

National Guild Day and AGM 2013
By Sue Potter
(from her article in the August 2013 Newsletter)

The Guild AGM day at Trowell Parish Hall started with a warm welcome at the registration desk.

Mapperley Knit and Natter Club supplied refreshments and had been very busy baking. There were many scrumptious cakes on offer all day as well as biscuits, plenty of tea and coffee. They also had a display of club members knitting in the café area. Such a talented group from the items displayed; they were very good and beautifully finished.

The competition displays were well presented on dressmaking models mostly so you could walk right around each garment display and see how it had been intended to look while being worn. A few others and non wearables were arranged on tables but draped or pinned to show the best points of the designs. There was a voting box for members' choice prize.

Machines had been set up and were being used to demonstrate and give help with specific techniques. Sue demonstrated necks and edges and showed how to enclose raw edges around necks that had been cut. The necks included lace scallops, and all kinds of variations and some with running stitching for extra patterns. She gave away 3 handouts of her samples to try at home. Erica demonstrated picking up loops on back of Fair Isle knitted with punch cards to make hand tooled patterns. Knitted in black and white some were quite 3D textures.

Hazel demonstrated a whole array of Garter Bar techniques that opened up a new world of hand tooled patterns, garter rows and weaving. Beryl demonstrated her necks and shoulder DVD and brought along other DVDs and knitting techniques sheets. Erica had a stand with her jewellery and knitting with wire. The helix earrings and bracelets were particularly popular and stunning.

Nick was in attendance from Uppingham Yarns and had brought along a good mix of natural and acrylic fibres. Quite a few bags of yarn were whisked off to car boots.

There was a map for attendees to pin where they had come from and showed how far and wide people had travelled. In the 'Have a go Area' were: Dorset buttons; Braiding; Yorkshire buttons; Mattress stitch; Back stitch; Grafting and Crochet/Crab stitch. The main hall was arranged with lots of tables and chairs for Knit and Natter and for the 'have a go' items. There was plenty of seating to rest, try a new craft technique, meet people and chat and solve some problems at the knitters clinic.

On the stage area of the hall there was a large display of all of the Guild newsletter pattern garments. There were so many displays; there was a board about the Circle of Five; another one about the Guild committee and Regional Officers with photos and pointing out vacancies. There were a number of other display boards showing photos of previous AGMs

with past competition entries and winners. Another board and table beckoned and were about knitting a heart bag.

Then it was time for the AGM. Liz, the Chairman, talked about the sad start to the year but how people had rallied round and kept things going. Soon it was into the core business of the day, finances, the proposals for longer subscriptions and people changes on the committee.

Then the time came for the 2013 Challenge results and presentations. It was quite shocking to realise there had only 20 people had entered. Erica talked about the judging, how well everyone had done, how difficult judging is and some finishing had let a few down. The cups and awards were gleaming and sparkling and there were new ones this year as some had been polished beyond repair. Piles of goody bags were stacked nearby to thank the winners for their well-deserved effort as they were presented with cup and certificates. It was such an inspiring presentation. It should have inspired more entries for next year, please let's support it. There were lots of happy flushed faces getting their prizes and photos being taken.

All too soon it was lunch. Some ventured off to the car park for sunshine, fresh air and stretching the legs. There was a Regional Officers meeting with discussion about who was organising what and could more be done to organise events and a sharing of ideas. Then the room hushed for the speaker.

AGM Speaker Alison Casserly

Alison talked about her life of knitting, inspiration, designing experience and about her latest business venture Natur-ally Yarns based near Humber Bridge at the Old William Blyth Tileyard. She plans to run workshops and promote the crafts of machine, hand knitting and crochet. As a mature student she gained a BA (Hons) in Fashion Knitwear & Knitted Textiles.

Alison talked about her inspiration and earliest memories of her grandma and mother who had a knitting machine and made school jumpers. She went on to tell us that she had worked in the craft section of an occupational therapy department and then went to Epsom Art College and studied for a diploma in fashion with machine knitting, millinery textiles, and pattern cutting. Alison provided a slide show of her college work, garment designs and end of term fashion shows.

A lot of the garments were shown as the presentation progressed through her college and job history. At one point Alison worked in a knitwear factory in the mending department where she picked up a lot of finishing techniques and mending. After she moved to Lincolnshire she started using punchcard machines and then eventually got an electronic and experimented on Fair Isle and coloured designs.

Another move this time to Scunthorpe where she joined a club and started designing and submitting garment designs for Machine Knitting News. Involvement with Ann Lavene influenced the Lincoln Swirl design - a beautiful jacket with short rows shaping. Alison also visited Moldova and helped in a school classroom for one week showing basic techniques

and helped children use the knitting machine. She told of the aim of the school and local village to obtaining knitting machines to earn their living.

In 2007-11 Alison attended Nottingham & Trent University and it was there she started using industrial machines like Dubied. She showed a mood board inspired by historical costumes and the everyday lives of people at the time. Her samples were held up and displayed as she talked through the presentation. A colour project had been combined with learning domestic machines and used crochet techniques in skirt and sock designs. Research into Dutch design like Delft and Van Gogh had given ideas for Per Una designs.

Alison gained a work placement with Di Gilpin in Fife sampling new yarns for various designs and hosted a knit club and workshops using JC Rennie and Adfrialfil yarns. For end of year finals Alison researched historic sea stitching designs and natural dyeing and became involved with Ganseymfest in Inverness. She has had a long and eventful journey that finally brought her to create Natur-ally Yarns in Humber.

Val thanked Alison for such an interesting insight into her machine knitting adventure and after a short break there was the Fashion Show. Garments were paraded around the room whilst Lidia introduced and provided the details.

Time to go home and Liz thanked Mapperly Club amongst others. It had been an extremely busy and very long day and very happy one.