



WILD CAT CRAFTS Newsletter No. 1 – January 2016

Thank you for signing up to my newsletter. I did say that it would be “occasional”, but I’d hoped to send the first one out before now. They will be more frequent in future I promise. A lot has happened in the last year, so make a brew and get comfy!

WORKSHOPS

I will be holding the following workshops in my studio at St Margaret’s House in Edinburgh. All classes will be from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. Full details can be found on the website - www.wildcatcrafts.co.uk

LEARN TO USE A DROP SPINDLE to make your own yarn. Sunday 6th March 2016. Treat yourself and your Mum to an afternoon learning a fun and creative craft together.

BEGINNERS’ CROCHET. Sunday 20th March or Sunday 17th April 2016. Suitable for complete beginners and those who need a wee reminder!

BEGINNERS’ KNITTING. Saturday 26th March 2016. Suitable for complete beginners and those who need a wee reminder!

LOCKER HOOKING. Sunday 3rd April 2016. “Locker what?” Popular in the 1940s, locker hooking is a simple and quick way to make beautiful home accessories with fabric or yarn using rug canvas and a tool that has a crochet hook at one end and a large eye, like a sewing-needle, at the other.

I’ll have more workshops later in the year on subjects like Fair Isle knitting, mastering the steek and cables and lace knitting, so keep an eye on the website and future newsletters. If you would like to request a more advanced workshop, please get in touch – jane@wildcatcrafts.co.uk

MORNINGSIDE MAKERS’ MARKET

I’m working on some new products for this market which will be on Saturday 5th March 2016 from 11am to 4pm at the Columcille Centre on Newbattle Terrace (just before the Dominion Cinema) in Morningside, Edinburgh.

STOP PRESS!

EDINBURGH MINI MAKER FAIRE

I’ve just received an email to say that my application for the Edinburgh Mini Maker Faire - part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival in April - has been accepted!

You’ll find more details of the event nearer the time on these websites - www.wildcatcrafts.co.uk
www.makerfaireedinburgh.com/
www.sciencefestival.co.uk/festival.

JANUARY 2015

I moved into my very own studio at St Margaret’s House in Edinburgh - a brilliant place to meet other artists and makers to share ideas, experience or just have a chat over a cup of tea!

I took delivery of paper bags printed with my logo and business name - and even if I say so myself, they look great. Then again, someone bought 10 as gift wrapping, so I can’t be the only one that likes them!





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FEBRUARY

Most of this month was spent getting the studio ready, so after lots of painting, laying laminate flooring, putting up shelves and moving fabric and yarn from home, I finally got my flat back!

MARCH

Time to get making so that I had something to sell at my first stall! The Edinburgh Yarn Festival at The Corn Exchange was exciting, exhausting and resulted in my first commission – a leather apron (no, nothing like that!) It was for a luthier (violin or guitar maker) who needed an apron that was more comfortable than the woodworker's apron he had been using.

APRIL

This month's highlight was a trip to The Border Mill in Duns in the Scottish Borders. A fascinating morning was spent at this small mill specialising in spinning alpaca fibre. It would have been rude not to add to my stash – so soft and fluffy! Some of the fibre is from their own flock, which we visited in the afternoon.



MAY

Open Studios North Fife was the excuse to have a nosey around, I mean be inspired by, other peoples' studios and creative work. There were far too many places to visit in one day, but I met some lovely, talented and inspirational people who produce stunning work -

indigo dyeing, elegant carpentry, luxurious weaving and contemporary blacksmithing. Dates are in the diary for 2016!

As for my own work, I tried my hand at a craft new to me – pyrography or “writing with fire”. I'm pleased with my new “shop sign” (the corridor could do with a lick of paint though!). I'll add items decorated with pyrography to my range in future.



JUNE

So much for Summer! The first day of the Meadows Festival in Edinburgh was cancelled due to high winds, but the next day saw the crowds out in force. I tried another new craft, this time at a silver casting workshop with the Leith Lapidary Club. A very satisfying craft that could be addictive and expensive! “Love Hearts”, I haven't had one of those in years!





WILD CAT CRAFTS

Newsletter No. 1 – January 2016

JULY

I'm with Oscar Wilde in that "*I can resist everything except temptation*", so I gave in and joined the Leith Lapidary Club! I've already spent many happy hours getting to grips with enamelling on copper. I use ready-made copper blanks to begin with, but I love the speckled effect.



I also managed to get some spinning done and reduced my stash of fleece ever so slightly – so much fibre, so little time!

AUGUST

Another temptation is the huge range of classes run by Edinburgh Council's Adult Education Department. I eventually made a decision and signed up for the silk painting course. I've always been a bit nervous about anything to do with drawing or painting, so it was fantastic to find out how forgiving silk painting is and, after a couple of weeks, a bit frustrating that the classes were only 2 hours long! So, once I've worked on some designs, it'll be full steam ahead with scarves and maybe a landscape or two if I'm feeling adventurous.

SEPTEMBER

This year, Open Studios was a collaborative event with over 100 artists from Albion Street Artists, Process Studios and St Margaret's House taking part. There's always a great buzz during Open Studios and this year was no exception - it's always great to surprise people with the wealth of creative talent within the anonymous exterior of St Margaret's House.

OCTOBER

Back for another enamelling workshop, this time using a riso screen – a bit like screen printing, but instead of ink, you pass powdered enamel through a mesh screen onto the copper. I was pleased enough with my first effort to plan a series, but I haven't decided if they should be solely Edinburgh landmarks, Scottish or from the whole of the UK. Decisions, decisions!



NOVEMBER

I finally made the decision to sell my old spinning wheel, an Ashford "Traveller", which is a great wheel, but I found that the drive wheel was knocked out of alignment when I put it in the car, no matter how careful I was. So, I tried lots of wheels that are specifically designed to fold up into a bag. I plumped for a Kromski "Sonata" after trying one at the Haddington Spinners & Dyers group. Such a smooth machine, I can use it for hours!



WILD CAT CRAFTS

Newsletter No. 1 – January 2016

DECEMBER

More enamelling - some sheepy badges for the Haddington Spinners & Dyers' Christmas lunch. I'd say that's a fair exchange for lots of lovely biscuits, jam and other tasty things!



The first week or so of December was spent preparing for the Makers' Market at St Margaret's House. This event is only in its second year, but it was very well attended and goes from strength to strength. I tried out a new product at this market, my drop spindle kit, which includes a drop spindle, 100g of Shetland fibre and full instructions all in a lovely gift box. Available in natural, blue or citrus shades, they were very popular.



JANUARY 2016

I've been looking for a weaving loom for some time, so when a friend of a friend decided to reduce her collection of looms, I just had to have a look. So, now I have a Harris 8-shaft table loom. It's in need of some TLC, but the first friend, Marie (a very experienced weaver and dab-hand at assembling floor looms) is going to help me get it running smoothly again.

I was also given an Enamelaire mini kiln that needed a good home, which means that I'll be able to enamel small items in my studio on days when the Leith Lapidary Club don't meet. So, this January has seen a wee rearrangement of my studio!

Don't worry, my next newsletter won't be in another year's time - or be so long!

I look forward to meeting you at a craft fair or workshop.

Jane