



WILD CAT CRAFTS Newsletter No. 2 – August 2016

Welcome to my second Newsletter! It's a bit shorter than the first one (I did promise that it would be). It's also a bit later than I'd planned because I've had, err, "fun" rearranging my studio so that I can rent out part of it due to an increase in studio rents. But it means that I have had a good clear-out - it's amazing what you can collect in a few months! And, after trying a few different crafts, it means that I can focus on the ones that I enjoy the most. But more of that later, first, details of upcoming workshops and classes.

WORKSHOPS

LEARN HOW TO SPIN YOUR OWN YARN USING A DROP SPINDLE

Fun, relaxing and creative, you can carry a drop spindle with you anywhere to create your own unique yarn for knitting, crochet or even weaving. Learn in a small, friendly group (max 8) - no experience needed.

My one-day workshop will be held during the Morningside Makers Market at the Columcille Centre on Newbattle Terrace, Edinburgh. The workshop will run on Saturday 3rd September from 11am to 3:30pm with tea and lunch breaks.

Included in the price of £81 is group/individual tuition, a drop spindle kit (worth £25) as well as tea and cake from the lovely "Tea Jenny" cafe!



You can book your place on the Eventbrite website www.eventbrite.co.uk Through the link on the "Events" page of my website www.wildcatcrafts.co.uk Or through the link on Morningside Makers Market Facebook page www.facebook.com/MorningsideMakersMarket

KNITTING AND CROCHET COURSE

A 10-week beginners' course on Wednesday mornings from 10am to 12 noon at the South Bridge Centre on Infirmity Street, Edinburgh. Classes start on 28th September. We'll do 5 weeks of each craft so that you can have a "taste" of each. Perfect for beginners or if you need a wee refresher!

CREATE YARN USING A DROP SPINDLE

A 10-week course on Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at Leith Academy. Classes start on 14th September. Learn to use a drop spindle to create your own unique yarns. Later in the course we'll also cover fibre preparation and colour-blending. A perfect follow-on to my one-day workshop at the Morningside Makers Market!

RAG WEAVING

A 10-week course on Thursday evenings from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at Leith Academy. Classes start on Thursday 15th September. Weave your own min-bags, rugs and cushion covers using basic materials that can be found in every home - cardboard, string and a stash of fabric that you've never got around to using (we've all got one of these)!

Course details are available to read online now on Edinburgh Council's website www.joininedinburgh.org/ and bookings "go live" on Wednesday 10th August. These links are also on my website www.wildcatcrafts.co.uk

For "Knitting and Crochet"

www.joininedinburgh.org/activity/9896/

For "Create yarn using a drop spindle"

<https://www.joininedinburgh.org/activity/1831/>

For "Rag Weaving"

www.joininedinburgh.org/activity/1771/

Bookings can also be made by phone on 0131 553 2810 or 0131 621 8316, by post using the form in the Adult Education class brochure or in person at the South Bridge Centre. My courses are under the "Craft" sections on pages 7 and 17.

CRAFT FAIRS

I'll be at the Morningside Makers Market on Saturday 6th August, 3rd September, 1st October, 5th November and 3rd December - come and say hello!



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My first Newsletter finished in January this year, so I'll carry on from there...

FEBRUARY

I'd been given some hand-spun yarn that had been made from Jacob fleece – they are lovely-looking piebald sheep, but they don't have the softest fleece. I knitted the yarn into a square for a cushion cover and decided to weave the other side in Jacob fleece that I'd spun. I used a square tapestry loom so that I didn't waste too much yarn – here it is just as I've started to cut it off the loom.



The finished cushion now has pride of place on my sofa at home! Not entirely work-related, but it gave me a chance to “get my head around” warping a loom for something slightly more complicated than plain weave.

There's nothing like forward planning, but this was a bit extreme. My proposal for a “weave a mini-bag on a cardboard loom” at April's Mini Maker Faire had been accepted. I knew that I'd need LOTS of cardboard looms and the boxes were getting in my way, so I spent a couple of days cutting up cardboard boxes. The photo below only shows a fraction of the completed ones and I didn't want to see another cardboard box for weeks!



MARCH

Tuesday 8th March was International Women's Day and I joined the rest of the Haddington Weavers, Spinners and Dyers to spin outside the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood. It was a bit chilly (it was March after all), but we met a lot of lovely people, including Sarah Boyack, MSP, who stopped to have a chat.



Later in March, I spent an afternoon at a “Free Machine Embroidery” workshop run by the extremely talented (and very patient) Mairi Brown (mairib.wordpress.com/) in her lovely bright new studio at Out of the Blue in Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh.

Mairi asked me to bring a photo to work from, so I chose a koi carp (second right in the photo below). We started by making a sketch (second left) to use as a template for cutting out pieces of organza in colours to match the image. Then we spent some time carefully choosing the colours of thread that would be used to create the embroidery. The organza shapes were sewn onto the fabric – I went for a piece of Moon tweed – and then each piece was covered with embroidery. I'm pleased that my first effort (left on photo) resembled a fish, but I had another go a few days later and it (right in the photo) is a bit more realistic and looks like it might be able to swim!





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I got a bit carried away that day and tried a wee Scottie dog too and I'm really pleased with "him".



Inspired by the workshop, I made a trip to the Scrap Store in Musselburgh to see what I could find - organza, tweed, embroidery thread and tapestry wool!



I was given some white cotton sheets, machine dyes in "Tulip Red" and "Intense Violet" and salt by different people. I can take a hint, so I got on with some dyeing - it'll be perfect for lining bags and purses!



APRIL

I stopped off at Moondance Wools in East Lothian for some woolly retail therapy and to pick up some bargains, chat, drink tea and

eat cake before heading to St Abbs for the Wool Festival. What a lovely day!



The Edinburgh Mini Maker Faire was incredible. I was worried that my exhibit was a bit too "low tech" compared to some of the other exhibits (all flashing lights and whirring noises). There was no need to have worried though - people queued to weave a min-bag and I didn't stop all day. Lunch had to wait until 5pm! (And I was glad I'd cut up so many cardboard boxes).



At the end of April, I took part in a spinning demo in the "Crafters in Action" section of the Knitting and Stitching Show at the Royal Highland Showground.





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It was great to see so many people taking an interest in the craft – young and old, male and female. Hopefully we encouraged a few people to give it a try and we'll welcome some new faces to the Edinburgh Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers.

Wandering around the Knitting and Stitching Show was very tempting and it would have been rude not to buy some gorgeous fabric. I'm planning a present for friends, but can't say what yet! I'll try to remember to take a few "in progress" photos for a future Newsletter.

April was finished off with a silver and copper jewellery workshop at Leith Lapidary Club. We learned how to cut designs from copper sheet, to use the saw properly, drill, solder, anneal and dome the piece ready to be enamelled.



MAY

I finally had a chance to do some weaving on my 8-shaft Harris table loom (with some help from Marie to warp-up). I used two of the yarns that I'd bought at Moondance Wools – ochre for the warp and salmon for the weft. I was pretty pleased with my first attempt at a herringbone pattern.



JUNE

Most of June was taken up with rearranging the studio, but with that done, I started a new weaving project using the same two yarns, but this time in a chequered pattern with both colours in the warp and weft.

As a result of the Mini Makers Faire, I was asked to run a workshop for weaving on a mini cardboard loom. It's always great fun to see people get to grips with something that they've never tried before.

JULY

I finished the chequered weaving and took it home for washing and blocking – just where I could admire it every time I passed!



Both pieces of fabric are destined to become cushion covers. I had borrowed a warping frame (used for measuring and organising warp), but that had to be returned. So, having looked online and nearly fallen off my chair at the price of warping mills, I'm designing one that folds for easy storage and uses materials that I already have. So at least I know what I'll be doing in August!

Having tried so many fascinating crafts over the last couple of years, I've found myself designing weaving projects as I fall asleep, so I'm going to concentrate on weaving and maybe a bit of enamelling when I feel inspired. And the odd bit of free machine embroidery. And sew a bag or two of course. Did I mention silk painting?

Jane