GP75 John Grimes' seeds and bars gansey
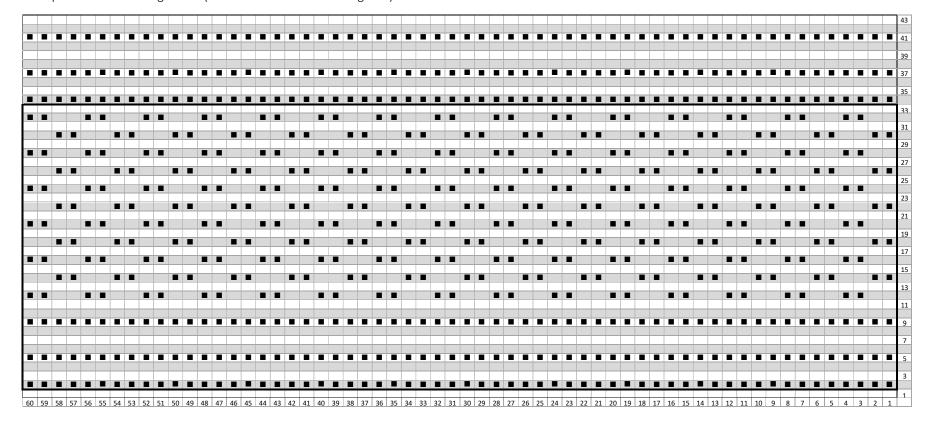
Sheringham

■ = purl stitch on the right side (and knit stitch on the wrong side)

1858

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Photo: Tim Groves collection

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This is a version of seeds and bars which is found all around the coast of Britain and elsewhere in the 19th and 20th century and was one of the earliest commercially produced designs for ganseys knitted especially at Polperro in Cornwall. The photograph it was taken from is in the family albums of the Upcher of Sheringham Hall and is dated 1858 by an annotation on the page. This makes it easily the oldest photo of a Norfolk gansey and rivals the work of Lewis Harding, who retired from the army and took up photography (coincidentally in Polperro) in 1856. I have been unable to find examples of Harding's photographs of Polperro fishermen in the ganseys that are securely dated to the 1850s, as the majority of the surviving works are from the 1860s and 1870s. So, this picture of John Grimes may actually be **the oldest photo of a gansey in the world**.

The design is very similar to Gilbert Rook's (GP31) in Cromer, which is clearer. His pattern has seeds made of 3 purl stitches and they align diagonally, rising at an angle of about 25⁰. Even though the John Grimes' gansey is very indistinct we can measure the angle of the diagonal alignment at 30 ⁰, which is the same as GP4, GP8 and GP71, which are all 2 purl seeds. So, we can be sure that John Grimes' gansey is a 2 purl version. I estimate that there are 36 diagonal ridges across the chest, each representing 4 stitches, making 288 stitches all round. Add 4 for the seam stitches makes 292. Divide by the estimated chest size of 40 inches (it is loose fitting) and you get a tension of 7.3 spi.

The rigs in the bars are single rows, like Gilbert Rook's (GP31), but there are only 3 rigs in each bar and the upper furrow is wider than the lower.

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