

Textile Craftsman
Andrew Johnson's Visit
12 September - 2 October 2007



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Guild of Spinners, Weavers & Handicrafts

The Guild of Spinners, Weavers & Handicrafts was very pleased to receive Shackleton funding to organise Andrew Johnson's visit to the Falkland Islands. Andrew has wide-ranging skills in textiles and experience as a workshop instructor. He was keen to come to help broaden especially spinning & weaving skills and to contribute to craft development generally in the Islands.



*Andrew Johnson giving advice
on finishing Tapestry
(photo: M Smallwood)*

The programme we arranged for Andrew tried to tap into as many of his skills as possible and to share them as widely as possible:

- helping judge at the annual Craft Fair.
- giving workshops at both schools: in resist dye techniques with Y6 in the I-J School & with Y9 at FICS, and workshops in tapestry techniques with Y7 at FICS (arrangements were also made where possible for Camp teachers & some students to attend Camp workshops)
- leading 7 workshops in town - open to the general public both through word-of-mouth and prior publicity in the *PENGUIN NEWS* - on Colour Theory, Tapestry Techniques, Introduction to 4-Harness Weaving, Spinning 'Clinic', Weaving Narrow Bands, Batik & Resist Dye Techniques, and Knitting with Unique Yarns & Designing Knitwear.
- taking workshops in spinning & weaving to Camp, and supporting developing Craft Centres there: Andrew gave workshops or tutoring in both spinning & weaving over two days at Darwin House on East Falkland, and later at The Rookery, Dunnose Head, West Falkland, and finally,
- tutoring individuals in bobbin lace, weaving, & weaving with cotton.

To centralise the workshops in town, the Guild arranged to use the north half of the Old Globe Warehouse as a temporary Textile Arts Studio. We set it up as a crafts centre for individual work & demonstrations, tutoring, & the workshops with all the materials, tools & equipment required. The 'Studio' worked well as a workshop venue, as well as a useful trial of a craft centre as a work space & as a gathering place for crafts people. It was an excellent location for the display of work held on the last full day of Andrew's visit.



*Introduction to 4-Harness Weaving
(photo: M Smallwood)*

The number of places offered at the workshops in town varied so that on each course participants would get some individual attention; most were fully subscribed. The largest course was Colour Theory with 18 and the



*Skill sharing at 'Knitting with Unique Yarns'
Temporary Textile Arts Studio, Stanley (photo: M Smallwood)*

The programme set up for Andrew's visit turned out to be much busier than it had looked on paper. He had hardly any time for working with local materials or suggestions for craft development, and the time available for most workshops was so limited that there was usually only time for a few techniques. Some participants even had occasion to wonder if they had somehow come into the workshop halfway through as Andrew leapt into the techniques he wanted to cover with groups encompassing every level from complete novice to the competent. In spite of the challenges, Andrew worked very hard and consistently throughout his visit.



*Open House & Display of Work
(photo: M Smallwood)*

Our thanks again for the grant from the Shackleton Fund that made Andrew's visit possible. We look forward to applying again sometime in the future! Thanks are also due to: Fortuna Ltd. for the use of the Old Globe Warehouse, Christchurch Cathedral Parish Hall for the use of folding tables, FICS for the use of the Science Rooms for the resist dyeing workshop (& space for a fermenting indigo dye vat), and finally the many members of the Guild of Spinners & Weavers for organisational & moral support.

smallest was Introduction to 4-Harness Weaving with 8. Participants were drawn from both Guild members & non-members, and from Islanders, long & shorter-term residents, and a few from the military base at MPA. Special mention needs to be made of Camp participation: there were 8 for spinning at Darwin and an amazing 14 for 'funky' weaving using simple frames & off-loom techniques at Dunnose Head (following 8 for spinning the day before - with participants travelling up to 7 hours a day round trip).

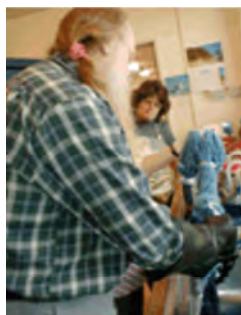


*Spinning Clinic at Darwin House, Darwin
(photo: R. Anderson)*

Feedback on Andrew's visit has been very good. Everyone who took part enjoyed doing so; they have reported that they all learned something from each workshop they attended. Most especially, however, participants highlighted how much they appreciated getting together to learn, work on crafts and 'network' across everyday barriers of physical distance, for those in Camp, or of the distance of working in a different office or part of town. Looking to the future, participants also said confidence building is very important; not only was it part of what they got out of getting together, more confidence would help us run more of our own workshops.



*Chatting over 'funky weaving'
at The Rookery, Dunnose Head
(photo: R Wilkinson)*



*Indigo Vat Dyeing - Resist Dye Workshop at FICS
(photo: M Smallwood)*