



DORSET GUILD OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS AND DYERS
Established 1947
Registered Charity Number 1200685

Core Skills

Following an increased interest in felting by members it was decided in 2023 that it should become a core skill in addition to weaving, spinning and dyeing. Although the National Association of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers promote felting at Summer School and similar events, it is not currently recognised as a skill admissible for items submitted for the National Exhibition. The decision by the Dorset Guild now gives equal status to felting alongside weaving, spinning and dyeing and allows felted items to be entered into such competitions as the Harold Woodrow Trophy and the Rendell Trophy. It is proposed that 'felting' will be added to section 3 (1) Objects of our Constitution, but there are no plans to change the name of the Guild.

With clarification of the Guild's competitions, it was felt necessary to also clarify which aspects of weaving were considered to be appropriate. Whilst the simplest definition of weaving is 'the intertwining of fibres', this includes crafts such as lacemaking, macrame, basketry and even hurdle making which, although they all intertwine or weave fibres, should be considered outside our core skills unless the weaving material such as the threads for lacemaking have been hand spun by the member. In the early days of the Guild woven items were expected to have warp yarn that was hand spun such as wet spun flax, fortunately this is no longer a requirement and it is understood that commercial yarns are predominantly used for weaving, although good hand spun yarn will always be given additional consideration.

Under the heading of weaving all types of heddle weaving are included together with inkle weaving, tablet weaving, tapestry weaving, woven braids and Kumihimo.

Under dyeing, the use of both chemical and natural dyes is admissible.

For felting, both wet felting and needle felting are included.

For spinning the use of drop spindles and wheels, including electric spinners, are all acceptable but in all instances it is essential that the competition details are adhered to especially where the source of the raw material is concerned (the Fortescue Award).

Knitting and crochet are not themselves included in our core skills, but items that are produced from yarn that has been hand spun by the member are admissible for competitions such as the Harold Woodrow Trophy, Rendell Trophy and the Brenda Deakin Memorial Trophy.

Tim Parker
2024