

A Twisted Yarn

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

Volume 7

Issue # 6

April 2021

The Watercolours and Lace Newsletter

Special Offer

This section features yarns which are only available in limited quantities and which are unlikely to be repeated. They may be the end of a line, or just an interesting yarn or unusual fibre combination where only a few kilos were available. They are all suitable for knitting and crochet, and a real idea for those who like to experiment with various textile techniques.



We're still finding and dyeing more yarn in the Limited Edition boxes so we've decided to extend this offer to the end of May. Get 25% off any yarns in this category, using the coupon code **LIMIT21** at checkout. Julie has started adding some cobweb weight wool (900m/50g!!), as well as more of the Lambswool Silk Tweed Lace. We'll continue adding more throughout the next month so keep checking back for the latest listings.

Wool Cobweb Lace



Lambswool Silk Tweed Lace (750m/100g)



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Advent Calendars

Thank you to everyone who responded to our question about Advent Calendars. We have enough interest to go ahead with these and full details will be released in the June newsletter. We are planning both 4-ply and laceweight versions, and there will be 12 and 24 mini-skein options to choose from. The 4-ply will be our ever-popular Blue Faced Leicester wool, and the laceweight will be a merino-silk blend.

We will ask for a small deposit to book your slot and then full payment a little closer to the time we start dyeing, ready for delivery during November.



Gallery Page



type and colourway (the dyelot will be enough for us to work it out) and the name of the design.

It doesn't have to be one of Julie's designs - we love to see whatever you make with our yarns. Alternatively, if you're on Ravelry and can give us permission to use a photo from your account, we can take one from there. We look forward to seeing and sharing your wonderful projects.

We're often asked at shows what a particular yarn looks like knitted up. With over 600 colourways in our range, multiplied by how different the same recipe can look on another fibre or blend, it's obviously impossible to have samples of everything we have on show. Julie has added a Gallery Page to our website to show some of the colourways she's knitted up herself but we'd love to add some of your own creations. If you have a picture of a finished project you'd like us to include, please email it to julie@watercoloursandlace.co.uk with a note of the yarn

Colour Gallery

We're often asked at shows what a particular yarn colour looks like in a project. With over 600 colourways in our range, multiplied by how different the same recipe can look on another fibre or blend, it's obviously impossible to have samples of everything we have on show. This Gallery Page features some of the colourways Julie has used in samples and garments and will be added to regularly. Click on a photo to view a close-up image.
Please Note: colours are shown as accurately as possible but may look different on your monitor/screen.



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Yarn Clubs

– Emerald Isles

There are just a few places remaining on our forthcoming yarn club - subscriptions will close at midnight on **30 April**, so sign up now if you'd like to be included.

We know some of our regulars still prefer the old style of Yarn Club with skeins in three different fibres released over the three months of the subscription, so we'll be running the July-September club in that format and will probably alternate future clubs. Instead of a club running from October to December, we will have our Advent Calendars - see below..



All three skeins will be posted together as a single package during May, at a price of **£44** plus the relevant shipping. However, please note that if you order something else at the same time that you order the yarn Club, then this item will be posted in the same package.

Did You Know #73 – British Sheep

The last time we took an overall view on sheep breeds was in July last year (#65) when we looked at the role of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. This time, we will try to establish how many breeds there are in the UK and tell you the bare details on them all.

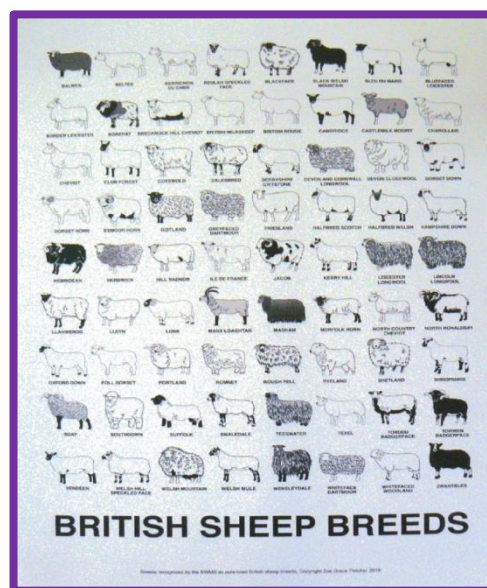
Our interest was first piqued when we found an A3-sized poster labelled 'British Sheep Breeds' (see right). The animals were all drawn by Zoe Fletcher and the poster originated in 2016. You can find it -----

British Sheep

The UK may seem like a small country but, when it comes to sheep, the country can boast it has the most breeds (including cross-breeds) of any other country. The United Kingdom has over 30-million sheep spread across it – and this makes up a third of the sheep population in Europe!

Through the ages, Britain has become one of the top breeding countries with superior breeding systems and now has some of the oldest sheep bloodlines to build on.

The 'British Sheep Breeds' poster by Zoe Fletcher ©



Different Stories

One of the challenges in this subject is finding a single authority! We had a look on the internet and found a site with a link giving a spreadsheet which includes 378 different sheep breeds throughout the world.: from Acipayam (Turkey) to Zwartbles (Netherlands). We have mentioned this site before - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_sheep_breeds - a useful starting point.

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If you look at Zoe Fletcher's poster, you can see there are 72 drawings and names. At the bottom of the poster it states "*Breeds recognised by the BWMB as pure bred British sheep breeds*". BWMB is of course, the British Wool Marketing Board. And there are some on this poster that do not appear on the world list. And, if you compare the list of sheep breeds with the details we gave about the RBST, there are some sheep on the poster that are not on the RBST list – and vice versa! So ... don't ask me how many British sheep breeds there are! We can probably say that there are "sixty – odd"!

Sheep are kept for a variety of reasons – for meat, milk, pelts, cross-breeding, vegetation management, genetic conservation – this is the 'Gute' breed from Sweden. One breed is even kept for trophy hunting! This is the 'American Blackbelly' – so you can guess where that hails from!



But of course, we are interested in the wool-producing sheep and you will be pleased to hear that over 100 of the breeds mentioned in the world list have 'wool' as one of their uses. Of the 'sixty-odd' British breeds, 15 have 'wool' as one of their purposes and we have featured 13 of them amongst these pages in previous versions of Did You Know : *Cheviot* (Sep 18), *Clun Forest* (Jan 20), *Cotswold* (Jul 16), *Dalesbred* (Feb 21), *Gotland* (Jun 20), *Jacob* (Sep 16), *Lincoln Longwool* (Feb 20), *Manx Loagthan* (Dec 19), *Masham* (May 18), *North Ronaldsay* (Oct 14 – the very first!), *Romney* (Jun 17), *Shetland* (Apr 15) and *Swaledale* (Nov 19).

Illustrating two of the more unusual purposes for keeping sheep: on the left is the American Blackbelly, for trophy hunting; and the Gute breed (below right) which is used for genetic conservation

That leaves us with a couple of British 'wool' sheep to look at in the future: *Devon & Cornwall Longwool* and *Lonk*. Of course, we also have 57 other British breeds that are not – apparently – kept for their wool. I say 'apparently' because one of these names is *Blue Faced Leicester* – probably our best-selling wool – so I think we will include these breeds in our future investigations!

There is a summary of our investigations overleaf. The 'Group' column is taken from the RBST's categories: Endangered (up to 500 animals); Vulnerable (500-900); At Risk (900-1500); Minority (1500-3000) and Other (over 3000).



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| Breed | Range | Type | Group | DYK | Origin | Use |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Badgerface Welsh Mountain | | | Other | May-17 | Wales | Meat |
| Balwen | Mid-Wales | Fine | At Risk | | Wales | Meat |
| Beulah Speckled Face | Mid-Wales | Hill | Other | | Wales | Meat |
| Beltex | North West | Hill | | | Belgium | Meat |
| Berichon Du Cher | Throughout UK | Fine | | | France | Meat |
| Black Welsh Mountain | Mid-Wales | Naturally Coloured | Other | | Wales | Meat |
| Bleu du Maine | Throughout UK | Medium | | Dec-18 | France | Meat |
| Blue Faced Leicester | Throughout Uk | Hill | Other | Mar-15 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Border Leicester | Throughout Uk | Medium | Minority | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Boreray | Scotland | Naturally Coloured | Vulnerable | Aug-17 | Scotland | Meat |
| Brecknock Hill Cheviot | Mid-Wales | Hill | Other | | Wales | Meat |
| British Milk sheep | Throughout Uk | Medium | | | United Kingdom | Milk |
| British Rouge | Throughout Uk | Fine | | | France | Milk |
| Cambridge | Welsh Borders & Central England | Medium | | | England | Breeding |
| Castlemilk Moorit | South West Scotland | Naturally Coloured | At Risk | | Scotland | Hobby |
| Charollais | Throughout Uk | Reedfine | | | France | Meat |
| Cheviot | Throughout Uk | Hill | Other | Sep-18 | Scotland | Meat, wool |
| Clun Forest | Welsh Borders & Central England | Fine | Other | Jan-20 | England | Meat, wool |
| Cotswold | Cotswolds | Lustre | At Risk | Jul-16 | United Kingdom | Meat, wool |
| Dalesbred | The Pennines | Mountain | Other | Feb-21 | United Kingdom | Meat, wool |
| Derbyshire Gritstone | Pennines & Peak District | Hill | At Risk | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Devon & Cornwall Longwool | South West | Lustre | At Risk | | United Kingdom | Meat, wool |
| Devon Closewool | South West | Medium | Minority | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Dorset Down | South West | Fine | Minority | Oct-16 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Dorset Longwool | | | Minority | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Exmoor Horn | South West | Hill | Other | Jul-17 | England | Meat |
| Friesland | Throughout Uk | Medium | | | Netherlands | Milk |
| Gotland | Throughout Uk | | | Jun-20 | Sweden | Meat, wool |
| Greyface Dartmoor | South West | Lustre | Minority | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Hampshire Down | Throughout Uk | Fine | Other | Nov-17 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Hebridean | Throughout Uk | Naturally Coloured | Other | | Scotland | Vegetation management |
| Herdwick | Lake District | Naturally Coloured | Other | Aug-16 | England | Meat |
| Hill Radnor | Mid-Wales | Hill | At Risk | Aug-18 | Wales | Meat |
| Ile De France | Throughout Uk | Fine | | | France | Meat |
| Jacob | Throughout Uk | Naturally Coloured | Other | Sep-16 | Middle East | Hides, meat, pet, wool |
| Kerry Hill | Welsh Borders & Central England | Hill | Other | Sep-15 | Wales | Meat |
| Leicester Longwool | East Midlands | | Endangered | Mar-21 | England | Wool, Meat |
| Lincoln Longwool | Yorkshire & Humberside | Lustre | Vulnerable | Feb-20 | England | Wool |
| Llandoverly Whiteface Hill | West Wales | | Other | | Wales/England border | Meat |
| Llanwenog | Mid-Wales | Medium | Minority | | Wales | Meat |
| Lleyn | Throughout Uk | Medium | Other | | Wales | Meat |

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|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--------|------------------|------------|
| Lonk | The Pennines | Hill | Minority | | England | Meat, wool |
| Manx Loaghtan | Isle Of Man | Naturally Coloured | At Risk | Dec-19 | Isle of Man | Wool |
| Masham | North England | Cross & Mules | | May-18 | England | Meat, wool |
| Norfolk Horn | East Anglia | Fine | At Risk | Nov-14 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| North Country Cheviot | North England | Hill | Other | Sep-18 | Scotland | Meat |
| North Ronaldsay | Isle Of Ronaldsay | Naturally Coloured | Vulnerable | Oct-14 | Scotland | Wool |
| Oxford Down | Throughout Uk | Fine | Minority | Nov-17 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Poll Dorset | South West | Fine | Other | Nov-17 | Australia | Meat |
| Portland | South West | Fine | At Risk | | England | Meat |
| Romney | South East | Medium | Other | Jun-17 | United Kingdom | Meat, wool |
| Rough Fell | Cumbria & Pennines | Mountain | | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Ryeland | Throughout Uk | Fine | Other | Apr-20 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Shetland | Shetland Islands & Throughout Uk | Hill | Other | Apr-15 | Shetland Islands | Meat, wool |
| Shropshire | West Midlands | Fine | Other | Jan-19 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Soay | Scotland | Naturally Coloured | At Risk | Sep-17 | Scotland | Meat |
| South Country | | | Other | | | |
| Southdown | Throughout Uk | Fine | Other | Nov-17 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| South Wales Mountain | South Wales | Mountain | Other | | --- | --- |
| Suffolk | Throughout Uk | Fine | Other | Nov-17 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Swaledale | North England | Mountain | Other | Nov-19 | United Kingdom | Meat, wool |
| Teeswater | North East | Lustre | At Risk | Feb-15 | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Texel | Throughout Uk | Medium | | Jun-19 | Netherlands | Meat |
| Torddu Badgerface | Mid-Wales | Naturally Coloured | | | | |
| Torwen Badgerface | Mid-Wales | Naturally Coloured | | | | |
| Vendeen | Throughout Uk | Fine | | | France | Meat |
| Welsh Hill Speckled Face | Wales | Hill | Other | | --- | --- |
| Welsh Mountain | Wales | Mountain | Other | May-17 | | |
| Welsh Mountain Pedigree | North England | Cross & Mules | Vulnerable | May-17 | | |
| Wensleydale | Throughout Uk | Lustre | At Risk | Nov-15 | England | Meat |
| Whiteface Dartmoor | South West | Lustre | Minority | | United Kingdom | Meat |
| Whitefaced Woodland | Pennines & Peak District | Hill | Vulnerable | Oct-15 | England | Meat |
| Zwartbles | Throughout Uk | Naturally Coloured | Other | | Netherlands | Meat, milk |

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