

CETG ARCHIVE

Meeting Report

8th August 2016

Speaker: Jo Atherton

Jo Atherton of [Flotsam Weavers](#) gave a fascinating and thought-provoking talk about her work sourced entirely from items washed up from the sea. Nothing in her work is bought, she weaves with discarded fishing line on looms from old picture frames, incorporating discarded plastic items from the fishing industry and from our everyday lives, including degraded mechanical parts, toys, balloons and many unidentifiable bits and pieces. She collects the materials principally on Cornish and Norfolk beaches during the winter when tides are high and pickings plentiful.

Growing up in St Albans, Jo was fascinated by the archaeology of Roman Verulamium and the stories told by found objects. After a degree in English Literature (more story telling) she moved into textiles, where she weaves a double strand of the stories the objects she has found have to tell, combined with the environmental cost of discarded items which are clogging up the sea and harming its inhabitants. Different audiences react in varying ways to her work: the fishing community focuses on the discarded fishing items (rope, line, floats, lobster tags) while inland viewers are caught by the detritus of modern living (plastic toys, balloons) and how they personally are contributing to the environmental decay.

When beginning a work, she often does not have a plan, the theme coming from the items woven in. So *It's Only a Game* focuses on the plastic toys and balloons; *Plenty More Fish in the Sea* on the detritus of the fishing industry; *Eternal Youth* round a plastic Peter Pan figure. For *Chronicle*, Jo collected broken clay pipes from the London shores of the Thames, discarded in the 17th century, to illustrate that human soiling of the waterways is nothing new. Her latest development is printing with the plastic items, where she produces pictures strongly reminiscent of the plankton floating in the open seas.



The second outing of the year will be held on 3rd September to the [John Lewis Heritage Centre](#) in Cookham. Members should make their own way there (car sharing would be appreciated) to arrive for 11.00am. The John Lewis Partnership Heritage Centre is home to the Organisation's business archive and the textile archive of Stead McAlpin, a fabric printing factory in Carlisle that was once owned by the Partnership. The textile viewing gallery contains over 4000 of the archive's designs in both paper and fabric format, with gems from famous designers such as Lucienne Day, Charles Voysey and William Morris.

Some of you may have heard that Bucks Adult Learning is no longer going to be running creative courses at Missenden Abbey. Whilst this is true, there is some promising news - two of the organisers have decided to set

up independently as [Missenden School of Creative Arts](#) and will continue to offer a programme of courses at Missenden Abbey. You can register your interest on the website so they can keep you up to date of any developments.

Many of those at the August meeting brought in a wonderful selection of surplus stash. Those present had a good rummage with much muttering of "Just what I was looking for" or "How could I use that?". Voluntary donations by those who helped themselves to the goodies raised £65 which, together with all the unclaimed materials, will be donated to [Workaid](#).

Janet reminded us of the stall that has been booked at the [Amersham Heritage Day](#) on 11th September. Terry volunteered to organise the supplies needed and the rota. Anyone who wishes to be involved, either by loaning work or sitting at the stall for a period (bring something to stitch!) should contact Terry. The more the merrier - we are hopeful this should spread the word about the group among a wider audience.

As part of Bucks County Museum's [Art of Islam](#) exhibition, there will be a talk on [Textiles of the Islamic World](#) by John Gillow at High Wycombe Library on 15th September from 6.00-7.00 pm.

Other reminders were for the Rose Bowl Competition to be judged at the January meeting, and for the collaborative project with [Anne Kelly](#) for [Buglife](#). Entries for the latter will be collected at the September meeting, or can be sent direct to Anne by the end of September.

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