

Albury Wodonga HandWeavers & Spinners Guild Inc.



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As the year gallops to a close ...

In September, the end of the year seemed so far away, but how time flies when you're busy! And it has been a busy two months!

With the growing number of new members, and older members returning, our Wednesday Workshops and events have been very well attended.



The Yerong Creek weekend in early September was a huge success as usual, despite the rain and threat of flooding. Some even lamented that the roads did not get blocked so they could have stayed a bit longer.

For our September 28th Wednesday workshop we had the pleasure of meeting Joan Asmussen, brilliant basket maker. She displayed some of her beautiful baskets, in many different styles, materials and techniques. She explained her method using gourds and other organic material to produce a wide variety of baskets. We also learnt to make string from bullrushes - good fun.



Thank you so much Joan!

In other news, we are in discussions with Albury Wodonga Community College regarding teaching a short course in basic weaving, and the Albury

Library are very keen for us to hold regular evening meetings at the Library on Thursdays. For more details on these activities contact Sue or Kylie.

Committee 2016-2017

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Public Officer:

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02 6026 3835

Publicity Officer:

Sue Braun
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Library & Equipment Officer:

Rhonda Doig
02 6026 3330

Hostess Duties

9th Nov. Rachael/Kylie

14th Dec. Christmas Party



The AWHWS goes alpaca shearing ...

With the closure of the Guild Rooms for the duration of the Albury Show, we took the opportunity to attend an alpaca shearing morning with Joe and Julie Hofer at their Jindera property. The plan for the day was to have a few animals shorn, both huacaya and suri, with comments from Julie on their fleece styles and quality, and demonstrations on the proper skirting of the fleeces. The animals ranged from older animals with poor quality fleece no longer suitable for next to skin garments, to show quality fleeces with wonderful crimp.

While during the shearing process the animals were stretched out as if on a torture rack, they were so pleased to be rid of their heavy winter fleeces most had to be pushed out of the shed once released! We were also kept amused by the antics of the chickens which kept trying to nest in the seconds fleece bins, and the clucky hens vying over occupation of a plastic crate on the floor.



For the benefit of members who were unable to attend the shearing, only the good fleece goes for further processing or showing (mainly the saddle area and sometimes necks) with lesser quality fleece, “seconds”, (necks, belly, legs and older animals fleeces) going for other purposes – carpets, rugs, felting, insulation, mulch etc. As animals age their fleece naturally “blows out” - that is it grows out thicker (higher micron) and often develop more guard hairs (the prickly factor). “Baby” fleeces are usually the finest, which is why you will often see “baby alpaca” fleece offered as the finest and softest product. How quickly an animal loses its commercial fleece value varies, with some retaining low micron counts for many years, and others blowing out very quickly. Genetics, overall health and nutrition all play a part.

The importance of shearing

There has been a lot of mis-information deliberately spread by certain groups over the years and sometimes sensationalised by the media regarding shearing of animals. Mostly it has centred on sheep, probably as they are the more familiar wool producing animals, especially amongst city dwellers who've likely never set foot on a farm. Then occasionally along will come a rogue sheep that has evaded the shears for years, barely able to move for the weight of its fleece (“Chris” the sheep had 40.45kg of fleece!) and so desperately in need of shearing that it should be obvious to everyone.



English Leicester sheep two weeks after shearing.

Our fibre animals have been domesticated by humans for thousands of years. Bred specifically to produce finer, denser, different coloured or longer fleeces, many are just as dependent on human care as humans are. Heavily fleeced sheep and alpacas can easily suffer heat stress in summer, and that can be fatal. Excessive fleece on sheep during summer pre-disposes them to fly-strike. Newborn alpaca cria can have difficulties finding the milk bar (teats) from a heavily fleeced mother. The list of potential issues goes on and on.

Is it in the best interests of the health of the animal as well as fleece processors and fleece/wool/fibre users to regularly shear our fleeced animals.

In the process of shearing it is true that occasionally animals get nicked or cut, especially if they wriggle at the wrong time, have an unexpected fold or lump under the skin, or badly matted fleece to the skin. Most incidents are no worse than a shaving nick and bigger cuts can be glued (yes superglue as a field dressing is not just a Vietnam War myth). Shearers and owners should always have medicated sprays or similar on hand to treat any injury.

Shearing is also a good time to check animals for any health issues that may have hidden under the fleece. Grass seeds for instance that have burrowed into the skin forming hard pus-filled lumps that need to be lanced and cleaned. Overgrown or split toe nails, foot problems, or teeth that need trimming.

As alpaca and sheep owners ourselves we take the opportunity shearing provides - a captive patient - to make sure all the necessary immunisations and vitamin shots are up to date as well.

Shearing and herd health go hand in hand.

So whenever you see a freshly shorn sheep or alpaca in a field, with or without coloured antiseptic stains on it, know that it has owners that care enough to get it shorn, treat any issues it may have, and give it the best start for another healthy year of wonderful fluff production for the spinners and weavers of the world.

Show and Tell - 14 September 2016

Rachel - has dyed the Charmac wool recently purchased from the Charmac Merino stud at Table Top. She used multicolours to produce a very soft pink/beige colour. Also showed her completed "Scarf Exchange" scarf.

Kathy - has purchased a "Dealgan" drop spindle (pronounced "d'jellygan", or fairsaid. It's Gaelic) – a different type of spindle to the usual ones used.

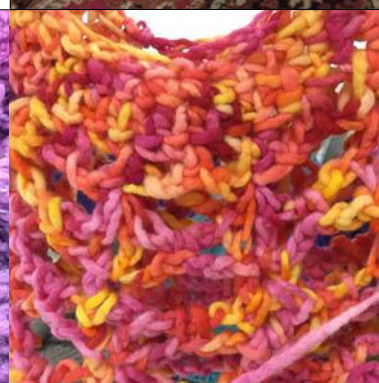
Julie - produced the skeins of alpaca she dyed at Yerong using black and green natural dyes. She has also finished the black scarf made on her pin loom.

Rhonda - has finished her latest alpaca scarf – natural with red that was dyed using natural dye colours moss, rust, pink and green.

Sue - showed a photo of the completed tartan dog coat she has been weaving.

Debbie - showed two tiny knitted dolls she purchased in Holbrook. All proceeds go to the Cancer Council Albury. Debbie also showed a cardigan she is knitting for her granddaughter together with a crocheted rug she is making.

Kylie - was extremely busy at the Yerong Creek weekend and showed the spiral yarn she had spun and dyed, together with the felted yarn she reknitted into a top, her "scarf exchange" scarf and some very interesting samples of different fabrics which had been dyed using the "bundle dying" process, ie organic plant material and rusty nails placed between layers of material and put in boiling water and left for 24 hours. She also showed photos of cold water dyeing –using ice and powder dyes.



Show and Tell - 12 October 2016

Ann - Dyed scarf using food colouring

Pam - Navajo ply on electric spinning wheel. Knitted cap using roving. Photos from the 45th anniversary celebrations in 2015. "Beanie Fest" book celebrating 20 years in Alice Springs

Kathy - knitting a beanie using alpaca, mohair and merino

Amanda - displayed the alpaca from Rachael's animal that had been spun at Boston Fine Fibres, Queanbeyan.

Pinky - bought in a rigid heddle loom she has made using old shelving, curtain rods and paddles sticks.



Show and Tell - 12 October 2016 cont.

Julie - combing fleece from her alpacas.

Rachael - she has fleece available if people want to contact her.

Heather - has recently been on holiday to Mittagong and bought in brochures on the Sturt Summer School 2017 together with a text in textiles book mark.



Next Issue ...

We have a sneak peak of two stories slated for our last Newsletter before the Christmas break.

Kylie made a "spinning thing" (left) and the kids at the Albury Show were fascinated. We hope to have pics and instructions for a little Christmas fun.

The story behind this beautiful soy silk shawl (right).



Suppliers List

Karoa Fibres – Corowa Email: karoa@ipstarmail.com.au
Phone: 02 6035 1727 Mob: 0427 302 209 / 0427 334 611

Fairfield Finns - 1275 Bacchus Marsh Road, Bullengarook, Vic, 3437
Ph: 0345 289 428 Mob: 0407 884 446

Bendigo Woollen Mills - 4 Lansell St. Bendigo 3550
Ph: 03 54424600

Tarndwarncourt Polwarth Wool (Wendy and David Dennis) - 41 Roseneath Rd. Warncoort, Vic, 3243
Ph: 03 5233 6241

First Edition Fibres and Yarns - 16-18 Charles St. Euroa. / PO Box 201 Euroa Vic. 3666
Ph: 03 57 95 3578

10-4 Gallery Glenrowan.
<https://www.facebook.com/tentofourgallery>

Kajiko Fibre Works (carding etc)
www.kajiko.com.au

2016 Workshops, Work Days, Meetings and Events:

November 9 th	Meeting (kitchen duty Rachael/Kylie)
November 23 rd	Casual Workday
November 30 th	Workshop - TBA
December 7 th	Casual Workday
December 14 th	Last meeting for the year, followed by a shared Christmas Lunch
February 1 st 2017	Return, Casual Workday

