

EDINBURGH GUILD OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS & DYERS

Newsletter April 2021

Welcome to the April edition of our monthly newsletter. Next month's newsletter will be circulated about the date of our May meeting on the third Saturday of the month so please do think about sending something for inclusion and many thanks to all those who have sent contributions for this edition. Just email anything to pennyskett@gmail.com.

We had our first meeting since February 2020 last month – albeit a 'virtual' meeting. It was great to see friends' faces again after so long. Katie Weston managed the zoom meeting superbly and gave us a very interesting talk about the Origins of the Modern Sheep from its early origins in Mesopotamia. Katie concentrated primarily on the development of the sheep in the British Isles with the early Scottish Dunface, Robert Bakewell's breeding of the Dishley Leicester and the concentration in recent years on producing sheep for meat, not wool. The video of the meeting is available for a further month [here](#).

Katie provided us with plenty of interesting links to explore further: a film showing life on St Kilda in 1908 <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/the-island-of-st-kilda> and an article about its evacuation in 1930 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/mar/24/last-man-st-kilda-evacuation>; two films of weaving on warp weighted looms in Norway <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxA1bpj6lB0> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a19IGJGOZWY&t=615s>; an article about processing the fleece of an early Swedish breed of sheep, the Gute, which would have been similar to the Dunface <https://waltin.se/josefinwaltinspinner/gute-wool/>; an article from Handwoven magazine about North Ronaldsay sheep, a descendant of the Dunface <https://handwovenmagazine.com/north-ronaldsay-sheep-rare-and-hardy>; and a link to British Wool and the current problems facing the wool industry as a result of the pandemic <https://www.britishwool.org.uk/ksupload/userfiles/Farmer/36pp-UK-Combined-A5-BritishWool-Brochure-2020%20-%20FINAL.PDF>

This month (Saturday 17th April 4.00pm) we have a talk from Valarie James in Arizona about the work of Artisans Beyond Borders supporting refugees on the Mexico/United States border by enabling them to undertake their traditional embroidery.

The talk will be about half an hour and then there will be time for questions and discussion at the end. If you haven't already registered your interest and received the zoom link but would like to join the talk please contact pennyskett@gmail.com.

Here is the flyer which Val made for us.



Our May meeting will be a talk from Clare Hunter via zoom. Don't forget to contact pennyskett@gmail.com for the link.

Double Weave and Bubble Weave

Carole Gascoigne recently undertook Cally Booker's online course 'Understanding Double Weave on an 8 Shaft Loom' which she found fascinating. The two pictures below on the left show some of the first double weave patterns Carole wove on her 8 shaft Ashford loom. The picture to the right shows the front and the reverse of the completed sample runner with the many blocks and pattern she was able to weave.

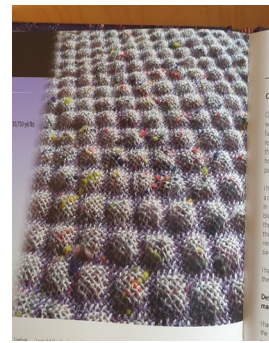


Carole's most recent project is an 8 shaft bubble weave with wool and elastic viscose. However warping up proved tricky.

"It was such a mess I nearly gave up on it, 3 metres!!! Inch by inch through the cross then inch by inch through the heddles, I think it took me 3 days!!! If I hadn't bought the elastic viscose it would have ended up in tangled warp heaven."



However Carole persevered and is now back on track. The picture on the left shows Carole's bubble weave being woven on the loom and the picture on the right shows how it will look when finished.



Wool Neck Shawl

Karon Gilhooley has spun and knitted a beautiful Shetland wool neck shawl which is modelled below by her daughter.



"The neck shawl I did from a World of Wool Shetland wool top in black. I'm nervous of trying a jumper or a cardigan in spun wool in case I run out whereas with shawls (which I love anyway) I can stop when the wool starts to run out or add a border in another colour and not have to match bits.

I have a very reluctant model in my youngest and have to produce chocolate in return with a promise of no face shots."

Double Weave Pick-Up

Carole's project with double weave sparked Penny Skett's interest in trying double weave on her 4 shaft floor loom. Limited to 4 shafts she decided to try double weave pick-up. Initially she tried weaving motifs using handspun black Jacob and handspun white Shropshire wool. Enjoying the process and finding it much faster than tapestry weaving she decided to be more adventurous and to weave an image of a griffin using handspun wool dyed with madder and cochineal and handspun grey Herdwick.



Wonderwool Wales 24-25 April

Wonderwool Wales has moved online again this year. The Welsh Guilds have put together a programme of talks and lectures over the weekend of 24-25 April. Topics range from Carding for Long Draw Spinning to Textile Processing in Yorkshire and a Dye Plant Garden while speakers include John Arbon, Jill Shepherd and Sue Hiley Harris. There is no charge for the talks but you are asked to make a donation to Welsh Air Ambulance or Macmillan Cancer Support. You can access the information and register for the events [here](#)

The Lost Textile of Ryukyu

You may enjoy this documentary which follows a leading Japanese textile designer searching for the secrets of a particularly exquisite fabric produced in the Ryukyu Kingdom of Japan. The Kingdom flourished in present day Okinawa in the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries and was famed for its beautifully dyed and woven textiles.

You can access the documentary [here](#)

Skye Weavers

There is an interesting short video on youtube about how Skye Weavers design and weave woollen cloth on their 'bicycle' powered loom [here](#)

Raphael Cartoons

The V&A has made seven Raphael cartoons which were produced to create tapestries for the Sistine Chapel available online in ultra high definition so that the cartoons can be explored in minute detail. You can even zoom in to see the pinholes that were made to enable the cartoons to be translated into tapestries. There is an outline of the step by step the process of creating a cartoon and its corresponding tapestry.

You can access the cartoons by googling V&A Story of the Raphael Cartoons. *(the hyperlink did not work for this site in pdf)*

Managing Moths and the Corryvrechan Tapestry

The National Museum of Scotland has an interesting article on dealing with the problem of a possible moth infestation in the Corryvrechan Tapestry. However their solution of freezing the tapestry for a week at -30 is not one which most of us would be able to undertake when we have any problem with moths in wool.

The article is available [here](#)

Highland Threads Exhibition

Highland Threads is an online exhibition which is available 1 April until 31 July. It uses fourteen key pieces from museums from throughout the Highlands of Scotland to provide stories of Highland fashion through history.

The exhibition is available [here](#).

Next Month

Next month's newsletter will be circulated at about the third Saturday of the month (15th May). Please send any photos of your craft projects and contributions to pennyskett@gmail.com.

Don't forget the Artisans Beyond Borders talk on Saturday 17th April at 4.00pm. Just email if you want the link.