

FOR SALE

- **Alpaca Fleece:** Lovely soft luxurious natural colour alpaca fleece. Let me know the colour and quality you'd like so I can hand pick a fleece. We have a selection of processed 100 gram bumps from \$15.00 - \$30.00, in a variety of natural colours. Postage can be arranged if required. Contact Jo Rhodes 0414 782 277 or jorhodes1955@gmail.com
- **Ashford Traditional spinning wheels:** Two wheels, plus some extras. \$175 each. Contact Walter Wallenborn 0419 937 499 (Mundaring)
- **Rigid heddle:** for an Ashford Knitters Loom, 30cm wide, 7.5 dpi (threads per inch). \$20. Contact Anne Marie 0423 114 256 or annemariekeights@gmail.com
- **Linen and cotton yarns:** Unbleached linen yarns and natural khadi cotton Yarn for sale. Please contact Ann 0402832198 if you're interested
- **Ashford drum carder:** medium 8" wide. Very good condition. \$300. Contact Gwen on 0439 916 947
- **Various items from the Toodyay Spinners**—Phone 0407177817, pick up from Toodyay:
 - * Ashford Knitters loom plus carry bag 50cm, Ashford Knitters Loom Stand 50cm. Never been used. \$400 the lot (Neg)
 - * Ashford Traditional Spinning Wheel, hand carders, 3 x bobbins, lazy Kate and niddy noddy. \$200 the lot (Neg)
 - * Spinning Wheel, lazy Kate, 2 bobbins and niddy noddy. \$200 the lot (Neg)
- **Spinning wheels:** Terry Cavill would like to reduce his large collection of spinning wheels, all in excellent condition. Contact Terry 9731 0947 (Donnybrook)

Guild members can advertise in the YarnSpinner events or items for sale at no charge. **Non members** may advertise but must pay \$5 per line, in advance. Contact the editor at the Guild address or by email as on page 15.

Advertising deadline for May YarnSpinner: 10 April 2021

Front cover: From the sharing table—knitted hippos by Rachel Meisner

The YarnSpinner



Newsletter of the Handweavers', Spinners'
and Dyers' Guild of Western Australia
Volume 51 No. 03
April 2021



COMING UP:

Saturday 10 April: Handweavers', Spinners' and Dyers' Guild of WA Annual Showcase

09:30am Doors open

10:00am Library & Yarn Area open

10:00-10:30am Entries for Showcase received (no entries will be accepted after 10:30am)

For a full running order of the day, see page 8

Coffee and tea available. BYO mug, morning tea/lunch (no food to share please).

**Contribution deadline for the May 2021 edition of the
YarnSpinner: Saturday 10 April 2021**

DISCLAIMER: Opinions expressed in correspondence in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Guild

Alexander Park Craft House Guild Groups

SPINNING GROUP: 4th Saturday of each month from 10am

Beginners welcome. Library and Yarn Area open. Bring your spindle or spinning wheel, your latest project, and lunch. Coffee and tea provided. Guild equipment is available for hire by members including hand and drum carders, spinning wheels, and dye equipment. Contact Information Officer (details page 15).

IN-HOUSE WEAVERS: 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month from 9:30am

Anyone is welcome to join us! Contact Brenda Roy 9381 4870 or brenda@cadplan.com.au.

TAPESTRY GROUP:

Stephnie Cantoni stephniecantoni@bigpond.com or Jan Hunter wsf.jmhunter@bigpond.com.

Guild Membership Fees for 2021

General \$80.00	Concession \$60.00	Associate/Junior \$60.00
Student \$60.00	Family \$97.50	Group \$120.00

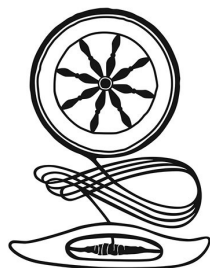
If a person applies for membership after 1 October, their fee will include membership for the current and following year.

Renewing Members: If renewing by mail, please include renewal form (or name, postal address and phone no.) and a stamped self-addressed envelope for return of your receipt and name badge. Renewing members no longer receive a name badge—members get a perpetual badge at joining. To replace a lost badge, contact Membership Officer (details page 15). A \$13 fee applies.

New members: For info on joining contact Membership Officer (details page 15).

HANDWEAVERS', SPINNERS' AND DYERS' GUILD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC

Alexander Park Craft House
Clyde Road, Menora
Mail: P.O. Box 446 INGLEWOOD WA 6932
Email: Information & Publicity Officer
candacegibson@yahoo.com
Web: <http://spinweavewa.org/>



Office Bearers and Convenors

COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT	Jenni Talbot	0488941751	jennitalbot@outlook.com
VICE PRESIDENT 1	Brenda Roy	0437904223	brenda@cadplan.com.au
VICE PRESIDENT 2	Candace Cranston	0424984883	candacegibson@yahoo.com
SECRETARY—Committee	Gail Hamilton	0438382739	gburchell1@bigpond.com
SECRETARY—General	Shona MacDonald	0419685506	shona.macdonald@gmail.com
TREASURER	Charmaine Pedrick	0401342278	pedrickc62@gmail.com
COMMITTEE 1	Shona MacDonald	0419685506	shona.macdonald@gmail.com
2	Janis O'Loughlin	0411212986	janis.47@bigpond.com
3	Sue Webb	0419937019	suewebb23@gmail.com
4	Kirrin Lill	0400229947	kirisamba@gmail.com
5	Murilla Measome	0413577309	murillameasome11@gmail.com

CONVENORS

MEMBERSHIPS	Charmaine Pedrick	0401342278	pedrickc62@gmail.com
YARNSPINNER DISTRIBUTION	TO BE CONFIRMED		
YARNSPINNER EDITOR	Cecilia Jordan	0406506941	ceciliajordan@rocketmail.com
LIBRARIAN	Gwen McLeod, with Sue Todd	0439916947 0400370556	gwenmcleod@live.com suetodd@aapt.net.au
YARN AREA	Sue Greig Jo Rhodes	9448 0840 0414782277	sue_greig@hotmail.com jorhodes@iinet.net.au
EQUIPMENT HIRE	Sue Greig	9448 0840 0411831814	sue_greig@hotmail.com
APCH REPRESENTATIVE	Bronwyn Croghan	0417720944	bronwyncroghan1@hotmail.com
RAS REPRESENTATIVE	Jenni Talbot	0488941751	jennitalbot@outlook.com
INFORMATION & PUBLICITY	Candace Cranston	0424984883	candacegibson@yahoo.com
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS	Helen Lovitt-Raison	0408272496	furrywithruffles@gmail.com
SPEAKERS	Sue Webb	0419937019	suewebb23@gmail.com
WORKSHOPS	Brenda Roy	0437904223	brenda@cadplan.com.au
HOUSEKEEPER	Dianella Spinners		
SHARING TABLE	Rae Flannagan		
TRADING TABLE	Innaloo Spinners		
WEBSITE EDITOR	Candace Cranston	0424984883	candacegibson@yahoo.com
ARCHIVES	Janis O'Loughlin	0411212986	janis.47@bigpond.com
AUDITOR	David Williams		
PATRON	VACANT		

Staying up to date

Unfortunately it is not always possible to include up-to-date information about changes to the meeting schedule in the Yarnspinner, but the Guild will always follow the Government's guidelines on gatherings.

If you need information about the Guild's activities, you are always welcome to contact Guild President Avril Liljekvist on 0449 001 103, or by email at avril.liljekvist@gmail.com or the Information Officer (details page 15).

The Guild is also on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/spinweavewa/>

And online:

<https://spinweavewa.org/>



WA Coronavirus Health Information Line: 13 COVID (13 26843)

WA Department of Health:

https://www2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus

Australian Government Department of Health:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

World Health Organisation:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14



Coming up...

Saturday 10 April	Guild Annual Showcase, APCH, doors open 9:30am (see pages 8-9 for details)
Saturday 24 April	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 8 May	HWSDGWA General Meeting, APCH (doors open 9:30am)
Saturday 22 May	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 12 June	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 26 June	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 10 July	HWSDGWA General Meeting, APCH (doors open 9:30am)
Saturday 24 July	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 14 August	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 28 August	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am
Saturday 11 September	HWSDGWA General Meeting, APCH (doors open 9:30am)
Saturday 25 September	Spinning Day, APCH, doors open 9:30am

Guild General Meetings for 2021

Handweavers', Spinners' and Dyers' Guild WA General meetings will be held at APCH on the following Saturdays in 2021:

- 8 May
- 10 July
- 11 September
- 13 November

The second Saturday of the month in April, June, August and October will be 'Spinning Days'. APCH will be open for members to gather, craft, and use the library and Yarn Area but no formal General Meeting will be held.

The fourth Saturday of the month (February-November) will be Spinning Days.

Sharing Table Saturday 13 February 2020

Lots of knitting on the table!

Helen Lovitt's needles have been flashing with a tartan cowl, cabled cowl, two pairs of Sock Madness sox, 'Mode Sadness' and 'cochineal' and a Strick-mich! Lightning shawl. Amazing! Her comment: *I need to get a life!* All I know is some folks are going to get a lot of snuggly pleasure from all that effort.

Rachel Meisner's knitting has been in a totally different direction. She brought two adorable hippos... hippopotami?... shaped from hexagons and I think pentagons, in an unfathomable but utterly fascinating fashion. She knitted the green one for herself five years ago. This one in tones of greys, black and white, is a generous present for a young friend. I am sure she will love it as much as we do (see photo below and on front cover).



A Coast Salish weaver and a wool dog – painted Paul Kane in the 1840s. Photo: Royal Ontario Museum © ROM

In a similar tale of loss to that of Dhaka muslin (see pages 10-11) capitalism quickly brought an end to fur dog breeding and blankets in the 1800's. The Hudson's Bay Company trading posts sold cheap, factory made wool blankets which could be traded for sea otter skins, and

which were much quicker and easier to obtain than the time and skill involved in raising dogs and weaving blankets.

But in recent years interest has grown in the origins of the wool dogs, and the techniques used to weave their fur. Because the dogs as a distinct breed no longer exist it is difficult to trace their evolution. The earliest dogs in western North America were used for hunting, hauling supplies, and guarding camps, and travelled with humans from Siberia around 10,000 years or more ago. At some point people began selectively breeding dogs for wool, and developed a distinct breed that was small, white and fluffy – quite different looking from the larger hunting or guard dogs.

Who knows—in future years, dogs may once again be bred and prized not just for their looks or character traits, but their fur.

Pelt of a wool dog, 1859. Photo: Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History



Source:
www.hakaimagazine.com/

Womans' best friend

Blanket weaving is a tradition carried on for thousands of years by the Cowichan, Squamish and Coast Salish people along the north west coast of Canada. Intricate woven blankets had a variety of uses in traditional cultures of the region – they symbolised wealth and a connection to ancestors and the spirit world; they were given away at ceremonial feasts; they wrapped a couple in a marriage ceremony, or adorned a chief, or swaddled newborns, or were worn as garments; they were used to negotiate the purchase of brides and slaves or to settle disputes; and they cloaked chiefs and other members of the nobility for burial.

These blankets made using dog fur. Women used the small islands off the north west coast of what is now British Columbia to keep packs of specially bred fluffy white dogs. They would visit regularly by canoe to feed the dogs, brush out their coats and, once or twice a year, shear them.

A rare photo of two women with their wool dog, late 1800s. Photo: Chilliwack Museum and Archives

The dog fur was spun with mountain goat wool, plant fibres and goose down to make the thread strong and warm. The yarn was then beaten with white diatomaceous earth to deter insects and mildew and left it's natural white/ivory colour or dyed with alder bark (red), lichen (yellow), or minerals or huckleberries (blue/black).

Despite the wool dogs' abundance in the early 18th century, they were almost extinct by 1858, and the blankets were becoming increasingly scarce.



Sue Greig has finished knitting a scarf of mixed origins. Lovely, Sue.

Sue Webb explored different fields of textiles this time. She brought a beautiful skein hand spun in wool and silk. It is totally soft in feel and hue, dyed with loquat leaves.

Sue also brought two covetable baskets coiled in raffia, some of which had been plant dyed and dyed with food colouring.

I know these were the fruits of a workshop run by an First Nations basket weaver but the details escape me. Ask Sue about it next meeting day.

And from **Jenni Talbot**, a woven table runner in earthy tones.

Thank you everyone. I always come away inspired.

Brenda Roy



Source: Hilary Price, rhymeswithorange.com (contributed by Sue Webb)

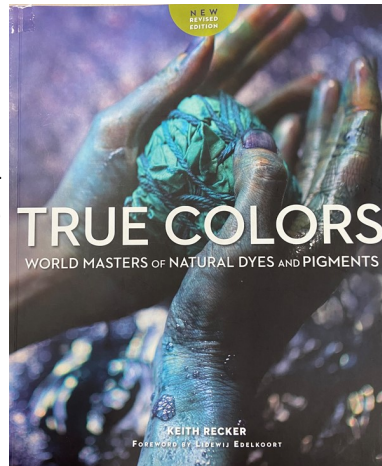
From the library

True Colors Keith Recker

True Colors is about artisans and their craft of creating color from natural materials, and about the historical importance and environmental sustainability of this practice. Deep conversations with twenty-six artisans from every part of the globe reveal the wisdom, traditions, and know-how that give their work such importance today.

Heartwear is a collaborative of artists and fashion designers who have created and supported indigo-dyeing projects from Benin to Morocco to India and beyond. Rupa Trevi-di collects faded marigolds from the Hindu temples of Mumbai and transforms them into ethereal golden fabrics for interiors. Juana Gutierrez Contreras dyes a full palette of vivid hues made from local plants and insects in her humble workplace in Teotitlan de Valle, Oaxaca, for her brother, Porfirio Gutierrez, to use in his critically-acclaimed and highly collectible tapestries.

The stories go on. Handmade paper dyed with indigo in Ghana. Rare greens from a fungus-infested plant that grows in the Peruvian jungle. Blues that adorned ancient Briton warriors rediscovered in a Norwich, England studio. Purples from shellfish collected along the western coast of Mexico. Vivid coral dyes obtained from mushrooms foraged in northern California. And so much more. Natural pigments aren't limited to cloth dyeing, though. They find their way into ceramic tile, glassware, pottery, artists' paints and pastels. They replace harmful chemical-based dyes, resulting in a more healthful and sustainable environment. 'True Colors' is the first book to connect the colors to the traditions to the artists who are pursuing this path with passion.



Continued on the next page...

By 1793 the British East India Company had conquered the Mughal empire and became involved with the Dhaka muslin trade. The company monopolised the trade, replacing the traditional global customers for the fabric with only those from the British Empire. It then came down hard on the industry, pressuring the weavers to produce higher volumes of the fabric at lower prices. Weavers then faced strong competition from English companies producing inferior muslin at much cheaper prices.

Sadly the finely balanced 'ecosystem' of Dhaka muslin producers, which had been successfully operating for more than 2000 years, collapsed. *Gossypium arboreum* var. *neglecta* became virtually extinct, and many of the skills required to make Dhaka muslin were lost.



300 thread count muslin woven by Bengal Muslin
Photo: Drik/ Bengal Muslin (<http://bengalmuslin.com/>)

But Saiful Islam is hoping to bring them back. Together with members of the local Bangladeshi craft industry he founded Bengal Muslin (bengalmuslin.com/), an organisation working towards resurrecting *Gossypium arboreum* var. *neglecta* cotton and the techniques of jamdani weaving. So far the team has produced a 300 thread count sari using a mixture of *Gossypium arboreum* var. *neglecta* and modern cotton

varieties. This is nowhere near the original Dhaka muslin thread count, but significantly higher than any weaver had achieved for generations. Hopefully one day the beauty of 1200 thread count Dhaka muslin will be seen again.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210316-the-legendary-fabric-that-no-one-knows-how-to-make?ocid=ww.social.link.email>

(This BBC article was sent to me by Margaret Jordan and Anne McAdam. It is fascinating, especially the details about the steps involved in weaving Dhaka muslin—I highly recommend it! Ed.)

Woven air

The finest weaving I've ever done was 12 threads per inch – so my mind was blown when I read about an ancient fabric that was 1200 threads per inch!

Dhaka muslin was almost transparent and reported to be so fine that you could pull a bolt of 91m through the centre of a ring or fit a piece of 18m into a pocket snuff box. The finest grade of the cloth was known as "baft-



Dhaka muslin garment

Photo: Drik/ Bengal Muslin (<http://bengalmuslin.com/>)

hawa", literally "woven air". Rumour circulated that it was woven by mermaids, fairies and even ghosts.

In fact, Dhaka muslin (known locally as jamdani) was woven by a 16-step process using the rare *Gossypium arboreum* var. *neglecta* cotton that grew only along the banks of the Meghna river in Bangladesh. Each step of the process was so specialist it was carried out by a different village in the Bangladesh and West Bengal region (spinning the short cotton fibres required such specific levels of humidity it had to be performed on boats!).

It was woven, traded and highly prized for thousands of years, clothing wealthy ancient Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and royalty throughout Asia. It became a sensation in Europe in the late 1800's, costing the modern equivalent of around £7,000-56,000 per metre, and was worn by Marie Antoinette, Joséphine Bonaparte and Jane Austen.

But this amazing fabric, and the incredibly skilled artisans that made it, was no match for the British East India company.

Continued on the next page...

The Golden Thread Kassia St Clair

All textiles begin with a twist. From the linen wrappings of Tutankhamun's mummy to the Silk Roads, from the woollen sails that helped the Vikings reach America to the lace ruffs that infuriated puritans, our continuing reinventions of cloth offer an unexpected history of human ingenuity. In *'The Golden Thread'* Kassia St Clair takes us on the run with escaped slaves, climbing the slopes of Everest and moonwalking with astronauts, in an unforgettable journey through our past, present and future.



Sue Todd

Vale Yvonne Sly

Yvonne was always there. She was always in her place at spinning before anyone else. Chairs were set up, cups were laid out ready for coffee, and she was on the job – spinning quietly.

Quietly was the word – never advertising her presence or her achievements.... but she was immediately missed if she wasn't there – at the Guild or at Innaloo.

At Innaloo Spinning Group, she regularly had something to show us be it spinning, knitting or something she had painted and her generosity overflowed. I'm sure everyone who knew her has a bookmark, a pendant or something she has shared.

Our sympathy goes to her loving family.



Wise Owls...

*By Chivalries as tiny,
A Blossom, or a Book,
The seeds of smiles are planted –
Which blossom in the dark.*

Emily Dickinson

Guild Annual Showcase

Start knitting, spinning, dyeing, felting and creating for the Guild Annual Showcase on **Saturday 10 April 2021**. There will be no theme this year, so let your imagination run free!

Running order for the Annual Showcase:

09:30am Doors open

10:00am Library & Yarn Area open

10:00-10:30am Entries for the Annual Showcase submitted (no entries will be received after 10:30am)

11:00-11:45am HWSWGWA General meeting

12:00-12:30pm Lunch and voting

1:00pm Award announcements

CATEGORIES

General Notes:

- Two items can be submitted per member per category.
- Items cannot be entered in multiple categories.
- The item must have been completed by the entrant within 12 months of the entry date.
- Entrants are encouraged to attach an artist's statement to their entries.
- Entries can be marked as not for judging if desired.
- Items must be submitted and prepared for Judging between 10:00 and 10:30am on the competition day.
- Winners in all categories will be determined by members votes on the day.

WEAVING: THREE COMPETITION CATEGORIES

- Off loom weaving
- 2 Shaft, Rigid Heddle, or inkle loom weaving
- Multishaft manual loom weaving (excludes computerised, mechanical, dobby-type looms)

SPINNING: TWO COMPETITION CATEGORIES

- 5 ply and under (14wpi or more)- minimum skein 25gr
- over 5 ply (less than 14wpi)- minimum skein 50gr

A skein made from handspun fibre, with attached sample and description of fibre and intended use.

FELTING:

Any felted item.

DYEING:

Natural or chemical dyes permitted. The entry may be a skein or item of commercial or handspun fibre and will be judged on the quality of dyeing only.

KNITTING/CROCHET:

Any handstitched item made from Handspun yarn, spun by the entrant.

MIXED MEDIA:

An item made using predominantly any, or a mixture, of the core crafts of weaving, spinning, dyeing or felting, which can include any material, including (but not restricted to) recycled or up-cycled materials. The item can be in any form from garment, decorative, domestic, to sculptural.

NOVICE/JUNIOR:

Any item as per above categories, made by a first-time entrant or member under 18 years of age.

GROUP or COLLABORATIVE ENTRY:

A group entry is to be a single item or cohesive set of items showcasing any mixture of the Guild's core crafts of weaving, spinning, dyeing or felting, where a group is defined as three or more individuals (who do not need to be an official Guild group). Items may also be partly crocheted or knitted. Note: items entered as a group entry CANNOT be also entered individually.

PRESIDENTS AWARD:

An entry chosen by the President.

POPULAR VOTE:

Members are to cast a vote for their selection. Votes are to be counted and the winner announced.