

# A Twisted Yarn

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

## The Watercolours and Lace Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue # 7

June 2020

### Yarn Club - The Sky is NOT! the Limit

Although there are still delays to overseas mail in some areas, we've decided to go ahead and run our next Yarn Club in the hope that things will continue to improve as lockdowns are eased. The theme for July to September will be "The Sky is (Not!) the Limit" and will be inspired by the skies we see around us, from bright blue summer skies with barely a cloud in sight, through misty morning skies, to the deeper colours of a sky at dusk. Lots of scope for blues, greys and a few other colours too. We've decided to include a mixture of yarns including some fine lace options for this club.



**Option 1** (4-ply/Lace mix) Falklands Merino 4-ply, Alpaca Silk 4-ply and Merino Silk Sparkle Lace. (Don't forget, if you prefer to use 4-ply you can always use the Sparkle Lace double to get a standard 4-ply weight.)

**Option 2** (All Lace) - Falklands Merino Lace, Alpaca Silk Lace and Merino Silk Sparkle Lace.

**Option 3** (Fine Lace/Lace mix) – Falklands Merino Light Lace, Suri Alpaca Merino Silk Fine Lace and Merino Silk Sparkle Lace.

As usual you'll get around 100g of each yarn (the Merino Light Lace will be 2 x 50g skeins), all in new colourways designed especially for this Yarn Club and not available outside of the Club until after the end of September. Subscriptions are available on the website here now until the end of July or earlier if the Club is full. Numbers are strictly limited, so sign up now.

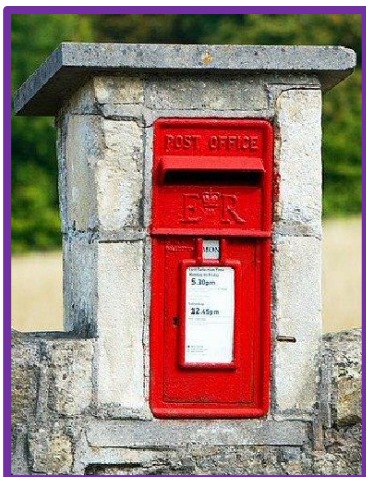
Please note that the increase in shipping rates to the USA (covered below) has a major bearing on prices, due to the need to post three separate packages at a much increased rate:

UK	£64.85	
Europe	£69.65	
World Zone 1	£73.55	excludes USA, Australia New Zealand and Singapore)
World Zone 2	£75.20	Australia, New Zealand and Singapore
World Zone 3	£83.00	USA only

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# USA Postal Charges



Sadly our shipping charges for packages to the USA will have to increase from 1 July, as Royal Mail have been forced to raise their prices. This is due to:

- a) An increase of more than 100% in the fees the US Postal Service (USPS) charges for the 'last mile' delivery of international mail
- b) Securing air freight at inflated market costs due to a 95% reduction in air passenger flights globally following the outbreak of Covid-19.

The new rates will result in an increase of nearly £3 for a package up to 200g, and higher increases for larger weights. We don't want to increase our charges but unfortunately have no alternative as we simply can't absorb this amount. If you are in the States and are looking to place an order, we'd encourage you to do so well before the end of June to take advantage of the current rates.

In future all our prices will be specifically calculated to be in line with the UK, Europe and three World zones now used by the Royal Mail.

## Postage in General

The Post Office here are recommending that US customers add an **extra three weeks** to expected delivery dates from the UK. USPS are apparently also holding parcels for three days to quarantine them.

Please be patient if you place an international order - the pandemic is still having a major impact on worldwide delivery and is obviously completely out of our hands. We can't be held responsible for delays, and are not liable for losses if your parcel is not sent tracked and insured.

We can offer a tracked and signed service to the USA (and elsewhere) on request. It does add to the cost but it means you can track your package right the way through the system and see exactly where it is at any time. Contact us by email before you place your order and we'll calculate the extra shipping for you, based on what you're planning to buy.

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## '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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## New Design and Sweater Quantities of Yarn

Julie has had a few requests from knitters wanting sweater quantities of yarn, which we usually produce as custom orders. We would obviously like to sell more of the larger quantities, but would like to know from those of you who do make garments - which yarn bases would you be interested in? We're looking at dyeing say 4-6 skeins as a garment pack, and there would be a discount on the per skein price for anyone buying multiples of at least 4 x 100g skeins. Our BFL and Alpaca 4-ply yarns are definitely on the list, but what else would you like to see available? Email [julie@watercoloursandlace](mailto:julie@watercoloursandlace) to let us know and we'll get dyeing!

This has prompted Julie to start work on a new design for a 4-ply cardigan (see teaser, right). The new design is called *Veronica* which is apparently of Latin origin meaning "*she who brings victory*". The name Veronica projects a triple image: at once saintly, sensuous, and strong. Veronica was the name of the compassionate woman who wiped Jesus's face when he was on his way to Calvary and whose cloth was miraculously imprinted with his image. She is now the patron saint of photographers. Then there was Veronica (born Constance) Lake, the peekaboo blonde of the 1940s, and the sultry, dark-haired rival of Betty in the Archie comics. And, more recently, we've had tough teen private eye, *Veronica Mars*. Veronica is also the name of a range of plants with small, bright blue flowers.



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## Did You Know - #64 - Gotland

The breed was first established on the Swedish island of Gotland by the Vikings with Karakul and Romanov sheep brought back from expeditions deep into Russia and crossed with the native landrace sheep. The Vikings were great seafarers as well as sheep farmers and took these animals on their extensive voyages to provide meat and skins along the route. Hence the spread of these Northern short-tailed sheep and the development into related breeds such as Goth, Icelandic, Finnsheep, Shetland, North Ronaldsay and Manx breeds. Some primitive horned Gotland sheep still exist on the island of Gotland today.



The Gotland Peltsheep (pälfsfår) or modern Gotland has been developed in Sweden since the 1920's through controlled breeding and intensive selection, producing a true multipurpose long wool sheep, yielding good flavoured close-grained meat, fur skins and soft silky lustrous fleece. In Britain we refer to these Gotland Peltsheep simply as Gotlands.

The pelt characteristics particularly attracted William Macdonald so that in 1972 he imported 110 Gotland sheep into Scotland to produce furskins for his Antartex Sheepskin Company. Lars and Anna Rooth made another importation, when they moved from Sweden to Sussex in 1984, also for producing furskins. These original importations have led to the establishment of about 40 pure bred Gotland flocks throughout Britain, with a concentration in the South West.

As well as producing furskins and beautiful fleeces for spinning or felting, Gotlands are prolific, milky and very motherly. Their lambs are active and fast growing from birth. These qualities, together with their hardy and adaptive nature, also make the Gotland half-bred ewe suitable for extensive grazing commercial systems, as practiced on the Scottish Islands.



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Fine-boned and of medium size, the sheep are usually hornless. The black head is free from wool, whilst it sometimes has white markings. They have dense, long, lustrous grey fleece, in shades of dark to light silver grey (as shown in the picture above left).

Gotland are a bright, active and friendly sheep full of curiosity. Ewes generally weigh from 55 to 70kg, with rams between 15 and 20kg are heavier. Lambs are born with a lush black birth coat and are very active and quick to suckle. They make rapid summer growth: 30 to 50kg at 6 to 7 months old dependent on litter size. Gotlands are not normally an early lambing breed but have been known to lamb on New Years Eve! Most British flocks lamb in March or April.

Gotland sheep are fine-boned and of medium size. Sometimes there may be white markings on the top of the head or around the nose and mouth. They have alert medium-sized ears that stand outwards with a small neat muzzle, an even jaw and even teeth. Their slender neck and shoulders set smoothly into a level back with good depth and reasonable breadth of body. The slender legs are well spaced and upright. The tail is short with a hair-covered tip. The fleece is fine, long, lustrous and dense and can be all shades of grey from silver to charcoal grey and dark enough to be almost black. In the United States "American" Gotlands can also be found in white and moorit (a reddish-brown colour). They have a clearly defined even curl (purl) and staple that is soft to the touch. The fleece is typically 29 to 34 micrometres in diameter. Lambswool can be in the low to mid 20s micrometre range. The fleece is prized in the United States by hand-spinners and in Europe they are most desired for their pelts.



## On the Road ... 2020

It is looking increasingly likely that we will not be having any more yarn shows this year. We have now heard that Yarndale has been cancelled, although organisers are hoping to arrange a 'digital show over the same weekend (end of September). We should be able to bring you further news over the next couple of editions of our Newsletter.

### 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	Sale 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	Wonderwood Wales	Rill Showground, Builth Wells
6	2-3 May	Knit & Stitch	Rhedeg 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, Cokermonth
12	26-26 July	Fibre East	Redbourne College, Amptill
13	5-6 Sep	Southern Wool Show	Newbury Racecourse
14	26-27 Sep	Yarndale	Skipiton Auction Mart
15	3 Oct	Fenland Fair	Burgess Hall, St Ives
16	14 Nov	Suffolk Lace Day	Kesgrave Community Centre
17	21 Nov	Aragon Lacemakers' Day	Addison Centre, Kempston
19	5 Dec	Lace, N'craft and Quilting Christmas Fair	Cranmore Park, Solihull

### Great Escape Weekends

8	16-17 May	Cancelled	
18	6-8 Nov	Knitting & Crochet Weekend	Moor Hall, Cookham, Maidenhead

Woolfest are planning an online virtual event within an open Facebook group from noon on Thursday 25 June to noon on Sunday 28 June. You can join the group here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2934562043307327/>

There will be an assortment of posts, videos, demos and blog posts so do please support the event and your favourite exhibitors if you can.

Looking further ahead, we have just heard that we have been turned down in our application for Bakewell Wool Gathering in October which is really disappointing.

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