



Woollen Woods at Stretton Watermill

Why?

To celebrate the 40th year since its restoration Stretton Watermill is planning a series of events to link to its local community and beyond. The first event will be Woollen Woods.

What?

The mill would like to link to this year's Voluntary Arts Festival by creating a Woollen Wood in its grounds. Last year the festival had 11 Woollen Woods amongst its 400 events across the country and we want to be part of it this year!



So we are calling out to crafters out there to create something to be part of our woolly outdoor exhibition. Could you crochet a ladybird, felt a rabbit or knit a robin? We'd love to invite you to contribute a little woollen 'something' on the theme of 'Native Woodland Flora and Fauna' to this fantastic site.

About the mill

Stretton Watermill is one of the country's best preserved demonstration water powered corn mills, in beautiful rural Cheshire. The current mill building was started in 1630 on the footings of an earlier mill. In 1959, Stretton's last miller retired. The mill lay derelict for over a decade before being restored as a working museum, which opened to the public in 1977. Today, Stretton Watermill is open from spring to autumn each year and welcomes thousands of visitors and school pupils.



The Watermill site

The mill pond is to the rear of the mill and the (reinforced grass) car park to one side.



The car park (pictured above) is edged with a small deciduous woodland and there are also other trees around the mill (including apple trees). The Woollen Woods creations will be displayed within these areas.



Our trees

Stretton Watermill is home to a variety of rare Cheshire apple trees. We are working with Reaseheath College and the Weaverham Orchard to ensure the survival of these rare varieties.

Millers used apple and other fruit wood to make replacement gear teeth – the timber splinters and allow the miller time to replace the tooth without sustaining permanent damage. Where there is a mill, there are usually fruit trees too.

If you'd like more info about the trees we have on site please get in touch
artswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

When

The woolly creations will be installed on site w/c 8 May
And will be on view to the public from Saturday 13 May - Sunday 3 September.
Please check the website before visiting for opening times or call 01606 271641.

How to take part

Please either bring or post your creations to Kate Harland at Grosvenor Museum, 25-27 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD by **1 May**.

Please add a label / luggage tag to your piece stating:

- Your name
- Your contact details (address, email, phone number)
- What your piece is

We will display all the pieces that we receive (as long as they are not offensive and they are safe for display).

Please note that unfortunately it won't be possible to return your items.

Materials

Voluntary Arts' Woollen Woods fact sheet states, "100% wool or yarn with a high wool content works best when creating work to be displayed outside as it can withstand the elements. Pale yellows and white acrylic yarns tend to go a bit patchy so use these sparingly or on things that won't be outside for too long. Loosely-felted creations get a bit wind-blown but fluffy densely-felted things will often improve as the cycles of wind and rain shrink the fibres even more."

Your designs

We've seen some exciting designs from previous events including a nest of blue tits, snails, butterflies, an owl, caterpillars, fungi, flowers, a spider, mice, ladybirds, bees, hedgehogs, a rabbit and a squirrel.

Check out the [Woollen Woods Pinterest Board](#) for useful links, patterns and inspiration.

Visit the [Woollen Woods Facebook page](#) (set up when the project was first established in 2013), to see photos of Woollen Woods across the land.

We can't wait to see what you will produce!



Please see the links below for other ideas and some free patterns.

Please consider a couple of things as part of your design

- how we will attach / 'plant' your item
- bigger things or woolly wildlife with frilly edges may require a little structural support / wire so they won't go floppy in the rain.

Patterns and useful links collated by Voluntary Arts

There are some great patterns and tutorials for nature inspired woollies, from knitted flowers and mini-beasts to crochet conkers and felted fungi. Click on the links below for some of Voluntary Arts' favourites -

Knitting

[Odd Knit](#) - Patterns created by Jessica Goddard. From leaves and acorns, to flowers and fossils.

[Knitted flower](#) - Artist Andrew Craig Williams shares his pattern for knitted flowers with a wire stem, ideal for planting directly in the ground and creating a woolly wildflower meadow.

[ChemKnits](#) - Knitting enthusiast, Rebecca, shares crochet and knitting patterns for minibeads, including ladybirds, bumble bees, spiders and dragonflies.

[Lion Brand Yarn Company](#) - Visit this site for a range of free knitting and crochet patterns, including flowers, mini-beasts, strawberries and a range of different flower designs.

Crochet

[Planet June](#) - June Gilbank shares her crochet pattern designs for flowers, pumpkins and apples.

[HappyBerry](#) - Crochet patterns designed and shared by Laura Eccleston. The website includes a range of video tutorials and instructions. We particularly love the daffodils, snails and mushrooms.

[Meli Bondre Knitwear](#) - Knitware designer, Camelia Shanahan has set herself the challenge of designing and posting instructions for 365 crochet patterns inspired by flowers across the land. You can access most of these for free and each pattern comes with helpful step-by-step photos.

Needle Felting

[Mushroom](#) - By Victoria, of Tiny Apartment Crafts.

[Pansy](#) - The Midwest Creative Collective share an easy to follow felted pansy tutorial.

[Bat](#) - The bat Conservation Trust share this fun tutorial for a felted Bat.

Visiting the site

The woodlands by the car park grounds are free to visit and there is a small fee to access the rest of the site for more information visit strettonwatermill.westcheshiremuseums.co.uk

@cwacmuseums

Find us on Facebook, search 'Grosvenor Museum and Stretton Watermill'



www.voluntaryarts.org/festival

The Festival runs 5-14 May 2017

Voluntary Arts works to promote and increase active participation in creative cultural activities across the UK and Republic of Ireland.