

FELT LINES

SUMMER 2012

Magazine of the
Victorian Feltmakers Inc.
Reg. No. A0034651T
Issue 84

A word from the wise
**Jude Wise's
passion for felt**

NUNOFELT and more
**Liz Clay's felt
journey**





Editor/Website Editor

Sarah L. Ricketts

Contributing writers

Maggie Hollins
 Sharon Carter
 Allison Baensch
 Anita Larkin

Photographers

Liz Clay
 Ben Clay
 Jude Wise
 Allison Baensch

Advertising coordinator

Sarah L. Ricketts

Special thanks to

everyone who has made this issue possible

Feltlines is the official publication of the Victorian Feltmakers Inc. Please refer any questions/suggestions about the magazine or about content (such as advertising), to the editor at vfi_editor@internode.on.net.



Like us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/vicfelt
 Remember to invite your friends to like us, too.

106 LIKES AS AT 22/11/12

COVER: Detail from *Zak-ka Commission for Mina Perhonen, Japan*, by Liz Clay. Full image shown in gallery on page 10.

In this issue

Felt Making can be Magic	2
Allison Baensch reports from the Geelong Forum, 2012	
The President Writes...	3
From a Wise Woman	4
VFI Member, Jude Wise, "talks" to Maggie Hollins	
Camp Jungai Felting Retreat	7
She wrote the book	8
Sharon Carter interviews international tutor, Liz Clay	
Contacts - Committee, Meetings and Workshops	11
Convergence 2012	12

Felt Making can be Magic

The magical possibilities of felting came to me in September, when I attended the TAFTA Forum in Geelong for the first time. Anita Larkin provided us with both challenges and encouragement throughout the workshop.

The magic came as I was fiddling with a small sculpture I had been making that day. The sculpture evolved from a random scribble pattern, intended to evoke a design without requiring thought. My shape was small and geometric. By this time, I'd cut the felt and removed the resist around which I had placed the fibre. I was 'massaging' the damp felt as I stood, with the rest of the group, watching Anita helping another class participant translate her ideas into the form she wanted.



I was thinking: **"How can anyone create a meaningful sculpture from a scribble pattern?"** I glanced down at my geometric shape. It had suddenly transformed itself into a creature's head, completely without my awareness. No longer was it squarely geometrical. There it was, in my hands, looking up at me, with its red eyes, smooth neck, whiskery lips, tufted nape of the neck and firm jawline. A creature I could relate to, almost a felted friend! To me he is the offspring of a sea serpent, who 'dallied' with a camel. He has no body yet, and may never have one, although I

am inspired to give him long, dark eyelashes, to emphasise his winsome expression.

My first TAFTA Forum gave me plenty of new skills to try out, a wonderfully talented group of fellow participants to spend time with, and a little taste of magic. This weekend I plan to spend 3 days in Drysdale, near Geelong, attending a Felted Body Wrap class taught by Catherine O'Leary. My guess is that magic will materialise, to delight me again, as I watch class members transform lengths of wool batt and delicate silk into fresh fabrics.



Allison Baensch
 VFI

The President Writes...



along with Camp Jungai and our Felting Frenzy Days.

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.

- James Dent

We launched the VFI on Facebook and have well over 100 followers now. We will be introducing our new booking system "Trybooking" not only for workshops but for Camp Jungai and membership renewals in the coming year. We encourage everyone to **like** us on Facebook so you can keep up to date with what is happening at the VFI.

As the year comes to a close we turn to the Festive Season and family celebrations. I wish you and your family a wonderful festive period, however you might celebrate and wherever you may be spending it.

I look forward to welcoming you to our first meeting in 2013.

Joyous Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Sharon Carter
President

Why don't you just trybooking?

This year the VFI edges further into the digital age. As Sharon has mentioned, we are introducing on-line booking as our preferred method of booking a workshop, registering for the retreat and paying VFI fees.

Trybooking.com is a well-established and well-regarded payment method allowing community groups and organizations to have a more professional feel when it comes to managing bookings.

Workshops will be treated as separate events, with each having a designated number and a link, to take you directly to the trybooking website, so that you can register. These codes are included with the workshop details in the workshop brochure for 2013, which can be downloaded from our website.

Not all workshops can be booked immediately. Booking becomes activated around 2 months ahead of the workshop date. It will no longer be possible to book a whole year's worth of workshops at a time. This lead to quite a few underattended workshops, as those who had booked a long way in advance cancelled their bookings, often without another participant taking their place.

From **December 3**, you will be able to download the new workshop program and bookings will be open for

1. Jan Everett
<http://www.trybooking.com/36531>
2. Gayle Burgess & the Crochet Crazies, Elma Morgan & Kaye Adolphson
<http://www.trybooking.com/36532>

Manual booking will still be available, but please do give trybooking a go if you are able. It will make life a lot easier for the organizers, and you can use a credit card, which we cannot take otherwise.

VFI Editor for
Maggie Hollins

Summer is upon us, along with warmer days and longer nights.

I love the rewards from the garden, too, as I harvest my herbs and vegetables and smell the new growth of my tomatoes. Then, magically turning everything into fresh salads, to pair with a wonderful BBQ.

Summer is also a good time to plan projects for the coming year as you take some time out from felting and sewing. So make sure you borrow a library book or two to read over the holidays.

Looking at the past year, we have had some wonderful meeting days and guest speakers,

Handweavers & Spinners

Guild of Victoria, Inc



Tues to Sat
10am to 3pm

Come visit our new home
Browse our Craft Supply
for felting supplies,
dyes, luxury fibres, books,
etc.

Enquires: 9387 9222

655 Nicholson Street, Carlton North
www.vicnet.net.au/~handspin/

An Opportunity

Lisa Walker, the Dancing Queen, has offered to do a 3 hour **Fibres and Fabrics** workshop at her premises in Fitzroy on May 19 or July 14.

Cost \$60 (Discount of \$10 to VFI members) Maximum 8 participants.

Contact Lisa for bookings:
(03) 9417 0660 or lisa@the-dancingqueen.com.au

From a Wise Woman

Jude Wise shares her wit and wisdom with Maggie Hollins



Where are you from and/or where do you live?

I grew up in West Preston as a child and now live my later years in Eltham North.

What stage of life are you at?

I lead a very busy life being a grandmother to 11 grandchildren ranging from 12 to 22. Apart from felting, which is my passion, I also create jewellery and other accessories in felt, beads etc.

Do you live alone?

I don't live alone thank goodness; I live with my husband of 30 years.

Where do you felt?

I had a workroom built into my house for my bridal business, until I discovered felting. The room is very spacious and has beautiful natural light. Felting gave me so much pleasure and satisfaction, so I decided to concentrate on this. My aim now is to create a wedding dress made out of felt.

How do your family and friends react to your felting?

My friends are amazed at what can be created, often suggesting ideas. They also love the felted gifts they receive.

How were you introduced to felting and when?

Shopping in Prahran several years ago, I noticed an outfit in the window, which looked absolutely amazing. I enquired about what it was made of.

When I was told it was felted, I had no idea what that was. Soon after, I received a workshop list and felting was listed. I enrolled around 2005 and I have never looked back since.

What was the first thing you made?

I made a number of scarves and samples, which I still have.

What role does felting play in your life?

Felting is my only passion now and plays a huge role in my life.

What is your favorite thing about felting?

I find felting is tactile, creating new designs, playing with the many fibres and fabric to create new garments.

What is your least favorite thing about felting?

My neck and back ache, luckily I have a spa bath to relieve the pain.



ABOVE TOP: Jude wearing one of her vests; **BELOW:** Detail of scarf decoration in felt and silk.





Have you had any tertiary education in visual art?

I attended Box Hill TAFE for three years and graduated with a Diploma of Art and Textiles.

Are you involved in any community groups?

Time does not allow this at the moment, but I have volunteered to work in an Op Shop in Warrandyte next year.

If you could make something for anyone, who would that be and what would you make?

Liza Minnelli has always been an idol and would be my choice, ever since I saw her sing with her mother Judy Garland. The movie, 'Cabaret', set in the 30s would be my inspiration to create a swing style jacket and cloche hat.

Who, what or where has been your latest inspiration?

A beautiful gum tree with a twisted trunk I saw in my travels. I would like to create an interesting felted garment or hat.

What is your favourite movie?

Love to watch old movies in black and white, mostly musicals, I cannot pick just one.

What book are you currently reading?

The same as everyone else, *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

What is your favourite pastime or hobby?

Watching the old movies, fashion shows and of course felting.

Who is your favourite footy team?

When I was a young girl around 11 years of age, I had a crush on a boy who was a Collingwood supporter. Lost touch with him in my later teens, and with my dad being a South Melbourne supporter, the influence of my crush didn't change my mind. Go Pies!

What is the one thing people should know about what you do, but don't?

My love of animals; also feeding the birds in my backyard. I am hoping to train a magpie (the feathered ones). I let spiders out into the garden after I have trapped them in the house. I don't like to kill them.



What advice would you give to a new felter?

Have patience; don't give up. All your work samples can be reused to create many items, keep practising and take as many classes as you can, for new experiences. ENJOY!

Maggie Hollins
VFI



PREVIOUS PAGE: Merino wool hat, a fabulous piece of silk fabric cut and assembled to create the design.

LEFT, TOP: Jacket of silk fabric & fibres, Merino wool & yarns.

LEFT: Scarf of silk fabric, decorated with prefelts, felts of silk fibres & Merino wool, cut and assembled to create the design.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Garment of silk & specialty fabrics to create design; wool and silk fibres complete the effect in the garment.

BELOW: Shoe, plaster of Paris, mesh wire, silk fabrics, Merino wool and machine embroidery. A nightmare, but it worked!



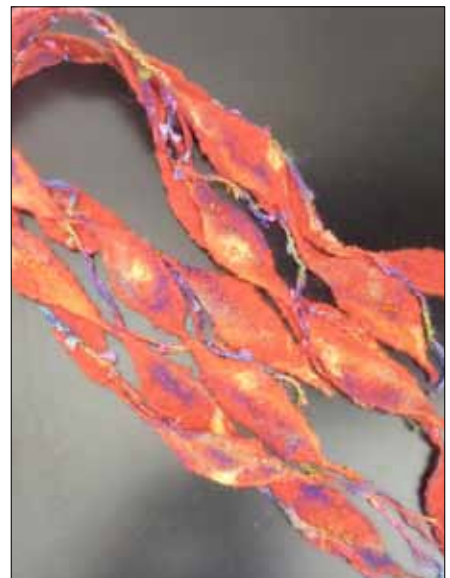
This interview is the last that Maggie Hollins will do for **Feltlines** for the immediate future. She has taken on the important role of Workshop Coordinator and no longer has time to produce the Member Profile. This leaves the position open for someone, or perhaps a few people, to step in and take over. Please take up this opportunity; it is a great way to get to know other members and to contribute to your organization. The questions are standard, although you are free to add/change as you see fit. The interviewee completes the questionnaire and sends good quality images of their work and hopefully a portrait of themselves, too. No layout is involved. If you like the sound of this, contact me on 0410 107 529 or by email to vfi_editor@internode.on.net.

The VFI thanks Maggie for the fantastic job she has done in establishing this column and for the great standard achieved. Thank you, also, Maggie for being Workshop Coordinator in 2012-13.

Sarah L Ricketts, Editor

Jude Wise's Gallery

If you like the look of Jude's work - and who doesn't? - why not learn to make a beautiful nunofelt garment with her? Download the 2013 VFI workshop program information from the website:
http://www.vicfelt.org/VFI_Workshop_Initial_Program_2013.pdf
and check out the details. Bookings open in 2013 for this workshop.



Camp Jungai Felting Retreat

May 3, 4 & 5, 2013

Camp Jungai lies in the Rubicon Valley (475 Rubicon Road, Thornton), north-east of Melbourne, roughly two and a half hour's drive through the Yarra Valley.

The weekend is centred around felting in a relaxed and felty atmosphere. There is plenty of room for felting, comfy places to sit and chat, and lovely areas to explore outdoors. This is an inspiring weekend where feltmakers can share their felting experience and learn new tricks. It is an ideal setting for new feltmakers. Please bring your own felting equipment, although the fibre shop will be available for purchases.

Accommodation consists of heated shared cabins with bunks, en-suite bathroom and separate toilet. Participants supply own mattress protector/cover and sleeping bag or bedding.

Buffet-style meals are provided and are plentiful. Please bring your own wine and/or soft drink. Morning and afternoon tea are included. There is plenty to choose from for breakfast, healthy yummy lunches and delicious evening meals. Tea and coffee facilities are available all weekend. Special dietary requirements can be catered for (please inform Margot).

The retreat runs from 1pm Friday, May 3, till after lunch on Sunday, May 5. Friday lunch is **not** included.

Cost \$195.00 - Early Bird Payment \$180.00 (early bird payments must be paid in full by March 15, 2013)

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Payment and registration opens on December 3, 2012. We prefer payment to be made through our TRY BOOKING site

<http://www.trybooking.com/36518>

Cheques/money orders can be paid directly into the VFI Account. VFI Bank details are BSB 033120 A/C 111910. Please include with your payment, your name, email address or



phone number AND the words **Camp Jungai Felting Retreat**.

Address any enquiries to Margot Ling:

email margot@myaccess.com.au or call (03) 9509 1470.



She wrote the book

Liz Clay, special guest tutor

Sharon Carter interviews the popular teacher, researcher, writer & artist who will visit us again in March 2013



ABOVE: Liz Clay and the cover of her 2007 work, *Nunofelt*. (Liz will have copies of the book for sale at her classes, but you must pre-order them. See page 10 for details.)

And a few of her favourite things:

RIGHT: Boa Collar and Corsage.

OPPOSITE, TOP: Boa and Corsage;

OPPOSITE, FAR RIGHT: part of the Wool Paper Collection

Tell me about your background. How did you arrive at felting?

Quite by accident. The initial encounter came via my interest with spinning and weaving. My first response to felt making was not enthusiastic: all that rolling and rubbing to produce something quite ugly! Luckily I became inspired to investigate further through my curiosity with materials and process and finally became seduced by experiencing some stunning work by Norwegian felt makers.

How would you describe your signature style to someone who has not seen your work? What are your favourite pieces?

I suppose my signature style is thin, transparent paper like felt as demonstrated by the Boa and Wool Paper collections that remain constant. I do make many other types of felt but I am always interested in how wool, especially British wools not commonly thought of as felt making material, can be transformed into felt fabric by innovative use of traditional techniques and process. My favourite pieces have always been my Boas. New work is on the horizon for 2013 and developing this has been instrumental in opening a fresh and exciting direction for my practice.

What does a typical day in your studio look like?

I am afraid nothing is typical as my time is always divided between writing and researching, which involves much deskwork and regular teaching commitments away from home. Studio making is usually for client-based work involving commissions and couture design briefs, often at short notice, that interrupt everything planned! When I do have scheduled time in the studio this often involves sampling unique composite wool blends that I have processed for various research initiatives. The studio can be full of fleeces, washed and carded wools. I am passionate about British wools for felt making, as not enough of these glorious wools are currently used.

In my studio I have an industrial sample card ma-

chine and it will be busy whirring away whilst I weigh the next batch of wool and tease open the various clean fibres. I love handling the carded batts as they come off the swift; it's quite magical and they are full of promise.

Where do you go for your inspiration? List 3 or more books, websites, blogs that inspire you.

Inspiration is found in the most unexpected places. I will always have my camera with me to capture those idiosyncratic and often transitory moments. Ideas may form over a period of time and do not necessarily present solutions or make sense immediately. I have a vast archive of felt samples that always inspire me when I am looking to develop ideas and materials in new ways. Sometimes a small swatch of fabric made as long ago as 15 years will inform a whole body of new work. Equally, materials and resolved pieces can sometimes be recycled and made afresh.

My library of books contains a number of texts on art and craft based disciplines that are a source of constant pleasure. I can thoroughly recommend the following titles: *Cloth and Culture Now* edited by Professor Lesley Millar and *The Textile Reader* edited by Dr. Jessica Hemmings. Both contain





inspirational essays and interviews with contemporary makers with references to felt. For visual inspiration the Crafts Council exhibition catalogue **Contemporary International Basketmaking** feeds my love of structure and innovation with material.

Inter-disciplinary notions and approaches inspire me. I must include books on fine

artists Chillida, Morandi and Prunella Clough whose works are so different but nevertheless inform what I do.

For a thoroughly researched investigation into traditional felt making origins, **Nomadic Felts** by Dr. Stephanie Bunn has to be a hot favourite for her eloquent and learned writing, sharing rich images and information on felt making traditions worldwide that so inspire my practice. Last but not least **Sheep and Man** by M.L. Ryder provides a fascinating trove of facts and knowledge as well as offering an epic journey into the importance of wool throughout history.

One great website for textile and felt related information is: www.clothandculturenow.com.

Are there other felters or creative people that you admire?

There are many whose work I find inspirational. For sheer innovation and mastery of the material for its expressive potential I admire the work of artist and sculptor Joan Livingstone. The felt work of Inge Evers is particularly sensitive to the methods I seek. For exceptional skill at hand crafting the raw material are the garment designs of felt maker Heidi Greb. The wonderful work of fine artist and felt maker Jenny Cowern was probably responsible for awakening my interest in experimental process. Jenny was a good listener and friend and is sadly missed.

Do you have any other creative interests?

I love music and ballet. Working to music is a must and I cannot be without my radio in the studio. If my work allows, I try to experience a live performance in London or anywhere in the world when I am away from home. The best is sharing an opportunity with my daughter, we try to organise our diaries accordingly.

Have you had a mentor?

No, not really, but I have received encouragement and guidance from a colleague, Professor John Miles at Bath Spa University. John's critical eye and sound advice have always encouraged me to be bold and different with my work. It's good to know someone has belief in your mad ideas and taking risks!

Where do you buy your supplies?

Most of my wool is bought as fleece direct from local farms. I

then spend an inordinate amount of time and care processing the fibres by hand. If required I hand dye in my studio. For large-scale commissions and some production work the fleeces will be sent away for washing and carding. The mill that I use always processes the fleeces individually for me so I can be sure to maintain provenance. For some development work with fashion houses and haute couture the materials are supplied. For silk fabrics and other specialist items I purchase from suppliers in Italy and Switzerland.

What business skills have you acquired to run your business? What would you still like to learn?

I was fortunate to win a London Crafts Council Development Award in 2004 that gave me financial support for equipment and running my business. That same year I won an Export award with UK Trade and Investment for my work shown at Chelsea Crafts Fair, London. This award enabled me to tap into export business skills and training and to take part in creative development opportunities for my designs in Japan and the US.

In the near future I am hoping to develop new fabric samples closer to home and to expand the use of British wools. The British Wool Marketing Board has continued to take interest and support my research development. Studio based initiatives for small scale industrial production is an area I would like to see developed within my business.



Any advice or words of encouragement for VFI members who do it as a hobby or as a business?

I would always say to anyone, that in the first instance you must love what you do and never be deterred by opinion. I am passionate about my felt making and would so love there to be a greater understanding and appreciation of felt. We are all custodians of the craft and we should take that responsibility seriously, whatever is made and for whatever reason it is made. That way others will notice and be inspired.

Sharon Carter
VFI

Liz Clay's Gallery

BELOW, FROM THE TOP DOWN:

Liz hand rubbing a felt panel;

Zak-ka Commission for Mina Perhonen, Japan. A detail of this image has been used as the cover image for this issue;

Liz inspecting Stella McCartney felts drying.

All photographs of work by Liz Clay; those depicting Liz herself plus work were taken by Ben Clay.



ABOVE: nunofelt dress

BELOW: embroidered felt coat



As previously mentioned, Liz will bring and sign copies of her book, *Nunofelt*, from the UK with her. These will be for sale, but she does need to know how many to bring in advance. Please let the editor know if you would like a copy brought over for you: vfi_editor@internode.on.net or call 0410 107 529. You do not have to be a workshop participant to ask for a book, but we will have to arrange to collect payment from you before Liz arrives.



VFI Committee 2012-2013

President

Sharon Carter
10 Doonkuna Avenue,
Camberwell, Vic., 3124
Mobile: 0468921158
president@vicfelt.org

Treasurer/ Public Officer

Tony Cooper
315 Dreeite Road,
Beeac, Vic., 3251
03 5234 6030
spinfelt@westnet.com.au

Secretary

Simone Braund
7 Parker Street,
Ormond, Vic., 3204
0417 963 665
simone.braund@gmail.com

Ordinary Member

Judith Latham
c/o Boisdale Post Office
via Maffra Vic., 3860
0419 296 501
judithalatham@gmail.com

Vice President

Gayle Burgess
40 Graceburn Avenue
Healesville Vic., 3777
03 5962 1389/0420 429 699
bgburgess@internodeon.net

Membership Secretary/ Assistant Treasurer

Jane Robson
PO Box 79,
Whittlesea, Vic., 3757
03 9715 1523
janerobson@live.com.au

Workshop Coordinator

Maggie Hollins
75 Grant Drive,
Benalla 3672
0423 075 533
maggiehollins@hotmail.com

Ordinary Member

Margot Ling
11 Orchard Street,
Armadale, Vic., 3143
03 9509 1470
margot@myaccess.com.au

Special thanks to:

Fibre Shop Coordinator
Alison Durham
1 Grey St,
Bacchus Marsh, Vic., 3340.
03 5367 3553
ajd@ozemail.com.au

Library Coordinator
Denise Leslie
2 Westmere Place,
Rosanna East, Vic., 3084
03 9459 6876

WORKSHOP INFORMATION

Download the most recent program information from the VFI website:
http://www.vicfelt.org/VFI_Workshop_Initial_Program_2013.pdf
Registration forms for workshops and for joining the VFI are also available at www.vicfelt.org.

Workshop Coordinator
at left under Committee

Workshop Booking Officer
Ros Bint

3 Turnbull Grove
Northcote, Vic., 3070
03 9481 7542
rosbint@gmail.com

Workshop Hostesses
Diane Morley
Bonnie Douglas

Felting Frenzies are an important part of the VFI month. Join us from 9.30 am to 4 pm. Bring whatever you want to do, and your own felting supplies, although the fibre shop is open for a while. There is no tuition, simply learning by sharing. Book a table in advance from:

Felting Frenzy Coordinator
Margot Ling
03 9509 1470/margot@myaccess.com.au

Frenzy helper
Gabrielle Pellissier

TEXTILES ANYONE

CD BOOKS, DESIGNED TO INSPIRE

126 TIPS FOR FELTMAKERS

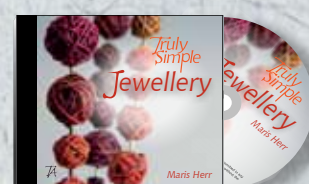


126 Tips for creating great felt. This is the book that the author herself wishes she'd had when she started felting. You will benefit from Liz's more than 20 years of experience as she guides you through the creative process; while helping you to avoid the pitfalls. There are tips for laying out, tips for rolling and getting a quality finish; tips for carding and working with colour; tips for when things go wrong and tips for just having fun with felt. A great reference, no feltmaker should be without.

\$24.95*



LAYERS FOR FELTMAKERS
\$24.95*



TRULY SIMPLE JEWELLERY
\$24.95*



TRULY SIMPLE GARMENTS
\$14.95*



TRULY SIMPLE PLANT PAPERMAKING
\$14.95*

TO ORDER ANY OF OUR BOOKS PLEASE GO TO:

WWW.TEXTILESANYONE.COM.AU

PO BOX 100 WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650 INFO@TEXTILESANYONE.COM.AU

*ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE AND HANDLING

***Come along,
learn, share,
felt --
and have fun!***

The 12th Southern Hemisphere Feltmakers' Convergence



The 12th Southern Hemisphere Feltmakers' Convergence will be held in Stanwell Tops in NSW, Australia, from September 1-6., 2013. The Illawarra Feltmakers warmly invite you to join us for this wonderful event.

The Convergence is a biennial gathering of feltmakers in the Southern Hemisphere and follows a long tradition of sharing knowledge, experience and ideas about felt. It is run entirely voluntarily for the benefit of feltmakers and feltmaking as a craft. It covers every aspect of feltmaking and is suitable for all levels of experience. Come along, learn, share, felt and have fun with other feltmakers.

We have planned a program including three guest feltmakers: They are Japanese feltmaker, Leiko Uchiyama, Martien van Zuilen from Perth Australia, and Anna Gunnarsdottir from Iceland. These three amazing feltmakers will be our guests for the convergence. There will also be fashion parades, installations, exhibitions, a traders' hall with lots of felt related goodies for attendees to buy, lectures by industry experts, tutorials and demonstrations, and the inaugural felt Olympics. Come join us for a week of feltmaking.

At left, members of the Illawarra Feltmakers create a banner celebrating and welcoming attendees to the Convergence.

Contacts: Website: <http://12thsouthernhemispherefeltingconverge.blogspot.com.au/>

You can email The Illawarra Feltmakers Inc. for an enrollment form:

12thfeltconvergencesh@westnet.com.au