you to determine what type of yarn a wheel will spin. It is important to know the ratios when buying or selecting a wheel. A wheel with higher ratios like 21:1, is best suited for spinning a fine yarn that requires a lot of twist.

Whereas, a wheel with lower ratios like 3:1 is best for spinning bulky yarns that require less twist.

TIP: If you buy a new wheel, the ratios will be included with the documentation that comes with it. If your wheel is used and you do not know the drive ratios, here is an easy way to determine them. Tie a piece of yarn onto the flyer, and position the crankshaft on the drive wheel to the highest position. Place the drive band on one of the whorls and turn the drive wheel very slowly by hand, one revolution, and count how many times the flyer turns for one revolution. This number is the ratio.



Helpful info that Angela Baker found on

www.joyofhandspinning.com

I'm a Gran.



I've just become a gran for the first time, (Harry, 7lbs, 29th Aug. and he 's gorgeous.) I'm led to believe that every gran says this! So I'm busy making baby things and I thought these looked cute. (From The Ashford Book of Spinning. Anne Field.)

Materials: Grey fleece, medium to strong, approx. 8/10 WPI (2.5cm) 8-ply, spun, as a 2-ply or a thick singles.

Sizes: To fit 11cm 4.5ins 14cm 5.5ins, 17cm 6.75ins sole.

Using size 3.5mm (10) needles, cast on 10 (12, 15) sts

1st row: Sl. 1 , K. to end.

Repeat first row until work measures 12 (15, 20) cm.

Next row: Sl.1, K.9 (11, 14) sts, fold work in half and pick up 10 (12, 15) sts from cast-on edge (20, 24, 30 sts).

Next row: K. increasing 3 sts evenly across row (23, 27, 33 sts).

Next row: K.

Next row: Rib in K. 1, P.1 to end. Repeat last row until work measures 5 (7, 8) cm.

Next row: K. 1, K.2 tog. to end of row.

Next row: P. 1, P.2 tog. to end of row.

Next row: K.1, K.2 tog. to end of row.

Break yarn and thread through remaining sts, draw up tightly and fasten off . Stitch to sole and attach pompom to top of slipper.

Jane.

Mo's summer adventure.

Friends and family came to wave and wish me 'bon vacance' and 'bonne route' for my solo trip across France in my 1980 VW campervan. Another summer adventure, who knew what I would discover. Once landed, heading towards the Verdun war cemeteries, a sign caught my eye- " Musee du Feutre" . MUZON. **A felt museum.** This I really did have to investigate. The sleepy village of Muzon was set in a beautiful valley surrounded by stately trees, fields of corn and sunflowers. The parking area was next to the old 12th century church on the square , a patisserie, tourist information and the museum. After paying 3.90 Euros I joined the other tourists from France, Holland and Germany to wander around this two story building, which was once a thriving felt factory using local wool. There was an introductory DVD showing the history of felt making from 8.000 years ago in Siberia, through Turkish and Afghanistan rugs to today.

The exhibits were divided into fashion, industry and nomadic life. Examples of fashion garments from Germany, France and Japan included a full length white dress in gossamer felt which was simply stunning. There was a case of fine multi coloured jewellery, hats, shoes and gloves. In a quiet area I found stools, chairs and tables all made from thick felt with cut out shapes in the seats.

Downstairs, were large needle felting machines and a drum carded which looked very impressive. There was a

case of industrial felt for use in piano making, drum heads, bowler hats of all sizes, roof insulation batts and weird shapes used for the car industry. How informative, I had never realised the varied uses of felt. On the second floor was an enormous grey, decorated 'ger'* used by nomads in Mongolia, inside were displays of household items, more gloves, hats and garments in red and yellow. This made me think how I would love to see a ger in Mongolia- perhaps next years' adventure?

Outside in the converted stables was a workshop where some visitors were already making felt, so of course I joined in. The tutor showed examples of children's work and gave us a basket of wool to make our own, how relaxing to be creative in this setting.

It was altogether an interesting way to spend a day. I learned many things about felting which enthused me to try at home. If you are in the Verdun area of

Champagne-Ardenne, it is well worth a visit but

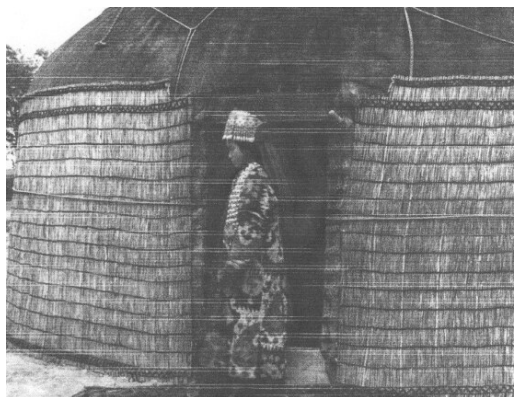
leave yourself a full day!

'bon vacance' 'bon route'

Mo

* *'ger' is mongolian,
'yurt' russian.

*



picture. 'Full-length profile portrait of turkman woman standing at the entrance to a yurt in traditional clothing and jewelry. 1911.

Words from the chairman. 2009-2010



Drawn by J. Mills.

What a fantastic year the guild has enjoyed. We've welcomed 6 new members, including 2 men; and had a stream of visitors, many of whom have been encouraged to join us. Members are so willing to welcome and help beginners get started that new people soon feel part of the group. Often I stand and look round the room and marvel at the smiles, laughter, and busy hands.

The committee planned a programme to include 2 discreet spinning dyeing and weaving workshops, when the experts in the groups were available to introduce new skills to members. The 2 planned dyeing workshops had to be amended, the hall was unavailable on one day and family commitments on the other. The spinning and weaving days were successful, instructive and enjoyable and will happen again next year if members enjoyed them.

We demonstrated at the East Bridgford Show, when it was very hot, and the Oak Lane Conservation meeting, when it was very windy. These outings are very popular with the public, if you haven't tried demonstrating yet, think about giving it a go. Or you could join 'spinnotts,' the 'ones in the black tee shirts.'

The National exhibition was held at Mansfield and Sue Relf ensured there was a full rota of stewards.

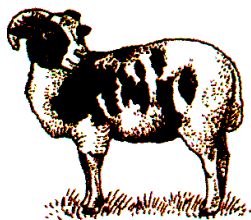
Dee and Nancy are retiring from the committee after their 3 years. Dee has done an amazing job setting up order and system in the library. I think of her as one of the 'wise ones' in the Guild, always willing to help. Nancy was responsible for arranging some fantastic outside speakers and is the person who I know is always willing to take a lead when asked. Many, many thanks to you both.

Looking forward to an equally brilliant 2011-2012.

Jane.

Thanks to the 'Spinster's Almanack 1989' for the picture.

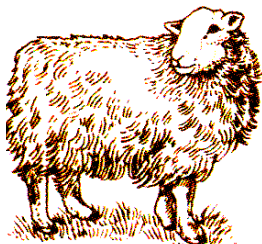
What sheep are these?



1.



2.



3.



4.

Committee members.

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 newsletter
 ejaneashley7@yahoo.co.uk

Angela Baker **secretary.** 07968 374046

ma.angelabaker@gmail.com

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 lenny.d@ntlworld.com

Dee Duke retiring
Nancy Hudson retiring
Chris Jesson 01949 851788
Sue Relf 01623473776
 sue@relf.org

Meetings are held at Lambley Village Hall, Catfoot Lane, from 10am-4pm. Workshops and speakers start at 11o/c

There is a large car park and easy access for disabled people.

Visitors are always welcome. Membership is £20 a year starting in October, plus £3.50 each meeting.

Remaining programme for 2010 and Jan. 2011.

Nov. .27th. Jennie Parry, “Embellishments.”
Dec. 18th. Christmas Fuddle, (that is bring food to share.)
 Secret Santa, and seasonal fun.
Jan. 29th. Jennie Parrey’s workshop.

Sheep quiz.

1. Jacob 2. Hebridean. 3 .Herdwick 4. Wenslydale.