

Authentic or not? 'Shetland' knitting patterns 1840-1880

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The Foyer, Shetland Museum and Archives

Knitting pattern books were first published in Britain in the 1840s and English and Scottish authors included instructions for 'Shetland' patterns, due to the increasing popularity of Shetland lace dress accessories, but how authentically Shetland were they?

The books contained few images so patterns were knitted by knitters across the world, following our appeal for help from knitters at the University of Glasgow. Some of the patterns are similar to designs commonly used in lace knitting in Shetland. Other published designs are not found in Shetland historical garments and their description as 'Shetland' remains a mystery.



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The Textiles Collection cared for by Shetland Museum and Archives is a Recognised Collection of National Significance in Scotland

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