

## February 2025 Meeting

Another Saturday morning and another full house – over 70 members (including several new ones) arrived at Sunninghill to take advantage of the free wheel clinic, watch a gorgeous film, and to meet with fellow textile enthusiasts.



Some wheels needed two experts!



David Herring & Josh were kept busy all morning checking over wheels, carrying out repairs and giving lots of advice. David estimated that they tended to more than 25 wheels, with several needing significant tlc. Many thanks to the Herrings team for their continuing support of our Guild. Members are reminded that they qualify for a 10% discount on purchases from Frank Herring & Sons in Dorchester on production of their membership card.



And the queue is starting to grow...



Josh giving a wheel the once-over

Clare Hadley was the deserving winner of the Brenda Deakin Memorial Trophy for her fabulous hand spun, hand dyed & hand knitted jacket. The competition was judged by DGWSD President, Kath Sanderson, who awarded the runner-up prize to Debs Sheridan for her hand spun, hand knitted, very impressive striped cardigan. Debs' cardigan featured steeking & faux raglans – which sent several of us off to Youtube & Google. Kath also gave a special commendation for Jane Wright's smartly dressed teddy bear, again demonstrating the high level of spinning & knitting skills at our Guild.



For the afternoon session there was a private screening of The Nettle Dress. A feature documentary by Dylan Howitt, it charts the 7 year journey taken by textile artist Allan Brown to collect, process, spin, weave, & finally sew, a Viking style dress made entirely from nettles growing in Lime Kiln Wood near Brighton.

The scale of the project was mind boggling – every nettle stem had to be cut, stripped, split & cored, by hand, in order to produce a few wisps of fibre. Enough thread had to be spun to weave 25' of cloth – the warp took 5 years' worth of spun thread alone – the woven cloth had to be boiled, then pounded by hand, before being cut and hand sewn into the finished garment.

The whole film had a meditative feel to it, calm, thoughtful, and above all, beautiful. Even more so as the story emerged of the death of Allan's wife from cancer during this period, leaving him to care for their 5 children, coping with their grief & his.

His solo hikes through the wood, to collect & prepare nettles, were clearly a time for his own reflections on life & loss, as well as a time to heal. We can all appreciate the meditative process of spinning & weaving, but this lovely film showed how it can also demonstrate the power of love – love for the people around you, but also love of the natural world and what it can offer.