



Welcome

Summer time is always a quieter time on the website and Forum as regular users enjoy holidays and time out with family and friends. We got away for a week to 'sunny' Devon and had a wonderful break at a craft and activities centre, picking the only four days sunshine the UK had this August!

There has however been hectic activity going on in the background here at Stitchlinks! Some of which we'll be able to reveal soon. Suffice to say that our research project has turned into three, I've been invited to America to talk to the American craft industry heads and I've done an interview with a major UK newspaper.

I'll keep you updated on the website with all the emerging news. In the meantime enjoy!

Betsan xxx



Support

News

Last month I mentioned the possibility of enjoying a weekend together sometime early next year. Well thanks to the wonderful Sarah these plans have now progressed. Regular visitors to the [Members Plus Forum](#) will know that some provisional dates have been suggested. These are the weekend of 14th and 15th March or 21st and 22nd March 2009. You can either let Sarah know on the Forum (Members Plus, Topic – A Mad Idea!) or email me at betsan@stitchlinks.com to let us know which would suit you best and we'll go with the majority vote!

Keep an eye on the Forum and [News](#) pages of the Stitchlinks website for confirmation of the date as booking your travel in advance can significantly reduce the cost. We're hoping that having some time to save up will mean that some of our non UK members will also be able to join us.

As you will know Stitchlinks members are spread not only across the UK, but across the globe. In order to accommodate this, Leeds has been chosen as our venue. We have many Scottish members so Leeds was felt to be the most central location in the UK. In addition it's close to major road routes, on rail lines and has an airport – hopefully an added incentive for those of you in the furthest corners of the UK and the world to join us.

Sarah has researched places to stay and has concluded that the Premier Inn in Leeds city centre would be our best bet, being more affordable than most hotels, but comfortable, particularly for our disabled members. When dates and numbers are confirmed she will book a conference room, where we can chat and hold informal workshops, but those attending will need to book their own rooms and travel. This way you can book what suits your tastes and pockets best.

Don't forget to log in regularly to the [website](#) and [Forum](#) to keep up to date!

My Story

"I filled the Stitchlinks survey a few months ago about my pain etc. However, I've recently discovered that I am dyslexic and dyspraxic. I also have ADHD and autistic borderline tendencies. I've been stigmatized at college and it's wonderful. I know labels aren't always a good thing, but in this case it's like a huge weight being lifted off my shoulders. So many things make sense now - the fact I can't always deal with people well, starting conversations in the middle, sensitivity to smells. It's not just me being awkward it's me being how I was made. Being totally left dominant doesn't really help either, but having a dad who can do things left handed really helps when I can't 'see' how to do things on occasions. Knitting also helps me to concentrate - if my hands are busy I seem to be able to concentrate on other things: telly, conversations, I can sit still when travelling. In fact all my needle crafts help along with the fact that I read (four-six books every month), especially if I'm going on a long car journey as I don't drive."

You'll find examples of stories from knitters and stitchers around the world on the [My Story](#) page. If you haven't yet told us your story, please fill in our [online questionnaire](#).

Stitchlinks Shop

Plans for rejuvenating our Stitchlinks shop are under way. We are aiming to get it off the ground in September. Stitchlinks member Ruth asked us if she could sell her home-dyed yarn through us. We think it's a great idea and a wonderful way for Stitchlinks to support those of you who would like to earn a little money from your craft. Why not let us know if you'd like to do something similar? Perhaps we can help you to reach more people with your crafty talents too!

"That's another reason why the Stitchlinks Forum is so brilliant - we all know that we are not going to be judged by others and we are all here to support one another, no matter what."

Did you know

Flossing your teeth regularly will not only ensure your teeth and mouth are in good health, but you'll have a healthy heart, too! Dr Michael Roizen of the University of Chicago states that keeping your gums healthy could add 6.4 years to your life! This is a change we can all easily make and benefit from!



Friendship

Groups

Those of you who know Gerard and Craig of IKnit London will know that they've taken knitting groups to a new level. The IKnit shop which nestles under the arches of Waterloo station in London is home to a wonderful shop, stacked with yarn, magazines and knitting books, plus of course comfortable sofas for knitting and chatting. If you attended their knitting day last October you'll already know that they certainly do things in style. We enjoyed a wonderful knitting party with live music, workshops, fashion show, and market place bursting with inspiration and colour.

The good news is that they're doing it again on Saturday 6th September at the Royal Horticultural Halls in Westminster, London. And this time it's even bigger and better! Knitting's most famous blogger and writer, Yarn Harlot, will be visiting from the US and running a workshop plus there will be lots of goodies to enjoy. We shall be there too, so please come and say hello.

You can buy tickets in advance at www.iknit.org.uk or on the door on the day, so why not join us at this year's best knitting get together for a great fun day out?

Diaries out! Notice of change to September's coffee mornites

As the first Saturday in September falls on the same day as IKnit London's BIG knitting day on 6th there will only be one online coffee mornite in September. I know many of you are coming on the 6th, so we can enjoy a chat in person on the day.

This month's online mornite will take place on **Saturday 13th September at 10am**, UK time on the **Members' Plus Forum**. Look forward to chatting to you there!



Information

Your Health Matters

We've talked a fair bit about mindfulness meditation in our health articles. Mindfulness is the state of mind where you are aware of your feelings, sensations, your surroundings and your relationship to those surroundings in the present moment. So you are aware of good and bad sensations in the moment. It's a little like sitting on the fulcrum of a balanced see-saw with good experiences on one side and unpleasant ones on the other. In this state of mind you neither fret about the past or worry about the future.

Whereas planning forwards is important to give structure to life and to enable you to prepare, it's not a good idea to concentrate wholly on what you will be doing at the expense of enjoying the present. Many of us also spend time worrying about past actions to the extent that the present moment – actual life itself – passes us by as we fret.

This month I'd like to suggest that you try concentrating on enjoying every moment as it is happening. Even as the rain pours down on us in the UK we can still enjoy each moment – the taste of a delicious meal, the smile of our children, a hug, or the fragrance of flowers. There are so many wonderful senses entering our brain every instant of every day. If we're not careful, though, they're so easy to miss as we worry about what has been in the past or what might someday be in the future. Remember enjoy NOW as you'll never get it back!

In Education

With the new school and university terms looming on the horizon it's worth remembering that anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that knitting and stitching can aid the learning process. They're also increasingly being used by teachers to calm disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Plus those with ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia report significant benefits.

Knitting and stitching groups are a great way of getting to know new people if you've moved area or going to university for the first time too. Why not look out for established groups when you arrive, or put up a notice to start your own. Let us know how you get on!

Research

As I mentioned earlier, we were able to escape to Devon earlier in August and spent a week at a craft and activity centre with our children. It was the perfect setting for 'trying out' a number of new crafts as well as activities such as Yoga – all in the interest of research!

Craft wise, I tried my hand at enamelling, jewellery making, porcelain painting, painting and silk painting and have concluded that there is definitely something important in the coordinated hand movements of knitting. Knitting and stitching also have the benefits of requiring no artistic talent! Plus materials aren't wasted as you learn - you can always undo yarn or thread and try again.

Yoga was interesting too and despite being too 'stiff' to move into all the poses I was still able to enter the peaceful mind state that is so important to yoga.

The experience was very valuable and I've been able to pass on the information I gathered to my research colleagues.

I also mentioned that our research project has grown into three. Proposals are being finalised and the quest for funding has begun. Our main 'core' project will involve three universities and experts in Primary Care. This will look at cognitive function and memory with group work being backed by experimental work in the lab. Another, very exciting project will look at the effect of knitting on pain and the third will be a PhD by me beginning in October 2009. All are dependent on funding.

October 2009 seems like a long way ahead, but I have a detailed proposal to get together by November this year in which I will have to plan and cost the whole four year project. In the meantime the other projects will hopefully get under way!

In Work

With constant reminders of a global downturn in the economy, stress will loom it's ugly head in many of our lives.

Make a decision to manage this positively and ensure you knit or stitch on a daily basis to lower your stress levels. It will enable you to find peace and calm on your commute to work or in your lunch break. Why not take the opportunity to introduce your work colleagues to knitting or stitching by setting up a work-place group? It's a great way of opening up and improving communication with colleagues in other departments too, so will have many benefits, including boosting morale!

**Please fill in
our **online**
questionnaire.
You'll find a link on
every page of the
Stitchlinks website!**

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Betsan xxx