

## New Yarn

We are waiting for the base yarn for our BFL Silk 4-ply to come back into stock at present but, while we do so, our supplier pointed us to a new yarn which we decided to try. This is Poldale Silk 4-ply - a blend of 85% Falkland Islands Polwarth (see the *"Did You Know #63"* on this breed later in this newsletter) and Corriedale (this was *'DYK #8'* back in May 2015, so perhaps we will need to repeat it!) plus 15% silk.

It is a standard 400m/100g 4-ply on a grey/fawn base, so no pale or pastel shades possible from this, but it does give wonderful effects with slightly darker colourways. The Polwarth breed has a large proportion of Merino in its ancestry and this is clear from the soft, plump feel of the yarn. There is also a little sheen from the silk and the smooth construction should give good stitch definition for lace or textured designs. The first few skeins are now on the website here at £16 per 100g and Julie will be dyeing more next week.

*Our new Poldale Silk 4-ply (PWS), from top:  
Deep Lavender Sky;  
Rich Chocolate Brownie;  
Road to the Isles*



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## Hardware

We have previously stocked Hiya-Hiya needles but last year we became a stockist for ChiaoGoo, which is the brand Julie prefers to use herself. We will be stocking the sizes most often used for our own designs/yarns (2.75mm - 4.50mm) in both Fixed Red Circulars and Twist Interchangeables, both of which have fine points ideal for knitting lace designs.

We have a few sets of double-pointed needles in either stainless steel or bamboo in sizes 2.75mm and 3.25mm (ideal for our Fair Isle hat designs) and will expand the range if there is sufficient demand. We also have some fine crochet hooks in stock; these are ideal for use when beading, and hope to add larger hooks in due course. You can find all these in the webstore here.

We still have a small selection of the Hiya-Hiya fixed circulars and interchangeables left in stock and these have now been reduced to clear - you'll find them in the Sale section here.

## 'Lockdown' Knit-along

As it seems the restrictions on movement may continue for some weeks or months for many of us, we thought this might be a good time to have a Summer Knitalong. Starting on 1 May and continuing through to the end of July, you are invited to work your choice of Julie's designs. We would obviously prefer it if you wanted to use Watercolours & Lace yarns, but this is open to any yarns.

There are four categories - 4-ply shawls, laceweight/fine lace shawls, crochet designs and Fair Isle hats - and we will award prizes of £25 gift vouchers to a winner and runner-up drawn at random in each category.

You can enter as many times and in as many categories as you like, but you'll only be able to win one prize. The projects should be ones you've started from 1 May onwards, not ones which have previously been completed. We have set up a thread in our Ravelry forum group, but for those who don't use Ravelry you're welcome to email photos and details of your project(s) to [julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk](mailto:julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk). For inclusion in the draw, please use the heading "Lockdown Knitalong" as your email subject. We'll need to know the pattern, yarn and colourway you've used. Many thanks.

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## Ulyana

At times it has felt a little bit like waiting for an elephant to give birth, but the laceweight version of Ulyana is finally now available. It's a large shawl – 290cm/114 inches wide across the wingspan and 107cm/42 inches deep at centre back – and takes two 100g skeins of standard laceweight, but it certainly makes a statement. Julie used Alpaca Silk Lace in Grandpa's Toffee Humbugs and She Sells Seashells for her sample. The design is classified as being suitable for intermediate to advanced knitters with plenty of experience, as the lace requires concentration since each section is different, and there is a very large number of stitches on the needle at the end – over 1,200! As with the 4-ply version already available, there is optional beading to the edging - you'll need around 750 beads for this version.



A number of kits are now available in the webstore here, in a choice of alpaca and wool yarns and blends and including beads, with more to come shortly. The kit price currently offers a discount of £5 on the full price of buying the elements separately.

As the instructions run to several pages, we've kept each version of the pattern separate so those of you downloading it from Ravelry only need print the one you're working on.



As with all our designs/kits, if you see a colourway/yarn combination you'd like but it's not listed, do please get in touch and we'll dye and/or list a custom order for you.

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## Accessorising

Continuing our theme from last month, when we introduced "Bobbin Rolls", we managed to find some images of the ones we had made.

Please let us know if there is any other fabric project that you would like us to create, to add to our growing range.



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## Did You Know - #63 - Polwarth

Remember what I said last month – “One of the great things about being interested in yarn and wool is that whenever you think ‘Well what will we talk about next month ... ?’, something will always turn up.”

So, after learning about our ‘local’ Ryeland flock we received an e-mail from one of our favourite suppliers – Andy at Wooltops – who offered us a new yarn. Something called Polwarth ... No, nor me!



Polwarth is a breed of sheep that was developed in Victoria (Australia) during 1880. They were of one-quarter Lincoln and three-quarters Merino bloodlines. They are large, predominantly polled sheep with long, soft, quite fine wool and produce good meat carcasses. They were developed in an attempt to extend the grazing territory of sheep because the Merino was found lacking in hardiness in this respect. A dual-purpose (meat and wool) breed with a major emphasis on wool production. Richard Dennis, of Tarndwarncourt in south west Victoria, bred the Polwarth, first known as Dennis Comebacks. His descendants continue to grow Polwarth wool at Tarndwarncourt, maintaining the original

bloodlines in a flock referred to as the "Blue Dots".

Polwarth wool is well regarded for its application in wool-craft. The longer staple length, up to 130mm, makes it easy for hand spinning and felting. Millspun yarns made solely of Polwarth wool are commercially available.

Polwarth sheep were developed with white wool; however, natural black, brown and grey wool flocks have expanded the popularity of Polwarth wool for craft.

Mature ewes weigh 50 to 60 kg (110 to 130 lb) and mature rams weigh 66 to 80 kg (146 to 176 lb). Ewes are excellent prime lamb mothers, producing lambs that have good lean carcasses. The high-yielding fleeces weigh an average six to seven kilograms, with a fibre diameter of 23 to 25 microns. The wool is ultra-white with excellent length, crimp and yield; and it is fine and soft enough for next-to-skin wear.



The Polwarth Sheepbreeders' Association of Australia was formed in 1918. Polwarths are now raised mostly in the higher rainfall regions of south-eastern Australia that have improved pastures. Polwarths have been exported into many countries, including South America, where they are known as Ideals. Polwarth and Corriedale form the main sheep breeds on the Falkland Islands.

Imported to New Zealand in 1932, their adaptability to hot and cold temperatures, hilly and lowland areas and a wide range of rainfall makes them an ideal choice for farmers throughout the country.

Polwarth sheep have many characteristics which make them popular with farmers. Ewes are capable of year round breeding with higher incidence of twin births than other breeds and a good mothering ability. The lambs have lean carcasses making them popular for meat export markets. This coupled with the high quality wool production makes the Polwarth sheep a dual purpose animal with the one of the highest returns from a single breed.

The dual purpose characteristics of the Polwarth sheep reduce the worries for farmers breeding them as they are not as affected by seasonal price fluctuations in either the wool or meat markets. They also provide great opportunity for selective breeding as the most sought after traits (eg, robust animals, high quality wool, large fleeces, good quality lambs etc) are genetically dominant.

Due to the demand for high quality wools, such as from Polwarth sheep, farmers are increasingly able to see good returns from their hardy flocks.



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As mentioned earlier, Polwarth wool has many desirable qualities. The long staple length makes it easy for spinning and felting but also produces a strong, smooth and silky yarn with good stitch definition that takes dye well and can produce a beautiful woven fabric. Polwarth fibre is also ideal for mixing with other fine fibres like angora, baby alpaca and mohair.

The yarn itself is a great pleasure to dye because it takes the colours with great clarity and depth, meaning that whilst it shows off semi-solid colourways well, it also shows off variegated colourways particularly well. It's easy to achieve a smudged, watercolour sort of effect, with layer upon layer of colour building up.

## On the Road ... 2020



Since we last wrote to you, we have not heard of any further show cancellations. But we are looking forward to another 'digital' show, as our return to "*WoolFest*" after several missing years will have to be virtual.

*This image shows the last stall we had at Cockermouth back in 2014.*

This will work in the same way as "Wonderwool" did last month, within an open Facebook group between noon on Thursday, 25 June and noon on Sunday, 28 June. The aim is to capture the variety, atmosphere and friendliness of "*WoolFest*". This will start from approximately the "arrival for set up" time on Thursday through to that much-asked-for Sunday morning

session – something that the organisers have not been able to do "for real." Watercolours and Lace will be allocated a time slot, which we will try and let you know about. We are trying to decide what we can use: a photograph; a short video; a blog post; or a link to our website.

The organisers also hope to include interesting posts throughout the weekend, such as speakers, readings, a sheep shearing demo, craft interludes, music and even live Q&A's with members of The Wool Clip.

You can join in the fun via their Facebook group here.

One final note to add is that our planned 'Greta Escape Weekends' have been modified. As expected, the planned event in May has been cancelled, and the November event will now be a joint event covering Knitting and Crochet.

## On the Road ... 2020

All shows confirmed, except those marked (TBC)  
All shows with a grey background have been cancelled

YarnLace

1	22 Feb	Ware Lace Day	Sele Farm Community Centre, Hertford
2	14 Mar	Fenland Lace Day	Burgess Hall, St Ives
3	15 Mar	Essex Suppliers' Fair	Chelmer Valley HS, Chelmsford
4	18-19 April	Spring Into Wool	The Grammar School, Leeds
5	25-26 April	Wonderwool Wales	RW Showground, Builth Wells
6	2-3 May	Knit & Stitch	Rheged Centre, Cumbria
7	9 - 10 May	Cornish Fibre Festival	R Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge
9	6-7 June	Fibre Rocks	Dela Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
10	20-21 Jun	Woolly Weekend	Dilham Village Hall
11	26-27 Jun	Woolfest	Mitchell's Auctions, Cockermouth
12	25-26 July	Fibre East	Redbourne College, Ampthill
13	15 Aug (TBC)	Appleyard Fayre	Appleyard Farm, Banham
14	5-6 Sep	Southern Wool Show	Newbury Racecourse
15	26-27 Sep (TBC)	Yarndale	Skipton Auction Mart
16	3 Oct	Fenland Fair	Burgess Hall, St Ives
17	10-11 Oct (TBC)	Bakewell Wool Gathering	Agric Centre, Bakewell
19	14 Nov	Suffolk Lace Day	Kesgrave Community Centre
20	21 Nov	Aragon Lacemakers' Day	Addison Centre, Kempston
21	5 Dec	Lace, N'craft and Quilting Christmas Fair	Cranmore Park, Solihull

## Great Escape Weekends

	15-17 May	Cancelled	
18	6-8 Nov	Knitting & Crochet Weekend	Moor Hall, Cookham, Maidenhead

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