The decorative art of knitting

Compiled by Linda Newington, October 2012

A selection of books from the Knitting Reference Library I used to accompany and prepare my presentation given at In the loop 3: the voices of knitting held at the Winchester Discovery Centre 5-7 September 2012.

My choices are focused on the decorative aspects of knitting illustrated in a range of published sources. The emphasis is on knitting from different parts of the world not only the UK. The list includes publications from the decades of the 20th century through to the present day October 2012 in the 21st century.

Note: using the collection of knitted fashionable dress and artefacts from the Victoria & Albert Museum this new book covers the plain and every day to the technically complex from early historical pieces to those mass produced today, with excellent illustrations.

Note: emphasis on fashionable knitwear using the company Weardowney as the focus.

Note: an exhibition catalogue from the Fashion Museum in Antwerp with a collection of essays and illustrations.

Note: a short historical overview with a range of Shetland lace stitch patterns.

Note: illustrated with knitwear by a variety of well-known designers.

Epstein, Nicky, Knitting on the edge: ribs, ruffles, lace, fringes, flora, points & picots. New York, Sixth & Spring Books, 2004

Epstein, Nicky, Knitting over the edge: unique ribs, cords, appliques, colors, nouveau. New York, Sixth & Spring Books, 2005

Note: starting in the early 20th century a visual journey of knitwear through the decades, excellent illustrations.
Note: a “classic” from the 1970s illustrating the fashionable, punk and fun aspects of knitting from that time.

Note: a selection of Hollywood stars from the first part of the 20th century chosen by the author for the interesting knitwear.

Note: a history of this Swedish knitting company started in 1939, good illustrations with an English summary.

Note: inventive 1970s adaptations by Anne Gordon and Jane Rapley of historical knitting techniques from across the world

Note: patterns from a contemporary designer with an emphasis on the glamorous

Note: the key published work on knitting from these two countries with good colour illustrations including hats, gloves and toys

Note: a visual overview which includes techniques for a range of garments, good illustrations especially gloves and mittens.

Miller, Sharon, *Shetland hap shawls: then and now*. Okehampton, Heirloom Knitting, 2006
Note: brief history of the practical, traditional Shetland shawls worn by working women, with historical and new patterns in both traditional and modern colours

Note: although a German text the items and stitches are interesting with good black and white illustrations

Note: good illustrations of traditional Nordic knitwear including Denmark, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Aland, and Finland.

Note: beautiful illustrations of shawls and the related stitches from Estonia.

Note: a selection of patterns from Patricia Roberts, a key knitwear designer from the 1970s and 1980s who helped modernise knitting during this period.

Note: an excellent overview of designers and techniques including details such as collars, neckbands, buttonholes and fastenings.

Note: A classic book on a wide range of techniques from an expert who used her collection of knitted objects to illustrate specific types of knitting. It includes examples of the knitted bags and purses with explanations of the techniques used to make them. Her collections of objects, photographs, postcards, books, magazines and patterns are held by the University Library.

Note: now regarded as a classic which includes a useful individual approach to developing colour in patterned knitting.

Note: a distinctive, creative and visual approach to a rich variety of knitting techniques for both hand and machine.

Note: an early classic includes many useful chapters related to technique for example, beaded and bead knitting.

Note: a pioneer of using what are now described as “vintage” patterns. This is the first edition. Other works by this author are also held along with her knitting pattern collection.

Note: a later contribution by Jane Waller to the now popular reinterpretation of vintage knitting patterns.

Note: published to accompany the exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum includes good illustrations of Westwood’s avant-garde knitwear.