

# Across the Needlebed



a publication from the

*Knitting & Crochet Guild*

Taster  
Does not contain  
all articles from  
Issue 1

**T**hose of you who have joined the Knitting & Crochet Guild (KCG) from the Guild of Machine Knitters (GMK) may remember *Beyond the Gatepegs*. As that publication was, this one is intended primarily for machine knitters – whether you're an expert or are new to the craft – and will contain articles written by machine knitters... But, of course, it's freely available to all KCG members who would like a copy.

Before I go any further, I want to say a big 'thank you' to those of you who have waited for us to get this going. As you can imagine, we had quite a bit to do when the memberships of the two organisations merged together. Then, just as we were getting on top of it all, we had to initially reschedule and then completely cancel the annual Convention, first moving everything from July to September and then realising we couldn't be sure of holding a physical gathering at all this year! That has created a lot of work behind the scenes, cancelling everything and refunding money already paid, then organising the online Un-Convention and AGM to replace it.

But enough about the past: we need to look to the future. So, what is the plan? Well, it depends in part on what we are sent, but the aim is to produce *Across the Needlebed* at least three (and ideally four) times a year. Assuming we get the content, it will include articles, a bit of news about the machine knitting world (and others items of interest), and possibly an element of show-and-tell. (If you already use social media, that's great – I'm not for a moment suggesting you stop – but I am aware that not everyone is comfortable doing that, so this could be another way of sharing your knowledge and ideas, as well as the fantastic things you've made.)

This isn't intended to be an alternative to *Slipknot*, which will continue to be the very professionally produced publication we know and love. It's intended to complement it, providing a way to publish more in-depth articles, and also to highlight items of interest to us all but particularly to machine knitters.

## How you can help

Obviously, we need content! If you have worked out how to do something, have overcome a particular challenge or have made something you are proud of, share it. It doesn't matter whether you are an expert or a novice. Sometimes, those of us who have been machine-knitting for a while forget the things that caused us a lot of problems when we started. We may have some of the answers – but don't always think of the questions people might have. That's where you come in: we're happy to include hints and tips, including links to YouTube tutorials and websites.

We do have to be careful of the dreaded 'c' word: copyright. The KCG doesn't want to be sued – and even outside of the legal aspects, it's not right to take away someone's income (whether actual or potential) or to be disrespectful to their ideas and moral right to be identified as the originator of a piece of work. Please check the copyright notice on the back page before you submit anything for publication.

We may have to edit your work, but we will always send you a proof and you will have to opportunity to tell us if you're not happy with what we've done. Even though this is an electronic publication, we don't want to end up with just a few words from an article on a page on its own. And we all make little mistakes ... I just hope this first edition doesn't contain too many!

Finally, tell people about *Across the Needlebed*. Share the news anywhere you talk about your craft. It may, of course, be of interest to Knitting & Crochet Guild members who are hand-knitters or crocheters too!

Alison

### Full list of articles in Issue 1:

Can I use a hand-knit pattern for machine knitting?

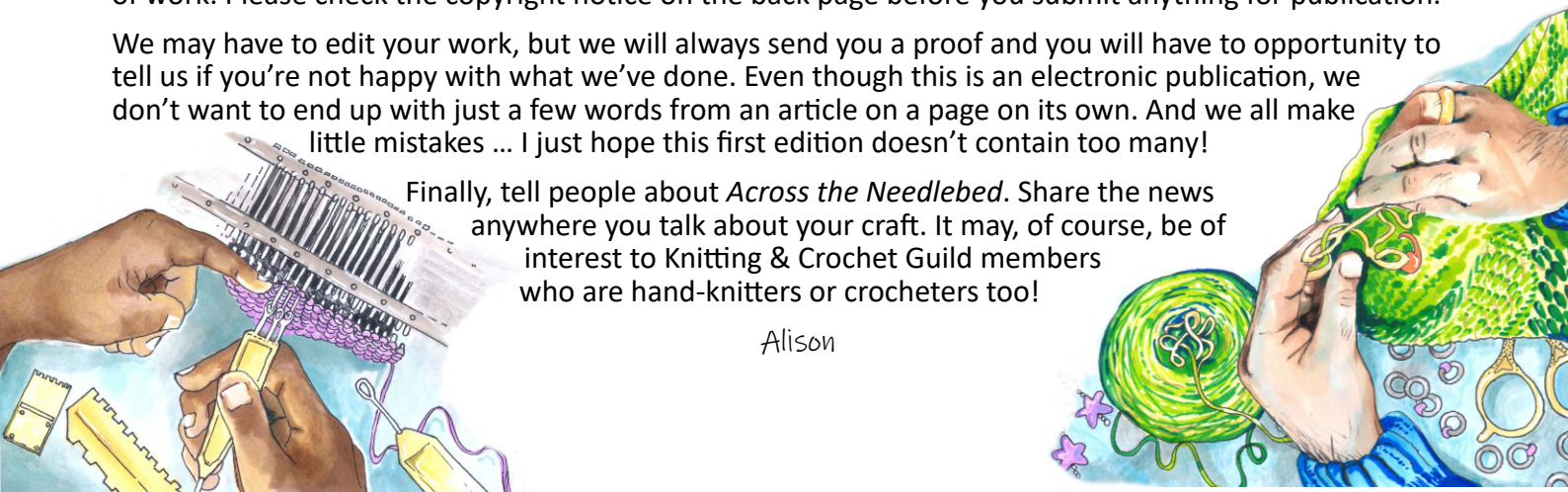
From field to wardrobe – via a Brother KH260 knitting machine

Charting devices (see page 2)

Who would want a Passap/Pfaff – especially an E6000?

Raglan cardigan for 6-month-old baby

The back page... (see page 5)

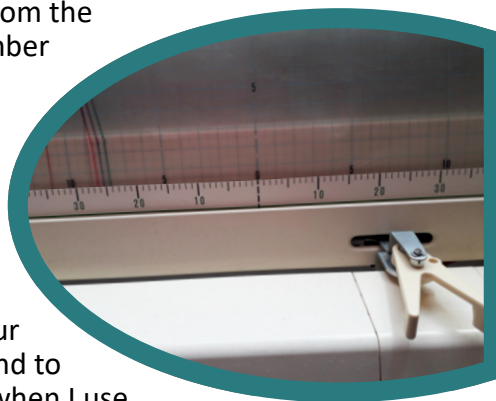


# Charting devices

By Alison Peck

Charting devices – if you have one, you probably either love it or loathe it. I've been on both sides of that particular fence, and I want to share some of the things I've learned about my own (I have a Brother Knitleader and a Passap Forma, but all follow the same principles) that have moved me more to the 'love it' point of view.

First to give a bit of background for those who have never seen one, and want to know what I'm talking about. A charting device either fixes to or is a part of your knitting machine. It enables you to draw the shapes you want to knit and use those drawings to see how many stitches and rows to knit, where and how much to shape, and so on. Charting devices are either full-size (as my Brother one is), which means that if I'm knitting a jumper that measures 30cm across the back below the armholes, I draw a line on my charting device that is 15cm from the centre (because, of course, we usually cast on the same number of stitches to the left and right of the centre 0 on the needlebed). If your charting device is half-size, your line is 7.5 cm from the centre mark. If you have a half-size charting device, you do have to do this little bit of maths (dividing by 2) for every line you draw. Some use a special plastic reusable sheet that you can wipe clean (as long as you've used water-soluble pens) while others use paper.



Once you have carefully knitted, prepared and measured your swatch, you need to set up your charting device to correspond to the width of a specified number of stitches (usually 40, but when I use my Knitleader with my chunky machine, I'm told to measure 20 stitches, so check your manual) or the number of stitches in 10cm, and either a specified number of rows (usually 60, but again I'm told to measure 30 for my chunky machine) or the number of rows in 10cm. When you have the required numbers, you simply select the matching stitch gauge from those provided and slot it in front of your drawn shape, and set the row measurement so that the sheet with your drawing moves through the charting device the right amount for each row you knit.

As you knit, your carriage (or 'lock', if you're a Passap knitter) triggers the charting device to move the sheet of paper or plastic containing your drawing and you watch it disappearing down behind the stitch gauge. When your drawn line crosses a line representing a needle, you either increase or decrease to match. Simple.

There are HUGE advantages to a charting device. You don't have to exactly match a tension to knit something if you have a pattern but don't have the right yarn, or you want to knit a smaller or larger size, or you want to make it a bit longer or shorter, or change the neckline...

## So, what are the problems?

Well, I'm going to share a few I've come across, in the hope that you can learn from my mistakes..

***I've taken great care with my initial drawing, and I've treated my swatch exactly as I'm going to treat my final item before measuring ... but my garment is much too long.***

What went wrong? There could be a number of reasons for the difference.

- **I didn't set something properly**

If you're anything like me, the chances are there was some human error involved, and these are always the first things I check as they are also the quickest to fix.

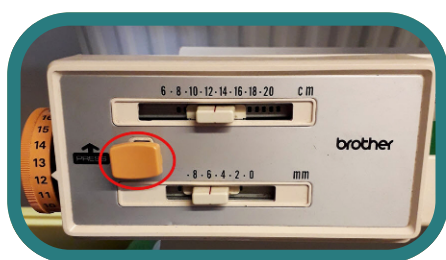
Did I measure it properly? Have I actually knitted the required number of rows in pattern? Have I used the same tension setting that I used for the swatch? (I have forgotten to increase it following a hem once or twice...) Did I remember to set the row settings in the first place, or have I just slipped the stitch gauge ruler in place and started knitting? I've even (I only did it once – I learned my lesson the hard way) knitted the back of my garment, then switched to knitting something else (I sometimes have two or three things drawn on my charter) before

coming back to knit the front and forgot to change the row settings back from the other garment! Fortunately, I had noted the number from the row counter at important points (such as when starting the armhole decreasing) and noticed that they didn't match.

- **Your charter needs some TLC (tender loving care)**

Something that can cause problems with the length is if the sheet is slipping a bit or your charting device is a bit stiff.

For a Brother Knitleader, you can check whether the sheet is likely to slip by checking the edges to make sure the holes are undamaged, and that the teeth are all present on the wheels that pull the sheet down. Some charting devices use a sheet of paper around a roller similar to the ones a typewriter (remember those?) used. These can get a little slippery, just with grease from your fingers, and may need cleaning. Just be sure whatever you use doesn't damage the surface, making matters worse!



You can test that the sheet is advancing by the correct amount by carrying out a simple test. You know from your swatch how many centimetres you get for 60 rows of knitting. Mark two lines on your charting sheet that many centimetres apart, line up the lower line with your charter and 'knit' 60 rows without any yarn or needles selected. You should end up at the upper of the two lines. If you prefer, you can calculate the number of rows in 10cm by doing a little bit of maths (or using a green

ruler) and checking that if you knit the required number of rows that you cover 10cm. In either case, checking the calibration in this way is useful. I once found with my charting device that the 'clutch' (the button I pressed in to adjust the rows, circled in the photo) was stiff – I could press it in but it wasn't popping back out fully, so everything wasn't properly connected. Cleaning it and lubricating it solved the problem.

- **The yarn is heavy/slippery and the stitch pattern has a lot of 'give'**

Finally, it may not be a problem with the charting device at all, but just something I didn't consider and I may have had exactly the same problem if I had exactly matched a tension and used a written pattern. The knitting has stretched! My tension square is only (probably) 100 rows long in total. I handled it carefully, not wanting to distort the stitches too much. But I forgot that when I'm knitting a jumper that is 350 rows long, depending on the weight of the yarn, the stitch pattern and the yarn composition, it may stretch considerably under its own weight when I'm wearing it.

What could I do prevent this happening? This is really one that's down to experience. If I'm at all suspicious, I knit the longest piece of the garment with the least shaping (usually the back), hang it up at least overnight and then measure it. If knitting a garment piece is going to take a long time because of the necessary shaping involved, I may knit a straightforward rectangle. It all depends on a number of things, including how much yarn I've got and whether I'll be able to undo and reuse that bit if necessary. And, of course, for some garments an extra 2, 3 or even 4 inches isn't a problem!

### ***I'm doing fully-fashioned raglan shaping but my charting device isn't giving me nice even decrease steps – it's all over the place!***

This used to bother me a lot when I first started using a charting device. I thought it was me! I'd cast off the appropriate number of stitches for the underarm, then would start the raglan decreases, letting the charter guide me. It would usually start OK. I'd be decreasing one stitch each end, fully fashioned, every alternate or every third row (for example). But the line wasn't moving exactly one stitch every other or every third row – it was either a tiny bit less or a tiny bit more, and all of a sudden my 'every 3rd row' became the 4th or the 2nd, depending which of those it was. And it always seemed to happen just at the point when it would be most visible!

### **Tip**

If you are using a plastic sheet or a piece of plain A4 paper, the quick and easy way to make sure you don't lose your notes is to write them on the sheet.

The lesson I learnt? If I'm doing set-in sleeves, I tend to follow the charter faithfully. Most of the shaping is in the underarm region, so isn't that obvious anyway. For raglans with fully fashioned shaping (especially if I'm being more dramatic and decreasing two stitches every 4th row, for example), I now do a little bit of working out.

I know how many stitches I have at the start of my shaping. I know how many I need at the end (I can read it off the stitch gauge ruler). All I need to know now is how many rows I have available to make those decreases. So I manually wind on the charter, counting rows (one full revolution on the Brother Knitleader is 20 rows) until I get to the top – and I work out what the decreases need to be. Sometimes I need to decrease more frequently a few times. Sometimes I just need to cast off a few more stitches at the underarm (not too many or you will destroy the shaping, but if the charting device shows to cast off 12 stitches and casting off 13 makes the maths 'work', you'll probably find it's OK.

### **Online resources relating to charting devices**

If you want to know more, we've found couple of videos online that give you a good overview. If you find something you think might be useful to share with others, please let us know.

- June Clark published a Knitleader video to YouTube in 2013, which takes you all the way from drawing your pattern on the plastic sheet to setting the Knitleader correctly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUli2yubQgc>
- Akeru Joyden published 'Downsizing paper patterns for SSR Knit Radar or Passap Forma' to YouTube in 2017, which explains in detail how to adapt full-size patterns for half-size devices: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olAk1NBIbrc>

**The complete issue of Across the Needlebed is available to members from the Members Area of the website (accessed from the Membership menu).**



## The back page...

### Publication timetable

This issue (issue 1, September 2020) has been timed to coincide with the AGM and the Un-Convention.

If we receive sufficient contributions, the next one (issue 2) will be published in November 2020, but may be a little later.

Please send any contributions to [ATN@kcguild.org.uk](mailto:ATN@kcguild.org.uk)

If you have something to share with your fellow machine knitters, please send it in. It doesn't matter whether it's an article, a link to a useful resource, or a helpful tip.

*Across the Needlebed* isn't an alternative to *Slipknot*. It's designed to complement it. If you send us something that is more appropriate for *Slipknot*, we may ask you for permission to pass it to the *Slipknot* editors.

### Did you know...

You can find the Knitting & Crochet Guild on social media.

- We have a thriving Facebook group, that both members and non-members can apply to join. If you use Facebook, you can find us by searching for [Knitting & Crochet Guild](#) (look for the blanket photo to be sure you've got the right place).
- On Instagram, we are [kcguild](#). An 'Instagram takeover' is part of this year's Un-Convention.
- We have a group on Ravelry, where we are [kcg](#). We sell patterns through the site.

As well as the '100 objects' project (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund) displayed on Instagram and in our Facebook group, items from the Collection are shown in other locations:

- Some of the items from the Collection are on display on Pinterest, where will find them under [KCG Collection](#).
- Finally, news from the Collection is shared on Twitter, where we are [@KCGCollection](#)

### Copyright notice

Please only send content for *Across the Needlebed* if the copyright holder is aware that it is going to be published and gives consent for us to do so. If you have written something, you are probably the copyright holder (unless you wrote it as part of your job, in which case your employer probably is).

- If you have created something from a pattern, the pattern cannot be included (unless it's your design, of course) – but we can (and usually should) say what pattern it was and where people can get it. Links to Ravelry, Etsy and so on are fine.
- Photographs are a special case: the person who owns the copyright in a photograph is (generally) either the person who took the photograph or (possibly) who commissioned it. Again, the copyright holder needs to give permission for it to be used. On top of that, if the photograph contains any people (not so much crowd scenes, but definitely individual, recognisable, people), are they happy for the photo to be published? And parents or guardians need to give permission for photographs of their children to be used.

As you know, everyone who works behind the scenes at the KCG is a volunteer. We don't have the time or the resources to contact people to check they have given permission, so please don't send anything in unless you know it's OK to publish it.

Finally:

- Copyright of the layout of *Across the Needlebed* has been assigned to the Knitting & Crochet Guild.
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