

National Guild Day and AGM - Saturday 21 June 2014

By Joan Adams

(From her article in the August 2014 Newsletter)

What a super day! It was obvious that the Guild Directors, Committee and Regional Officers had all worked extremely hard to ensure that we had a well organised and varied day and that everything ran smoothly.

The Knit and Natter plus Knitting Clinic was very useful. There were opportunities to make buttons including Dorset, Yorkshire and Chinese Ball Buttons. You could try your hand at mattress stitching (a very professional finish can be achieved by this method); back stitching and grafting were also demonstrated.

To decorate your work you could partake in the Swiss darning workshop, how to use cords to a very good effect and also learn how to do Crab Stitch (crochet) to edge a garment.

Time was available to catch up with 'old' friends and also make new ones. Pick the brains of Beryl, Hazel and Ann on their specialities. Lots to do and time passed so quickly.

I must mention the refreshments. What a fantastic selection of cakes on sale! The diet went out of the window, yet again. The ladies in the kitchen worked extremely hard to provide tea, coffee, biscuits and cakes all day long. The proceeds of the catering facility were to be donated to a local charity.

The focus of the day was the AGM and this was efficiently chaired by Liz Holness. Directors and Committee members were voted into the various positions of authority, and this didn't take up too much time.

Prizes were handed out for the Challenge Entries and photos taken, some of which will be published in the Guild Newsletter.

Uppingham Yarns were on hand to ensure that we all built up our "stash" of knitting yarns. I don't think knitters can resist buying yarn, and I am sure we all crept home with yarn that we 'must have' and a definite project in mind.

The speaker, Melissa Warren, was an inspiration.

All in all a fantastic day; if you didn't make it this year, try to do so next year, as you will be in for a treat.

2014 National Guild Day Speaker - Melissa Warren "Knitting outside the box"

By Patricia Scott

(From her article in the August 2014 Newsletter)

"Practical, useful and design led" are Melissa Warren's guiding principles in her extensive and creative output over the last 40 years of "Knitting outside the box". Melissa's presentation at the Guild's AGM on June 21st revealed her reliance on stitch simplicity achieved on her Jones 585 and beloved 1932 Dubied machines. The outcomes however appear far from simple incorporating

plating often with viscose and wool giving plain knitting drape and form as well as producing garments and accessories which are reversible and functional.

Self-taught in the 1970s, Melissa was influenced by Mary Weaver. 40 years later Melissa's signature style is now identifiable by her use of piece dyeing which results in each item being different as colours merge and emerge in magical transformations. These effects are heightened by and reflect the Japanese influence in Melissa's use of shadow pleating and short row shaping.

Melissa has what to some may be a scary method for shaping. Avoiding commercial patterns she has developed her own "systems". For example, in a garment front requiring simultaneous neck and side shaping, she has challenging mental images she wishes to achieve and woe betide anyone who interrupts her whilst work is in progress.

"Recycle, re-use and upgrade" is another of Melissa's maxims, though her recent yarn wrapping seascapes and creative indoor and outdoor sculptures are fresh and innovative.

Melissa's current experimentation includes creating 2 piece garments for people who have difficulty dressing themselves. These items and the weekly craft sessions, workshops, taster courses and school led tuition illustrate Melissa's desire to achieve the "variety of life" she enjoys so much.

In her next life Melissa wants to experiment with "pattern" – hope you are lucky enough to be there too!