

# Wiltshire Guild Spinners Weavers and Dyers



## Newsletter September 2019

Registered Charity Number 1168349

## **Letter from the Editors**

The *Craft and Chat* Saturdays are a chance for members to get together and do exactly as the title suggests. The August meeting was no exception; amongst the topics of discussion were climate change, our individual and collective responsibility to limit the damage that humanity has done to the planet and any appropriate action that can or should be taken by the guild. Karen is pictured on the front page taking part in an event to lobby MPs on the issues (see page 5 for more information).

We suspected that as a group of people we would be resourceful and creative in ways to recycle and reuse, so we threw out a challenge to find out if this was so. Turn to page 19 and you will find just some of the proof!

Liz researched the sustainability of fibres that we use and her article on page 15 is most informative.

Thanks to everyone who has submitted articles. Do keep ideas coming in for future articles and topics of discussion; everyone's input and views are important and valued.

Wishing everyone a productive autumn of crafting!

Julia and Harriette

### **Welcome**

A very warm welcome to new member; Victoria Ross

## **Safeguarding and Protecting Young People and Adults Policy**

The new Chair of the National Association is keen to attract young members. We have drafted a *Safeguarding and Protecting Young People and Adults Policy*: a copy will be on the noticeboard and given to every new member.

### **What's On**

If anyone is able to venture over to Saltford between Bath and Bristol, [World Textiles Day](#) will be on 5<sup>th</sup> October from 10.00am until 4.30pm. The talk at 11.00am is *Deeper than Dyeing* with Isabella Whitworth – natural dyeing artist, historical dyes expert, teacher and lecturer.

[The Whitchurch Silk Mill](#) is hosting The Hampshire Guild of SWD exhibition – Spinning a Yarn – Weaving a Thread from 30<sup>th</sup> November to 5<sup>th</sup> January and [The Peacock Arts Trail](#) which is around the Corsham and Chippenham area is on from 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October.

## **Subscriptions and Fundraising**

Guild Day in September each year is when membership fees are due.

- Please make every effort to pay at the guild meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, or beforehand if you are not attending.
- There are tasks relating to preparing financial statements for the AGM and renewing our payment to the National Association of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers which are delayed by the late payments of subs. For this reason, the very latest we can accept subscription payments is 31st October.

As agreed in September 2018 the subscriptions for 2019/2020 will be as follows;

- £60.00 for full membership
- £35.00 for associate membership.
- Young Persons' membership' at £30.00 per year
- Door money will be £3.00 (£1.50 for young person) per visit, payable by all members.
- Journal Magazine Prices are the same as last year: £16 for 4 issues if bought through Guild (£20 if you buy independently), also £16 for digital only or £20 for print + digital. Liz McCarron arranges the group order, so let her know you have paid.
- Printed Newsletter: All newsletters are available online on the Guild website but if you would like a printed copy of the Guild newsletter then please add £4.00 to your total and we will leave them at Guild in December, March, June and September for you to collect.
- Add these sums to your sub to make a total for payment.

### **Ways to pay**

Cash, cheque or BACs.

- Cheques to be payable to Wiltshire Guild of SWD.
- Bank details if paying by BACS:  
HSBC sort code 40 32 13 account 51470671.
- Please put as a reference your Membership number and "Subs"
- Please make it clear to Erica, our treasurer, if you are also paying for the newsletter or the Journal
- Contact Kathy for membership number if required.

## **Gift Aid**

If you are a UK taxpayer and you can help us to claim gift aid on your subscription, please let Kathy or Erica know at the point of paying, or email Erica who can send a blank form in reply for you to complete. Gift aid increases income to the guild by 25% at no cost to the member.

If you have already filled in a form you don't need to do this again.

## **Fleece Sale**

As ever, the fleece sale was organised with Kathy's usual precision and care and was a lovely event which showcased a wide variety of fleeces available to use for our various crafts.

If you did not manage to get to the sale, or resisted buying and now regret your decision, the fleece sellers were as follows;

- Lucy Doughty (member) - Gotland
- Val Lenaerts (member) - Whole Jacob (Grey/browns) and smaller lots of Jacob.
- Eileen Broadley (member) - Portland and Ouessant
- Issy Whitford (member) - Mixture of fleece types
- Trish Gray (member) - Shetland
- Marie Escott (Member) - Dorset X and Whole Jacob (dark browns)
- Gill Russell (ex-member) - Bleu du Maine and North Ronaldsay.
- Wendy from Alpaca Adventures (non-member) - Alpaca.

If you would like to contact any of the sellers, then please ask a committee member to pass on your request.

Issy will be running the fleece sale next year so any contacts please pass on to her.

## **Karen's top that she wore at "The Time is Now"**

*Karen was one of 15,000 people participating in 'The Time is Now': a mass lobby of MPs organised by The Climate Coalition at Westminster on 26<sup>th</sup> June. [The Climate Coalition](#) consists of over 130 organisations concerned about our environment: Campaign for Rural England, the Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, the WI, many Christian and Faith groups, the Woodland Trust and many others. Constituents lobbied MPs to emphasise the extreme urgency of addressing climate change, our destructive use of nature and to show people's willingness to get behind serious measures to achieve improvement.*

*We were interested to know the story behind the top she was wearing; "The top was made using the length of fabric shown at the Guild exhibition in May. The piece was called 'Summer Sakiori' and was made from torn up fabric strips from old cotton garments: a blouse, two dresses, a beach wrap, etc. Some garments were old ones of mine and some were bought from charity shops. I like buying from charity shops because the money goes to support a good cause and I get to buy clothes in sizes I can only dream of; a size 8 dress anyone?"*

*Sakiori is a Japanese technique devised by the peasant class of historic Japan. Life was hard in a climate with very hot summers and cold winters. Textile resources were so scarce that peasants cleverly devised techniques to re-use worn out garments. Sakiori is made by using strips of old kimonos re-woven to create new textiles. I use a plain weave with new cotton or bamboo yarn for the warp at 10 dpi then design as I go using ¼" fabric strips for the weft cut using a rotary cutter. Torn strips need to be about ½" wide to tear from the cloth without breaking. The strips are wound into balls called 'nuki'. The top was made using a Saori pattern ('Beginners' Saori Clothing Design' square neck vest p43 ISBN 978-4-907038-03-8)."*

*Shockingly, the Government rejected all 18 recommendations to address poor working conditions in the fashion supply chain, reduce the chemical and fibre pollution caused by textiles and to legislate for effective recycling of garments by fashion retailers and said it won't be making a decision about this subject until 2025.*

*"We don't have to wait for the powers-that-be as ALL garments can be recycled in Wiltshire. No clothes need end up in landfill as even worn out clothes are shredded for fibres which are then made into packaging, underlay and insulation materials."*

Eds. and Karen Skeates.

## Suri Alpaca Fleece

Most people are probably familiar with alpacas, but not many are aware there are two varieties of alpaca fleece: huacaya and suri.

### **Characteristics**

Huacaya alpacas are the better known of the two and have a fluffy sheep-like appearance.



Huacaya Fleece



Suri Fleece

Suri alpacas have a lustrous fleece, without the crimp of the Huacaya, that hangs down from the body in locks

Young Suris with the best quality fleeces look like mystic elf steed creatures straight from the over budgeted CGI department of a Hollywood blockbuster, with shiny flowing locks. Older Suri fleeces are not as fine, and as the first shearing tends to disrupt the lock structure and it never really comes back the same, they can often look more like rugged Highland cattle.

*(Eds. CGI if anyone is wondering is Computer Generated Imagery!)*

The fleece type is controlled by a single gene, so a Huacaya and a Suri can breed together and the cria will have either a Huacaya or a Suri fleece depending on the genetic combination it gets, and not something intermediate of the two.

## Characteristics

Despite alpaca breeders everywhere extolling the virtues of suri fleece, I've found very little information available on how to prepare and use it to get the best out of it, so I had to discover a lot of it by trial and error. Suri fleece is reputed to be the mammalian fibre most similar in its qualities to silk. The fleece while it's on the animal ideally should feel cool rather than warm, and finished items should retain this quality. With no crimp, suri is a dense and inelastic fibre that works best in situations that take advantage of its drape. The fleece is lustrous and smooth, but prone to static and likes to frizz and stick to everything but itself, so things made from it can end up looking hairy if it's not handled sympathetically. To get the best results, proper combed preparation and worsted spinning are required.



## Fleece Selection

With all alpaca fibre, fleece from younger animals is generally better quality than from older ones. The fibre coarsens with age and coloured animals accrue white hairs. However, coarser suri fibre with less defined structure is easier to work with than very fine, closely locked Suri, so can be a good choice for a first attempt, and you can still make interesting things from the coarser fibre – they just won't be things you'd want to wear against your skin. Whether acquiring fibre from older or younger animals, avoid fleece with staple length less than 4 inches. Slick fibres need to be long in order to grip when spun and short fibres are harder to comb and handle and will make hairiness worse. Suris are often shorn every two years for this reason, but a yearling with good growth should also have long enough fibre. Very long suri fleece is popular to use as hair for high-end dolls and rocking horses.

## Preparation

Suri fleece does not hold together as do fleeces from huacaya and sheep, so you will probably be working with either a pile of shiny spaghetti or Blondie's haircut leftovers, depending on the lock structure of the animal. Break off a handful of locks and spread them out, or if the locks aren't well formed, break a clump. Remove any short bits and any locks that feel hairy or rough. Alpacas have different qualities of fibre on different areas of the body. The best fibre that is suitable for spinning is the blanket from the animal's torso, but it becomes full of guard hairs on the undercarriage and legs. Some of this transition line always ends up in with the fleece at shearing, but it can be easily picked out, particularly on coloured fleeces as the hair often lightens at the transition line.

The fleece is not greasy, but will probably be contaminated with bits of hay and small particles of grit. I generally do not wash the fleece before combing it, as the washing compacts the fleece and won't remove most of the contamination, and it can strip natural oils away and make static worse. If the fleece has a lot of contamination, it can help to hold the locks down on a table top and brush with either a dog slicker or hand carder to remove some and start to break up the locks before combing.

Lash the locks onto the comb by the cut end. The fleece has to be combed quite a lot to break up the lock structure and remove any bits. It is helpful to mist the fleece with water to reduce static, and I like to add anti-frizz hair serum to the spray water. It hopefully leaves a residue that will help keep the frizz down when the combed suri is spun, and it makes it smell nice! However, if you can get the comb through a few times before misting, this does help to encourage some of the particles of foreign matter to drop out, which will otherwise stick to the fleece once it becomes damp from misting. What I've found works best when using small hand combs is to clamp the loaded comb and comb off almost all of the fleece onto the other comb and throw away what's left on the clamped comb for the first two passes. After that, you can re-clamp the comb with the fibre on it and comb away until what's left on the comb is smooth and as free as possible of debris, diz that off, and bin the remainder. You can then swap the combs over and repeat until you've removed all the fleece from the combs.

I usually don't bother to plank and re-comb the suri, as if it is combed thoroughly like this it should be enough. If the fleece is very dirty or you want to dye the suri, I find it is best to comb the fleece twice, once before the wash or dye, and again after. Particularly with fleeces with well-formed locks, combing beforehand will help the dye to penetrate evenly as well as reducing dyed waste. When dyeing, I find it helps to twist the slivers together and tie with string loosely in a few places to make it easier to recomb once the fleece is dry. Coil the combed fleece in the bottom of the dye pot. When rinsing after dyeing or washing, it can help to add some hair conditioner to the rinse to reduce static. The hank of suri can then be laid to dry on a towel before re-combing.



## **Spinning**

Suri works best as a finely spun, high-twist yarn. Because of the density and lack of crimp, thick-spun suri will come out very heavy and garments made from it will sag. A wheel with double drive helps a lot. If you don't have a double drive wheel, tricks to reduce the uptake such as wrapping a bobbin to increase its diameter can help. Keep pieces short and try to avoid letting the combed suri drag across your lap, or it will stick to you.

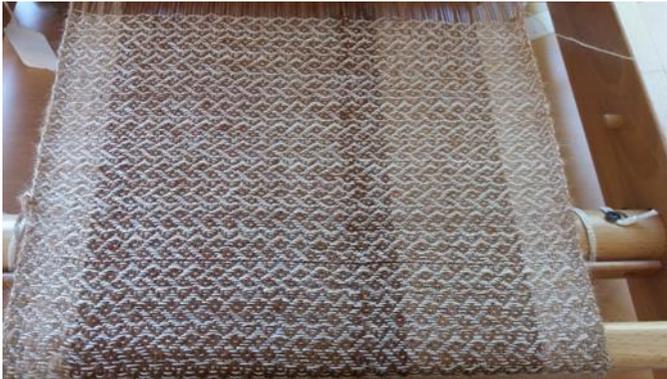
When plying, I've found it can really help at reducing hairiness to rewind the spun bobbins first so the singles are being plied in the same direction they were spun. The suri has no 'memory' so a loose ply will not expand after washing as wool does, and even singles spun with a lot of twist have little tendency to coil back on themselves.

## Uses



With its drape and inelasticity, suri lends itself to techniques like weaving and crochet. When using singles for crochet, work from the starting end of the single as it was spun to keep the fibre as smooth as possible (it helps to tie a knot in it when removing it from the bobbin to wash and to make a centre-pull ball with the knot in the centre). It is possible to use suri singles for

warp, but the friction of the beater does cause hairiness, and coating the warp with something might help with this (answers on a postcard please). Plied suri seems to have more resistance to friction. The finest suri can be used for stoles and summer shawls for wearing against the skin. Coarser suri from older animals is extremely hardwearing and strong. As long as it's not too short, it can still find uses that make the most of its colour and lustre, in outer garments, tapestries, blankets, and rugs. I haven't experimented much with suri blends so far, but finer suri could be blended with similar fine lustrous fibres such as silk and bamboo viscose. Coarser suri could be blended with native lustre longwool, e.g. Wensleydale sheep.



MJ Rawlings

*Eds. Thank you so much Manda. The subtitle could have been "Everything you ever wanted to know about Alpaca and how to process the fleece, but were afraid to ask!"*

## Wool, Woad and Water; a Creative Walk through the Cloth Trade

I joined this event with my sister, and although it was a fascinating insight into the lives of the people who were involved in the wool industry in Frome, there was too much information for us, read from notes, and too much standing and listening during what was a very warm afternoon. Several people left early and we left before the end of the walk, both suffering with tired feet and information overload.

However, anyone with the stamina and concentration would have found this to be a most informative stroll around central Frome. Led by Carolyn Griffiths, author of 'Woad to This' and Christina Sanders of *Creative Walkshops*, at each point of interest Carolyn treated us to many facts, with excerpts from letters, which she had discovered during the course of her research. At the same time we were encouraged to try to imagine what life might have been like for those involved, the labourers, the weavers and dyers, the merchants. The noise of the looms and the fulling blocks, the overpowering stench of a polluted river in which both the fleece and finished product were washed and the hard labour of those who were employed for a pittance to wash both fleece and fabric. There was no respite for those living in Willow Vale, alongside the river; the sounds and smells were a constant reminder of their status, and the source of their income. Those who could afford to do so built their houses uphill from the dwellings in the valley below.

Supporting Carolyn, Christina offered different perspectives on the act of walking and explained how closely this verb is linked to the various processes involved with weaving (waulking). An interesting analysis of the origin and meaning of "walk" can be found in the [Online Etymology Dictionary](#) ;

Meaning: "*travel on foot*," c. 1200, a merger of two verbs, 1. Old English *wealcan* "to toss, roll, move round" (past tense *weolc...*)

As part of our walk we were encouraged to look about us and to notice details of buildings designed for the cloth trade; the river as it is now, green and lush with vegetation, and to be aware of colour as we walked, particularly, as it was relevant, shades of blue in our surroundings.

Overall this event was a fascinating history lesson, a combination of facts and walking with awareness and during the afternoon there were plenty of opportunities for questions and discussion. I'm only sorry not to have been able to absorb more of the details of the walk but am looking forward instead to our guild visit to Frome Museum on Saturday 24th August when Carolyn will be talking more about her experiences as she is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about her subject and her research has been incredibly thorough.

Anne Reddan

### **Frome Museum; [Woad to This](#) Carolyn Griffiths**

Carolyn firstly explained the details of the map and display in the museum about the textile industry in Frome. We then looked at ledgers and weaving sample books from the archives.

Our topics of discussion were wide ranging;

- We wondered why woad and teasels are not found growing in the wild. (I have since found that woad does grow precariously on one site in Tewkesbury, whilst in the USA it is a damaging and invasive weed.)
- In the 1700's weavers and dyers had complex workbooks for recipes and samples. Perhaps this meant that they could read?
- [Shawford Mill](#) had a room dedicated to opera (the link is for an underwear company – but do read it as it has an extensive history of the site).
- International trade was badly affected by an earthquake in Portugal in 1755 which caused huge economic disruption even as far as Frome.

And a couple of things for the wordsmiths amongst us;

- Some of the suit fabric samples were "*crammed*" meaning having a very dense warp. Also meaning to be full almost to overflowing and used by students to mean last minute revision.
- "*Dyed in the wool*" – the wool is dyed before it is spun and thus less likely to lose the colour- those with such opinions are less likely to change them!

Margaret and I shared the cost of Carolyn's extensively researched book and once both of us have had a chance to have a good delve into the pages, it will find a home in the library.

Please do borrow the book, it is a fascinating subject.

Julia

## Trish and all her rosettes



These photos are from the Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show where we won the Reserve Championship with this black gulmoget ram lamb, who has been so successful at all of the shows that he has been taken to. His name is Mandeville Done, his twin sister is Dusted!

If the shows are local, Trish even enters the produce classes which make life complicated as the exhibits need to be delivered the day before and collected late on the day of the show.

These delightful little exhibits each has a story;



*"The needle felted fox family with two adults & three cubs in a wet felted surround which had been the brim of a hat that I thought didn't look right, so I ripped it off and several years later found a use for it. The autumn flowers are "tickle" felted.*



*The handbag had been intended to become a bowl, then I changed tack. The bag is wet felted & the handle I needle felted, the ladybirds were needle felted & took longest to make. The knitted leaves were supposed to have been a brooch with a Dorset Button in the middle.*

*Rupert rabbit has been needle felted using 100% Shetland fleece from our flock, which is so satisfying to have bred the sheep, rooed (hand plucked) the fleece, scoured it in a suint bath, teased it, made it into rolags using hand carders & finally shaping it into my bunny."*



Hearty congratulations to Trish who braved some rather wet (August!) conditions to show her beloved Shetland sheep.

I am sure that we are all in awe of the dedication and energy that Trish gives to her flock of sheep; enduring inclement weather and early starts, not just in August, but all-round the year and still finding time to devote to crafts which justifiably caught the judge's eyes.

I am sure that one or two of us will be making room in our craft store cupboards for one of Trish's fleeces at the sale next year.

Julia

### How to Wash Fleece – [Janet Renouf-Miller](#) of Create with Fibre

Liz McCarron posted Janet's "How to Wash a Fleece" video on the Guild Facebook page and it was lovely to actually see her at last (I'd seen her name and heard lots about her).

Then Scott commented that she'd actually taught him to spin as well. How wonderful to make such links across the country.

Do take a look if you can be online and if you can't then ask someone to help you take a find some of the fantastic resources available on her website.

Janet has also written books on spinning and one on her epic bike journey around Scotland teaching fibre crafts on the way.

Harriette

## Sustainable textiles – Making informed choices

Everything that we use has an environmental impact.

Choosing which textiles to use is a minefield, and all textiles will have an environmental cost. The greatest impact we can have is by **reducing** our consumption and by **reusing** resources.

There are several ways in which the textiles we choose affect the environment. All textiles, no matter what state they are in (as raw fibre, as spun or woven materials or as completed items of clothing) will have a carbon footprint. This is the estimated amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and other harmful greenhouse gases that are produced during its lifetime – this will include the production, manufacture and use of the item. Greenhouse gases are what is causing climate change. In addition to the carbon footprint there are other environmental impacts: synthetic fibres never biodegrade, and they shed microplastics into the waterways when washed; producing and dyeing some fibres can use large quantities of water, pesticides and other polluting pesticides. All of the fibres we use will impact on the world we live in and it can be difficult to decipher what is most harmful.

Clothing was once valuable and valued, now cheap items of clothing are worn for a season or less before being discarded. Those of us who choose our sweaters by first choosing our sheep could never be accused of indulging in fast fashion, and we value our clothing because of this, but there are environmental impacts that we need to consider in order to make our hobby / obsession / way of life more sustainable. Our choices may seem like a drop in the ocean, but textile production contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined. Consumption of new clothing is estimated to be higher in the UK than any other European country–26.7kg per capita. This compares to 16.7kg in Germany, 16kg in Denmark, 14.5kg in Italy, 14kg in the Netherlands and 12.6kg in Sweden – we all need to take responsibility for our actions.

In this article I want to highlight some of the issues to think about when choosing which textiles to spin, weave, dye or sew. It is by no means comprehensive, but I hope it will give some food for thought and act as a springboard for you to research further.

## **Wool**

British wool is usually a by-product of the meat industry: it's a natural protein fibre which will biodegrade fully. Hand spinners are helping to keep rare breeds of sheep from extinction, and sheep can graze land that is not suitable for crops and fertilize the land at the same time. Sheep come in a variety of colours so fleece can be used without dyeing.

Processing wool uses water and energy – consider a fermented suint vat as a greener (but smellier) alternative to scouring.

There is an environmental impact to keeping sheep (and any livestock), but my personal feeling is that as long as sheep are being kept for food, it makes environmental sense to use every part of the animal including their fleece. For a more damning perspective on sheep, read [George Monbiot](#)

When we're thinking about wool, do bear in mind that "[superwash](#)" wool has been chemically treated with chlorine gas to remove the scales, and then coated in plastic.

## **Alpaca**

Alpacas are usually kept as useful pets in the UK – they can protect flocks of poultry from fox attacks, and are fertilising lawnmowers. Because of their camelid hooves they don't compact the land as much as sheep do. Alpaca fleece is much warmer than sheep fleece and comes in a variety of colours. It's a natural, biodegradable protein fibre.

## **Linen**

Flax to spin into linen is a rapidly renewable resource which will grow in this country without fertilisers, pesticides or even much watering. On a small scale it's probably the greenest fibre we can produce – retting water can be polluting, so it's probably best to dew ret. It's strong and will last for ages. I have found that by knitting with handspun linen the fabric structure means that it requires much less ironing than woven linen – which reduces energy use in the garment's lifetime.

On a larger scale, flax is chemically retted, so is therefore more polluting.

## **Hemp**

Hemp has a similar environmental impact as flax. Because it can only be grown under licence in the UK it's not viable to grow a small patch independently.

## **Stinging Nettle (*urtica dioica*) and Himalayan Nettle (Ramie)**

There has been a small resurgence recently in experiments with the common stinging nettle. Many small scale experiments have been shared on the Facebook group "[Nettles for Textiles](#)", and several spinners are now producing small amounts of woven cloth.

[Ramie](#), the Himalayan nettle, as far as I can find out, is only degummed chemically (which probably has pollution issues).

## **Cotton**

[Cotton](#) uses a lot of water and a lot of pesticides to grow. The environmental impact of cotton in some areas of the world is huge. The Aral Sea in central Asia was once the 4<sup>th</sup> largest lake in the world, and is now almost gone because of cotton production – the region also has the highest incidence of throat cancer in the world due to the pesticide rich cotton dust.

The Better Cotton initiative was founded to introduce better farming and irrigation practices worldwide with some success. Read about it [here](#)

Organic cotton is a less polluting choice, but still needs a lot of water to grow. Some initiatives are now making use of naturally coloured cotton (brown, green and red) to reduce the need for dyeing the fabric. Read about Sally Fox, the U.S. pioneer of saving coloured cotton [here](#)

Some UK manufacturers are committed to sourcing sustainable cotton (similar to the Better Cotton Initiative). M&S have committed to using 100% sustainable cotton by this year, Tesco and Sainsburys by 2020.

## Bamboo

I have included [bamboo](#) because it is still often marketed as an environmentally friendly fibre. [Bamboo](#) can be great for furniture and other items (although beware of the bonding materials), but for fibre it needs to go through what is known as the viscose process. This means the cellulose is chemically dissolved and then extruded through spinarettes. This is a very polluting process. As spinners, it is worth noting that most of the new cellulose fibres that are available to us such as rose and mint fibres use exactly the same technique – all that differs is the original source of the cellulose. Some countries legally require all of these fibres to be labelled as “Rayon”. Lyocell (trade name Tencel) is a patented closed loop system which is much less polluting and therefore a better choice for this type of man-made fibre. Lyocell is not currently available to hand spinners. *(EDs Click on the words “bamboo” for a few articles about bamboo as a fibre / fabric.)*

I hope this has given you some starting points to consider. There are no easy answers, and using natural fibres, while being biodegradable, is not a panacea.

The Environmental Audit committee has produced a very useful report this year called “[Fashion: it shouldn’t cost the earth](#)” Interestingly, North Wiltshire’s MP, [James Gray](#), is a member of this committee, so those of us who are his constituents may consider keeping this in the forefront of his mind.

Another useful general study by WRAP “[Valuing our clothes: the cost of UK fashion](#)”

In summary, when it comes to clothes, the most sustainable choices begin by **refusing, reducing, reusing, repairing and repurposing** clothing. If we are going to make new clothes, then we should make them as well as we can so that they will have long lives. Using natural fabrics will mean that microplastics don’t get into our water and our clothing will ultimately **rot**, using organic fabric will mean that pesticides don’t get into our water and land. There are no simple answers, but the more we know, the more informed our choices can be.

Liz

## Gallery of upcycling projects

It should really have come as no surprise to find that members of the Guild are a creative and resourceful bunch of people, but the range of ideas that has so far come to our attention is quite astounding. Please keep sending your photos and ideas to your Eds. as we hope to showcase projects and ideas regularly.

Here are a few projects that we know of;

Val saved two skirts for about 25 years (showing a dogged determination that *eventually* the fabric would be of use) and repurposed them into tops.

Here she is celebrating her achievement (or possibly something else!)



Val would possibly have not heeded Harriette's advice to Margaret about downsizing your wardrobe; turn the hangers of clothes recently worn in a different direction to those you don't wear. After a season or so, you can then see exactly what can be repurposed or recycled.



Christine never throws away bits of thread or fabric: using the tiniest scraps for felting and patchwork projects. However, we particularly like her up-cycled table; her husband sanded it down, accidentally removing the veneer, so she cut up old magazines and seed catalogues and covered the table, varnishing

it an impressive 9 times to give a really shiny finish. It does not yet count as a spinning weaving or dyeing project, but the colours are inspiring and once she has made matching felted table mats the project will be on topic!

Sarah Bond made this rather unique table/ storage box out of a damaged drum.



Erica assures me that the method for creating this table runner from old denim jeans is deceptively simple.



Margaret's bag is one of two made from a charity shop find of a pair of jeans. It was the perfect size to carry Carolyn's book home from Frome Museum!

Margaret also had a brilliant idea of turning a buttoned skirt into a shirt. This so cleverly dispenses with the task of making a button band and button holes.



There are no fabrics that are out of bounds for Harriette as her husband's old novelty boxer shorts are now serving to keep his tea warm!



Julia

## Dame Kiri te Kanawa – and the “Zara” bed sheet.

In June of this year Kiri te Kanawa wore a voluminous printed skirt on stage when she presented a BBC Singer of the Year award. It was made from a lovely floral printed duvet cover by “Zara”. The tabloid press picked this up and predictably ran a headline “Dame Duvet”. *The Guardian* columnist [Dale Berning Sawa](#) was more enthusiastic and made her own dress based on the style of [Molly Goddard](#) (a simple bodiced dress with a gathered skirt). The benefits of using bed sheets Dale says are “it’s very strong, durable fabric and it has already been professionally hemmed. So any way you can incorporate those hems into your garment is a winner.”

I was reminded that a few years ago, I was making storage bags for my ever growing stash of fleece. Some colleagues had given me old duvet covers which were very useful. I knew I had some left, so not to be outdone, I found my Ann Ladbury book “Children’s Wardrobe” which accompanied a BBC TV series in the 1970’s and made this little angel top for my youngest granddaughter. It is completely impractical but it was quite fun to make.



If printed sheets are not your preferred option for recycling projects, then do remember Karen’s advice about buying ex-hotel Egyptian cotton sheets from Regency dry cleaners. Lesley also suggested a return to a good old-fashioned flannel to save using wipes. The last time I went to the Regency Cleaners branch on the Lower Bristol Road in Bath, a mere 50 pence would purchase a really good quality small cotton towel/ flannel. It may be worth ringing to see what is available (Tel: 01225 425 142).

Julia

## Dandelion marmalade



Jacqui Shewring is an enthusiastic jam maker and reports that this jam is delicious. Once dandelions move in on a lawn it is difficult to get rid of them – why not embrace them instead? So, if you miss out getting Seville oranges next year, or need a top up on your supplies of marmalade, then try this recipe. Do remember to leave some flowers for the bees.

Her notes are as follows;

### **Ingredients**

About 100 Dandelion heads

1 whole lemon

1 overripe pear

Orange peel and apple peel saved in the freezer \*

750g sugar with added pectin

### **Method**

Halve the amount of petals

Add water to cover the fruit and petals

Simmer for 1 hour then strain off the juice

Add the sugar to the pan

Dissolve the sugar bring to the boil when reduced add the other half of the petals.

Use a cold saucer to test for the set.

Pour into hot jars

Shake gently to reduce air bubbles.

Delicious

Jacqui Shewring

*\*Eds. Now there is a brilliant tip!*

*Jacqui has also used honeysuckle flowers as flavouring, check first to see which flowers can be used!*

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