

# Craft courses

Our look at the very best craft courses available online and around the UK. **By Tanya Blake**

## Blithfield Willow Crafts

Eddie Glew, owner of Blithfield Willow Crafts, has been working with willow for years, using traditional skills and knowledge passed onto him by his father to make a diverse selection of beautiful handcrafted items with locally coppiced willow from Staffordshire and Somerset. With this versatile natural material he creates traditional items such as log baskets and

## Hardcastle Crags and Gibson Mill's Crafty Fridays

Staff at the National Trust's Hardcastle Crags and Gibson Mill in Yorkshire are preparing for a year of fantastic art and craft events and they'd like nothing more than for you to join them. Crafty Fridays is a bespoke programme of demonstration-led workshops by experts in their field held in Gibson Mill, a stunning 19th-century building that was originally a functioning cotton mill. This year's schedule starts on 19 April and includes an eclectic range of sessions including photography tutorials with Sarah Mason, knitting, cyanotype, needlework, glass design, bear making, herbal remedies and painting. Gibson Mill also happens to be surrounded by 400 acres of beautiful woodland and is well known as a beauty spot of the South Pennines with its streams, waterfalls and unspoilt woodland. It's an amazing place to visit so why not make the most of it and plan a special day out in both historic and spectacular settings as well as learn a new skill showcased by those who really know their craft?

To view all the workshops available at Hardcastle Crags and Gibson Mill visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardcastle-crags](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardcastle-crags) or contact them by email [hardcastlecrags@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:hardcastlecrags@nationaltrust.org.uk) or call **01422 844518**



berry baskets to boxing hares and willow hurdle fencing. Eddie now wants to pass his knowledge of willow crafts onto you and holds courses, demonstrations and talks across the country throughout the year. His courses include basket making, sculptures, obelisk making and willow hurdles and have proved to be very popular. They have even caught the attention of one of Britain's favourite property buff turned creative crafter Kirsty Allsopp, which resulted in Eddie appearing on both Kirstie's Vintage Home and Kirstie's Handmade Home to teach the nation his craft! So if you fancy turning your hand to creating with willow and picking up a unique skill to pass onto your loved ones get in touch with Blithfield Willow Crafts today.

For more details please visit [www.blithfieldwillowcrafts.co.uk](http://www.blithfieldwillowcrafts.co.uk), e-mail [blithfieldwillowcrafts@gmail.com](mailto:blithfieldwillowcrafts@gmail.com) or call **01889 500696** or **07528 150756**



## La Vidalerie

Karen had been a passionate jewellery maker for over 20 years when she and her partner Tim discovered La Vidalerie, a ruined 300-year-old farmhouse perched high on a valley in the beautiful Aveyron in South West France. They soon set about making it into a space where they could run their jewellery making classes as well as provide comfy cottage accommodation for their students. Now in their 5th year they run an ever growing range of informal and fun jewellery making holidays with workshops from beading to silversmithing and tiaras to stone setting. New workshops are added each year as many students are returning for their 3rd or 4th visit.

Classes are kept small, (1-4 people) ensuring you get lots of one to one tuition, and their style of 'Kitchen table' jewellery making means that



## Social Fabric

Social Fabric, a new venture in Totnes, south Devon, is the brainchild of craft addict Caroline Voaden. Previous work as a journalist meant Caroline spent long hours at home in front of her computer. She craved company and a way to indulge her passion for all things crafty, which led her to open the Social Fabric boutique and workshop last summer. Caroline now hosts a range of courses in crochet, knitting, sewing, felting and lampshade making as well as stocking a gorgeous range of yarns, books, accessories and kits. Caroline teaches most of the crochet and knitting and makes lampshades for sale, while a team of tutors teach sewing and other crafts. Crochet workshops include chunky baskets and pretty 50s-inspired collars, and summer will bring much skirt and summer dress making – basic skills that can save money and make life more fun and creative. Workshops are run as informal one-off classes or short courses of two or three so people can fit them in easily, and all include tea, coffee and the essential chocolate biscuits. Social Fabric also hosts parties for all ages and can arrange private group making sessions – perfect for families or friends who are spending time on holiday in south Devon and would like something different to do. Their superhero costumes are as popular with boys as with girls!

Details of all workshops and more information can be found on the website at [www.socialfabrictotnes.co.uk](http://www.socialfabrictotnes.co.uk) or call **01803 866144** or email [hello@socialfabrictotnes.co.uk](mailto:hello@socialfabrictotnes.co.uk).

students can carry on practising their new skills at home. Interested in escaping the rat race and learning new skills in an idyllic setting? Then visit [www.lavidalerie.com](http://www.lavidalerie.com) or call/email Karen for more information **0033 6 30 74 20 35** [karen@lavidalerie.com](mailto:karen@lavidalerie.com)

