



The Journal of Dress History

Volume 5, Issue 2, Early Summer 2021

Front Cover Image:

Chapkan, circa 1700-1799, Velvet, Silk, and Silver, © National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, Baku, Azerbaijan, Ethnography Fund Inventory #3571.

A chapkan is a type of kaftan, worn by women and men, widespread in Azerbaijan, Iran, North Caucasus Turks, Turkey, and central Asia. The patterns on this chapkan reflect the fabrics and embroideries of the eighteenth century. Inside the silver contours, the flowers decorated with silk thread are called “Afshar flowers.” The Afshars are one of the ancient Turkic tribes. They settled in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkey. According to the patterns on this chapkan, the dress is called “Afshar chapkan.”

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Contents

Articles

- Knotting and Tatting:
The Dual Role of the Shuttle as a Fashion Accessory
and Instrument of Decoration
Cary Karp 8
- “For Those Who Enjoy an Interesting Piece of Knitting:”
Handknitting and Handknits in
British Domestic Magazines, 1910-1939
Eleanor Reed 48

Book Reviews

- The Competition of Fibres:
Early Textile Production in Western Asia, South-East
and Central Europe (10000-500 BC)
Wolfram Schier and Susan Pollock
Reviewed by Gulzade Abdulova 81
- Tudor Textiles
Eleri Lynn
Reviewed by Elizabeth L. Austin 85
- The Dyer’s Handbook:
Memoirs of an 18th-Century Master Colourist
Dominique Cardon
Reviewed by Katrina Balmer 89

**“For Those Who Enjoy an Interesting Piece of Knitting:”¹
Handknitting and Handknits in
British Domestic Magazines, 1910–1939**

Eleanor Reed

Abstract

Although early to mid twentieth century histories of handknitting are well documented, comparatively little research has been undertaken into the role in these histories of domestic magazines, which, appealing to and working to generate mass readerships of skilled and enthusiastic knitters, supported—and sought to profit from—a precipitous rise in the handicraft’s popularity. This article uses quantitative and qualitative analysis of The Knitting and Crochet Guild’s collection of 1910–1939 British domestic magazine knitting patterns to explore these publications’ treatment of handknitting and knitwear during a period in which knitting’s popularity soared, and the women’s magazine market boomed. Surveying a sample of 2538 patterns from 367 magazines representing 46 titles, this article spotlights, besides a rise in the popularity of knitwear and handknitting, a fall in the assumed expertise of knitters targeted by domestic magazines, and a growing intimacy in the commercial partnerships between these publications, yarn manufacturers, and pattern designers.

¹ Anonymous, “Child’s Fair Isle Jumper,” *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 25 March 1937, p. 830.

Introduction²

Amidst a “resurgence of interest in craft and making”³ and the Covid-19 pandemic, global enthusiasm for knitting is soaring, as people turn to the handicraft to relieve stress and make gifts that maintain connections with loved ones.⁴ Within Britain, there is a strong movement to remake historical garments:⁵ projects such as “Knit-along 2020!”⁶ reveal strong interest in “vintage” knitwear and knitting practices, which can prompt today’s knitters to reflect on their own approaches to making.⁷ A key period in knitting history was 1910–1939, witnessing the handicraft’s transformation from a utilitarian practice less popular than crochet into a national craze. Yet although early to mid twentieth century histories of British handknitting are well documented,⁸ little research has been undertaken into the critical role

² Research for this article was carried out during an Arts and Humanities Council-funded Creative Economy Engagement Fellowship at The University of Roehampton (2019) in Roehampton, England.

³ Emma Shercliff and Amy Twigger Holroyd, “Stitching Together: Participatory Textile Making as an Emerging Methodological Approach to Research,” *Journal of Arts and Communities*, Intellect Publishing, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England, Volume 10, Number 2, 2020, p. 6.

⁴ Kate Connolly, “From Ice Swims to Knitting: Europeans Seek Ways To Ride Out Covid Winter,” *The Guardian*, London, England, 30 October 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/30/from-ice-swims-to-knitting-europeans-seek-ways-to-ride-out-covid-winter>, Accessed 8 April 2021.

⁵ See:

Kat Jungnickel, *Bikes and Bloomers: Victorian Women Inventors and Their Extraordinary Cycle Wear*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States, 2018.

⁶ “Knit-along 2020!” was a Facebook knit-along run by the author of this article, Eleanor Reed, throughout January and February 2020, using a sweater pattern from *Woman’s Weekly*, 1923. Over 120 knitters joined the Facebook group, and the sweater was knitted in Britain, Sweden, and Australia. The author’s article about the knit-along appeared in:

Eleanor Reed, “Vintage Knits,” *Knitting*, GMC Publications, Lewes, East Sussex, England, June 2020, pp. 16–17.

⁷ Fiona Hackney, Clare Saunders, Joanie Willett, Katie Hill, and Irene Griffin, “Stitching a Sensibility for Sustainable Clothing: Quiet Activism, Affect and Community Agency,” *Journal of Arts and Communities*, Intellect Publishing, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England, Volume 10, Number 2, 2020, pp. 35–52.

⁸ Works include:

Sandy Black, *Knitting: Fashion, Industry, Craft*, V&A Publishing, London, England 2012.

Cally Blackman, “Handknitting in Britain from 1908–39: The Work of Marjory Tillotson,” *Textile History*, Taylor and Francis for the Pasold Research Fund, London, England, Volume 29, Issue 2, 2013, pp. 177–200.

Marnie Fogg, *Vintage Fashion Knitwear: Collecting and Wearing Designer Classics*, Carlton Books Limited, London, England, 2010.

Lucinda Gosling, *Knitting for Tommy: Keeping the Great War Soldier Warm*, Mary Evans Picture Library, History Press Limited, Stroud, Gloucestershire, England, 2014.

played by domestic magazines, which, appealing to mass audiences of skilled and enthusiastic knitters, worked to position knitwear at the forefront of fashion, and to generate consumers for expanding yarn and pattern markets. This article aims to fill this knowledge gap. The research on which this article is based engaged with a sample of 367 domestic magazines, knitting supplements, and tear-outs⁹ in the collection of The Knitting and Crochet Guild (KCG),¹⁰ representing 46 separate titles and issued during 1910–1939. Representing readers of a range of ages and from a range of backgrounds, this sample demonstrates the ubiquity of knitting in these publications across the period.¹¹ Outlined in what follows, analysis of this sample spotlights the contribution made by these publications to three important developments in the early to mid twentieth century history of knitting: the soaring popularity of both knitwear and handknitting, a fall in the assumed expertise of knitters targeted by patterns, and the increasing intimacy between domestic magazines and other agents in the knitting marketplace.

Methodology

In filling an important knowledge gap in the early to mid twentieth century history of handknitting in Britain, this article takes on a methodological challenge central to periodical scholarship: how best to analyse vast, verbal and visual texts in ways that are sufficiently representative, nuanced, and succinct.¹² Drawing on a “distant reading” approach pioneered by literary theorist Franco Moretti,¹³ studies of literature and periodicals by Michaela Mahlberg,¹⁴ Dan Cohen and Fred Gibbs,¹⁵

⁹ “Tear-outs” are knitting patterns torn out of magazines and supplements.

¹⁰ For more information about The Knitting and Crochet Guild, visit www.kcguild.org.uk.

¹¹ This research was carried out during an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (Techne)-funded six-month postdoctoral Creative Economy Engagement Fellowship at the University of Roehampton, London, England, 2019–2020, part-time.

¹² Bob Nicholson, “Counting Culture; or, How to Read Victorian Newspapers from a Distance,” *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Routledge, London, England, Volume 17, Issue 2, June 2012, pp. 238–246.

¹³ Franco Moretti, “Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History—3,” *New Left Review*, New Left Review Ltd., London, England, Volume 28, July–August 2004, pp. 46–63.

¹⁴ Michaela Mahlberg, “Corpus Linguistics and the Study of Nineteenth-Century Fiction,” *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Routledge, Leeds, Yorkshire, England, Volume 15, Issue 2, August 2010, pp. 292–298.

¹⁵ Dan Cohen, “Searching for the Victorians,” Keynote: Victorians Institute Conference, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, United States, 1–3 October 2010, <https://dancohen.org/2010/10/04/searching-for-the-victorians>, Accessed 4 January 2021.

Bob Nicholson¹⁶ and, more recently, Bartholomew Brinkman¹⁷ highlight the value of quantitative textual analysis, which reveals some of the “larger structures” of meaning within which texts are produced.¹⁸ Mahlberg, Cohen and Gibbs, and Nicholson mine digitised texts to pinpoint what Mahlberg calls “cultural keywords:” terms that, having relevance to a given demographic at a given time,¹⁹ reveal “overall trends” within texts’ cultures of production.²⁰ Brinkman uses keyword searches to identify topics of interest, and poems addressing these topics, in a sample of digitised early twentieth century magazines.²¹ Collectively, these studies demonstrate the value to periodical scholarship of Moretti’s approach, which enables the analysis of texts too vast to be read in their entirety by a single researcher in a limited amount of time.

Unlike those carried out by Mahlberg, et al., this study could not be undertaken using a searchable version of the text sample, as the magazines in question have yet to be digitised. Rather than via text mining or keyword searches, therefore, information about the sample of 2538 patterns was extracted from a spreadsheet of data, built using a tagging system developed by the KCG’s Publications Curator, Dr. Barbara Smith. The basis of the pattern catalogue of the KCG collection, Dr. Smith’s system encompasses categories including designer’s name, craft (knitting, crochet), item (e.g., table mat, sweater), item type (e.g., homeware, garment), intended wearer by age and gender (e.g., woman, teenage girl), recommended yarn brand and weight, construction techniques (e.g., two needles, four needles), and attributes pertaining to the item’s shape and design, such as sleeve length, neck shape, fastenings, and embellishments. These categories formed the columns of the spreadsheet; the relevant information from each pattern in the sample was entered into each column, along with the pattern’s title, magazine of origin, and publication date. Quantitative analysis of this information highlights shifts in the production of domestic magazine knitting patterns over time, for instance, the rising popularity of knitting versus the falling popularity of crochet, the emergence of the so-called sweater craze.

¹⁶ Nicholson, op cit.

¹⁷ Bartholomew Brinkman, “Women’s Poetry in the Modern British Magazine: A Case for Medium Reading,” *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1890s-1900s*, Faith Binkes and Carey Snyder, Editors, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, Scotland, 2019, pp. 313-328.

¹⁸ Moretti, op cit., p. 63.

¹⁹ Mahlberg, op cit., p. 293.

²⁰ Cohen, op cit.

²¹ Brinkman, op cit.

In an article of this length, it is impossible to consider the implications of shifts within each of the categories listed in the previous paragraph. Owing to the exigencies of space, therefore, this article will focus on data concerning craft, item, intended wearer, the average number of patterns per publication, and yarn brand. Analysed quantitatively, this information illuminates, and positions the sample within, the following three wider developments in knitwear fashions and handknitting practices: a rise in the popularity of knitwear and knitting, the latter seemingly at the expense of crochet; a fall in the assumed expertise of knitters; an increase in the intimacy of commercial relationships between yarn manufacturers and pattern designers, and domestic magazines. Woven into a “distant reading” of quantitative change, qualitative analysis of individual patterns elicits deeper understanding of the discourses that produce and are produced by these developments.

Knitwear and Handknitting Rise in Popularity

Knitting patterns were an established feature of women’s magazines by the start of the twentieth century, having appeared in society journal *The Queen* from the early 1860s.²² The KCG collection contains an example from the early 1900s;²³ domestic titles launched during the 1910s, notably *My Weekly* (1910) and *Woman’s Weekly* (1911), printed knitting patterns from the outset. During the interwar period, 1919–1939, a growing culture of woman-centred consumerism,²⁴ along with a steep decline in the number of individuals willing to enter domestic service in middle class homes, led to a boom in the publication of domestic magazines;²⁵ knitting patterns were a stalwart of many new titles, enabling the development of creative

²² Black, op cit., p. 129.

²³ Anonymous, “Pattern of Knitting and Crochet-work Suitable for a Shawl in Fine White Shetland Wool,” *The Girl’s Own Paper and Woman’s Magazine*, Lutterworth Press, London, England, February 1902, p. 402.

²⁴ Fiona Hackney, “Woman Appeal: A New Rhetoric of Consumption: Women’s Domestic Magazines in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Women’s Periodicals and Print Culture in Britain, 1918–1939: The Interwar Period*, Catherine Clay, Maria DiCenzo, Barbara Green, and Fiona Hackney, Editors, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, Scotland, 2018, pp. 294–295.

²⁵ Cynthia White, *Women’s Magazines, 1693–1968*, Michael Joseph Ltd., London, England, 1970, pp. 95–96.

skills,²⁶ facilitating the production of items that—unlike the housework supported elsewhere in these publications—would last, and increasing value for money.²⁷

Comprising material saved by readers, the KCG domestic magazine collection is itself testament to their value. Promoted on front covers, where they might catch the notice of browsing consumers, knitting patterns clearly numbered among magazines' most marketable assets, and were central to the feminine lifestyles and identities that they produced. Women's magazine scholars, most notably Margaret Beetham, have established that these identities were complex and multi-faceted,²⁸ and knitting patterns support this complexity. Urging readers to knit for family members and friends, patterns for menswear, childrenswear, and items for babies engender commitment to domestic service²⁹ and, less oppressively, perhaps, love and care for others;³⁰ encouraging readers to knit for themselves, patterns for womenswear cultivate interest in the latest knitwear fashions.³¹ On a quantitative level at least, the sample indicates that interwar domestic magazines' commitment to updating their readers' wardrobes outweighed their commitment to serving or caring for others, for womenswear is by far the largest category, accounting for 1057 out of 2528 patterns. Since almost half of these patterns are for sweaters, and since the sweater's increasing vogue was a key factor in handknitting's interwar rise in popularity, this garment is the focus of this section.³²

²⁶ Fiona Hackney, "Quiet Activism and the New Amateur: The Power of Home and Hobby Crafts," *Design and Culture*, Bloomsbury, London, England, Volume 5, Issue 2, 2015, p. 172.

²⁷ Fiona Hackney, "Making Modern Women, Stitch by Stitch: Dressmaking and Women's Magazines in Britain 1919–39," *The Culture of Sewing: Gender, Consumption and Home Dressmaking*, Barbara Burman, Editor, Berg, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, 1999, p. 77.

²⁸ Margaret Beetham, *A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800–1914*, Routledge, London, England, 1996, p. 1.

²⁹ Megan Ward, "'A Charm in those Fingers': Patterns, Taste, and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*," *Victorian Periodicals Review*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, United States, Volume 41, Issue 3, Fall 2008, pp. 248–269.

³⁰ Katherine Harrison and Cassandra Ogden, "'Knit 'n' Natter': A Feminist Methodological Assessment of Using Creative 'Women's Work' in Focus Groups," *Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, United States, 2020, pp. 1–17.

³¹ Blackman, op cit., p. 180.

³² A note about terminology: in this article, "sweater" refers to an upper-body garment with short sleeves or long sleeves, which is pulled over the head and has no front opening. As will become clear, patterns in the sample frequently refer to these garments as "jumpers." In Britain, "sweater" and "jumper" can be used interchangeably, to denote the same garment; in the United States, however, a "jumper" refers to a short, pinafore-style dress. "Sweater" is used throughout this article, to avoid confusion.

1910s

Throughout the 1910s, domestic magazines targeted readers who, evidently, much preferred crochet to knitting. In the sample of 107 publications issued during 1910–1919, crochet patterns outnumber knitting patterns significantly, 576 to 391, and with the exception of decorative linen edgings, doilies, and elaborate bedspread squares, the majority of knitting patterns are for functional items, such as socks, vests, and shawls. When domestic magazine readers knit garments, these patterns suggest, their primary object is to keep themselves and their families warm.

Privileging crochet over knitting, patterns printed in domestic magazines during the 1910s belong to a much wider trend. At the turn of the twentieth century, handknitting had been a comparatively low-status craft, “used solely to make utilitarian garments for warmth, babies’ and children’s garments or edgings for decorative household objects.”³³ Crochet, on the other hand, had enjoyed significant cachet, Queen Victoria having been a devotee.³⁴ Domestic magazines’ clear preference for crochet over knitting continues this trend into the twentieth century’s second decade: certainly for the women on low incomes targeted by titles such as *Home Chat*, *Woman’s Weekly*, and *Home Companion*, crochet would have offered an affordable means of producing decorative, “luxury” items, which perhaps explains why patterns for crocheted edgings and insertions, collars and cuffs, and elaborate bedspread squares—flowers, animals, St. George and the dragon, a plum pudding—proliferate in these publications during the 1910s.

Signs of change are emerging however, in the form of five patterns for sports coats, four knitted and one in crochet, that were printed in *Woman’s Weekly*, *The Girl’s Own Paper* and *Woman’s Magazine*, and *People’s Friend* knitting supplement *Aunt Kate’s Home Knitter*. A type of cardigan, the sports coat was adopted as an item of informal dress around 1909, becoming the first item of knitted outerwear to enter mainstream fashion, and around the same time, home craft publications such as *Weldon’s Practical Needlework* started popularising handknitting itself.³⁵ *Woman’s Weekly* called its version of the sports coat “The Pattern of Queen Mary’s Hand-Knitted Coat” and printed it alongside a photograph of the queen wearing hers:³⁶ emphasising that the coat is handknitted and drawing readers’

³³ Blackman, op cit., pp. 177–178.

³⁴ Annie Louise Potter, *A Living Mystery: The International Art and History of Crochet*, A.J. Publishing International, City Unknown, United States, 1990, p. 95.

³⁵ Blackman, op cit., p. 180.

³⁶ Anonymous, “The Pattern of Queen Mary’s Hand-Knitted Coat,” *Woman’s Weekly*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 16 December 1911, p. 201.

attention to its royal model, this pattern signals clearly that both the handicraft and the garment are gaining fashionable standing. Knitting and knitwear are losing the mostly utilitarian status they had at the start of the century, despite the continuing preference for crochet over knitting shown by *Woman's Weekly* and its sister titles.

1920s

By the 1920s, knitting had overtaken crochet in popularity amongst domestic magazine readerships: in a sample of 27 publications issued during this decade, knitting patterns outnumber crochet patterns, 160 to just 41. Alluding to rapid growth in the popularity of handknitting, the sample belongs, once again, to a much wider trend, for whilst enthusiasm for the craft had increased during the 1910s, it was during the 1920s that it really escalated. That domestic magazines played, however, a comparatively minor role in this rapid rise is suggested by the form taken by their engagement with knitting during the First World War.

Although knitwear had begun to enter mainstream fashion during the early 1910s, and although enthusiasm for handknitting had begun to increase at around the same time, the First World War was a key factor in the handicraft's rise in popularity. As Lucinda Gosling shows, from the war's outbreak in the summer of 1914, a British volunteer army of "an unprecedented size" needed kitting out, and knitters responded enthusiastically, churning out woollen comforts that aimed to mitigate the harsh conditions of trench and naval warfare.³⁷ Knitting expressed patriotism, showed love and support for service personnel, and helped to soothe the anxiety of those awaiting news: the craft became "a national mania" and was taken up by people of all ages, classes, and genders.³⁸

It is significant, therefore, that the sample does not reflect the enthusiasm for producing knitted comforts recorded by Gosling, for out of 87 patterns published in 11 wartime magazines, just one is for service knitwear: a pattern for socks, in *Home Notes* 5 October 1918.³⁹ Whilst a sample of patterns from 11 magazines is by no means representative of the genre as a whole, it does seem surprising that it offers so little evidence of the "national mania" for handknitting comforts—or, indeed, for knitting itself, for crochet patterns still significantly outnumber knitting patterns, by 58 to 16 (the rest of the patterns in the sample are for other crafts).

³⁷ Gosling, *op cit.*, pp. 9–11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁹ Anonymous, "Socks!" *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 1 October 1918, p. 8.

Rather than a sign that the editors of these publications did not wish to support their readers' patriotic knitting endeavours, they hint at a conviction that their "war service" was, in part at least, the provision of escapism through crafting. By continuing to publish patterns for edgings and insertions, collars and cuffs, doilies, and functional garments for babies and small children, and by continuing to favour crochet over knitting, these craft pages invoke a sense of continuity, and by working these patterns, readers might maintain a comforting sense of peacetime normality amidst traumatic circumstances. Patterns for service knitwear were, after all, readily available in books and pamphlets produced by charities and yarn manufacturers,⁴⁰ and since the garments themselves were relatively plain, there would have been little need for numerous versions. A more detailed analysis of a larger sample is needed to confirm this; nevertheless, the sample does suggest that, although domestic magazines embraced knitting during the 1920s, during the conflict that contributed substantially to the rapid rise in the handicraft's popularity, they maintained their established preference for crochet.

Knitting patterns in the sample of magazines from the 1920s confirm that during this decade, sweaters became firmly established as a key element of a fashionable wardrobe. The war had increased women's "need for practical, functional and economic forms of dress"⁴¹—*The Girl's Own Paper and Woman's Magazine* obliged in November 1917, with a pattern for a "comfortable little jersey"⁴²—and once peace resumed, fashions for women continued to adapt, in reflection of their wearers' increasingly modern lifestyles and growing social freedom.⁴³ Haute couture collections by designers including Coco Chanel (1883–1971), Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973), and Jean Patou (1880–1936) raised the status of knitted outerwear further,⁴⁴ and although domestic magazines including *Home Companion* and *Woman's Weekly* continued printing patterns for crocheted personal and domestic embellishments, acknowledging perhaps the tastes of older readers, the sample shows a marked rise in patterns for women's outerwear: dresses, skirts, and, especially, sweaters.

⁴⁰ Gosling, op cit., p. 111.

⁴¹ Blackman, op cit., p. 180.

⁴² Anonymous, "A Magyar Jersey in Plain Knitting," *The Girl's Own Paper and Woman's Magazine*, Lutterworth Press, London, England, November 1917, p. 107.

⁴³ Fogg, op cit., p. 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

The new enthusiasm for sweaters is particularly pronounced, for whereas the sample contains just two sweater patterns from the 1910s, it contains 19 from the 1920s, and a pattern, in *Woman's World*, for "Jumper Lace" edging for a sweater.⁴⁵ Sweaters had been worn increasingly by women from the late nineteenth century. In line with the growing emancipation of women, they participated increasingly in sports,⁴⁶ but it was during the 1920s that the so-called "sweater craze" really took off. These garments were tubular, skimming the figure to produce the straight-up-and-down silhouette associated with "flapper" fashions.⁴⁷ Bold and colourful designs, such as the checkerboard pattern on a *People's Friend* sweater,⁴⁸ invoked the jazz age,⁴⁹ although there remained a trend in *Woman's Weekly* and *Home Notes* for more elaborate, lacy designs, which reconcile these brand-new garments with crafting fashions and practices of the previous decade. Indeed, sweater patterns in both magazines combine crochet with knitting, requiring makers to crochet lacy edgings onto knitted garments.⁵⁰ Flexible, modest, and comfortable, sweaters were embraced by athletic, fashion-conscious young women, who found the sweaters ideal for activities such as driving, dancing, and sport.⁵¹ Capturing this spirit, the front cover of *Modern Weekly* 12 February 1927 promotes a pattern for a "Striped Jumper" using images of sporty-looking young people on a golf course, with a motor car in the background. Embracing, thus, the sweater craze, the knitting (and crochet) pages of domestic magazines published during the 1920s transitioned from home-crafting to fashion features,⁵² and in doing so, appealed to their readers as women keen to participate in the latest, forward-looking lifestyles.

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "Jumper Lace," *Woman's World*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 2 October 1920, p. 373.

⁴⁶ Black, op cit., pp. 158-162.

⁴⁷ Fogg, op cit., p. 25.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, "Lady's Knitted Jumper," *Aunt Kate's Knitting Book*, John Leng and Co. Ltd., London, England, circa 1920s, pp. 33-34.

The 1920s is cited as the publication date for this work because the book does not include a publication date and the 1920s appears to be the decade in which it was published.

⁴⁹ Black, op cit., p. 61.

⁵⁰ For example, see:

Anonymous, "A Magyar Jumper with Crochet Trimmings," *Woman's Weekly*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 6 October 1923, pp. 462-463.

Anonymous, "Crochet-Trimmed Jumpers," *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 24 March 1924, pp. 560-561, 580.

⁵¹ Jane Waller, *A Stitch in Time: Knitting and Crochet Patterns of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s*, Gerald Duckworth and Co. Limited, London, England, 1971, p. 2.

Fogg, op cit., p. 26.

⁵² Blackman, op cit., p. 180.

1930s

By the 1930s, knitting had well overtaken crochet as domestic magazine readers' craft of preference. In the sample for this decade, 235 magazines representing 42 different titles, there are 1235 knitting patterns and only 97 crochet patterns, an emphatic reversal of the balance evident just two decades previously. Practical and comfortable, knitted sweaters were firmly established as a female wardrobe staple by the 1930s,⁵³ and domestic magazines were flagbearers of this trend: of 551 women's outwear patterns in the 1930s sample, 338 are for sweaters. In line with demands within wider fashion for a curvy, more "feminine" shape,⁵⁴ these garments were now fitted rather than tubular, and accentuated their wearers' figures with belted waists, puff sleeves, and exaggerated necklines, collars, and yokes. Drawing readers' attention to these features, pattern titles work them into mainstream fashion, highlighting their "smartness"⁵⁵ and (feminine) "prettiness" (Figure 1).⁵⁶ Patterns in the sample also highlight domestic magazines' complicity in the 1930s trends for large buttons, and soft, "feminine" textures produced using openwork, lacework, and cabling.⁵⁷

⁵³ Fogg, op cit., p. 48.

⁵⁴ Black, op cit., p. 165.

⁵⁵ Anonymous, "Such a Smart Cravat Collar," *Woman's Pictorial*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 20 November 1937, p. 11.

⁵⁶ Anonymous, "A Bow Is So Pretty," *Woman's Pictorial*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 22 April 1939, p. 26.

⁵⁷ Cabling is a technique that includes knitting stitches over or under one another, to produce patterns with a "woven" effect.

WOMAN'S PICTORIAL, November 20, 1937 11



SUCH A SMART CRAVAT COLLAR

*This Attractive Jumper is knitted
in a Pretty Cable-Stitch*

remain. Then proceed without further shaping until armhole measures 6 inches deep on the straight. Then shape the shoulders by casting off 5 sts. at the beginning of the next 12 rows. Cast off remainder for back of neck.

Sleeves are Both Alike

With No. 11 needles cast on 60 sts. and work in ribs of k. 1, p. 1 for 3½ inches, knitting into the backs of the sts. in the 1st row. Change to No. 6 needles and work thus:

1st row: K. 2nd row: P. 1, k. 2, p. 4.
* K. 2, p. 2, k. 2, p. 4; repeat from * until 3 remain, k. 2, p. 1.

3rd row: As 1st row. 4th row: As 2nd row.

5th row: K. 3, slip next 2 sts. on spare needle and place at back of work, k. next 2 sts., then k. off the 2 sts. on spare needle, * k. 6, cable the next 4 sts. as just described; repeat from * until 3 sts. remain, k. 3.

6th row: As 2nd row.

These 6 rows form the pattern for the sleeve. Repeat them once, then continue in pattern, but increase 1 st. at both ends of every 8th row until there are 84 sts. Then proceed without further shaping until sleeve

Figure 1:
*Knitting Pattern, "Such a Smart Cravat Collar,"
Woman's Pictorial,*

Amalgamated Press, London, England,
20 November 1937, p. 11,

© The Knitting and Crochet Guild, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, England.

Running a home on a limited budget was a key focus of many interwar domestic magazines, and knitting patterns blended high fashion with economy:⁵⁸ especially during the 1930s, when readers were badly affected by the Great Depression.⁵⁹ Hollywood films offered escapism during these difficult times, and Hollywood stars emerged as trendsetters:⁶⁰ the sweater receives Hollywood's approval in a *Home Notes* pattern for a short-sleeved angora sweater, a "Jumper Like Deanna Durbin's!"⁶¹ Durbin's expensive appearance contrasts strongly with the cheap, brownish paper on which her image is printed, yet this pattern brings her glamour within reach of the twopence publication's low-income target readers who, for the price of a few balls of yarn and four knitting needles, can wear a sweater like the film star's. Sweater patterns also reflect a craze for sport, health, and fitness, *Woman's Pictorial* and *Wife and Home* dressing their readers for the tennis court, and *My Weekly* preparing its readers for a range of outdoor activities, declaring of a ribbed, polo-necked sweater that, "if you play games or watch games, go for country walks or drive a sports car, here is your jumper!"⁶²

Besides sweaters, patterns for women's garments in the 1930s sample include 132 cardigans, 12 twinsets, 12 jackets, four coats, and a lumber jacket, a spencer, and a coatee. Collectively, these patterns confirm that, by the end of the interwar period, handknitted outerwear had fully entered mainstream women's fashion. The handicraft's rise in status is highlighted by a striking "Wedding or Party Dress" with a long train, billowing sleeves, and "Mary Stuart" head-dress" and veil, designed by Thea Scott for readers of *Woman's Friend*.⁶³ That this pattern names its designer is highly unusual, for generally, domestic magazines presented patterns anonymously or attributed them to their own knitting editors, probably teams of individuals working behind pseudonyms such as "Dorcas" (*Home Companion*) or "Finella" (*Wife and Home*).

⁵⁸ Black, op cit., p. 130.

⁵⁹ Fogg, op cit., p. 48.

⁶⁰ Black, op cit., p. 165.

⁶¹ Anonymous, "A Jumper Like Deanna Durbin's!" *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 25 March 1939, pp. 828-829.

⁶² Anonymous, "Grand for Sports Wear," *Lillie London's New Season's Knitted Jumpers*, John Leng and Co. Ltd., London, England, 1935, p. 3.

⁶³ Thea Scott, "Your Wedding or Party Dress," *Woman's Friend*, Newnes and Pearson Printing Co. Ltd., London, England, 13 June 1935, pp. 20-21.

Scott's identity remains a mystery, but her pattern's setting makes it likely that her name would have been recognised and respected by readers of *Woman's Friend*: a photograph of the dress occupies most of the issue's front cover, and the pattern itself is introduced by a note from Scott that, declaring that the "frock" appeared "nearly a hundred times" at a recent fashion show, establishes the garment as high fashion. Like the "Deanna Durbin" sweater, this frock blends glamour with economy, appealing to readers with the promise that it cost "under £1" to make, which still would have been a considerable outlay for the target readership of a twopence magazine.

For those who could not afford the yarn, or had no need of the dress, the following page presented a cheaper and more practical means of buying into its designer: a pattern for vest and knickers, with the title—"She Designed These Undies"—alluding to the value of Scott's name by placing its designer centre-stage.⁶⁴ Lauding their designer, urging brides-to-be to showcase a handknitted dress at their wedding, these patterns emphasise that, by the 1930s, handknits were established at the forefront of affordable fashion, and that as such, they had become a key selling point of domestic magazines.

The Assumed Expertise of Knitters Falls

This article will turn, now, from the development of knitting and knitwear trends to the development of knitting patterns themselves. As Table 1 shows, although knitting and knitwear exploded in popularity during 1910-1939, the average number of patterns per magazine issue dropped, from just over nine to fewer than six.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

Table 1:
Patterns per Magazine, 1910-1939⁶⁵

Decade	Total number of knitting and crochet patterns	Total number of magazines	Average number of knitting and crochet patterns per magazine
1910-1919	967	107	9.02
1920-1929	201	27	7.44
1930-1939	1331	235	5.66

This quantitative reading highlights changes in the layout and content of patterns, which occupied increasing amounts of page space as a consequence. A number of factors account for these changes. Knitwear designs themselves grew more complicated, requiring more elaborate instructions, and improvements in print technology made possible the inclusion in magazines of more, and higher quality, illustrations.⁶⁶ Indeed, the latter innovation supported a switch from drawing to photography in magazine fashion illustration more generally, photography being better suited to the purposes of advertisers, who wanted to show garments in close detail.⁶⁷ Promoting the latest knitwear designs, the images illustrating knitting patterns belong to this trend. Alongside these developments, however, the KCG sample indicates that there was a drop in the assumed expertise of knitters; it is this development that the following paragraphs will examine. Their focus is, specifically, patterns issued during 1910-1929, since it is between these decades that changes to pattern layout and content were most radical.

⁶⁵ Source: spreadsheet constructed by the author of this article, Eleanor Reed, based on information from patterns in domestic magazines issued 1910-1939, in the collection of The Knitting and Crochet Guild, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, England.

⁶⁶ David Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States, 1880-1960*, The British Library, London, England, 1997, pp. 149-152.

⁶⁷ Sophie Kurkdjian, "The Emergence of French *Vogue*: French Identity and Visual Culture in the Fashion Press, 1920-40," *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, Intellect, London, England, Volume 6, Number 1, 2019, p. 70.

1910s

To a twenty-first century knitter, the layout of patterns in domestic magazines published during the 1910s reflects a preference for quantity over clarity. It was usual during the 1910s for cheaper titles in particular to include them alongside crochet, embroidery, and, occasionally, tatting, in a general handicraft feature: *Home Companion's* "Fancywork" of 31 January 1913 is a typical example, cramming five patterns (three crochet, two knitting) onto just three pages of small, closely-set type.⁶⁸ *Woman's Weekly's* first ever knitting pattern, for bed socks, is squeezed into the bottom right-hand corner of a page dominated by two crochet patterns, for lace edgings for household linen (Figure 2).⁶⁹

Like those in *Home Companion*, all three patterns are arranged in columns, and are written continuously, without a line break between each row. Both crochet patterns are illustrated with photographs showing close-ups of the finished work in white yarn against a black background; the knitting pattern, however, is unillustrated, and is much briefer than its companions, occupying just 13 lines of written text. As sock patterns go, it is relatively simple, but even so, it lacks detail; knitters are instructed to "Do this for about eighteen or twenty rows," for instance. Although we can safely assume that its knitter would know already what bed socks should look like, a photograph would help to clarify the finer points of their construction. The other notable distinction of this pattern is that it lacks information about measurements, tension, and materials. Knitters are instructed to cast on 80 stitches for women's socks and 90 for men's—but they are not told how large or small the socks should be, which weight of yarn or size of needle they should use to get the correct dimensions, or how to adjust their size to fit their wearer.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, "Fancywork," *Home Companion*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 31 January 1913, pp. 15–17.

⁶⁹ Anonymous, "Knitted Bed Socks," *Woman's Weekly*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 4 November 1911, p. 4.

4 WOMAN'S WEEKLY. November 4, 1911.

The First Mistletoe Lace Pattern Ever Designed!

This lace is worked with Arden's crochet cotton No. 40.

The motifs are worked first, and then sewn to a crochet foundation, made in the filet net pattern.

For the foundation net make 109 chain and turn.

1st row: 1 treble into the 4th chain, 1 treble in each of the next 2 chain, * 3 chain, miss 3 chain, 1 treble in the next chain; repeat from * 22 times, 3 treble in the next 3 chain, 3 chain, 1 treble in the 4th chain, 1 treble in each of the next 3 chain, 3 chain for a treble. Turn. 2nd row: 3 treble on 3 treble, 3 chain, 4 treble on treble, * 3 chain, 1 treble on treble; repeat from * 21 times, 3 chain, 4 treble on treble, 3 chain for a treble. Turn. 3rd row: 3 treble on treble, * 3 chain, 1 treble on treble; repeat * 22 times, 3 treble on 3 treble, 3 chain, 4 treble on 4 treble, 3 chain for a treble. Turn. 4th row: Same as 2nd. 5th row: Same as 3rd, 8 chain, join back to 3rd chain made at the end of 1st row. Turn. 6th row: 15 double crochet in the loop of 8 chain, 1 slipstitch to treble in the 5th row, 8 chain. Turn. 7th row: * 1 double crochet between the 3rd and 4th double crochet, 5 chain; repeat from * 3 times, slipstitch to the top of last treble worked in the 1st row, 1 chain. Turn. 8th row: 7 double crochet in each loop, slipstitch to 3rd chain in last loop; repeat the 2nd row. 9th row: Same as 3rd row; repeat from the 2nd row for length required.

For the Motifs: Make 80 chain, 1 double crochet in each chain. Turn.

* 5 double crochet into 5 double crochet, 13 treble in next 13, 5 double crochet into next 5. Turn. Repeat from * once, 3 more double crochet into last double crochet. Turn work, double crochet in each of the 26 stitches. This forms a leaf. 3 double crochet on stem, 26 chain. Turn. 1 double crochet in each chain. Turn. * 1 double crochet in each of the first 5, 1 treble in each of

stitch up to the point of leaf. Turn and work 1 double crochet into each of the first 24 slipstitches. * 25 chain. Turn. Miss 1 chain, 1 double crochet into each of the next 24 chain. Turn. 5 double crochet into 5 double crochet, 12 treble in next 12, 7 double crochet into the next 7. Turn. 7 double crochet on 7, 12 treble on 12 treble, 5 double crochet on 5. Turn. Slipstitch into each stitch up to the point of the leaf. Turn. 1 double crochet in each of 24 stitches. * 1 slipstitch into each of the next 21 stitches of stem, 1 double crochet into each of the next 18 on the main stem. Repeat from * to *. In every alternate motif two more leaves are to be worked here by working * 25 chain. Turn. Miss 1 chain, 1 double crochet in each of the 24 chain. Turn. 5 double crochet, 12 treble, 7 double crochet. Turn. 7 double crochet, 12 treble, and 5 double crochet. Turn. Slipstitch to point. Turn. 1 double crochet in the 24 stitches; repeat from * for the other leaf. These two last leaves are to be worked on the other side of principal stem as is clearly seen in the sketch.



Something quite new. This is the first time a mistletoe design has been used in lace making. Specially designed for "Woman's Weekly" readers, and it is one of the most charming patterns ever devised. Corner will be explained in No. 3. Next week beautiful holly design. The illustration is half actual size.

15 double crochet in the loop of 8 chain, 1 slipstitch to treble in the 5th row, 8 chain. Turn. 7th row: * 1 double crochet between the 3rd and 4th double crochet, 5 chain; repeat from * 3 times, slipstitch to the top of last treble worked in the 1st row, 1 chain. Turn. 8th row: 7 double crochet in each loop, slipstitch to 3rd chain in last loop; repeat the 2nd row. 9th row: Same as 3rd row; repeat from the 2nd row for length required.

For the Motifs: Make 80 chain, 1 double crochet in each chain. Turn.

the following 15, 1 double crochet in each of the next 5. Turn. Repeat from * once. Turn. Slipstitch up to point. Turn. 1 double crochet in each slipstitch, 18 double crochet in the 18 on the stem, 45 chain, miss 1 chain, and work 1 double crochet into each of the next 23 stitches. Turn. * 1 double crochet into 5 double crochet, 1 treble on each of next 13 double crochet, 5 double crochet on each of the next 5. Turn. Repeat from * once. Work 1 double crochet on each of the remaining 21 chain. Turn. Slipstitch into each

are to be worked on the other side of principal stem as is clearly seen in the sketch.

For Berries: Make 5 chain, join in a circle, and work 8 double crochet in circle, join, then work 2 double crochet in each double crochet of last row, and join. These berries are to be sewn as shown in the illustration. Pin the motifs in position right side up, on the filet foundation, then turn the foundation on to the wrong side, and sew neatly all round the leaves and berries.



This edging is specially effective for underclothes threaded with ribbon.

Beautiful holly design next week. Another great novelty.

The corner of the mistletoe pattern will be in No. 3 "Woman's Weekly."

Figure 2:
Knitting Pattern, "Knitted Bed Socks," *Woman's Weekly*,
 Amalgamated Press, London, England, 4 November 1911, p. 4,
 © The Knitting and Crochet Guild, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, England.

Other 1910s patterns in the sample show that this lack of visual or written detail is far from unusual. Whilst most patterns for complex knitted lace are illustrated by photographs, which would help knitters to interpret written directions and spot mistakes, this is not always the case. An unillustrated “Spider Pattern for Shawls” in *People’s Friend* supplement *Aunt Kate’s Home Knitter* even omits instructions to knit or purl every other row, a structural convention of lacework.⁷⁰ Garment patterns are usually accompanied by drawings, but these show their basic shape whilst revealing little about their construction. A “Child’s Double-Breasted Coat” in *Home Companion* is a good example of this: its drawing confirms that it is textured, but the construction of the collar and cuffs is visually unclear. Intriguingly, the coat in the illustration appears to have a small pocket on its left-hand side, but written instructions for working this are not given (Figure 3).⁷¹

The *Woman’s Weekly* bed sock pattern is not the only pattern in the 1910s sample to be completely unillustrated, and although some patterns do recommend yarn weights and needle sizes, many leave readers to choose their own. Very few give specific measurements, and none give sizing alternatives. Requiring knitters to select appropriate materials, make sizing adaptations, and interpret often brief written instructions without knowing precisely how the finished garment should look, these patterns target experienced and accomplished knitters. Whilst tutorial “Knitting Terms Explained” in a 1913 issue of *Home Companion* reminds us that this magazine at least did not expect every member of its readership to be expert at the handicraft, the layout and content of these patterns show that during this decade, most were assumed to be highly skilled.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, “Spider Pattern for Shawls,” *Aunt Kate’s Home Knitter*, John Leng and Co. Ltd., London, England, pre-1914, p. 18.

Pre-1914 is cited as the publication date for this work because the book does not include a publication date and appears to have been published before 1914. In lace knitting worked backwards and forwards on two needles, as this shawl is, it is usual to work the “fancy” stitches that give the fabric its lacy texture in rows going in one direction, and then “set” these stitches by working back over them in knit or purl stitches: put simply, every alternate row in lacework is usually worked plain. Omitting this direction, presumably to save space, the pattern assumes that its maker understands this convention without having to be told, implying thereby that she is an experienced lace knitter.

⁷¹ Anonymous, “A Child’s Double-Breasted Coat,” *Home Companion*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 23 September 1911, p. 15.

These Four Pages can be Detached from the Paper for Future Reference.



CHILD'S DOUBLE-BREASTED COAT.

This coat is knitted in one piece, and fits a child from two to three years.

Required: 5 skeins of 3-ply best fingering wool, 1 pair of finest bone knitting-needles, 4 steel medium knitting-needles. Commence at bottom of back. Cast on 103 stitches.

1st row: Knit plain. *2nd row:* Purl. *3rd row:* Purl. *4th row:* Plain. *5th row:* * Knit 3, purl 1; repeat from *, ending row with knit 3. *6th row:* Knit 1, * purl 1, knit 3; repeat from *, ending row, purl 1, knit 1. *7th row:* * Knit 3, purl 1; repeat from *, ending row with knit 3. *8th row:* Knit 1, * purl 1, knit 3; repeat from *, ending row with purl 1, knit 1. *9th row:* * Knit 3, purl 1; repeat from *, ending row with knit 3. *10th row:* Knit 1, * purl 1, knit 3; repeat from *, ending purl 1, knit 1. *11th row:* * Knit 3, purl 1; repeat from *, ending with knit 3. *12th row:* Knit 1, * purl 1, knit 3; repeat from *, ending with purl 1, knit 1.

These 12 rows form the pattern to be knitted throughout the coat. Knit 2 patterns, then decrease 1 stitch on each end of needle every 6th row until there are 8 stitches decreased on each end, having 87 stitches on the needle. Knit 5 patterns. Start sleeve by casting on 50 stitches on each end of needle. Knit 3 patterns. This will be full length of coat. Slip 71 stitches on a spare needle, the next 45 stitches on another spare needle for collar, and on the other 71 stitches, knit one front after the following, and the other front to correspond. Knit 2 patterns for shoulder, cast on 40 stitches towards front; there should be 111 stitches on the needle. In the 4th row make a buttonhole by casting off 4 stitches, and in the next row cast same stitches on again. Make buttonholes every 4th pattern. Knit 3 patterns, cast off 50 stitches for sleeve, and knit 5 patterns on front, then increase 1 stitch towards side-seam every 6th row until there are 8 stitches increased; 69 stitches on needle. Knit 2 patterns. Cast off loosely. Knit the other side of front.

COLLAR.—With the steel needles, leave the first 12 stitches on the front of coat on both sides, then pick up 30 stitches across front and shoulder; the 45 stitches from spare needle on back; 30 stitches across shoulder and front on other side. There should be 105 stitches. Decrease these to 78 by knitting 2 together at intervals, at front and back. *2nd row:* * Knit 1, purl 1; repeat from * to end of row. *3rd row:* Knit like last row, make a buttonhole on right side. Knit 10 plain rows the same rib. Make another buttonhole. Now increase

1 stitch on each end of needle every 2nd row for 20 rows. Cast off loosely.

CUFF.—With steel needles pick up 50 stitches around bottom of sleeve. Rib in 1 plain, 1 purl for 10 rows. Then knit plain for 20 rows, increase 1 stitch each end of needle at centre of sleeve from seam every 2nd row. Cast off loosely, sew up cuff. Sew up side-seams of coat and seams of sleeves. Face front of coat with ribbon both sides for buttonholes and buttons.

THE LOVELACE KNITTED EDGING.

Cast on 28 stitches, and knit across. *1st row:* Slip 1, knit 1, * make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 1; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 2. *2nd row:* Make 1, knit 2 together, purl until 4 remain, knit these 4. Every alternate row is worked like this. *3rd row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 3, make 1,

stitch over; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 1, knit 2 together, * knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1; repeat from * 3 times, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, make 1, knit 2. *15th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, * make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, make 1, knit 3; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, make 1, knit 2. *17th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, * make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 1; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 3, make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 3, make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over; repeat from * 3 times, make 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, * make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, make 1, knit 3; repeat from * twice, make 1, slip 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, make 1, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1. *25th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, * make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 1; repeat from * 3 times, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1. *27th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 3, make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over; repeat from * twice, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1. *29th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, * knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1; repeat from * twice, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1. *31st row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, * make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, make 1, knit 3; repeat from * twice, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1. Work another row like the 2nd, then repeat from the 1st row.

(Directions for working insertion to this pattern will appear shortly.)

TEA-POT EDGING.

(By request.)
Commence with 55 chain.
1st row: 1 treble in the 5th and 4



A Useful Little Jacket.

slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over; repeat from * twice, make 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2. *5th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, * knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1; repeat from * twice, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2. *7th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, * make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped stitch over, make 1, knit 3; repeat from * twice, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, make 1, knit 2. *9th row:* Slip 1, * knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 1, knit 2 together, make 1; repeat from * 3 times, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2, make 1, knit 2. *11th row:* Slip 1, knit 1, make 1, knit 2 together, knit 2 together, * make 1, knit 3, make 1, slip 1, knit 2 together, pass slipped

THE HOME COMPANION.

September 23rd, 1911.

Figure 3:
Knitting Pattern, "A Child's Double-Breasted Coat," Home Companion, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 23 September 1911, p. 15, © The Knitting and Crochet Guild, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, England.

1920s

In the 1920s sample, however, knitting patterns are laid out in much the same way as they are today. Reflecting and reinforcing handknits' increasingly fashionable status, editors now work to sell patterns, in introductions highlighting their most attractive features. "This jumper is quickly and easily worked...It shows the new Peter Pan collar, and would be equally effective if worn with a muslin collar and cuffs and a black ribbon bow" (Figure 4 and Figure 5).⁷²



Figure 4:
Knitting Pattern,
 "A Knitted Jumper
 with Rainbow
 Embroidery,"
Woman's Weekly,
 Amalgamated Press,
 London, England,
 9 August 1924,
 Front Cover,
 © The Knitting
 and Crochet Guild,
 Slaithwaite,
 Yorkshire, England.

⁷² Anonymous, "A Knitted Jumper with Rainbow Embroidery," *Woman's Weekly*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 9 August 1924, p. 216. An ellipsis was added by the author of this article, Eleanor Reed.

**A KNITTED JUMPER
WITH RAINBOW EMBROIDERY.**

This Pretty Jumper with Chain Stitch Embroidery is Illustrated on the Cover.

THIS jumper is easily and quickly worked and is ideal for the holidays. It shows the new Peter Pan collar, and would be equally effective if worn with a muslin collar and cuffs and black ribbon bow.

MATERIALS
SEVEN ounces of Beshive Shetland Flax, and two ounces of Beshive Rainbow wool, a set of four knitting needles No. 3, pointed at both ends.

SIZE AND TENSION
LENGTH from shoulder to hem, 21 inches; bust 46 inches; length of sleeve from neck to cuff end, 23 inches. Work at a tension to produce 4 stitches to one inch in width on the stocking web.

Begin at front hem of jumper. Cast on 94 stitches and knit in rib of 1 plain and 1 purl alternately for 2 rows.
Do 2 rows plain.
* 2 rows stocking stitch (1 row plain and 1 row purl alternately), beginning and ending with a plain row, then 2 rows plain. This forms stocking stitch bands 2 inches deep, separated by raised lines of garter stitch.
Repeat from * until work measures 16 inches, when there should be 6 bands of stocking stitch, then cast on 25 stitches at the end of each of the next 2 rows for the sleeves, when there should be 164 stitches in the row.
Continue knitting in the pattern for another 24 rows.
NEXT ROW: Knit 76 in pattern, cast off 12 for front neck, knit 76 in pattern. Continue on these 76 stitches for first shoulder. On the next 3 plain rows knit 2 together at neck end to continue the shaping for neck, when there should be 73 stitches on the needles.
The next raised ridge forms the fold for top of shoulder. After working this ridge, continue the shaping for the back of neck by increasing one stitch at neck end on the next 3 plain rows.
Now leave this shoulder for the time being, and work the

second shoulder to correspond, finishing at neck end of the row. Cast on 12 stitches for back of neck, and knit across first shoulder stitches.
Continue knitting in pattern until there are 2 more raised ridges from cast-on stitches at back of neck, then cast off 25 sleeve stitches at each end.
Now work on for same number of rows as on front, then work the 8 rows in rib of knit 1 and purl 1 alternately. Cast off loosely.

THE COLLAR
PICK up 50 stitches round the neck edge, beginning at centre front, for the collar, and using 3 needles with points at each end. Knit 6 rows in stocking stitch, but knitting 2 stitches plain at beginning and end of every row on the collar. The right side of stocking stitch to be to the inside of the garment, as the collar folds over.
NEXT ROW: Knit 5 and make 1 alternately all along, thus increasing the stitches to 60.
Knit 2 rows plain.
Do 8 rows stocking stitch, then increase again as before.
Knit 2 rows plain and cast off very loosely.

THE CUFFS
PICK up 45 stitches round sleeve edge for the cuffs, and knit 15 rows (or depth of cuff required) in rib of 1 plain and 1 purl to correspond with the hem of jumper. Cast off loosely.
Sew up sleeve and under-arm seams.

THE EMBROIDERY
THE jumper is decorated with rainbow wool, worked in chain stitch on every alternate band of stocking stitch. Any braiding transfer in a narrow border design would be suitable. Just tack the transfer on the knitting, and work chain stitch loosely over the design, then tear the paper away. Work the design also on cuffs and collar.

Figure 5:

Knitting Pattern, "A Knitted Jumper with Rainbow Embroidery,"
Woman's Weekly, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 9 August 1924,
p. 216, © The Knitting and Crochet Guild, Slaithwaite, Yorkshire, England.

Emphasising the speed and ease with which this sweater can be made, associating it with a brand-new trend, and suggesting how it might be worn, this introduction frames the handknit as a widely accessible fashion item, emphasising this status much more clearly than do patterns issued during the 1910s, which usually begin without preamble. The editor's emphasis on the pattern's simplicity is important, for it is far simpler to follow than its predecessors from the previous decade. Rather than being written through from start to finish, it is divided into sections, separated by gaps and clearly headed with bold, capitalised type. The "MATERIALS" section specifies yarn brands, weights, and quantities, and needle size; "SIZE AND TENSION"⁷³ are now detailed as well, enabling knitters to work to specified dimensions; instructions are divided into paragraphs, one per section of the garment, and they include explanations that help knitters understand more clearly

⁷³ Tension is defined as the number of stitches per inch required to produce a garment of the specified size.

what they are trying to produce. The changes in content and layout in this *Woman's Weekly* pattern are typical of those in other publications, which now list materials, followed by sizing and tension, before outlining the pattern itself, divided into separate, headed sections. Some patterns also include instructions for blocking finished garments,⁷⁴ and furthermore, most now contain photographs, either alongside the written instructions or on front covers. Giving instructions in separate stages, recommending materials, and referring to images that are substantially more detailed than they were during the 1910s, these patterns target knitters with a lower level of assumed expertise.

Once again, this development is motivated by the First World War. This article has shown already how the conflict triggered a craze for knitting, as citizens worked to churn out homemade comforts for service personnel: many of those who answered their country's call for knitwear were first-time knitters, and the items they produced were not always fit for purpose.⁷⁵ Needing to guarantee the quality and usefulness of service knitwear, the sample suggests, patterns became clearer, a development exemplified by the *Home Notes* pattern for socks, referred to above. Subtitled "that positively ANYONE can make" and introduced with its writer's reassuring (and probably false) confession that until "recently" she herself was a novice knitter, this pattern addresses beginners directly.⁷⁶ Its instructions are clear and precise, detailing exact stitch and row counts, and, laid out in separate rows, they can be followed one at a time, and marked off when complete. That the pattern assumes its maker capable of casting on, working purl, plain, and slip stitches, and knitting in the round without needing explicit directions gives the lie to its claim "that positively ANYONE" can follow it; nevertheless, it is far more detailed than any of the pre-war domestic magazine sock patterns in the sample, including the *Woman's Weekly* pattern for bed socks discussed above, indicating that it assumes a much less expert knitter. Again, further work on a larger pattern sample is needed to determine precisely where and how knitters' expertise was assumed by pattern designers to be falling during this period, and it is clear that other developments, including more complex designs and developments in print technology also contributed to changes in patterns' content and layout. Nevertheless, these changes can be attributed, at least in part, to the need by novice wartime knitters for instructions that were clearer and easier to follow.

⁷⁴ Blocking is defined as the process of washing and "setting" the knitted item into shape, which could include ironing the knitted item through a damp cloth.

⁷⁵ Gosling, pp. 19–21.

⁷⁶ Anonymous, "Socks!" *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 1 October 1918, p. 8.

Advertising Revenue Rises in Importance

The final aspect of the pattern sample that this article will address is their relationship to their host publications' consumerist project: how they encouraged magazine readers to spend money, on knitting materials and domestic magazines themselves. The focus here is knitting supplements, which, working to extend existing readers' loyalty and entice new readers with the promise of something extra, presented these publications with significant opportunities to profit.

Given away free, advertised on front covers, knitting supplements are further evidence of the craft's huge popularity amongst interwar domestic magazine readers, who were clearly eager for more patterns than could be accommodated by a weekly knitting page. Even those who could afford neither the time nor the materials to work all of the patterns that they would like to might enjoy browsing through them, selecting their favourites, and updating themselves on the latest trends. Pre-internet forerunners of knitting blogs and pattern-sharing websites such as *Ravelry*, these publications help to establish browsing and hoarding patterns as a pleasurable aspect of the craft. Targeting, for instance, mothers and grandmothers (*Lillie London's Baby Wear Book* [*My Weekly*], *Woollies for Your Baby* [*Mother and Home*]), wives (*Pullovers and Cardigans for Men* [*Lady's Companion*]), and novices (*The Easy Way Knit and Sew Book* [*Woman's Way*]), some knitting supplements create opportunities to engage with specific interest groups within broader readerships; others anticipate seasonal trends, seeking to profit from key moments in the fashion year (*Spring Knitting* [*Home Notes*], *Autumn Knitting* [*Woman's Sphere*], *Winter Woollies* [*Wife and Home*]). There are 61 supplements in the sample, subsidiary to 26 different "mother" titles: of these supplements, eight were issued during the 1910s, three during the 1920s, and 58 during the 1930s, a distribution signalling that, as domestic magazine publication boomed and handknitting grew in popularity, the former worked increasingly to profit from their readers' enthusiasm for the craft.

Besides courting new readers and strengthening existing readers' loyalty, knitting supplements reinforce domestic magazines' commercial partnerships with pattern designers and yarn manufacturers. Knitting patterns have long been associated with commerce, early pattern books having been produced by wives of wool traders:⁷⁷ by the 1920s, advances in textile technology were expanding yarn production dramatically, and manufacturers supported publications that promoted their

⁷⁷ Sherrin Berezowsky, "Refashioning the Past: Technology, Nostalgia, and (Neo-) Victorian Knitting Practices," *Neo-Victorian Studies*, Neo-Victorian Studies, Swansea, Wales, Volume 8, Issue 2, 2016, p. 10.

products.⁷⁸ Fiona Hackney highlights the intimate relationship between *Woman's Weekly* and Bestway, the company that produced many of the magazine's knitting patterns during the 1920s and 1930s, and which was owned by the title's publishers, Amalgamated Press. Given the interdependency of pattern selling and magazine production, Hackney notes, it is "no coincidence" that knitting patterns were promoted on *Woman's Weekly's* front covers.⁷⁹ *Woman's Weekly's* partnership with publisher-owned Bestway was especially close, but it is clear that knitting was a key revenue source for many magazines. Supplying more patterns and more copy space, supplements increased the number of product placement opportunities available to the manufacturers of recommended yarns, offered room for a greater number of advertisements, and—crucially—targeted audiences guaranteed to be interested in the commodities on offer.

Issued during the 1920s, *The Lady's World Fancy Work Book* is a good example. Of its 27 patterns, 24 recommend yarns, made by 10 different manufacturers; of these manufacturers, eight advertise their yarns in the supplement, which also features adverts for two yarn shops, and "Genuine Fair Isle Jumpers" from Shetland. In meeting *Lady's World* readers' demand for knitting patterns, this supplement draws revenue from a range of market shareholders, for whom it works to create a consumer base. The printing of adverts for yarn manufacturers whose products are recommended by patterns is astute, ensuring their exposure to knitters who make only one or two of the patterns. By the 1930s, yarn manufacturers' sponsorship of knitting supplements is more monopolous and more obvious. Each of the nine patterns in *Mother's Family Knitting Book* recommends a Patons and Baldwins yarn, and, lest the manufacturer's presence be not felt strongly enough, the supplement's front cover is headlined "PATONS and BALDWINS WOOLS" and its back cover is a "PandB" advert. Supporting adverts and yarn recommendations, knitting editors champion manufacturers' cause. "See these shades from the Ladyship Scotch Fingering range and see how effective they are" writes *My Weekly's* Lillie London, her introduction for a sweater pattern in *The 1935 Jumper Book*.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Blackman, op cit., pp. 189, 193.

⁷⁹ Hackney, 1999, op cit., p. 77.

⁸⁰ Anonymous, "A Striped Top—And an Unusual Colour Scheme," *The 1935 Jumper Book*, John Leng and Co., London, England, 1935, p. 11.

But although knitting patterns and supplements work hard in the commercial interests of both their host publications and the broader knitting marketplace, the way in which the handicraft is presented complicates its relationship with consumerism. Besides emphasising garments' status as desirable fashion items, patterns highlight the pleasure of handknitting, a productive activity, itself. "A Jumper You'll Love to Make" declares a *Home Notes* front cover of a sweater pattern;⁸¹ in a separate issue of the same magazine, a schoolgirl's Fair Isle sweater pattern appeals to "those who enjoy an interesting piece of knitting."⁸² Further emphasis on the pleasure of knitting is made by patterns highlighting details of construction, which appeal to readers who enjoy the process of making, besides wearing, fashionable clothes. "The bodice and sleeves of this delightful frock are knitted in an exciting new tufty stitch"⁸³ exclaims *Woman's Pictorial*, foregrounding the thrill of working this novel detail. Exploring knitting's relationship with consumerism, Jo Turney observes that knitters are positioned as consumers, of materials; producers, of items made from these materials; and consumers, of the finished items.⁸⁴ Reinforcing her point, these patterns appeal to domestic magazine readers as producers as well as consumers, acknowledging them as skilled craftswomen who, in keeping up with the latest fashions, take pleasure in cultivating their expertise.

⁸¹ Anonymous, *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 11 September 1937, Front Cover.

⁸² Anonymous, "Child's Fair Isle Jumper," *Home Notes*, Pearson Publishing Company, London, England, 25 March 1939, p. 830.

⁸³ Anonymous, "Your New Spring Dress," *Woman's Pictorial*, Amalgamated Press, London, England, 5 March 1938, p. 15.

⁸⁴ Jo Turney, "Here's One I Made Earlier: Making and Living with Home Craft in Contemporary Britain," *Journal of Design History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Oxfordshire, England, Volume 17, Issue 3, 2004, p. 269.

Conclusion

During 1910–1939, British domestic magazines nurtured and sought to profit from their readers' growing enthusiasm for both knitwear and handknitting, contributing to the soaring popularity of both. During this period, knitting patterns were a key selling point of these publications: promoted on front covers and in free supplements, the handicraft was marketed as a highly enjoyable activity, integral to the pleasure of consuming the magazines themselves. Selecting patterns and choosing yarns, using both to produce comfortable, fashionable garments for themselves and their loved ones, domestic magazine readers who knitted could prolong the enjoyment they gained from their initial, cheap purchase: we can imagine them savouring an extended sense of anticipation as they worked on their projects, watching them take shape, and experimented with new stitches and techniques. Demanding extended visual and manual engagement, often requiring a high level of skill, knitting patterns authenticate domestic magazines' more illusory joys, and complicate the consumerist impulses that they seek to cultivate.

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