

NEWS

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GOOD TIMES AHEAD FOR CRAFT?

There are signs of better things to come for the embattled craft industry, a new report has revealed.

With average household incomes at their lowest in three years, and 6% down on 2019, crafters have become increasingly cost-conscious, according to the Craft Report, prepared by Linda Jones & Associates for the CHSI Stitches trade show.

Crafters' average monthly spend fell 9% to £34.20 in 2020 – the lowest it has been in the three years the report has been produced. Sixty-two percent of those surveyed said the cost of craft supplies is rising ahead of inflation, while just 36% said they were keen to always have the latest materials and equipment.

But the good news is that the market is growing. According to TGI, the UK's largest consumer research panel, the number of UK crafters grew to 15.1 million in 2019, from 14.6 million in 2017.

That is partly thanks to a "normalisation" of craft, which is now seen as social currency rather than a social stigma, according to the *Craft Report*, which has interviewed more than 10,000 enthusiasts over the past three years and polled over 3,000 keen crafters this year.

More than three-quarters of those surveyed said craft is now seen as "cool".

Eighty-one percent said they were proud to be known as crafters, and 88% agreed that craft is increasingly important in improving people's wellbeing. Report author Linda Jones adds: "There is a real move to crafting together, and the great thing about social crafting is that it in turn begets further exposure. We have got to be part of this increasingly social culture – step out of our comfort zones and get out into the community."

Knitting remains the most popular craft according to the report, followed by sewing, papercraft, cross stitch, embroidery and crochet. But more and more new crafts are joining the list, with new crafters trying out such diverse activities as marbling, weaving, woodcraft and pyrography.

Consumer research body TGI found an interesting polarity in the ages of crafters, with the biggest concentrations being in the under-35 and over-65 age groups, and far fewer in between.

Linda says: "The key message to the trade is to keep innovating. Seventy percent of crafters are still shopping in store so the retailer has lots of influence. There are good times ahead, but only if the industry as a whole adapts and seizes the opportunity provided by the growing audience."

knittingmag.com



NEW WEBSITE FOR WENDY

Designer Wendy Jane Paterson has launched a website where you can buy kits and patterns for her stunning colourwork creations – including new releases *Jacobite Queen* wrap and *Black Isle* infinity scarf. Wendy only taught herself to hand knit Fairisle just over three years ago. "I've achieved so much in that time," she says. Find out more at knitwjp.com



PRETTY PINS FROM PONY

Pony has released a collection of pins designed specifically for piecing sections of knitting together. They have rounded tips to ensure they won't damage yarn and pin heads decorated by hand in organic colours. The pins come in three sizes: 5cm (rrp £7.70), 7.5cm (rrp £8.15) and 10cm (£8.65).

STITCHES IN CLOVER

Clover has released an ingenious circular stitch holder that not only holds your stitches safely but can also act as a lifeline. The tool has a needle tip at one end of a pliable cord and a stopper at the other end, along with a movable piece into which you can stick your needle tip to secure held stitches. The stitch holder comes in two lengths: short 23-41cm (rrp £5.70) and long 61-91cm (rrp £6.10).

