



Becky Herrick's first design for Twist was Cambridge Cables, featured in last year's winter edition. She's back with another cold weather knit, with her hat and mitten combo, [Trefoil](#). Becky talks a bit about her design process in this cross post from her own [blog](#).

The [winter issue](#) of Twist Collective went live this morning! And while there are many lovely patterns in it, I'd like to take a moment to draw your attention to mine:



photography by Jane Heller, [pattern Trefoil](#) by me!

Trefoil is a cabled winter hat and mitten set with an elegant three pointed celtic knot on the crown and a single leaf of the knot mirrored on each mitten. The knot is framed by arching stockinette and trimmed with stretchy i-cord edging.

The idea for Trefoil started a loooong time ago. The idea seemed so simple, a celtic knot on the top of a hat. The decreases for the crown could be worked right into the cable and the cable would repeat three times around the crown, with the crossovers interlocking from each repeat into the knot. If you were reading [my blog](#) back then, you might remember the discussion of the hat I was designing. The one with [the cable I couldn't get quite right](#). The one I knit no less then 15 times! After the first few tries I'd broken down to just knitting the crown over and over and over... I couldn't get the crossovers to work right. My best try looked like this:



Let's not even cover how busy the hat looks with the textured background! Eventually I gave up and stuffed the swatch into the back of my closet (in fact, I still have that purple prototype, as well as the knot swatch, hiding there now)

This story becomes a lesson in "why knitting other people's designs is a good thing" for me. It never occurred to me to try a top-down hat until I was knitting one by another designer. I realized that this approach would allow the crossovers to flow much more smoothly, but I worried that the first cables would bow out, downward, instead of directly across. I thought that cabling every row might give the horizontal cable look I needed.



After knitting this one little swatch in DK weight yarn I knew I had solved my problem! But the knot was very small, and would barely cover the crown. So before putting together my submission I knit a second hat in bulky yarn, so I could show the knot in two very different sizes.



I had considered adding mittens to my submission, but didn't because the hat was my first and main goal for this design. However I wasn't at all surprised when Kate Gilbert asked if I could add mittens to the pattern to create a set. Of course this provided it's own challenge. Did I need yet another mitten take on the 3 [cornered knot](#)? I decided the mittens should reflect the motif, without mirroring it exactly, in part because I didn't want to do a third take on that look. But mostly because the aran weight yarn was too heavy to fit a whole knot on a single mitten!



Once I'd finished with knitting the pattern write up provided a whole new challenge. Like many cable designers I work from primarily from charts, and if I include row-by-row directions in a pattern they're reverse engineered from those charts. But this hat was different, I worked the knot purely from the image in my mind, and noted my stitches as I went. This means I had the row-by-row directions first! Because of the way the stitches shift from one repeat into another this worked especially well in this instance. However I knew, for many cable knitters, I would need charts in the pattern. As a knitter myself I'll pass right over a cable project if it doesn't include charts. But I didn't want to chart the whole repeat, just the first repeat, so when you're knitting from the charts pay special attention to the rounds that begin and/or end with those vertical colored lines!



I absolutely loved working with [Osprey](#) from Quince & Co. It's very soft without losing the stretchy bounciness that I love about 100% wool yarns. The plied texture shows off stitches and cabling very well. That being said, blocking is completely necessary to make the stitches as even as possible. On that note if you're having trouble getting gauge on this pattern – Block It. Due to the increases in the cables of the crown of the hat the whole thing will need to be stretched horizontally just a touch during blocking for the fabric to lay flat.

And finally, as if that weren't saga enough, the original name of this pattern was Highland. As in, the scottish highlands, highland cattle, windy highland moors, and celtic knots. But if you search "highland" in patterns on ravelry you'll get more then EIGHTY results. So I spent some time looking for something properly scottish as a replacement, but in the end it was Kate Gilbert who suggested Trefoil.*

*the girl scout cookies didn't even occur to me, until someone else mentioned it earlier today!
Mmmm, cookies...