Sheepfold

2012 Cushion

WOOL SACK

The Woolsack project is making cushions from British Wool to give as a welcome gift from the people of Britain to each of the Olympic and Paralympic athletes at the London 2012 Olympic Games. This will require up to 20,000 cushions! Each cushion will be a standard size of 16 inches (40 cm) square. The cushions will be directly stuffed with clean new or recycled British wool at one of the many 'stuffing events' taking place nationwide. Each cushion will be accompanied with a personal gift card from the individual or group who made it saying "I/we made this for you …" and telling the story of the particular cushion. We hope this will be a comforting physical memento and recognition from us of the enourmous personal effort each athlete has made to get to and take part in the Games. This pattern gives a basic design that can be adapted and developed to create your very own very individual cushion.

Materials used:

"Wensleydale Longwool Sheepshop Aran+" wool in undyed and 2 dyed shades were used in the photographed cushion.

- Approx 200-250g aran weight pure British wool in main colour (mc). It must be British in every way!
- Approx 50g aran weight pure British wool in contrast 1 (c1).
- Approx 50g aran weight pure British wool in contrast 2 (c2).
- 4.5 mm straight needles.
- Wool needle to sew in yarn ends, Swiss darn motifs, then sew front and back together.
- Appropriate 'stuffing' wool, available at the publicised 'stuffing events' happening nationwide.

Finished size:

16 inches (40 cm), of course!!

Instructions:

Before starting your cushion, check your tension: Work 17 st and 22 rows in stocking stitch to measure 10x10 cm or 4x4 inches using 4.5 mm needles. If necessary, adjust the needle size to obtain the correct tension so ensuring that the finished cushion is the right size!

Now wind 3 balls from your main colour so that the contrast boxes can be worked using the intarsia technique. The intarisa method is preferable to fair isle as it reduced the risk of the work being pulled out of shape by wools carried across the large boxes at the back of your work.

Front of cushion: Using mc, cast on 69 sts. First row: *k1, p1**, repeat * to ** until 1 st remains, k1.

Repeat this row four more times so that a total of 5 rows of moss stitch have been worked.

Row 6: k1, p1, k1, p1, k29, p1, k1, p1, k29, p1, k1, p1, k1.
Row 7: k1, p1, k1, p31, k1, p31, k1, p1, k1.
You will be creating a piece with a 4 st moss stitch edge up the 2 sides and a central 3 st moss stitch panel up the centre.

Row 8: In mc k1, p1, k1, p1, k2; in c1 k25; in mc k2, p1, k1, p1, k2; in c2 k25; in mc k2, p1, k1, p1, k1.
Row 9: In mc k1, p1, k1, p3; in c2 p25; in mc p3, k1, p3; in c1 p25; in mc p3, k1, p1, k1.
Repeat the last two rows 15 times more so that the 25-stitch contrast boxes (worked in stocking stitch) are 32 rows high.

Rows 40 and 41: repeat rows 6 and 7, once.
Row 42: repeat row 6, once more.
Rows 43 to 46: repeat first row, 4 times.
Rows 47 and 48: repeat rows 7 then 6, once.

Row 49: In mc k1, p1, k1, p3; in c1 p25; in mc p3, k1, p3; in c2 p25; in mc p3, k1, p1, k1.
Row 50: In mc k1, p1, k1, p1, k2; in c2 k25; in mc k2, p1, k1, p1, k2; in c1 k25; in mc k2, p1, k1, p1, k1.
Repeat the last two rows 15 times more so that this second pair of 25-stitch contrast boxes (worked in stocking stitch) are 32 rows high.

Rows 81 and 82: repeat rows 7 then 6 once.
Row 83: repeat row 7 once more.
Rows 84 to 88: repeat first row 5 times.
Cast off all stitches.

Back of cushion: Using mc only, cast on 69 sts. First row: *k1, p1**, repeat * to ** until 1 st remains, k1.
Repeat this row four more times so that a total of 5 rows of moss stitch have been worked.

Row 6: k1, p1, k1, p1, k61, p1, k1, p1, k1.
Row 7: k1, p1, k1, p63, k1, p1, k1.
You will be creating a piece with a 4 st moss stitch edge up the 2 sides.

Repeat the last two rows 38 times so that the central 61-stitch box (worked in stocking stitch) is 78 rows high (83 rows worked since casting on).

Rows 84 to 88: repeat first row, 5 times.
Cast off all stitches.

Finishing: Finish off <u>all</u> ends of yarn by weaving into the work. Block the two pieces to ensure they are exact 16 inch (40 cm) squares.

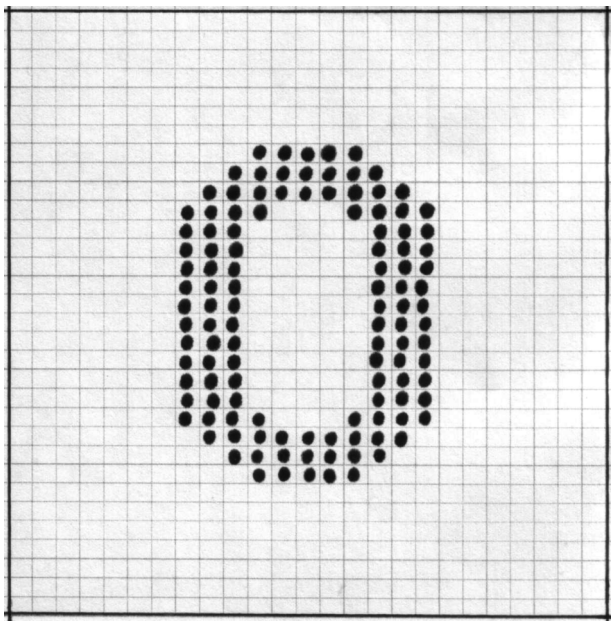
Embroider the motifs (given below) to the four contrast squares on the front of the cushion. I used the Swiss darning technique, though cross stitch may also work well. Take care not to pull your stitches too tightly or you may affect the overall size! Press this piece to flatten the embroidered stitches.

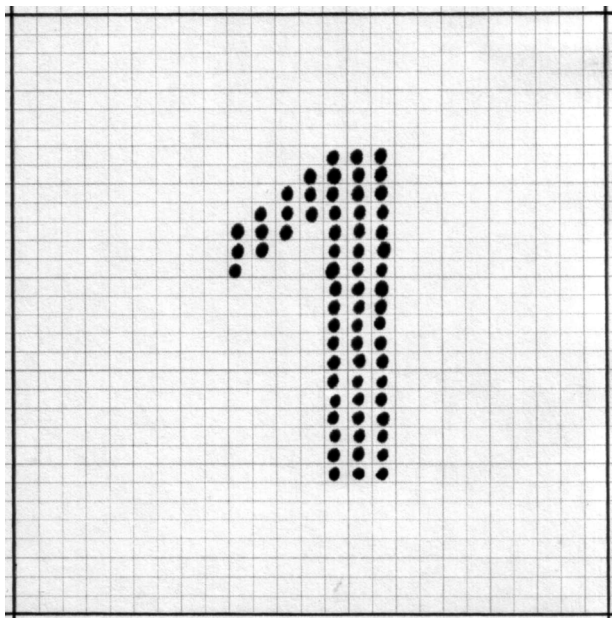
Now sew the two pieces together on three sides, leaving most of the fourth open ready for stuffing. Then take or send to one of the many stuffing events happening nationwide, along with a length of the wool you have used so that the fourth side can be sewn up neatly when filled.

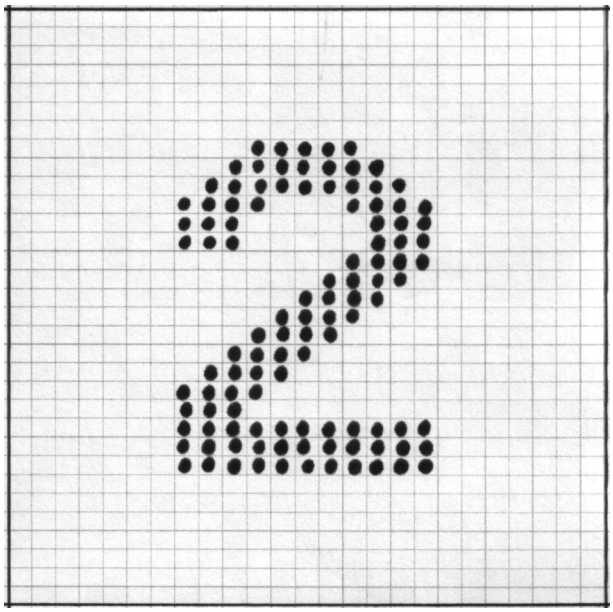
Number motifs:

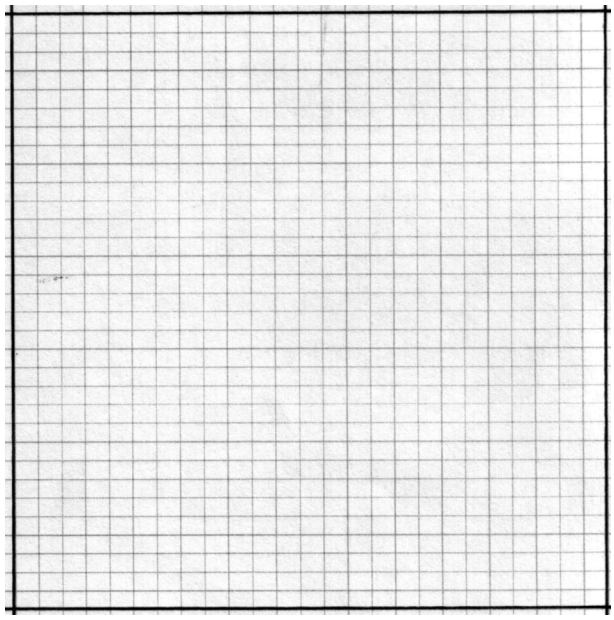
The following charts are 25 stitches wide and 32 rows high, so representing the stitches in contrast boxes on the front of the cushion. These can be used to embroider the number 2012 to the front of your cushion. Swiss darning is particularly

effective. Alternatively use your own motifs, but remember that cross stitch charts will not work out as expected due each knitted stitch not being an exact square. For this reason I have placed a blank chart in this pattern, that can be reproduced and used to assist in designing your own motifs, if preferred.









Please note: This pattern is available free of charge to enable you to make a cushion that can be given to one of the many splendid individuals participating in the 2012 London Olympics. A little bit of British wool and British heritage to take home after the event!

To see more designs and ideas, visit www.sheepfold.co.uk. Our website also gives advice on some of the techniques used and lots of information about particular native British sheep breeds.

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to purchase wonderful knit and felt kits containing British wool, visit www.sheepfold.co.uk