

spinning

felting

dyeing

weaving

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# the Wheel

ASHFORD'S FIBRECRAFT MAGAZINE - NEW ZEALAND

A Surprise for  
Spinners  
Try Down Wool

Heirlooms  
Making Connections

## HOW TO

Create your own iconic New Zealand jersey  
Scarves with a twist  
Cardigans, socks, bags and more

ashford  
WHEELS & LOOMS

**GREAT NEW PRODUCTS AND PATTERNS INSIDE**

# the Wheel

**Editor** Elizabeth Ashford

The Wheel is published annually and is available to members of the Ashford Club (see page 43) or from your Ashford dealer. Copies of back issues 16 and 17 are available.

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## Welcome

Welcome to issue 18 of The Wheel.

Thank you for the positive comments about last year's issue: I really appreciate the feedback. Some readers asked for more spinning patterns so I have some great articles for you in this issue – how to use that springy down wool that is so readily available, suggestions for blended fibres, spinning for the iconic NZ jersey, and more. There are still plenty of ideas and patterns for weavers, dyers and felters, too!

The Ashford Club is one year old and I am thrilled that so many of you have joined from around the world. We have members from 34 countries! Thank you. As you know membership provides for the mailing of one issue of *The Wheel* and access to the Club online, with its newsletters, competitions etc. If you haven't sent us an email address please do so, as I want you to be able to access the Club online. If you do not have a computer at home perhaps a family member, friend, or even the local public library could supply an address for you to use.

Richard and the factory team have been busy producing more of the Knitters Looms. This so-portable loom is certainly meeting a need (See Have Loom will Travel, on page 24)– it has its own web site, [www.knittersloom.com](http://www.knittersloom.com) and even features in a pod cast. Have a listen to episode 5 at [www.weavecast.com](http://www.weavecast.com)

Oh, by the way, while at the USA conference Convergence in June, Richard was interviewed for a pod cast. Check it out on <http://blip.tv/file/get/Craftsanity-CraftSanity29ConvergenceTheHandweaversConvention244.mp3>. Richard features in this very funny “lively interview” with Jennifer Ackerman-Haywood, starting at 31.35 minutes from the start of the broadcast and finishing at 54.10.

Rowena has been working with two authors, Jo Reeve and Anne Field, to bring you two great textbooks. Jo's *The Ashford Book of Carding* is a new book on the extra-ordinary things you can do with flick, hand and drum carders. Here, on page 39, Jo uses one of these techniques to give new life to an old favourite. Anne's *The Ashford Book of Weaving for the Four Shaft Table Loom*, is an updated classic and will be available soon. For *The Wheel* Anne has created a fabulous pattern using high-twist yarn to produce a collapse-weave scarf (page 35).

Since appearing in last year's issue, Shrek has become quite a star with his story being retold in *Wild Fiber* (USA) and in the German *Lavendelschaf* (“Lavender-Sheep”) as well. Many of you took the opportunity to buy some of his super-long fleece and on page six you can find out who won the Shrek wool competition. I have managed to buy another fleece from this flock of hermit sheep and this is available on the Club site.

Talking about competitions, on page 4 I have printed our favourite handspun jersey pattern. What's your favourite pattern? Do you have an original knitting pattern using handspun that you would like to share? Send it in and enter our competition, see page 18, there are three drum carders to be won!

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes from me, and all the Ashford team,

## ERRATUM

Page 15 The Wheel issue 17, row 3, should read:

\*K2 tog, wool forward to make one\* repeat to end of row, K1 (19sts)

## Cover

Otis, my great-nephew(!), wears Marion Cameron's down wool jacket, see page 18.



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## The Iconic New Zealand Jersey

When you look around New Zealand you will see this jersey in every shape and form. It's a classic. Teenagers wear it with jeans – often two sizes too big! It is almost a school uniform! Parents wear it as a fashionable country classic: children as warm and practical out-door kit.

### You will need

1 kg (2.2 lb) of greasy Romney, Perendale or crossbred fleece with a variation of colour throughout.

Spinning wheel

Niddy noddy

Needles 4.5mm, 7 British, 6 American

5.5mm, 5 British, 8 American

### HERE'S HOW

#### SPINNING INSTRUCTIONS

Do not arrange the colours in order. Take it from the bag as it comes! This way the jersey will look very natural. Only lightly card the tips of the staples and spin a bulky thread. Lift your fingers from the twist from time to time to make some "texture".

*Don Petrie, grape grower, and Cindy Begg, Romney sheep breeder, comfortable in their handspun jerseys*



It is best if the yarn for this project is a little bit "bumpy" or "lumpy". You will create your own "original" style handspun yarn. Pedal very slowly but feed the yarn onto the bobbin quite quickly. Remember the day you spun your first ever "lumpy, bumpy" wool? Well, that would be ideal for this project! Ply two threads together – do not overply. This will result in a soft bulky yarn that is very light. Try the ruler test to see if your yarn is the right weight for this jersey.

#### RULER TEST

Wind the yarn around the ruler, 10 wraps between 2.5 cm (1 in.) is perfect. If your yarn is extra-textured it may be a little different – don't worry! Your jersey will be a real "original". Take the plied yarn from the bobbin onto the niddy noddy to make hanks. Tie the skein in 3-4 places.

#### WASHING INSTRUCTIONS

If the wool is very dirty, soak hanks overnight in cold water. Wash in warm soapy water very gently. Rinse in warm water. Dry outside on a warm sunny day in a gentle wind. When your jersey needs washing, hand wash as above and dry flat on a towel.

**Size** one size fits all – adjust sleeve length as required.

**Tension** is 7 sts to 5 cm (2 ins) in stocking stitch on 5.5 mm needles.

#### BACK

Using number 4.5 mm needles cast on 85 sts and k1, p1 rib for 12 rows increasing by 7 sts evenly spaced on the last row (92 sts). Change to 5.5 mm

needles. Work in stocking stitch until work measures 74 cm (29 ins). Cast off 32 sts at the beginning of the next 2 rows. Slip remaining 28 sts onto stitch holder.

#### FRONT

Work same as for back until work measures 66 cm (26 ins).  
Next row – Knit 38, turn.  
Next row – Knit 2 together, work to end. Now decrease at the neck edge on the next 5 rows. Continue until front measures same as back. Cast off.  
Slip the next 16 sts onto stitch holder. Join in wool and knit to end. Work same as other side of neck.

#### SLEEVES

Using 4.5 mm needles cast on 41 sts, k1, p1 rib for 12 rows increasing 4 sts on the last row (45 sts). Change to 5.5 mm needles and continue in stocking stitch increasing at each end of the 3rd row and then on every 6th row until 71 sts. Work straight until sleeve seam measures 48 cm (19 ins) Cast off LOOSELY.

#### NECKBAND

Join right shoulder seam. Using 4.5 mm needles, pick up 81 sts evenly around neck. Work 10 rows in k1, p1 rib. Cast off LOOSELY.

Fold in half and sew down to wrong side of garment.

#### MAKING UP

Fold sleeve in half, place this point to shoulder seam. Measure down 29 cm (11½ ins) on each body side. Sew in sleeve loosely.

Join other shoulder seam and sew in sleeve. Join sleeve and body seams – Now try it on!

# THE ICONIC NEW ZEALAND JERSEY

The wonderful thing is that as every  
fleece is different, and every spinner  
has a different technique, every  
jersey has its own original design.



# Shrek 2

“Wow!! Shrek 2 is better than the movie.” So says Denise Lai of Berkeley, California who has chosen the Shrek wool to spin and weave, for her son’s tallit (Jewish prayer shawl for men).

You will remember Shrek 2 from last year’s issue of *The Wheel*. He was part of a renegade flock of New Zealand high country Merinos which evaded the shears for six or seven years. Relieved of his massive 31kg (68 lb) fleece we discovered the staples were 270mm (10 1/2ins) long, instead of the usual 75 mm! Amazing!

Small and large parcels of the wool have been sent around the world and from those folk who completed their projects by 31 July, we chose Penny Landen from Edgewood, Kentucky, USA, as the winner of our competition. Penny, who ordered 20gms (less than an ounce) writes, “It washed up beautifully and due to its length, I decided to use my English wool combs to make a wool top from it. I spun it up on my Ashford Traditional Wheel and Navaho plied it into 6.5 yards (6 metres) of three ply yarn. Because I had so little yarn, I decided to use it as a feature in a larger project. I made a 10” x 12” (25 cm x 30 cm) pillow top, sewed it to a forest green faux suede backing and stuffed it with polyester fluff filling.

The pillow celebrates Shrek 2’s quest for freedom. The white yarn is my handspun Shrek yarn and the red is handspun Merino. You can see how bright white the Shrek yarn turned out.”

One of the challenges working with Shrek was the washing. Merino spinning expert, Margaret Stove, of New Zealand, experimented with the wool and she emphasised that the water must be very hot - 80°C at least, with plenty of soap/detergent/wool scour to bind

*Maureen Haley, from Maine USA, used Shrek and an angora blend for this chic beret.*

with the grease to remove it so the ‘left over’ grease doesn’t settle back onto the fibre.

Margaret who wrote *Merino - Handspinning, Dyeing and Working with Merino and Superfine Wools* (available from us), tells us how to wash Shrek, and other Merino wool.

“Sort the wool into staples of finger-thickness. Hold firmly and immerse the staple into very hot water. Rub two-thirds of its length vigorously on a cake of pure soap until it is encased in a rich lather. Lift out, squeeze gently to remove the excess water. Repeat the process to wash the other end of the staple. Rinse in warm water (hot enough to ensure that no residual wax and grease sets in the fibre).

It is important to handle the staples by the tips only when wet (remove the tips before spinning). Place the washed and rinsed staples on a small towel and with the tips all in the same direction, roll up and squeeze to remove excess moisture. Leave to dry in a warm place.”

## AND WHAT OF SHREK NOW?

Owner David Wightman keeps him and the other bad boys in comfort on his lowland block where Shrek has grown accustomed to regular meals and shearing! David has kindly made available another fleece from these hermit sheep. It is the last fleece from this flock. If you would like some of this extra-ordinary wool please visit the Ashford Club Site.

*The boys – undressed and overdressed*



# Elizabeth's Paintbox

By Linzi Mason, of Norfolk, UK

A hand-dyed, hand-spun,  
hand-knitted jacket  
in one week?



When Elizabeth asked me to do a project especially for the Ashford Magazine involving dyeing, spinning and knitting, I felt I had to rise to the challenge. After brief discussion we decided the project (which I now call "my week off work" project) would be a fashionable semi-fitted, short cardigan with a collar. Then Elizabeth encouraged me to incorporate dyeing as well – having always put off the concept of dyeing as a craft which I felt I hadn't got time to explore,

I nearly 'died'. I knew the design of the yarn, spinning and knitwear design would pose no problem, but dyeing too? I was seriously worried.

However, never daunted for long by any challenge, I bought the Ashford Wool Dye Collection and plunged in to this New World with vigour - it was easy! I decided on a two-ply yarn using Ashford Merino for one ply and dyed British Alpaca for the other ply – I call the final yarn 'Antipodes'.

Here is the resultant project and I have noted what I did on a day-by-day diary basis. The project took exactly a week.

## Day One

Using a white British Alpaca fleece, choose and dye separately, six different solid colours (yellow, green, blue, pink, purple and red) of 100 grams (3 ½ oz) each. For each 100 grams (3 ½ oz), I simply put half a teaspoon of each dye in a 20cm (8 ins) sized saucepan and three-quarters filled with hot water and 2 tablespoonfuls of white vinegar, carefully lowering the fleece in and prodding down below the water level with plastic stick or spoon. I was careful not to stir or agitate the fleece in any way. I very gently simmered each batch for only 15 minutes for each colour before tipping the water away and putting the fleece in a non-staining container.

## project gallery



*The front row of rolags (I make mine into "donuts") is the 'cold' sets of 4 colours and the back row is of the 'warm' sets of colours.*

The alpaca fleece was rinsed VERY thoroughly until the water was clear, gradually raising the temperature of each rinse until the final rinse was hand hot. Each colour was laid out carefully to dry.

I did six single colour batches and two random colour ways (a warm and a cold). The warm colour was the result of sprinkling a little of each red/yellow/orange colour into the pot directly on to layers of the dry fleece, before adding the water and vinegar; and the cold was the result of sprinkling blues and greens in the same way on the final batch of fleece.

While the fleece was cooling, I made a start on spinning the first ply of the yarn using Ashford's black (called "Liquorice") Merino.

For the cardigan I needed approximately seven/eight hanks of 100 metres (100yds) – weight approximately 45/50 grams. Using an Ashford Traveller, I worked approximately 5 cm (2 ins) per two treadles, allowing enough thickness of fleece through each draft to keep it soft and fairly loose – the resultant yarn measures approximately 4 wraps per centimetre (10 wraps per inch). I spun two bobbins before returning to the fleece.

### Day Two

I quickly carded the fleece once just to ensure it was fully dry, and put into separate bags in order of the colour. I then started making the rolags as follows (I found that 36 rolags made two hanks when plied with the Merino). I put four colours in strips on to the carder and thoroughly carded them whilst keeping the colours separate.

So on each carder I used 4 strips at a time of one each of

CARDER ONE - Yellow; Green; Blue and a cold random strip

CARDER TWO - Pink; Purple; Red and a warm random strip

On the second day I carded and spun 72 rolags and plied with the Merino, which was enough to get me started on the knitting! Half the rolags had a set of four of the colours and the other half used the other four, thereby keeping the rainbow effect uniform.

### Day Three

I put my favourite film on the TV and started designing and knitting the cardigan; managing the two fronts and one sleeve up to the armholes as well as working out the general pattern idea.

### Day Four

...was spent spinning for the back for which I decided to put two of the colours on for each carding; as the back is roughly double the width of each front piece, this ensures the stripes of colour repeats are kept more regular. I worked another 36 rolags and an equal amount of Merino, which was approximately what I needed to complete the project. I also managed to knit the other sleeve up to the armholes.

### Day Five

I knitted the back up to the armholes before adding all the other pieces on to a circular needle ready to finish off (the pattern notes will explain this).

### Day Six

Finished all the knitting

### Day Seven

Sewed up the seams, gently washed and pressed the cardigan and checked fitting etc.

## Knitting Pattern Abbreviations

Alt, alternate; beg, begin(ning); C1, contrast colour 1;

C2, contrast colour 2; cont, continuing; dec, decrease(ing); fin, finish(ing);

foll, follows(ing); gst, garter stitch, every row k;

inc, increasing; k, knit; M, main

colour; meas, measures; p, purl; patt, pattern; psso, pass slipped stitch over; pwise, purl-wise, or as though to purl; rem, remaining; rep, repeat; rev, reverse(ing); rs, right side; sl, slip; ssk, slip, slip, knit; st(s), stitch(es); st st, stocking stitch, 1 row plain followed by 1 row

purl; tog, together; ws, wrong side; yrn, yarn round needle;

\*...An asterisk is used to mark the beginning of a portion of instructions that will be worked more than once.



# Elizabeth's Cardigan

## Knitting Pattern

The design of the cardigan is very forgiving to different spinning styles and sizes.



The lace rib effect means that the final garment will span a size of around 10cm (4 ins) for 86cm to 97cm bust (34 to 38 ins). If a larger or smaller size is needed another rib section can be easily added and a longer length can be made by just knitting a few more rows before the shaping starts.

**Tension** in pattern stitch on 5mm needles is 16 stitches and 24 rows to 10cm (4 ins).

**Materials** 7/8 hanks of Antipodes yarn, size 5.5mm circular needle; pair of 5mm and 5.5mm needles.

### Pattern

**Row 1** \*Knit 2, purl 2\*

**Row 2** \*Knit 2, yarn round needle, purl 2 together\*.

### LEFT FRONT

Using cable method and size 5mm needles, cast on 40 stitches.

**Row 1** (right side) \*Knit 2, Purl 2\* to last 4 stitches, knit 4 (button band edge).

**Row 2** (wrong side) Knit 4, \*Knit 2, yarn round needle, purl 2 together\* to end.

Keeping continuity of pattern, work 6 rows, then decrease 1 stitch on side edge of next row and following 4th and 8th rows. Work 3 more rows (18 rows in total, 37 stitches).

Change to 5.5mm needles.

Increase 1 stitch at the beginning of next row and following 8th and 16th rows. Continue straight in pattern until work measures 27cm (10½ inches) from beginning

(approximately 58 rows in total).

Cast off 4 stitches at the beginning of the next row.

Knit 1 row and put the remaining 36 stitches on a holder.

### RIGHT FRONT

Work as for the left front but commence as follows and work increases and decreases for the sides at the opposite edge, changing to 5.5mm needles after 18 rows.

**Row 1** (right side) Knit 4, \*knit 2, Purl 2\* to end.

**Row 2** (wrong side) \*Knit 2, yarn round needle, purl 2 together \* knit 4 (buttonhole edge).

At the same time, make a buttonhole on 5th and every following 10th row (knit 2, yrn, knit 2 together).

### BACK

Using 5mm needles, cast on 72 stitches.

**Row 1** (right side) \*Knit 2, Purl 2\* to end.

**Row 2** (wrong side) \*Knit 2, yarn round needle, purl 2 together \* to end.

Keeping continuity of pattern, work 6 rows, and then decrease 1 stitch each end of next row and following 4th and 8th rows. Work 3 more rows (18 rows in total, 37 stitches).

Change to 5.5mm needles.

Increase 1 stitch each end of next row and following 8th and 16th rows. Continue straight in pattern until work measures 27cm (10½ inches) from beginning to match length of fronts (approximately 58 rows in total).

Cast off 4 stitches at the beginning of the next two rows and put the remaining 64 stitches on a holder.

## project gallery

### SLEEVES

Using 5mm needles, cast on 36 stitches.

*Row 1* (right side) \*Knit 2, Purl 2\* to end

*Row 2* (wrong side) \*Knit 2, yarn round needle, purl 2 together \* to last two stitches, purl 2.

Keeping continuity of pattern work another 3 rows and change to 5.5mm needles.

Increase 1 stitch each end of next and following 6th row. Continue increasing each end of every following 12th row to 52 stitches (84 rows in total).

Work another 9 rows, then decrease 4 stitches at the beginning of next 2 rows (44 stitches, 95 rows in all – approximately 45 cm/18 ins).

### RAGLAN YOKE

Using 5.5mm circular needle and ensuring all pieces face the same way, put each piece on the needle in the following order – right front, sleeve, back, sleeve, left front. Put or tie a marker in between each piece to mark where raglan edges are.

With wrong side facing, re-attach yarn to left front and, keeping continuity of pattern, buttonholes and edges, rib across all stitches (224 stitches).

Continue in pattern, decreasing 1 stitch on either side of each marker on the right side rows only until 72 stitches remain in total.

Still working pattern and decreases, cast off 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 2 rows (or leave on a holder). Cast off 2 stitches at the beginning of the following 2 rows (or add to the holder) (36 stitches).

### COLLAR

Using 5mm needle, knit 3 rows in garter stitch, picking up 10 stitches on the right hand holder at the end of the second row, and the stitches at the left side at the end of the third row (56 stitches).

Continue in garter stitch for 6 rows. If required, add buttonholes to follow on from main cardigan so collar can be done up to make a polo neck.

Change to 5.5mm needles and continue for another 15 rows.

Cast off very loosely.

### To finish

Match side and sleeve edges and join. Sew on buttons to suit buttonholes made (I used random coloured 2cm).

Gently wash work in liquid wool detergent, dry and enjoy!

Yarn and cardigan designed by The Alpaca Spinner (Linzi Mason).

[www.alpaca-spinner.com](http://www.alpaca-spinner.com)

[alpaca.spinner@btinternet.com](mailto:alpaca.spinner@btinternet.com)

Telephone 0775 449 7004

Linzi's Limited Edition British alpaca yarn, created and identified as originating from an individual animal by a certificate and photograph, is sold to discerning customers around the world. Linzi, after a recent shift to Norfolk, also offers 2-4 hour individualised spinning sessions and Ashford product advice and support.



ashford  
dyes

- Clear colours
- Easy to use
- Fully concentrated
- 10 gm dyes 1 kg
- No chemicals needed



*Students, with their heritage of handwork and familiarity with textiles, quickly learnt to spin on traditional Lithuanian and Ashford wheels, one of which was donated by Ashford UK distributor, Haldanes.*

**ashford** around the globe

## the Unbroken Thread spinning in Lithuania

Four spinners from rural UK, part of communities where spinning and knitting are traditionally practised and used to supplement incomes, shared their knowledge in a two-week project in Lithuania.

The project was funded by the Leonardo da Vinci Trainer Exchange Project in association with Lithuania Link, with the aim of reviving traditional skills of hand spinning wool, which had almost died out in the last fifty years, as a means of aiding the rural economy. One other objective was the formation of the first Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers in Eastern Europe, affiliated to the Association of Guilds based in the UK, to promote further exchanges and co-operation between the two countries.

The students gathered at the village of Vilkija, 120 kilometres from the capital, Vilnius. Several of them owned a few sheep and knitted their fleece, but had to get it spun by someone else. They had come to learn to spin so they could do the whole thing from start to finish.

At the project's end, teacher June Hall and her team of Veronica Burningham, Rose Ashley and Jean Ovens left confident they had contributed in keeping the thread of spinning and knitting from the past to the present and into the future unbroken.

## Ashford Dyes for Wool & Silk

Individual pots or convenient collections.

Rust, Brown, Green, Yellow, Scarlet, Hot Pink, Purple, Teal, Blue, Navy Blue, Black.

In 10 gm, 50 gm, 100 gm or 250 gm pots.



### Ashford Wool Dye Collection

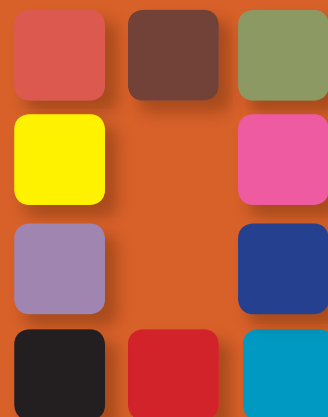
All 11 colours in 10 gm tubs, colour card and instructions.

### Ashford Rainbow Collection

Three primary colours in 10 gm or 50 gm tubs with recipe for rainbow one-pot dyeing.

### Ashford Cold Pad Dye Kit

Paint your own variegated yarns. Full instructions and padding mixture included. In four colour collections: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter (each containing 3 dye colours)



My husband David and I joined a tour led by Valerie Carson, a textile curator from the Museum of New Zealand, on a five week visit to China and Central Asia in August and September of 2005.

by Margaret Stove,  
of Lyttelton, New Zealand



## The Golden Road to Samarkand



*Top right: Margaret admires an embroidered antique woman's coat*

*Above: Gold embroidery on velvet in Uzbekistan*

*Below: Silk rug weaving in China*



Travelling as part of a group had the advantages of having local guides who spoke good English, and as Valerie had made this trip before she knew local museum staff and where to find not only the private collections of textiles which are in danger of being lost but also the collectors who could tell us about their passion for their culture from past centuries to the present day.

We began our trip in Shanghai and then travelled west across China through Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan.

It would be impossible to put into a few words the range of textile craft we experienced on this journey. We visited small enterprises, often with primitive looms, and major workshops with sophisticated equipment and large teams of weavers. Everywhere there seemed to be infinite yardage of exquisite fabrics and great piles of carpets from finest silk to wool and camel fibre. Frames were set up with gold embroidery on silk velvet, and when we left China we saw more and more variety of pattern and embroidery, in particular magnificent Suzane wall hangings and cotton embroideries.

Overall, I was aware of the intensity and variety of the colours worn by so many of the people, especially after we left the cities where there were extremes from the very traditional to the most modern fashions and where there was a mix of East and West. As we travelled to Xian, the official beginning of the legendary Silk Route, we began to see people in smaller towns and rural settings. Vast landscapes were cultivated, and wherever you looked there were so many different greens, colourful fruit and vegetables. What particularly intrigued me were the donkey carts piled high with reeds and the driver talking earnestly into a cell phone!

When we began to visit the markets we saw this produce piled into great stacks of colour and here we also saw countless aisles of the brilliantly coloured silk garments and fabric with so much metallic thread it was hard to imagine why people would choose to wear what seemed like such ostentatious apparel. However, I soon formed a theory that with such a vast landscape which, as we travelled

further inland, became more drab, monotonous and dreary, wearing such clothing would be a great way to enjoy colour and lift the spirit.

Silk was everywhere and I will never forget the sheen and the feel of this luxurious product. The foyer of the Silk Museum in Hangzhou was dominated by a huge mural of mulberry leaves embroidered in silk behind a larger than life representation of a cocoon, and from the ceiling hung a chandelier made entirely of lengths of silk filament. A most impressive space. The story of silk and the tools and equipment used to the present day, as well as examples of silk items, set the pattern for the many aspects of the silk story which evolved as we travelled west.

Xian included a visit to the old Muslim section and the magical Market at the mosque. In fact it was the markets which were to become a main feature of each stopping place as each one gave us the opportunity to see large numbers of the local people in their everyday setting, and they reflected not only the local produce but also the items brought into the area for them to buy. We learned about customs, food and also dress e.g. what Valerie called "Nora Batty" stockings of wrinkly, fawn cotton often worn with the very latest stiletto-style high heels, and the traditional miniature hats worn with a white veil by the Uyghur grandmothers on the southern edge of the Tarim Basin.

The most impressive museum visit for textile enthusiasts had to be the Urumqi Museum. Here we saw "mystery" mummies from 2,000 years ago who were of Caucasian appearance, tall and with light coloured hair. Their garments, preserved by the dry climate and salt of the Tarim Basin, were woven from finest cotton for undergarments and various types of outer garments included wool plaids dyed in bright

colours. There were examples of sprang and a cap which I am sure was knitted but it could have been nalbinding.

Though I saw few knitted items, I found shawls machine knitted in brown cotton worn by a few of the Muslim women in Kashgar to completely cover their heads. They looked so thick I really wondered how they could possibly see where they were going, let alone examine goods to buy them. I bought one and have discovered that you can see through them easily and they probably keep lots of germs out as well.

In Kyrgestan, by far the poorest of the places we visited, the people have chosen to return to their nomadic lifestyle and had abandoned the collective farms established during Soviet times. The people were extremely friendly and happy to share the uniqueness of their lives with visitors. We had lunch in a yurt, listened to traditional music played by several members of the group who later showed us felt making. We were invited to participate and they were excited to discover that at least one "Kiwi" in our group could spindle spin! Again a feast of colour.

A cotton flower is the national symbol of Uzbekistan. Even the crockery was decorated with it, and we saw cotton fields and mountains of cotton in fenced off storage areas. Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand all preserve the old traditions of the Silk Road alongside thriving modernity. David and I were privileged to spend a day with the family of his penfriend, Umida. We were shown how to make bread Uzbek style and helped to make Plov, a communal dish of meat and vegetables with rice eaten around midday. To have such an opportunity made leaving so much harder and Umida's continuing correspondence keeps this magical visit alive in our memories.



*In the Gobi Desert*

#### Editor's Note

Weavers will be fascinated by the research done on the Urumqi mummies. Margaret recommends *The Mummies of Urumqi* by Elizabeth Wayland-Barber.

Margaret, a cultural treasure in New Zealand and popular lecturer and exhibitor world-wide, is an authority on spinning and lace knitting. She writes, "I have been a compulsive continental knitter since being taught by my grandmother when four. I was fascinated by the structure of knitting. Later, as a young adult with a family I learned to spin when given an Ashford Traditional wheel, and again was challenged by how yarn is structured with a focus on superfine Merino.

Since then my discoveries and techniques have been published by the Caxton Press *Handspinning, Dyeing and Working with Merino and Superfine Wools* (1990) and *Creating Original Hand-Knitted Lace* (1995). Both these definitive texts are available from us at NZ\$49.99 + post for the Merino book, and NZ\$32.95 + post for the lace book. If you would like to order these excellent books please contact us at [sales@ashford.co.nz](mailto:sales@ashford.co.nz)

Margaret is currently studying full-time at the University of Canterbury in her third year of a four year Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Her 'student holiday job' is continuing work on a third book which will focus on shawls.



## over 600,000 loving stitches

Eleven years ago, Alexandra Weikert, of Taufkirchen, Germany, was busy knitting socks for her fiancé, Hubert, who had promised to marry her if she knitted 12 pairs of socks (see *The Wheel* 1999).

His best man wanted proof before the couple went to the Town Hall!

As her now husband approached his fiftieth birthday, and as those original socks had grown old and thin, Alexandra decided to make another loving gift. This time 50 socks (25 pair).

In secret and over a three year period, Alexandra, using self-patterning yarn or a Celtic spiral pattern, knitted over 600,000 loving stitches. Hubert was surprised!

If you would like to make a pair of socks for someone special, we have created an “easy peasy” pattern using self-patterning sock yarn.



# Easy Peasy

Using self-patterning sock yarn

### SOCK TOP

Cast on 60sts.

Rib K1, P1, across 60sts as follows:

Needle 1 Rib 20

Needle 2 Rib 20

Needle 3 Rib 20

You have done your first round, joining the 3rd and 1st needle together.

Rib 19 more rounds (20 rounds in total)

Change to stocking stitch (all rounds knit) for 40 rounds. Or, work all 20 + 40 rounds (total 60) in Rib. This will give a more sporty look to the sock.

### HEEL FLAP

Starting the next round.

Knit 20 stitches across 1st needle and on same needle knit 10sts from the 2nd needle, turn and purl back on these 30sts.

Slip 5sts from the 3rd needle onto the 2nd needle.

Now you have 30sts on the 1st needle for the heel flap and 15sts each on the 2nd and 3rd needle.

On the first 30sts continue knitting for 21 rows in stocking stitch. (Knit 1 row, Purl 1 row).

Finish on a knit row. Turn.

### TURNING THE HEEL

Don't worry, if this is the first time, it's going to be o.k. Just take everything step by step.

P19 across heel flap, P2 tog, turn.

Sl1, K8, Sl1, K1, pssso, turn.

Sl1 purl wise, P8, P2 tog, turn.

Sl1, K8, Sl1, K1, pssso, turn.

Repeat the last two rows until the last row is Sl1, K8, Sl1, K1, pssso = 10sts remaining.

### STARTING THE ROUNDS FOR THE HEEL

First side of the heel:

1st needle - pick up 19sts along the first side of the heel.

2nd needle - slip next 30sts (15 + 15) onto one needle. Knit across 30 sts

3rd needle - pick up and knit 19sts on the other side of the heel flap.

Arranging the stitches onto the 3 needles:

Continue across heel flap, Knit 5 onto the same needle

# Sock Pattern ...

## You will need

1 x 100 gm ball Opal yarn (knits 2 socks)

Needles: 1 x set of double pointed needles  
15cm (6 ins) long

Loose knitter 2.25mm

Average knitter 2.50mm

Tight knitter 2.75mm

**Note:** Needle 1, 2 & 3 will change for each sequence, the stitches are dividing, decreasing and increasing. It is impossible to keep the same numbers throughout.

$(19 + 5 = 24\text{sts})$

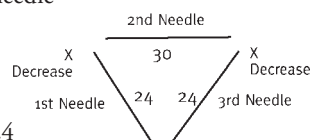
Slip the last 5sts onto the next needle.  $(5 + 19 = 24\text{sts})$

Knit across 24sts on the next needle

Knit across 30sts

Knit across 24sts on  
the next needle.

You will have 78sts = 24, 30, 24



## SHAPING THE HEEL FLAP

Decrease Round

1st needle - Knit 21sts, K2 tog, K1

2nd needle - Knit across 30sts

3rd needle - K1, Sl1, K1, psso, Knit to end of round.

You have now done a decrease round. Knit 1 round.

Knit 20, K2 tog, K1, Knit 30sts, K1, Sl1, K1, psso. Knit to end. Knit 1 round.

Continue on these two rounds – 1 decrease round and 1 plain round until you have 60sts left. You will have 15sts on two of the needles and 30sts on the other. 15, 30, 15 (Total of 60sts)

## TO KNIT THE FOOT LENGTH

Knit 35 rounds and 45 or more rounds for a large sock.

From here to the end of the toe is approx. 3cm. Finish at the end of the 3rd needle.

## TOE SHAPING

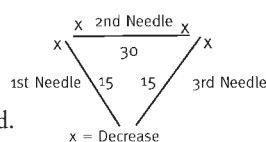
Start on the 1st needle of 15sts. Knit to last 3sts, K2 tog, K1.

Next needle of 30sts. K1, Sl1, K1, psso, Knit to last 3sts, K2 tog, K1

Next needle of 15sts. K1, Sl1, K1, psso, Knit to the end.

You have now done a decrease round.

Repeat the last round until a total of 24sts



remain.  $6 + 12 + 6 = 24$

Knit 6sts across 1st needle, slip these 6 onto the other needle holding 6sts. You will have 12sts on each needle.

Break the yarn 60cm from the end. Slide 12sts from 1st and 2nd needle onto a safety pin. Slide the other 12sts onto a safety pin. Turn work inside out.

## JOINING THE TOE

Slide the stitches from each safety pin back onto two needles. We can cast off the stitches and join the toe seam at the same time.

Lie the two needles side by side.

Knit a stitch off each needle at the same time as follows...

Put the needle through the front of the 1st stitch on the front needle and the 1st stitch on the back needle. Knit as usual, slipping both loops off together. Knit one more stitch in the same way.

Cast off one stitch in the usual way (1 stitch over the other on the right hand needle). Continue to work across the row until all stitches are cast off. Darn the thread through the last stitch and finish thread by running across the inside of the knitting for 3cm (1 in.).

Darn off the stitch at the top of the sock, neaten the join as you do this.

**Note:** We stock a good range of Opal Sock Yarn. For more information contact [info@ashford.co.nz](mailto:info@ashford.co.nz) To make your own self-stripping yarn for socks see *The Ashford Book of Carding*.



# Woven Totes

By Virginia “Ginger” Balch,  
of Connecticut, USA

About 15 years ago, I learned to spin on an Ashford Traditional wheel, and my life changed forever.

Spinning led to joining the Connecticut Nutmeg Spinners, which opened a whole new fibre world to me. Spinning led to felting, and then to weaving. Working at the Wool Connection yarn shop gives me the opportunity to spread my love of the fibre arts to others. I have to say that when the Knitters Loom came out, I became very excited about the possibilities that are provided in getting the word out to my fellow knitters about weaving. Due to the ease and speed in warping I found myself whipping out a scarf an evening.

Some of my favourites were using the self-patterning sock yarn as warp and one strand of sock yarn and a strand of lace-weight mohair as weft. I then began weaving twill scarves on my 8 shaft loom, which morphed into a large twill tote. I decided to translate that tote into one that could be done on both the Knitters Loom and the larger rigid heddle loom. By adding to the width and length of the pattern below you can make larger sized totes.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

See more of Ginger's lovely work on her weaving blog <http://insheepsclothing.blogspot.com/>



## Small Plain Weave Tote

This tote was designed specifically for the Ashford Knitters Loom with 7.5 dpi reed, but the Ashford rigid heddle loom may also be used.

### HERE'S HOW

#### Warp

Length: 115 cm (45 ins), allows for 15 cm (6 ins) fringe on either end.

Number of ends: 45 double through all slots (89 ends total)

Finished width: 25 cm (10 ins)

Using direct warping method, warp through all slots across on Knitters Loom.

#### Weft

Using solid wool throughout, beat in gently. About 7 ppi.

Note: if you would like a plaid effect, just weave 2 shots of another colour wherever desired.

#### Finishing

Using overhand knots, tie the fringe at both ends into groups of 4, ending with 5 at the end. Place piece into a zippered pillowcase, and place into washing machine at lowest water setting, hot wash. Note: take a little bit of hair conditioner and lightly moisten fringe. This will help keep the fringe from tangling too much. Add a small amount of laundry soap and agitate for 3-4 minutes, and then check fabric

## You will need

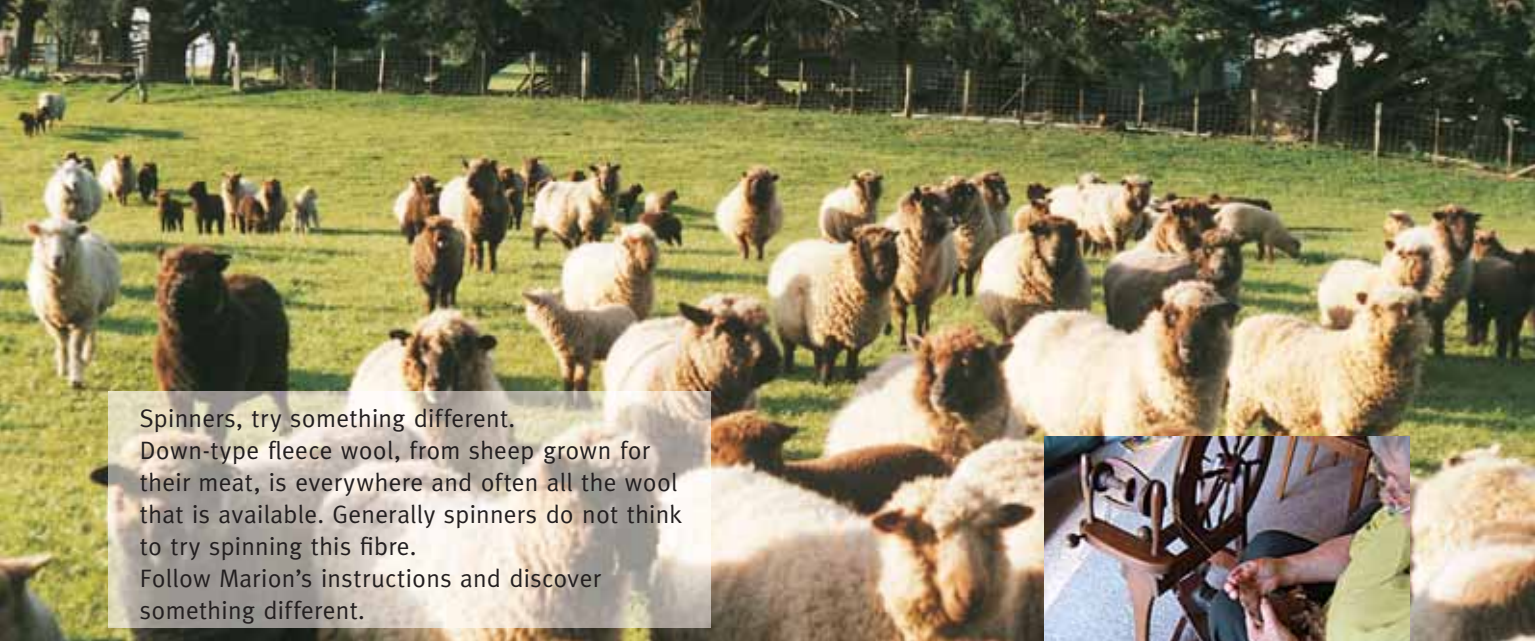
115 m (125 yds) multi-coloured  
100% worsted weight wool for warp

70 m (75 yds) solid 100% worsted  
weight wool for weft

every minute or so, pulling into shape until piece is firmly fulled, as well as combing through the fringe with your fingers to straighten out. This part requires your absolute attention. You don't want to overdo it! When piece is done, give it a quick 30 seconds on the spin cycle to remove extra water. Shape piece and lay out flat to dry.

Fold piece in half, fringed ends together. Sew side seams, about 10 cm (4 ins) from top of fringes to bottom fold on both sides. Turn piece inside out and sew from fringe to top of first seam. Turn right side out and fold fringed top over outside of tote. If you would like a base on your tote, fold in edges of base and sew across bottom of triangle. Trim fringe. Sew on handles of your choice.





Spinners, try something different. Down-type fleece wool, from sheep grown for their meat, is everywhere and often all the wool that is available. Generally spinners do not think to try spinning this fibre. Follow Marion's instructions and discover something different.



*Marion spins from the cut end*

## A New Experience in Spinning

Marion Cameron, of Masterton, New Zealand

We live on 4.5 hectares (11.5 acres) on the outskirts of Masterton in Wairarapa, in the North Island of New Zealand. We have a flock of 50 sheep of varying shades of brown (moorit) and grey, with a few white. Although the original stock was basically Romney we have concentrated on breeding more down-type wool because I enjoy its elasticity and bounce. Down-type wools are short (1½-3 inches) compared to other wools such as crossbred or Merino-type wools and do not show the distinctive crimp patterns of these wools. They do not felt but produce very elastic and bouncy yarns. These are the qualities I enjoy.

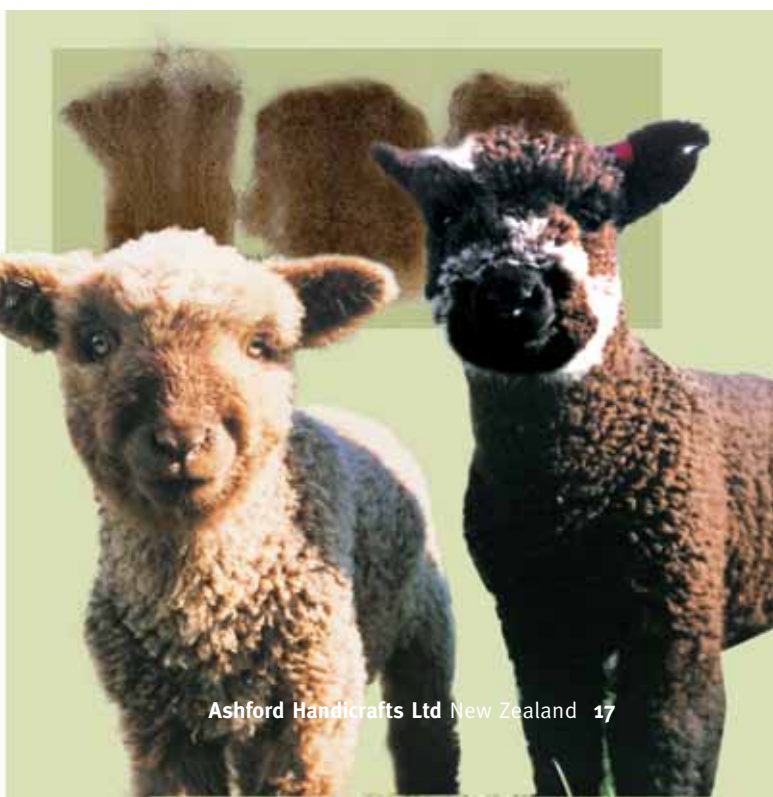
Down-type wool is produced by sheep mainly grown for their meat-producing qualities such as Southdown, Dorset Down, Suffolk and our latest sire, Ryeland, now a rare breed. As with other breeds, the wool varies from fine to coarse and the handle may be soft or quite crisp and crunchy but produces very elastic yarns. Soft handling wools make lovely cuddly items which do not felt, great for babies, while other crisper wools make good sock yarn or items with more complex stitches such as Aran patterns.

I spin the short wool straight from the fleece (without carding). I work with small groups of staples spinning mostly from the CUT END. With a good fleece the fibres just spin themselves as easily as a carded fleece. Sometimes parts of the fleece may need the top opened to remove rubbish but it usually just falls out anyway. I have tried hand carding or combing the fleece before spinning but unless you spin the wool immediately there is no advantage (as the fibres bounce back to their natural state) and you might as well spin direct from the fleece. Longer, down-cross wools do card well by machine. They are good for dyeing in the fleece because they do not felt easily and

dry quickly. The biggest problem I have with spinning the down-type wool is to produce very fine yarns. Although this is partly because of how I spin, it is also affected by the elasticity of the yarn produced. The plied yarns must always be washed before knitting to release the tension. The yarn always becomes shorter and more bulky. You need to check your tension carefully before you start an article. I still find the washed yarn is not as fine as I expected it to be.

Because I have trouble spinning fine wool, especially using down-type wool, the pattern on page 18 uses larger needles than I originally planned.

*Spinners do give down wool a try!*



project gallery

# *The Russ*

by Marion Cameron

This simple jacket for Otis (aged two) is knitted in one piece and could be easily adapted for different sizes, patterns and yarns.



## **READER COMPETITION**

Send us your favourite original knitting pattern using handspun, with a photo, and be in to win one of three drum carders. Send to Handspun Pattern Competition, Ashford Handicrafts Ltd, PO Box 474, Ashburton, New Zealand. Entries close 1 July 2007.



# Jacket

## You will need

250 gm of down wool (quantities may vary if other wool types are used) spun medium (about double knit weight) and plied. Using the ruler test, 13 wraps per 2.5 cm (1 in.)

5mm needles. Tension 20st = 10cm over garter stitch.

### BACK

Cast on 63 stitches and work 9 rows in garter stitch (every row knit).

Pattern \*1st row knit, 2nd row K3, purl 57, k3. Repeat these rows twice more. Rows 7 - 10 knit\* These 10 rows form the pattern.

Repeat 4 more times. (approximately 20 cm/8 ins).

### SLEEVES

Working in garter stitch (every row knit), cast on 8 stitches at the beginning of the next 10 rows (143 st). Work a further 28 rows in garter stitch (sleeve at cuff approximately 10 cm/4 ins).

To shape neck. Knit 60st, cast off 23st, knit to end (60 st).

### WORK EACH FRONT SEPARATELY LEFT FRONT

Knit to neck edge. Cast on 15 stitches. Continue in garter stitch for further 31 rows finishing at cuff edge.

To complete the sleeve. Cast off 8 stitches at the beginning of the next row and following 4 alternate rows

(35 st). Continue front in pattern but working 5 stitches in garter stitch at centre front, i.e. K 4 rows. \*Next row knit. Next row k3, purl 27, k5.\* Repeat from\* to \* twice more. These 10 rows form the pattern. Repeat pattern 4 more times. Work 9 rows garter stitch. Cast off.

### RIGHT FRONT

Join wool to neck edge, knit to cuff. Knit 1 more row to centre front. Cast on 15 stitches. Knit 31 rows finishing at cuff edge. Cast off 8 stitches at the beginning of next row and following 4 alternate rows (35 st). Work in pattern as for left front but note the purl row will read k5, p27, k3.

Buttonholes, if required, can be made in front band on either side. Suggest they are made in the first row after the garter stitch stripe.

On left front. K2, M1, K2tog, k to end.

On right front. K3, p27, k1, M1, K2tog K 2.

Collar. Pick up 15 stitches from each front and 23 from back neck (53st). Work 16 rows in garter stitch. Cast off.

To make up. Join sleeve and side seams but you may like to leave the side seam open below the bottom 4 rows of garter stitch.

Attach ties at centre front where the garter stitch yoke finishes.

I made a crochet chain for each tie but use any suitable ribbon or other cords. Approximately 70 cm/27 ins required.

# Helping Hands

Moved by her friend Anne's battle with breast cancer, and subsequent mission to raise funds for the Cancer Council of NSW, Australia, spinner and weaver Jenni Stott wanted to do something to help.

She made scarves.

She made pink scarves (using diluted Hot Pink Ashford dyes, with a dash of Purple).

She writes, *"The scarf pictured was spun quite chunky using my Traveller Wheel and Jumbo Flyer then woven on my Rigid Heddle Loom using a 5dpi reed, and crotchet cotton was used for the weft. I made quite a few scarves, all different, but this was my favourite as it shows off my "rustic" spinning.*

*The scarves were then put up for sale by the Herceptin Awareness Group at the Festival of Fun on the N.S.W. Central Coast. Herceptin is a drug that has shown in trials to be beneficial in the treatment of women diagnosed with early breast cancer but this drug is currently not funded, and therefore this treatment option is extremely costly to patients."*





shibori weaving

The rigid heddle loom is a wonderful weaving loom. Often considered as a 'beginner' weaver's tool, its versatility is sometimes overlooked.

## Shibori Weaving WITH ALPACA ON THE RIGID HEDDLE LOOM

By Doe Arnot, of Oamaru, New Zealand

Recently I have been experimenting with shibori effects on cloth woven on this very straightforward loom. Its simple, quick warping and small loom waste encourages lots of experimentation. A choice of heddle sizes allows for a variety of thread sizes to be used. Pick-up sticks at the back of the heddle are used to create the shibori weft shed (Refer to Rowena Hart's book – *The Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving* for clear diagrams on using a pick up stick).

When Rowena's rigid heddle book first came out in 2002, it was the indigo shibori woven mats that caught my attention. Catharine Ellis in her book *Woven Shibori* experimented with stitched resist in cloth and thoroughly soaking the tied fabric before dyeing. I thought I would try using my alpaca yarn and wool dye. I left the fabric to soak overnight and to speed up the dye colour take-up my fabrics were put into hot, simmering dyebaths. When I opened out the first alpaca sample I was thrilled with the results.

Weaving shibori cloth is not for the faint hearted. Since the patterning and colour is added to the cloth after it comes off the loom, there is a certain unpredictability about the process. However this is the enchantment. This plain cloth is put into the simmering dyebath and emerges like wet folded

butterfly wings which show their true colours when they are opened out. The pattern shows up in a more fluid form than the woven structure suggests. They are like ghost images of the woven grid. For many years my main textile hobby was batik, which is a method of surface design on cloth using hot wax resists and multiple dye baths. In some ways woven shibori is a bit like going back to those roots. The final dye bath and tied fabric emerges with the pattern completely hidden until the shibori threads are removed, much like revealing a batik pattern after the wax is taken out of the cloth.

All the samples are worked on the rigid heddle loom using various pick-up techniques including my version of pick-up Monk's Belt which requires threads to be picked up on a closed shed behind the heddle (this involves threads from both the slots and holes in the heddle). I slide the pick-up stick flat, against the back of the heddle on a closed shed and can just make out the pattern threads which I pick up in the front with my stick shuttle. This method saves counting the threads each time I weave the shibori weft thread. Despite simmering the alpaca fabric in a hot dyebath, washing and steam pressing, the cloth has a wonderful handle and the holes where the shibori threads have been removed

virtually disappear. Using thick shibori weft threads with fine alpaca yarns produced strong graphic patterns in some of the samples. Although I have specialised in working with alpaca and alpaca blends this would work equally well on wool and other protein fibres. Silk would require more care simmering as high temperatures can damage this fibre.

In my experiments I have, so far, woven plain weave cloth in light coloured yarns which were subsequently dyed or painted after the fabrics have been woven. However, this is a technique that could be incorporated with coloured warp and weft patterns and even with some textured threads. The fabric could be further embellished with surface patterning such as stamped designs and beading. The single dye bath fabric produces the most distinctive shibori pattern. I am however delving into more complex dye layering and experimenting with threads which resist colour and/or have some texture. All will be woven on my two rigid heddle looms.

### REFERENCES:

Hart, Rowena. *The Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving*. 2002. This book covers the basics in the indigo mats project.

Ellis, Catharine. *Woven Shibori*. 2005. Interweave, U.S.A. An in-depth analysis of the techniques this author created over a period of six years using from two to multishaft weaves and various dye techniques.

## SHIBORI SCARF PROJECT

Here is a scarf to get you started in shibori weaving on the rigid heddle loom.

### You will need

An Ashford Knitters Loom or any other rigid heddle loom with a heddle size of 7.5 dpi (40/10).

Warp and weft: 100gm (3½ oz) of 8ply alpaca or wool yarn white or cream. I've used a handspun 100% alpaca cream yarn for the rose coloured scarf, and 100% wool yarn for the charcoal one. Both scarves were woven exactly the same, but the rose scarf pulled in a little more than the wool one.

Shibori Weft Thread: approx. 30gm (1 oz) of mercerised cotton or strong polyester yarn (4ply weight or slightly finer than the weft yarn) in a contrasting colour. This is enough to do two scarves.

Empty stick shuttle at least the size of the weaving width.



*Above: I've used a handspun 100% alpaca cream yarn for the rose coloured scarf, and 100% wool yarn for the charcoal one. Both scarves were woven exactly the same, but the rose scarf pulled in a little more than the wool one*

### HERE'S HOW

#### Warp

Total warp ends 56.

Total warp length 200cm (79 ins).

You can lengthen the warp as desired.

Beat the weft gently to a balanced weave. Read through instructions below before commencing.

1. Warp up loom with the alpaca or wool yarn.
2. Leaving some space on the warp for fringes, weave 10 rows plain weave with the alpaca or wool yarn. Hem stitch the edge.
3. Wind shibori cotton thread onto a stick shuttle.
4. Place heddle in the down position, using the empty stick shuttle (now called the pattern stick) behind the heddle, miss the first 4 warp threads, pick up the next 4, miss the next 4, etc to end. Leave the stick lying flat in place at the back of the loom.
5. Place the heddle in its rest position, Raise the empty stick shuttle and slide it forward to the back of the heddle. You will see a new shed has been created. Weave the cotton shibori thread through this shed, leaving a small tail of yarn at the

side. Lay the pattern stick flat again at the back.

6. Weave another 4 rows in plain weave with the alpaca or wool yarn.
7. Repeat rows 5 and 6, three more times. Leaving a small loop of cotton thread at the beginning of each pattern row. Do not cut the pattern threads.
8. With heddle in the down position, remove pattern stick and replace picking up 4 warps, missing 4 warps etc to end. (The alternate warps are being picked up to the last pattern.)
9. Repeat rows 5 and 6.



*Rigid heddle loom with fabric and shibori wefts. The chosen shibori thread needs to be strong, non-stretchy and smooth so that it will pull the fabric into pleats and resist the dye type you've chosen*



Rows 4 to 9 create the pattern.

Continue weaving as set until the end of the warp is in sight. Finish with 6 more plain rows (to make 10 rows plain weave) and hem stitch edge.

Cut scarf from loom allowing for fringing at the ends. Twist fringes as desired. The loose ends will fluff in the dyebath so twisting the fringe keeps them neat. Wash the scarf gently by hand and leave to dry thoroughly.

Carefully pull up a little way and tie in pairs the cotton threads all along one side using an overhang knot on each pair. Slowly pull up the first two threads on the opposite side (this may require cutting the side loops to pair them up). Pull until the fabric is a tight thin pleat and tie the 2 ends of each pair in an overhang knot. Spend time getting tight pleats as these resist the dye in the dyebath. Soak the pleated fabric in water for a couple of hours or overnight.

*"Shibori caterpillars" - tied fabrics awaiting their dye baths. In these samples the shibori weft threads are the same colour as the fabric but the cotton threads won't dye in the wool dye bath so the knots are easy to see after the fabric is dyed and dried.*



#### PREPARE DYEBATH.

Choose colours that are a good contrast to the white yarn. I chose a rose and a charcoal shade. Add enough hot water to cover the scarf and allow for the fabric to move in the dyepot. Heat the water in the dyepot to a simmer. Add dye and white vinegar using your normal wool dye recipe.

Note: to calculate how much dye is required weigh the scarf dry before soaking. Approx. one third of the fabric will remain white so base your dye calculation on the two thirds of the fabric you want to dye. See below for my scarf dye calculation. Immerse wet scarf in the dye and continue simmering fabric until the colour has been taken up by the fabric.

Simmer for a further 10-15 minutes. Remove fabric from dyebath and leave to cool. Rinse the pleated scarf in warm water and leave to dry. Carefully remove the shibori threads by snipping the knots down one side of the dry fabric and pulling threads through. Handwash the finished scarf, and steam iron gently.

Voila! Wear with pride.

#### DYE CALCULATIONS FOR SCARF

Based on 1 teaspoon of dye powder mixed into 500ml (1 pint) of water.

Weight of scarf = 90gm (3 oz) / 3 x 2 = 60gm (2 oz).

Depth of shade for dyebath - I chose 1.5%.

Amount of dye liquid = 60gm (2 fl oz) x 1.5 = 90ml (3 fl oz).

I used 50ml (1 3/4 fl oz) of white vinegar.

For the rose scarf 90ml (3 fl oz) of dye liquid equals 60ml (2 fl oz) of blue and 30ml (1 fl oz) of red.

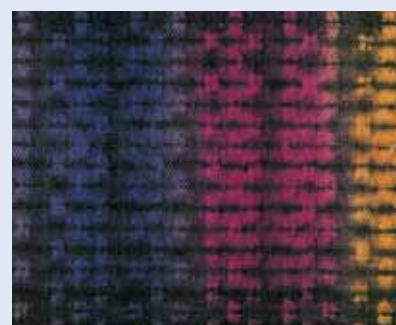
The charcoal scarf uses black at a depth of shade of 2%.

## More Shibori Ideas

### Cotton and alpaca striped patterns



Both woven on the same warp using white alpaca yarn and white cotton yarn in both warp and weft for the plain weave. The pattern only shows up on the pleats after the fabric has been dyed in an acid dye bath. The cotton threads do not take up any colour. There are so many colour variations to this idea. Think about log cabin and stripe patterns using yarns that will dye with ones that resist the type of dye you are using. You do need to keep track of the pattern (e.g. 2 cotton wefts, 2 alpaca wefts) as well as the pick-up patterns using the shibori weft.



*This fabric had dyes painted onto its surface, the colour was steam set and dried before the threads were pulled up and shibori dyed.*

## The 2006 Melbourne Scarf Festival Presented by Craft Australia

### ashford rigid heddle loom

Wonderfully versatile, this two-way loom can produce, very quickly, original and creative garments, cushions, table mats and more.

- small, portable and inexpensive
- 3 weaving widths, 40cm (16 ins), 60cm (24 ins), 80cm (32 ins)
- 4 reeds available: 5, 7.5B (extra-large eye), 10 and 12.5 dpi, 20, 30, 40, 50/10

#### Optional accessories

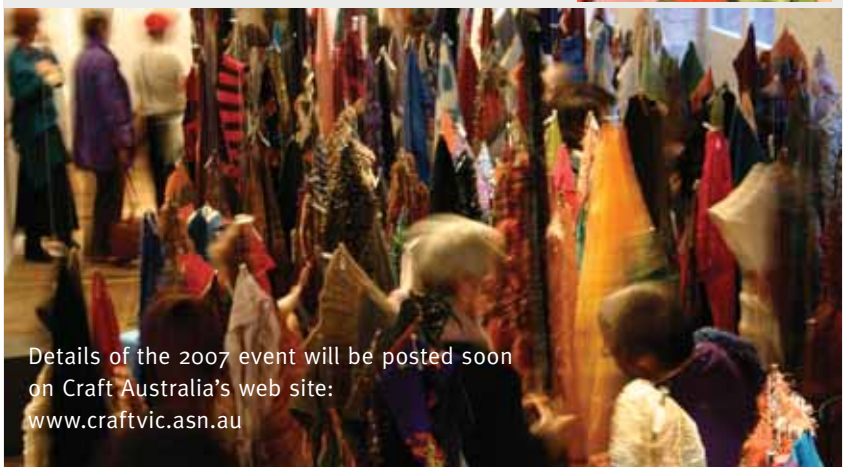
- loom stand with 2 handy shelves
- second heddle kit

In the middle of Melbourne's grey winter, Craft Australia holds an annual celebration of a universal garment - the scarf. After exploring the religious, cultural and tribal meanings of scarves, the fourth festival moved to technology: Pod. Pod focused on ways that scarves might house accessories such as iPods, mobile phones and precious objects. Think scarves with secret compartments or techno functions. A Pod can also be a group or collective. Scarves that can be worn by more than one person, or have been made by more than one person, were encouraged: not just iPods - wePods!

This year's Festival saw around four hundred scarves, hundreds of scarf-makers, twenty-six awards, twelve workshops, four exhibitions and displays, three lectures and forums, two knitting circles and one huge launch. Over 2,500 visitors attended the Melbourne Scarf Market, with an additional 500 participating in the Festival events and workshops.

Nicola Bota, from Ashford Handicrafts Ltd, NZ, and Gay Epstein, from Ashford Australia, exhibited the new Ashford Knitters Loom and taught the very popular "Weave a Funky Scarf in Half an Hour" class.

Two of Nicola's favourite scarves were "Holes on Spring", hand knitted and crocheted spring flowers in rainbow-dyed yarn grafted together to create a very lightweight and lacy scarf with all the hues of Spring, and "The Pearl of all Scarves" in hand-felted cream Merino with alpaca locks from ginger to chocolate in colour, overlaid with hand-felted cream silk and tassels of pearls, silk and sequins, giving the impression of moonlight on a golden, sandy beach.



Details of the 2007 event will be posted soon on Craft Australia's web site:  
[www.craftvic.asn.au](http://www.craftvic.asn.au)

# Have loom, will travel

## Knitters Loom to the rescue

By Andrea L. Zrimsek



*Andrea weaves alongside the Arabian Gulf*

As someone who can't bear to leave the house without some sort of fibre project in hand, I was perplexed at what to take on a five-month stay overseas. After all, I can jump from knitting a sweater to dyeing freshly shorn wool to measuring warp for a scarf all before my cup of coffee gets cold. So how can I possibly plan out five months' worth of projects in advance, let alone lug them from the United States to the Middle East?

Packing yarn and roving was easy. Instead of thinking of the fibres as future sweaters, I dubbed them "protective cushioning" for my clothing, shoes and personal items. Stuffing skeins and bags of roving in every crevice was merely a precautionary measure taken by any smart traveller, right? Knitting needles and drop spindles could also easily slide into the tiniest of spaces.

As a beginning weaver, I was worried such a long absence from my loom would impede my learning process. Maybe I would even lose interest. But there was simply no way I could justify taking up a sizable portion of my 63 kg (140 lb) allotment with my loom. In an answer to my fibre-filled dreams, Ashford came out with the Knitters Loom just in time. I hadn't

even finished reading the ad when I tore out the page, presented it to my other half and said it was all I wanted for Christmas. (Mind you, it was December 18.)

Somehow he tracked one down and was able to get it under the Christmas tree. Well, more like behind the TV so I wouldn't see it. I took it out of the box and immediately nestled it in my suitcase. Tipping the scale at just over three pounds, (1.5kg) the Knitters Loom barely even made a dent in my weight limit. And since it folded up so neatly, nothing had to be sacrificed so the loom could join us on the trip. Plus it came with all the necessary tools – an instruction booklet, warping peg, hooks, clamps and shuttles - so I didn't have to worry about forgetting anything. If only every other aspect of packing for a long trip was as easy.

Having never used a rigid heddle loom, I was amazed at the ease at which I could warp it. It wasn't a daylong adventure and I could do it myself. Yes, I was limited to two sheds but that was okay. Unlike with knitting where I only work on insanely advanced projects with a half dozen cables and very intricate stitches, I prefer to keep my weaving simple. Fun yarns + standard weaves = something cool. My

Andrea L. Zrimsek is a knitter, spinner and weaver who lives in Pittsburgh, USA, but spent five months carrying her Knitters Loom around Doha, Qatar.

simplicistic approach may be due in part to my lack of experience, but I'm okay with that since this loom allows me to plan, warp and weave a scarf in under two hours.

The Knitters Loom has done something I never thought was possible: it made weaving as portable as knitting and spinning. I can weave anywhere I want, anytime I want. I can park myself on the sofa, at the pool, out on the coast of the Arabian Gulf and even in the sand dunes. And since the loom is whisper quiet, I can weave on the bedroom terrace in the wee hours of the morning without worrying about noisy shafts waking anyone up or scaring my dog.

This loom is truly the ultimate traveller's companion. Now only if airlines would give us a bit more elbow room, I could upgrade it from checked luggage to my carry on. Ladies and gentlemen, please place your loom in the upright and locked position...

*A padded carry bag and different sized reeds are optional accessories for the Knitters Loom*





1



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# MOZART

## *in wool*

Greetings from Vienna to all of you. My name is Christine Schimerl, my company is called "Wiener Web-Waren", and since 2004 I have been proudly representing Ashford Handicrafts here in Austria.

I love spinning and weaving a great deal, but most of all I enjoy teaching new, interested people in order to keep these old traditions alive, sharing my passions with others (from all over the world!).

So, as you probably know, 2006 marks the 250th anniversary of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's birth, which is remembered and celebrated here in Austria during the year with many events - nearly everybody has a sort of Mozart-speciality.

Thinking about it, a great idea came to my mind: I created packages with certain colours (see above) out of the

wonderful, new Ashford Merino range and started a project called: "Mozart In Wool".

I encouraged people to work freely, using their imagination and their favourite handicraft technique.

What I want to point out especially is that every knitted or woven piece has been worked by my participants with their own (mainly on an Ashford wheel, of course) handspun yarn!



6

1. Frisby-Disks (wouldn't little Mozart been thrilled to play with them?), felted works by Helga und Franz Schaflechner

2. Felted Bag with Notes by Dr Renate Wimberger

3. Mozart as a new-born baby born 27th Jan. 1756, needlefelted by Herfriede Szilagyi

4. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, needlefelted by Herfriede Szilagyi

5. To keep Constanze warm, handwoven scarf by Olinka Gjigas

6. Scarf "Klaversonate" (Composition for the Piano) handknitted by Emmi Leitner



2



3

4



*Papageno in "The Magic Flute", desires, "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen ..." ("A girl or a woman ...").*

*Musical Potpourri Jacket, handknitted and embroidered by Stefanie Malzer*



*Papagena's Waistcoat, handwoven Damask by Helga Jossen-Sullmann "I love birds," Helga wrote, "and thinking of Papageno and Papagena, my favourite characters, they are simply a must!"*



*Handwoven Jacket (on the rigid heddle loom with second heddle kit) & Scarf by Herfriede Szilagyi*



*Musical-Bag, handknitted by Edeltraud Binder*



*Handmade Shoes by Gudrun Pichler*



*Papagena Shawl, handknitted by Martina Kastanek "This lace-knitting technique is perfect to imitate Papagena's lightweight featherdress," Martina says*



*Cushion Mozart portrait, felted work by Helga and Franz Schaflechner*

*Cushion "Kleine Nachtmusik" (A Little Night Music), handwoven and knotted by Marianne Roth*



# dyeing

*with Buddleia & Iris Root*

By Fiona Nisbet, of Shropshire, UK

Tried to use any unusual plants for dyeing recently?

In January, during the cold dark damp days I thought I'd cheer myself up by wrapping up warm and going for a walk around the garden. Ours is big by most people's standards, so yes, I can go for a good walk in it and it feel as if I've been somewhere!

While out in the biting wind, I noticed I hadn't dead-headed the buddleia. I'm of the opinion that the more dead heads that are left on the plants, the more food is available for the birds during the winter which I'm sure they appreciate particularly this year. Or am I just idle?!

I decided to cut as many of these dead heads as possible, having been told they produce a good dye....While I was doing this I remembered some iris roots which were drying out in a heap near the hedge, having been dug out in the late summer when we decided we didn't want a garden full of flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). Maybe you have yellow flag iris and know how rampant it can be especially if put in its favoured position – a damp or preferably very wet spot, as in our garden. They do brilliantly – too brilliantly! Let me know if you'd like some.

So back to the warmth of the house I went with dead buddleia flower heads and dried iris roots. I chopped them both up and put them into separate pans, each filled with rainwater of which I have plenty as we have so many very large water butts! I left the pans to simmer gently. Never be in a hurry when using plant material to extract a dye because the longer the process the stronger the dye colour will be, and the more light-and-wash fast.

Into the dye bath went some pre-mordanted Lincoln cross fleece. This fleece I had mordanted with alum some months ago, probably last summer when I had plenty of fresh fleece and the weather was more conducive to washing and drying.

I always have a stash of washed fleece and ready-mordanted fleece in a cupboard under the stairs. I also have silk caps mordanted ready to use and usually dye both some fleece and silk together because the colour differences on the two fibres is sometimes quite astonishing.

After some considerable time I remove the pans from the kitchen and put them outside, leaving them to cool down. The longer they can be left before being rinsed the stronger the colour will be on the fibres as the dye will continue to transfer until the dyebath is cold. It also means that cool water can be used to rinse the fibres. This will save the hot water for something more important.

I always wash the dyed fibres in a warm soapy solution. This improves the smell of the fibres; not everyone likes the smell that natural dyes produce! They are then rinsed thoroughly and rolled up in a towel to remove the excess water. If the weather is dry I hang them on the washing line to dry.

The colour from the buddleia was a lovely yellow, very difficult to describe. A sort of tan-coloured yellow on the wool mordanted with alum, but a yellowy green on the fleece pre-mordanted with copper. I think if I were to pick the dead heads in the autumn the colour would be stronger. Something to try another time...

All the books say that iris roots produce black especially when mordanted with iron, but I got a soft brown on the fleece with iron added and a lovely warm peachy brown colour on the fleece mordanted with alum.

Maybe one day I'll turn them into something for you to see...

That's the exciting part about dyeing with plants from the garden – you never know exactly what colour you'll get. That's more than enough to brighten up any dreary January day. Have a go!



# Maori Weaving in New Zealand

By Margaret White  
of Waitara, New Zealand

"Aitia he wahine o te pa harakeke"  
So says an old whakatauki (proverb). Good advice to men as it suggests they choose a woman who weaves as she will be industrious, methodical and not give up easily.



Maori women who weave have a special place among their people. Like all Maori art, weaving was an integral part of everyday life, and as the coconut palm is important to Pacific Islanders, the flax bush (phormium tenax) is to everything Maori.

The leaves and fibre of the flax bush, or harakeke as it is named by Maori, are used for clothing, baskets, fishing nets and lines as well as for rongoa (medicine) and dyes. Its leaves can be divided lengthways for weaving or its inner fibre stripped, beaten and twisted into a fine white twine (muka). Other fibres such as kiekie (*Freycinetia banksii*) or pingao (*Desmoschenus spiralis*) are also used. The basic stitches for all this work are simple and few in number. It is the willingness of the weaver to be diligent in what may otherwise be laborious and repetitive that earns respect.

Weaving has a spiritual base, has rules to be observed and is not to be taken lightly. In the past talented children were selected for the whare pora, a special place where they were mentored by a master weaver in the *Close-up of the "Te Awaroa" cloak that won for Margaret, in 2005, The Far North Award for the most creative use of New Zealand design or material*  
Photo Fiona Clark

art of weaving and karakia (prayers) and tikanga (ritual) associated with the craft. As a Pakeha, I was privileged to have been taught in the traditional way. Subsequently, it has been my obligation as a teacher to uphold, not only the technique of weaving, but the social, culture and ritual aspects of the craft. I work seasonally; weaving from sun up to sun down when the weather is warm, the light is good and the plant is supple. I only harvest flax in fine weather. Unused fibre is returned to fertilise the ground beneath the plants. When the first cold winds of autumn arrive I put away my work and start spinning and knitting.

Weaving was a communal occupation which alleviated the arduous and consuming nature of the work. There is always much laughter, camaraderie and a binding together so that it becomes a whanau or family affair. This is one of the most enjoyable aspects of Maori weaving and it has been my experience that women who weave together, stay together.

One of the most outstanding forms of weaving is the cloak of which there are many varieties. When Captain Cook discovered New Zealand he recorded a remarkable scene of Maori squatting about in their raincoats which made



them look like little thatched houses. These were simple garments; warm, rainproof and practical. The finest garments (kaitaka), made of the highest quality muka and bordered with a taniko design, were reserved for the chiefs and worn on ceremonial occasions. The prestige associated with these cloaks came from the open display of the weaver's skill – the consistency of tension and knotting and the straightness of the weft. Such garments were coveted by early European visitors to New Zealand and chiefs were often persuaded to trade them for items such as nails, blankets or guns with many finding a home in overseas museums or private collections.

The techniques of Maori weaving remained unchanged after European contact, though the introduction of new materials and ideas continues to be influential. There is a move away from natural dyes: black from mud and brown and yellow from bark. White and red are traditional colours as well, but nowadays one may see a variety of colours used, the laborious process of natural dying being replaced by chemical dyes. With the increased protection of native birds, contemporary weavers use imported feathers for the production of feather cloaks or kahuhuruhuru. There is also a European influence on the development of taniko designs and one may see text or crosses incorporated in them. The traditional patterns and shapes associated with nature are preferable however.

Maori weaving, like the language, has undergone a revival in recent years, which is exciting. Many young people are taking up the challenge and are using materials such as copper wire to create articles once only made of flax. With the upsurge in interest in all Maori art there is money to be made. It has become a year round occupation with

classes starting at the end of summer. Giving work away to someone who may treasure it is only one option now.

Weaving patterns that were once jealously guarded and tribally owned are now available for all in books written by ethnologists and on display in museums. Patterns printed on fabric for patchwork and clothing are very popular. Weaving forms also feature in floral art and fashion shows. Woven backpacks are worn by younger people in preference to the traditional kete or basket.

Cloaks that were once the property of high class Maori are now being made and worn in greater numbers. They are practically essential for any Maori graduating from polytechnics and universities. Cloak manufacture has been adapted to suit demand with feathers being sewn onto fabric using a machine. Such garments however, will never compare to the mana (status) of a hand woven cloak that has taken over a year to complete. Preparing the fibre and feathers, working with the seasons and not using a loom, is a very long process. It can take weeks or months of preparation before the weaving even begins. My weaving usually grows half an inch each day. There are hundreds of stitches to each row and many, many rows. Despite this, it brings me tremendous joy to offer my cloaks to those who are being honored in the community. In this way, I can acknowledge the work of that person and in turn, my work is elevated by the mana of that person; a concept that is at the heart of the following whakatauki:

Ko keo ki tena

You have the handle

Ko koe ki tenei

I have this handle

Ki wai o te kete

Together we will uphold the mana of weaving



#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Margaret's work has been recognized at national level and although modest herself and mindful, as she puts it, that she is "dabbling in another culture", Margaret is one of our most skilled exponents of New Zealand's heritage crafts. Her late husband was Maori, as are her children and grandchildren. Initially she learned the culture by learning the language and then the traditional weaving techniques and their associated spiritual values. Alongside her latest award is a framed copy of a "Whakatauki" (proverb) which reads, "This strand of flax is nothing by itself, like me, but woven tightly with other strands..... it is strong, like us together".



*At their ancestral marae (meeting house) Margaret's four daughters wear her magnificent cloaks*

*Photo Fiona Clark*



## Reversible double weave scarf on the rigid heddle

By Kim Schiffmacher of Silverthorne, Colorado, USA

This double weave scarf is super-warm and with the coloured squares alternating, smart as well.

### HERE'S HOW

Begin by winding a 250cm (100 ins) warp holding the 2 colours together. You will need a total of 92 warp threads - 46 light and 46 dark. If you are direct warping, run the two colours together through each slot of one heddle (23 slots).

Centre for a 15cm

(6ins) wide warp. There

are now 4 threads per slot. If you wound a warp, thread each slot in one of the heddles with 2 light and 2 dark threads (again centred for a 15cm/6 ins warp). Wind on to the back beam as usual. Make sure to keep even tension as you wind on. Leave 25-38 cm (10-15 ins) hanging in front of the heddle for threading. If this heddle is not in the back heddle holder, put it there and place the 2nd heddle in the front holder. Thread the heddles following Figure A and the colour sequence following. It is the colour sequence that allows the pattern to develop.

### THE COLOUR SEQUENCE

#### Back heddle:

Holes: 2 light, 5 dark, 2 light, 5 dark, 2 light, 5 dark, 2 light.

Slots: all dark.

#### Front heddle

Holes: 2 dark, 5 light, 2 dark, 5 light, 2 dark, 5 light, 2 dark

Slots: all light.

This takes some thinking and concentration but it easier to do than to explain and gets easier as you work. It is easiest to work with the 4 threads from one slot at a time, leaving all the others threaded in just the back heddle. Figure A shows the threading for an all dark bottom layer and an all light upper layer - to make the colour change just exchange the dark and light hole threads. (See Figure B)

Once the heddles are threaded, tie on to the front beam and tension your warp. Place both heddles in the DOWN position and using your knitting needle pick up all the light slot threads, behind the heddles! When

### You will need

A rigid heddle loom with two heddles

2 balls Tekapo - one light, one dark or 200m (220 yds) of each colour

2 x 7.5 dpi heddles

2 pick up sticks

2 stick shuttles

A pointy stick or knitting needle for clearing sheds and a hand mirror for checking sheds may also come in handy.



## ashford tekapo yarn

Tekapo is spun from 100% NZ wool. This lofty, lustrous yarn has a soft, handspun texture and a quality sheen, and comes in 100gm balls. Ideal for knitting (knits at 18-22 sts/cm, 4.5-5 sts/in and is double knit for use with 8 ply patterns), weaving or felting.

Tekapo comes in a range of fashion, random and natural colours. Patterns available. See our web site [www.ashford.co.nz](http://www.ashford.co.nz)

you have all the light slot threads, slide in your pick up stick (Pick up stick A) and move it to the back beam. Now place both heddles in the UP position and from underneath pick up all the dark slot threads. (Pick up stick B). Slide this pick up stick to the back as well. This warp is narrow enough for there to be no need to crawl under the loom to make sure all the dark slot threads have been picked up - you should be able to tell by just looking at it from the side. Check for crossed threads between the heddles and correct them (if you threaded very carefully you might not have any).

Wind two stick shuttles - a light one to weave the upper layer and a dark one to weave the bottom layer.

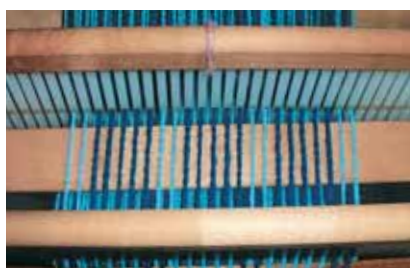
### Heddle sequence

Block A - squares of solid colour  
 Back heddle down - weave bottom layer (dark weft)  
 Stick A - upper layer (light weft)  
 Stick B - bottom layer (dark weft)  
 Front heddle up - upper layer (light weft)  
 Block B - narrow bands separating the solid squares  
 Front heddle down - bottom layer (dark weft)  
 Stick A - upper layer (light weft)  
 Stick B - bottom layer (dark weft)  
 Back heddle up - upper layer (light weft)

When the heddles are not in use they are either just hanging or in the 'neutral' position in the heddle holders. (I usually put the back heddle in the neutral position on the front heddle holder and just let the front heddle hang in front of its heddle holder).

When using two shuttles always place the working shuttle nearer to you than the resting shuttle - this way the two wefts will wrap around each other and tie the edges together.

Leave 18cm (7 ins) for fringe and begin weaving Block A. To get the



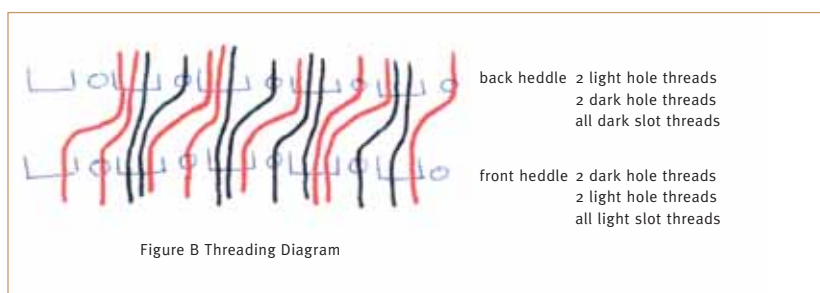
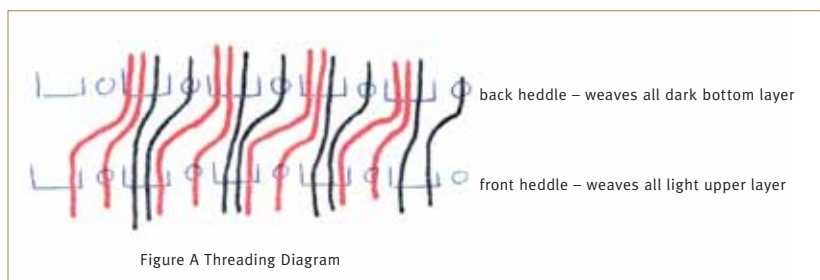
*Pick-up stick A and light slot threads*



*See how the hole threads for the back and front heddles are reversed*

pattern in the scarf, weave Block A for 12 shots each layer (24 total) followed by Block B for 4 shots each layer (8 total). Weave for 183cm (72 ins) or until you run out of warp and/or weft. I hemstitched both ends on the loom and then twisted the fringe after cutting the scarf off the loom. After

you cut the scarf off the loom, check for and correct any errors. I finished by soaking it in warm water for about 20 minutes, spinning out the excess water in the washing machine and hanging until dry. Once dry I tossed it in the dryer, on the 'no heat' setting, for a few minutes to fluff the yarns a bit more.



### Threading

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Only the hole threads can change layers - the threads in the slots ALWAYS weave either the upper layer or the bottom layer. A pointy stick/knitting needle and/or mirror are handy to check for clear sheds - especially on the bottom layer (back heddle down is the most likely to cause problems). You can also vary

the look of your scarf by changing the length of each block when weaving or if you want a more 'checkerboard' effect you can thread the holes in the heddles 'square' (5 light, 5 dark etc for the back heddle and reversed for the front heddle). You can also use one colour to weave both layers.



Here is a selection of questions I have received. I hope my answers may help you, too.

**Q I bought my Ashford when I was 23, I am now 55. Recently I have had problems with it feeding in when plying. I have adjusted the drive band, tightened/loosened the brake, oiled it, but it is still holding back.**

A Many thanks for your query. It's great to know that your early Ashford wheel is still going strong. Plying problems can often be solved simply by adding a tension spring on the other side of the bobbin. This means the brake band can flex. Spare springs are available from your local Ashford dealer. Also a drop of oil on the brake band give a more even tension. Replace the flyer hooks as they may be worn and catching on the yarn.

**Q How do I get a light and lofty yarn on my electronic spinner?**

A To achieve a light lofty yarn try slowing the speed right down so the flyer is only doing about 120 rpm (10 revolutions in 5 seconds) & have the brake band very loose. Draft a medium weight yarn & allow the bobbin to pull the yarn on without holding back. If insufficient pull, increase the brake band tension. Ensure there is a spring on both sides of the bobbin & to give a more even tension apply a drop of light oil to the

bobbin whorl/brake band.

Check the flyer orifice is clean & free of snags & also check the flyer hooks to ensure the yarn isn't catching.

**Q I have just bought an old Ashford Traditional from an estate sale. What parts could be updated?**

A Replacement wheels, cranks and con rods are available from your Ashford dealer. Older wheels had leather bearings on the maiden uprights that wear with time. These can be replaced with newer uprights incorporating nylon bearings. A current single drive three-speed flyer or jumbo flyer unit will replace any earlier one or two-speed. This will give you the ability to spin a variety of yarns. For Traditional wheels made since 1971 the double treadle kit is an ideal way to upgrade your wheel, with the added benefit of converting your wheel to double treadle. These kits contain a crank, con rods, treadle boards and hardware. Remember to give all the bearings a good oiling and check that the flyer hooks and orifice are smooth. The tension spring may need replacing. A Maintenance Kit has all the small parts you are likely to need plus a bottle of spinning wheel oil. Happy spinning.

**Q This weekend I purchased an Ashford Inkle Loom. Warping and getting started was easy but now I seem to be unable to move the warp in either direction.**

A As you weave on an inkle loom, the weft causes the warp to shorten. Thus it is important to have the tension flap extended to around 45 degrees when warping the loom. This allows sufficient flexibility to tension the warp but also relax it when you need to advance it. I suggest using two

hands to carefully advance the warp by stretching it in sections around the loom. Shorter warps are easier to advance, the longer it is the more friction on the pegs.

**Q I really like the wide-eyed reed supplied with my new Knitters Loom. Can I get one for my regular rigid heddle loom?**

A. Yes, these reeds with the extra-large eyes, are available for all our rigid heddles. I have also colour-coded all our reeds to make them easier to identify: pink for 5 dpi (20/10), green for the extra-large eyes 7.5 dpi (30/10), blue for the Knitters Loom extra-large eyes 7.5 dpi (30/10), lilac for the 10 dpi (40/10) and butter for the 12.5 dpi (50/10). These reeds will be available from your Ashford dealer soon.



*The Knitters Loom wide-eyed reed is now available for all rigid heddle looms*



*All reeds are now colour-coded to make them easier to identify*

There is the old saying, "When an elder dies, a library burns to the ground." I think that to pass on the ancient and modern craft of spinning is one way of preserving a library.

# Heirlooms

By Judy Dyer, of Decatur, Georgia, USA

At one time, the world depended upon spinners to produce all the fibre needed for every purpose. Handspun fibre was woven or knitted into garments for warmth, clothing, even the sails needed for sailing the seven seas. This past century is the first in the history of the world in which handspinners were not essential to the growth and sustenance of a culture. This old, old craft could now be considered obsolete. To our present culture so obsessed with the new, with staying on the cutting edge, spinning could be seen as an arcane pursuit; of some interest perhaps, but of little use. Yet to many spinners and fibre artists, the act of creating something by hand holds a strong connection to the past and the future.

When I hold my grandmother's handmade quilt, I feel close to her. The energy of her stitches exists. Her generation lived in a less-than-perfect world, and despite this she used her creativity in moments of peace to make items with patience, with a nod to the future, and with love. Fingering her

handiwork, I sense a connection to her that might otherwise be lost. She has left for me more than a quilt; through her handiwork, I sense her vitality. It lives on, transformed, in her work.

Spinning and knitting fill me with a similar sense. I wonder when I create blankets and sweaters, might these items be heirlooms someday? I feel the energy I impart from roving to yarn moving through me. What I create may live on to represent my time the same way my grandmother's quilt represents hers.

My grandmother's generation valued heirlooms. Household things, by necessity, were passed from family member to family member. Furniture, clothes, dishes, toys, were made to last, produced with intent to be passed on. Not so anymore. Who has time to create items, or the inclination to hand them down? Nowadays most families live apart from one another. Connections between aunts, uncles, and cousins often disappear. Family stories are shared less frequently. Family histories are in danger of

extinction. When things move so quickly it is easy to forget where we came from. When we cease to know where we came from, we cease to know who we are. Rootless, storyless, unconnected, a culture ceases to have culture.

Although spinning is an old craft, it is constantly being reinvented by those of us who do it. We are who we are, people of the 21st century, refashioning an old craft to receive from it what we will. Spinning represents to me a recognition of the past and a hope for the future, yet paradoxically as I spin I feel solidly connected to the here and now. Spinning makes my day real.

Heirlooms provide connections and help preserve stories. I gain solace from holding my grandmother's quilt and remembering that one quilt square was my mother's favorite dress, another was my great-uncle's shirt. The quilt brings back my earliest memories from childhood. As I admire each stitch I recognize the intention behind the act of making the quilt. It soothes me, provides for me a "groundedness".

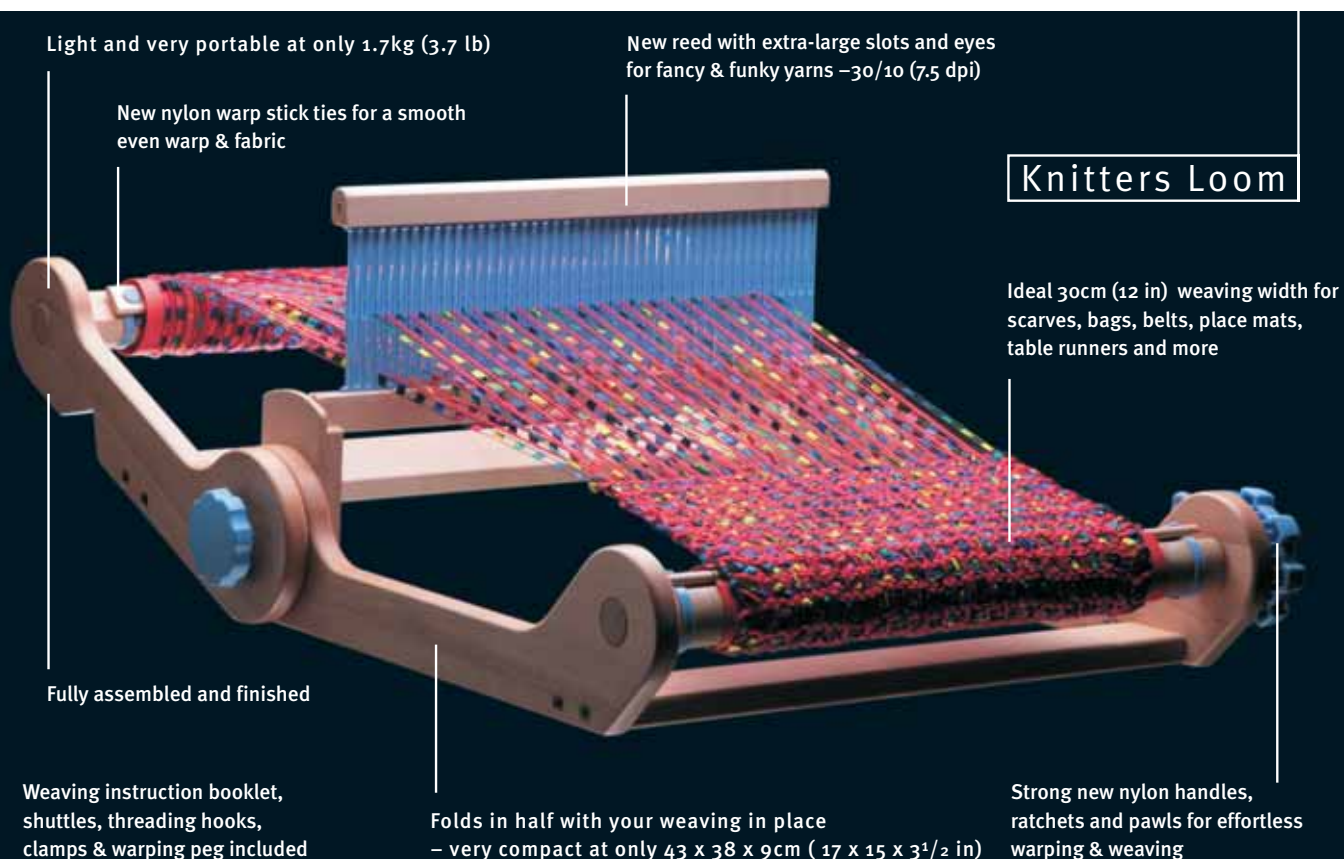
## ashford heirlooms

This is where I come from, I tell myself. These are my roots. I have been left a signpost.

I hope that when my great-grandchildren hold a blanket or a shawl that I have created, they might feel a similar sense of the conduit of time - or timelessness. I hope that they will know that the world of the early 21st century was not made up solely of war, waste, destruction and loss of vision, but of real people, some of whom found the time to sit, to think, to create, to be engaged in peaceful activity; people who worked with honest reflection. I hope they will know that my vision of the future took their lives into account. I hope they will feel, as I do, that the past has something to teach us.

To be a spinner in today's world is to go against the unspoken modern norm that would have us only seek the new. To think about leaving something for those who are yet to be could be considered a counter culture act. Making items that are meant to outlast us is to brazenly admit to a hope that there will be a tomorrow. It is to create a signpost for the future generations.

If spinning and fibre arts are countercultural acts, then as spinners we are all part of a revolution. Let us be counterculture, then, and go against the norm. Handspun items are a way to build signposts of hope. Let us create works of art and dare them to outlast us. Spinning is an act of peace, a way of living our hope. Through our craft, we can look backward and forward. Together we can make sure the libraries do not burn.



# REVOLUTIONARY

Portability ... like never before.

# Collapse Weave Scarf

Anne Field, of Christchurch, NZ

There are many reasons why collapse happens. It can be caused by the weave structure or by the yarn itself. The collapse weave in this scarf is caused by the structure of the yarn: a Merino wool/nylon blend single (unplied yarn). The yarn is over-twisted so when the scarf is washed the yarn tries to straighten out, pulling the cloth into pleats and puckers.

If the cloth is tightly woven the yarn cannot straighten out, and remains stable, as in the woven squares in this scarf. In the unwoven areas, the yarns kink and curls back on itself when it is washed.

Weaving this scarf is not difficult as it is all plain weave.

## You will need

A two or four shaft loom

Warp and weft yarn: 40 Tex over-twisted Merino wool/nylon blend singles yarn. The small amount of nylon is added to give strength to this very fine yarn.

For the warp and weft yarn for each scarf, including wastage 60gm (2oz) of yarn will be sufficient.

## HERE'S HOW

Width on loom: 33cm (13ins)

Length on loom: 210cm (83ins)

Sett: 32 ends per 2.5cm (1in.) in the woven areas

Structure: Plain weave

Weight of finished scarf: 40gm (1½oz)

## THREADING THE LOOM

Wind a warp 3m (9 feet) long with 224 ends. The yarn will kink and curl somewhat as it is being wound, as it is so over-twisted, but it behaves itself when it is under tension.

Because the yarn will curl up when not under tension it is easiest to use a raddle and thread from back to front. Tie counting ties around the warp every 16 ends, (14 groups). Space the ends out with 16 in each 2.5cm (1in.) in the raddle and wind onto the back beam. At this stage the warp will be 36cm (14ins) wide.

It is not until the warp is sleyed that the correct spacing is done.

Thread the heddles with a straight draw, 1, 2, 3, 4. Beginning at 17cm (6½ins), from the centre of the reed, sley an 8 dent reed with 4 ends to every dent for the first 8 dents, then miss 8

## project gallery

dents across the reed, finishing with 8 sleyed dents. If you have a 10 dent reed, it is easiest to sett the yarn at 30 ends per 2.5cm (1in.) and thread 3 in every dent, apart from the spaced sections, although this will make the scarf a little wider.

The width will now be 33cm (13ins) through the reed.

### WEAVING

Weave a heading using scrap yarn. Wind the yarn onto a shuttle. Weave 32 picks for the first woven square. Do not hemstitch. Place a smooth stick across the warp, one that will leave a 2.5cm (1in.) gap when it is removed. Do not break the weft yarn when starting the next square but carry it up the edge. When this second square is woven, pull the stick out, from the first unwoven warp, and replace it after this square, and so on until the scarf measures 210cm (83ins).

### FINISHING

Leave about 10cm (4ins) of the warp at the end of the scarf when cutting it from the loom. Twist the fringe at both ends, with the 32 ends in each woven square in each twist. Take the two lots of 16, twist them to the right, then hold the two groups together and twist them to the left. Finish with an overhand knot.

Finish the scarf by pouring boiling water over it. I add some detergent to help the scarf absorb the water. Let the scarf soak until the water is cold, then squeeze out most of the water and hang the scarf up to dry. When dry the scarf will measure about 152cm (60ins).

### DYEING

The scarf can be dyed after it has collapsed, using wool dyes. I experimented with one scarf by putting drops of dye from an eye-dropper in each square of the dampened scarf.

### Editor's Note

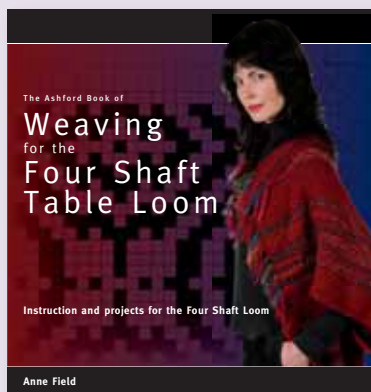
We have sourced, from Anne, some of this special Merino wool/nylon blend over-twisted single for Ashford Club members. If you would like us to send you enough for this scarf, or any other project, please go to [www.ashfordclub.co.nz](http://www.ashfordclub.co.nz)



## Latest book releases from Anne Field

Anne has recently updated her classic weaving book.

The Ashford Book of Weaving for the Four Shaft Table Loom, available soon, is a 175 page, full colour inspirational and informative text. Written specifically for this popular loom this comprehensive book covers planning a warp, pattern drafting, weaving techniques and fourteen innovative projects.



Anne is also soon to publish a new book on collapse weaving. This book was written after years of research, by Anne, into collapse weaves that pleat and pucker after washing to make original cloth. This cloth is light and flexible, ideal for scarves and wraps and filmy, floaty fabrics. This magical transformation happens after washing, where the structure seems to move before your eyes. In this book, Anne takes you through the processes that make up collapse weave cloth, from the yarns through the weaving to the finished project.

For more information on this new book please go to Anne's web site [www.annefield.co.nz](http://www.annefield.co.nz)





Siri Omberg's "Woolly Bird" beanie exhibited at the 2005 Alice Springs Beanie Festival, Northern Territory, Australia.



### Shawl

A shawl in Tekapo wool yarn in the Summertime random shade (see page 30).

### Perfect Puppets

Melissa Gray, of Richlands, North Carolina, USA, makes adorable hand puppets using felted sliver wool.



Poncho woven on the Knitters Loom in black Tekapo and red looped mohair.



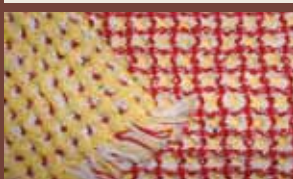
Pam Gipson, from Adaminaby, NSW, Australia and a member of the Canberra Spinners and Weavers, created this striking cardigan in the Ashford Tekapo random-coloured Summertime. The collar and hem are in Tekapo Violet and the flowers are made in Violet Tekapo with a button centre.



Karen Workman, from Bluff, New Zealand, crocheted this beautiful wrap with large diamonds of handspun multi-dyed sliver plied with a fine gold thread and small diamonds of energised handspun singles, for the 2006 Creative Fibre Fashion Parade. Model Maureen Mckenzie



Groovy felted bags in Ashford Tekapo with a novelty yarn accent.



Kim Schiffmacher's eye-catching 8 shaft waffle weave towels (see page 42 for more on this weave structure).

### Claudette's Cornucopia

Claudette Dufresne, of Dufresne D'Art, a spinning, weaving and beading supply store in Mayfield, NSW, Australia, made this glorious cornucopia using cloth woven on her Ashford Knitters Loom.



# Queen of Wool

In September 2007 Mary-Annette Hay is being honoured by an exhibition in New Zealand's National Museum, Te Papa, in the nation's capital Wellington.

Crowned as the "Queen of Wool" Mary, as a young woman, from the late 1940s to 1956, was the director of wool promotions for the New Zealand Wool Board.

With her background in the visual and performing arts she dramatised the story of wool and her productions, having titles such as "The Miracle of Wool" and "The Romance of Wool", attracted unprecedented publicity for wool in New Zealand and overseas.

The exhibition will include costumes by the world's great fashion designers, selected photos and art material and we look forward to Mary telling the story of her extraordinary career.



*Mary photographed in a dress by Worth, with wool gowns by Carosa (circa 1951) and Balmain (circa 1948)*



We recently commissioned New Zealand fibre artist and teacher Jo Reeve to write **The Ashford Book of Carding**

(see back cover),

which is now available

from your local Ashford dealer.

This book is a really clear, practical guide that will inspire you to take out your carding tools and experiment. The introduction of colour or fibre blends can give favourite old patterns a new twist.

A favourite pattern of Jo's is a double-skinned slipper devised by Wayne Pfeffer of Missouri, USA (see right for the full pattern).

See what fun she had!

"For the shell of the slipper I spun two firmly-twisted singles using a hand-carded blend of dyed English Leicester staples with a medium brown Ashford Romney sliver. The dyed staples were bright yellow/orange and deep green/blue. I placed a layer of Romney on the carder, then a layer of English Leicester, using the colours in about the same proportions. The two singles were plied firmly to give the yarn durability.

For the lining I blended equal amounts of the same brown Romney sliver used for the shell and some white Perendale for softness. These singles were spun with my usual amount of twist and plied for a balanced yarn.

Both yarns were about 12 wraps to the inch (2.5 cm) and I used 4mm needles for the knitting."





## You will need

Worsted weight yarn that measures about 12 wraps/inch (2.5cm) and 800 yards/pound (1625 m/kg). You'll need about 3 to 4 ounces (80 to 110g) each of two kinds of yarn.

MC = coarse wool tightly spun and plied for the outside of the slipper

CC = softer, finer wool or wool blend for the inside

Needles: Size 7 or 8 (4.5 to 5.25mm)

Gauge: 5 sts/inch (2.5cm)

## HERE'S HOW

### Pattern

Multiple of 4 stitches plus 2.

Rows 1-4: With MC. Knit every row, making two garter-stitch ridges. I recommend that you knit (rather than slip) the first stitch of every row on these slippers.

*Rows 5-10:* With CC

*Row 5:* \*Sl2 purlwise with yarn in back, k2\*. Repeat from \* to \*, ending with sl2

*Row 6:* \*Sl2 purlwise with yarn in front, p2\*. Repeat from \* to \*, ending with sl2

*Rows 7-10:* Repeat rows 5 and 6.

### Directions for medium-sized adult foot

With MC, cast on 46 sts. Leave a

tail to stitch up the heel. Work in pattern. You will be creating a flat fabric consisting of two ridges of garter stitch in MC and six rows of stocking stitch in CC. Continue knitting in this pattern until the slipper is almost as long as the foot it's meant to fit. For example, I work a total of 13 repeats for woman's size large or man's size small.

Then shape toe as follows, with MC.

*Rows 1-2:* Knit

*Row 3:* Knit.

*Row 4:* K1, k2tog (or ssk) across row.

*Rows 5-6:* Repeat rows 3-4

*Rows 7-8:* Repeat rows 3-4

*Row 9:* Knit

*Row 10:* K2tog across row (7 sts remain).

*Row 11:* Knit

Break yarn leaving tail. With yarn needle, draw tail through remaining sts, then sew about halfway up the instep to close the toe of the slipper. Sew the cast-on edge together to form the heel.

Make second slipper the same as the first.

### Editor's Note

This pattern was first published in the Summer 2000 issue of the *Spin-Off*, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the author.

# Two-Yarn Slippers

by Wayne Pfeffer of Centralia, Missouri, USA

A few years ago Wayne was shown a pair of slippers that was worked in two colours of acrylic yarn. Immediately it occurred to him to use two kinds of wool yarn: a coarse wool tightly spun and plied for the outside of the slipper and a soft, fine wool or wool/angora blend for the inside. The coarse wool wears like iron, and the soft wool provides comfort and warmth. Over the years Wayne has knitted

several pairs of these slippers. They are thick and warm, stretchy enough to fit very comfortably, and very durable. A pair he made for friend Jenny (and now wife!), using her three-ply handspun Karakul for the outer (main colour) yarn seem indestructible! Wayne writes, "I have been unable to track down the origin of this slipper.

It's a very simple clever pattern and the slippers are easy to knit."

# Blended Slivers

No fuss, no waste, carded and blended fibres are ready to go. Ashford has two new blended slivers for you to try.

## ALPACA WOOL BLEND

Fibre from the alpaca has been prized since the days of the Inca. Able to live in the highlands of Peru and Bolivia at altitudes of above 3,600 metres (12,000ft), this member of the South American camel family produces a fibre stronger and warmer than wool, but it blends beautifully with this and other natural fibres.

So, for the best of both worlds, we have produced an alpaca blend sliver with 33% natural brown alpaca and 67% Corriedale, dyed in eight lovely colours.

## POSSUM MERINO WOOL BLEND

The New Zealand possum is a pest in our country but it does have a thick, luxurious fur that is often labelled in tourist shops as "New Zealand mink". The fur is 7% warmer than wool and wonderfully soft. The warm ginger shades of the possum fur are blended through the fine Merino fibres to produce a special mix of 25% possum and 75% Merino.



## Brilliant Brocade

Angela Mainz, of Muenchen, Germany, created this beautiful brocade sweater using the new Ashford Alpaca/Wool Blends in Grape Jelly and Peach colourways. With her Ashford Joy wheel she spun a 100m/50gm 3ply yarn and using 3.5mm needles and Kaffe Fasser's "Brocade" pattern (published in *Rowan Magazine* No.38, Pattern No.10, page 98) Angela made a garment that she describes as "luxuriously soft", and that we think looks fabulous!

Lucy Ashford wears a garter stitch cardigan knitted in handspun (to an 8ply) Possum Merino Blend (the middle taupe colour) and Corriedale sliver (light and dark).

## HERE'S HOW:

To spin blended slivers

Break off a length of sliver 20cm (8ins) long. Hold length in one hand and use the other hand to draw the fibre out until it becomes a loose, long length.

Commence spinning by drawing out the fibre and attach it to the header on the bobbin.

The amount of fibre to be released determines the thickness of your finished yarn.

As most of the fibres lie in one direction you will produce a semi-worsted yarn.

Light brushing of the finished garment will encourage both the alpaca and the possum fur to reveal their furry finish.

Spin sliver as a medium/fine single. Ply two together to produce an 8 ply/double knit equivalent yarn.

Ruler test: 11 wraps per 2.5cm (1in.).

GAUGE (tension)

18 sts and 34 rows = 10cm (4 ins) over garter stitch with size 7 (4.5mm) needles. If you obtain more sts per 10cm (4ins) than specified, use larger needles, if less use smaller needles.

For Knitting abbreviations see page 8.

\* Armhole shaping - beg. in this colour band

\*\* Fronts only - neck shaping - beg. in this colour band

\*\*\* Shoulder shaping - beg. in this colour band

## Measurements

### To fit bust

32	34	36	38	40	ins
81	86	91	96	101	cm

### Finished measurements

40	42	44	46	48	ins
100	105	111	116	121	cm

# Garter Stitch Cardigan

Handspun in 3 natural colours -  
a light and dark Corriedale and a Possum/Merino mix

## NOTE

Instructions are given for first size with larger sizes in brackets.  
Where only one figure is given, this applies to all sizes.

## BACK

With M, cast on 90 (94:100:104:110) sts. Work in gst  
63(69:71:71:71) rows.

Now work:

2 rows in C1, 8 rows in M, 4 rows in C1, 4 rows  
in M

\* 10(10:12:12:14) rows in C1

\*On rows 7 & 8, bind off(cast off) 5 sts at beg  
of each row. Dec 1 st at each end of next and  
every alt row until 68(72:74:76:78) sts rem  
keeping colour pattern correct as foll:

2 rows M, 10(10:10:12:12) rows C1, 2 rows  
C2, 8 (8:8:10:10) rows C1, 4 rows C2, 4  
rows C1

\*\* 10 rows C2, 2 rows C1

\*\*\* 22(22:22:24:24) rows C2

\*\*\*When 18 of these rows have been worked, shape  
shoulders as foll:

Bind off(cast off) 9(10:10:7:7) sts at beg of next  
2(4:4:6:6) rows. Size 32 ins (81 cms) only, bind off(cast  
off) 10 sts at beg of next 2 rows. 155(161:165:173:175)  
rows worked in all from beg. Bind off(cast off)  
rem 30(32:34:34:36) sts.

## LEFT FRONT

With M, cast on 51(55:56:58:61) sts

Follow colour patt as for back to \*

Shape armhole. Bind off (cast off) 5 sts at armhole edge.

Keeping colour patt correct, dec 1 st at armhole edge on alt  
rows until 36(37:39:42:43) sts rem. Follow colour patt as for  
back until \*\* 10 rows C2.

Shape Neck. On 8th row, at neck edge, bind off(cast  
off) 9(11:11:13:13) sts. Dec 1st at neck edge on alt rows  
until 19(20:20:21:21) sts rem. Foll colour patt to \*\*\*  
22(22:22:22:24) rows C2.

Shape Shoulders. On 21st row, at armhole edge bind off

*continued next page*

## You will need

### Main colour

Light Corriedale sliver 400 400 500 500 600 gm

### Contrast colour 1

Possum/Merino sliver 200 200 200 200 200 gm

### Contrast colour 2

Dark Corriedale sliver 200 200 200 200 200 gm

NOTE: Quantities may vary if other wool types are used.

## Garner Stitch Cardigan continued from page 41

(cast off) 9(10:10:7:7) sts at beg of next 1(2:2:3:3) alt rows. Size 32ins(81cm) only: k 1 row, bind off(cast off) rem 10 sts.

### RIGHT FRONT

Work same as left front, but rev shapings, and spacing 5 buttonholes evenly up centre front edge as foll: 1st button hole: k 3 rows  
4th row: k 3 sts, bind off(cast off) next 3 sts, k to end  
5th row: k to bound off(cast off) sts, cast on 3 sts, k last 3 sts.

### SLEEVES

With M, cast on 42(42:42:44:46) sts and work in gst for 25 rows. Inc 1 st at each end of last row.  
Keeping colour patt correct, inc 1 st at each end of every foll 8th row until there are 64(66:68:72:78) sts

117(117:117:119:119) rows M

2 rows C1, 8 rows M, 4 rows C1,

4 rows M

\* 10(10:12:12:12) rows C1

Shape sleeve top. Keeping colour patt correct, bind off(cast off) 5 sts at beg of rows 7 and 8 C1.

Still keeping colour patt correct:

Dec 1 st at each end of alt rows 7 times  
40(42:44:48:54) sts

Dec 1 st at each end of every foll 3rd row  
4 times 32(34:36:40:46)sts

Dec 1 st at each end of alt rows 6 times.

2 rows M, 10(10:10:12:12) rows C1, 2 rows C2, 8(8:8:10:10) rows C1, 4 rows C2, 4 rows C1

4(4:4:4:8) rows C2

Bind off(cast off) rem 20(22:24:28:34) sts loosely.

### TO MAKE UP

Join shoulder seams.

Sew sleeve tops to armholes.

Join side and sleeve seams, rev seam on lower 5cm (2ins) of sleeve. Fold up 2.5cm (1 in.) for cuff.

Sew 5 buttons to left front to match buttonholes on right front.

Press garment lightly on ws.

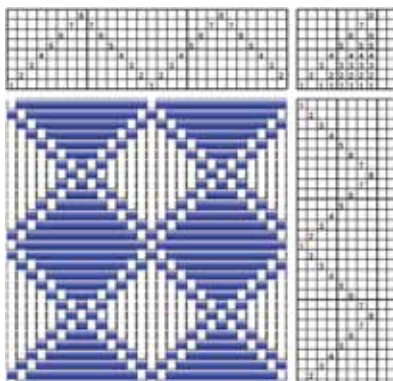


This eye-catching weaving, exhibited at Convergence in the USA this year, caused great discussion. The waffle weave structure consists of warp and weft floats surrounding a little sunken square in plain weave. In Britain this weave is called Honeycomb, no doubt in reference to the cell-like texture created. The 3-D look is very appealing and using a random-dyed yarn, with several tones, gave the illusion of

cutting back through the layers. Thick yarns increase the scale, and depth, of the cell. The cellular structure gives wonderful insulation against the cold and for this reason the waffle weave is traditionally used for blankets where the pockets of air, trapped by the weave, retain body heat. When woven in cotton or linen the floats absorb moisture readily, making this pattern ideal for hand towels.

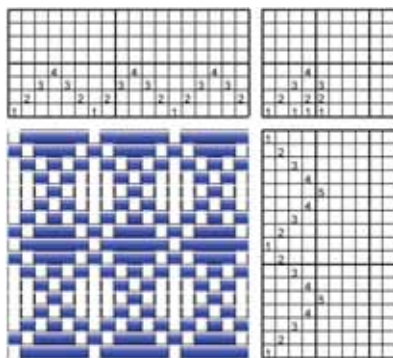
For interesting variations on waffle weave pattern take a look at Sharon Alderman's *A Handweaver's Notebook*, Mary Black's *New Key to Weaving*, Ann Sutton's *The Structure of Weaving* and Elsa Krogh's *The Ashford Book of Textures and Towels for the Four Shaft Loom*.

*The eight shaft waffle weave woven with the random-dyed Tekapo yarn in both the warp and weft.*



*Pattern Draft for Waffle Weave on the eight shaft loom*

*Pattern Draft for Waffle Weave on the four shaft loom*





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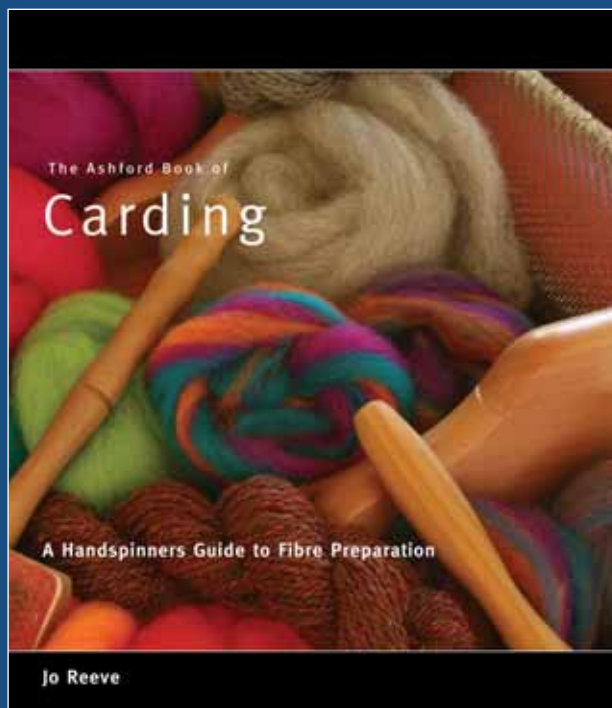
## The Ashford Book of Carding

By Jo Reeve

This is a practical and inspirational guide to carding fleece, slivers and exotic fibres. Written for the hand spinner and felter, and everyone who loves fibre, there are sections on using flick, hand and drum carders, fibre and colour blending, colour theory and four innovative projects. Step by step instructions and full colour photographs envelope you in the world of colour, texture and the endless possibilities of fibre.

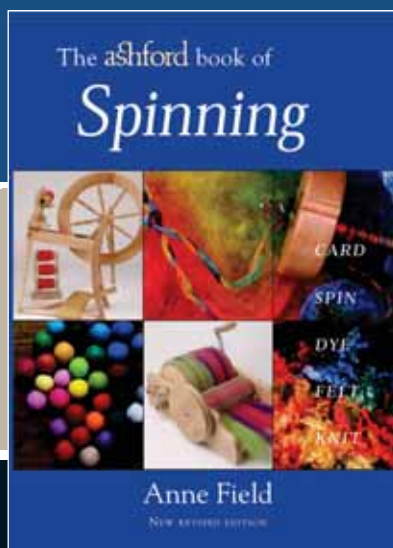
First published 2006

Soft cover, 92 pages



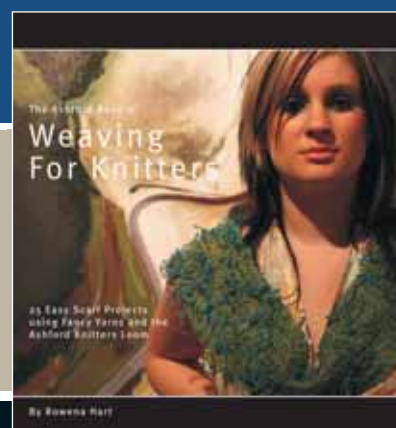
### The Ashford Book of Rigid Heddle Weaving

Step-by-step instructions to create exciting and beautiful garments, all on a two-shaft loom



### The Ashford Book of Spinning

Revised edition of this comprehensive text on spinning



### The Ashford Book of Weaving for Knitters

Twenty-five easy scarf projects using fancy yarns and the Ashford Knitters Loom