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“Need it be said that the first and most important step is to choose the best material available? I, of course, use wool...”

- Elizabeth Zimmermann, *Knitter's Almanac*, 1974

Newsletter #26 fall 2014

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Dear Knitter,

For those of us living in northern climes, crisp fall air reinvigorates the knitting spirit. Whether a small project of cap, scarf or socks, or an afghan that keeps your lap warm while knitting, the impending cold of winter adds a pleasurable urgency to the knitting.

If you are reading this in a more temperate zone, our **Icelandic Laceweight** is a wonderful material for any climate. We now offer six new, exciting colors (*see p2*) which add to the versatility of this beautiful wool.

Wherever you reside, subscribers may take advantage of....

10% off, plus free shipping* on any order over \$75

Offer good through 9/30/13 (use promo code 'fall sale').

*US postage only. International orders will be credited the equivalent US rate.

WOOL GATHERING



Faroese Shawls
schoolhousepress.com

The Fall *Wool Gathering* is here

-featuring 2 beautiful
Meg Swansen Faroese Shawls.

Subscribe now and we'll include 2 free
back issues of our choice.



New colors of
Icelandic Laceweight



New colors of
Ultra Alpaca



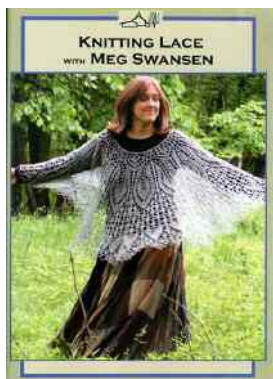
Wool. I never tire of talking about, and praising this miraculous stuff. Yes, I was heavily brain-washed by my mother, but I find all her justifications for its superiority to be irrefutable.

We have added six new colors to our *Icelandic Laceweight* palette. With the first wash of this wool, the sizing that is added to the spinning process is removed, and the garment softens and 'blooms'. Of the two Faroese shawls in the new *WG#91*, you can see that the pink Icelandic Laceweight wool is finer than the red *Shetland-Spindrift Jumperweight* version (see *Q1*, p4).

In deference to knitters who prefer softer fibers, we introduced Berrocco's *Ultra Alpaca* a number of years ago (50% wool, 50% alpaca). It produces a denser fabric than 100% wool, but is luxuriously soft. The mill changes their colors with great frequency, and here are seven new shades.

Good Knitting,
KCO

Want to get started with lace? Meg's *Mananita dvd* is a great tutorial and features 3 separate lace designs.



Or choose a lace *Schoolhouse Press Patterns*: #7, 9, 25, or 48.

Meg also used the Laceweight for her Lace Tunic, featured in the book, *A Gathering of Lace*.

Unspun Icelandic



Aqua and Chartreuse are back in stock.

Both *Baby Pink* and *Lake Blue* have been discontinued, so order while supplies last.

New Products



SPPs

(Schoolhouse Press Patterns)

L to R: *SPP#37* Meg's Twisted-Stitch Peplum Jacket,
SPP#53 Two Klein Bottle Hats by Debbie New,
SPP#52 Meg's North African Pullover,
SPP#31 Autumn Color Fair Isle by Betts Lampers.

Here are just three of the splendid new books reviewed in WG#91:

Shetland Textiles, 800 BC to the Present edited by Sarah Laurenson

Dutch Traditional Ganseys, Sweaters from 40 Villages by Stella Ruhe

Viking Knits & Ancient Ornaments, Interlace Patterns from Around the World in Modern Knitwear by Elsebeth Lavold

(click on the links to read about them on our site)

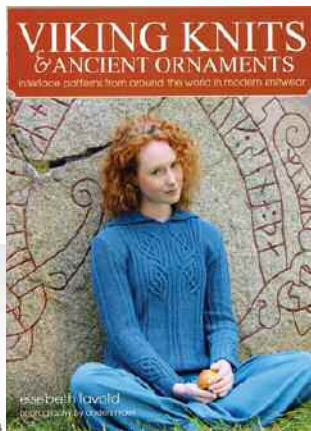


SHETLAND TEXTILES
800 BC TO THE PRESENT

Edited by Sarah Laurenson



STELLA RUHE
DUTCH TRADITIONAL GANSEYS sweaters from 40 villages



Elizabeth Zimmermann Signature Necklace

This cream oval pendant featuring Elizabeth's original drawing and signature is handmade by Jennie The Potter and comes with a removable 16" silver chain necklace.

Q&A

Q1: Hi Meg - I would appreciate your clarification:

Page 81 [of *Elizabeth Zimmermann's Knitter's Almanac*; *Plain Shawl, Circular*] - what type of yarn can I use of this shawl? Is it equivalent to double knit/sport weight?



Am going on a long bus ride, and think this will be a perfect project for my long boring trip.

Thanks Meg, and look forward to hearing from you.

A: Good question, dear Gwen.

I think *Shetland Jumperweight* and *Unspun Icelandic* produce a more utilitarian-

shawl; for going to the grocery store, or air-conditioned movies, etc. *Shetland Laceweight* and *Icelandic Laceweight* make a dressier garment; the drape of *Shetland Laceweight* is particularly lovely. Either weight is suitable for this shawl - base your choice on the intended use.

As for the terms, double knit/sport weight/fingering etc, I confess to being confused. I am on more solid ground if I am given an approximate Stocking-stitch gauge. -Meg

Q2: I want to knit the Faroese shawl from *Shawls and Scarves*: the blue shawl with Lobed Leaf pattern (p39), a variation on Meg's Faroese shawls. The instructions consist of one paragraph; I'm wondering if there are more detailed instructions.

E.g. 8 oz Shetland wool. What else is like that? How much is that?

A: You can use any wool you like that is approx the same diameter. Shetland Jumperweight is a good choice for everyday wear - but you may also use Laceweight wool for a dressier shawl (see Q1). 8oz is about 1,000 yards in Jumperweight; about 1,200 yards in Laceweight.

Reading through the directions for the yellow shawl will help a great deal with detail - the shawls are basically the same in construction, just different in size and lace motif. I will add a couple of points, however:

One: If you are going to use the Lobed Leaf pattern, I recommend you work about 5-6" in Garter-stitch before beginning the lace motif. Looking at the illustration in *Barbara Walker's Charted Knitting Designs: A Third Treasury of Knitting Patterns* (p174), I didn't realize the motif



produced a scalloped lower edge - which destroyed the blunt lower edge of the gusset! The extra Garter-stitch will help to ameliorate that effect.

Two: Many of the shawls stop decreasing each side of the gusset during the lace (so as not to fuss the knitter too much, I imagine). If you do that, the whole shawl will be just a bit longer. If you rise to the challenge of decreasing each side of the gusset in pattern, the length of the shawl will be a bit truncated.

Three: Please be aware that when I did that design for XRX, I had no concept of the *shoulder shaping* inherent in Faroese Shawls (I knitted it from the *Faroese Shawls* book before we had any translation). Please see Marliyn van Keppel's grey Faroese Shawl in the same book (she has shoulder-shaping in her instructions), or reference the current **Wool Gathering** for complete Faroese Shawl instructions. -Meg



Faroese Shawl book, now with translation

Q3: I am knitting the blue Faroese shawl from the best of knitters magazine (*Shawls and Scarves*)- a lovely pattern. I am confused over the directions and seek confirmation before I knit the whole incorrectly. The book states that I should decrease every row at the selvages. All the other shawls I have studied say decrease every other row. Should I decrease every row, or every right side row for the selvages and the gusset? Thanks for the info.

A: Dear Kate,

Alas, the book has an error, which you have found. You can work the selvedge dec at the *beginning of every row* (which is actually e.o.r. at each selvedge), or *at the beginning and end of every other row*. They both will produce the same rate of decrease - use either one and you will be fine. Unfortunately, the sentence in the book merges the two, and implies a decrease at each selvedge every row...no.

Note that the center gusset has a pair of single-dec each side, every-other-row. -Meg

Q4: Hello. I'm a bit confused about EZ's Butterfly vest (*SPP#1*). I made the **Alpaca** version (4.75 sts/in) and now I want to make the bulkier version (3.33 sts/in). I understand why one does not cast on 1/4 of the entire number of chest sts at the shoulder (to avoid wings), but I do not understand why you cast on a lot less inch-wise at the



shoulder for the bulky version than you do for the Alpaca version. Why do you only increase 2 sts on each shoulder for the Alpaca (approximately 1/2"), but you increase 6 sts (approximately 2") for the bulky? You end up with the right chest measurement in both cases, but the difference between the shoulder and

chest measurements varies by 1.5" (provided my math is correct). I'm sure there is a reason and would love to know what it is! Thanks for your help!

A: Ingrid, I'm sorry if you are feeling somewhat confused. After reading your questions, it seems to me that one problem might be that you are reversing the #s. In the directions, the first number is for the 4.75 gauge (Alpaca), and the parenthetical number is for the 3.33 gauge (bulky). So:

One: Actually, at the shoulder, more is cast on (inch-wise) in the bulky version than the alpaca version: 22 sts cast on for the Alpaca (22 divided by 4.75 = 4.63"), and 18 sts cast on for the bulky (18 divided by 3.33 = 5.4").

Two: The reason more increasing is done in the bulky than the alpaca is because overall, the bulky is a larger garment. A larger body circumference for the bulky, combined with the concern of eliminating 'wings' means more sts are required at the underarm to get to body circumference. Because the Alpaca is thinner, and can be a smaller garment, the relationship between the widest possible shoulder (without getting 'wings') and the body circumference is closer, and thus fewer increase sts are needed at the underarm. Remember that as you increase the size of a garment (circumference-wise), the shoulder width will not increase anywhere near as much, so the difference between the shoulder and circumference will greatly expand as the overall size goes up, thus demanding more increase sts at the underarm.

I hope these answers help you see things a little more clearly. Of course, none of this is written in stone, and the great thing about this design is that you can easily adjust the numbers to make it fit whomever it is being knitted for. -Cully

Q5: Dear Meg,

I would like to try a knit in the round two color pattern using *Alpaca*. The pattern calls for steeks at the armholes and neck opening which I have not previously attempted. I have, however, knitted with Alpaca before and know it to be a somewhat "slippery" yarn, lacking the natural grab of wool that is desirable when stitching and cutting the steeks open. Is alpaca a good choice for a steeked pattern? If so, is the standard stitching prior to cutting all that would be required to secure the ends of yarn?

A: Thank you for your enquiry, dear Marie. Any wool or wool blend can be used for a steeked project; it comes down to how you secure it. I have only steeked Alpaca once - using the crochet method (*WG#77 Double-V Vest*). It worked better than I had anticipated and only came undone in one place. In the future, I might machine-stitch (a double row perhaps?) over that section for more peace of mind. -Meg

