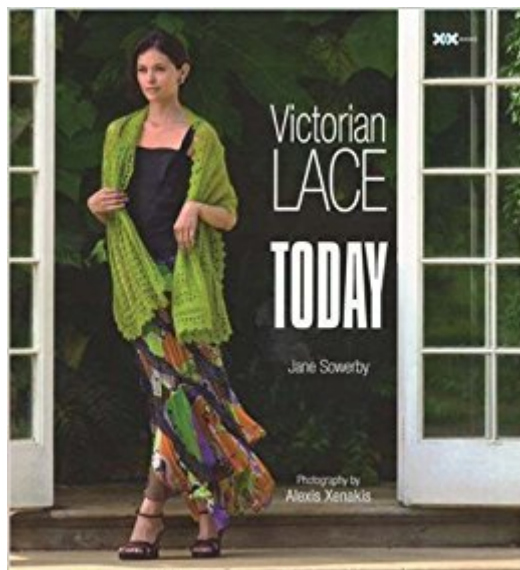


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Victorian Lace Today



Synopsis

Part project book and part history lesson, this unmatched collection of lace patterns offers techniques for embellishment and edging— to shawls and scarves. The 40 projects are deciphered, rewritten, charted, and adapted for modern tools and fibers, and are presented with full-color photos and illustrations of both the works-in-progress and the finished items. Comprehensive information on the tools and techniques of lace knitting helps beginning knitters, and challenging patterns keep experienced and ambitious knitters engaged. Delicate and decorative, the historical lace patterns in this book are adventurous and dynamic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Issue 15 This title is a must-have for knitters looking for an excellent introduction to lace knitting. It features truly beautiful and detailed photography of 40 lace knitting patterns. A real inspiration, the designs are revised from original Victorian patterns - with mistakes corrected! - and seeing the way they are presented for modern tastes and in today's delicious yarns make us want to knit them all. Each is well graded by complexity level too so you can easily gauge your project's involvement. Choose from scarves, rectangular and triangular shawls, stoles and capes. The reference section is incredibly useful too. It is a bounty of tips and tricks, and includes clear illustrative diagrams on working knitted-on borders, information on how to plan, design and calculate your own lacework project, how to read charts successfully and also handy yarn classifications and substitution ideas. The historic background notes provide a fascinating extra level of detail, and in addition Jane's

revealing final pages guide us through her Victorian adventure - how she went about discovering the marvels of Victorian lace knitting and producing this delightful book. The Knitter No. 117, Sept 07

Another large format book that seems to be aimed, at least in part, at knitters' coffee tables. It might even be described as a photographer's ego trip, were the photographer not Alexis Xenakis, the editor of Knitter's magazine and a man with a lot of experience of illustrating knitting. As an American he seems simply to be revelling in the UK's architectural heritage whilst on a trip to illustrate Jane Sowerby's amazing collection of knitted lace and her research into Victorian lace knitters and designer. For me though, that is the problem with a book that I shall no doubt buy, but which I find is set out in a way that I do not immediately follow. Yes, each pattern has a schematic of the finished shape, details of the tension, the materials (in generic yarn type as well as commercial brands) and charted stitch patterns and the instructions are written out at the start. Despite this information, there is nothing that shows where each of the charts appears on the final version. I would have liked something like 'the body of this triangular shawl is worked from the point to the wide edge and the border is then added to all three sides'. I also found the habit of putting some quotes from Victorian authors in quotation marks but others indented and in an italic font (the book uses a sans serif font so that italic type does not show up very clearly) irritating. But perhaps the greatest omission in a work that contains so much research is the lack of an index to anything but the projects and the photographic locations. There is no bibliography either. However, as a visual delight, this book is at least the equal of any other knitting book that I have ever seen and it stands alone because of the historical research and enormous collection of beautifully knitted and immaculately presented knitting.

Lesley Fidler SlipKnot No. 117, Sept 07

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Lesley Fidler SlipKnot Jan 07 A decade in the making, this elegant book harks back to the 1800s, when knitting for pleasure took wing and the first wave of knitting authors made a name for itself. Those pioneers - Misses Watts, Hope and Lambert, Mrs Gaugain - are revered and revitalized by Sowerby, who updates their gorgeous designs, along with those in the 'Weldon's Practical Knitter' volumes, to work with today's fibers and sensibilities. Shot on grand location at the English estate used in the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as on the bridges of Cambridge and at stately museums, the photos byn Alexis Xenakis do complete justice to the beauty and intricacy of the lace. If you're a lace knitter, get one copy for the coffee table and another to dog-ear your way through.

Yarn Market News Feb 08 Did you know that Queen Victoria was a keen knitter? Have you ever wanted to knit a 150-year-old pattern but now known where to start? This excellent book addresses both questions, tracing the history of how lace-making evolved from the 1830s to the 1900s and updating Victorian patterns for the modern knitter. As part of her research on the subject, author Jane Sowerby has gathered together many original Victorian patterns, and then given them a clever modern update by adapting them for today's yarns and colours. The result is a very successful collection which includes flowing shawls and delicate scarves as well as some more unusual designs. It also caters to all skill levels, so even if you're new to lace you'll find something simple and stunning to start on. This book is also beautiful to look at and includes many great location shots taken in and around Cambridge. The gorgeous photos show off Jane's designs against some wonderful backdrops. The stunning design of the book itself combined with the wealth of historical details and the gorgeous patterns makes this an ideal coffee table book for the keen knitter. It would also make an excellent gift for a special knitting friend - we're adding to to our wish lists!

Simply Knitting Jan 07 A decade in the making, this elegant book harks back to the 1800s, when knitting for pleasure took wing and the first wave of knitting authors made a name for itself. Those pioneers - Misses Watts, Hope and Lambert, Mrs Gaugain - are revered and revitalized by Sowerby, who updates their gorgeous designs, along with those in the 'Weldon's Practical Knitter' volumes, to work with today's fibers and sensibilities. Shot on grand location at the English estate used in the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as on the bridges of Cambridge and at stately museums, the photos byn Alexis Xenakis do

complete justice to the beauty and intricacy of the lace. If you're a lace knitter, get one copy for the coffee table and another to dog-ear your way through. Yarn Market News April 08 This wonderful book has now been published in paperback and if you are a fan of lace knitting and have not yet seen it, it is a must for your bookshelf. The author has a passion for lace and the Victorian women who pioneered the first published knitting patterns. There are 40 patterns in the book for beautiful lace shawls and scarves that have been inspired or recreated from these vintage patterns. The book begins with a brief exploration of Victorian knitting books and chapters based on the patterns several nineteenth century tomes. The patterns provided are for a variety of levels from the enthusiastic first-time knitter to the experienced with simple but effective starter projects to the mind-bogglingly challenging. There are clear explanation and charts to accompany each one and there is a full technique library which covers a variety of cast-ons, stitch manoeuvres and borders. The entire book is sumptuously photographed with a fascinating chapter on Jane's researches and production of Victorian Lace Today. If you have ever been remotely tempted to try lace then this book is an excellent companion; the author describes herself as a 'normal' knitter before embarking on her research and with "curiosity and determination" has created this beautiful collection of lace shawls you see in the book. Knit Today

Jane Sowerby is a former teacher who has done extensive research on Victorian knitting patterns and has given a series of lectures on Victorian lace shawls to craft guilds. Alexis Xenakis is the publisher of Knitter's Magazine and XRX Books. His photography is featured in more than 15 books, including all three volumes of The Knitting Experience. He lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

This book uncovers and reveals great knitting patterns from the 19th century, and those of us who love knitting lace are understandably eager to own it. I recommend it highly for the border patterns and the inspiring way they've been used to create items we'd use today. Definitely NOT your great-great-grandmother's lace. HOWEVER, the photos are fashion shots, and frustrating to those of us who are knitters and want to know what the knitting really looks like. Several of the scarves use an unimaginative drop stitch for the body of the scarf (I am certain there were other choices to offer!) and the first item -- a mesh shawl with beaded fringe -- is certainly not lace. Given how few lace knitting books are on the market, however, and how eagerly they are snatched up by those of us who want them, I have to say that this colorful, modern book is worth the money for the new take on lace. It was a pleasure to page through and see projects that didn't look as if they belonged in a

museum or historical recreation. I've marked several for holiday projects and purchased my yarn. If I change out a stitch pattern -- well, those borders really are yummy!

Wow! I drool over this book. I love to knit lace and this book has the most beautiful presentation of lace projects that I have ever seen. There are photographs of flower, wood, bridges and natural objects to complement the lace projects. The colors are luscious. If I had enough time in my days, I would knit every project in this book! The projects are primarily shawls and scarves and vary in degree of difficulty. I think that one should be an intermediate knitter to take on one of these projects. As an experienced knitter told me when I did my first lace project (which I called my 'Chaos blanket'), "Learn to Count". Counting is the key to lace knitting. I recommend this book for every lace knitter and for anyone who has ever dreamed of knitting lace. This book is inspirational and one that you will look at over and over for its beauty and ideas.

This book is full of 40 beautiful pieces to knit, one more beautiful than the next. When it arrived I was so surprised at just how wonderful this book is. The photographs are stunning, the history is interesting, and the advice as to how to design your own shawls are a great addition too. It is indeed Victorian Lace for Today as even my hip teenage daughter admires the shawls and scarfs wanting some for herself. It will be hard to decide which to do first. I am past being surprised when knitting books have errors in patterns, I assumed this one would also. One reviewer said the book has many errors. I will be sure to look online for corrections before starting any pattern but I do this anyway with every book.

The shawls are lovely, and this is as much a coffee table book as a pattern book. However, having now made two of the patterns in the book, the yarn amounts listed in the book are WAAAAAY off. On one of the shawls, the pattern called for 5 balls and I ended up using 7. I've never run into that problem in any other knitting book, and I know other knitters have encountered the same problem with other patterns in the book, so I'd be very careful if I decided to make anything else from this book.

Most of the knitters I know are drawn to knitting for the creativity of the craft. We could buy sweaters, hats, mittens for our loved ones, toys and blankies and darling baby underthings, often in materials as fine as those we use for our knitting. And we can often buy them for less money than we spend on our lovingly hand-painted yarns of squishy, silky fiber. We knit because we want to knit

some love into every stitch; because we can afford to; because we have the skill and creative energy; and we knit because we have the time. Knitting was a more utilitarian pursuit until the Victorians, who are sometimes said to have invented the leisure class, took it up as a leisurely pastime. This gorgeous book from author Jane Sowerby traces the growth of creative hand knitting of lace from the 1830's to the end of the Victorian era. During these decades the codification of knitted lace designs began to appear in pamphlets and magazines. There was no standardization of directions and abbreviations, so some of these patterns are unknittable today; but they're a treasure trove, and Sowerby has now made them so much more accessible to modern knitters with this book. Though *Victorian Lace Today* is much more than a pattern book, it does contain 38 patterns for shawls, scarves and stoles that are taken straight from the pages of *The Ladies' Knitting and Netting Book*, *The Ladies' Assistant*, and other publications of the era. Sowerby knitted them up, often in her own homespun yarn, and translated the designs to modern language for the modern knitter. In addition to the patterns (all of which are charted), this volume contains a wealth of general information on shawl construction, and deconstructs the patterns in a way that makes the reader feel it's all do-able. Yarn choices are discussed in a very helpful way. Beyond the patterns and instructions, however, "Victorian Lace Today" is a big, beautiful book with glorious photography. The shoots were done in the English countryside, along the River Cam, in London and Brighton, and at the wonderful Belton House, where some filming was done for the BBC's "Pride and Prejudice." Photographer Alexis Xenakis captured the detailed shots of the knitted pieces, along with wonderful vistas of lawns, formal gardens, and half-timbered buildings. The photography and the social history would make this book an object of desire, and then there are the knitting patterns too. I understand that the cautious knitter should look on the publisher's website for errata before picking up yarn and needles for one of these projects. That's a price I'm willing to pay for the pleasure of owning this book and, energized by Jane Sowerby's gift, I look forward to undertaking some of the projects in it. They are a living link to a rich creative history. Linda Bulger, 2010

This is a gorgeous book with gorgeous patterns. The only reason I would not give it a 5-star rating is because of the complexity of the patterns. There are many techniques that are illustrated in the back of the book, so you end up having to find those to accomplish making a pattern. The one shawl I tried was fine until I got to trying to knit and attach the border; that ended up being a really confusing process, and I did give up and never finish the shawl.

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