

# Hooked on WOOL

Meet the women making a living from their nifty needles

Lots of us love to knit and crochet in our spare time, but these clever craftswomen use their creative passion to pay the bills too. Here they share how they make sure it's a wonder-wool life!



Jeanette's designs use bold, eye-catching colours



## Close knit

Jeanette Sloan, 55, is a knitwear teacher and designer who loves using playful colour combos and innovative stitch patterns.

My mum came to the UK from Barbados in the 1950s and learnt to knit because she was cold! I was fascinated by how graceful she looked knitting, and how magical it seemed. She taught me when I was seven, starting with items for my dolls.

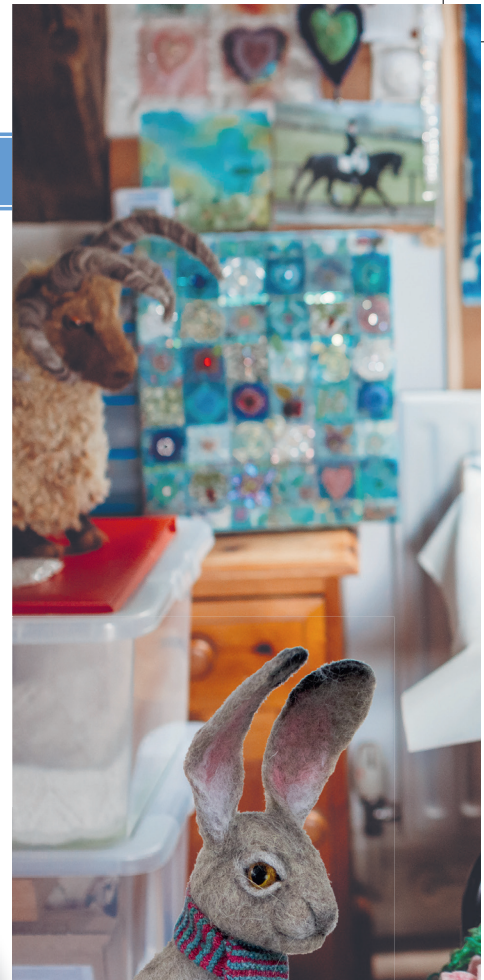
As I got older, I knitted items for myself from patterns in magazines. Through difficult times, Mum and I knitted together – that made the special bond between us even stronger.

## 'My mum and I knitted through difficult times'

I didn't imagine turning it into a career, but after specialising in knitting on my textiles course, I became a freelance knitwear designer for various companies. For 25 years I have designed hand-knit patterns for my own website, along with ones for knitting books and magazines.

Knitting takes me to a different place, even now. I love feeling the wool in my hands, playing with it and trying new ideas. I have more wool than a woman should own, but it doesn't go off, so it's fine!

✦ Find out more at [jeanettesloandesign.com](http://jeanettesloandesign.com)







Helen creates three-dimensional portraits of beloved pets



doing workshops and accepting commissions. Among my favourites are memorialising pets as felted sculptures and in portraits, created with wool including the animal's fur.

I adore seeing people arrive at my workshops feeling doubtful of their ability, then leaving with something they are proud of. I'm taking my workshops online to bring needle felting to a wider audience. There's a meditative quality to felting that can bring the heart rate down and settle the mind.

✦ [helenwintertextileart.co.uk](http://helenwintertextileart.co.uk)

## 'I took up felting to relax after work'

redundant in 2019, I took a micro business course. That's when I decided to design and sell felting kits.

I took a rare breed here on the Isle of Man for inspiration, and my first kit was a Manx Loaghton sheep. Soon I was producing other kits alongside

## Heart-felt

Textile artist Helen Winter, 57, creates needle felting art on the Isle of Man, where she runs woolly workshops.

I was five when my aunt taught me to knit. I still remember the excitement of walking into a haberdashery

for the first time to choose my pattern and wool.

I studied knitwear design and textile technology, and kept trying new crafts. I discovered needle felting 10 years ago, and it helped me relax after a stressful day at work. When I was made

## Stitch and soothe

Crochet designer Marta Mitchell, 44, takes inspiration from her natural surroundings on the east coast of Scotland to create patterns for eye-catching accessories.

My best friend taught me crochet in 2009 and I was literally hooked. My background as a sculptor means I love the three-dimensional element – it suits my way of thinking.

Wool is incredibly soft, renewable and biodegradable. Scottish nature and our rich heritage

of wool production inspires my projects and desire to work sustainably.

Crochet went from a hobby to a career after seeing an advert for a crochet design competition and thinking, 'I can do that!' My hat design won and my patterns took off from there.

**'Crochet went from a hobby to a career'** I sell patterns on my website and other popular craft ones. I also enjoy

running my blog, YouTube channel and podcast to connect with crochet fans across the world. There's been a resurgence in crochet, so now when I say I'm a crochet designer, people

know what I mean. They tell me about friends they know who crochet.

I think it's the repetitiveness of the stitches that people find soothing, and the colours are good for boosting your mood. The colours in my accessories not only help me to feel better, but they also put a smile on the faces of the people I meet.

✦ [martamitchelldesigns.com](http://martamitchelldesigns.com)



Marta's patterns include warm hats and socks



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