

Guidelines for writing for *Slipknot*

Slipknot is the Guild's unique magazine, written by members for members. Contributions from all members are welcome. The aim of these guidelines is to help those who would like to write, with ideas, and with the practicalities of a document. The first article is always the worst, after that the process becomes easier.

Ideas for items

Think about what you would have enjoyed reading in *Slipknot*, and things you would like to see in *Slipknot* – maybe things that haven't appeared before?

Could you write something to help other people with developing their knitting and crochet skills – for example how you mastered a new technique, maybe including what inspired you to try, and where you plan to go with it? A how-to story about an original or interesting creation? Or a nugget of history that other people might enjoy, too? Or maybe something more theoretical? What about a review – of a book, of an exhibition, of needles and tools, or tell us about a yarn shop, including its specialities?

Creating an article

Every article needs an introduction; a main section, and then a conclusion. The length depends on the article – and may only be a sentence or so for the introduction and the conclusion. A page is around 360 words, and is generally a suitable length for an article. The maximum length for an article is 720 words. Branch reports should be around 150 words long, and concentrate on reports of meetings.

Think what you are telling people – don't just say "this is interesting", but explain why – for example it made you rethink how you do something, appreciate how workers in the past coped. Personal comments are fine, but make it clear that these are your abilities / views, and be polite and positive.

If you have tried to draft something then run it past a friend or a relative – they don't have to be a knitter or crocheter – to help pick up obvious errors and ambiguities, and, with luck, how you could improve it. Leave it for a few days and go back and look at it again – questions to ask are, "what does this tell other people?" "does it improve our knowledge?" Double check for any errors – especially in charts and stitch patterns: the editor may not have the skills to do so (not all editors knit, crochet and machine knit). If you have mentioned resources in your item, please make sure there is sufficient detail for someone else to find them:

- For books, include author (if there is one), title (X's book does not help – X may well have written more than one title!), and date of publication (books get reprinted, or come out in new editions, which can contain different material – for instance, the editions of Alice Starmore's *Tudor roses* contain different material).
- For websites, either give a direct link, or the main website of a group.
- For museums, shops – an address and, if possible, a website.

Reviews need more details, especially books. For a book review, please give author, full title, publisher and date of publication, ISBN, and price. An exhibition review needs dates and venue. Equipment reviews need the manufacturer's details, including, if there is one, a website; and the price. A review can be quite short – 100 words is often plenty. Again, be polite and positive.

Feel free to contact the editor, or relevant sub-editor, if you have ideas – they are happy to discuss these, and offer advice, but NOT to write the article for you. If you have submitted an article, don't be upset if you are asked for clarification, or to expand a point – the editor will see it in a fresh light, and see how it could be tweaked for the benefit of readers. All editors reserve the right to delete / alter material – and very often need to, to fit with the conventions and practicalities of the magazine.

Illustrations

Illustrations are often very useful. They should be of reasonable quality – 600 dpi (or more) is best for photographs – if you using a tablet or an iPad please check the setting on these.

Although we now have colour in *Slipknot*, many of the illustrations are in black and white, and are often quite small. Try reducing the size of your illustration, and turning it to grayscale (usually to be found in picture tools) and then see how clear it is. Concentrate on showing the process / item, and filling the whole picture with this. If people are needed in the photograph, follow the old newspaper advice only to have one or two people,

otherwise it becomes too busy. *Slipknot* cannot guarantee to use all illustrations submitted, but it is useful to have a selection from which to choose.

Submitting an article

Slipknot looks forward to receiving your article. Send it to the relevant sub-editor, or to the editor as appropriate – details are on the back cover of *Slipknot*.

Use as little formatting as possible. The most useful way you can send an item is as a separate file – WORD is fine, rtf is good. Do not use a .pages file – these are currently incompatible with Microsoft. Please avoid sending an article as the text of an email, as it creates more work for the editor (sometimes a lot more work if the email formatting cannot be cleared).

Pictures etc. need to be sent as a separate file; **please don't embed them in the article**. If you can't send a Microsoft version don't be deterred, but contact the editor to make special arrangements. Non-electronic articles are welcome, but bear in mind that these need to be sent on to the editor, and to be typed up, so don't leave writing too close to a deadline.