

The Magazine of the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers

Issue 297 – February 2026

Warp & Weft



LGWSD exhibition

Christmas Competition Winners

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Front cover: 2 untitled pieces by Brenda Gibson, was inspired by the 'Black White Yellow' wall hanging by famous Bauhaus weaver, Anni Albers,

Photo: Helena Nora Vitola-Jones, Immaterial Art Lab

All contributions and adverts must reach the editor by: 1 January for February, 1 April for May, 1 September for October issues.

Warp and Weft by the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers. Any opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Executive Committee. Nothing may be copied without the permission of the editor

FROM THE EDITOR

This has been a fantastic year to be a member of the London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers. The autumn was incredibly busy as it saw our usual Christmas meeting with its competitions and show and tell in which members were able to display and share their work, but also the most fantastic exhibition in November. Morley Gallery at Morley College played host to two floors of displays of all of our crafts and the exhibition was one of the most successful that the venue has ever held.

All members of the Guild were invited to participate with over 50 taking up the opportunity to exhibit their work and even more members contributing to the very successful sales table and the spinners' display of spun and unspun fibre - some of which was dyed in fantastic colours to make an unexpected installation at the show.

We also had regular meetings in the run up to November and this edition includes write ups of our speakers Eleanor Burkett and Rose Sinclair. As we look forward to 2026 the Guild will continue with meetings and interest groups at Burrige gardens so do check the calendar to find out what's available and what you would like to come to.

For members who have not yet paid their 2026 subscription, this will be the last issue of Warp and Weft that you receive. Do remember to renew and remain part of this vibrant organisation.



***75th Anniversary cake
at November's Meeting***

FROM THE JOINT CHAIRS

As we've now arrived in our 76th year, it seems timely to think about what sort of things we should be doing as a guild for the 21st. century. One way is to look at things guild used to do and see if they'd be worth renewing. A couple of ideas seemed to emerge from our birthday party, as our esteemed older members reminisced about the guild in the past.

For example, we might welcome reviving guild coach trips, perhaps to textile festivals or possibly a day trip to an interesting textile museum. Secondly, from time to time it might be good to hold more extended show and tell sessions where we share one another's work, as it crosses our various disciplines of weaving, spinning, dyeing and tapestry. Both of these let us gather and work together as a guild.

On the other hand, there's also scope for thinking about what we might like to do that's new or different. For example, we book our space at Burridge Gardens, usually for a speaker in the afternoon and for interest groups in the morning. But there isn't any reason why members shouldn't make use of the space at Burridge in the mornings, to meet informally, craft

or just hang out, whether you're a member of an interest group or not. That's easy to arrange. But it's also evident that younger, newer members would very much welcome exhibiting work more often, not least because, and it's an important reason, showing work and getting it out there can be invaluable if you're testing the possibilities of a career where you want to derive some or most of your income from a textile practice. Organising an exhibition takes a lot of energy and multiple skills. But perhaps we should be committing energies now, both to finding venues where we can hold guild exhibitions, both wide in scope and smaller more focused shows, as well as asking members to volunteer to take these on, either biennially or triennially?

We can think of many good things we could revive and new ideas we could pursue. But we can't do any of it if new people don't step up to take on some of the roles in the guild. So please look carefully at our current vacancy for a secretary and our upcoming vacancies for

programme secretary and for membership secretary. If you can't commit to taking on a role, just joining the committee is helpful. Your contributions will be hugely welcome.

**Sarah MacDermott
and Sue Malvern
Joint Chairs LGWSD**

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

February 2026

Since I last wrote for the October 2025 Warp and Weft, we have welcomed the following new members:

Emily Collett (W) Mary O'Looney (W)
Lucrecia Camiletti (WT)
Safu-Maria Gilbert (T)
Deborah Isaacs (W)
Chloe Paterson (WD)
Deborah Schneider (WD)
Karen Russell (SD) Regina Elliott (S)
Emma Crabtree (WD) Kirsty Pelham (S)
Jennifer Crouch (WD)
Catherine Hughes (W)
Caroline Phillpot (WSDT)
Simone Oates (WSDT)
Taslima Sultana (W)
Samantha Jones (D)
Lesley Robinson (WDT) Julie Klim (D)
Sarah Rapp (WSD) Pia Asare (WSD)
Catherine Boak (WS)

For current members who have renewed their membership for 2026, many thanks. If you have not yet renewed but would like to, please do so before the AGM in March. The annual subscription remains at £30 (or £15 if you are a full-time student). The easiest way to renew is by going to our website

www.londonguildofweavers.org.uk/join. Read down to "Sign In", click and follow the instructions. You can pay your subscription online by Paypal or bank transfer, or you can rejoin in person at a monthly meeting, by bank transfer, cheque or cash. If you have any questions or concerns about your membership please email membership@londonguildofweavers.org.uk

**Linda Litchfield
Membership Secretary, LGWSD**



**Members
voting in the
2025
Competitions**

WASHI, SHIFU AND KAMIKO

BY ELLIE BURKETT

The Endangered Paper Processes of North-east Japan and a Contemporary Artist's Response

Originally trained in Fine Art Textiles at Goldsmiths College, our speaker at September's meeting was Ellie Burkett's creative journey took an unexpected and fascinating turn when she developed a deep interest in handmade paper. That curiosity eventually led her to Fukushima in northern Japan, and later to Tokyo, where she spent several years studying traditional Japanese papermaking and textile processes. The Japanese word 'washi' comes from 'wa' (Japanese) and 'shi' (paper), and it is traditionally made from the paper of the mulberry tree. In the Fukushima district of Kami Kawasaki, papermaking was once an entirely handmade process carried out by family groups. Everyone played a role, from the youngest to the oldest. Families typically farmed during the summer months and made paper throughout the winter, when the land lay quiet.

In the 1880s, Kami Kawasaki was home to around 300 papermaking

households. By 2021, that number had fallen to just one — and sadly, with no successors. Today, paper is no longer produced there except within the local heritage centre. The decline is not hard to understand: papermaking was physically demanding work, and as Japan modernised, new employment opportunities opened up in even the most remote areas. Farming and papermaking gradually gave way to industrialisation.

One of the most unexpected outcomes of handmade paper is Shifu — literally 'paper cloth'. Shifu textiles typically used a cotton warp (or sometimes silk in high-end versions) and a weft made from paper thread, often pre-dyed with indigo or walnut. Farmers wore garments made from Shifu, layering them in the colder months for warmth. Samurai also wore this fabric, and it was even presented as gifts by the Shogun. Being made from paper, Shifu cloth is incredibly fine, lightweight, washable, and quick to dry. Museums such as Kew Gardens and the V&A hold

examples in their collections, but Ellie was able to share treasured samples of her own. It was hard to believe that the distinctive striped fabric

***Elleanor's
woven
Shifu cloth
sample***



contained a paper weft at all. Watching paper transformed into thread and then woven into cloth felt nothing short of magical.

Happily, Ellie now offers courses in this rare craft, helping to keep the knowledge alive. It seems almost unbelievable that such delicate cloth can come from a tough old mulberry tree — yet there it is, strong, flexible, and beautiful.

Another fascinating paper tradition is Kamiko — ‘kami’ meaning paper and ‘ko’ meaning garment. Kamiko is made from pressed paper and was traditionally worn by priests. It was considered a pure material, as no women or animals were involved in its production. The paper pulp was pressed into moulds and surface-inked using natural dyes such as indigo and walnut.



***Elleanor's
printed
Kamiko
sample***

Ellie's contemporary work explores just how far paper can be pushed as a material. She is particularly interested in recycling Japanese paper, especially when it is turned into thread and fragments of the original text remain visible. Sometimes, she explains, the woven paper seems to take on a life of its own, asking to become a three-dimensional form — fragile yet strong. At other times, she carefully restrains the paper, tying it down to hold its shape.

Ellie plans to return to Japan in October, where she will work with madder and walnut dyes and learn the surprisingly complex art of crumpling paper correctly (yes, that really is a thing!). She will also be giving a talk and hosting a pop-up exhibition while she's there — continuing her thoughtful dialogue between endangered traditions and contemporary practice.

Penny Brazier

DORCAS SOCIETIES AND THE TEXTILE PRACTICES OF BLACK CARIBBEAN WOMEN IN BRITAIN BY ROSE SINCLAIR

Our speaker at the September meeting, Rose Sinclair MBE, gave a fascinating talk about the Dorcas Societies and the textile practices of Black Caribbean Women in Britain. Rose is an academic, designer and maker, first being taught to knit and sew at the age of 5 by her mother, a skilled dressmaker who immigrated from the Caribbean in the 1950s.

Dorcas groups, which were named after a Biblical character who made garments for the poor and taught them to weave cloth, began in the UK in the late 18th century. Groups would meet to teach skills to destitute women; they became known for charity and sewing and are credited as starting the first jumble sales.

The groups were introduced to the Caribbean in the early 19th century, becoming embedded into the community. They brought women together through textiles as part of church culture and provided a network to 'share and give back'. When Caribbean women migrated to

the UK in the 1950s and 1960s the Dorcas clubs travelled with them and provided a support network and practical assistance to the new arrivals.

Very few official records were retained so Rose's research sources were newspapers, parish magazines, club archives and landing cards (where available). Her research has established that a significant proportion of the Windrush generation were highly skilled craftspeople including dressmakers and tailors. These were very respectable occupations which were highly valued in the Caribbean, but they found that their qualifications were not recognised in the UK, and they were often offered only unskilled work.

Some craftspeople opted to work independently from their own homes, so in addition to the front room becoming a space for socialising, it also became a venue for crafting and a showcase for skills in clothes making and home furnishing using a range of textile techniques: knitting, embroidery and crocheting in addition to sewing.

Rose co-curated the exhibition 'Dorcas Stories from the Front Room' at Craftspace, Birmingham including installations of a recreated Caribbean front room providing a location for oral history projects to capture the experiences of the Windrush generation and their descendants.



Rose also co-curated the first retrospective exhibition about Althea McNish the Trinidadian born artist who became one of the UK's most influential textile designers.

Rose's research also uncovered many other interesting topics on textile practices in the Caribbean; bags used for importing flour from America were re-purposed as clothing and home wares. These were made of finely woven white

cloth which could be washed with soapberry to remove any printed motifs. Fruit and vegetables found new purposes such as Papaya could be used for retaining black dye.



Rose Sinclair exhibits from the exhibition

'Dorcas Stories from the Front Room'

Starching crochet was a way to sculpt it into a form to be shown off as an ornament or vase of flowers placed inside.

Ellen McGrath

75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Guild celebrated its 75th birthday at the meeting on 8 November 2025. As this was just days before the Guild’s Renewal and Reinvention exhibition was installed and opened at Morley College, many members were having a very busy time thinking about weaving spinning and dyeing! At the meeting, a panel of long-serving members comprising past officers and our current President, including Janet Crowther, Eve Alexander, Penny Brazier and Wendy Morris were encouraged to share reminiscences by Andrea Sharp and Helena Jones and took questions from the

audience.

Members were able to enjoy a buffet lunch and a specially commissioned anniversary cake with a gluten free option. It was a great chance for members old and new to chat together and celebrate the longevity of the London Guild.

Andrea Easey



Cakes photo: Andrea Easey



Panel discussion:

Photo: Sue Malvern;

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION WINNERS 2025

Lore Youngmark Prize for Loom Weaving

A couple of years ago I was given a beautiful piece of striped fabric by a dear friend of my mothers, Lydia. She told me that they bought it together on holiday in Donegal in the 1970s at the McNutt woollen mill, where we spent many a wet afternoon on our family holidays.

The cloth languished in a drawer until I heard about the Guild's anniversary exhibition and thought I could make something that fitted the theme of Renewal and Reinvention perfectly. I planned to unpick the weft of a section of the cloth, leaving the warp to reweave into a new design.

Thankfully, I started six months before the exhibition as unpicking turned out to be a slow process. I ended up with a piece that had 80cm of original stripe pattern and 70cm of unpicked warp ready for reweaving.

Dressing the loom backwards by lashing the original end onto the front beam and dropping weights off the back of the loom produced something of a Heath Robinson construction, but luckily the fell ended up straight and the yarn was forgiving enough to produce a good enough tension across the warp.

The dark stripe warp threads were dropped behind the cloth and replaced with red and pink and I started weaving, first just plain weave in red, but progressively reintroducing the dark warp threads and adding colour in the weft and structure to build through flat squares to full waffle weave.

I felt somewhat guilty about unpicking the original fabric gift, but in working through both the unpicking and reweaving my head was filled with memories of the joy and laughter of Lydia and my mother pouring over fabrics at McNutts.

Jenny Field



KENNEDY CUP FOR SPINNING

For me, this year's spinning challenge became the answer to the question: 'What do with a lot of purchased roving when you don't like the results of spinning from the end?' The roving in question is a lovely soft combed top blend of merino and silk, the colours range from white(silk), light green, mossy greens in darker shades, and black. Spun from the end, the level of contrast produced a zebra effect, promising irregular colour pooling in use. This is not something I would use. Thus began a journey of three variations of colour management.

Zebra

I started by spinning from the fold. Taking the roving in 20cm sections, spinning from the fold to achieves a good degree of colour separation. Two bobbins of singles were then plied yielding a highly variegated colour effect. So though this was less muddy a result than spinning from the end, the colours will still pool and create irregular stripes.

Ombre

I separated the roving into colour

ranges: Light, Medium, and Dark. The singles were spun one range at a time, creating a continuous single with a gradual colour change from light to dark. I used chain plying to maintain the colour separation and create an ombre, gradual colour change along the skein. When knit or woven the colour change will progress through the length of the piece.

Heathered

The final section of roving was carded to blend the colours. The result is a softly mottled colour in the mid range of the lightest and darkest elements of the roving.

The sharply contrasting colours of the roving become highlights and shadows, yielding a yarn in a soft green with a subtle depth of colour. Knit or woven, it will work up beautifully.



Jan Harriman

GWEN SHAW PRIZE

It was an honour to be awarded the Gwen Shaw prize this year, especially amongst such imaginative and beautifully made entries from other members.

So far, in my weaving journey I have been working towards making garments with my own cloth. With that in mind, and with the opportunity of our 75th birthday exhibition as a goal, 2025 was the time to realise that ambition. As I started to design my piece I had two things in mind: a cutting in my scrapbook that I have revisited many times and a statement coat.

Rather than come up with a final design, I experimented and sampled. I worked through different colourways, different weave structures, and different yarns and yarn weights until I was happy. When I finally had my base fabric worked out, I then had to determine how to weave the big flower structures, and what to use to make those flowers pop. I had already used supplementary warp and weft for the silk overcheck grid, and I realised I needed a different method of

supplementary weft for the flowers. After a lot of tearing strips from different weights of silk fabric and trying to get the technique and the shape right – I decided to use hand dyed silk ribbon. I had planned to dye the silk for the lining of my coat anyway.

I have learned that for me designing is a process, and in the end, the thinking, the swatching and the sampling took a lot more time than the actual weaving and sewing of the coat itself. Some of the touches, like the buttons, and the ruffles on the collar and pockets were moments of inspiration, and I don't think I would have come up with these if I had started with a concrete plan.



Sarah MacDermott

TAPESTRY WINNER

I was delighted to receive the 2025 Tapestry Award for 'Autumn Colours' based on the theme 'Inspired by Autumn'. I chose to look at the changing colours of autumn leaves and 2025 did not disappoint as being better than last year. The colours were rich autumnal yellows, oranges, golds, ochres to dark reds. Most of these colours were in my stash and selected a simple design of strips of these colours to represent autumn. I had great pleasure in creating this tapestry and using supplementary warps to create the leaves to complete the overall look.



Aruna Reddy

BEGINNER'S PRIZE

My piece for the Gwen Shaw Cup: “New Growth, Old Roots” is a piece of batik dyeing on silk. I made it on the Morley College Batik weekend course – my first experience of batik. It is a pixelated image of a rosebud. The grid is created by batik wax, hand-drawn with a tianjing, each square filled with Procion dyes, mixed to give a variety of colours. The dye in each square is denser on the edges than the centre, giving a gradation of tone.

There are a few journeys here from old roots to new growth. The rosebud is copied from a cross-stitch needle-book I made forty years ago. After a long career working in business and tech consulting, and a digression into ceramics, I have returned recently to focussing on textiles, and trying new processes and materials. There's also a journey from my roots in computers, where I would code images through a grid of pixels and colours to use in simulations. Now I can use that process with different – more responsive - materials. And there's a reflection of the journey of coding itself, from the punched cards of

Jacquard looms through the Hollerith punched cards I used at college, to the html code that creates websites today. Maybe my next project should be weaving!



Carys Davie

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LONDON GUILD EXHIBITION: RENEWAL AND REINVENTION, 11-22 NOVEMBER 2025

The London Guild's exhibition focussing on work made in the last 5 years was a great success, with exhibits representing all the crafts of the Guild. Visitors could make purchases from the inspiring range of items in the shop area, stewards were on hand to answer questions by visitors and our daily demonstrations brought all our crafts to life. These photos by Sue Malvern and Helena Nora



Window Display
Photo: Sue Malvern



Spinner's skein display
Photo: Immaterial Art Lab



Sarah McDermott's coat
Photo: Sue Malvern



View of Ground Floor



Dyed and spun locks
Photo: Immaterial Art Lab

Scarf display
Photo: Immaterial Art Lab



Lower Floor Gallery
Photo: Sue Malvern



Liana Listunova's tapestry
Photo: Sue Malvern



Seasonal hats and scarves in the shop
Photo: Sue Malvern

INTEREST GROUPS IN 2026

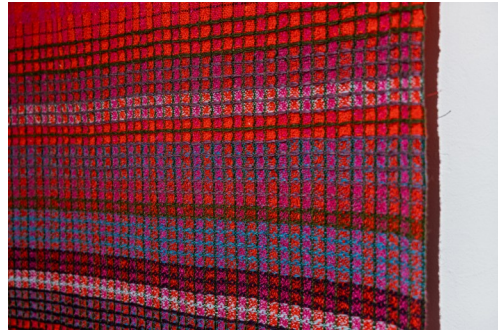
After a very busy year creating the exhibits and demonstrations for the Guild's exhibition at Morley College, members are reminded that interest groups meeting in person or on Zoom throughout the year.

Check the programme or sign up for emails from the interest group leaders. If you are having difficulty making contact – the Membership Secretary can add you to the mailing list.

Some groups also operate a **What'sApp group** – ask your interest group leader for more details.
Weave Interest Group – meets in person at Burrige Gardens on selected Saturdays through the year and on Zoom – check the programme for details

Tapestry Interest Group – meets in person at Burrige Gardens on alternate months on Saturdays through the year and on Zoom – check the programme for details
Dye Interest Group – meets in person at Burrige Gardens on selected Saturdays through the year and on Zoom – check the programme for details

Spinning interest Group – the Barnes Spinning Group meets 11am – 3pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at Barnes Community Centre, and meets on Saturdays at Burrige Gardens on the mornings of the February, May, September and November meetings.



***Jenny Field's Lydia's Gift
at LGWSD exhibition
photo Sue Malvern***

TAPESTRY INTEREST GROUP

Welcome to 2026 and lots more tapestry weaving! This year we will be running skill workshops for our interest group and hope you will be able to attend these sessions. They will be held every other month from 14 February onwards at 11.00am at Burrigge Garden Community Centre. At the February meeting we will be exploring the technique of Krokbragd, inspired by Angie Parker's talk on Krokbragd. It is a weave based on three colours creating patterns which are endless. Krokbragd can also be woven on a frame and is fun to do, playing with colours and patterns. The second themed session will be in April.

Aruna Reddy



***Krokbragd sampler:
Photo Aruna Reddy***

WOVEN WORLDS – TAKING TAPESTRY INTO THE FUTURE

Barbican Library 5– 29 November 2025

The London British Tapestry Group held a very successful month long exhibition at the Barbican Library, with twenty tapestry weavers exhibiting a huge range of varied techniques and contemporary themes. Topics covered were the natural world, story telling, mythology, climate change and health.

Together with the diversity in the subjects chosen by the tapestry weavers they also chose a wide variety of materials including natural fibres of wool, silk, cotton and linen plus synthetic fibres such as nylon, monofilament, wire, paper, packaging and other found objects. The variety of themes and materials led to a very creative approach to the techniques and colours used to create texture patterns, lines and shading.



Duet by Aruna Reddy

Contemporary tapestry weaving has not really had the same level of publicity or interest as other fibre arts and is often confused with other crafts. This exhibition really explored the creativity that tapestry allows – it allows such freedom of design and using differing fibres in a piece of work - really it is painting with fibres and the

3D pieces become a form sculpting. Today the Tapestry artist is not constrained to traditional techniques to call it Tapestry.

In July of this year the travelling National Exhibition of the British Tapestry Group will be at Morley Gallery, 13-25 July, 2026. Many of these tapestries were awarded a place through juried entry and I am sure we will again see some of the London Group exhibiting at this exhibition.

Juliette Syme

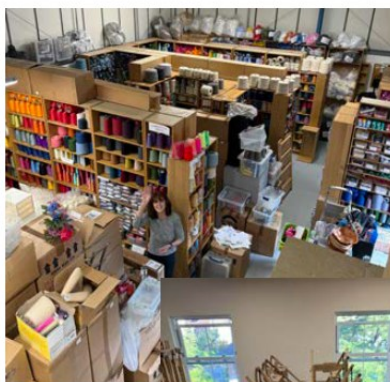


Landscape by Suzanne Osborne



the handweavers studio & gallery

Handweavers has relocated to Verwood in Dorset where you now find our lovely weave studio for workshops and courses, plus a dedicated yarn store where we fulfil your web, phone & email orders...



See our website for location details - personal visits by arrangement

All our contact details remain the same. If you phone we are available 10am-6pm Tues - Fri

**www.handweavers.co.uk
admin@handweavers.co.uk
Tel: 020 7272 1891**



AGWSD NEWS

The Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers of which the London Guild is a member, is looking forward to hosting two of its regular biennial events on 2026. The Conference is 10-12 July at The Burleigh Court Hotel, Loughborough University (West Park), Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3GR. The theme is around the textiles and their production 'Local to Loughborough'. The Association AGM will also be part of the event.

The Association National will be held throughout October 2026 at The Rose Patterson Gallery, Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard, Nr Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8LE. The theme is 'A Festival of Flora and Fauna' with details on the requirements for submission having been sent to Guild Secretaries and the open section to display strings of bunting pennants as joint entries from all Guilds also welcome.

Andrea Easey
Acting Chair, AGWSD

14 MARCH 2026

London Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers AGM followed by speaker, **Paul Henry**

Come to the Guild AGM to hear about the past year's activities and vote in the elections of new committee members and officers. This is your chance to help shape the future of the Guild. After the 'business' of the afternoon there will be a talk by Paul Henry. Best-known for his work creating bespoke contemporary kilts, Paul will talk about his passion for textiles and community work with textiles.



Paul Henry © Paul Henry

9 MAY 2026

GUILD OPEN DAY

The Guild Open Day is a chance for visitors who are interested in weaving, spinning, tapestry and dyeing to come to Burr ridge Gardens and learn more. There will be demonstrations and the opportunity for visitors to try their hand at our crafts. Members who want to try other skills can also try out different equipment.

Free meeting – no charge to attend



***Inkle loom demonstration
at Morley Gallery - photo Sue Malvern***

11 APRIL 2026

FIBRES, MATERIALS AND STITCHES

– Speaker Alison Ellen from Alison Ellen Handknits

Alison trained in textiles at UCA Farnham (UK) and began a small business designing knitting in the 1980s. Her interest in both designing and teaching is to explore knitting, and how different stitches can shape fabric and create garments knitted without seams, to suit different people and to be a pleasure to wear. Using British wool, she dyes her yarns for added colour interest and effects. She has help with production of garments from expert hand knitters the UK.

In this talk, Alison will look at how knitted stitches can alter fabric and how different fibres affect the way stitches work, including knitting with plant materials.



Alison Ellen above and left one of her knitted cardigans © Alison Ellen



14 March 2026	11.00am 2.00 pm	Weaving Interest Group AGM followed by speaker Paul Henry
11 April 2026	11.00 am 2.00 PM	Tapestry Interest Group Dyers Interest Group Fibres, Materials and Stitches— Speaker Alison Ellen Handknits
25 April 2026		Flax Spinning workshop with Cath Snape Pre-booked places only
9 May 2026	11.00 am From 1.0 pm onwards	Spinning Interest Group Guild Open Day
6 June 2026	10.00am -4.00 pm	Elle Burkett Shifu Workshop Pre-booked places only

BURRIDDGE GARDENS COMUNITY CENTRE, ST JOHNS HILL SW11 1AR

Morning interest group meetings start at 11.00. Afternoon meetings start at 2.00 with Members' Show and Tell and notices, followed by the speaker's talk at around 2.30.

Committee meetings will be held in October, January, April and July with varying dates.

All interest groups continue to meet on Zoom with varying dates as well as in-person meetings shown in the programme above. Please contact the interest group co-ordinators for details of dates and times and to receive the Zoom link for the meetings.

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