

devon weavers workshop

www.devonweaversworkshop.org

ISSUE 14

OCTOBER 2013

the shuttle

TRUSTEES

Kay Balmforth, Rosemary Durant, Sue Dwyer,
Ann Holl, Colleen Pope, Erdmunda Symon

COMMITTEE 2013

Chairman, Intermediate
& Advanced Courses

Ann Holl

Secretaries

Colleen Pope & Jill Davies

Treasurer

Dorothy Tallentire

Beginners Courses

Jenny Rolfe

Newsletters & Website

Kay Balmforth

Membership

Anne Bulleid

Sue Dwyer

Catering

Erdmunda Symon

Equipment

Janet Thomas

Library

Sareela Salter

South West Area Co-ordinator
& Health and Safety Officer

Gail Bryant

8 COOMBE PARK, ASHPRINGTON, TOTNES TQ9 7DY

Registered Charity No. 1108423

devon weavers workshop
www.devonweaversworkshop.org

DATES 2013/14

COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 9 October 2013, 10am

BLACKJACK 19

Tuesday 25 March, 11am

AGM

16 November 2013, 12 noon

COURSES 2013

BEGINNERS

Tutor - Jenny Rolfe

AUTUMN: 28/29 Sept, 5/6 & 12/13 Oct

SPRANG

Tutor - Carol James

17 & 18 OCTOBER 2013

COLOUR & DESIGN

Tutor - Margo Selby

9 - 11 NOVEMBER 2013

COURSES 2014

TWILL WEAVES FOR RUGS

7 - 9 February 2014

Tutor - Jason Collingwood

BEGINNERS

Tutor - Jenny Rolfe

SPRING: 5 to 10 APRIL 2014

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS 2013

DODDISCOMBSLEIGH ART SHOW

1 to 3 NOVEMBER, 10am to 4.30pm

(Closes 1pm on 3 NOVEMBER)

DWW members have the opportunity to sell their textiles in the shop at this event. (See page 7 for further details.)

Teign Valley Community Hall, Christow EX6 7NA

FOR SALE

GLIMAKRA COMPUTER DRIVEN LOOM

Glimakra Twin Beam 100cm Ideal Countermarch Loom converted to a computer driven 16 shaft Loom



Price includes:

Toika EWS computer drive including Operating Instruction Manuals & CDs

- * Height adjustable bench
 - * 2 canvas covered beams
 - * 6 flat rug stick shuttles
 - * 4 boat shuttles (one with rollers)
 - * 5 rug shuttles
 - * 5 steel reeds
 - * 1 warping frame
 - * Extra heddles
 - * Journal magazines
 - * Several woven items
 - * Cotton warp yarns
 - * All parts required to reconvert the loom to the original standard Glimakra Ideal 100cm Loom
 - * A laptop with operating programs can be included with the sale if required.
- Offers invited of £4000 or near offer

Contact: via our website

A FEW WORDS FROM THE CHAIR.....

16 November at 12 noon is our 9th AGM. We never thought we would get this far! The meeting will be short and followed by a Bring & Share Lunch. At 2.00 pm we have a one hour talk given by Jackie Millen, who has recently moved into the area. She is an embroiderer(City and Guilds), with a degree in Textiles and a masters in Textile Culture. She calls her talk 'A Magpie Talk' and will be bringing along samples of her extensive collection of textiles from many countries and eras. I hope there will be a good crowd to enjoy her talk.

Dorothy is retiring as treasurer after 5 years of hard work, and Colleen has volunteered to take over. This will leave the job of Secretary vacant. Jill Davies will carry on as Minutes Secretary, so the other post is not too arduous. If you are interested please talk to Colleen about what is involved.

No final details as yet, but it looks as if we will be running several exciting courses in 2014 with some well known tutors. We will let you have details as soon as we have confirmation of dates etc, and as always we will be giving members the opportunity to book their places first, before the courses are advertised nationally.

And thank you Kay for all the hard work you do producing *The Shuttle*. Jackie Jones has kindly offered to help Kay collect content and pictures for future issues, so please let Jackie have anything you might think would be useful for Shuttle 15.

Ann Holl

The 'What Next?...' Book

Many new weavers get 'bitten by the bug' and elect to join DWW to carry on weaving after taking part in one of our beginner's courses. As many of you know, they are often at a loss to know what to weave next and how to weave it. With this in mind, we're attempting to put together a book of straightforward projects for new weavers, to be sold at a modest price, proceeds to DWW. We're hoping to get a good range of ideas which we can build on over the coming months and years.

If you have made anything in the past, or can think of anything that might be suitable, could you please let me know? We'll need details of yarns used, setts, weights of yarns, costs etc. We'd also like a photograph of your finished project (we can help with that if necessary) and an idea of the pattern/colours used in order to create a Fiberworks file for the new weavers to use on the DWW laptop.

Kay Balmforth



DYEING WORKSHOP WITH INGRID PARKER

USING ACID & DIRECT DYES ON PROTEIN & PLANT FIBRES

We gathered together at the Workshop on a cold day in February. Most present had done a bit of dyeing previously, for me it was all new. If anyone had come along expecting to leave with a few recipes for certain colours or an outline recipe for adapting to our preferred colour scheme they were to be disappointed, it's just not Ingrid's way. Her opening gambit was: some people like to cook following a recipe with exact quantities and times, others prefer to chuck in a handful of this and a bit of that; the result cannot be repeated easily, but the results are always interesting. And so it was to be for the rest of the day, a bit of this, a splash of that and see what comes out.

It wasn't quite as haphazard as it sounds, but she did show us a pathway to achieve a colour we were after, or perhaps one we preferred once we'd tried a few things out.

The morning was spent using acid dyes for use on protein fibres, i.e. animal fibres - wool, silk, mohair etc. including mixes with man-made fibres. We started off with enough boiling water to comfortably cover our skeins, added about a handful of salt to aid the penetration of the dye and a glug or two of acid, in this case white vinegar, to fix the dye to the fibre.

A colour was chosen to aim for and a few grains of the starting dye colour were dissolved in warm water and added to the dye bath. A pre-soaked skein of fibre was added to the bath and covered with the dyed water and left to simmer for a few minutes (if using wool, don't agitate to prevent felting).

Lift the skein from the bath, see what you think of the colour, if you don't like it add more dye of the same or different colour to move towards what you are after. The secret is to do everything in small stages, gradually moving to the depth of shade you like. You can dye lighter colours darker, but not the other way round. Once you've achieved your preferred results allow the skein to simmer for around fifteen



Photo supplied by Anne Bulleid

minutes so the fibre takes up all the dye; allow to cool and rinse. One very interesting observation was how differently silk took up the dye compared with wool.

The afternoon was spent using direct dyes on plant fibres - cotton, linen, flax etc. No acid is used in direct dyeing, but otherwise the method is much the same.

This has obviously been a brief outline of some of what we learned that day. Ingrid's approach is that a variety of shades between the skeins used in a project adds for a more interesting piece of cloth as an end result. The thought that dyeing requires the need to following exact recipes has certainly been dispelled. However, a requirement for repeatable colours will need exact quantities to be noted.

It was a very interesting and informative day, and I am looking forward to experimenting with different colours and fibres.

Steve Newsham

WEAVING WITH LINEN

Not knowing what to expect, and feeling great apprehension about having to provide a warp for others to use, I started the Linen Course with a strange mix of fear and enthusiasm. The majority of the group had far more experience and expertise as weavers, but gladly, my worries that I would not be able to keep up and take part, were less of an issue than I had feared. Most people seemed to have had some difficulty with the warps, and were ready to hear how to gain control over the challenging and unruly linen yarns. Riita, with 50 years experience of using linen, and a fairly pragmatic no-nonsense approach to her weaving, gave hints and advice throughout the course, but really promoted the view, that in the end, it was really just down to practice and experience.

I was in Pembrokeshire this August, and seeing that Riita's studio was open to visitors, had gone to see her work and looms. It was fascinating and inspiring; her large, often hand-dyed, damask Linen landscapes are stunning. Riita runs courses from the studio, with B&B available, covering different areas of weaving, for weavers with different levels of experience.

Whilst I may or may not make tea towels with hanging integral loops, learning how to weave them into the body of the cloth was interesting and encouraged some talk about how loops might be integrated into other projects - to hold shawls and heavy scarves together, for example. Not that there was much chat, it was a busy three days and everyone was focused on making the most of



Photos supplied by Jackie Thomas

the opportunity and the range of warps available. Some of the fine warps looked wonderful when woven correctly, but I discovered there was a real skill in achieving the right level of beat and consistent tension. As a beginner, I gained lots from the weavers around me, the comments they made, the questions they asked, and as much about weaving generally as about using linen. My first samples were truly awful, but after observing others, the samples from the warps I have been able to return to, since the course, show a visible improvement. Success! And as a result, I am slightly less intimidated by attending future courses, and look forward to the challenges.

Jackie Jones

ACCESS TO THE WORKSHOP

Associate members who would like to use the Workshop on a particular day please use the contact list below.

MONDAYS – ANNE BULLEID

TUESDAYS – JANET THOMAS

WEDNESDAYS – KAY BALMFORTH

THURSDAYS – JENNY ROLFE

GENERAL ENQUIRIES – JILL DAVIES

KISSING THE SHUTTLE

'Kissing the shuttle' is the term for a process by which weavers used their mouths to pull thread through the eye of a shuttle when the pirn was replaced. The same shuttles were used by many weavers and the practice was unpopular because of health concerns. It was outlawed in Massachusetts in 1911, but continued in Lancashire even after it had been outlawed in 1952.

For 100 years the weaving sheds of Lancashire had been equipped with cast iron constructed looms similar to those invented by Richard Roberts, which were driven by leather belts from line shafts. They were closely packed together in pairs separated by a narrow alley. One weaver was responsible for four looms; it was her duty (they were almost always girls or women) to replace the weft in the shuttle when it ran out.



The weft was wound onto a removable holder (a pirn) which was held in the middle of the shuttle. The weaver stopped the loom, found the shuttle, removed it and bent the shuttle peg holding the pirn towards her, removed the pirn and replaced it with a fresh one. The shuttle had a hole at the end, known as the eye, through which the weft passed. She placed a loop of thread next to the inside edge of the eye and in an operation called 'Kissing the shuttle', sucked it through. The shuttle was ready. It was placed back in the spey. All loose threads were cut off and removed, a final check was made and the loom was restarted.

A typical loom operated at 220 picks per minute and the weaver was paid by the piece. The weaver was adept at balancing her work, keeping all the looms working, so only one would be stopped for replenishment at one time. Labour costs were a significant proportion of the cost of producing cloth. The Lancashire cotton industry was loath to invest

in hand-threaded shuttles, or in the more productive Northrop automatic looms with self-threading shuttles of 1902.

Shuttle kissing was widely opposed by weavers who thought it led to byssinosis, a lung disease caused by cotton fibres lodging in the air passages. Shuttles were shared and would be kissed by several weavers and tacklers. They were grimy and the use of lipstick rendered them sticky. A piece of rabbit fur was a component of the shuttle, harbouring additional pathogens.

In the United States, Board of Health physicians agreed that there was a potential risk of spreading disease, and united, persuaded the state legislature in Massachusetts to enact reform. In Lancashire medical opinion remained divided and no legislation was passed - or was cost really the consideration here?

In 1911 the Amalgamated Weavers Association enquired of their Lancashire members their objections to the suction shuttle. The principle complaint was the risk of spreading diseases, followed closely by injuries to teeth and inhaling dirt and dust into their lungs. A Home Office Report of 1912 concluded that kissing shuttles caused no health risk, though it was insanitary and recommended the self-threading shuttle. Self-threading shuttles became mandatory in 1952 though kissing shuttles were still being manufactured in the 1970s.

A further danger (not connected with kissing!) was the practice of steaming. To weave cotton the air had to be moist and weaving sheds were built into the hillside so the structure would remain damp, and additional moisture was added by keeping the floors wet. To keep the air moist steam pipes at roof height constantly sprayed the air. Lancashire Members of Steaming was discussed and deemed safe by Home Office reports in 1928 and 1929.

Wishing you all happy and healthier weaving in our Workshop.

Edited by Ann Langrishe from Wikipedia

Keeping notes as you weave.....

When we began to gather information for a project book to help inspire new weavers (see page 3, the 'What Next?...' book), it wasn't long before the ugly truth revealed itself... very few of us keep any kind of record of what we make and how we make it!

Given the ever-rising cost of yarns it makes good sense to calculate the cost to yourself of weaving anything you might wish to sell at some time in the future. How will you know the correct price to charge if you don't? After you do sell it, and some time later want to make another one the same, how will you do it? And if there were things about the first one you didn't like or that didn't work so well, how will you remember those things next time...? We're hoping to actively encourage our new weavers to keep notes on what they weave by giving them a page for notes opposite each project in the book. Perhaps you can be encouraged to do the same?



Down the years I've filled up five or six A4 notebooks stuffed with detailed information, photographs and yarn samples for every item I've woven. It doesn't always look pretty, but I constantly refer back to it for details on sett, yarns, lengths, widths, finishing and all sort of other things. I often note what worked or didn't work, or what I do or don't like about it afterwards - sometimes including the reminder 'never do this again'!



We hope to add your projects to the book as we go along - we can only do this if you are able to give us all the information we need. So please, if you're about to embark on something you feel might be just right for the book, keep detailed notes as you weave of all weights, measurements, yarns, colours, finishing processes etc. If you've never done it before, it might just prove to be the start of a lifetime's habit.

Kay Balmforth

DODDISCOMBSLEIGH ART SHOW

1 - 3 NOVEMBER 2013

<http://doddiscombsleighartshow.co.uk/home>

DWW members have the opportunity to submit work for The Shop at this event. A 35% commission charge applies on all sales. Submissions form are available from Ann H or Jill D. All profits go to Doddiscombsleigh Primary School. All work for sale to be left in DWW by Monday 28 October. Unsold items will be available for collection from DWW by Thursday 7 November 2013.

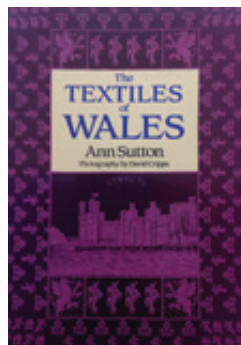
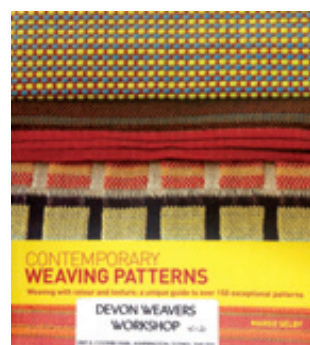
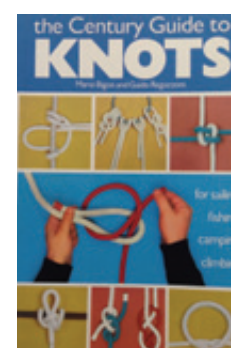
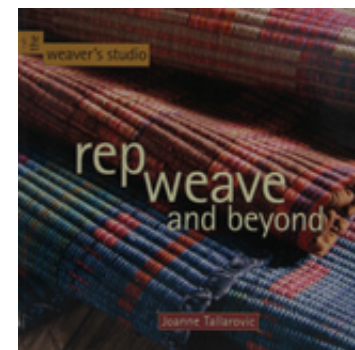
Art Show & Shop are open as follows:

Thursday 31 October
Preview Evening 6.30pm (invitation only)
Friday 1 November 10am - 4.30pm
Saturday 2 November 10am - 4.30pm
Sunday 3 November 10am - 1pm

DWW's Library

Just to remind you that the books in the DWW library are being constantly added to and we have now built up a wonderful range of new books, a few of which are featured below. They are there to be borrowed, read or referred to by our members, so please make good use of them. You will find many of the reference library books are now available in the borrowing

section as well. Just sign in the Borrowing Book on the library shelves if you intend to take books out of the Workshop. Please let Sareel, our librarian, know of any book on weaving, spinning, dyeing or related subjects that you would like to have in the library and we will do our best to supply a copy.



A Weaver's Date

Compiled by Jill Davies

LOCAL

IN THE COMPANY OF WEAVERS is an exhibition of weaving by the members of classes at Coldharbour Mill Working Wool Museum, Uffculme, Devon EX15 3EE. They have been exploring the fabric archives at the Mill, including designs by Fox Bros, using them as inspiration for designs. Rugs, scarves, cushions and clothing will be on show. The exhibition runs from 23 September to 1 November 2013 and is open Mon to Fri 10 - 4. *Admission to the exhibition is included in the price for admission to the working mill (which produces knitting wool) and is £6 (concessions £5). Directions can be found on their website: www.coldharbourmill.org.uk*

The students on the **JANET PHILLIPS' MASTERCLASS** will be showing their handwoven work, described as original and innovative, at Butterfly Cottage, 37 Castle Street, Nether Stowey, Somerset TA5 1LN from 28 September to 6 October 2013. *Opening times are 11 to 6.*

Peter Tavy Guild is holding its exhibition, **FIBRE MAGIC**, from 25 to 27 October 2013. There will also be refreshments and a raffle. The exhibition will be held at Peter Tavy Village Hall, near Tavistock PL19 9NN and will be open from 11 to 5. *Admission is free. chrisgrummitt@hotmail.com is the contact if you need further information.*

The current exhibition at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen in Bovey Tracey is **intoLACE**. 'Exhibits feature fabric-wrapped ceramic, photograms, glass-encased lace, sun-prints through lace, laser-cut paper sculpture and delicate jewellery.' There is another part of this exhibition at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Honiton, which 'examines the historic uses and values of lace with particular reference to Honiton lace'. The exhibition continues until 3 November 2013.

www.crafts.org.uk/current-exhibition.aspx and www.thelmahulbert.com

Until 21 October the Devon Guild of Craftsmen's Member's Showcase is Caroline Biggins, a lacemaker. Her work is traditional in style and based on Honiton Lace.

LONDON

The Textile Society's annual **ANTIQUE TEXTILES FAIR** is on 6 October 2013 at Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road, London SW3 5EE. Dealers from Britain, France and Italy will be selling English, European and Worldwide textiles and costumes from 17th to mid 20th century. Good quality wearable and collectable vintage dress and accessories will also be on offer.

Opening times are 10.30 to 4.30. www.textilesociety.org.uk/events

This year's **KNITTING AND STITCHING SHOW** is on 10 to 13 October 2013 at Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way, London N22 7AY. The show has everything for the textile lover and boasts 'hundreds of exhibitors selling specialist supplies that you can't find in the shops, galleries from leading artists and groups, plus hundreds of workshops to introduce you to lots of new subjects'. Details of exhibitors can be found on the website. Booking tickets in advance is cheaper and can be done via the website www.theknittingandstitchingshow.com/london or the ticket hotline: 0844 848 0159. *The show is open from 10 to 5.30 (5 on Sunday).*

From 30 October to 10 November 2013, there will be an exhibition of **WEAVING BY BONNIE INOUYE** at the Handweavers Studio & Gallery, 140 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7NS.

The gallery (which is the shop) is open Mon to Sat from 10 to 6. *More details available on the website www.handweavers.co.uk or tel: 020 7272 1891.*

The 14 to 20 October 2013 is **WOOL WEEK** hosted by the Campaign for Wool. *Visit their website for information. www.campaignforwool.org/event-item/wool-week-uk-2013-3*

PLANNING AHEAD

The Association of Weavers Spinners and Dyers' (of which we are members) **2014 SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM** will be held in Manchester at the Chancellors Hotel, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 6ZT. Dates are 25 to 27 April. More information in the *Journal* and the AGWSD newsletters which Colleen circulates.

The AGWSD Exhibition, **YARNS IN THE CATHEDRAL** is next year - 15 May to 1 June, in Norwich. The Hostry, Norwich Cathedral and the Crypt, Norwich School. The closing date for submissions (via the Workshop) is 10 March 2014. *More details on the website www.wsd.org.uk/ex.htm*

CONTEMPORARY CRAFT FESTIVAL 2013

Many thanks to all those who gave their time to steward at this event, especially those who helped in the Children's Tent over the 3 days. Despite the wind, the weather was kinder to us this year and most of us had an opportunity to have a look around at the beautiful items on offer.



BIRDWOOD HOUSE EXHIBITION JULY 2013

The wonderful weather proved to be our enemy for this event - a lot of our would-be customers spent their days on the beach and Totnes was very quiet. However, it looked beautiful (apologies, we forgot to take pics), as usual we had a lot of interest in our beginners' course and we achieved significant sales of members' work.

Thanks again to all of you who made such an effort to organise this exhibition, not forgetting those who came and helped take it all away - always a bigger-than-expected job.

Our next exhibition at Birdwood House will be in early December 2014.

NEW BEGINNINGS

On 6 April this year I welcomed a group of six excited and slightly nervous people into the Workshop, as they arrived to start their Beginners' Course. I have to say that since this was the first course that I was to lead, I was pretty excited and nervous myself! Sue's Beginners' Courses were legendary and I always knew she would be a hard act to follow. From Christmas onwards I had been thinking about how best to approach the course and trying to anticipate all the questions that might be asked and what the best answers might be. Now I had to put all the theory into practice. I was grateful that lots of people had turned up to help and that, thanks to Margaret, there was plenty of tea, coffee and biscuits on hand. However, mugs in hand, we soon settled down to introductions and almost before we knew it the course was under way.

I was very aware that the part everyone thinks of as weaving - the actual cloth making - is only the final stage in a process that includes making design decisions, measuring the yarn and setting up the loom. (Experienced weavers will recognise I have simplified this description, particularly the setting up bit... .) I knew that I would be asking the new weavers to take on board a huge amount of information in a pretty short timescale. However, I am pleased to report that they all rose to the challenge magnificently!



Of course, not everything went smoothly. Mistakes were inevitably made, but there was always someone to help correct them: this is part of the learning process for any weaver. There was some difficulty in finishing on time, but an extra session was quickly arranged and I have made some changes for the future that I hope will tackle this. But six fantastic scarves were successfully completed and it was fascinating to see how different they all were and how the yarn colours combined to make unexpected and subtle new shades. Lots of visitors to the workshop commented on the high standard of workmanship on show and at the end of the course the six participants left the Workshop tired, but justifiably happy with their work.

Lots of members came along to help and this is one of the things that gives our course its unique character. I don't think that we always appreciate just how much we do as a Workshop to encourage new people to take up weaving. Because it is so time consuming to set up a loom, most other courses either run as short tasters, with a loom already set up for weaving, or require a long commitment, maybe a day a week for several months. We aim to take people through all the processes they

need to know in six days, making it possible for them to go away with enough knowledge to start their first solo project. We couldn't do this without the freely given help of Workshop members.

Beginners courses are sometimes intense (and not just for the beginners!), but they provide great opportunities to meet interesting people and enjoy interesting conversations, (not all of them about textiles!). I can almost guarantee that you will find out something you didn't know before, whether it is a weaving tip or an exhibition to go to, or just a new cake recipe. If you haven't helped yet, why not think about it for next time? If you have only just joined us, you are still very welcome - in fact you are very useful because you know just how the beginners are feeling. It is just as important to keep the coffee and tea supplies going, and there is always an experienced weaver or two around for the complicated issues. So come along, even just for half a day, and you will be very welcome.

Jenny Rolfe



DEBBIE'S BAG

Debbie wove and made this beautiful bag as her second project after completing a DWW beginner's course. Isn't it lovely? An inspiration to us all.

DWW COURSES 2013 & 14

SPRANG

Tutor - Carol James

17 & 18 OCTOBER 2013

COLOUR & DESIGN

Tutor - Margo Selby

9 to 11 NOVEMBER 2013

TWILL WEAVES FOR RUGS

Tutor - JASON COLLINGWOOD

7 to 9 FEBRUARY 2014

.....plus more to come!