

Long Buckby Machine Knitters

Special edition Newsletter

During the shutdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Long Buckby Machine Knitters will issue special editions of our newsletter. This can be found on the website and will be issued on a monthly basis.

April 2020



Reduce



Reuse



Recycle

This edition will focus, though not exclusively, on reducing our 'collections' of yarn, reusing textiles which we no longer use, and recycling items by refreshing them.

The Editor



I hope you are all well in these strange times, I am, and I thought I would say a few words about myself, by way of introduction.

I am an amateur craftsperson, rather than a dedicated machine knitter [like most knitters, I suspect]. I started machine knitting as a student, over forty years ago, with a Knitmaster that I had bought new in a department store sale. I think punch card machines had just been introduced, and the manual patterning machines were being sold off.

I wanted to make fabric, as I was also into dressmaking, and I managed to teach myself to use the machine, badly. I went on to make my children jumpers later, then abandoned the machine as life became more hectic.

Much later, I returned to machine knitting, buying a second-hand Brother punch card machine. This has been a second career with the machine, as I have learned so much more. [particularly when thrown into the deep end, demonstrating at craft shows for the Guild of Machine Knitters!] I still like the idea of making fabric, and I think this is reflected in some of this newsletter. I now have a Brother KH891 with ribber, having shed a chunky Brother, a fine gauge Brother, and mid gauge Knitmaster, amongst others!

Other crafts I indulge myself in are spinning, weaving, dyeing, hand knitting, crochet and dressmaking. Jack of all trades, master of none, but I love learning new skills. So, apart from the fibre mountain described later in this newsletter, I have to find space for spinning wheels, weaving looms, drop spindles and sewing machines. Which probably explains why I have chosen this theme now!

Stay safe!

Lynda Fiendley



We have all experienced the effects of hoarding in recent days. Supermarkets have been stripped, and an unnecessary shortage created in just a few days.

Whilst we, as machine knitters, do not cause shortages, at least as far as I am aware, we are guilty of hoarding.

There are two main reasons, I think, for this:

1. As craft shops, and specifically those that sell yarn on cones, have become an endangered species, we buy what we can, where we can, as much as we can, without specific projects in mind.



This applies to all crafts: I have a hoard of fabric, fibre, yarn and beads. This is a small part of it, and, yes, all the boxes are full.

The problem is, we might never use it all. And here at LBMK, we are frequently offered ex-knitters' unused yarn etc.

2. Remnants: left over yarn etc., which we don't discard, but don't know how to use.

Ways to reduce your pile of yarn

1. Start knitting! Now is a good time, you may well have the opportunity to focus on machine knitting. I find it difficult to motivate myself sometimes, until I find some inspiration or think of a project.
Do a bit of research. Look on the internet, Ravelry and Pinterest are good places to start. Our LBMK pattern collection might be of interest too.

2. If you can't find a specific project, how about knitting for fabric. Knit yardage/metreage of fabric. You can knit plain or textured. You could knit weave.
Then you can do some cut and sew construction, using dressmaking patterns or existing garments as templates, or, if you really want to be creative, use a dressmaker's dummy, and drape the fabric to create new shapes/clothing.
3. Combine yarns: this might make you use some yarn which does not appeal, or seems difficult to use
 - You can use yarn twisters, or stacks, to combine thin yarns to make thicker ones. Experiment to find the best way to do this - results can be unexpected, and I have found it best if the colours are similar.
 - You can use plating. You can get some really good effects from knitting a different yarn on the front and back of your knitting: especially effective with tuck stitch

If you haven't tried this before, now is a good time. It is simple, and your manual should show you how to do this, but here are links for Brother machines:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LKRPUVBRPs&t=153s> this one is for Brother machines, in Spanish, but clearly shows how to do it.

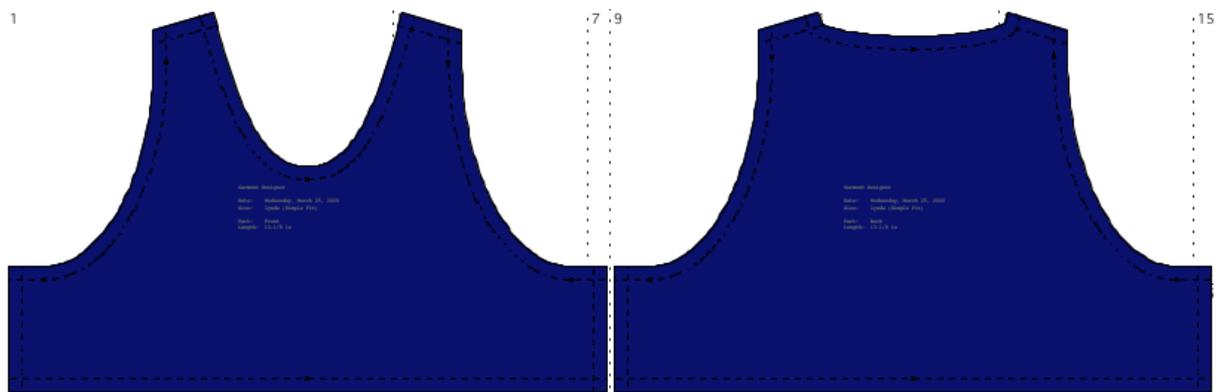
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTH7QEn_wnE also Brother, in English

I couldn't find one for Knitmaster/Silver Reed, so have included below the relevant page from the manual of the SK700, which should be similar to most models.

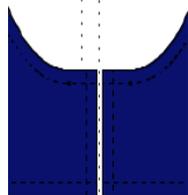
- Knit weave: use a finer yarn to knit with, and weave in a thicker yarn. Experiment! You can achieve a very fluid fabric with finer yarns, knitted loosely, or a firmer fabric with a tighter tension.

Although I haven't used the knitting machine for my latest project, I could have made it easily with knit weave. Instead, I used handwoven fabric. I wove about 4.5 metres, 42cm wide, and I had a little waste from that, but not much.

My Tunic Project

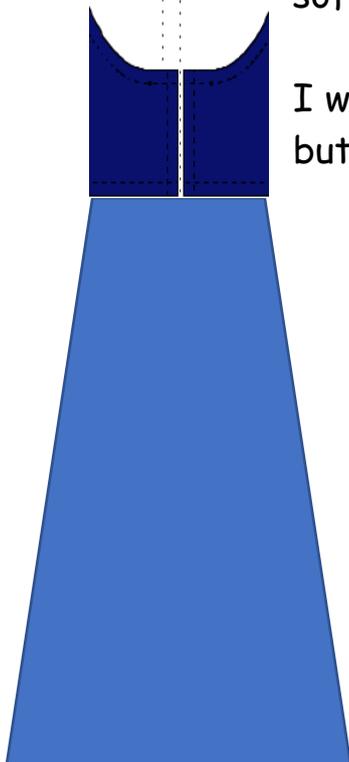
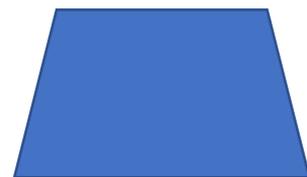


First, I used *Garment Designer*, dressmaking and machine knitting software, to make a fitted empire line top pattern.



I wanted to use this to shape the top of the garment, but strictly as a starting point. Because my fabric was narrower than these pieces, I used the central part of each piece, and extended them both straight down to about 34 inches in length. The side parts I cut separately, and extended them down too, but I wanted to make them flare out a bit, so I did that [not to scale]:

I then cut the pieces, one front, one back, and two side pieces. I wanted pockets, so cut those separately. These I attached to the side pieces, by stitching



them on to the side seam edges, and stitching the pocket bottoms to the side piece, before sewing the side seams. This way the pocket is secured.

As I was using handwoven fabric, I overlocked each piece on the raw edges after cutting, to secure the threads. For knit weave fabric, this would also work, as would zig zag stitch on a sewing machine. I have found cutting either kind of fabric less of an issue than some people think, as long as I treat the pieces quickly after cutting and handle them gently.

I stitched the seams with straight stitching on the sewing machine. I could have used zigzag and would with knit weave. I finished the edges with straight stitches on a simple rolled over hem. Knit weave could be finished with a 'bias' binding strip. I saw a weaver using a knitting machine to make bias binding from yarn, knitting a straight strip of ten stitches for as long as is needed. This can be attached easily, and of course will stretch round curves.



My final tunic: I am quite happy with it. I did elasticate under the arms, as it was quite loose. I will post the pattern in multiple sizes on the website, with the charted patterns. If you want to use the chart for a knit radar/leader, then I would choose a smaller size than otherwise, and you might want to do this anyway. If you want a Knitmaster pattern for charting, let me know, I can provide a half size version.

[Link to patterns](#)



If you find your stash is not quite comprehensive enough, and you have a garment or item which is not being used enough, you could reuse the yarn.

Frogging

In the past I have unpicked knitwear and rewound the yarn. It will be quite kinky, and will need treatment, depending on the yarn content.

There might not be enough for a whole garment, but why not use some special yarn for parts of one, or for an accessory?

Treatment could mean washing, and for this, it would be better to skein the yarn first. You can use a swift or a niddy noddy for this, or



you could make one. Use tubes for each part, I have made one out of kitchen roll tubes. You can gaffer tape it together, then use it to wind your skein around.

Thrum ball

Another technique which is not strictly reusing, but similar is to take all those shortish remnants that machine knitters normally waste [including 'waste' yarn?] and knot them together in a ball. You could then use this ball for knit weave, which might make an interesting fabric. I have seen this used in loom weaving to good effect, and I think it would work well in knit weave, too.

Dyeing

If you have an item of knitwear that is not quite the right colour, or you have grown tired of, consider dyeing.

I have dyed fibre, yarn and complete garments more or less successfully. It might be worth an experiment at least! It is not difficult. (But don't try dyeing acrylic, not possible at home. How about embellishing with fabric paint instead?)

I would recommend <https://www.dtcrafts.co.uk/> for information and dyes and equipment.



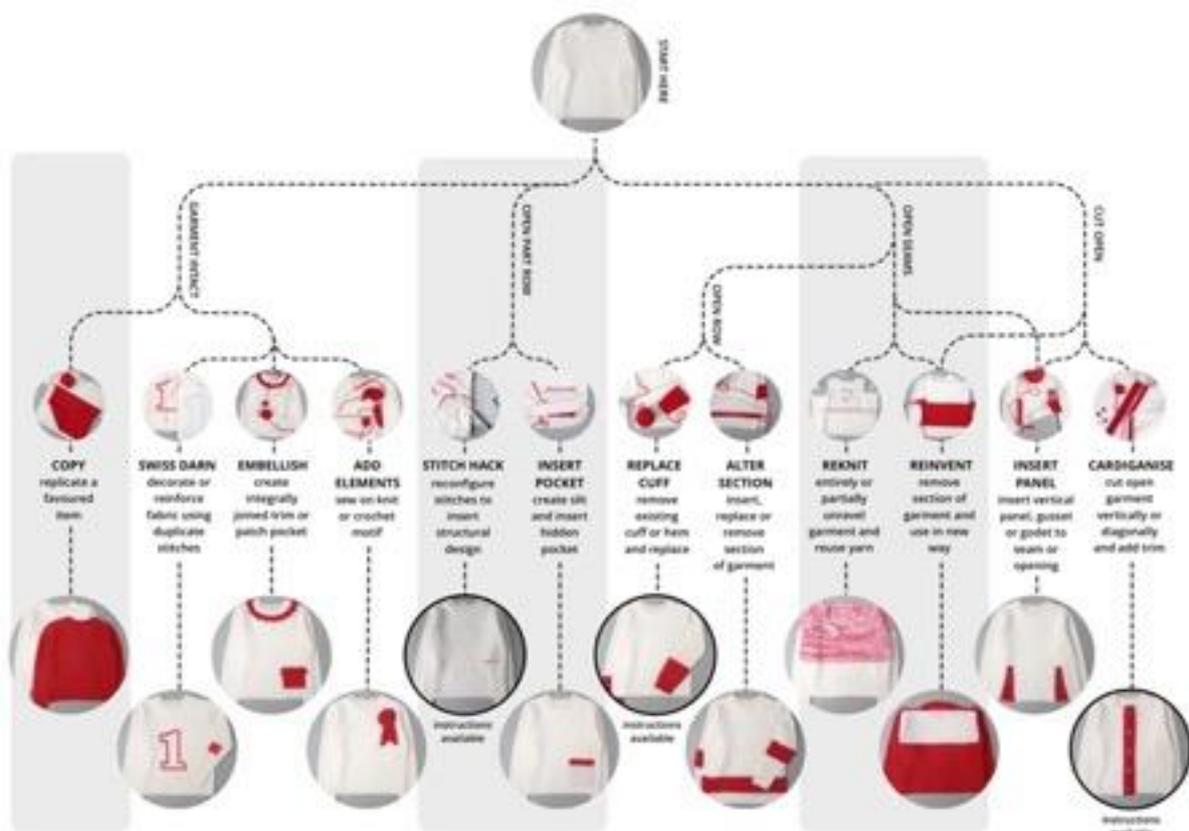
Recycling is the last option, reducing and reusing being preferable.

However, recycling knitwear can be a form of reuse.

I have often recycled knitwear which has shrunk slightly [I am not a careful washer!] or which I have outgrown. For example, a jumper which is just a little snug can be cut down the centre front, a band attached, and it becomes a cardigan.

Another way I have used shrunken woollen knitwear is to make accessories out of felted wool. It is then used like fabric.

Amy Twigger Holroyd has researched the recycling of knitwear and developed a useful and comprehensive resource. Find it here <https://reknitrevolution.org> for a much clearer version of the chart below, and detailed instructions



If you can't manage without buying new cones of yarn, I think the following are still sending them out, [not and exclusive list]:

www.wools.co.uk - Uppingham Yarns

<https://yeoman-yarns.co.uk/> Yeoman Yarns

<https://www.yarnoncone.co.uk> Yarn on Cone

and there are plenty of videos and blogs about to keep us busy!

Finally, I hope this is of some interest.

I would like to involve others in this newsletter, so please let me know of anything I can include

Administrator@longbuckbymk.com is my club email address.

Next time, I intend to research the world of yarn and fibre, with information about how our yarns are made, can be used and their effect on the environment.

And I promise to include a new machine knitting pattern [I have just got to get the cone stash away from the machine!]