

## 2009 Annual Report

You are warmly invited to attend the Guild's Annual Meeting which will take place at 6.00pm on Friday 26th June 2009 at the Hundith Hill Hotel, Lortan Vale, Cockermouth, CA13 9TH. There will be no costs to members or the Guild as the hotel has kindly offered us the room free of charge.

### Chairman's Annual Report

It is a privilege to have chaired the Guild into its third year. Thank you all very much indeed for keeping it all going during the past year. And thank you very much for keeping me going over the difficult times too.

We have been very active in 'Encouraging, Inspiring and Supporting Long Draw Spinning' again this year. For example; for the third year in succession we will be demonstrating and teaching long draw spinning at Woolfest. We have demonstrated at public events too numerous to mention. Thousands of people must have seen long draw spinning as a result and we have no way of assessing how great the influence of those visual images and our enthusiasm has been so far, or will be in the future. I can't think of a more eco-friendly activity, something which is becoming an increasingly important issue.

On the internet, the Long Draw Spinners group on Ravelry is a great success and our thanks are due to Janet who set it up and moderates the logo-bearing group. Ravelry is doing what we envisaged the Guild website would do. But it didn't. It is easy to see this as a failure, but I think this is taking the wrong viewpoint. Why? Because through Ravelry long draw spinning is being promoted in a way that we could not possibly sustain ourselves (let alone set up) from our own resources. Now is perhaps a good time for us to re-assess our aims and objectives for the Longdrawspinners.org site. Thank you to all who have invested so much time and money to get us where we are now. I think it is time to think on about this, share our thoughts and who knows? We may surprise ourselves! Our mission to encourage and inspire long draw spinning is happening all day everyday - that is success, no doubt about it.

Off the internet, our efforts at press publicity have been successful. We had a visit from a journalist on the upmarket Leicestershire and Rutland Life magazine in October and a lovely two page article appeared in the November issue. This coincided with our Celebration of Spinning Day which attracted our biggest turn out ever; many members and visitors travelled huge distances to be there; it was put on entirely by members which is evidence of the range and quality of their skills. Within the membership, it is particularly pleasing to see innovative new projects such as Heather's, The Nude Ewe taking off, and more spinning wheel research taking place. Attendance at our monthly inspiration days is gradually increasing and these are lovely occasions where we regularly solve problems, and help newcomers to get going with their spinning. The quality of work which members put on the Talking Table is amazing; shawls made in the round, curtains, baby rugs which squeak, cushions which you just have to feel. Loan of Sheila's drum carder is in great demand, and fleece, magazines, books and equipment regularly change hands. Our shared lunches also go down very well too. In July we will be making our first visit to another Guild - in Derby - to demonstrate and teach. If all goes well we will hopefully do more of this in the future.

On a personal level, we are undoubtedly achieving our aim to encourage, inspire and support long draw spinning. But I have discovered for myself this year that the guild offers other, less tangible benefits. One is the mutual support from like minded people. But perhaps more important than anything is the affirmation of our work from members whose skills and talents far exceed our own; this is a unique pay-off which we all enjoy and never envisaged when we started out.

As an organisation it seems to me that the guild is developing a life of its own - a sort of organic growth that is not dependent on the input of any one person, but the outcome of a meeting of minds. Watching something grow - whether it is an organisation or a garden - is very pleasing and I think that is where we are now. Growing. However, we must not sit back and be complacent. The initial strategy is beginning to pay off, and perhaps now it is time to revisit our aims and objectives to make sure we all agree where we want to go from here. Because 'go from here' we certainly will - whether we like it or not. Organisations don't stand still. I would like to make sure we go in the direction we want, not get out of control like my garden. So, could I ask you all to think about 'What would I like?' don't discard an idea because it seems impossible. Dream the dream and share it. We've got the Guild off to a great start, now we can start getting creative about its future.

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