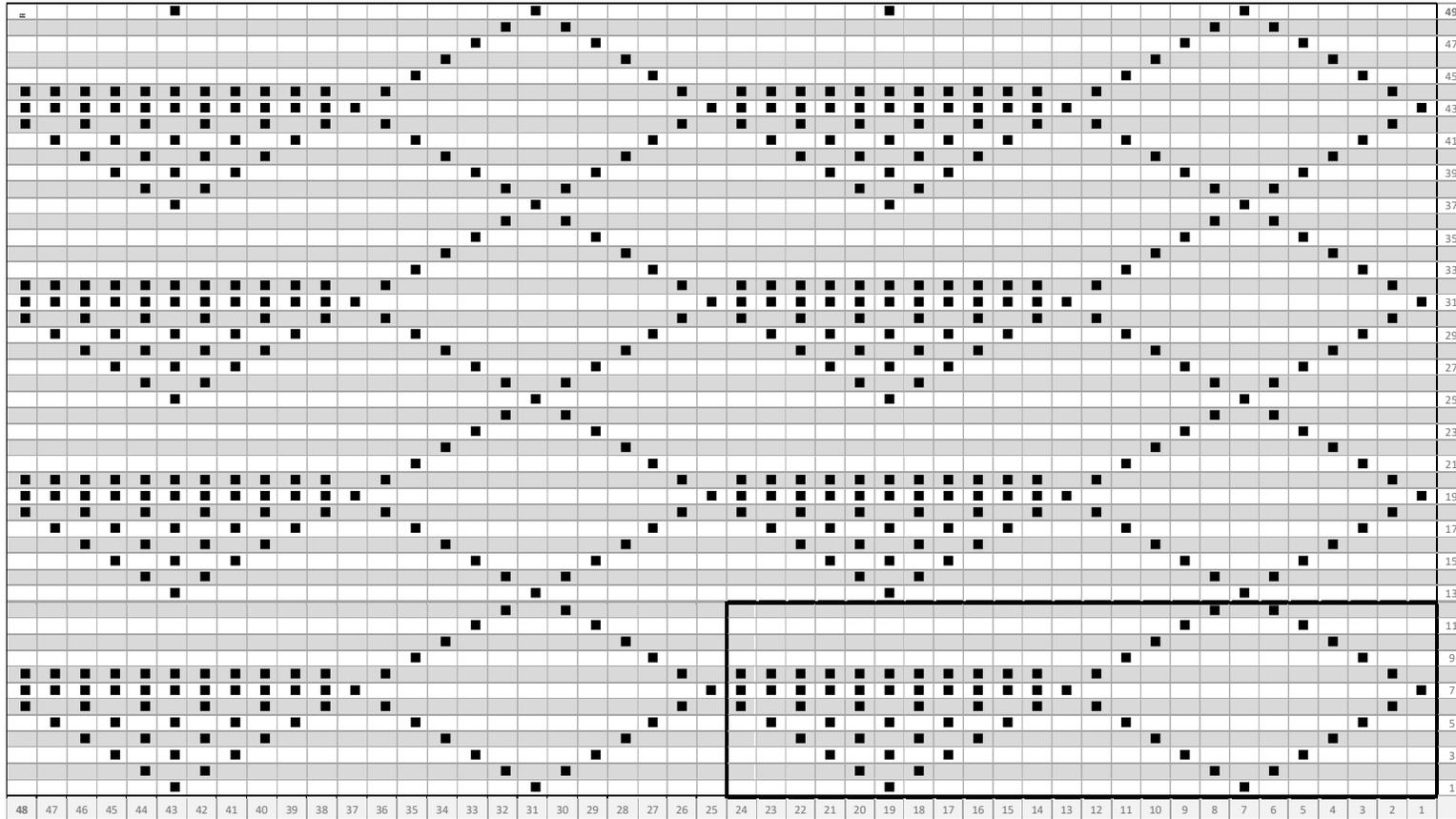


GP99 Esther Nurse's hoop nets and meshes gansey for Tooshy Brown



Hoop nets

| Meshes

| Hoop nets

| Meshes

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■ = purl stitch on the right side (knit stitch on the wrong side)

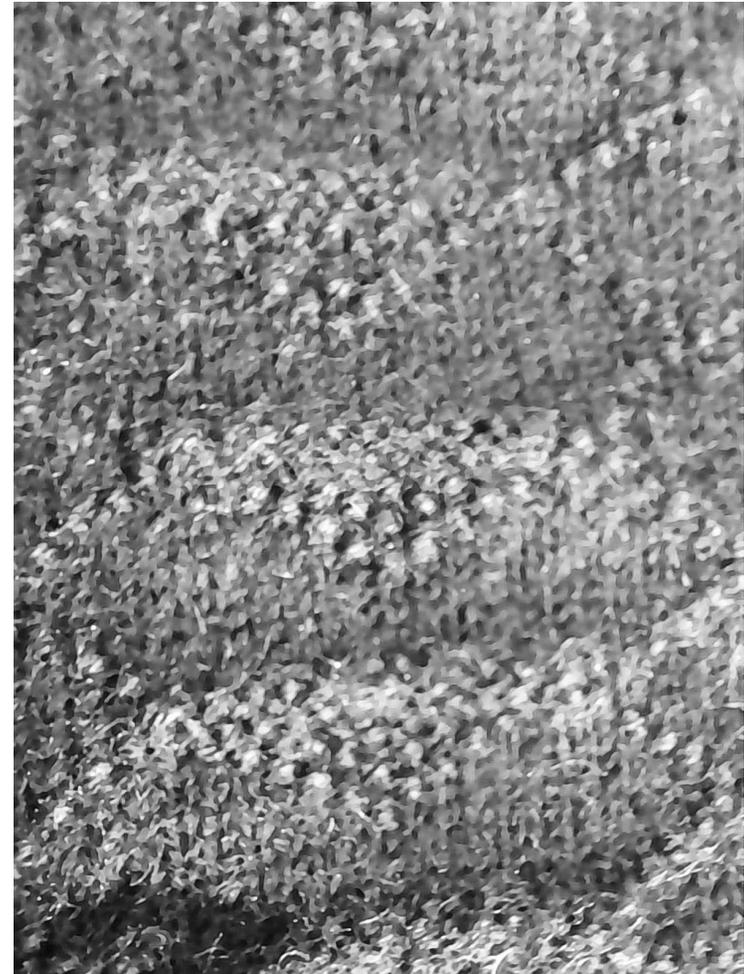
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A hoop nets and meshes pattern is described by Michael Harvey in Gladys Thompson's Dover edition (1979) of *'Patterns for Guernseys, Jerseys and Arans'*; Norfolk II, p. 85. It was knitted by Esther Nurse (née Middleton). Fig 85 is a photograph of a gansey (GP39 in this catalogue), now in the collection of the Sheringham Museum. Beside it is a variant which he charted as fig 86 and it may well have been taken from the gansey documented here (or else there is a third gansey in existence). This gansey was without a doubt knitted by **Esther Nurse**. It was seen, briefly, at the first International Gansey Day event at Sheringham Museum 25.11.2022, brought in by Terence and Alan Brown, two sons of the original owner, **James Walter 'Tooshy' Brown** (born 1907). They said the gansey was about 100 years old, which suggests it was knitted in the 1920s or possibly the early thirties. Tooshy was married in 1929 and in a photograph (left) taken on his wedding day he wears a Cosalt machine-knitted 'marriage lines' gansey, not this one. Did he have Esther Nurse's gansey then? Was this machine-made one newer or smarter? We don't know but it does show us that fishermen were normally married 'in uniform', so to speak, wearing their gansey, attesting that ganseys were more than workwear: a symbol of the community they belonged to.

Michael Harvey's chart of this pattern (fig 86) contains an error, as the bar over the moss stitch hoop net is asymmetrical, caused by an extra stitch on the left hand end. This cannot be right. The result is that while the right edge of the hoop net purls lines up with the diagonal of the mesh to the right, the left hand edge does not line up with the diagonal of the mesh to the left. In the photograph of the gansey above you can line up all diagonals stretching right across the gansey with a ruler. It is possible that Harvey saw this actual gansey in his research at Sheringham in the 1960s and 1970s.

Incidentally the name 'Tooshy', which is pronounced "too-shee", stems from Benjamin Christopher Brown, the father of James Walter Brown, who was *too shy* to go up on stage at a ceremony to receive an award for his lifeboat service. It is common in Sheringham for all the descendants to



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carry the nickname, to signify their lineage. So, the brothers who came to the museum were both 'Tooshy Browns', like their father and grandfather.

**Left:** *James Walter 'Tooshy' Brown on his wedding day in 1929, wearing a Cosalt machine-knitted gansey. He was known as Walter because there were three boys called James in his school class.*

## Description

The yarn has a soft fuzzy finish which makes the pattern rather soft and difficult to see clearly (and photograph). Welt about 2.5 inches, plain about 8 inches (estimated from a photo). Three rigs at the bottom of the yoke. A hole in the yoke has been repaired clumsily (moth damage?). The chest measures 36" at the level of the rigs at the bottom of the yoke but widens to 38" higher up. There are 8 columns of meshes and 8 of hoop nets, so it is asymmetrical, as it starts with hoop nets on one side and ends with meshes on other. There is no gusset. Stand up collar. Shoulder strap of rigs. Arms have about 5 iterations of the hoop net pattern at the top, starting and ending with rigs.

8 meshes 8 x 13 sts	104	
8 hoop nets 8 x 11 sts	88	
Seam stitches	10	p3 k1 p2 k1 p3
		202 stitches
Total	404 (101 ribs in the welt)	



By calculation (number of stitches / width) the **tension is around 11 spi** (seems to vary between 10.7 and 11.3 spi, depending where you measure it) but it wasn't measured directly from the gansey on the day, unfortunately. The colour is a darker blue than depicted in the photograph (digital cameras often have trouble colour-wise).

*Swatch by Val Smith. 4 ply Signature, size 16 needles.*



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Photos by Tim Groves and Lisa Little



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