

FASHION FIELD TRIP





More than an opportunity to learn about regenerative wool first hand from one of our leading producers in the country, Fashion Field Trip was designed as an embodied learning experience to shift participants' perspective on our clothing and what it is made from. Moving beyond the 'coulds' and 'shoulds', we hoped participants would leave with a sense of how our clothing mediates our experience with our surrounding environment, and therefore how working bioregionally in fibreshed systems we foster connection to landscape and to the community involved in producing a garment.

A one day event aimed at tutors and course leaders in the field of fashion and textiles, October 24th was the pilot event of what will grow in to a series of experiences accessible to educators, students, postgrads and industry professionals, hosted by a variety of fibre and dye producers across the South West.

The Team



Emma Hague

South West England Fibreshed, Organiser

Emma is the founder of SWEF, also Bristol Textile Quarter and Bristol Cloth. With a background in human rights, natural resource development and rural economic livelihoods, her work over the last 15 years has been at both grassroots and global policy levels. The holistic mission of the fibreshed movement marries her expertise with a lifelong passion for clothing and textiles. Together with her husband she is also a new entrant to farming, grazing cattle on conservation sites in Gloucestershire.



Amelia Twine

South West England Fibreshed, Organiser

Amelia has worked as a Project Manager with SWEF over the last 2 years, and is the founder of Sustainable Fashion Week (SFW). SFW works across the year in creative community engagement, uniting UK communities in taking grassroots fashion action.



Liz Parker

Facilitator

Liz is an expert facilitator with experience in nature-based learning for higher education and is now working on climate and ecological crisis and workers' rights in the Clean Clothes Campaign network.



Melissa Thompson

Educator and soil food web technician

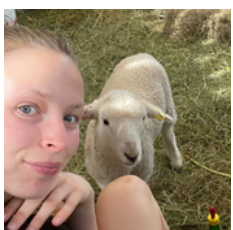
Melissa works with microbes to restore life to depleted soil and has trained in microscopy so she can see her fellow non-human collaborators. Melissa is a founding member of The Roving Microscope — a community microscope club exploring human-soil ecologies.



Lara Lopez Ayuso

Textile designer and wool handler

Lara is a material researcher and textile designer specialised in woven textiles and hand-spinning techniques. Her work explores organic materials and natural fibres that contribute to regenerative practices in agriculture and textile design. Lara has trained in wool handling at Fernhill Farm.



Ruth McGuinness Marshall

Textile designer and wool handler

A CSM Textile Design graduate focussing on textile regeneration and innovation, Ruth advocates for practical experience in design education, highlighting the impact of real-world exposure. Since graduating, Ruth continues to work seasonally as a wool handler at Fernhill Farm and alongside interning at The Mills Fabrica.

The Sessions

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Activities were structured into the themes of Connection, Landscape, Story of Place, Fibreshed, Wool, Focus, Harvest and Reflect.

The sessions began with reflecting on our connection to place, grounding ourselves and exploring sensory experiences of the landscape. This was followed by the story of the farm and land that were hosting us - discussing agro-ecological animal husbandry with the group and the impact on fibre quality. We were then introduced to the global Fibreshed movement and South West England Fibreshed's growing network of farmers and producers.

The group got hands on with wool and the grading of fleece, understanding the diversity of sheep breeds and fleece products through touch. We then got to explore the relationship between soil, fleece and the nutrient cycle at a microscopic level before turning to craft - using the opportunity of hands busy with spinning and weaving to discuss how the educators could bring the day's learnings into their teaching.

The Fashion Field Trip pilot included a group of 12 educators from universities across the South West. Following a variety of activities and a day of experiential learning, attendees were invited to share what they gained from the experience.

81% of attendees deepened their understanding of the relationship between clothes and the landscape

72% of attendees deepened their understanding of how working bioregionally builds connection to the landscape and community involved in producing a garment

100% of attendees could see the value of teaching and learning in the outdoors and on a farm

“Today’s workshop has been fantastic. The connections and information that I have gained, I can’t wait to bring back to my students. Such a valuable experience as a teacher and a human. Thank you.”

“It gives you a sense of purpose and a much deeper understanding how things work in society and what can be done to start perceiving life in different views.”

“FFT has been an invaluable experience to physically lean on the land, teaching that would not be possible in an online space. As educators we need the time and space to continue our education too.”





As a result of the experience, attendees felt primarily:

Excited
Hopeful
Inspired
More connected

What worked well?

The mix of activities
The pace of the day
The hands on nature of the activities
The holding of the day by the team

What could improve?

See the shearing of the sheep
More time! Both for activities and sharing information about individual journeys
Something to take away

100% of attendees wanted more information about SWEF organising a Fashion Field Trip for their students. This is a really positive outcome for the pilot. We also saw an additional and unforeseen impact in that the educators' experience of the field trip was also beneficial to their wellbeing, alongside gaining insight and inspiration from the experiential learning.

Next steps...

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Many of you have already reached out to start conversations about how to continue working with SWE Fibreshed and we are really excited to see where ideas lead.

If you are happy for us to do so we will be in touch with all of you in the future about how we intend roll out the programme for students and post-grads, as well as for colleagues who may wish to attend.

In the meantime if you have questions, or have existing budget to bring a group then please contact Emma directly.

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