

## FOCUS ON BAMBOO, THE DESIGN PROCESS, & TESTING

In our final newsletter of the year, we shine a sustainable spotlight on bamboo and hear from one of our designers, Cheryl, as well as featuring our regular Ask Donna column and company updates.

### Bamboo: A Fantastic Alternative to Cotton

Here at The Cotton Textile Company, we take the health of the planet seriously. As producers of clothing, towels, and socks, we understand the impact of manufacturing on the environment, from the production of yarn, through to regular washing with detergents.

We know how important sustainability issues are to many of our customers, so we offer them the option of bamboo viscose yarn for several of our products.

Bamboo is a fast-growing woody plant from the grass family, and much loved by pandas. In recent years the range of products made from bamboo has increased dramatically, from flooring and furniture to textiles.

In many ways, bamboo viscose yarn is an eco-friendlier alternative to cotton because it has a lower impact on the environment in which it grows.

It is primarily an organic crop, so it does not need fertilisers. It is harvested annually, and is cut rather than dug up, which reduces soil erosion. And bamboo crops require about 30% less water than cotton crops.

Bamboo plants also contribute to carbon reduction. These plants absorb around 12 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per hectare per year than the equivalent mass of trees, as well as producing 35% more oxygen.\*

\*Source: The Guardian, 20 March 2003

### A Bamboo-lievable Material



Our bamboo socks are the perfect showcase for the brilliance of bamboo. Softer than cotton, odour resistant, moisture wicking and with antimicrobial properties, it seems bamboo and socks really are the perfect pair. And, to top it all off, bamboo products can be composted at the end of their life.

For more information about our range of environmentally favourable clothing, towels and socks, please call us or email [sales@thecottontextilecompany.co.uk](mailto:sales@thecottontextilecompany.co.uk)



# The Design Process

**Our designer, Cheryl, gives you her expert insight into how she develops your designs from initial ideas to finished products.**

Ideas. Pure and simple...the fundamentals for any design project at TCTC. How the concept develops differs vastly, depending on the client and product, but ideas are always the nucleus of any project., but ideas are always the nucleus of any project.

To get the project on target, the best starting point is information and guidelines from the client. Brand guidelines can be anything from one to 100 pages, but knowing the 'handwriting' of a brand is essential.

Consumer habits are increasingly fickle and fast changing, so I immerse myself in as many influential arenas as possible, from TikTok to the Turner Prize!

Inspiration and design concepts flow from scrapbooks and mood boards (mainly virtual rather than physical these days) and, most importantly, sketching. Again, I sketch mostly on the iPad, but a notepad sketch is still commonplace, so pencils and paper are always to hand!

Colour work can vary depending on the type of yarns and swatch cards involved. Matching to colour systems, such as Pantone®, can often be accommodated (depending on the order quantity). 'First pass' concepts of designs are always given to the client in CAD form, which allows for quick editing of any changes. At this stage I can collaborate further with the client to get the exact design solution.

Designing the complete item, from concept to shop floor, including trims, labelling, and packaging, is a unique service from TCTC.

Surprisingly, many brands still don't have this vital toolkit (but don't worry, TCTC can help you with that too).

Once I have the full brief then the design process begins.

For trends in colours, yarns, and surface pattern design, I look at forecasts for more than a year ahead. Obviously, clients' ranges will drop at different times of year, and not necessarily in accordance with seasons, but to be informed by what is happening in the mainstream fashion market is key knowledge.

Coherent, informed design is paramount for attaining the best products possible.



An example of the progression from CAD design to manufactured product.





## Ask Donna: Testing

Testing is considered a fundamental element in the development and production cycle of any product. It involves assessing functionality and suitability, under the umbrella of quality assurance, with the aim of ensuring the final product is fit for purpose.

Testing can be very simple or extremely complex, depending on the product and intended end use. Testing is used to evaluate the performance of fabrics, prints and end products, under laundering and wearing simulations.

Key indicators tested include fibre composition, colour fastness (colour loss, bleed and staining of the fabric dyes), shrinkage, pilling, bursting and spirality, to name but a few. Testing is also used on a wider scale to assess a product's ability to comply with childrenswear and nightwear legislations.

As a garment technologist, it is my role to ensure the correct tests are conducted and the test reports are analysed accurately to ensure the fabrics and end products are fit for purpose, comply with all legal requirements, and meet the highest expected quality standards. After analysis of a test report, I can then advise the most suitable wash and aftercare instructions for the product and accurately advise the legal fibre composition.

## Product of the Month is... Hammam Towels



Hammam towels can be traced back over 600 years to the public baths of Turkey, where they were used as cover-ups by men and women. Lightweight, compact and endlessly versatile, it is clear why hammam towels have stood the test of time and are TCTC's favourite product at the moment!

Small but mighty, the Hammam has many uses. From a classic, quick-drying towel turned beach cover up, to a make-shift yoga mat or even draped over a sofa as a coastal piece of interior design, customers will be sure to get their money's worth.

Custom embroidery choices and packaging options, such as recycled paper sleeves, elevate our Hammam towels, making them a beautifully bespoke product for your business. We would be delighted to discuss your unique design requirements.

Here at TCTC, we work with one of the leading international testing organisations. They have testing labs around the world, so we are certain that testing is always conducted at a certified and controlled laboratory, and in compliance with British (BS) and European (EN) standards, no matter the country of origin of the products we produce. We also have our own in-house testing manual, and all testing within this document complies to the highest industry requirements and is updated regularly.

# ALL ABOUT US

## No Escaping the Fun at the Monthly Social...



This month's social was certainly one to remember, as the team took part in an Escape Room. It was brilliant to have so many of the TCTC team together and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they took on the team building challenge.

We were also paid a visit from our long-distance designer Cheryl, and the team enjoyed a great meal out together.

## A Very Hoppy Christmas!

The clocks have gone back, the temperature has dropped and Christmas certainly feels like it's on its way. In a merry bit of news to round off a busy year here at TCTC, the Christmas jumpers we produced for Harvey's Brewery in Sussex have reportedly been a hit and are flying off the shelves!

This will be our last newsletter of 2023, so we would like to thank all of our customers for a successful year; the team are looking forward to a well-earned Christmas holiday, ready to get back to work producing the finest quality textiles in 2024.



## A Tee-rific Day with SNAP

Recently, Sam and Grant spent the day volunteering for our charity partner SNAP at their charity golf event, guiding the golfers around the course and ball-spotting. TCTC also provided SNAP-branded golf towels for the event, and the day concluded with a great total raised.

Our co-founder Sam commented: "we are happy to be continuing to work closely with our deserving partner SNAP. The team are excited to keep giving back to the local community through this partnership." Sara Clifton, a spokesperson for SNAP, added: "We really could not have done this without [the TCTC team] and we are still reeling a bit from the results!"



## Changing Faces



We welcomed back Pip from maternity leave...



... bid farewell to Freddie after 2 brilliant years...



... and also to Ellie, both of whom we wish the best of luck.