

Team Groenewoud, May 20, 2017

International Back to Back Wool Challenge

A Guinness World Record attempt

Story of Team Groenewoud by Miriam Tegels, team captain and GWR fastest Knitter.

On May 20, 2017, Team Groenewoud competed in the International Back to Back Wool Challenge for the 6th time. The final measurement was **4 hours, 45 minutes and 53 seconds**.

History of Team Groenewoud.

In the Summer of 2010 I received an invitation to join a back to back Challenge team in Stirling Scotland. Team member Astrid Schramm received the same invitation and we both decided to join in. Together with some UK and Shetland Island spinners/knitters we managed to finish that back to back event in 6 hours and 10 minutes. Sadly, the organisers of that event had failed to report the event to Wendy Dennis, coordinator of the international Back to Back Wool Challenge.

Disappointed by the failing organisation at Knit Out in Sterling 2010, Astrid Schramm and I planned putting together a German/Dutch Team which we did. May 2012 Team Groenewoud joined the International Back to Back Wool Challenge for the first time. We were announced best team in that years' challenge with the result : 6 hours 3 minutes. In following years team Groenewoud improved their skills in working together as a team by endless practising during numerous training weekends and demo's at craft shows in the Netherlands. In 2014 Back to Back Challenge organiser Wendy Dennis and her husband Dave visited the event at the venue: Garden Guesthouse Groenewoud to cheer us on.

These are the results of team Groenewoud up until this date:

2012: 6 hours 3 minutes.

2013; 5 hours 32 minutes.

2014; 5 hours 25 minutes.

2015: 5 hours, 1 minute, 28 seconds

2016: 5 hours 1 minute, 7 seconds.

And finally on May 20, 2017: **4 hours, 45 minutes, 53 seconds**.

Team Groenewoud members: nationality and skills required:

Since 2012: Team captain, event organiser Miriam Tegels, 'speedknitter' (Netherlands) spinning & knitting.

Since 2012: Astrid Schramm (Germany) spinning & plying.

Since 2012: Martina Hofmann (Germany) Spinning & knitting.

Since 2012: Hannelore Hemingway (Netherlands) spinning & plying.

Since 2012: Albert Koopman (Netherlands) sheering.

Since 2013: Elisabeth Gütschow (Germany) spinning & knitting.

Since 2013: Elma Bartels (Netherlands) spinning.

Since 2017: Antje Gref (Germany) knitting.

During all 6 events the team had help from partners/husbands of team members who acted as **stewards** such as:

Claus Hofmann: (Martina's husband) helped us with statistics, set goals for knitting a number of rows per hour, what would be the ideal time after start to start plying and then knitting. He took notes during training sessions and gave feedback afterwards. Claus valued the statistics after each yearly event and came up with thoughtful suggestions how to improve our result.

Frans Tegels: my husband and partner in organising the event. Frans was responsible for all our well being as in cooking meals for the team, answering to the media during the events, guiding the public at the venue. Putting up parking space for the public event, taking care of the event legislation for the city Roermond. And during the event: start the digital clock and stop the clock at the finish.

Thomas Schramm: also responsible for the team's general well being: cooking evening meals, setting up the room for the event, making pictures at the event.

Thuur Tegels (son of Frans & Miriam Tegels) Putting up the video camera in the event room, responsible for correct video recording of the event. Also right hand of Albert Koopman (sheerer) in handling sheep Klara while sheering took place.

Team Groenewoud was in the lucky position to receive lots of **local support:**

Volunteers of www.kumihospital.nl were invited to put up a stand with catering service for the public: coffee/thee and cake were sold as well as African textile products, produced by the women of the village Kumi in Uganda. In 6 years time the organisation managed to obtain >4000 euro's, 800 euro's during the event on May 20.

Local farmer Ton Dings of: www.asselterhof.nl provided the team with Swifter (breed) sheep each year. He gave us free choice to come and pick out the best fleeces from his flock of about 30 young adult sheep.

Local vendors in my hometown Swalmen supported the team by offering free food:

Local bakery: www.bakkerijleischreurs.nl

Local butcher: Slagerij Kluitmans, Swalmen.

Fruits & veggies: Fruithandel Siegfried van Bladel.

Team Groenewoud also received support from the wool / textile related industry:

www.knitpro.eu general CEO of this firm: Shirish Jain, became enthusiast about the teams' achievements in 2012 and offered to pay the rent for the guesthouse Groenewoud during the event. This way it was affordable for all team members to travel to Swalmen and stay during 4 days around each event at low cost. Days in which we planned our training sessions in order to achieve our goal: the Guinness World Record sheep to jumper.

www.sockenwolle.de A German firm producer of mainly sock yarn. Firm owners Frederic, Felix and Henrike Zwerger were fascinated by the idea that a team like team Groenewoud could manage to break a Guinness World Record. Therefore this firm offered to pay the rent for the digital clock coming from this firm: www.eraton.nl

Description of the event: On May 20, 2017;

Everything the team and I had been practising, fell into place. We were all healthy and happy to aim for that ever so wanted goal: breaking the sheep to jumper Guinness World Record. Starting time was announced at 10 AM. Team members were seated in the event room half an hour before. The jurors were sitting front row in the public area. Juror and former mayor Corrie Langelaar gave a short inspiring speech for the team.

Sheep Klara was brought in just before 10 AM. The digital clock was set before on 0.00.00 by time keeper Frans Tegels. With all team members and sheep Klara in position he gave the start signal 2 minutes before 10 AM that morning.

After the start signal shearer Albert Koopman cut the first wool with his clipper. Team member Antje Gref divided that wool: 6 spinners started spinning. After 7 minutes plyers Astrid and Hannelore handed over the first two bobbins with yarn to Antje and myself. At that point we started knitting the back and front without any break. We both visited the toilet once at approx. half time. We also switched our projects after two hours when Antje became 8 rows ahead of me. With the digital clock in sight Antje and I could calculate at each hour turning that we were knitting in record breaking speed. The fleece produced by sheep Klara was of 13 cm staple length and of high quality. Therefore the spinners managed to spin at high speed, producing enough yarn for the sleeve knitters to start knitting at the designated time of 1 hour, 15 minutes.

No incidents happened except sheep Klara had to pee and defecate during sheering. Her droppings were removed by steward Frans Tegels with brush and paper towels. The excitement amongst the public knowing this team could reach the finish within record breaking time grew during the last hour of the event. Viewers who had enjoyed a picnic and the coffee stand in the garden of the venue Guesthouse Groenewoud came into the room

were the team was ready to start sewing up the jumper. After binding of her front of the jumper Antje handed over her finished piece to the waiting team members seated in the centre of the room. Sleeves had been finished and seamed flawless after 4 hours and 17 minutes. (as written in 'statistics'). Antje then took over my piece and bind of again. The reason for this action being the fact that she can bind of within three minutes were I need 4 minutes. With all 4 pieces of the jumper in position the team of 7 women sew and held the jumper, checked the seams and turned the completed jumper right side up. It flew over into the hands of Frans Tegels, time keeper, who stopped the clock at **4 hours, 45 minutes and 53 seconds**. The complete event was video recorded by webcam from one position.

A comprimed video of the record breaking event can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibxtI9tH6Yk>

Future Back to Back Challenge teams who would want to break this Guinness World Record:

Make sure that you complete the list of required evidence as written below:

- **Specific Guidelines Pack**
- **Entry form** international Back to Back Wool Challenge 2017, containing all important information such as date, place, names, equipment.
- **Standard adult sweater/pullover pattern**
- **3 independent witness statements** (for example: Notary of law, retired mayor and chairwoman Dutch spinning association)
- **4 steward statements**
- **44 Hr pictures with description**
- **Video recording of the event**
- **Statistics** by steward Claus Hofmann
- **Arra schedules two & three**
- **Poster event announcement**
- **-supporting material; media releases etc**