

## **Launching Today: Guernsey Knitting Competition to Revive Tradition of Family Patterns**

VisitGuernsey has joined together knitting shop and community group I Knit London to launch the 2011 #iKnit\_Guernsey competition. The winner will receive an idyllic break for two to Guernsey, with £50 iKnit London vouchers available for four runners up. The winning pattern will also be published in *The Knitter and Simply Knitting*.

The contest seeks to revive the tradition for families on the island having their own, unique pattern for the iconic maritime sweater. Patterns that re-interpret this tradition should be submitted via pdf upload on the VisitGuernsey facebook page by July 4, 2011.

Gillian Lenfestey, costume curator for the National Trust Guernsey Folk & Costume Museum advised on the project: "The traditional guernsey has evolved from one of Europe's oldest knitted garments, out of a community knitting tradition on the island that pre-dates the Middle Ages.

"Originally, each Guernsey family had its own distinctive pattern variation which would also indicate which parish they were from. The designs were passed down through the generations orally. After the German occupation, the younger generation of evacuees returned unable to speak the Guernsey-French patois of those that had remained and the tradition was lost. One pattern was however saved and written down by the Federation of Guernsey Women's institutes in 1945."

According to guernsey manufacturer Guernsey Woollens, patterns on the traditional guernsey, which developed as practical work wear for sailors, are significant: The rib at the top of the sleeve represents a sailing ship's rope ladder in the rigging, the raised seam across the shoulder a rope, and the garter stitch panel; waves breaking upon the beach.

Those entering the competition are encouraged to creatively re-interpret the original garment, imagining how the lost family patterns might have looked, or would look today if the tradition had continued and evolved. However, to maintain the guernsey tradition they should attempt to incorporate the following features:

- Inclusion of the traditional box shape
- Using British [or Guernsey!] wool with four or five ply
- Pattern designs for size 10-12

The competition first prize is only available to knitters and designers able to travel from departure points served by Flybe at Belfast, Birmingham, Exeter, London

Gatwick, Norwich and Southampton, however anyone inspired by the idea is welcome to take part on a non-competitive basis.

Gerard Allt owner of I Knit London said: "The fact that these jumpers went on to influence traditional "Gansy" designs all round the UK coastline is fascinating. We also loved the fact that the guernsey comes from a culture of community based knitting, which is the very thing that we are nurturing with our iknitlinks local knitting groups initiative."

ENDS

### **Competition guidelines:**

The competition will be judged in two rounds. Round one will comprise a paper pattern design and accompanying notes via pdf file upload. Those taking part will need to enter via the VisitGuernsey Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/VisitGuernsey>. The deadline for first round entry is July 4, 2011.

Five finalists will then be selected to knit their designs by a panel of experts including Gerard Allt of I Knit London, historian Gillian Lenfestey, Arthur Eldridge co-owner of Guernsey Wollens, and Guernsey knitter, craft teacher and iMake blogger Martine Ellis.

The final garments will be judged during UK national knitting week and announced on October 10, 2011.

What makes a guernsey a guernsey?

- Guernseys are made of single colour worsted yarn, usually four or five ply, tightly knit using fine needles.
- Patterns are made up of simple knit/ purl combinations, the most elaborate of which would have covered the top half of the body and arms. *Patterns on Tudor knitted stockings produced in Guernsey had names such as Turk's Head, and Peacock's Tail, which may have also been used on jumper designs.*
- Jumpers have a boxy shape which means that they can be worn both ways; front and back (originally to prolong life-span).
- Other common features include a funnel neck, triangular inserts under the arms and side splits for ease of movement.

Hashtag: #iKnit\_Guernsey

Follow us on Twitter @visitguernsey @iknitlondon

<http://www.iknitlinks.org/>

<http://www.iknit.org.uk/>

<http://www.visitguernsey.com>

### **Terms and conditions**

- The competition prize is available those able to travel to stated departure points.
- First round competition designs must be submitted as PDF or word documents under 1MB via upload on the VisitGuernsey Facebook page.

- Finalists should hand deliver or post completed garments via registered post to the I Knit London shop.
- The prize provided by FlyGuernsey will comprise a 3-night stay in Guernsey in a 3 star hotel for two people sharing a twin room. Breakfast is included.
- Flights to Guernsey from the UK will be provided on Flybe from Belfast, Birmingham, Exeter, London Gatwick, Norwich or Southampton. Winners must arrange their own transport to the airport.
- The prize is valid for one year and must be to be taken between October 2011 and October 1, 2012. Bookings should be made by the end of February 2012.
- The holiday is not transferable and no cash alternative will be offered. Accommodation and flights are subject to availability and black out periods at the discretion of FlyGuernsey.
- I Knit London vouchers are non refundable and must be redeemed in the London shop or via mail order.
- Designs may use the Traditional Guernsey knitting pattern as a basis for customisation however embellishments and pattern developments must be entrants' own work. By submitting their patterns, designers are confirming they own the copyright to the designs.
- Entrants will retain copyright of their designs however the winning designs may be shared by VisitGuernsey and I Knit London via their social media (online) areas. Media partners such as *The Knitter* may also publish the winning designs.
- Completed garments will be returned to competition finalists but will be photographed and possibly displayed for up to 12 months before their return. (All jumpers will be returned by November 2012)

For more information on Guernsey please visit [www.visitguernsey.com](http://www.visitguernsey.com) or call 01481 723 552.

**For further media information please contact:**

*The Saltmarsh Partnership*

Tom Panagos [tom@saltmarshpr.co.uk](mailto:tom@saltmarshpr.co.uk) 0207 902 2794

David Ezra [david@saltmarshpr.co.uk](mailto:david@saltmarshpr.co.uk) 0207 902 2795

Chloe Buchanan [chloe@saltmarshpr.co.uk](mailto:chloe@saltmarshpr.co.uk) 0207 902 2797