

# A Twisted Yarn

yarn n.  
1. a spun thread,  
2. a story often having  
incredible elements

Volume 5

Issue # 8

July 2019

June

## Yarn Club - Mediterranean Flowers

Many thanks to all you keen 'clubbers' – we have sold out of places for the summer's Yarn Club - and the first month's skeins for **Mediterranean Flowers Yarn Club** are being sent out in the next day or two.

## Songbirds Yarn Club

Julie in Devon, one of our most devoted Yarn Clubbers, on receiving her May (Chattering Chaffinches) skein:

*"Received this month's surprise. I do not know how you select such beautiful colours each month. Thank you."*

Alison in Essex was delighted with the blush pink tones in the Song Thrush Serenade skein, which she said reminded her of ballet shoes, and within minutes of receiving the package her yarn was wound and she was casting on for a shawl!



*Clockwise from above:  
Gossipping Greenfinches,  
Alpaca Silk Lace;  
Chattering Chaffinches,  
Alpaca Fine 4-ply;  
Song Thrush Serenade,  
50:50 Merino Silk  
Singles/4-ply*



## Under the Spotlight

*We definitely want to continue to recognise the many wonderful people that we have met over the years since Watercolours & Lace started exhibiting in 2014. We started this feature in February 2017, but seem to have run out of volunteers recently. Please give it some thought ... and don't throw that e-mail from Alan into the bin!*



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## New Yarns

### Cashmere Cotton Fine Lace (CNL)

We had a little of this yarn a few years ago and have managed to locate another small stock, so are delighted to feature it again at a very competitive price. A sumptuous blend of 50% Cashmere and 50% Cotton, it's beautifully soft. A fine laceweight, it's perfect to wear next to the skin, making it ideal for tops and summer sweaters as well as shawls, scarves and cowls, and the long length of 1,400m/100g goes a long way. We've listed some 50g skeins at £12.50 each in the 'Limited Edition' section on the website, with more to come shortly.

Please note: The acid dyes we use in our dyeing process don't fully adhere to cotton fibres, so colours in this blend tend to be soft and muted. It is also likely that the cotton element of this yarn will fade with time, rather like your favourite denim jeans.

### Fine Wool Lace (ESL)

We've also got a very small amount of a fine pure wool lace, which is of the type used in Estonia to make their famous lace shawls and scarves. It's soft and smooth with great stitch definition. Another 1,400m/100g weight, we have 50g skeins listed in the 'Limited Edition' section at just £11 per skein.

*New Yarns: Cashmere Cotton (CNL) from top: Amethyst Shadows, Warm Coral and Pale Lavender Sky*

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## Loyalty Card Scheme

Unfortunately, the Loyalty Card Scheme was badly affected when we tried to change over to a new version of Windows on Alan's machine. The various permutations and calculations – which had previously worked without issue before Microsoft decided to “unnecessarily” improve things – did not take place. And so the spreadsheet – which previously had given impeccable values and results – now presented rubbish. It was only when Alan decided to test one or two ‘calculations’ that he realised that nothing had been done correctly since December.

But we can say that we have processed all the sales records of those of you who use the loyalty cards and now know what additional work he needs to do at the end of each month.

Our apologies!

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## Workshops

Julie is running a workshop at the **Southern Wool Show** at Newbury Racecourse on Saturday, 31 August.

It is called "Introduction to Knitted Lace Shawls". The cost is £18 per person, which includes yarn and pattern - you just need to bring your own needles.

Book here:

If you organise or attend a knitting or craft group, or are running an event, and would like Julie to teach a workshop for you, please get in touch. She can offer various topics, particularly knitted lace, beaded lace and Fair Isle, and workshops could last from two hours to a full day, for between 6 and 20 people. We can also bring along a selection of yarns for purchase. Charges would depend on timings, numbers and travel distance. Email

[julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk](mailto:julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk) with details of your area of interest and we'll see what we can do.



**Win tickets for  
Southern Wool Show!**



31st Aug & 1st Sept, Newbury Racecourse  
[www.southernwoolshow.co.uk](http://www.southernwoolshow.co.uk)

## Southern Wool show

Speaking of the Southern wool Show, we are delighted to tell you that we have two free tickets to the show to give away to the first two names drawn out of the hat. Note the dates on the graphic (left) and the closing date, which is Friday, 23 August.

Get in touch now – [alan@watercoloursandlace.co.uk](mailto:alan@watercoloursandlace.co.uk)

## Award Nomination

We are delighted to remind you all that we were nominated in the **Best Independent Hand Dyer Category** for this year's Knitting & Crochet Awards! Voting is still open and you can vote for us online at [letsknit.co.uk/awards](http://letsknit.co.uk/awards) or via the July issue of *Let's Knit Magazine* or issue 113 of *Let's Get Crafting*, and you'll be entered into a draw to win hundreds of pounds worth of amazing prizes.

Voting closes on 29 August. Thank you to everyone who nominated us, and for your continued support.



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## Do You Know - #56 - Swaledale

As you can see from the reference number, we are safely into our second half-century of Facts about Yarn. So far, we have covered many breeds of sheep and other animals that provide our fibre/yarn. For those of you wondering about what we will do when we run out of sheep, we should warn you ... We mentioned last month that we had found a listing on line which included over 200 breeds of sheep. So, keep reading! Before we stop muttering, we were interested to see that one of our 'glossy' competitors had featured 'Beltex' last month, which is a Belgian off-shoot of Texel, which featured here last month! This month, we return to England and look at the Swaledale ...



Swaledale is a breed of domestic sheep named after the Yorkshire valley of the same name. They are found throughout the more mountainous areas, especially in the Yorkshire Dales, County Durham, and around the fells of Cumbria.

Just after the First World War, a group of farmers living within a seven-mile radius of Tan Hill Inn, on the lonely, North Yorkshire moors, near the Cumbria / Durham borders, held their first meeting to form a breed society. After several meetings, the Swaledale Sheep Breeders Association was formed. From this small beginning, the Swaledale breed has become well known for being a bold, hardy sheep, well fitted to endure the hardships of exposed and high lying situations. The Swaledale can now be found in both the hills and lowlands of Britain, producing both pure bred and the well-known North of England Mule.

Swaledales are noted for their off-white wool, curled horns and white around their nose and eyes. They are also used for the production of lamb/mutton, the North of England Mule sheep, and as Pedigree breeding stock. Together with the Rough Fell, Herdwick, and Dalesbred sheep, they are one of the four variations associated with the English Lake District.

Well suited to the exposed regions in which they predominantly live, Swaledale are very hardy sheep, with thick coats; they are able bodied, and bold. The ewes make excellent mothers and are known for being able to rear lambs well, even in adverse conditions. They have a medium build, with black faces marked with bright white around the nose and eyes, and both males and females grow curled horns, with the males' horns being much larger. Their coats are thick and very coarse and are considered a uniform white or off-white colour. The wool they produce, although durable, resilient and usable for a number of applications, is not worth very much, with the British Wool Marketing Board paying approximately 40 pence per kilo of wool. The marketed fleece and fibre may contain kemp that is not white, so some yarns and prepared fibres from the Swaledale are grey.

As a breed, Swaledales are related to Scottish Blackface and Rough Fell sheep, both of which are also found in upland areas. They are also noted for their ability to thrive in exposed locations. Although the specific origins of the breed are unknown, a non-indigenous and exotic ancestor for the Swaledale was considered by two noted names of the eighteenth century, John Naismyth and Charles Findlater. Published in 1796, Naismyth's opinion in Young's Annals of Agriculture was that the origin of the black-faced highland breeds was "impossible to trace".

Robert Trow-Smith in his book A History of British Livestock Husbandry, 1700–1900 wrote: "... it has already been suggested that this family stood outside the mainstream of ancient British sheep..." and that the root of the Swaledale and Scottish Blackface breeds could be the Argali. This tenuous link between domestic sheep and the wild Argali has since been proved to be insupportable due to a significant difference in genetic make-up and number of chromosomes.

The Swaledale Sheep Breeders Association was founded in 1919. The association is an active organisation point for Swaledale sales, shows, breeding, and products. There are approximately 1,200 flocks of pedigree Swaledale sheep in the United Kingdom. Fine pedigree rams sell for approximately £25,000 to £30,000 on average, though the highest price paid at auction for a prized ram was £101,000.



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The sheep produce commercially viable mutton and wool. Wool colour and coarseness prevent Swaledale wool from fetching high prices, but it is strong and durable, which makes it suitable for carpets, rugs, and insulation. The wool is also used for spinning and knitting of clothing, though on a lesser scale.

The Swaledale sheep is an official symbol of the Yorkshire Dales. In 2003, plans were submitted to build a Swaledale sheep visitor centre in Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, declaring Kirkby Stephen as the "spiritual home of the Swaledale sheep". These plans drew strong opposition from the town of Hawes, in Yorkshire, a strong competitor in terms of Swaledale sales, and which had its own plans for a visitor centre.

## On the Road ... 2019

We might have said before – “This is a very strange year ...!”

We are in the middle of our longest period without a show to go to – and we are already suffering from withdrawal symptoms!

Julie has been working on new colourways and Alan is making some accessories ready for our return to action at the Southern Wool Show in Newbury on 31 August. We are really looking forward to that; we enjoyed the show there last year, and this year it has grown to two days, so we're sure it will be wonderful.

We have two more shows in September and four in October, so we hope to see many of you on our travels!



## On the Road ... in 2019

All shows confirmed

			Yarn Show Lace Fair
1	9 Mar	Fenland Lace Day	Burgess Hall, St Ives
2	17 Mar	Essex Suppliers' Fair	Chelmer Valley HS, Chelmsford
3	13-14 April	Spring Into Wool	The Grammar School, Leeds
4	27-28 April	Wonderwool Wales	RW Showground, Builth Wells
5	4-5 May	Knit & Stitch	Rheged Centre, Cumbria
6	11-12 May	Buxton Wool Gathering	Pavilion Gardens, Buxton
7	18 May	Lace, Quilt and N'craft Fair	Kingsgate Conf Centre, P'borough
8	1 Jun	Lavender Lace Day	Hunstanton Community Centre
9	14-15 Jun	Woollinn	City North Hotel, Dublin
10	22 Jun	Essex Lacemakers' Day	Henry Dixon Hall, Rivenhall
11	31 Aug-1 Sep	Southern Wool Show	Newbury Racecourse
12	21 Sep	Suffolk Lace Day	Community Centre, Kesgrave
13	29-30 Sep	Yarndale	Skipton Auction Mart
14	5 Oct	Fenland Fair	Burgess Hall, St Ives
15	12-13 Oct	Bakewell Wool Gathering	Agricultural Centre, Bakewell
16	18-19 Oct	Loch Ness Knit Fest	Leisure Centre, Loch Ness
17	25-26 Oct	East Sussex WS&D Guild	Town Hall, Lewes
18	16 Nov	Southern Counties Lace Fair	Havant Leisure Centre
19	30 Nov	Lace, Quilt & N'craft Xmas Fair	Cranmore Park, Solihull

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