

Tutbury Women's Institute

Spinning A Yarn

On Thursday 9th June twenty members of Tutbury Women's Institute welcomed Frances Murray from Tutbury Crafts. Frances talked about spinning and we now know what a whorl was used for and why you need a large and a small niddy noddy!

Frances enthralled us for over an hour with her account of the origins of spinning and weaving, along with some practical demonstrations and opportunities to have a go.

Frances explained that archaeological evidence of spinning has been dated to some 20,000 years ago. All that was needed was a stick and a stone and, while the stick and stone are now polished wood, hand spinning has changed very little since then. It was not until the middle ages that the wheel was added to these and we have the more familiar spinning wheel of fairy stories.



The photo shows Frances with some of the products she sells.

Frances passed round a beautifully carved stone dating from the 9th century and explained some of the terms. She passed round samples of wool and we had a go at drawing and twisting the wool. Even a few twists make the wool surprisingly strong. One brave member even had a go at spinning using a spindle. Not all wool is the same, Merino, Jacob and Suffolk are wonderfully soft and alpaca is amazingly strong. After handling some of the wool, we were rather pleased to discover how the lanolin softens the skin on your hands! We loved the hanks of wool, dyed with natural products and I think quite a few of us might have a try at spinning.

Our competitions organiser was thrilled with the members' responses to the June competition, with over 30 entries. A big thank you to everyone who made an effort

We all look forward to the next meeting, at Tutbury Castle, on 14th July, when Lesley Smith has very kindly agreed to let us use the castle for the evening. We will celebrate Bastille Day with French food and members are asked to bring a small contribution to the food – French if possible! Drinks will be purchased from the castle.

Don't forget, Lesley is also bringing Boudica to Tutbury! Tickets are now on sale for her triumphant march into Tutbury Village Hall on 12th August. To order tickets, telephone Sue Norris on 01283 815784.