



Weaver Incorporation of Dundee Tartan
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The DUNDEE WEAVER

The newsletter of the Weaver Incorporation of Dundee

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Meet your New team:-

Following the issues around the COVID outbreak the new Deacon and Boxmaster were inducted into their Roles at the AGM held on 8th October 2021.

After having to take on an extra year due to COVID Deacon John Fyffe handed over the 'Chain of Office' to his Boxmaster Paul Leigh as he completed the Weavers AGM Meeting. Both new Deacon Paul Leigh (pic on right) and Boxmaster Richard Irvine (pic on left) were giving a round of thanks for those Members attending the AGM.



Weavers Deacon Chain of Office

Personal Message from Deacon Paul Leigh:-

I am delighted to have been appointed Deacon of the Weavers. I consider it an honour to be entrusted with the responsibility of helping to steer such an historic organisation over the next two years.

The first thing I want to do is to thank Late Deacon John Fyffe for the contribution he has made over the past three years.

The work John has done during his term of office has been remarkable, not least is the setting up of the Dundee Tapestry Project. The progress John and his team have made has been considerable, particularly given the exceptionally difficult circumstances of recent months; however, the work is far from finished and I will work hard as Deacon to support John and his team in terms of taking this worthwhile legacy project to a point where it is presented to the public in 2023.

To help maintain continuity during the darkest days of the pandemic/lockdown, John agreed to serve an additional 12 months as Deacon, and I thank him for that. I would also like to thank the Deacons Committee who, under John's leadership, have maintained an admirable level of activity during the past 18 months, despite the challenges presented by Covid.

In closing, I want to thank Richard Irvine for agreeing to be my Boxmaster and to summarise what I see as the priorities for the times ahead: in addition to supporting John as described above, Richard and I, with the able assistance of the Deacons Committee, want to pick up the threads from the times before the pandemic i.e., to get back to fundraising and the dispersing of funds to worthwhile causes, having an active social calendar, resuming the work of the Intergenerational Project, and developing our relationships with the other Trades. I look forward to your support.



Introducing your New Deacon:- PAUL LEIGH

Born in London in 1964 and moved to Scotland in the early 1970's, initially to Perth then into Fife.

He attended Buckhaven High School, then studied History at Edinburgh University (1982-1986) followed by a one year postgraduate diploma in HR Management at Napier University (1988-1989).

His working life started in GEC Ferranti in the HR Department of the Edinburgh Head Office (1989-1992), moving to the Royal Bank of Scotland in the HR Department at the Edinburgh Head Office (1992-1997).

In 1997 Paul took up the position of HR Manager with Don & Low Limited in Forfar where he remains to this day having taken on additional responsibilities in 2013 as HR Manager, Europe for the Thrace Group of which Don & Low is a wholly owned subsidiary.

Paul is married to Jenni who works as a Primary School Teacher and they have three sons Patrick, Rory and Hamish. His interests involve watching most sports in particular rugby and football.

He takes part in cycling (slowly) and golf (badly!!) and is a member at Scotsraig Golf Club

Paul became a member of the Weaver Craft in 2014 becoming a member of the Deacon's Committee in 2016 and in September 2018 I was delighted to take up the role of Boxmaster to support the then newly appointed Deacon John Fyffe.

Having been Boxmaster for three years due to the Covid outbreak he is now keen to carry out his tenure as Deacon of the Weaver Craft, maintaining the history and good works within the community and beyond.



Introducing your new Boxmaster, Dr RICHARD IRVINE

Firstly, Richard says that it is an honour to be the new Boxmaster of the Weaver Incorporation of Dundee. Our organisation despite being over 500 years old, is not a relic of the past, but one which has a real and vibrant role to play in today's Dundee, and one which will continue to develop and evolve for future generations too. He is looking forward to making his small contribution to that great legacy.

Richard is currently a part-time lecturer with Fife College teaching the HNC Sustainable Resources Management programme. This course has students from across Scotland and England who work in the waste, recycling and sustainability sectors in both local authority and commercial settings, many with little previous academic experience.

Prior to this he taught on the former HNC Wastes Management at the College, as well as teaching biology and chemistry at Dundee and Angus College and had a long association with Abertay University teaching a wide range of science subjects over the years. Richard has also worked as a private environmental consultant and is a chartered biologist.

The above situation resulted from his initial academic studies at Abertay University, firstly completing a HND Biological Sciences and then an honours degree in Biotechnology and finally a PhD in compost science.

At Abertay he was involved in a range of environmental research activities, culminating in his appointment as Biowaste Scientist with the Abertay Centre for the Environment, a highly successful EU funded project with helped dozens of SMEs across the east of Scotland.

Many of you will know Richard from his activities at the Verdant Works Museum, where he volunteers as a costumed guide in the guise of Mr Forrester the Edwardian Works Manager, welcoming members of the public and school groups alike. Behind the scenes he contributes to the Facebook feed, especially historical themed posts and videos. The lockdown gave him time to undertake some intensive research into the Verdant Works and its characters – watch this space!

Richard's other great passion is radio broadcasting. He presents two weekly shows on Radio North Angus, the *Vintage Wednesday Breakfast Programme* and *The 602 Jazz Club* from their studios in Arbroath, locally on FM, regionally on DAB and globally online. This has allowed him to network with the vintage and jazz communities in Europe especially Bratislava, as well as the US and of course the UK. Talking of Bratislava, did you know it once had a jute (and flax) industry, complete with machinery made by Douglas Fraser & Co. of Arbroath?

When Richard joined the Weavers in 2016, he remembers saying he had no family connection with the textile trade. However, since then, Richard has discovered that on his father's side of the family, he is descended from linen and woollen weavers and spinners and calico workers!

Richard has served on the Deacon's Committee since 2018 and looks forward to working with the new Deacon, Paul Leigh and hope that everyone can contribute to the continued success of the Weaver Incorporation and to the friendship we enjoy.



Weaver Incorporation Online Lecture No.1:-

Wednesday March 17th 2021

Subject:- Discovering the world of Mr David Jeffrey, Manager of Verdant Works 1858 - 1884

Presenter:- Weaver Craftsman Dr Richard Irvine



Dr Richard Irvine as Mr Forrester,
Volunteer Tour Guide and fictional
Manager of Verdant Works.

Due to the Covid Pandemic the Deacon's Committee agreed to arrange a series of Talks to reach out to Weaver Craft Members and Guests to keep them socially involved, this is the first of these Talks.

The session was introduced by Deacon John Fyffe to the 19 attending.

David Jeffrey was the longest serving mill manager of the Verdant Mill. He was born 1815 in Longforgan and in the 1841 census he is noted as a "mechanic", in that same year he married his first wife, Janet Robertson of Errol. Between them they had five children, sadly only one reached adulthood. Prior to the 1870's Dundee had an inadequate fresh water supply and a nearly non-existent sewage system.

David and his family lived at this time in the Scouringburn which was nicknamed the "valley of death" and is likely the cause of the huge level of mortality in the household.

Despite these difficulties, Mr Jeffrey rose to become firstly manager of the Lower Pleasance Mill (Queen Victoria Works) and in 1858, manager of the Verdant Mill which was owned by John Ewan.

Janet died in 1861, but as was common in the era he remarried. His second wife was Mary Doig from Dundee. They had four children, and this time only one died young.

During the time of Mr Jeffrey's management, the Verdant Mill expanded and many of buildings we see today date from this time. In 1863 a powerloom weaving factory was opened in Miln Street directly opposite the original 1833 High Mill building.

To mark the occasion a great party was held for all the workers and staff - this was the beginning of annual soirees which were chaired by Mr Jeffrey. The image of the dark satanic mill and the evil Scrooge-like owner is perhaps misplaced. Sadly, to date no photographs of either the Victorian Verdant Works or Mr Jeffrey and his workers have come to light. The employment of children was noted, as was the occurrence of accidents, including that of Bernard Donally (10-ish) who lost two fingers.

Mr Jeffrey bought a house in Kilburn Place, Newport in 1880 where he retired in 1884 after 26 years of service. Sadly, he died in 1888 aged 73, and is buried in the Western Cemetery, Dundee.

The nett value of his estate was £1357.2.6 - a considerable sum, suggesting a prudent man who had some success in his life. Interestingly, the Verdant Works closes as a jute mill in November 1885 - it was the end of a golden era.



Weaver Incorporation Online Lecture No.2:-

Wednesday April 14th 2021

Subject:- Behind the scenes at the Museum; Textile Treasures at the Highland Folk Museum, Badenoch

Presenter:- Maureen Shaw



Maureen Shaw with her Gaelic name

Continuing the series of Talks to reach out to Weaver Craft Members and Guests to keep them socially involved, this is the second of these Talks.

The session was introduced by Deacon John Fyffe to the 23 attending.

Maureen began introducing the attendees to the origins of the Highland Folk Museum (see separate information below).

Maureen gave an online tour of some of the textile pieces at the Highland Folk Museum many of which are to be seen '*by appointment only*'. These pieces have been the primary source of her PHD, which looks at textiles in the central highlands in the 18th century. Maureen says it has been a privilege to see up close such unique and rare hand-woven textiles and I looked forward to sharing the experience with attendees.

Three original thatched cottages were purchased to get the museum underway and work equipment that was going out of fashion but was important in understanding how the land was worked at that time to make a living included were various types of peat cutting tools, farming tools etc. Lots of furniture has been gathered over the years and are held in storage, with the talk and main area of interest being the Textile Store which has some very interesting items. Some of the female clothing is very well preserved indeed whereas some of the male clothing was retrieved from peat bogs!! more so following Culloden when tartan had to be hidden. In storage are photographs from all over Scotland (5000 approx.) which include for example St Kilda where St Kilda Tweed was produced as part of their economy.

14 feet of fabric used by the women where the main colours were Red and Blue on a White background or Red and Green on a White normally seen as the 'Sunday Best' – this wrapped around their bodies and covered their heads as well when attending the Kirk hence the length. Silk was high status in tartan weaving and there is a 1930 Silk Brides Plaid donated by the wife of royal photographer (George V) Francis Caird Inglis.

Highlighted were the specialist weavers, dyers and tartan designers and noted that dyes were brought in from worldwide as well as using the local colours available in the islands.

Sheep were the principal animal for the materials with normally the fleece sheared from the animal but in the Fair Isle Maureen said that the sheep are 'plucked' giving the fleece a softer feel to the finished material.

Dresses available in the museum are shown below with the Lady Drummond dress (Drummond Castle in Perthshire) along with a dress which belonged to Queen Victoria which has some very exquisite design work.

In 1820 a very bright orange and green kilt known as the Wilson of Bannockburn tartan also known as the Kingussie Kilt which has a specific pleat design to save on fabric only 4 yards of material as opposed to the 8 yards issued in a normal kilt. From the year 1850 mens linen shirts with fancy collars which were the height of fashion at the time can also be viewed.

There is also a library of books that can be requested from the Curator with various information of tartans showing the Clan and those who purchased them.

Maureen also mention that the growing of the flax plants were possible in the scottish climate and the flax had been the staple crop in the highlands.

During the talk Maureen took some questions and was very informative in return, all in all it was an interesting talk and am sure quite a few of those attending will be taking a trip to Newtonmore the visit the site of the Highland Folk Museum.

Deacon John Fyffe thanked Maureen for her talk and told her she would be welcome to attend the next Weaver Dinner as a guest after which he asked the attendees to show their appreciation.



Lady Drummond Dress



Womens 14 feet long fabric



Queen Victoria Dress



Museum Township View



Weavers Cottage in Baile Gean Township



Information related the origins of the Highland Folk Museum

The Highland Folk Museum is unique in terms of its origin, its longevity and its cultural reach. Inspired by European folk museums Isabel F Grant (1887-1983) pictured left, founded the Highland Folk Museum in 1935 on the Island of Iona, so that *"the old setting of our daily life....be saved"*. She began collecting artefacts from the fast disappearing way of Highland life. By 1939 the collection had outgrown its Iona home and was moved for a period of five years to a disused church in Laggan, Inverness-shire. In the early 1980s the Highland Folk Museum, now owned by the Highland Council, acquired an eighty acre site in Newtonmore where an open air, living history site was established.

This site is divided into four main areas – Aultlarie Croft, a 1930s working farm, Balameanach (Middle Village) with a developing community of re-located buildings, the Pinewoods and 'Baile Gean' the Museum's unique reconstruction of an early 1700s Highland Township. On this mile-long site visitors can discover how Highland people lived, worked and dressed, how they produced food, cooked and what they ate from the 1700s up to 1950s.

Maureen Shaw is an Illustrator from Badenoch, Inverness-Shire, graduating BA Hons (Illustration) from Edinburgh College of Art in 1995, and MLitt (Highlands and Islands Culture) from the University of the Highlands and Islands. She is currently preparing her AHRC funded PhD for submission, *Economy, Innovation and Identity - Badenoch Textiles in the 18th Century*, which has been researched in partnership with the University of the Highlands & Islands and Highlife Highland. Her PhD has a special focus on linen, with three years of practical flax growing on site at the Highland Folk Museum forming part of her research.



Weaver Incorporation Online Lecture No.3:-

Wednesday May 12th 2021

Subject:- Abertay University and its Historical Relationship with Textile Training

Presenter:- Ruairaidh Wishart



Ruairaidh Wishart
Ruairaidh Wishart, Archivist at Abertay University, Dundee

Continuing the series of Talks to Weaver Craft Members and Guests to keep them socially involved, this is the third of these Talks.

The session was introduced by Deacon John Fyffe to the 23 attending.

As the Archivist at Abertay University Ruairaidh has for the past two years been establishing the archive service there whilst also leading on the Abertay 25 project, celebrating 25 years of the institution's status as a university through the stories in the archives of its wider history going back to 1888."

Abertay University's history with textiles training goes back to 1889 when its founding institution, the Dundee Technical Institute, started its first classes. These classes trained the majority of Dundee's textile factory managers and soon established a reputation for textiles training that gained international respect, especially in the area of jute manufacture. This talk will chart the highs and lows of the Textiles Department until it finally closed its doors in 1984. In 1888 a bequest by Baxter encouraged the beginnings of the Institute of Technology with technical and mechanics institution education to satisfy the needs of industrial Dundee and was not ready for use until November 1889 with machinery donated from local businesses to use in the training rooms. Thomas Ferguson was the main teacher for this new syllabus which was introduced in 1892 (see photo below) with a layout of the training school completed in 1907 split between Spinning and Weaving (see diagram below).

The Two World Wars had an effect on the training where in WW1 the women were encouraged to take on the technical training and management for the jute industry due to the absence of the men at the Front. The length of the training was reduced for the women as the men were expected to return from the war and resume their roles in the jute business. In WW2 there was an increase of overseas students taking on the training with Polish soldiers being involved between 1938 and 1945, in 1946 there is a photo (see below) what shows a 'League of Nations' giving the extent of different Nationalities attending the training school. There was concern that the more trained Asian people trained they would start up their own business in competition but no evidence of this was shown.

Prior to 1984 problems in Bangladesh prevented students attending Dundee and therefore the loss of revenue resulted in the closure of Dundee facility in 1984 with training transferred to Galashiels. The Staff if they desired could move and the machinery donated to Verdant Works for the Jute Museum. As he was finishing the presentation Ruairaidh suggested that should anyone wish to learn more regarding the training and the history should view the Online Exhibition – 360 Degree which has lots of interesting reading. Following the presentation Weaver Craft members Michael Hardie and Alastair Scott who were former students on this training in the mid 1960's recounted their own experiences of the training. Noted that the reduction in Jute production due to the introduction of polyolefins into the area individual companies arranged their own training to gain competition advantage.

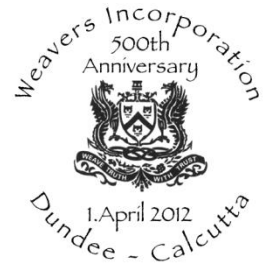
Deacon John Fyffe thanked Ruairaidh for his talk and that they may invite him for further talks in the future.



Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

End of Year Degree Show 2021

Weaver Craft Annual Presentation Prizewinners



Once again this year due to Covid Deacon John Fyffe and Boxmaster Paul Leigh had the opportunity to judge the two best students for 'Innovation in Textile Design' virtually!

They both agreed who were to be awarded the first and second prize of £300 and £200 respectively with the overall winner being Eden Parkes and runner up was Charlotte Neilson. (reference to their work below):-

Eden Parkes (Bio and samples of work)

Title - CO-EXISTENCE

CO-EXISTENCE (CE) is inspired by the organic nature and form of mycelium, an incredible complex fungus that connects a vast majority of the earth's natural biodiverse ecosystems. CE is a research-based project dedicated to the exploration of eco-conscious design that challenges conventional ideology and perceptions of textiles. This body of work aims to show that textiles do not have to be confined to the conventional domestic environment, or standardised fashion products. They have vast, varied and exciting applications in a wide range of fields.

Materials and processes have been carefully considered with regards to their environmental impact.

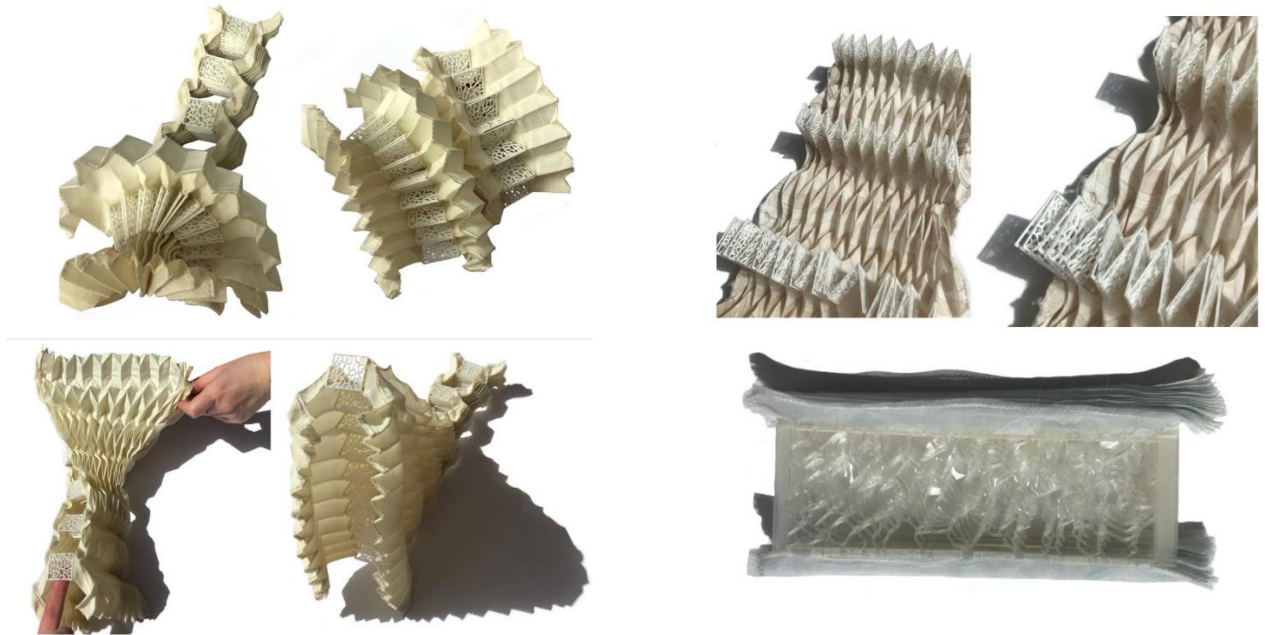


Materials and processes have been carefully considered with regards to their environmental impact.

Combining traditional eco-conscious processes (organic & repurposed fabrics) with non-traditional processes (3D printing & laser cutting) CE has engineered fabric that is both sustainable and pliable. Its key properties are of movement, adaptability and interactivity.

The underpinning of this project is the in-depth research which has fuelled an overarching theme of symbiosis, where natural shapes influence the transformative motion of the textiles. By pushing boundaries with multidirectional designs and the manipulation of materials these designs challenge the norm as they create a direct connection between sustainability and new possibilities & applications





Charlotte Neilson (Bio and samples of work)

Title - Interrogating The Gender Binary

The gender binary is a cultural belief that there are only two distinct and opposite genders – male and female. This belief is upheld by a system of power to create conflict, fear and division, not celebrate creativity and diversity. I used this project to interrogate gender and recognise gender is a more complex than any norm captures. My aim for this project was for it to be a celebration of differences and individuality.



My visual inspiration is flowers and plants as sexual metaphor to play with gender bending. Taking different characteristics that match that of the plants and genitalia, like frills and layers or bulge and protruding, and mixing these traits together to emphasise it doesn't matter what body parts a person has, it doesn't define who you are or your gender.

Fabric is not a living thing and has no gender and what I find curious is that a piece of fabric which starts as a cotton ball, shouldn't have rigid social and gender labels, yet it does. The likes of leather and denim are associated with males, as gender expectations assume them 'tougher' and lace or satin are associated with females as they are seen as 'delicate'. I used this when choosing my materials, incorporating leather and tulle and once again mixing the traits.

Camp fashion and culture had an influence on my project. Camp opposes satisfaction and seeks to challenge norms. The whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious, I took how seriously society takes the gender binary and gender standards because of their fear of the 'unknown' and made a joke of it, turned it playful and joyful.

Camp is the love of the exaggerated and this helped shape the visualisation of my final pieces. I chose extreme and unusual silhouettes that hide the body. This takes away the physical features society uses to assume one gender and forces then to look deeper at how a person chooses to present themselves.



A **Weavers AGM and Supper** took place on Friday the 8th of October 2021 in the Weavers Room within Verdant Works with 41 Members and Guests attending. This AGM was on this occasion the final duty of Deacon John Fyffe having served a three-year tenure due to COVID where he handed over the 'Chain of Office' to Incoming Deacon Paul Leigh.

(Pictured right showing those attending on the night)



Following the AGM the evening entertainment had been organised by newly appointed Deacon Paul Leigh and his Boxmaster Richard Irvine which included guest speaker Prof. Graeme Morton who gave an insight into the Scottish Diaspora, Late Deacon Convener of the Nine Trades Robert Dunn standing in for Deacon Convener Iain Murray (who unfortunately was isolating due to COVID) gave the attendees an update of the work of the Nine Trades.



Deacon John Fyffe welcoming all to the event in the Red Box.

The Weaver Craft AGM was held in the Red Room set in the High Mill of Verdant Works prior to the Supper.

Deacon John Fyffe welcomed all Members to the meeting and after the initial points proceeded to read highlights from his Deacon's Report which showed the high level of activities the Weaver Craft had undertaken over the last 18 months during the COVID times.

He made mention of the donation of £500 from the Weaver Craft towards PPE equipment which was requested by Past Deacon Alastair Scott to supply Care Homes in Dundee.

Craftsman Bob Low also made contact with suppliers in China where 10,000 face masks were procured and distributed to Care Home Staff and Food Bank Volunteers in the Dundee area. The Group also distributed 200 face shields to local Doctor's Surgeries to which Bob later explained the order had been made possible by a private donation.

Deacon John also spoke about the Dundee Tapestry which was officially launched to the press on Monday 23rd August in Verdant Works. This is now moving forward with key personnel being Craftswoman Frances Stevenson and Andrew Crummy who have been stalwarts in getting the project so far with their specific expertise and experience.

It should be noted at this stage that during his time as Deacon, John has moved this Project from an 'idea' he had as Boxmaster with his enthusiasm and drive to get to where it is today and will continue to lead this going forward to which the Weaver Craft are so grateful.

Boxmaster Paul Leigh was then asked to introduce Two New Members and stated the full introductions would be carried out during the main part of the evening after the meal.

It was encouraging to see that we are still recruiting members to the Craft.

The Deacon then put forward the proposal for the Office Bearers commencing with his Boxmaster Paul Leigh being appointed as the new Deacon of the Weaver Craft, Richard Irvine taking up the position of Boxmaster, both appointments were seconded at the meeting.

Ashleigh Slater to continue in the role as Schools Liaison Officer and has mentioned that the Intergenerational Project is to be up and running later in the year getting involved with the communities.

The ceremonial handing over of the 'Chain of Office' took place and the meeting closed with everyone proceeding to the Weavers Room for the supper.



Deacon Paul Leigh opening speech

Newly appointed Deacon Paul Leigh welcomed all the members and guests to this, his first event and hoped that everyone would have a great evening.

After introducing the Top Table of Clerk Colin Graham, Professor Graeme Morton and Late Deacon John Fyffe and the apology from Deacon Convener Iain Murray the Deacon said Grace.

He then intimated that the Rep Catering Staff led by Eve Moore would carry out a 'table service' for the meal and coffees due to COVID.



Boxmaster Richard Irvine introducing the New Members

New Members

Two new members were inducted into the Weaver Craft at the AGM Supper.

Sheena Devlin

Sheena was educated at Hawkhill Primary and Harris Academy in Dundee (1970/1982) after which she studied at Dundee University (1984-1988) and graduated with a B.Ed. (Teaching). She started her Teaching in Eastern Primary School in 1988; followed by Douglas PS, Clepington PS and then Ancrum Road where she was appointed to the Headteacher Role.

Sheena Devlin (cont'd)

Sheena then moved to be Headteacher in Perth where she was seconded to the Scottish Executive's Curriculum & Assessment Division for 2 years prior to returning to work as Service Manager with Schools in the Perth & Kinross area. Promotion then followed to the role of Head of Education and for the past 5 years has been the Director of Education and Children's Services for Perth & Kinross District Council. Sheena has multiple family connections to the Mills in Dundee with her Grandfather, Grandmother, Mother and Aunt all working in a range of Dundee Mills over the years – Cairds, Halley's, High Mill, Thomson Shepherds etc.

Proposed by Deacon John Fyffe and Seconded by Boxmaster Paul Leigh.

David Reid

David is originally from St Andrews but has lived in Dundee for the last 20 years. Educated in St Andrews and then attended both Fife College and Elmwood College where he gained qualifications in both Catering and Accommodation Management. He had a brief career in the Royal Navy for 5 years before returning to work at St Andrews University for over 15 years.

While there he volunteered for the St Andrews Preservation Museum. Following a move to Dundee working as an Accommodation Manager for over 10 years he decided to take a 'career break' and volunteered at the Museum of Transport. While there he completed studies with Museums and Galleries and has now gained certifications in both those procedures.

It was then he moved to his current position with Dundee Heritage Trust in Verdant Works starting as a Front of House assistant but also helps as a guide and an exhibition assistant in Verdant Works.

It was through his interest in the trade while working in Verdant Works which has encouraged him to Join the Weaver Craft.

Proposed by Craftsman Richard Irvine and Seconded by Craftswoman Judy Robertson

Pictured below relates to the signing of the 'Lockit Book' after being inducted into the Weaver Craft following the taking of the 'Weavers Oath'. Sheena then replied on behalf of David and herself.



Sheila Devlin and Clerk Colin Graham



David Reid and Clerk Colin Graham



Sheila Devlin replying on behalf of the new members



Past Deacon David Edgar
receiving the shuttle from Late
Deacon John Fyffe

Presentations.

Past Deacon David Edgar was presented with a Shuttle in respect of this 12 years as a member of the Deacon's Committee. The various Roles within that time as Schools Liaison Officer, Boxmaster and Deacon who through his leadership moved the Intergenerational Project involving Care Homes and Schools to a higher level.

The Intergenerational Project was helped through the efforts of Weaver Craftswoman Sandra Thomson as well as the help of Master Weaver Ashleigh Slater producing a 'Weaver Incorporation of Dundee Tartan'.

Past Deacon David thanked Late Deacon John Fyffe for this award and it was a surprise as it had been an honour to hold these posts and more so as Deacon it was duty he enjoyed and haven been a weaver himself getting to be 'leader' of this ancient Craft was indeed a duty well served and gratifying.

Late Deacon John Fyffe was also later presented with the Past Deacons Badge of honour which he gratefully received from Deacon Paul Leigh.



Professor Graeme Morton

After his introduction by Deacon Paul Leigh, Graeme who is Professor of History at Dundee University gave a talk relating to the Diaspora which was an exhibition in two parts displayed in Verdant Works May to September 2021.

Graeme began by highlighting why Scots would want to leave Scotland with records relating to the late 1700's through the 1800's highlighting weather conditions and damp in Scotland being a main contributory factor.

The 'need' to follow where the sun shines to such climates as in Australia, New Zealand, America to name but a few.

Sir Walter Scott stated the 'Twa Lands' meaning Scotland and whatever country the people found themselves in and although a lot is made of the 'clearances' forcing people to find work there were a lot of skills also went abroad and when you viewed the Diaspora Tapestries you could understand this point of view. This was an interesting and informative talk with references to Highland Games, Burns Suppers taking place in the countries the Scots made a living in.

Deacon Paul Leigh replied to the Speaker then presented him with a hip flask.



Past Deacon Convener Robert Dunn

Due to Deacon Convener Iain Murray isolating due to COVID Robert agreed to deputise and presented an update on the Nine Trades activities.

The Nine Trades in year ending April 2021 had handed out £98k to various organisations throughout the area which is really amazing to say the least considering the past 18 months. The current year however will be limited in funding and although the Halls of residence have been fully booked for this coming year which will be welcome funds indeed although a committee has been formed to look at different ways of bringing on funds to continue the good work in helping the needy and schools in particular.

Robert also praised Late Deacon John Fyffe for his passion with the Tapestry Project and wished new Deacon Paul Leigh and the Deacon's Committee all the best in continuing the good work in maintaining the profile of the Weaver Craft.



Professor Graeme Morton receiving his hip flask from Deacon Paul Leigh



L-R Sheena Devlin, David Reid, Deacon Paul Leigh and Boxmaster Richard Irvine

Vote of Thanks

Past Deacon David Edgar was asked to convey the 'Vote of Thanks' which was a reciprocated task as New Deacon Paul had carried out this duty at a function in 2017 and Past Deacon David was happy to oblige.

Deacon Paul Leigh then thanked all for attending and their participation in the successful evening and that they have a safe journey home



The Lockit Book

On behalf of the Weaver Craft I, as Editor want to thank Weaver Craftsman Ken Miln for the following articles relating to the jute mills industry in colonial India.

No.1 - Weaver Craftsman Kenneth Miln kindly forwarded the following information regarding the Dundee Jute-Wallahs in West Bengal, India for inclusion to the Newsletter.

Ghoorka* Please retain phonetic spelling for correct pronunciation.

In 1947, I was living with my jute-wallah parents at Megna Jute Mills compound some 20 miles north of Calcutta (now Kolkata) on the east bank of the river Hooghly.

Having spent my childhood in India I spoke Hindi before English, my good Ayah (Indian nurse) acted as translator between her charge and my mother; a state of affairs which lasted until I started kindergarten at Chandernagore's convent school on the Hooghly's opposite bank.

During the WW2 years, I often sat chatting with our Indian house-hold staff on our chota verandah (small verandah at the rear of our bungalow), at such times I would share their food, which was usually more tasty than the "Blighty" fare prepared for my parents. Although our staff, some of whom were Moslems while others were of the Hindu religion, took their meals separately, I cannot recall any signs of animosity between Indians of different faiths until the creation of Pakistan became a real possibility.

Of course, as a young lad at that time such political matters meant little to me; my priority was fishing and taking part in washing Hatees (elephants) at our local Tindal Ghat - Ghat being a series of stone steps between roadway and river. Unfortunately this peaceful way of life came to an abrupt end, aggravated by the necessity for many thousands of poor people having to uproot and travel long distances to unfamiliar regions.

A state of affairs resulting in a stark division between people who, until that juncture in the politics of the sub-continent, had lived in harmony.

No longer were our "bhat" sessions held on the back verandah, outright hatred and serious aggression quickly replaced peaceful co-existence, a state of emergency was declared at our Jagatdal area, with increased security in the form of armed Ghoorka* guards positioned at all mill and compound gates.

Travel by road was strictly controlled and many jute-wallahs used river launches for business journeys between their compounds and Calcutta. Despite the fact that most expatriates were not directly involved in the violent rioting, a few unfortunate folks, caught-up while travelling outside their compound walls, fell victim to rioting mobs.

Most Jute-wallahs were fortunate indeed to live, with some degree of safety, within their compounds, while those poor souls out in the nearby bazaars were exposed to all the horrors perpetrated by rioters.

I clearly recall witnessing several men being beaten to death only yards from our bungalow; hiding terrified, behind the verandah's balustrade, as a lathi wielding (lathi = bamboo pole) mob carried out their murderous attack. During most nights flames from burning villages could be seen from as far off as Chandernagore across the Hooghly, even bursts of gunfire and explosions were commonplace.

On one particularly hot day, while returning across the river by dingy-boat, to Megna compound I, together with other passengers, saw a group of men pulling, what appeared to be piles of flotsam from large filter-cages below the jetty and on reaching the jetty's stairway we were horrified to see that what had been sucked against the cages were human body parts, there as a result of the wide-spread rioting around the district.

The Hooghly had always a rather singular smell, mud, fish and decaying vegetation were but a few ingredients, to which the addition of rotting flesh, made the smell quite overwhelming. During those infamous days a nauseous pall covered the entire region.

Some twelve years later, when I returned to India in a professional capacity, I came to learn that Partition of India, and the creation of Pakistan had caused in the most massive displacement of people in history.

Hundreds of thousands of lives were destroyed as a result of this rupture and many years were to pass before a degree of stability was achieved in both India and newly created Pakistan.

No.2 - Weaver Craftsman Kenneth Miln kindly forwarded the following information on his engineering apprenticeship served with J F Low's Monifieth (1955/60)

Along with a group of lads from Dundee and district, I started in Low's "Monkey House" a large shed in which I was initiated into basic engineering practice :- chipping, filing, hack-sawing and boring holes into cast-iron machine parts.

After a few months I was moved to the machine-shops where, under the guidance of a journeyman (a skilled and much experienced technician-engineer), I was taught metal-turning, milling, precision grinding and case-hardening procedures using sodium cyanide.

After another year or so I was moved to the machine erection/assembly shops, where I worked, again under the guidance of journeyman, on the complete assembly and test-running of jute-mill machinery.

At Low's, work began at 7:42am and woe betide late-comers. Work was hard and "shirkers" we're sacked with little formality.... "Get yer books laddie !"

Most lads took "a piece" to work (usually a buttered roll with cheese or jeely/jam), Low's canteen provided a large bowl of hot soup plus a chunk of bread during winter months. I remember sitting on wooden benches crammed with lads, all of us in boiler-suits, slurping good vegetable broth and munching into thick slices of bread.

As regards toilet facilities, with very basic cubicles supervised by an old gent who handed out sheets of newspaper (usually from the "Tully") for toilet-paper: for those unfortunate lads who spent more than seven minutes "on the bog" a quarter hours pay-deduction was made.

During the final weeks of my apprenticeship I was sent overseas to India to install and commission Low's machinery into mills in the Calcutta area; challenging yet rewarding work, made easier by the fact that having spent my younger days in that country, I spoke/speak Hindi almost fluently

However, many of the constraints and hazards experienced would have been much the same as experienced by the Low's installation engineers who were sent to the other locations in the far east.

Heat, high humidity, noise, the smell of jute-fibre and batching-oil (originally whale-oil was used) were always part of the operational environment. In addition, hazards to life and limb were always present from unguarded machinery, dust particles inhaled by workers and the distinct possibility of fire breaking out.

As regards training technicians at overseas locations: a major constraint must have been one of language/accent for which the following examples should serve to high-light!

(Dundee parlance)

"Pit yon bracket ower there Mon" (Put that bracket over there man)

"Fit are ye dein ?" (What are you doing?)

"Ye daft bugger, that's the wrang spanner !"(self explanatory)

"Pit some mair eyel intae thon bearing " (Put some more oil into that bearing)

"Are yez glekit or sumthin ?" (Are you stupid or something)

"Watch oot an no git cracked by thon pickin-stick !" (Watch out and not get struck by that picking-stick)

No.3 - The Sahibs

Stalwart lads from Scotland, many in their early twenties arrived at Calcutta's Diamond Harbour on the river Hooghly after a three to four weeks ocean voyage by steamship from Blighty.

Rookie Jute-wallahs were normally met by a company representative with whom they would travel to their respective mill compounds in the Mofussil (Rural areas): during the early years 1850's to 1920's this was accomplished by horse-drawn carriage and during more recent times by mill car or taxi-cab.

Upon arrival at the compound the rookie wallahs were taken to the batchelor's quarters and introduced to colleagues, some of whom had passed their rookie status and full of good advice! – typical names were Jock, Wullie, Tam, Bert & so forth.

After being provided with a personal 'bearer' to attend to his Sahib's domestic requirements, the rookie wallahs would join the 'batchelor lads' for a very cold beer, hota peg (whisky and soda) or if an abstainer, a nimboo pani (fresh lime juice) and of course a long chat about life back in Old Blighty.

Within a day or two to settle in and fitted out with the required mill work-attire almost always heavily starched white cotton trousers shirt button-up waistcoat and polished black shoes the young wallah was ready to work in 'the Mill'.

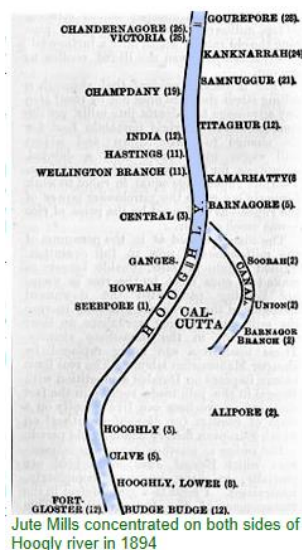
During the first few weeks, or months some of the lads felt a bit sorry for themselves and for a break with family, friends and even more so a girl friend.

However with most of the time spent working, weeks, months and years passed by, during which period the rookie wallah became known as a 'pukka Jute-wallah Sahib'.

By the time his first long overseas leave was due, normally six months period many much matured Sahibs had fallen under the magical spell of India, an affect of which was to make the return journey even welcome more so with a wife to share and enjoy life in the exotic East.

On retirement most jute-wallah Sahibs returned to their native Scotland, while others opted to settle down in some of the more salubrious parts of India, of which the hill stations were popular.

Although most Jute-wallahs and their way of life, have but all disappeared, their legacy has been deeply etched in memory.



No.4 - The Memsahibs

Jute-wallah Memsahibs were mainly Scottish women typically – Betty, Bella, Mabel, Molly, Nan & so forth, who accompanied their husbands out to India, many of whom went on to spend many years in the Country.

Memsahibs some with young children lived in mill-compounds with their hiscbands who having completed the required period of batchelor servive of 3/4 years were entitled to bring their wives out to join them in India.

Compound life for many Memsahibs was quite a trying experience, certainy during the ‘hot weather’ (March to September) and the monsoon season, when outdoor activities were all but impossible.

While ther jute-wallah husbands were at work in the mills the Memsahibs were, more or less confined to their bungalows: for those fortunate to have indoor hobbies such as painting, reading, writing or playing card games with the other Memsahibs, life was tolerable ad even enjoable.

Memsahibs fortunate to live on the compounds with swimming pools were able to take a cooling dip and refreshments at the pool side: a most welcome amenity for families with young childrewn.

Most Memsahibs had virtually no domestic duties to deal with: cleaning, polishing, washing and ironing of clothes were all attended to by servants (as household staff were called at the time).

The only input equired involved the ordering a basic foodstuffs and giving out weekly meal-menu orders to her khansama (cook):-

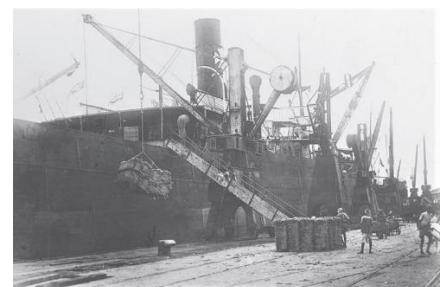
Breakfast usually consisted of porridge, bacon and eggs, toast with marmalade, finishing off with the all important t’chai (tea).

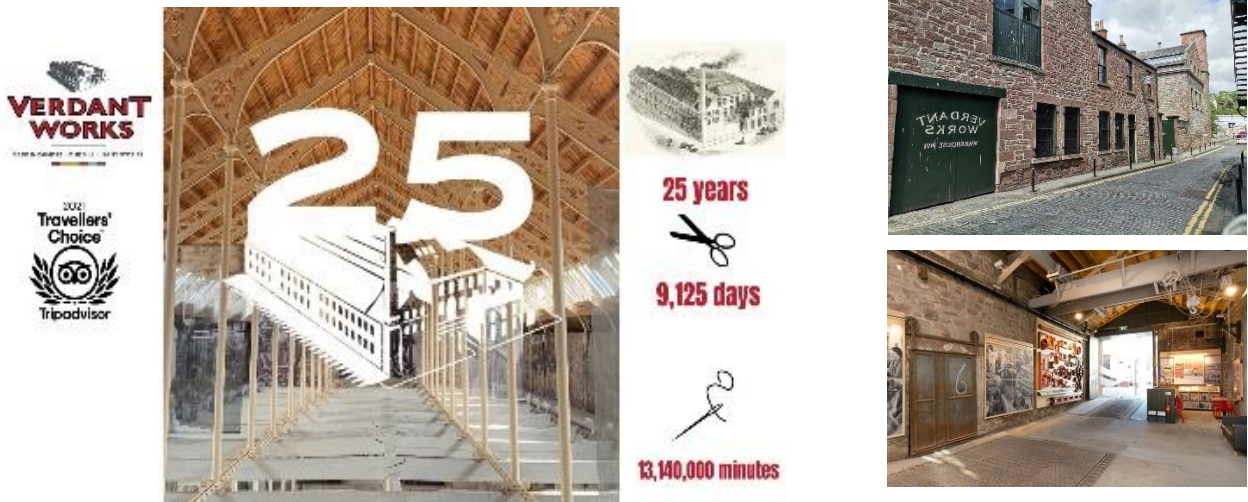
Titfin (lunch) with cold moogri(chicken) salad and fruit. Sundays were, for most folks, much looked forward to when, with the mills shut-down for maintaince, families would gather on their bungalow verandahs for a few drinks before devouring delicious curries: chicken with dal (lentil sauce) was a favourite ‘burra-tiffen’ (big lunch) with many wallahs.

During the “cool weather” (October to February) the quality of life improved significantly with regular tennis parties, dances and perhaps best of all, vsits to Calcutta for shopping, dining at Firpo’s famous restaurant and the occasional floor shows at a night club.

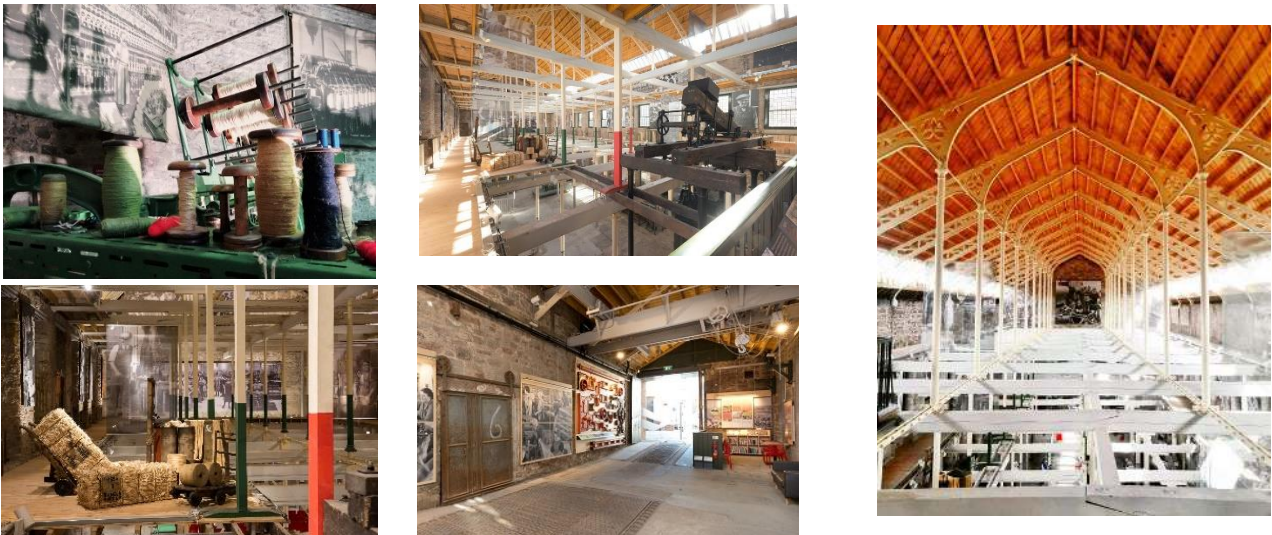
The one major draw-back, which affected Memsahibs and Sahibs alike was he distress of families parting, usually when school aged children were sent back to Blighty to complete their education.

During WW2 when travel between Blighty and India became exceedenly hazardous some families were separated for a full five years. However many Memsahibs lived full and rewarding lives during their years in India.





As the Verdant Works is seen as the 'Spiritual Home' of the Weaver Craft it is fitting to have a small article regarding the 25 years anniversary that was held this year. This Mill was saved from destruction by Volunteers to house a Museum worthy relating the history of the Industrial Mills of Dundee – Thanks to 'one and all'



The Weavers Room has been furnished to suit the needs of the Weaver Craft with pictures and relevant information adorning the walls as well as being a venue for Dinners and Social events. Weaver Craftswoman Lily Thomson (see below) is a volunteer at Verdant as is now a well known TV Star in her own right!!



Weavers Room Verdant



Weavers Room Verdant



Lily in her early working life



Lily on her first day in Verdant



Lily today, always the jovial character

An End of year update on the Dundee Tapestry from Late Deacon John Fyffe

Work is progressing on the design of the opening panels for each of the eight themes;

- Dundee Women,
- Dundee Education,
- Dundee Culture,
- Dundee Industry
- Dundee's Communities
- Dundee Nature
- International Dundee
- Creative Dundee

We need stitchers and stories that can be included in the tapestry and if any Members know of anyone that can assist, see the following information.



CALLING ALL STITCHERS!

Can you help us stitch The Dundee Tapestry?

We are looking for volunteers to work on the Tapestry

If you think you can help fill out this template and send it to the link below.

How would you like to help?

Stitch at home

Community Centre Stitch Group

Private stitch Group

Are you:

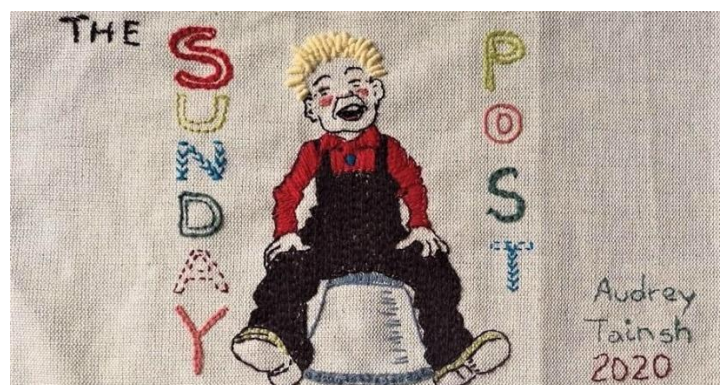
Experienced Stitcher

Intermediate

Novice

Can you be a lead stitcher/co-ordinator?

Contact thedundee Tapestry@gmail.com so we can get in touch



The following article has been provided by Past Deacon Ron Scrimgeour relating to the history of St Paul the Hermit, Patron Saint of Weavers



St Paul the Hermit, Patron Saint of Weavers

Ron travels to Egypt regularly and returned from his latest trip to Cairo and Luxor on the 14th November 2021.

His main interest is in the pyramids, the tombs and the temples. He was able to fulfil a lifelong ambition during that trip and that was to get inside the step pyramid at Saqqara, but that is another story. Every trip that he makes to Egypt includes a visit to a Coptic Church.

The Copts are an ethnic religious group indigenous to North Africa who have primarily inhabited the area of modern Egypt and Sudan since antiquity. Many people think that the Copts have a more, pure form of the Christian religion, but that is also another story.

The Stained-glass windows in Coptic Churches tell many stories that enlighten us to the early history of the Christian Church and the one story that always intrigues me is the story of St Paul the Hermit, Patron Saint of Weavers.

St. Paul was not a weaver by trade, but out of necessity and after escaping persecution in Thebes he moved to the Egyptian desert where he lived, according to the biography of the saints, to the ripe old age of 113.

It was in the desert that Paul took up weaving where his only clothing was a tunic which, after the manner of wicker-work the saint had woven out of palm-leaves.

This woven tunic, sometimes of palm leaves, is one of the primary ways to identify images of St. Paul.

Legend has it that St Paul lived in the mountains of the Egyptian desert in a cave near a clear spring and a palm tree. The leaves of which he wove to provide a tunic and the fruit of which provided him with his only source of food until he was 43 years old. Then a raven started bringing him half a loaf of bread daily and he would remain in that cave for the rest of his life, almost a hundred years.

Father Anthony visited the hermit and it was he who found Paul dead in the year 339. Anthony clothed him in a tunic which was a present from Athanasius of Alexandria and buried him, with two lions helping to dig the grave.

Father Anthony returned to his monastery taking with him the robe Paul had woven with palm leaf where he honoured the robe so much that he only wore it twice a year: at the Feast of Easter, and at the Pentecost.

The lions feature in the Weaver Craft images and iconography and Ravens are also mentioned.

Some people doubt that lions existed in north Africa and the middle east.

Of course, the lion we see in the introduction to Metro Goldwyn Mayer films is not the type that was in the original textile homelands of the middle east where some people think that the lion is actually a leopard, but that is another story.

St Paul's Saint's Day is the 15th of January and If you attend the Kirkin o' the Nine Trades in St Andrews Parish Church, have a look at the stained-glass windows and you will find one depicting St Paul, Patron Saint of Weavers.

Important Dates for 2022

The Deacon's Committee agreed the following events for 2022 to allow Members to note in their diaries:

Friday 28th January -Games Night – Weavers v Hammermen – venue Broughty Ferry Snooker Club

Friday 25th February - Gin (or some other drink) tasting evening – venue TBA

Friday 1st April - Weavers Spring Supper

Lecture Series March, April, May details TBC

History walk around Verdant Walks area early summer

Friday 9th September - Weavers AGM and Supper

Visits/Tours TBA

The hope is they can also arrange some inter-Trade quiz night details TBC.

The Weaver Incorporation of Dundee Tartan was designed and woven on a handloom by Master Weaver Ashleigh Slater of Blairgowrie.

It was decided that these items should be made available for sale to help raise monies for the Weaver Craft Charitable Funds.



Anyone wishing to purchase any of the items please contact Ashleigh Slater by email with your request at tartancaledonia@outlook.com or Telephone Mobile No. 07846486135