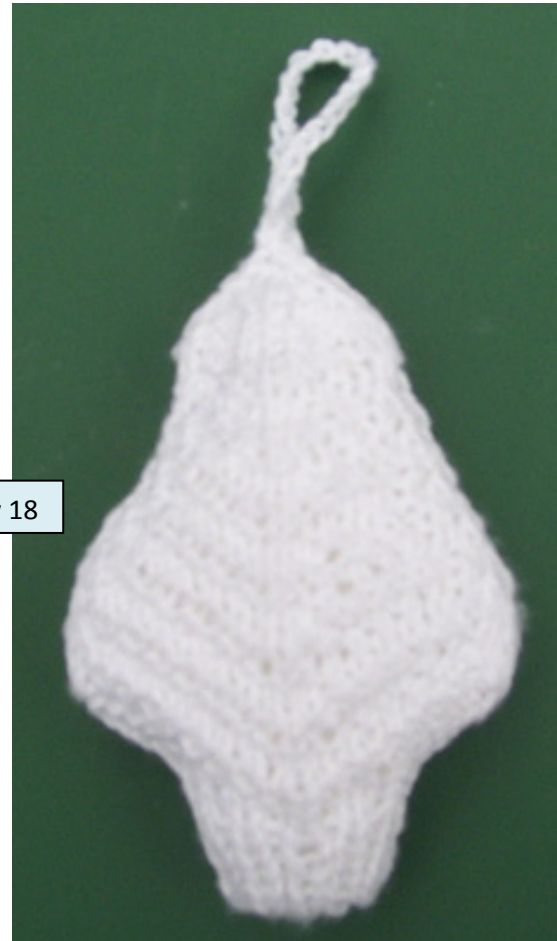
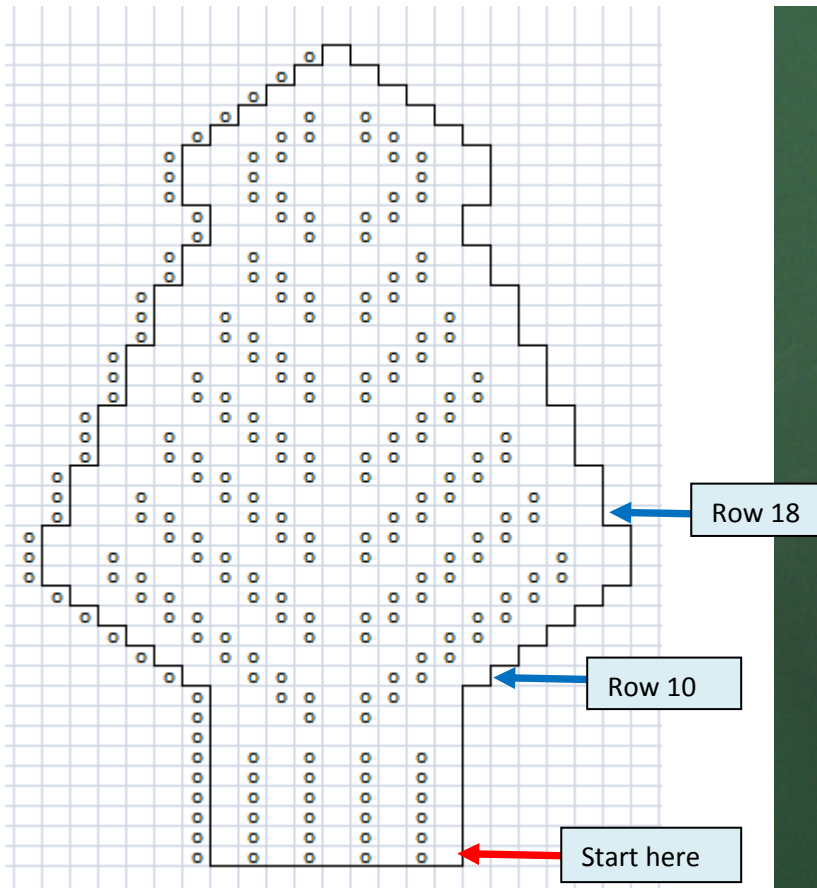




Gansey patterned Christmas Decoration



Photograph courtesy of Noble and Buchan families, Fraserburgh



This Christmas decoration uses a pattern that is part of our coastal heritage. This is one of the variations of the tree or tree of life pattern. This, and many others, were used on “ganseys” - the seamless, fine-knitted jumpers traditionally worn by fishermen and seamen around the British coast, up to the late 1950’s, to help keep them warm and dry at sea. Different areas of the coast used different patterns or pattern combinations, and it is said a fisherman’s home port could have been identified from his gansey.

This pattern is brought to you by the Moray Firth Gansey Project (2009-2012) which is researching gansey patterns traditionally used round the Moray Firth in the north east of Scotland, conserving old examples of these beautifully and cleverly constructed garments and recording local stories and traditions. The project

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will also make the patterns and knitting skills available to a new generation to use and enjoy through developing school and community knitting groups, and in a booklet and online pattern library. For more information, see our website www.gansey-MF.co.uk.

Instructions

The chart shows one side of the decoration. It can be knitted in the round, or as two flat pieces and sewn together. The black line shows the main outline of the shape. The line of purl stitches outside the line on the left will appear as a false seam on each side when the decoration is knitted in the round; if you are knitting it as two flat pieces you should add an extra stitch on the right hand side as well to make it easier to sew up.

Measurement: approx 11 cm / 4.25 inches

Needles: 2.75 cm

Yarn – any smooth crisp yarn (that in the example has a bit of sparkle); about 4ply / 20 wraps per inch

Symbols:

Blank boxes are stitches which appear as knit stitches on the right side of the work – K in instructions

O = stitches which appear as purl stitches on the right side of the work - P in instructions

To knit the decoration in the round on 4 double pointed needles:

Cast on 20 stitches, leaving a tail for sewing up the bottom of the tree

Distribute the stitches so that there are 6 on the first needle, 7 on the second and 7 on the third. Make sure the cast on row has not become twisted, before starting to work in the round. (Note: form the three needles into a triangle so that the last stitch on the third needle is next to the first stitch on the first needle.) Start your first round by knitting into the first stitch you cast on, with the 4th needle. Pull the yarn up fairly tightly on the first stitch to ensure there is not a large gap between the needles.

Starting at the red arrow, follow each row of the chart from right to left, repeating the pattern once each time, so that both sides are the same.

Where the black line steps outward you need to **increase** a stitch – you will add 4 stitches each increase round e.g:

Row 10: Increase 1 (knit into the front and back of the same stitch), P2, K3, P2, Increase 1, P1, Increase 1, P2, K3, P2, Increase 1, P1. Work the other increase rows in a similar way, continuing to follow the pattern chart.

Where the black line steps inward you need to **decrease** a stitch – again 4 per round e.g.:

Row 18: Decrease 1 (knit two together), K1, P2, K2, P2, K3, P2, K2, P2, K1, Decrease 1, P1, Decrease 1, K1, P2, K2, P2, K3, P2, K2, P2, K1, Decrease 1, P1. Work the other decrease rows in a similar way, continuing to follow the pattern chart

Finishing off

When you have only 4 stitches left put them onto two needles and knit 2 together twice, put the remaining stitches on one needle and knit them together. To make the loop at the top you can use a crochet hook or your fingers to make a chain, starting with the stitch you have left on your needle (see the third picture in the sequence below*). When the chain is as long as you want it cut off your yarn, thread the end through the last stitch to secure it, and stitch or tie it to the base of the chain make a loop. Stuff the tree lightly, and sew up the bottom.

To knit the decoration as two flat pieces

First add an extra purl stitch to each row on the right hand side of the chart, outside the black line. NB The **increases** and **decreases** are all worked **inside the black line**.

Cast on 11 stitches

Row 1: start with the Purl stitch you have added before the red arrow, and follow the chart from right to left

Row 2: start at the left hand side of the second row of the chart and work from left to right – remember that as this is a **wrong side row** a **blank square = Purl** and **O = Knit**

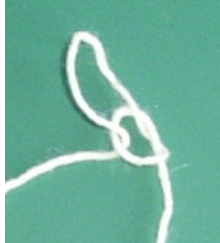


Continue in this way, working increases as above (2 per row) where the black line steps out, and decreases where it steps in. When you have only 2 stitches left, knit them together and fasten off by threading the end of your yarn through the loop left on the needle. Knit another piece the same.

Finishing off

Stitch the two pieces together on the wrong side, leaving the bottom open; turn right side out; stuff lightly and stitch up the bottom; make a cord for the hanging loop using a crochet hook or your fingers (see below) and stitch to the top of the decoration.

* Making a chain for the hanging loop

Follow the instructions below for a chained cord. You can create this cord with a crochet hook or just with your fingers:

	Make a slip knot and loop		Pull the knot fairly tight – you should still be able to make to loop bigger or smaller		Put your thumb and finger (or crochet hook) through the loop, pull another loop through and tighten the first loop.
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Continue in this way until your cord is the length you require. Fasten off the end with a knot. You can also make a twisted cord, or make a cord by plaiting three strands of yarn together.