



Ceredigion Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers

Newsletter January 2017

A Very Happy New Year to you all

The Autumn workshops and meetings proved to be a big success.

October meeting - making Christmas decorations Temari Balls, Dragon Boats, and Needle felting

Report by Helen Marriage

Rita Acton led an exciting group making dragon boats, turning little cardboard boxes into beautiful brightly coloured Christmas tree decorations.



Penny led one of the temari ball groups and Nicky the other. Layers of brightly coloured threads were soon covering Polystyrene balls. Coloured patterns developed, and were enhanced with 'shinies'. A little stitching to secure all, and behold a bauble. Mine was far from perfect, and I may well never make another one, but I was ridiculously pleased with it, and it graced my 'minimalist' Christmas tree.



Gail and Frankie soon had everyone making exquisite felted gnomes in various shapes and colours and above all, it was all such FUN.



November meeting

Cambrian Wool Company

Report by Nicky Evans

At our meeting in November Suzi Park and Sue James came to talk to us about Cambrian Wool. They are both directors of the Community Interest Company that organises the processing and sales of raw wool grown in our area on Welsh Mules.

The whole idea of trying to promote farm produce from this area came from The Prince of Wales. He set up the Cambrian Mountains Initiative to try to increase farm income and show the world what wonderful food and wool they can source from West and Mid Wales. The Initiative brought together interested parties to support each other in finding new ways of packaging and selling lots of different products, boosting sales and helping the local economy.

One branch of the Initiative was tasked with promoting Welsh Lamb and Beef and they have proved so successful that they are now a thriving and profit making concern. Wool however has proved to be more problematic.

Suzi and Sue are the only two directors still actively involved with Cambrian Wool, others having dropped out. The basic problem is that wool processors are set up to deal with enormous amounts of wool, and to keep the really good wool from Welsh Mules from this area separate from all the other wool from all over Wales is not easy. All the fleeces have to go to the Wool Marketing Board for sorting. The Board have apparently been very supportive and helpful, as have all the processors that Suzi and Sue have talked to. The majority of the wool then goes to the Midlands for spinning and dyeing, Suzi and Sue were overawed by the size of the wool clip from all over the British Isles and the comparatively small amount they were concerned with.

Still they have managed to organise the production of really beautiful DK and three ply wool which they sell for a reasonable price, it is stocked in many shops in our area. They also showed us some twill, woven at a local mill, which is quite exceptionally lovely, but unfortunately also very expensive to produce.

More information about Cambrian Wool can be found on their website and they also have a discussion group on Ravelry. Sue is presently designing knitting patterns for sale on Ravelry as well.



After the meeting Suzanne contacted Sue James about the price of wool on the comb, which might be interesting for both weavers and knitters. Below is her response

We have 2/6 nm in the neutral colours – Shale (dark charcoal) Slate (deep dusty grapey colour) Arian (silver) and Cegin which is a warm pale grey. And natural undyed too.

Dyed cones are around 500g in weight; less than 2.5kg these are £70/kg. Natural undyed is on bigger cones of around 2kg at £60/kg.

We can offer a discount for larger quantities, so if there are several of you wanting some, then that could reduce prices to £56.50/kg for dyed and £48/kg for undyed.

If anyone is interested in purchasing any of the cones then I am happy to coordinate

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Christmas Meeting

Report by Alison Douch

Do you remember Christmas either because you had a great time or because you are just glad it is all over! Hopefully you will remember our Guild meeting fondly.

It was great to see so many people come to the meeting when there is so much to do at that time of the year. The morning consisted of a chance to spin, chat and generally catch up but was most notable for the excellent entries in the competition (a Christmas decoration in any medium) There were so many excellent entries that it was difficult to choose the best. However, we did, by means of a ballot so that everyone had a chance to select their favourite. You will see the number and quality of the entries from the photos.



This was followed by a superb lunch. There were more than 40 contributions to the buffet, all of excellent quality and I know many of us took the opportunity to go for seconds! The tables looked lovely with all the decorations, thank you to everyone who brought one, it certainly brightened up the hall.



The lunch was followed by 'Ask the Expert'. This was an idea mooted by Madge some time ago and we 'persuaded' Penny McGregor, Gail Evans, Alice Evans, Pat Griffiths, Rita McCoy and Claire Davies to be our panel of experts. Between them they have an extensive knowledge of spinning, weaving, felting, fleeces, knitting etc. Boxes had been set out in the morning for members to submit their questions and Madge, as compere, read out the questions to the appropriate panel member. After their response, it was open to members to ask further questions or query anything they were not sure about. Initially people were a little reluctant to ask additional questions but things soon warmed up and very quickly members were joining in the discussions. I certainly enjoyed and benefited from the session and hope that other members felt the same. So often we have queries which may seem either obvious or too small to ask about and this was an opportunity to ask those questions.

Thank you to Madge and the panel for taking part.

After the Christmas meeting Helen Williams came up with what, everyone agrees, is an excellent idea. For those who receive the bulletin my apologies for the repetition but as many don't get the bulletin I am repeating her idea in full below.

In the question and answer session at the last meeting there were two questions about equipment for beginners:-

Which loom and which wheel would you suggest I buy first.

It is a difficult question to answer.

Everyone has different amounts of spaces to put equipment, we have different budgets, we work in different ways and all of us are different sizes! All of which has an impact on what we can store, afford and work on comfortably but there is a huge range of equipment out there, so which do you choose when you are buying for the first time? What does a 70cm David loom look like in real life and can it fit in the corner by the sofa, how low is the orifice on an Ashford Joy, how does a countermarche work and will I ever get off the floor again when I've done the tie up?

It is always useful to see, have a go on and discuss different bits of equipment but who has what? Some wheels come to Guild so it is fairly simple to have a look at them and chat to their owners but many others don't and looms hardly ever come along.

So what I suggest is that we have a list of kit owned by members that they are willing to discuss and allow people to come and see (by arrangement of course) and maybe have a go with. I'm not talking about loaning out - I'm just suggesting a sit in front of the equipment and see if it's comfortable to reach the treddles on that loom or is it too much strain on bad knees to lift the shafts on a 8 shaft jack floor loom or did you find that the orifice on that wheel was too high/low/perfect for you or that the location of the bobbin on that one makes it impossible to see what you have spun when you are sitting down.

Because those are the things you want to know before you start saving up, looking for second hand or putting them on your birthday list.

If you buy the same as someone else you'll also have contact with someone who has the same equipment and if you get stuck you'll have someone who may have had the same problem and knows the equipment you are talking about.

So I'll go first - I have a Ashford Traditional (scotch tension) and a Haldane Lewis (double drive) and a Glimarka Ideal countermarche loom, a 70cm Louet David and a Wolf pup. All of which I'm happy for people to meet and have a look at - some of the equipment can come to Guild but not all. I just need a couple of days notice so I can Hoover up and the kettle will be on when you arrive.....

There have been many responses already to this idea of Helen's and we will be publishing a list of members happy to share information in the next bulletin.
Roving reporters

Janet Phillips Weaving Course, Somerset

Alison Douth and I (Suzanne Rees) spent a wonderful couple of days with Janet Phillips down in Somerset at the end of October. We wanted to learn about colour and sett. There were six of us on the course, from someone who had never used a loom before to someone looking to extend their knowledge of double weave (she had treated herself to 4 days!). On the first morning we all squeezed into Janet's tiny mews house and then made our way up to her lovely studio at the top of the garden. Janet had prepared both looms for those weaving and papers for those of us looking at colour.

The day flew by as we played around with the colour wheel and interpreted some of our favourite pictures into a card sample. It was fascinating to see how the colours changed when put next to each other and using the colour wheel to accentuate and dull down various designs. Janet is a great believer in the use of Fibonacci numbers in design and I have to say that having used it constantly since the course it certainly seems to work. The Fibonacci sequence is a series of numbers where a number is found by adding up the two numbers before it. Starting with 0 and 1, the sequence goes 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, and so forth.

The second day we moved on to our looms, Janet had set them up ready for us to play around with different setts and, using a linen counter, off we went. It was fascinating to see the difference beating to different ppi (picks per inch) made and I now pay much more attention to this in any designs I attempt.



Janet will tailor her course entirely around you if you want it, we will certainly be going back again and should anyone want any advice on where to stay or eat while you are there then do get in touch with Alison or myself.

We would just like to alert you to the meetings in the next 3 months.

11th Feb

Spinning angora rabbit with Rachel Auckland.

Come and learn about these delightful animals and how best to spin their beautiful fine fibre.

11th March

'Colour in weaving' with Helen Marriage and Pat Griffiths.

Thinking about colour effects in weaving with discussion/explanation and exercises.

8th April

Needle felting with Frankie Jefferson and Gail Evans.

This dry felting method is a good way to build up 3 dimensional pieces, even animals and birds.

There are some places left on each course at time of printing.

Please see me at the guild meetings or email. spinweave55@hotmail.com

For Sale

Ashford 24 inch table loom, two years old and in good condition £350.00

Contact Suzanne on 01974821206

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