



Gunnister Gloves



These gloves are modeled on the gloves found with the Gunnister body (late 17th century, north of Scotland). Gloves that are similar in construction but fancier in execution survive dating back to the sixteenth century and earlier.

I've changed the gauge slightly from the original gloves. Both Audrey Henshall and Richard Rutt say the gauge is 17 stitches/inch, but Deborah Pulliam states in her article in *Piecework* that the gauge is 6 to 8 stitches per inch (see references). If you count the rows described by Henshall and Rutt for the gloves' cuff, then divide by the number of inches in the cuff, you get 8 rows per inch, which would correspond to a horizontal stitch count of 6 stitches per inch. I think that Henshall, and Rutt, who seems to have been quoting her, may have meant 17 stitches over two inches.

Moreover, to get a gauge of 6 stitches per inch, I would have used a heavier gauge of yarn and wound up with a very thick glove which would likely be a bit cumbersome to wear. In addition, the thumb and fingers on the Gunnister glove are rather short and thick, especially compared to leather gloves of the period. I think that the knitter did not take the lengthwise rate of shrinkage into account when knitting the glove, and have tried to adjust for that. So, these gloves are knitted using period techniques and details, but are not slavish copies of the Gunnister gloves. You may change them out by substituting a period purl-stitch pattern such as a checkerboard pattern or the diamond pattern from King Charles I's waistcoat for the garter stitch bands on the cuff.

Size:

Women's Medium -- 7½" hand circumference (Men's Medium – 8½" circumference, Men's Large – 9" circumference)

Needles:

1 set of five size 2 double-pointed needles, or as needed to get gauge. If you like to knit both gloves at once (as I do), you'll need two sets of needles.

Optional: short (sock or glove) double-pointed needles in the same size as that used to get gauge, for knitting fingers.

Yarn:

3 50 g. skeins sport weight wool (gloves shown used Brown Sheep Nature Spun Sport)

Gauge:

before felting = 14 st./2", 18.5 r/2"

after felting = 16 sts/2", 24 r/2"

Knit a swatch with the yarn you plan to use for the gloves, measure the number of stitches and rows per inch. Felt it using the technique you plan to use on the final project and measure the stitches/rows a second time.

If you are using a superwash yarn or do not want to felt your gloves, try to get the "after felting" gauge with the yarn you are using. When knitting the fingers and thumb, knit the fingers to the length that fits the recipient's hand, not the longer length needed for the felted version.

Knitting:

Cuff:

Cast on 94 (106, 114) sts and join*. Divide sts evenly among four needles and start knitting in the round, placing marker at beginning of rnd.

As you knit the cuff, make a pair of decreases on either side of the marker every third round. Use a right-slanting decrease (k2tog) before the marker and left-slanting decrease (ssk) after the marker.

**To make it easier to start knitting in the round, you can knit the first three rows back & forth in garter stitch, then switch to knitting in the round.*

Knit the cuff as follows, decreasing every third row as you go: [5 rows of garter stitch**, 6 rows stockinette stitch (STst)] 3x, then knit STst, continuing to dec every 3rd rnd as before, until you have 60 (68, 72) st left. Knit STst until cuff is about 5 7/8", finishing with 5 rows garter st. The finished cuff before felting should be 5½" (5 7/8", 6 1/8"), including the final band of garter sts.

***This will give you three garter ridges, then about three quarters of an inch of stockinette stitch.*

Thumb gusset:

Next round: M1 (make one using a raised increase so as not to make an eyelet) before the stitch marker.

Right hand glove:

K across 30 (34, 36) sts, place marker (PM), knit 5 (6, 6) st, [PM, M1, K1, M1, PM]*. K to end of rnd.

Left hand glove:

K across 25 (28, 30) sts, [PM, M1, K1, M1, PM]*. Knit 5 (6, 6) sts, PM, k to end of rnd.

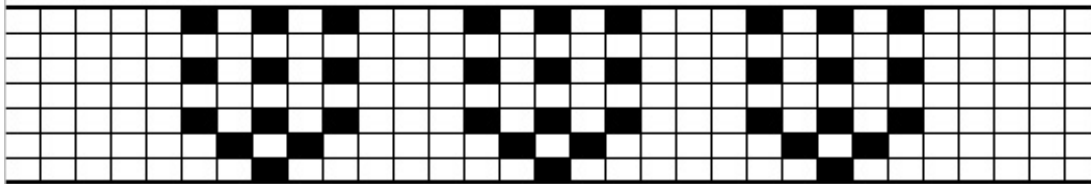
*These are the markers for the thumb gussets.

Increase every third round inside the thumb gusset markers – 1x after first marker, 1x before second marker -- until there are 11 (13, 13) total gusset stitches, then start the false seams on the back of each hand (see below); charts start at markers dividing the front of the hand from the back. Meanwhile, continue knitting thumb gusset, increasing every third round until there are 21 (25, 27) total stitches between the markers. Continue knitting gusset for 4 (6, 7) more rows after this point.

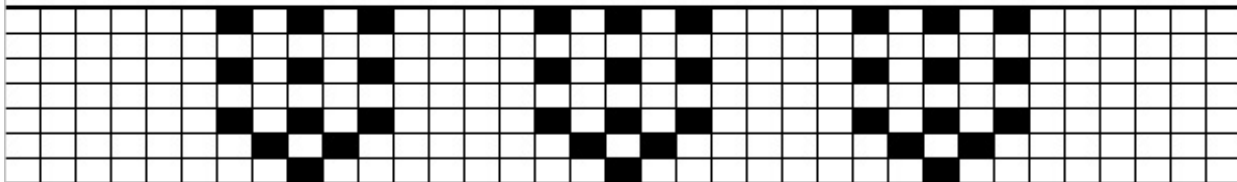
Place gusset stitches on waste yarn, removing gusset markers. On next round, cast on 1 stitch over the gap by the gusset stitches using the backwards loop method (total sts: 62 (70, 74). Continue knitting hand until it measures 4 1/2" (5 1/4", 5 1/2").

Chart for False Seams:

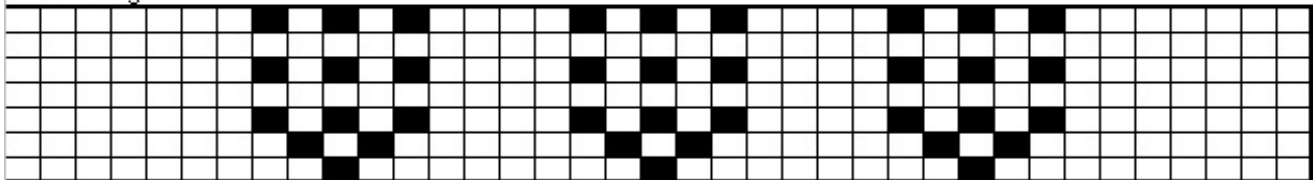
Women's Medium



Men's Medium



Men's Large



☐ = knit stitch
■ = purl stitch

Fingers (both Left and Right gloves):

Little Finger

On next rnd, work across 8 (9, 9) sts. Place 46 (52, 56) sts on a holder (or leave them on the other needles, if you have a set of spare needles) to be worked later.

Cast on 2 sts over gap using backward loop method.

Rejoin; knit to end -- 18 (20, 20) total sts. Arrange sts evenly on 3 dpns and knit 18 (22, 24) R.

To decrease for top –

R1: From beginning of round, k2tog, k 5 (5, 6), k2tog (2x). R2 and all even rnds: knit.

R3: ssk, k 3 (3, 4), k2tog.

R5: ssk, K 1 (1, 2), K2tog. Continue decreasing in this way at either side of finger until there are 8 or less sts remaining. Cut yarn; thread tail through remaining sts and bind off.

Upper Hand

Place reserved sts on needles. Join yarn at gap formed by little finger; pick up and knit 2 sts along cast-on at base of little finger -- 48 (54, 58) total sts.

Rejoin and knit in the round for 4 (6, 6) R, continuing "false seam" pattern where possible.

Ring Finger

Place first and last 8 (9, 10) sts on dpn. Reserve other sts to work later.

Cast on 2 sts as before over gap – total 18 (20, 22) ring finger sts. Work in the rnd for 26 (30, 32) rnds.

To decrease for top –

R1: From beginning of round, k2tog, k 5 (6, 7), k2tog (2x). R2 and all even rnds: knit.

R3: ssk, k 3 (4, 5) , k2tog.

R5: ssk, k 1 (2, 3), K2tog. Continue decreasing in this way at either side of finger until there are 8 or less sts remaining. Cut yarn; thread tail through remaining sts and bind off.

Middle Finger

Place first and last 8 (9, 9) sts on dpns. Pick up and knit 2 sts along edge of ring finger; knit across to gap and cast on 2 sts over gap – 20 (22, 22) total sts. Work in the rnd for 30 (34, 36) R.

To decrease for top –

R1: From beginning of round, k2tog, k 6 (7, 7), k2tog (2x). R2 and all even rnds: knit.

R3: ssk, k 3 (4, 5) , k2tog.

R5: ssk, k 1 (2, 3), K2tog. Continue decreasing in this way at either side of finger until there are 8 or less sts remaining. Cut yarn; thread tail through remaining sts and bind off.

Index Finger

Place remaining 16 (18, 20) sts on dpns; pick up and knit 2 sts along edge with index finger – 18 (20, 22) total sts. Work in the rnd for 26 (30, 32) R. Decrease and finish as for little finger.

Thumb:

Place held gusset sts on dpns. Pick up and knit 1 st along cast-on sts between thumb and hand – 23 (27, 29) total sts. Distribute evenly on 3 dpns and work in the rnd. Where thumb meets hand, decrease 2 (0, 2) sts in 2nd rnd and 1 st in 4th rnd -- 20 (26, 26) sts total). Knit even for 12 (16, 18) R. Decrease and finish as for little finger.

Finishing:

Weave in loose ends, closing up gaps between fingers and base of thumb as necessary. Felt using same method as used for swatch; block.

Construction Alternatives:

The Gunnister gloves were knitted with a gusset for the thumb, and with the decreases at the end of the fingers.

The Sture gloves, ca. 1564-5 (Rutt, p. 69), were knitted without the gauntlet cuff; the thumb is an afterthought thumb (i.e., the stitches for the thumb may have been knitted on waste yarn which was then picked out, the stitches picked up, and the thumb knitted) without a gore or gusset. This glove was knitted in silk thread at 9 sts/cm., and the decreases for the fingers were spread around the fingers over their whole length. This style is common in early gloves, replaced by a more modern construction with the decreases at the end of the fingers by the late 17th / early 18th centuries.

Baumgarten, Linda. *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America*, p. 89. The knitted brown linen glove on this page is made using the same methods of making the fingers and thumb as the Gunnister glove, but omits the gauntlet cuff and false seams. The cuff appears to be about 1 ½" long (doubled over on itself), with an opening at the outside of the wrist, then knitted for another 1 ½" or so before the thumb gusset is started.

References:

- Henshall, Audrey and Stuart Maxwell. "Clothing and Other Articles from a Late 17th Century Grave at Gunnister, Scotland", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1951 - 1952*, pp. 30 - 42.
- Pulliam, Deborah. "Gunnister Man's Knitted Possessions", *Piecework*, September / October 2002, pp. 30-32.
- Rutt, Richard. *A History of Hand-Knitting*, B.T. Batsford, London, England, 1987, pp. 56-58, 69.
- Turnau, Irena. *History of Knitting Before Mass Production*, Institute of the History of Material Culture, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland, 1991, pp. 131 - 136.

Support:

If you believe you have found an error in this pattern or have problems understanding it, please email the author at mara.riley@yahoo.com.

Changes or updates to patterns will be posted at www.marariley.net/errata.htm. If you would like a version of the updated pattern, email me at mara.riley@yahoo.com.