



**Urdd Gwehyddion Nyddwyr a Lliwyddion Gwynedd**  
**Gwynedd Guild of Weavers Spinners & Dyers**

# NEWSLETTER

## 2019 Year in Review

### CALENDAR of EVENTS

<b>2019</b>	Saturday, 12 January 2019	'Silk Spinning Workshop' with Fiona Nisbet, Shropshire Weavers
	Saturday, 9 February 2019	'Make a Bag from you Own Weaving' with Margaret Markland & AGM (pm)
	Saturday, 9 March 2019	'Felting Workshop' with Nicole le Maire (am)
	Saturday, 13 April 2019	'Blending Board Workshop' with Anne Cambell (am) & Fibre Exchange Part 1 (pm)
	Saturday, 18 May 2019	'Nalbinding Workshop' with Mary Hurst (am) & All Wales Challenge Design Discussion (pm)
	Saturday, 15 June 2019	All Wales Challenge Workshop (am) & 'Excavations at Parc Cybi Lecture, esp. spindle whorls & looms' with Jane Kenney, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (pm)
	Saturday, 13 July 2019	'Hand-carding and Long-Draw Spinning Lightweight Woollen Yarn' with Freyalyn Close-Hainsworth (am)
	Saturday, 10 August 2019	All Wales Challenge Workshop (am) & 'Ikat Weaving Lecture' with Mary Hurst
	Saturday, 14 September 2019	Dyeing Day @ <b>Treborth Botanic Garden, Bangor*</b>
	Saturday, 05 October 2019	All Wales Challenge Workshop (am)
	Saturday, 09 November 2019	Fibre Exchange Part 2 (pm)
	Saturday, 14 December 2019	Christmas Lunch
<b>in 2020 ...</b>	Saturday, 11 January 2020	'Freestyle Weaving Workshop' with Sophia Ingham, PhiaEco (am)
	Saturday, 08 February 2020	AGM (pm)

### REMINDERS ...

**Meetings in 2020 will be at Tecstiliau, Y Bedol, Bethel, Gwynedd. LL55 1AX.**

**Saturday meetings** are 2pm – 4pm. A spinning workshop, which beginners are welcome to join, runs from before meeting from 10 am onwards so that you can come and enjoy the day. All are welcome to bring spinning, weaving etc. to work throughout the day at the Hall, bring your own lunch.

**When we have both am and pm sessions --- am sessions start at 10.00am; pm sessions start at 2.00pm**

## MEETINGS & EVENTS *from 2019*

### *Make a Bag from Your Own Weaving (February 2019)*



Margaret hosted a (shorter than expected) day of making bags from guild members weaving.

The bags showed off the diversity of our guild members weaving while also their interior fabrics that added an extra bit of personality to each of the bags. So nice to see woven fabrics transformed in to functional products.

Well done to all who finished them on the day and beyond!

### *Ros Hornbuckle at Oriël Môn – Sarah K. (March 2019)*

It was refreshing to see an exhibition dedicated to tapestry weaving at Oriël Môn this year. A range of works from Ros Hornbuckle displayed textures and scenes from the landscape with references to familiar scenes around Anglesey. As someone who is interested in the development of my own tapestry skills, I was keen to see the pieces close-up. Observing the subtle shifts in colour as well as the finishing techniques that she uses to display her work were very useful. The works were popular with other visitors as well. Many of the smaller pieces being labelled as ‘sold’ and the larger ones catching the attention of many people as they walked through the long gallery space on their way around Oriël Môn.



### *Spinners and Weavers Do Felt! – Cathy O. (March 2019)*

We were privileged to have Nicole le Maire giving us a day of instruction on felt making, a bit different but many of us who had met Nicole in her role of leading the Calon Wlan organisation and noted the fabulous felt jacket she wears were interested in learning how to make this form of woolly textile. So, we had the room laid out with tables in two lines allowing space for all of us to make felt.

Nicole gave us a brief introduction to the making of felt which is thought to be the earliest form of fabric made with wool. Basically, the animals make it themselves if they are kept in close confinement at a

time when they are naturally shedding their wool, which primitive breeds of sheep do, the action of their feet on the shed wet wool will felt it.

We were told that we use natural wools, dyed or processed fibres, we could add in locks, spun threads, other fibres such as silk and objects such as beads, and mirrors. We were encouraged to take time in laying out the wool as that will save time later and that it is important that the felt shrinks as that is important for the longevity of the fabric.

So, we set to it, setting out the layers of fibre on-top of a layer of material or netting, thin layers and each layer at 90 o angle crossways until there is a good thickness of layers, the lay out the coloured fibres and embellishments on top. It was necessary to add soap and spray warm water to dampen it as you go. The top and bottom layers of fine bubble wrap added and roll it up into a sausage and then roll it up and down the table, several hundred times! Boy was that hard work, but in the end all of us had a lovely original piece of felt!



### *A Dyer's Garden on Gardener's World (April 2019)*

A nice surprise this week to see Monty Don start a 'dyer's bed' on the Easter edition of Gardener's World with Rachel de Thame. It will be interesting to see the follow up on this garden in episodes to come but in the meantime here is the list of plants mentioned on the television series.

<b>Isatis tinctoria</b> (Woad)	- dye colour: blue, created from the foliage. Flowering reduces efficacy, pick leaves.
<b>Hypericum x hidcoteense</b> <b>'Hidcote'</b> (St John's wort)	- dye colour: varied yellow to brown, created from flowers.
<b>Alcea rosea 'Halo Cerise'</b> (Hollyhocks)	- dye colour: varied pinks to purples, created from flowers.
<b>Rubia tinctorum</b> (Dyer's Madder)	- dye colour: reds, created from roots.
<b>Calendula officinalis</b> (Common marigold)	- dye colour: soft orange, created from flowers.

One of the best resources for dyeing with plants is the book 'Wild Colour' by Jenny Dean. Dean is great at providing details on how to cultivate and harvest plants while also the procedures for dyeing. Knowing that we have our annual dyeing day in September this is an excellent opportunity for growing your own dye plants this year!



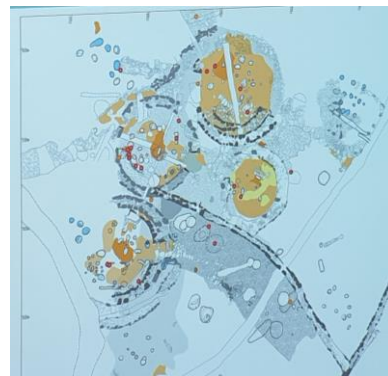
## *WonderWool Wales at the Royal Welsh Showground (April 2019)*

Our annual trip to WonderWool Wales in Builth Wells, organised by Susanne S., ventured south for a view of what is available in supplies, equipment, fibres and techniques. We all thought that WonderWool Wales had a bit of a revival this year with some of the annual participants as well as new stall holders. I am sure that some of us are already planning again for the event next year!

## *Whorls and Looms at Parc Cybi – A talk by Jane Kenny (June 2019)*

Some years ago the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust undertook excavations at an Iron Age site at Parc Cybi near Holyhead, on Holy Island off Anglesey. Jane Kenny of the Trust gave a talk to the guild focussing on the spindle whorls found associated with a group of roundhouses. The site, which had 5 roundhouses, was occupied over a long period and the houses themselves had substantial stone walls which would have been topped by a conical thatched roof. In all, 33 spindle whorls were found at the site, ten being recovered from a single roundhouse prompting the idea that it may have been the focus for textile work. The whorls were all made of the same fine-grained but soft stone, the origin of which is yet to be determined. Several whorls showed some decoration and they were regular and well-made. The weights of the whorls ranged from 12g to 38g and diameters 30 - 50mm. Perhaps this suggests different types of fibre were being spun and plied? No fibres survive on the site, but there is evidence that sheep were present, so yarns produced probably included wool, but perhaps flax or other bast fibres were spun as well. The roundhouse with the whorls also had a mystery post hole which did not seem to be structural but was close to the area where the spindle whorls were found. A suggestion is that backstrap looms were being used and the post could have been used to tension the warps. It is known that backstrap looms were used in Ireland at this time, rather than warp weighted looms. At this period the sea would have been a cultural highway rather than a barrier.

In the discussion after the talk some members were insistent that spindle whorls would not have been 'lost' as the archaeologists term it (in order to be 'found' by excavation). A spindle whorl would have been highly valued and the group found together probably represented an area where they had been stored in baskets, on a shelf or hung up and were abandoned through some kind of catastrophic event - perhaps an epidemic or local conflict which caused rapid abandonment of the dwelling or whole settlement. It was an excellent talk and prompted a good discussion and exchange of ideas. – Hilary M.



## *Hand Carding and Long Draw Spinning – Cathy O. (July 2019)*

In 2018, we decided to try different speakers and with the growth in our membership we are able to have more speakers in to teach us different techniques, so in 2018 a relatively new committee member was tasked with booking the next year's speakers and was coerced to be the vice chair as well. So back in the spring of that year I did the bookings for 2019 and for July we had Freyalynn Close-Hemsworth booked to deliver the workshop on Hand-carding and long-draw spinning to make beautiful lightweight woollen yarns. During 2018 I should have seen the impending resignation of our then chair coming earlier than I did but by our Christmas meeting it was clear that our chair was going to resign, and then in late December I had a heart attack which made it difficult for me at our January meeting which I was very keen to attend as I had booked Fiona Nisbet to do Silk – from Silkworm to Fabric Lecture and Silk Spinning Workshop but had to get a lot of help from others on the committee.

Typically for our meetings we are getting 25 to 35 members attending which can be quite hard to manage as we only have one big room to use in our venue so it can be a bit noisy with chat going on so as chair I have to be forceful sometimes to get a bit of quiet, they may regret having me as chair.

## *Gwynedd Guild Attends the Anglesey Show (August 2019) – Cathy O.*

On August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> members of the Gwynedd Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers attended the Anglesey show to demonstrate the art of spinning and show our spun and dyed wools and finished articles knitted, crocheted and woven. On the Tuesday Eva brought with her great wheel, all of the visiting families were able to chat about the old folk tales of pricking fingers and sleeping for 100 years. We had 4 members on the Tuesday and sadly only 3 as Mary had been unable to join us. For the Wednesday we also changed the layout of our display, necessary as the items being displayed were different. The weather on the Tuesday was fine and sunny but the Wednesday was showery and the showers were heavy but we are in the permanent hall and so we were snug and dry.

Both days were very busy with lots of people coming over to talk to us and we might have a few new members as a result, there was a lot of interest and our new leaflet was useful to give to people, but most people needed to be encouraged to take one away rather than just picking one up. The flow of people on the Wednesday was variable as when the showers started there was a sudden influx of wet people and mud, but at least the site management did a rapid mop up between showers!

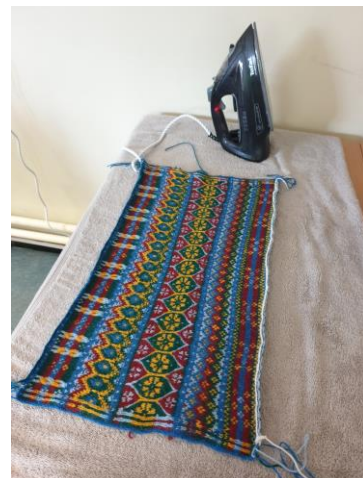
This is a great show and all members who do a stint get an opportunity to look around the show for free, it is a busy site with a lot going on both days. If you haven't done this please do at least one of our spinning in public opportunities as they are great fun.





### *An Adventure at Guild Summer School at Askham Bryan in York (August 2019)*

During the month of August, I was fortunate enough to be accepted to attend the Guild Summer School. As the only participant from our guild I was not alone because we had Chris J. who had the prestigious opportunity to be a tutor for one of the workshops and Rosie was at the end of week trade show for SaoriMor. Throughout the intensive week I attended the course titled “Stranded Colourwork for Handspinners” with Ann Kingstone. While I was a bit unsure whether or not my hands would hold out knitting so intensively all week I discovered a range of techniques including: two stranded colour knitting (like Fair Isle), three stranded colourwork, travelling colourwork, Norwegian purl and cabling without a cable needle. With a technique introduced each day there were strong expectations that we would complete our ‘remedial knitting’ each evening. I broke a few needles trying to ‘knit tighter’ as encouraged by Ann to ensure that my patterns would be clear and some rows had to be re-knit with attention and concentration. Alongside all the technical development were tales of the history of knitting, a display of knitting sticks and storytelling in Yorkshire dialect. This is an experience that I will never forget and I do feel like I am a more accomplished knitter, and that perhaps I need to have more confidence in my abilities as a knitter because my hands survived after all! - Sarah K.



I would encourage others to think about applying in future I was great to meet and spend time with members from the other guilds around the UK and from abroad. Keep an eye out for applications!



## *Spin in Public (September 2019)*

Locations: Caernarfon Castle, Llynnon Mill (Anglesey) and the National Slate Museum (Llanberis)

Spinning in public is always an event we look forward to particularly if the weather is fine, 2019 was spectacular in terms of wall to wall sunshine but it was a bit windy.

### **... at Caernarfon Castle**

The wind caused some problems with setting up in Caernarfon Castle and required a lot of rethinks in terms of placing stuff on our tables with things blowing away or blowing over. The initial set up was modified by the use of string to tie things down and secure the vertical element to the tables. The amount of fiber being used at any one time also had to be modified with the wind catching it and us having to give chase to rapidly moving fluff! We did have a good day showing off our skills in spinning and natural dyeing with spun wool in a variety of colours and knitted items made from handspun wools with much interest from visitors to the castle from the UK, USA and Japan and a number of guilds across the UK might get some enquiries as a result of information given. – Cathy O.



### **... at the National Slate Museum, Llanberis**

From our arrival the staff of the Slate museum were truly welcoming, making sure we were looked after throughout the day. It was quickly decided that our initial plan to spin outside the quarryman's cottages was possibly not the best idea given the wind, our fleece would soon have been blown halfway up the side of the mountain. Instead we were set up in the school room 'Glyder Fawr'. With its long trestle tables and benches this was a perfect space to spread out our equipment and the handmade items we

had to show what can be created. It was a bright and welcoming space, out of the wind, where the guild members were able to arrange their wheels to chat together and with our visitors. We had a steady stream of interested people through the door. It was great to spend time with one family where the parents chatted away with us while their daughter was shown how to use a drop spindle and her brother spent quite a while looking at how he could make one out of recycled articles just like the one his sister was using made from old CDs, a dowel and hook. I suspect they may both have projects in mind for when they get back home! A great day was had by all, definitely helped along by scones and tea from the Fountain Cafe. Here's to next year! – Kath T.



### *Dyeing Day (September 2019)*

The September dyeing day was 'bubbling' as usual with a dozen or more hot plates turned on in the beautiful surroundings of Treborth Gardens. Using knowledge and a bit of luck, a variety of colours and textures appeared and by the end of the day the drying racks were full. Experiments of all different types from natural dyes to bright KoolAid! The sun also did a good job drying all the days production.





*All Wales Challenge & All Wales Event at the Minerva Centre - (October 2019)*



*All Wales Challenge theme for the 2019: 'Patterns of Wales'*

Our design focused on imagery associated with the geological landscape, farming and slate heritage.  
Our display was organised by colours in association with the seasons.

*Fibre Exchange Results! (November 2019)*

Images from the annual fibre exchange based on the theme of 'festival'.



*A few more pics from the fibre exchange ...*



*Sewing Notions Wreath ... maybe a little project for the holidays!*



Susanne S. is always on the look out for interesting ideas and we are thankful for her regular contributions to the newsletter. In her email highlighting this unique wreath ideas Susanne mentions:

“We all have gathered interesting and special items which we are never going to use but just keep hidden in drawers and boxes. Now we can put them on display for ourselves to love and remember or share as a gift. From my own stash of inherited treasures I can fill Grandmother and Mother eras with all sorts of old fashioned bits and bobs. I hope Guild members will find this idea inspirational.”

The whole of the instructions can be found as a pdf on the authors website:

<http://www.amakinglife.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Sewing-Notion-Rreath.pdf>

***Our website:* [gwyneddguild.weebly.com](http://gwyneddguild.weebly.com)**