

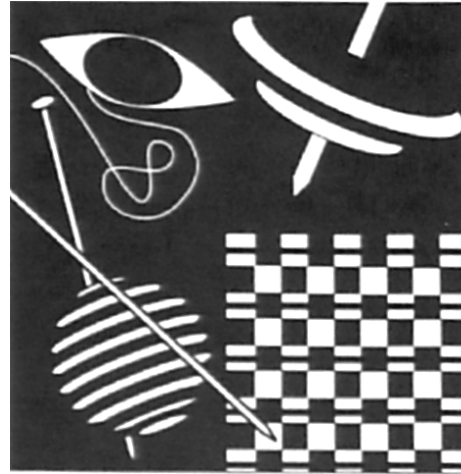
EAST SURREY GUILD CREATIVE FIBRES

NEWSLETTER 56

Winter 2011

Acting Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer

Gill Blackmore
Betty Newman
Janice Russell



Welcome to our new members: Fiona, Rosy, Philippa, Sarah, Dot, and Lucy.

RECENT MEETINGS

Saturday 16th July - Making Buttons with Felicity Jowitt



The button workshop was immense fun and strikingly productive. Everyone was enthusiastically busy all day, right up until our time ran out, as we made lots of buttons, and one or two other items using the materials and techniques demonstrated. We began by making "shrinky dink" buttons using shrink plastic film. We cut out large (2 inch) circles, coloured them using waterproof inks, and then (holding down firmly so they did not blow away) shrank them to a fraction of their original size using a heat gun. You can achieve impressively detailed patterns, apparently all in miniature.

Continuing with the use of the heat guns, we experimented using "Friendly Plastic" which becomes malleable when heated. Friendly Plastic is supplied in highly iridescent colours, which you can mix to give a marbled effect, and form buttons, as well as other items such as hair clips and jewellery.

In the afternoon we moved on to working with "Fymo" clay, which sets when baked in an oven. We used pasta makers to create thin even sheets of clay, tiny biscuit cutters to make the round shapes, and needles to press the holes. We made "canes" of clay where patterns are embedded in a layered tube of clay - like a stick of seaside rock - which you cut into slices to make a set of similarly patterned buttons. We learnt to make a flowered button, using 3 colours, but you can make a variety of patterns using this technique.

Moulded buttons were created using flexible moulds made from a two-part clay mixture which sets to a flexible rubber-like mould. When the two clay materials are first thoroughly kneaded together, the mixture remains malleable for a time, and you can press an interesting existing textured button into it. After about 20 minutes, you can remove the

button, and press in your Fymo to make a new button, which is then removed from the mould and baked.
It was a very enjoyable workshop, and by the end of the day, we all had lots of practical, washable buttons to use with our knitwear - as well as lots of ideas for creating the perfect buttons to match our future projects.

Christina

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### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August - Guild 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration



What a great day we had for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. It was good to see some of our past members including some of our founder members. We had a superb lunch. Thank you to everyone who was involved in the organisation of this event.

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Saturday 17th September - "Spindling with Spindlers2" with Pete Leonard



I attended the very interesting spindling workshop with tutor Pete Leonard, held at the September meeting. Although I weave, I am a complete novice at spinning and furthermore allergic to wool. So a bit of a problem really!

Here is Pete's programme for the day:

- Pete brought basic Babe (CD-like) high whorl spindles and Falklands wool tops for everyone to use in the morning - or all day, for those who wanted. We started by spinning that wool, in whatever yarn came "comfortably" to people. Pete went through the processes from scratch, but did not spend a lot of time explaining about drafting, etc.
- After people had had a reasonable amount of yarn spun, we plied it, using the "Andean plying" method, making a centre-pull ball on the wrist.
- Using the same fibres and spindles, people then spun both a thicker and a thinner yarn. Pete demonstrated how to use a nostepinne to create a centre-pull ball to ply from.
- After lunch, people had the opportunity to try out some of Pete's own collection of spindles.
- Throughout the day, we discussed what makes a good spindle and how to fit spindle to intended yarn.
- We discussed methods of plying for larger quantities, equivalent to filling two (or more) bobbins on your wheel and plying them on to an empty bobbin.
- We spun from silk tops, as well as one or two other fibres - mohair, alpaca or another wool - and people who did not fancy spinning cotton were able to try some or all of these.
- Pete brought some Akha spindles and a number of tahklis, other supported spindles and bowls, together with cotton, for those who wanted to try spinning this "magic" fibre.
- Then we could "all go home and collapse from exhaustion!"

I am exhausted just reading this!

In the morning I tried spinning the wool provided, although I had to throw the hank over my shoulder as I could not wrap it around my wrist, as you should. I found it hard to twirl the spindle, hold the yarn, draft etc all at the same time, but finally managed to spin some very uneven yarn with the help of Amanda sitting next to me, and using my knees!

After some lumpy plying on my part, we had lunch and moved onto other yarns in the afternoon. I tried with some silk and a small spindle with a square top, and actually did quite well. The silk was not itchy, so I could handle it more easily.

By now some people had yards of smooth thread in various yarns. My attempts were declared to be 'novelty yarn' - apparently very difficult for an experienced person to spin. Oh to be in that position!

Thanks to Pete for a very good day. I feel I learned a lot, and plan to buy a little spindle at the festival at Lewes later in the month, and have a go with some silk at home.

Jennifer

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## Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October - Open Day



We were kept very busy with the many visitors who came to our open day. The visitors showed a lot of interest in all the crafts being demonstrated, some having a go themselves. Thank you to all of our members who helped on the day.

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The Stitch and Creative Crafts Show at Sandown Park from 19th - 22nd January 2012.

Once again our guild will have a stand at this event and hope some of our members will be able to help with demonstrating. If you are interested in helping please contact Betty Newman - telephone number at the top of this newsletter.

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## A further dispatch from Tokyo



I wrote about my meeting with Sonoko in Tokyo in an earlier Newsletter. At the end of our holiday we went back to Tokyo, and I spent another day with her.

Sonoko took me to a fascinating museum, the Mingeikan, or Folk Art Museum. The crafts are of course highly valued in Japan, and there is a tradition of respect, even reverence, for individual craftsmen and their artistry and expertise.

This museum is different. The founder, Yanagi Soetsu, set out to collect the works of anonymous

crafts people. Among the criteria for inclusion in the museum was that the work was produced by hand in quantity for use by the masses, so when originally made it was inexpensive and functional. He also required it to be representative of the region in which it was made. Although the bulk of the collection is probably Japanese, there are pieces from all over the world, including Dutch and English ceramics.

I was so fortunate to visit with Sonoko – all of the captions are in Japanese, so I needed plenty of explanation.

The Museum has an excellent website: [www.mingeikan.or.jp](http://www.mingeikan.or.jp), which is well worth a visit.

By this time the cherry blossom had arrived in Tokyo, so after lunch we visited a park, in company with thousands of others. Sonoko explained that in sympathy with the victims of the recent Tsunami disaster, the celebrations this year would be very low-key – none of the usual parties. Notwithstanding that, there were certainly plenty of people walking about, enjoying the sunshine and photographing the trees.

Sonoko has had further meetings with the architect, who has managed to squeeze just a little extra space into the house so she will have space for her loom, she was very relieved about that!



*Sandy*

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WSD Summer School August 2011

This year's summer school was held in Edinburgh, at Queen Margaret University, situated at Musselburgh, on the coast. The campus was small, so not much walking needed, with only one main building and several accommodation blocks. Unfortunately the weather was foul, with wind and rain most days. Luckily we were mostly indoors so relatively unaffected by it. Any poor spouses, like mine, who were planning to 'do' the Edinburgh fringe, were wrapped up in raincoats and skittering around under umbrellas.

I took the Dyeing with Indigo course, which also covered shibori. Our tutor, Fiona Moir, was great, well organised and inspiring. After making the indigo vats, we began the different shibori techniques, knotting, tying, wrapping, stitching, and clamping, working through one or more a day. We made lots of samples, plus a few scarves, and I put together a skirt, using a different technique for each panel.



Here I am with my skirt before it was stitched together

At the end of the week, we had a fashion show, a fair with lots of traders, and a dinner and ceilidh.

All this was most enjoyable, with plenty of opportunities to make new friends, and spend time with old ones. On Sunday morning I set off home clutching my hard work, determined to go back in two years time.

Jennifer

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## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

### **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November - General Meeting and Sales Table**

Those of you who attended the drop spindle workshop with Pete Leonard might want to bring your spindles to this meeting. If other members have a drop spindle then bring it along. Don't worry if you do not have a spindle someone will be able to help you or bring along any project you are working on.

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FOR YOUR DIARIES

17th October - early December - Insight into Beauty II at The Embassy of Japan, 101 - 104 Piccadilly, London W1J 7JT

The 2nd exhibition of contemporary craft inspired by Japanese materials, techniques and design.

Open Monday - Friday 9.30am - 5.30pm

Sandy Jessett, one of our guild members, has her work in this exhibition.

If visiting this exhibition photo identification will be needed and bags etc will be security screened.

For more information phone 020 7465 6500 or info@mofa.go.jp

9th - 27th November - Old World New Eyes at The Robert Phillips Gallery, Riverhouse, Manor Road, Walton on Thames, KT12 2PF

An exhibition by Phoenix Contemporary Textile Group.

Open Wed - Sat 11am - 4pm and Sun 2.30 - 4.30pm. Admission free.

For more information phone 01932 254198 or visit www.riverhousebarn.co.uk

24th - 28th November - Contemporary Craft and Design Fair at RHS Wisley

Free to RHS members

For more information phone 01622 747325 or visit www.craftinfofocus.com

If you have any comments, tips or interesting items for future newsletters please send them to me.

Janice Russell