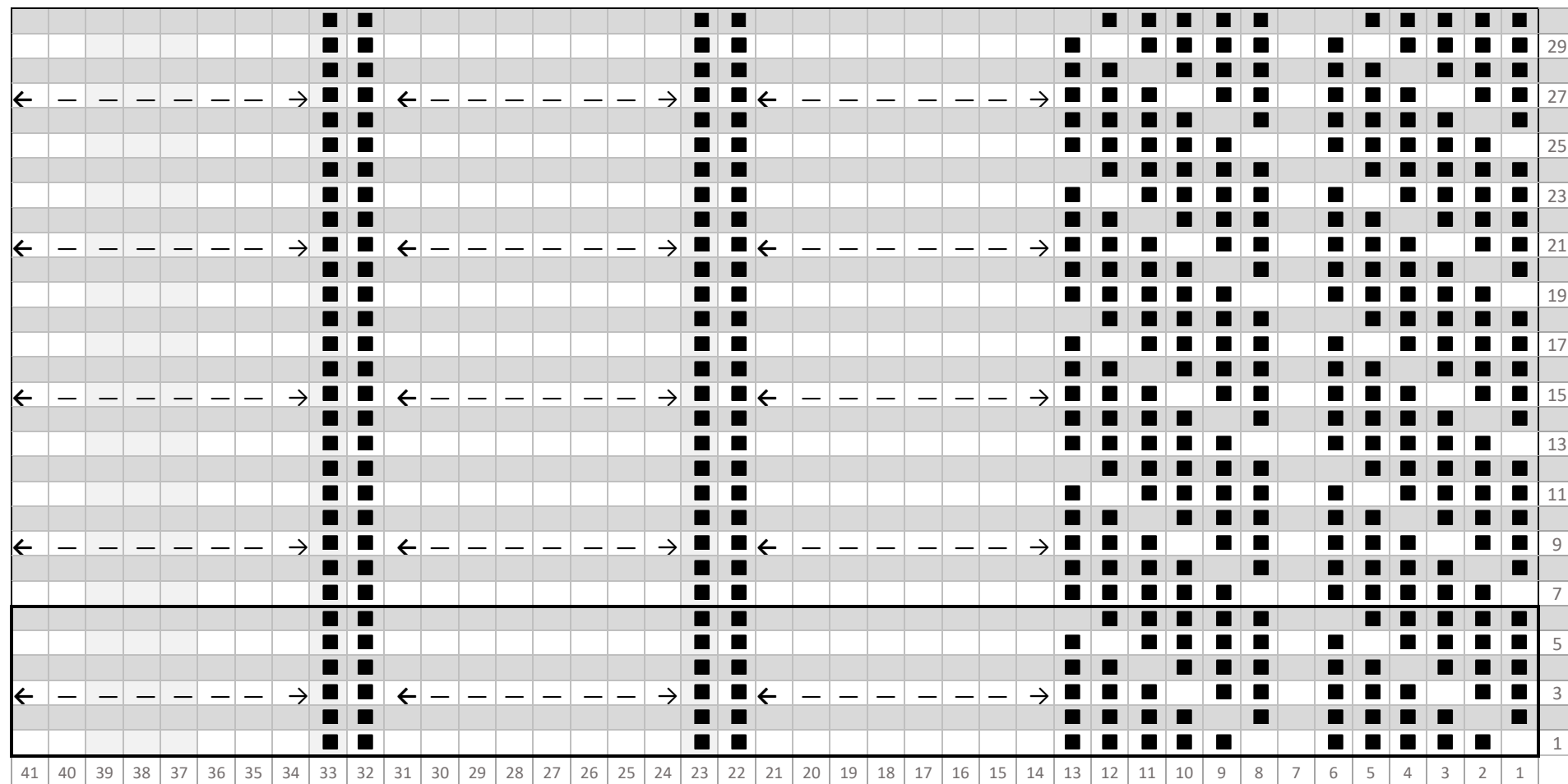


GP68 Robert Dowsey Little's gansey

■ = purl stitch on the right side (knit stitch on the wrong side)

Photo no.: IMG_20200805_072646.jpg

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To date we have not been able to track down an original photograph. The analysis has been done from a half-toned reproduction in a copy of “Time and Tide: The story of Sheringham’s fishermen and their families” by Alan Childs and Ashley Sampson (Sheringham Museum Trust, 2004).

The design is very obviously based on vertical columns in groups – three 4 over 4 cables (coil o’rope), twisting to the left and two diagonal bars (cross-bars) sloping up to the left. The slope of the turns of the cables, which is around 25° as opposed to 35° for a standard cable, indicates a slightly compressed aspect ratio of 4 x 4 x 6 (4 over 4 twisting every 6). In Sheringham it was typical (but not universal) for gansey to carry two contrasting and alternating motifs – A B A B A B A. This gansey shows them grouped B B A A B B A A B B. The cables are separated by recessive columns of purl stitches, two stitches wide.

The motifs carried in the intervening pair of columns are diagonal bars (or cross-bars, as Gladys Thompson calls them). The cross-bars are formed by knit stitches on a background of reverse stocking stitch and do not stand out as much as purl stitches would on a background of stocking stitch. While the right-hand column in the pairs of cross-bars are faint, in just one column they are visible and countable. The left-hand columns are even fainter, possibly due to the screening process for half-tone reproduction or the direction of the light source. Very faint hints here and there suggest that it is the same as the right-hand ones. While a possible alternative would be to slope in the opposite direction to make an upward herringbone, there is not the slightest evidence that it does so. This may become clearer if an original photograph can be located. Thus, the diagonal bars imitate the slope and direction of the cables either side. There is always a danger here of speculation ruining the optic nerve, as the Little family seem to be fond of the motif of diagonal bars in various forms. See Henry Little’s ganseys GP45 and GP46; and GP55 is a putative member of the Little family. If correct, this would make the fourth example of the cross-bar motif. So, until proved otherwise I am proposing that the B columns are cross-bars. Gladys Thompson records cross-bars in Scottish ganseys too but no Yorkshire examples, indicating perhaps the influence of patterns used in the Scottish fleet and also by the knitters who followed the herring shoals down the East Coast to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

The rigs are unusual: there are four of them, whereas in Sheringham there are more often three. They are widely spaced, especially the top two which are wider apart than the others. This is not unprecedented; see GP17 which has 4 with wider spacing and GP50 which has 3 with wider spacing.

The cuff is interesting in that you can see that between the rib and the casting off there are two plain rows as a reinforcement. See Friday Balls’ gansey in Cromer Museum (not allocated a GP number at the time of writing).

References:

Childs, Alan, Sampson, Ashley : 2004 : Time and Tide, The story of Sheringham fishermen and their families : : p.13

Thompson, Gladys : 1979 : Patterns for Guernseys, Jerseys and Arans : Dover Publications : 3rd revised edition : p.99

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Stitches/inch	12
Rows/inch	17

The calculations dictate that the tension must be the standard fine Sheringham one of 12 stitches to the inch and 17 rows. It is impossible to see what happens around the sides. I suggest that a single column of cross-bars sits either side of the false seams. Exactly how the false seam was treated is an open question, as the seam is normally formed of recessive purls or moss stitches but the cross-bars are already set against a background of reverse stocking stitch. Perhaps the seams stand up as a ridge (like the other B patterns) but made of a pair of knit stitches that divide at the gusset. This gansey is too big for the man, perhaps because he has lost weight in old age (you can see his bony shoulders). Another photograph in the same book supports the notion that it is rather big on him. His well-dressed wife Ann helps to date the image of this gansey to the very early years of the 20th century.



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