

EDINBURGH GUILD OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS & DYERS

Newsletter May 2021

Welcome to the May edition of our monthly newsletter. Next month's newsletter will be circulated about the date of our June meeting 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 second virtual meeting last month and it was great to see the faces again of everyone who was able to join the talk. Val James in Arizona gave a moving talk about the amazing work of Artisans Beyond Borders in supporting asylum seekers on the Mexico/US border by enabling them to work together making their traditional embroidered manta cloths.

The embroidery which I ordered from the Artisans Beyond Borders etsy shop (which you can find [here](#)) arrived beautifully packed and presented with a handwritten thank you card.



Here is a photo -

Future Guild Meetings

The Guild now has a Zoom account so that we will be able to organise meetings each month. This month (**Saturday 15th May**) we are having Clare Hunter's talk. The meeting will be at 4pm this month to enable Val from Artisans Beyond Borders in Arizona to also be able to participate. ***If you haven't already received the zoom link and you wish to join the meeting please email me (pennyskett@gmail.com)***

In June the Guild's AGM will be held on zoom. However members will also be able to send their responses to AGM proposals by post or email. All papers will be forwarded to members in advance. The meeting will commence at 11am to enable members to participate and chat and the AGM itself will commence at 11.30. The June meeting will be on **Saturday 26th June**. This is a week later than usual to avoid a clash with the National Association AGM which is to be held on 19th June.

The Dine, Their Sheep and a Tale of Survival

The Jan/Feb 2021 edition of Handwoven has an interesting article about a shepherd who is helping preserve the Navajo-Churro sheep breed. The article can be accessed [here](#).

Women Weavers of the Bauhaus

Artsy has a fascinating article about the Bauhaus and the women's work in the weaving section. You can read it [here](#).

Stitches for Survival

Margon Van Tuyl has sent information about Stitches for Survival which may be of interest to members. The website is [here](#). It is a group of knitters, crocheters, stitchers and crafters from across the UK and beyond who are creating a scarf to give a heart-felt message to the COP26 climate talks to be held in Glasgow 1–12 November 2021. If you are interested in participating:

“Knit, crochet, stitch or craft as many pieces of the scarf as you would like and are able to — in green or blue yarn, fabric and thread. Each piece of the scarf needs to measure 60cm x 100cm. This will make it much easier to assemble the full ‘scarf’, and also help re-purpose the pieces for blankets. The shorter edges will be the ones we join together so each piece will contribute 100cm to the length of the scarf. So if you want to do an image or writing on your piece make sure it is the right way up (60cm high and 100cm wide).

- All sections of scarf to be sent off (addresses to be provided) – 30th SEPTEMBER 2021
- COP26 talks in Glasgow: 1 – 12th November 2021”

Full details are on the Stitches for Survival website.

Scottish Textiles Showcase

Kitty Bruce-Gardyne recently joined the Guild and she has sent some details of the Scottish Textiles Showcase in Edinburgh which she established.

“After a fond farewell to the Tron Kirk, the Scottish Textiles Showcase has moved around the corner to 20 St Mary's Street, just off the Royal Mile. Founded by Kitty Bruce-Gardyne this independent shop champions Scottish artisan textile makers and wool mills, and sells a range of pure wool, cashmere and linen blankets and throws, ladies Harris tweed coats and jackets, knitted accessories, tweed bags, baby blankets and knitting wool. Tweed cloth also available by the metre. The Showcase goes out of its way to celebrate the Scottish provenance and craftsmanship of all the gorgeous products on its shelves. St Mary's Street is located just off the Royal Mile and is home to a growing number of artisan shops, including Mackenzie Leather, Kilberry Bagpipes, Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers.”

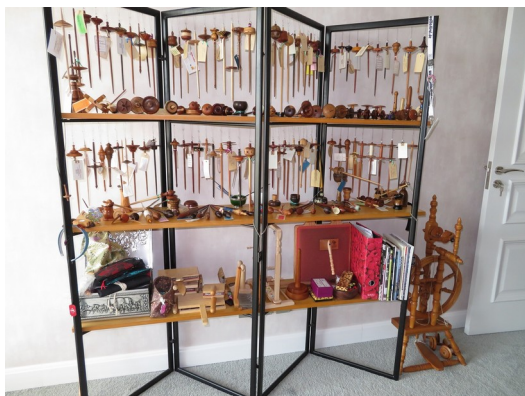
Below are some pictures of the shop and the beautiful products on sale. The Showcase is now open, though weekday openings may vary as we come out of lockdown. Check opening times before visiting by texting Kitty on 07717 473964. More details can be found at the Scottish Textiles Showcase website <https://scottishtextilesshowspace.com>



Life in Mongolia

After her posting in Edinburgh Julia Schlingelhoff went on to work in the German Embassy in Ulan Bator, Mongolia and she has sent some interesting details of life there.

"I shamelessly admit that I miss Edinburgh. Sometimes, when I'm especially homesick, I close my eyes and imagine walking to Kathy's Knits, or my gym, or that fish&chips shop around the corner... I don't regret a single minute I spent in Edinburgh."



Julia's spindle shelf – (beautifully lined up)

Mongolia is difficult, but not as bad as I had expected. The first year brought very warm summer, deep blue skies, a very posh apartment (on the outside, there are several issues that only came out after a while of living there) and a lot of very nice colleagues. The language barrier is the biggest issue, as not many Mongolians speak any other language, and every time I started Mongolian lessons, 2 months later we got a lockdown and I had to stop learning again. I tried learning alone, but I do need the interaction with a teacher. Luckily I don't need the language a lot, the supermarkets around me have pretty much everything I want and my local colleagues all speak German or English, as does the single trustworthy taxi company around here. There are several very nice restaurants, Spanish, American, Korean, sushi (very good sushi!), Indian, Peruvian. I still miss the fish&chips, though!

The first winter was hard, but somehow less stressful than this second one. The cold is painful, but very dry, so even -25, -30 °C are easier to bear than -10°C in Edinburgh with its humid air. But -40°C was an experience... luckily cashmere clothing is very easy to get here, and I'm pretty much kitted out from socks to hat. Another bad thing is the air pollution, which exceeds health limits by a lot. Especially the very small particles 2.5pm are dangerous, as they are small enough to enter the lung tissue. Burning and car traffic release those particles, and unfortunately we have a lot of both here. The traffic is beyond insane, and beside the coal heating plant, many of the poor families heat their "ger" yurts with unrefined coal, which you can imagine isn't very healthy. I have been wearing a facemask since September 2019, first for the pollution and then seamlessly for the rest of the insanity. However, once you get out of the city, the winter is brutal, but absolutely gorgeous. The sky is summer-blue, the frozen rivers gently steam, and the landscape reminds me of the highlands with the hills and few trees.



The summer is short and very wet, as most of the country's rainfall happens in August and September. And the streets have no drainage, so I'm wading to work and the drivers around me are having fun to hit the biggest puddles whenever a pedestrian is right beside it. More than once I arrived at work soaking wet.

Last year I bought a kilo of unprocessed cashmere fibre, which was a nightmare and ended up as a cat bed - dehairing cashmere is something that might have been done in Victorian workhouses! It took me two hours to somewhat dehair a small handful, then I gave up. But there is an American here who sells locally sourced yarns through Kickstarter, and I support local businesses that way. Currently I'm spinning an undefined silvergrey wool (possibly Romney or Merino) with nylon mix, which might have come straight from a silver-centric Rumpelstiltskin story)

The pandemic came here early, the borders to Russia and China were closed in February 2020. Thanks to that and 5 weeks of mandatory supervised quarantine for returning citizens, it took until November until someone made a mistake and the virus got out. Since then we've been more or less in constant lockdown, with decreasing success. I have been out of Mongolia in February last year, to Bali for a week, and that was the last time I left the country. My dreams of Woolweek will probably have to wait another year or two.



The quilt I had made to order by a local NGO that teaches quilting to poor women and former sex workers to help them get back on their feet. The NGO is suffering greatly due to the lack of tourists, so I try to support them whenever possible. The frozen door led to a viewing platform outside the very famous Chinggis Khan statue. It might as well have been the door leading to my local bank, as badly insulated doors do tend to look like that in the city as well. And the goat statue stands in front of a big cashmere clothing shop - very fitting, I think”

Alpaca Fleece Anyone?



Are you interested in a beautiful alpaca fleece? Jane Green of New Leaf Yarns has kindly donated thirteen fleeces to the Guild. They are clean, free of vegetable matter and very good quality. Jane

has currently suspended the operation of New Leaf Yarns due to the impact of the pandemic and Brexit on her business and had unprocessed fleeces left which she has given to the Guild. Having collected the fleeces from Jane these are now available free to anyone who is interested. If you wish to arrange collection of a fleece or wish one to be reserved for you for when we are able finally to meet up just contact me (pennyskett@gmail.com)

Next Month

Next month's newsletter will be circulated at about the third Saturday of the month (19th June). However the monthly meeting, which will incorporate the Guild AGM, will be held on Saturday 26th June.

Please send any photos of your craft projects and contributions for our June newsletter to pennyskett@gmail.com.

Don't forget Clare Hunter's talk about her fascinating book 'Threads of Life' on Saturday 15th May at 4.00pm. If you have not already received the zoom link for the talk and are interested in joining please email me (pennyskett@gmail.com).