



Sarah Cunniffe of The Makery proudly shows off their new book



'Sporting knickers' at the Fashion Museum, Bath

# The Crafter:

## *words from the craft world*

There are plenty of crafty things going on down in the South West. Bath is home to the brilliant **Fashion Museum**, a treasure trove of gorgeous things. When I visited, these fantastic 'sporting knickers', contributed by the Kennet U3A knitting group, caught my eye. I can see these catching on.

While in the back streets of Bath I went in search of craft shop **The Makery** only to find that it was boarded up. Oh no, I thought, a craft catastrophe, another victim of the recession. But no, on closer reading it seems they have just moved to larger premises around the corner. I was shown around by the lovely Sarah Cunniffe, who proudly showed off their new book, cunningly called *Makery*. I'm sure to be back for more of their inspirational classes; there is always so much more to learn.

A good long time was spent enjoying **The Bristol Wool Fair**, a new venture started up by Sarah and David Harris of the **Spinning Weal** in Clevedon. The fair was at a lovely spot on the Downs where it is still legal to graze your sheep (should you want to). There I met **Gertie the Sheep** who was busy having her modesty spared by many flowers that were being stitched on, a creation of Vicky Harrison from **Paper Village**.

The lovely Jen Best of **Beaker Buttons** was selling kits to make Dorset buttons, something I haven't tried for a while. I bought a Bee Uptite, a key for tightening Knitpros that I won't lose.

I joined in the **Knitathon** where stitches had been cast on to many circular needles at once. I'm still not quite sure how this worked, but the stitches were worked along the row to the next knitter and eventually cast off at the end. The idea was to create a long piece of yarnbombing

to decorate one of the fences along the Downs to mark the passing of the fair.

Stallholders included the lovely **Midwinter Yarns**, Scandinavian in origin but now living in Wales, the lovely Estelle Faust is surrounded by Gotland wool and Lithuanian linen all day. Poor love. I also met Karen Tesson of **Wildcraft**, an online shop selling the most delicious cast resin spindles and hand-turned wooden accessories and stitch markers. **Liz Eley** has angora goats that roam and chomp away on her wildflower meadow. Sounds rather idyllic, doesn't it? Her husband is roped in to make these rather lovely buttons. They are made from offcuts of hawthorn and blackthorn when he is laying the hedges on the farm. Well, of course they are.

Slightly further up north is Stroud, home of the novelist Laurie Lee. His books and travels are well known but what is less known is that Laurie Lee was 'Curator of Eccentrics' at the 1951 Festival of Britain. At Stratford Park for the centenary of his birth the strange and the surreal included a machine for knitting dreams made by artist **Julian Claxton** from Spike Island in Bristol.



Julian Claxton's machine for knitting dreams



Eley Angora Buttons



Bristol Wool Fair organiser Sarah Harris at the Knitathon



Bristol Wool Fair



Estelle of Midwinter Yarns

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