Long Buckby Machine Knitters

Newsletter

April

2022

From the Editor

Welcome to the April edition, with a focus on all things technological concerned with knitting.

When it comes to computing, the knitting world is divided into those who enthuse about it, and those who find it very daunting. There are also some inbetweeners who have tentatively tried some parts of the computing world and are looking for more.

I have tried to provide an overview, which turned out to be much more than I thought – I hope you can muddle through – it is another huge area, and one of which I have only skimmed the surface.

Our meeting this time is an open session, with mini demonstrations/ activities including crochet and software, as well as lots of chat and the usual sales. I will have all the software mentioned here on show if people want to see/try it. I should also mention, though I am not an expert, I will always try to help members access technology if they ask.

For those of you who are KCG members, help is sought for the stand at the Summer Wool Festival at Ampthill https://summerwoolfestival.co.uk/ on July 30th or 31st. Contact Pat at patbs@btinternet.com for more details.

Finally, the August meeting date has been changed by a week [later] – mea culpa, I am supposed to be on holiday on the original date and the committee agreed it would be better to move the meeting [apologies!]

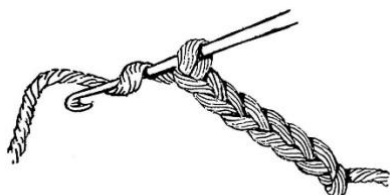Lynda Fiendley

Today's meeting

11th April

Machine Knitting Forum – a chance to catch up on skills and friends!
Crochet demonstration/ have a go session.
Software demonstrations.

Bring your projects to show, work on or seek advice about….

Future meetings

LBMK calendar 2022	All meetings are from 2pm to 4pm, and doors are open from 1.30pm. Membership fee: annual £5, plus £3 for most meetings, £5 for those with visiting speaker [marked with ***] Guest fees: £5 most meetings, £7 for those with visiting speaker. Tea/coffee and biscuits included, please bring a cup, and take it with you for washing later [we are limiting use of the kitchen post-Covid]
Date	**Topic**
9th May	**Necklines – hoods, cowls, collars etc.**
13th June*	**Visiting Speaker: Erica Thomson** Erica will demonstrate how to use pressing to enhance your knitting
11th July	**Machine Knitting Forum – a chance to catch up on skills and friends!** Multiple rolling demonstrations, basic skills to more advanced, patterns, gadgets and garments. Also, software demonstrations. Bring your projects to show, work on or seek advice about
15th Aug	**Holding Position** How to use this simple technique for shaping and other effects. Please note change of date!!!
12th Sept	**Edges [hems necks bands etc]** Demonstration of edging techniques on the knitting machine, and other ways to finish your knitting
10th Oct	**Machine Knitting Forum – a chance to catch up on skills and friends!** Multiple rolling demonstrations, basic skills to more advanced, patterns, gadgets and garments. Also, software demonstrations. Bring your projects to show, work on or seek advice about
14th Nov	**Maintenance.** DIY maintenance and tools
12th Dec	**AGM/ COMPETITION, DISPLAY AND SALES.** **End of year celebration**

Tools of the Trade

Machine knitters use tools of various kinds:
- √ Machines – some have one, some have quite a few! They might be manual, semi-automatic, electronic or ………?
- √ Stitch manipulating tools – which are needed for moving and transferring stitches
- √ Accessories – which can help with patterning e.g., ribber, colour changer, lace carriage etc.
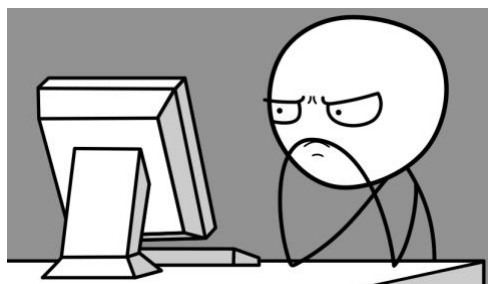- √ Yarn manipulating tools – which can help prepare yarn for machine knitting e.g., winders

These are all physical tools, but there are others, including:
- √ Patterns – either on paper, charts, or cards
- √ Virtual tools

Most machine knitters are comfortable using any of the above, except perhaps the virtual tools: I will consider here whether there is any need or advantage to using them.

Virtual Tools

I have heard many members [and others] express an anxiety, or even hostility, towards computer software. Some will refuse to consider the possibility that it can help them. It is true that you can knit on a machine without using a computer, tablet, or phone, and of course knitting machines predate all of these. But does this mean that you should?

First, consider what you want to achieve with the machine. If you can manage that without software, go ahead; and if you do not want to delve any deeper, that is fine.
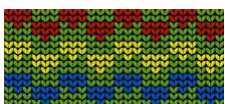
However, I would suggest, that will become more difficult in the future – last month's edition was about the ever diminishing 'real world' resources, and it is often easier to find resources online now.

Second, consider what, if anything, is putting you off technology. It may be a false assumption that it is a steep learning curve – if you use an electronic machine, you are already using a computer!

Thirdly, think about what might improve with the use of technology. I will attempt to assist with this:

> Organisation – using electronic patterns, for example, might cut down on paper. Also, some software can be used to catalogue your supplies.

> Design – you can use software to plan stitch patterns, either the stitch formations themselves, or the yarn colours [or both]. You can also use garment designing programs.

> Learning – new techniques, or about features and accessories

> Inspiration – particularly if you want to design something new

None of these are impossible without computer technology, but computers cut down on time spent in these tasks – once you have learned how to use them.

In the first part of my resume, I have tried to group the different types of technology, while the second part focuses on the tasks you might want to use them for.

I have mentioned costs quite a lot: I know it is an issue, but please remember, as I suggested last month, that it is expensive to produce resources for the craft market – it is a limited market [machine knitting even more so]. What is worse is that computer software needs updating regularly, or it will fail, or be damaging. The more expensive software probably reflects that!

Social Media and websites

Many more people are now familiar with social media – love it or hate it, it is here to stay. You can use it to your advantage without engaging wholesale in it, but it is best [I think] to proceed with caution if you are new to it. For me, the main sites are:

Facebook has many machine knitting groups, and you can learn new techniques, ask others about machines and suppliers, buy parts and yarn, learn about software and much more. You can register as a user without participating except as a 'watcher' if you want to.

Ravelry is a site mainly for knitting and crochet, although it is also of use for any textile craft. You can communicate with other crafters, look for patterns, find out about events and more. You do not have to interact beyond observation if you don't want to, but I have found other members to be helpful and friendly. I have also used Ravelry for buying and selling with good results.

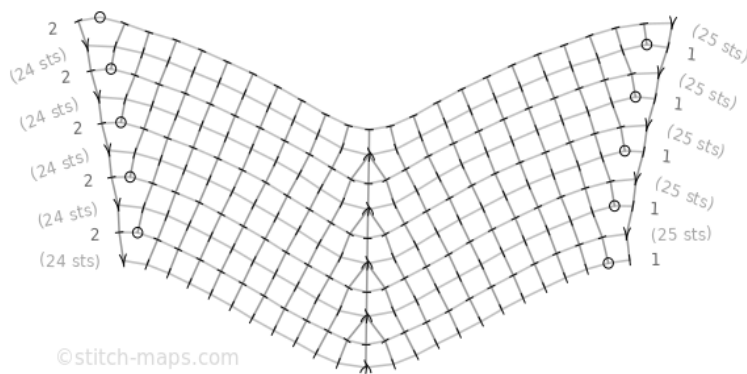Instagram is similar to Facebook, but much more visual, being orientated around photos

Pinterest is a good place to find inspiration: users save pictures from the web as they see them, and other users can search for style features, for example.

YouTube is an amazing source of instructional videos on machine knitting and many other crafts and activities.

Knitting paradise https://www.knittingparadise.com/ is a friendly forum for knitting and crochet, including machine knitting

KnititNow https://www.knititnow.com/home/ is a website with a paid subscription – if you subscribe, you have access to a great number of instructional videos of good quality, as well as patterns and some helpful resources.

Stitch Maps www.stitch-maps.com is a website I have found interesting, but more as a hand knitter – there may be a use for machine knitters. It is free to use, but also has a subscription package if you want to design without sharing your patterns.

This is a pattern I designed and have used for the handknit scarf I feature later: The difference between this and other chart making programs is that this shows the distortion of fabric caused by the shaping stitches [in this case central decreases and lateral increases]
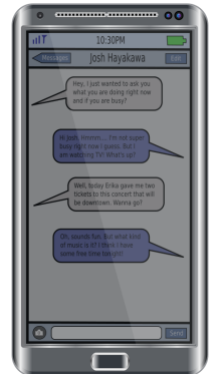
Written instructions here:

- **Row 1 (RS):** K1, yo, k10, sl1-k2tog-psso, k10, sl1 wyib *(24 sts)*.
- **Row 2:** K1, yo, k22, sl1 wyif *(25 sts)*.

Mobile Apps

I use apps [which are mini programs really] for lots of purposes, including eBay, Facebook, banking apps, and many others. Most functions are also available via websites, but apps are often quicker to access. I have found, however, that some are less reliable than their web sources.

With the increasing use of mobile technology, there are numerous apps available for Apple and Android devices, which are of potential use for machine knitters.

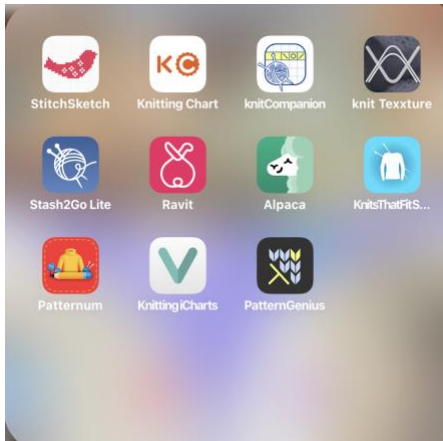Knitting apps seem to be generally of these types:
- ❖ Counting apps – row counting, calculations etc.
- ❖ Organisation apps – linking to Ravelry or other websites which have patterns etc.
- ❖ Designing apps – chart making or knitting pattern design

Some are free, but most are relatively low priced anyway.

If you search for 'apps for knitting', you can find various sites which evaluate knitting apps, but these are focused on hand knitting. I think there is common ground, but the areas where machine knitters' needs are different include

- Row counting is not normally an issue for machine knitters, as the machine does it for you. This means that many apps can be excluded from our search.
- Designing knitting patterns for the machine using apps intended for hand knitters means you will need to adapt the pattern slightly – but as long as the tension is correct, it should be possible to get a good result
- Some apps are about techniques, and these will also be for hand knitters – I have not found any for machine knitting

From a longer list of apps which I downloaded; these are the ones still on my iPad, if only for interest

Charting Apps

StitchSketch and Knitting Chart are both charting apps, although the latter is mostly used to follow the pattern – both free

Knitting Charts is another charting app, but some of the notes are in German [fine for me, as I speak it, but a drawback for others] – however, most of it is in English, so that might not be an issue

Pattern Genius is a charting app, too, which looks quite interesting, but would be more expensive if you subscribed to all the features.

Knit Texture [£1.79] is a hand knitting stitch guide [which I have kept on my iPad for that purpose]

Tracking and Ravelry

KnitCompanion is another app for tracking your pattern – works well if you have the right [line by line] pattern

Stash2GoLite, Ravit [4,49]and Alpaca [1.79] all connect to Ravelry – if you find Ravelry cumbersome, these might help you, but I am not sure there is a lot to be gained from them [and you will pay a price].

Pattern Design

Knits that Fit and Patternum are pattern designing apps: although Patternum does not help with the actual pattern but allows you to set your own pattern out for publication.

Knits that Fit https://knitsthatfit.com/knitsthatfit-sweaters-and-cardigans-app mentions machine knitting, but it is a bit cursory in that. You input tension and measurements, choose a sweater or cardigan style, and you will get knitting instructions in written and schematic form. I think the latter is good, and I can see that it would be useful for machine knitting – but, at £10.99 for the Premium version, it is a little restricted. [there is also a hats app, which I did not buy]. If you look at the website, you can see a sample of the output.

Mnemosina is another pattern making app which can use machine knitting – see below in the next section for details.

Patternum allows you to input your [mainly hand] knitting pattern in sections and sorts it out to a uniform 'look'. It is free to use – you have to register to enable saving of the patterns, but you can set your pattern to private use. I quite liked

it, but I think it didn't do much for me that I couldn't already do in existing software, and I had little control over pagination, which means that patterns may be several pages long, instead of being more concise, which I prefer.

I used the app to make a little pattern for a handknit scarf based on the Chevron pattern mentioned above in the Stitch Maps section, which can be seen here https://downloads.rowcounterapp.com/patterns/31320/get_pdf_pattern.json?sizeId=mixedOneSize&key=5kt8rxwiu8k   I did add a crochet edge all round to finish the scarf, which is a small one I wanted for a summer neck warmer. The pattern could be used in any yarn or gauge, though, and could easily be a larger scarf.

My Verdict

In my opinion, unless you use a free app or do not have computer access, there is little to gain for machine knitters in these: the software available for Windows PCs and Apple Macs is better by far, and not necessarily more expensive.

Computer Software

In previous issues [January 2021], I have described the software I have bought and used:

❖ Knitware [no longer available] – my favourite for quick designs
❖ Garment Designer www.cochenille.com $199 [$249 with style sets]
❖ Stitch Painter www.cochenille.com $199
❖ Designaknit www.softbyte.co.uk   £189-259
❖ SweaterMaker $39
   https://www.seedlingsoftware.com/sweatermaker.htm
❖ Knitbird [free] https://knitbird.com/

These all pertain to machine knitting: all but SweaterMaker will do hand knitting and can also be used for other crafts – GD for dressmaking, Stitch Painter and Knitbird for crafts which use charts.

More information follows…….

Horses for Courses

So, with all these ways of supporting knitting, which one would you choose?

If you are, like me, disorganised and capricious, you might buy or download lots of different applications and try them all – but I will attempt to guide you if you want just a sample.

What do you want to do?

1. **Find the answer to a knitting problem – ask on these websites**
   a. Facebook
   b. Ravelry
   c. Knitting paradise

2. **Find information about knitting**
   a. Machine knitter's treasure chest
      http://www.needlesofsteel.org.uk/
   b. Any of the above websites, or Google if you have patience
   c. Knit it Now if you are willing to pay
   d. https://mkmanuals.com/ for manuals and other knitting machine manufacturers' published resources – previously machineknittingetc it is being revamped, but still up and running as I write
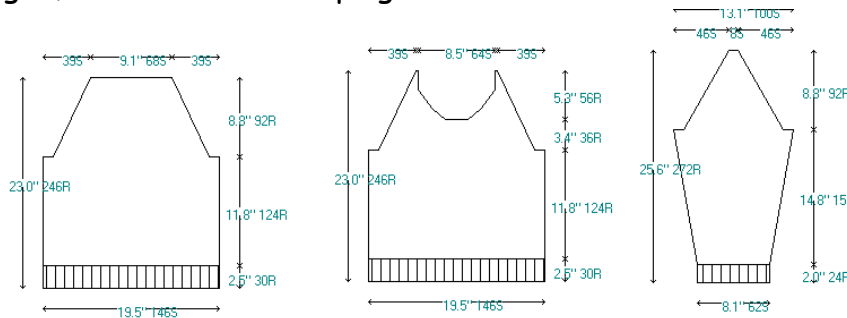
3. **Find patterns**
   a. Ravelry www.ravelry.com
   b. Machine knitter's treasure chest
      http://www.needlesofsteel.org.uk/
   c. Knit it Now https://www.knititnow.com/home/
   d. Individual pattern designers' websites eg. Anne Lavene https://home-machine-knitting.co.uk/ and Marianne Henio http://heniocreative.com/

4. **Design patterns**

   I would use the computer software designed for Windows or Apple computers rather than mobile technology. All programs use a database of sizes and other factors to make the patterns and there are some differences between them, but you will learn to adjust: Where I can I have shown a basic sweater design – generally in chest size 36, with a tension of 6 stitches 8 rows to an inch.

   It should be mentioned that all software I have tried allows you to alter the measurements – some have standard sizes to start you off, but you can enter your own body measurements as well. The best advice is to find a piece of knitwear that fits you well and use it as a guide to measuring.
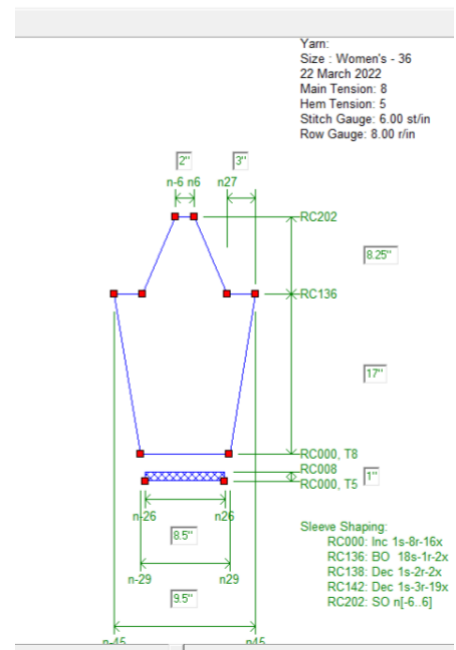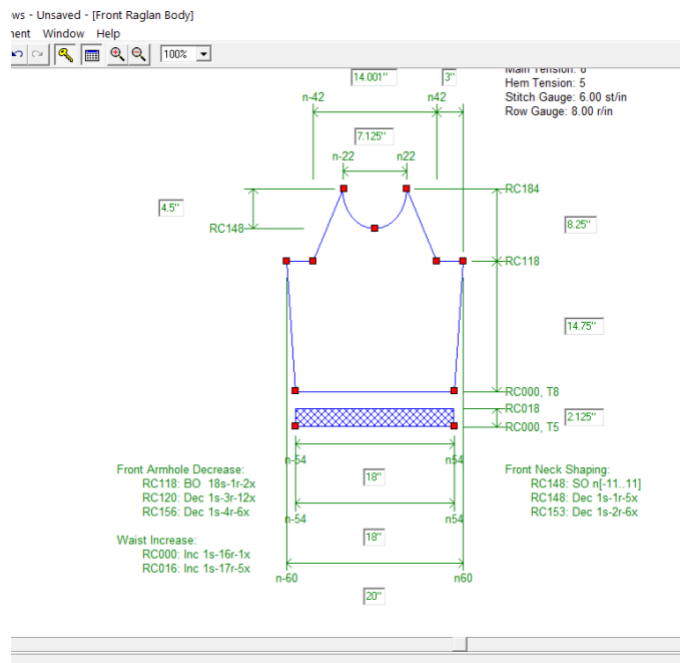
Knitware is basic and good if you can get hold of it. It allows you to select basic designs, and has a few shaping features

This schematic from Knitware shows a size 14/36 with a gauge of 24st/32r per 10cm: written instructions are more detailed
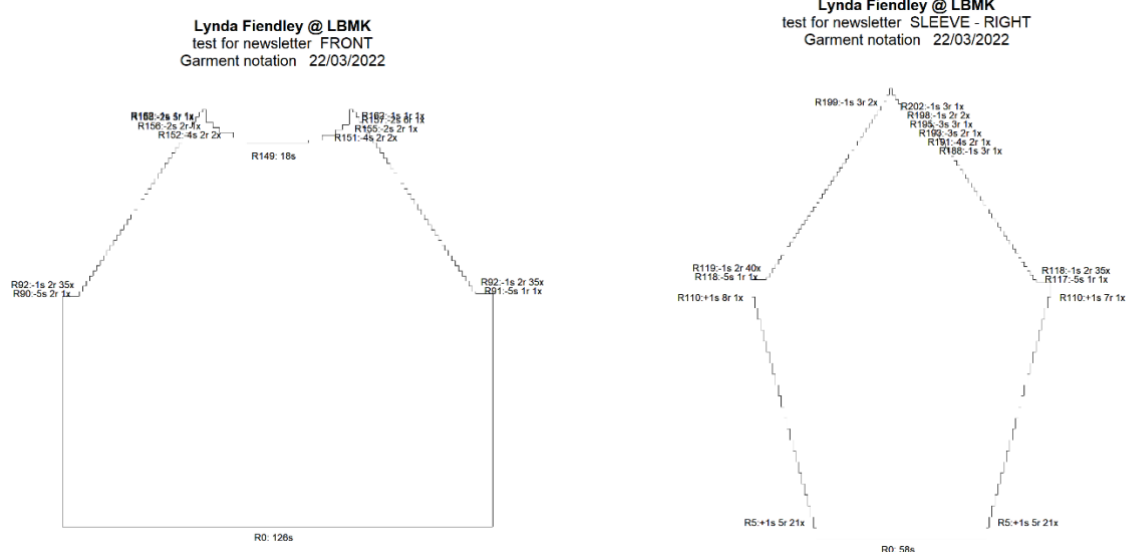
SweaterMaker is similar, but maybe not as flexible. The schematics it produces are better, though, and it was designed for machine knitting, so is worth a shot, and is not expensive

This is a similar sweater with the schematic from SweaterMaker, no detailed written instructions are generated – you can alter the shape a little by moving the red 'handles' on the screen
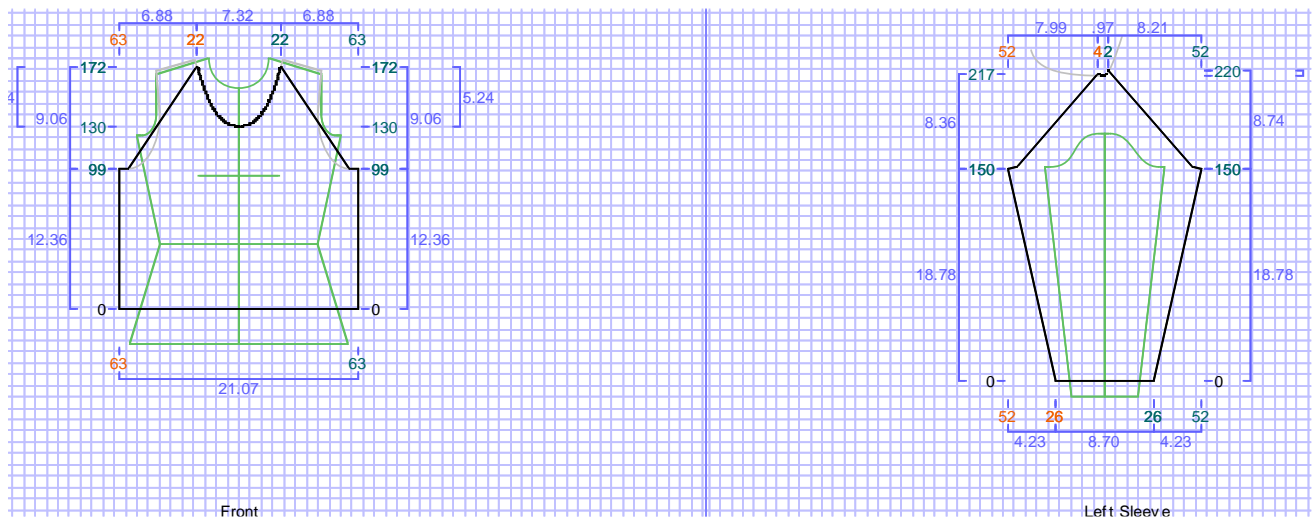
Designaknit is quite expensive, very versatile, but does have a steep learning curve if you want to do more than basics. That said, I have used it often with little knowledge, am learning more all the time – Knit it Now is a good source of tuition as is our last month's speaker Claire Newberry http://knittingschool.co.uk/knitwear-portfolio/ . And you can use it for interactive knitting, which suits many electronic machine owners.

And this is a similar sweater to the others above

In addition to the schematic, there are other output options, including row by row instructions. This is a very basic use of DAK – there are far more design features you can use as you get more proficient.

Garment Designer is also quite expensive [though not as much as DAK]. I have used it for many years, and it is wonderful for dressmaking patterns as well as machine knitting – this means it is quite easy to get a wide variety of patterns with little input. I also like that you can mix and match between sewing and knitting, as it does both. I have taken part in a few webinars this year with the developer, which have enhanced my knowledge [but I am no expert!].

This is a similar design to the ones above; the instructions are not detailed on the schematic, but GD uses a different kind of row by row instruction, part of which is here
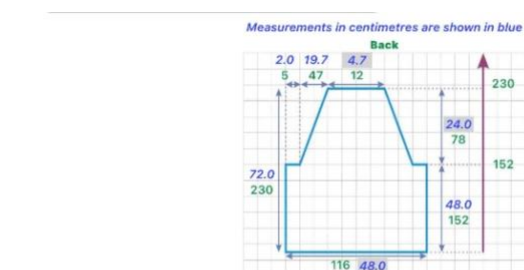

This is the front of the sweater [not complete]. You have to work up from the bottom, the stitch/row count is shown along with increases and decreases – the shape is not obvious, but it does work.

Knits that fit is now an app for Apple and Android users [stop press]. I used it to design a similar sweater as these others, and it worked very well – being closest in stitch/row counts to Knitware. My one caveat is that I did not like the way it did raglan sleeves – I found the sleeve a bit restricting, as the decreases were more staggered than I am used to – but that is my preference. I think that all software is a bit like this, and needs adjusting.

Because of copyright, I cannot share the final pattern, but you can see the format on the website if you want to. I would use the app if I did not have a computer or the software, but otherwise I would always prefer the more powerful computer programs. https://knitsthatfit.com/knitsthatfit-sweaters-and-cardigans-app

Mnemosina is a Russian app for Apple and Android, which is free [possibly some in-app purchases in Android]. You can input personal measurements and choose from a number of patterns and get a personal pattern: I put in some very rough numbers [don't try this at home!!!!] and got this file

Measurements in centimetres are shown in blue
Back
2.0 19.7 4.7
5   47   12
230
24.0
78
152
72.0
230
48.0
152
116 48.0
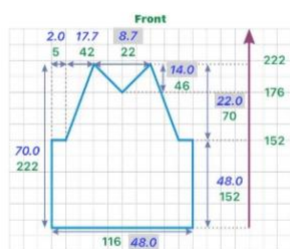
Armhole curve
Cast off stitches:

5

Raglan
Decrease stitches (in parentheses) at specified row(s)

154(1), 156(1), 158(1), 160(1), 162(2), 164(1), 166(1), 168(1), 170(1), 172(2), 174(1), 176(1), 178(1), 180(1), 182(2), 184(1), 186(1), 188(1), 190(1), 192(2), 194(1), 196(1), 198(1), 200(1), 202(2), 204(1), 206(1), 208(1), 210(1), 212(2), 214(1), 216(1), 218(1), 220(1), 222(2), 224(1), 226(1), 228(1), 230(2)

Neck
Cast off stitches:

12

Front
2.0 17.7 8.7
5   42   22
222
14.0
46
176
22.0
70
152
70.0
222
48.0
152
116 48.0

Armhole curve
Cast off stitches:

5

In the interests of anyone who wants to try this app, I would look at reviews posted on

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ru.mnemosina&hl=en_GB&gl=US – I haven't really tested it but it looks fine, and seems to be for machine knitters – as it is free, I would say it is definitely worth trying

5. Design stitch patterns

This is an interesting area. Stitch patterns may be designed for hand knitting in quite a few apps, as well as machine knitting in DAK and Cochenille Stitch Designer [to a more limited extent].

Most of them also allow you to experiment with colour patterns.

- StitchSketch is an app for knitting as well as cross stitch and beading https://www.stitchsketch.com/ this link suggests it is an Apple app, but this one is for Android https://baixarapk.gratis/en/app/525117691/stitchsketch
- Stitch Maps www.stitch-maps.com mentioned above, is mainly hand knitting, but I do like the way it shows how the fabric changes
- Stitch Fiddle https://www.stitchfiddle.com/en/chart/create/knitting is a simple but effective online chart maker – you can use the free version or upgrade to £2 a month for lots of other features
- Knit Bird https://knitbird.com/ is free to download and use, and is very good, but is no longer supported – hence the lack of a price tag
- Envisio Knit Design Studio is popular, and costs $99 regardless of how many machines you install it on [Windows or Mac] – you can download a demo here https://www.envisioknit.com/ . If I hadn't already bought many such programs, I might even be tempted [and you never know!!!]
- Designaknit is definitely the winner for machine knitters. For a price, you can design your own colour and stitch charts and print out punch card templates or upload to your electronic machine. You can also convert digital images to stitch patterns. Truly amazing… and well supported.
- Cochenille Stitch Painter is also very powerful, and well supported.

6. Get inspiration

There are many places on the internet to get inspiration, as well as offline – shop windows, ordinary people, nature etc.

Here are just a few:

- Pinterest https://www.pinterest.co.uk/ and its app. You can search/research any feature or just browse other people's collections. It is a bit of a rabbit hole – despite what you might think, I spend time on my iPad in very limited bursts, but if anything makes me forget time, it is Pinterest! One person you might like to look at is Susan Lazear, who is the Cochenille owner, and does webinars based mainly on ideas she has stored on Pinterest.

- Readly is an app I use https://gb.readly.com/ which has a digital version of many newspapers and magazines, including lots of craft ones, especially hand knitting and crochet. The first month's trial is free, £9.99 after that. I think there may be other similar ones. If I see something I like, I usually take a screen shot [for personal use!]. Pocketmags is similar https://pocketmags.com/ but I haven't tried it.
- In the interests of fairness, I must mention that you can also buy actual magazines – especially Machine Knitting Monthly which is more focused!

Diamond hand knitting- guidance [sorry about that – I will work on an MK one for next issue!!!]

A cardigan based around a mitred square.

This was knitted in hand spun wool yarn, between DK and Aran weight, but either would probably work. It is knitted very loosely, I used 5.5 mm needles. Gauge is relatively vague, too, but my 'diamonds' measured 5 inches across. I used a 29 stitch diamond as my base. Size 36/ 14, but it could easily be adapted by altering the size of the diamond by multiples of 2 stitches.
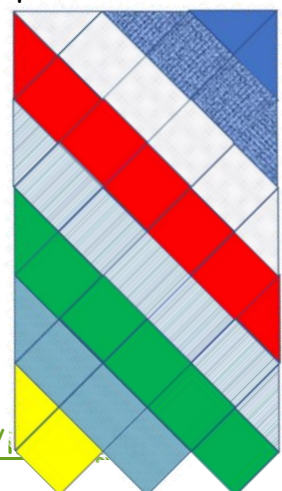
I started with the back, and formed a rectangle like the one below: starting with the yellow diamond, then completing each 'row' on the right of the previous one each time – yellow/blue/green etc. Pick up stitches along the previous row where you can.

Back

Full diamond:

Cast on 29 stitches.
1. Knit 13, knit 3 together, knit 12, slip last stitch purlwise.
2. Knit to last stitch, slip last stitch purlwise.

Change colour.
3. Knit 11, knit 3 together, knit 10, slip last stitch purl wise.
4. Purl to last stitch, slip last stitch purl wise.

Change colour
These 4 rows are the basis of the diamond, with the number of stitches decreasing on alternate rows.
Final row will be when there are 3 stitches left, knit 3 together.

Depending on the stage in the pattern, you will now pick up stitches for the next diamond.
On the yellow row, the next diamond is a half one, so you pick up 15 stitches down the left side of the diamond [including the stitch you have already on your needle].

Half diamond [left hand side]
1. After picking up 15 stitches, knit one row, ending with slipping last stitch purl wise.
2. Knit 13, knit 2 tog.
3. Slip 1, purl 13
4. Knit 12, knit 2 tog.
5. Slip 1, knit 12

And so on, alternating colours as for full diamond, until 2 sts remain, knit 2 together and cast off.

Half diamond [right hand side]
1. Pick up 15 stitches along right hand side of row before.
2. Knit 1 row, ending with slipping last stitch purl wise.
3. Knit 2 tog. Knit 12, slip last stitch purl wise.
4. Purl to end stitch slip one purl wise.
5. Knit 2 tog. Knit to last stitch and slip purl wise.
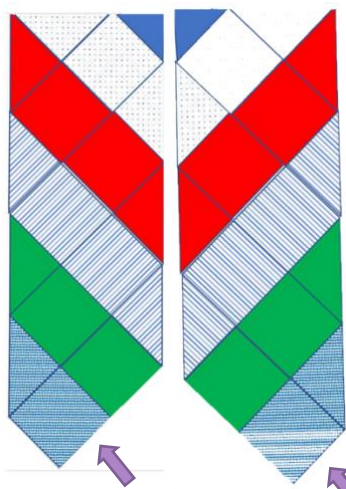6. Knit to end and slip one purl wise

And so on, alternating colours and knit and purl rows as before.

Top triangle
Pick up 29 stitches.
Knit as for full diamond but knit 2 stiches together at each end of right side row, as well as the centre decrease.

Front

The front is knitted in two parts as below – they are mirror images of each other, but must be knitted slightly differently, because of the way the rows go. The right side [as seen face on] is knitted from bottom right and therefore not knitted in the rows as coloured. Knit from the bottom up, in rows, as in the back. The starting point for each front is shown for each front. The final triangle I knitted by picking up 15 stitches from the diamond edge then knitting in the same stripes and alternating garter stitch pattern as in the diamond but decreasing at the row ends of right side row, without a central decrease.

Sides

Knitted in 4 pieces.
At the side of each front piece, and both sides of the back.
Pick up stitches up to armhole [this is a bit approximate – I underestimated, then filled in the space afterwards.
Knit 10 rows of garter stitch then
Knit in garter stitch, and using short rows,
https://www.purlsoho.com/create/short-rows-wrap-turn/ knit across whole side towards hem, then back to within 2 stitches of armhole, then knit back to the hem. Next row knit to within 4 stitches of armhole, before knitting back.
Continue until you have no more stitches left to knit, then knit back all the stitches.
This will get you a half godet. Do not cast off but leave on a spare needle.
When you have knitted two sides [one from the front, one from the back], cast off the seam with a 3 needle cast off.
https://impeccableknits.wordpress.com/tutorials-tips-tricks/3-needle-bind-off/

Top of front

Pick up stitches from the top the front – it should be about 22-25.
Knit in alternate garter stitch/ stocking stitch. Decrease at neck edge on alternate right side rows. I knitted about 30 rows. Cast off and sew on to back at shoulder.

Sleeves

I used this pattern with DK commercial yarn. I did the garter stitch hem in hand spun.

1. Cast on 39 sts on size 5.5 needles. Work in garter stitch for 2.0 ins. Inc 4 sts evenly across the row to 43 sts total.
2. Change to Stocking stitch.
3. Inc 1 st at each end of every 7th row 5 times, then every 8th row 7 times to 67 sts (91 rows total, excluding hem).
4. Work even until sleeve measures 14.8 ins (98 rows), excluding hem.
5. Shape cap. Cast off 5 sts at beg of next two rows (57 sts rem). Dec 1 st at each end of every row once, then dec 1 st at each end of every 2nd row 17 times, then dec 1 st at each end of every row once. Cast off remaining 19 sts loosely.

If you are interested in this pattern, and want a different size for the sleeves, let me know – or use an existing one of your own.

Pockets

I made pockets by using the basic diamond design, but on right side rows I increased each end with a yarn over, which makes the 'chevron' shape. See the earlier Chevron pattern for this! I also used a 35 stitch diamond for this. When the pocket is big enough, you just cast off.

I finished off the cardigan with 3 rows of double crochet all round the edge.

Suppliers

These are still operating an online supply
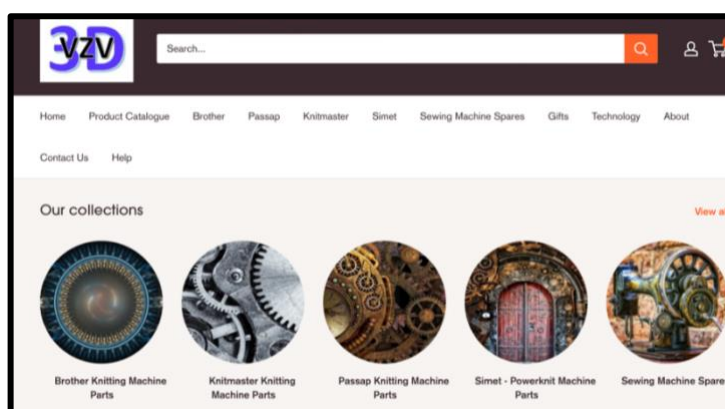
www.wools.co.uk – Uppingham Yarns

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

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

https://woolyknit.com Woolyknit

and this one deals in recycled fibres https://www.iinouiio.com/

For 3d printed parts try
https://vzv3d.com/

Other information

Sally Butcher has a Kalamunda Crafts page on Facebook. Sally is an inspiring machine knitter, with lots of ideas and videos to keep you busy! And now she has her own YouTube channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDxy6pQHAs4gd5XBztYWmw
which is well worth a visit. Well done, Sally, a marvellous resource.

http://handymachineknitting.libsyn.com is a regular podcast

http://knitwords.blogspot.com/ is a blog

And Finally

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.

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