

**Yarn Tubs,
Caskets, Cages,
- where to put
that ball of
yarn**

July, 2023

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I am primarily a collector of tools related to knitting.

This picture is of my single-point knitting needle alphabetical reference collection – doesn't mean I can actually find anything. Circulars are filed separately.

1000 brand names and manufacturer names and about 900 physical specimens

All this information – and many of my presentations - are available to read or download from my website.

This photo was taken in about 2013; now the shelves are so full, I don't use a more recent photo as it is too messy.

Handling Yarn – a Six-Year Journey

2013 – Skein winders



2014 - Winding Reels



2015 – Spool Knaves



2016 – Yarn Holders
Worn on the Person



2017 – Yarn Tubs and
Caskets



2018 – Yarn and
Thread Winders



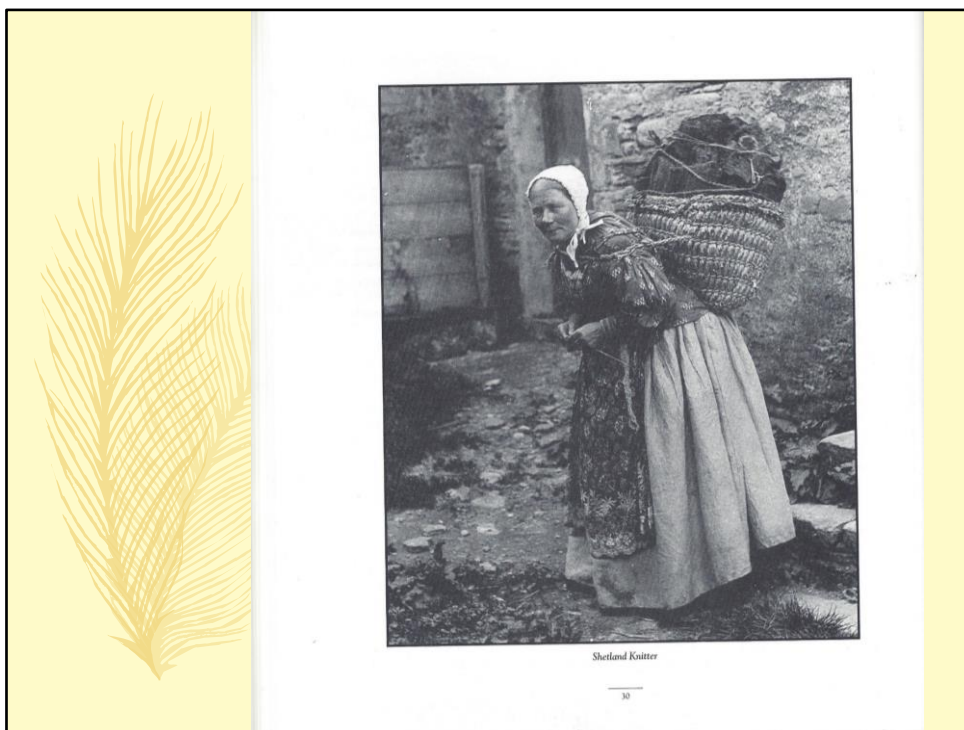
In 2013 I began trying to come to terms with my tools used to handle or store yarn. This became a six-year journey. Now I can look back with a much wider overview. Not a lot available in English about a lot of these tools which often produced at home or by individual craftsmen/women or by very small firms.

Now I have combined *Spool Knaves* and *Yarn Holders Worn on the Person* together. Actually they are in the same classification.

2015 – spool knaves – wasn't until the next year that I could articulate what distinguished a spool knave from other yarn holders worn on the person.

The “knave” is the rod or staff. So a spool knave has to have a rod or staff – although I have also seen a chain used for a horizontal spool knave.

Like a lot of self-taught collectors and “experts”, a lot of my opinions are based on my experience over the last almost 30 years. If anyone has any corrections or has additional information to add, I would be delighted to hear from you – either today – you can sing out during the presentation or put your comments into the CHAT. Or, my contact details are at the bottom of the presentation.



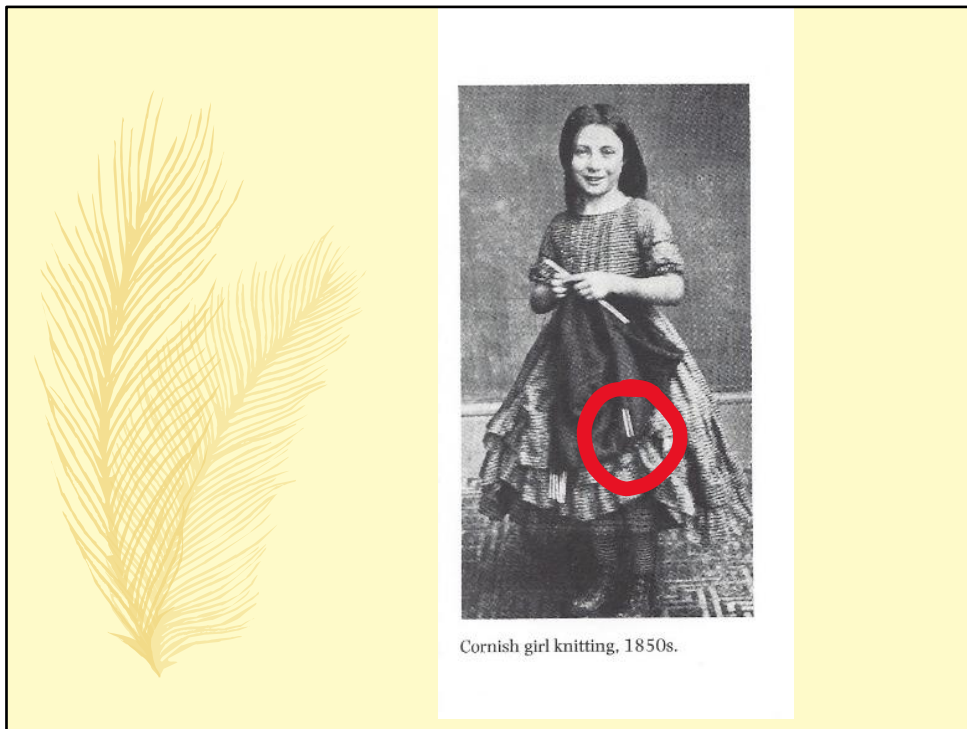
Like most tools, these items moved from up the social scale. Poor people didn't sit down while they knitted - walking to other work, working, waiting for family, etc. (husbands back from the day's fishing)

CC 2209 - Shire's *Fisherman Knitting* includes this picture of a women knitting whilst waiting for fleet to return.



A fisher lassie of Foula about to fill her 'kishie' (basket) with peat, knitting while she walks.

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One interesting thing about this photo is that the knitter who appears to be about 12 is using at least FOUR very long needles – see the third and fourth needles hanging on the live yarn to the right of the knitting. There may be other needles not visible among the knitting.



So these tubs, caskets, bowls reflected the middle-class - where women could sit down while they knitted or crocheted or tatted (I don't think I am talking about tambour work – this was a slightly earlier form of needlework and required a stable base, so women were always sitting down to do these crafts).

But we can start with the well-to-do peasant or farmer family.

Painted blue tub CC 3073 19th century Dutch, bought from Kay Sullivan.

The **Hindelopen** folk art style became very popular and folk artists in Holland still use oil paints to paint their designs. Typically, greens, blues and reds were used in painting **Hindelopen**. Also used on Tole ware, Hindelopen is used today in craft work.

What I like about this item is that the painting seems quite crude around the rims, and the bowl itself seems to have shrunk a bit out-of-the-round, evidence of quick work for daily use in the family.



As 18th and 19th centuries progressed, more women entered the middle classes (and wealthier classes) and focussed on ladylike skills, suitable for the drawing room and social entertaining. The evolution of the yarn bowl or tub reflected these changes in social attitudes. In first half of the 19th century, yarn used by “ladies” during social entertaining was still very fine, almost embroidery-fine, but often stronger. Ladies did not create garments with their handicraft - they created edgings or accessories - so yarn tubs and bowls were still small.

In the UK, knitting - aside from edgings - had no social cachet, so yarn in their holders was used mostly for crochet and tatting.

Clockwise from top left

CC 2934 – small lignum vitae yarn bowl – bought in England – I find these rounded-tapered bowls mainly English, so assume that is their style.

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CC 977 – Walnut or oak - Dutch

CC 1352 – small boxwood crochet cup – I bought this in Australia, but I don’t think it is Australian, especially being boxwood.

CC 1501 – lidded corozo nut crochet canister – vegetable ivory



These are a variety of yarn bowls, showing the various shapes and hues. Clockwise from centre, 19

Bottom - CC 98 – low, wide bowl in lignum vitae (wood of life, considered to have healing properties when first imported into Europe from the Americas in the 16th century), ogee shape, Lot 978 in the 1982 auction of the treen collection of Wm Shepherd. Such a momentous sale that it is still referred to, as I am doing today. I bought the catalogue for this sale a few years ago for GBP100. It was definitely listed as a yarn bowl, although the flat bottom of the bowl and the straight insides do not seem as supportive of a ball of yarn as the others shown here with more rounded interiors. The short sides mean the yarn ball would have to be small, so I put this first half of 19th c when craftswomen still used small balls of fine yarn. But the wide base means it would be very stable.

CC 265 – Dutch seller says “made from the trunk of a fruit tree” – really fits the word “tub”

CC xx – footed fruitwood yarn bowl with painted (??) black rings

CC 1599 - Quite large and deep yarn bowl of lignum vitae – English

CC 1206 – Walnut ?? And classic shape



Many substances were used besides wood - silver, crystal, ivory, porcelain

Photo of crystal, silver, and ivory

CC 1004 - ivory knitting tub with tortoiseshell floor and ebony insets around the rim – early 19th century, French

CC 505 - lead crystal – German – proverb translates : “Honor the women – they work and they weave, heavenly roses in life’s short reprieve”

CC - lidded Gorham crystal casket with silver cage overlay – American, late 19th century

CC 1215 - Early 19th century – Rotterdam hallmark, silver basket, with inscription around the lower rim – “In remembrance of my beloved sister A A van Mierop, maidenname Roelane, born on November 24, 1740 and passed away 7 January, 1802.” Memorial inscriptions were rare on items like this.



All the traditional “wares” were used to create yarn bowls.

Here, left and top, stickware – the technique developed in mid-19th century (??) as one of the variants of Tunbridge ware. These two tubs are continental, rather than English and include a glass covered reverse painting or coloured print - lithography.

CC 2811 - Mahognay with inlaid boxwood stringing and hand-coloured lithograph with a brass mount. Dutch 1850-60

CC 1282 – French, early 1800’s

Right bottom – CC 1281 straw work – probably Italian, late 1800s.



Mauchline Ware - There were approximately 10 Mauchline ware varieties – I am showing 5

Clockwise from bottom left –

CC 922 - Footed **Fernware** yarn ball – you can see that it has provision for a cord to slip over the arm, like the one above it. Fernware was produced from 1850-1900 – highest popularity was between 1860-1880, using the template or the stencil method. Early Fern ware was created by draping a fern over the object before painting, then removing the fern to show the outline.

CC 454 - traditional **transfer** decorated yarn ball with a piece of string to slip over the wrist. Both the top two yarn balls have missing feet. Presumably if one came off, the other two had to be knocked off.

CC 822 - **Floral white ware**, a small pasted-on transfer, possibly foreign (saying this, due to the poor quality of the workmanship on the application of the transfer

CC 917 - **Tartan ware** tub (Stuart ??) – with duck’s egg blue interior - note the gold stars tape pasted around the foot

CC 2472 - inside the tub, a small **Chinz ware** yarn ball. This is upside down to show the bottom – note the wavy tape glued over the joins. There are many different Chinz patterns.



Bakelite, clockwise from bottom centre

CC ?? – string holder ??

CC ?? – bottom is a KN gauge, says, Patent No. 108363 or 108383

CC 182 – both top and bottom say Patent Appld No 23299/35

CC 1946 – speckled white, bottom says Peter Pan **NZ** ware 115

CC 1820 on bottom says British made UP

CC 2368 – **NOT** end-of-day ware, bottom says British NB ware 797286



Here is a set of matching items, all purchased separately from three different sellers in Britain, each of whom had a different story. They varied on country of origin, period when created, and species of wood, but I think they are a set of Dutch origin. They are rather Deco in style to our eyes, but again, they are reminiscent of the Hindeloopen style :

Front, CC 771- a very large yarn bowl

Middle CC 17 – a very large tubular knitting needle holder

Back, CC 199 – a large yarn casket - I believe the darker colour on this is due to more contact with the hands to twist off the top.



Left, CC 2901 – about 1930 from Erzgebirge region in Germany – no label. Ingrabran Simon has this model pictured on page 10 of his book *Eve and the Needle*. Made by the Erzgebirgische Holzkunst Gahlenz GmbH; the firm is still active today.

Right, CC 2569 – label on bottom says E H and below a small graphic of a ball of yarn and KN, the letter L. Also shown in *Eve in the Needle*, page 10. This model has moveable arms, and you can see that one of the flower centres is a hole through which to pull the yarn.

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Now we are moving up to more contemporary times. These are ceramic yarn bowls from Fritz & Floyd,

Left, CC 2304 (?) labelled copyright 1977

Right CC 91 labelled copyright 1978



Porcelain, iron ware or ceramic – from bottom centre clockwise –

June Rivette – small casket with pin cushion on top, no markings

CC 1200 – Ironstone, with transfer decoration. Transfer on bottom, The Gristmill
<emblem> Royal Crownford Ironstone England

CC ?? – ceramic yarn holder with open back, stamped on bottom Made in Italy with a slit
in the bottom to help with the clay drying, I assume.



Cardboard or chipboard

Front, CC 1518 - unlabelled but with the same interior lining paper as the back item – diagonal stripes

Back, CC 1189 – label on bottom says “Terston” Twine Cabinet Made in Scotland



Plastics – clockwise from left

CC 256 – lightweight, soft, transparent plastic with strap/handle of different plastic consistency. Labels Twinco made in England Light and unbreakable. Wool holder. Wool can easily be seen – MARKETING Bought from the UK, but the Twinco branded knitting needles were also sold in Australia – plastic brand of Stratnoid.

CC 2639 – Box says on top, String and Yarn ball holder – back says made by the Kilgore <trademark> Manufacturing Company, Westerville Ohio”

CC 445 – green unusual shape – impressed around the base : Registered Design * Made in Holland * Design Nikaloi Carels * Originated by the Meccano Company

CC 1502 – hard white plastic with foot – Yarn Maid, Ritter-Carlton Co New York

CC 302 – soft red plastic, unusual design, plastic strap/handle. Bottom includes an extrusion : NB <logo> ware Made in England HW 1257 Has a KN gauge on the bottom.



Cannisters – clockwise from left,

CC 495 – tin, bottom stamped Huntley and Palmers Biscuits Reading and London England

CC 1223 – cardboard, small label inside lid says Beer & Co Handgemalt (handpainted) – Hindeloopen again - the painter's initials WS

June's – cardboard - black with gold overprint, children playing, including with rabbits

CC 2214 – tin, top labelled in French, Coton a Repriser Mercerise A La Chapelle 25 Grammes W.F. W.F.

Ingraban Simon, *Eve and the Needle*, page 13 : The origin of the yarn boxes made of papier-mâché with floral patterns or Japanese motifs or Mother-of-pearl cannot be determined unequivocally; these thread cans are probably end in Europe of the 19th century. E.g. built the Franco-German family of industrialists Adt for their papier-mâché production in the mid-19th century .Century offices in Munich, Berlin, London and New York to conquer the world market. She sent up decorators for several months to China and Japan. They collected templates therefor the products with the popular in Europe East Asian motifs.



Unusual, clockwise from left

CC 1502 – clear hard plastic. Label says Jumbo Handy Holder All purpose * for all size balls * prevent waste * stop tangles and a lot more instruction and many more hints

CC 1934 - Egg-shaped, blue aluminium with thin cord handle. Bought from the US – seller said her mom bought this in the 1950s.

CC ?? – catalogue label fell off – Extruded in the base REG. DESIGN PAT App coiled wire is held on with small bolts !

The End

References

Webster's Knitting Needle Notions

<http://knitting-needle-notions.com.au>

Eve and the Needle (Eva und die Nadel), by
Ingraban Simon, 2005, published in PDF format.

