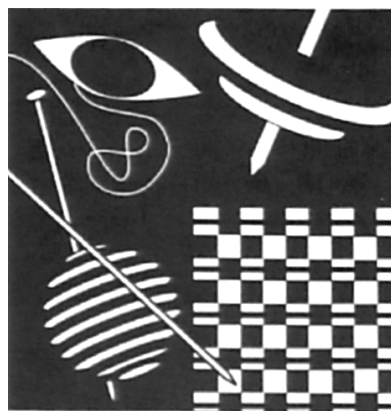


EAST SURREY GUILD CREATIVE FIBRES

NEWSLETTER - 59

Autumn 2012

Chairman	Gill Blackmore
Secretary	Betty Newman
Treasurer	Janice Russell
President	Sandy Jessett



Profile of our President Sandy



Hello Everyone

Very many thanks for inviting me to serve as President of Creative Fibres. It is a great honour, and I will do my best to live up to the precedent set by our last President, Pat Vaughan.

Some of you may not know me very well, so I will introduce myself. I was a founder member of the Guild. Back then I was a keen weaver, and occasional spinner. However, I much enjoyed widening my interests by way of our classes and workshops, and that is how I was introduced to the wonderful world of braiding, something that has become my main textile interest, if not obsession.

My loom has been banished to the loft, replaced by a range of Japanese braiding equipment. I also practise other types of braiding, such as ply-split braiding and loop manipulation, which require little equipment. Here are some pictures of my work. The bags are ply-split braided in cotton, and the neckpiece was braided in silk on the marudai.

I have served the Guild as Treasurer and Chairman, but the role of President is new to me. I recall some years ago I was a member of a group which invited Peter Collingwood to act as our President. He accepted, but told us "A President is like a bidet – no-one knows quite what it's for, but it's very posh to have one!" So if any of you work out what should be doing, do please tell me.

Best Wishes from Your President

Sandy

Recent Meetings

Saturday 21st April - Needle felting with Susanna Wallis



We started the day with flat needle felting. Using a very sharp, barbed needle we stabbed a layer of merino wool onto a foam block. The needle pulled the fibres through each other so they bonded together. Thin wisps of coloured merino were then used to make shapes, again using the needle and a picture was created.

Susanna then helped us make a ball and some also made a Christmas pudding. Using this technique you can make jewellery, decorations, toys and lots more.

Finally we all created a three dimensional object using pipe cleaners as an armature.

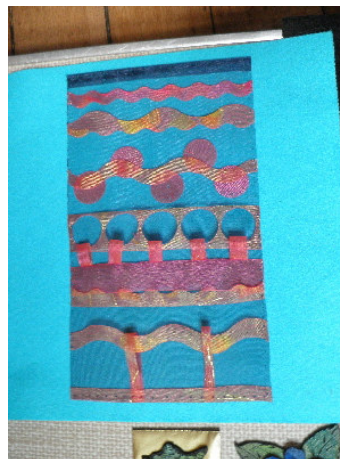
There were various brightly coloured birds, a penguin, hedgehog and even a little bear.

Susanna made it a very enjoyable day.

Some of the items made on the day were entered into the national exhibition (see page 4).

Janice

Saturday 16th June - Fusing Fabric with Margaret Beal



Margaret started the workshop by introducing the equipment and materials. We started by setting up our soldering irons with very fine tips, point downwards in terracotta flowerpots used as stands. The fabrics to use need to be meltable so synthetic organzas, nylon or

polyester were recommended. Polyester felt was used to mount the samples; we also used polyester lace to add texture.

We started by learning how to fuse fabrics together using straight lines. The designs looked very impressive but were simple to produce. Throughout the day we tried out the following techniques:

- Mark making – using a variety of templates including wobbly rulers, brass mirror brackets, wire grids and metal stencils.
- Building depth - layering small off cuts between sandwiches of organza then using marks and eyelets to create designs.

I went home with several colourful samples mounted on felt and a couple of brooches. Before the workshop I had no knowledge of the techniques used and found Margaret an excellent tutor.

Amanda Eves

Saturday 18th August - Beaded Dragonfly with Jennifer Hughes



I arrived bright and early for my first class since I joined the group, and thanks to Jennifer's patience and expert tuition managed to make a passable if not large dragonfly.

We started the day painting the fabric background and when this was dry we created our dragonfly body, using threads, onto this coloured fabric. Dark thread was used for the legs and a big black bead became the head. The tail was made of bugle beads and the wings were made from sheer shiny fabric.

The variety of work was amazing as different students produced some stunning effects, one had a beaded body, and another with fine painting, all of the 10 dragonflies were different in their own magical way.

I think most of us agreed that the wings were the most difficult bit and some of us discussed different ways to achieve easier wings and bodies.

The day was very successful, so thank you to Jennifer who made the day very productive without rushing us. Looking forward to more.

Jane Nightingale

National Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers 2012 Exhibition



This was a very interesting exhibition held at the Weald & Downland museum in the Gridshell building. Those of us who visited were very impressed with the many varied items on show. Included in the exhibition were these small pieces made by a few of our members. These pieces had to fit inside a 6" diameter ring and along with the 100s of others on show made quite a feature. The next exhibition will be in 2 years time so maybe we will see more of our members work exhibited.

Golden Spider Silk: Exhibition at the V&A Museum

The silk of a spider's web is known to be very strong and elastic, and if silk worms can be used to make a fabric, why not spiders? Spiders are carnivorous and cannibalistic; they do not form social groups, and cannot be bred like silk worms. However they have been used in various parts of the world to produce silk, albeit in a long and laborious process.

Simon Peers and Nicholas Godley were 'seduced by the creative potential of the silk', and over the last eight years have collected the large golden silk orb-weaver spider of Madagascar, and used their silk to make two exquisite items, which have been on display at the V&A. One is a brocaded textile based on the traditional Malagasy cloth known as 'lamba akotifahana' which displays many idiosyncratic motifs. The other is a cape of taffeta weave adorned with fine embroidery and appliqué. Both are the wonderful, glowing, natural golden yellow of the spider silk.

The spiders are collected each day from the wild, and returned back at the end of the day. The female spider can sit in the palm of a man's hand with its legs stretching from the thumb to the little finger. Each spider is put into a tiny harness so that the silk from its spinneret, on the lower part of the abdomen, can be gathered.

In the book accompanying the exhibition, 'Golden Spider Silk' by Simon Peers, he says: 'The thread used in weaving both textiles is first composed of 24 single threads drawn from 24 individual spiders. These threads are joined and twisted together in the 'silking' part of the process. They are then removed onto cones before being doubled and doubled again to make one ground warp thread comprised of 96 individual spider threads. We have used this size for the principle weaves in both textiles, though the lining of the cape is made from a finer 48 strand thread.'

He goes on to say that the ground weft of the fabric consists of twice this, so 192 individual threads, and the floating brocaded weft uses 960 spider threads. For the embroidery the core part of the raised motifs are made from the basic 96 strand thread, but the 'lustrous covering thread' is 24 untwisted threads, with three or four threads to each pass of the needle.

In other words, they used a huge amount of silk, collected laboriously every day from the large spiders.

The textiles are very beautiful. The cape is covered with a flowing embroidered pattern of flowers, spiders and fine lines representing the spider silk, with the front hung with long shining tassels. The brocaded piece is made from seven sections, woven separately, each with intricate, discontinuous supplementary weft motifs. A video, showing the weaving and embroidery, depicted the weaver lifting each row of pattern by hand using string heddles, and the embroiderers working in groups around the cape, much of it covered with tissue to keep it clean.

This was a lovely little exhibition, which has finished now, but was well worth visiting. We were bowled over by the skill involved and the beauty, the vibrant golden yellow of the finished items. The book is still on sale at the V&A for only £5- a bargain! It covers the history of spider silk as well as the production of these two exquisite textiles.

Jennifer Hughes

Weavers, Spinners & Dyers Association Summer School 2013

The 2013 summer school is being held from 4th - 11th August at Trinity St Davids College in Carmarthen. For more information visit www.wsd.org.uk

FOR YOUR DIARIES

11th - 14th October - The Knitting and Stitching Show, Alexandra Palace, London For more information phone 01394 288521 or visit www.twistedthread.com

20th October - The Big Bead Show, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey
For more information phone 01903 884988 or visit www.ashdown.co.uk

5th November - 6th January 2013 - Dazzle, National Theatre, London
Largest selling contemporary jewellery exhibition in Europe
For more information visit www.dazzle-exhibitions.co.uk or www.lovedazzle.com

22nd - 25th November - MADE12, Corn Exchange, Brighton
Contemporary design and craft fair
For more information phone 01394 288521 or visit www.twistedthread.com

If you have any comments, tips or interesting items for future newsletters please email me:
treasurer@creativefibres.org

Janice Russell