

A Twisted Yarn

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

The Watercolours and Lace Newsletter

Volume 7

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February 2021

Early Spring Offers

Until Friday 12 March, newsletter subscribers can take advantage of the following offers:

5% off orders of £15 or more with Code **SPRING-5**, or
10% off orders of £25 or more with Code **SPRING-10**.
Just enter the relevant code when you checkout and it will
be deducted from your total payment.

Yarn Club - Spring Garden

The first set of three skeins in our new-style Yarn Club were despatched earlier this month. They've proved very popular and prompted some happy comments:

Irene (Cumbria): Arrived today. The colours are just beautiful. You have excelled Julie!



Anna (Cumbria): My lovely yarn has arrived safely and the colours are wonderful (as always). As the three colours work so well together, I am planning to weave a piece of fabric to make into an item of clothing.

We'll wait to show you the actual colours in next month's newsletter, just in case some of the international packages haven't arrived yet, but here just to tease you is a picture of the three skeins in greyscale!!

We'll be announcing the theme for the next Yarn Club in the March newsletter, so keep an eye out for that next month. In the meantime, we would like to stress that we do have contact with people from places other than Cumbria!

Your Projects

Alan wondered during an unusually idle moment recently what some of our customers might be making with our yarns if they weren't using one of Julie's designs. We can see a number of such projects on Ravelry but we know many of our customers don't use this platform, and we'd love to see more of them, so we invite you to email details and pictures to julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk - you might be featured in a future edition of the newsletter!



Julie Harris Designs

Watercolours & Lace

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Valid for any purchase of £15 or more
Please enter voucher code **SPRING5**

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Personal Shopping Appointments

It looks unlikely that any yarn events will be running before at least August this year. So, if you're missing the chance to look around our stand, you have an opportunity for a one-to-one virtual shopping session with Julie. These pre-booked appointments will take place using the online meeting app, Zoom, which you can access free of charge from a smartphone or a laptop/tablet with a camera. Each session lasts for 20 minutes, during which Julie can show you a selection of yarns and colourways and discuss suitable yarns for any design from our range. You can book a session in the webstore here - there is a £5 booking fee to reserve your slot but this will be deducted from any order placed on the day. Orders can be shipped worldwide as usual.



To start with, we've set aside two Saturdays - 13 and 20 March - for these sessions. If they prove popular then we'll arrange more dates over the following weeks. When you book your session, please add a note in the Customer Comments section explaining what you're interested in - 4-ply, lace or fine lace yarns, your preference for fibre or blend, and if there's a specific design you'd like to discuss. (Sadly we don't have space to build our whole stand in the house but we can create a section of it.) Julie can then show you her samples of the actual garment or accessory and discuss the best yarns to use. You can see the various colourways available, or order a custom dye. We know you won't be able to feel the yarn, but this is the next best thing!

Book your session now and we'll email you a link to use on the day. If you'd prefer to discuss the possibilities by email or phone first, please contact Julie on julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk or 01379 674427.

On the Road ... 2021

As we go to press we here in the UK are a little more optimistic, with government proposals for a gradual relaxation of lock-down being announced. The proposed stages for England – provided that the current trend of reducing COVID cases continues – are shown below:

Stage 1	8 March	School re-open; two people can meet outside
Stage 2	29 March	Two households can meet outside; outside sport allowed
Stage 3	12 April	Shops, hairdressers, gym, outdoor attractions open
Stage 4	17 May	Indoor hospitality; outside gatherings of 30
Stage 5	21 June	All limits on social contact scrapped

We are keeping our fingers crossed for “Southern Wool Show” and “Yarndale” in September.

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New Yarn



The continuing lockdown has enabled us to delve further into the darker recesses of our stockroom and we've found a few kilos of a cobweb weight blend of Wool, Silk and Cashmere, most of which is now available on the website. With a huge length of 2,250m per 100g, you get a lot of yarn for your money with this one and it will be perfect for stoles or shawls in those beautiful Shetland and Estonian lace designs which are so popular at the moment. We've dyed 45-50g skeins in a selection of our most popular colourways - these are available at a bargain price, for this fibre blend, of £12-£14 per skein, so they may not last long!

Cashmere Silk blend, clockwise from top left: Leafy Greens; Midnight Storm; Silvery Stars and Ruby Goes for Red

Did You Know #71 – Dalesbred

The Dalesbred is a breed of domestic sheep originating in England. Derived from the Swaledale and Scottish Blackface breeds, the Dalesbred is a northern hill breed distributed in the Yorkshire Dales and into Lancashire. The Dalesbred is genetically distinct from the other northern hill breeds, the Herdwick and Rough Fell.

Very similar in appearance to its parent breeds, both rams and ewes have distinctive horns and a white carpet-quality fleece. Scurs (see note below) are absent in the breed. It can be best distinguished by having a white spot on each side of its black face, with the end of the muzzle becoming grey. This breed is primarily used for meat and wool production. The legs are free of wool and are mottled black and white. Dalesbred ewes weigh 45 to 60 kg (99 to 132 lb) and rams 55 to 75 kg (121 to 165 lb).

Dalesbred are a hardy breed capable of surviving the harsh conditions of upland terrain. They are generally bred for several generations in this environment, then ewes are sold to lowland farmers for cross breeding to produce mules. Ewes are often crossed with Teeswater rams to produce the Masham which is one of the most famous of British crossbreeds.

Due to the location and small extent of its distribution, this breed was threatened during the foot-and-mouth disease epidemic in 2001. It is still considered at risk due to its distribution.



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Blackface

The Blackface or Scottish Blackface is a British breed of sheep. It is the most common sheep breed of the United Kingdom. Despite the name, it did not originate in Scotland, but south of the border.

History

The origins of the breed are uncertain. It was developed on the Anglo-Scottish border but it is not clear exactly when it became a distinct breed. It replaced the earlier Scottish Dun-face or Old Scottish Shortwool, a Northern European short-tailed sheep type probably similar to the modern Shetland.

There are several types of Blackface in the United Kingdom, including the Perth variety, which is large-framed and coarse-woolled, and mainly found in north-east Scotland, Devon, Cornwall and Northern Ireland; the medium-framed Lanark type, with shorter wool, found in much of Scotland and in parts of Ireland; and the Northumberland Blackface, which is large with relatively soft wool.

Swaledale

The Swaledale breed was covered in these pages in DYK #56 (July 2019).

Note

A scur is an incompletely developed horn growth. In cattle, scurs are not attached to the skull, whereas horns are attached and have blood vessels and nerves. Scurs also occur in sheep.

Welcome to ... Baarack



Those of you who have been with us for a while may remember a couple of pieces we did on Shrek, back in 2015. The first one came when we featured Merino in our *Did You Know #11 (August 2015)* and mentioned Shrek, a New Zealand Merino who, we suggested, was the most famous sheep as he had hidden in various caves over a period of 6 years to avoid being sheared. When he was caught, his fleece weighed 27kg (60lb). The following month we brought you



breaking news of Shrek 2. He came from Australia and his fleece weighed just over 40kgs (89lbs).

So we were delighted to see a piece on the news this week of another Aussie sheep who has been avoiding the shears. He has been dubbed Baarack and donated nearly as much as Shrek 2. Baarack had been living wild and was not in a good way when he was found with the heavy fleece of 35 kg (77lbs) covering his thin frame. You can see his Before and 'After' pictures above. The wild and struggling animal was found in a forest in Australia with a fleece that was so overgrown he could barely see. The sheep was found by a member of the public who contacted the Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary near Lancefield, Victoria, about 37 miles (60km) north of Melbourne.

"It would appear Baarack was once an owned sheep," said the Mission's Kyle Behrend. He had at one time been ear-tagged, however these appear to have been torn out by the thick matted fleece around his face.

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