

Spring A.S. XXXX (2006) *filum Aureum*

Newsletter of the Needleworkers Guild

in the Kingdom of the West (SCA)

Embroidered
book covers

Catherine Lorraine
c/o Conny Fitzsimmons
1062 Yorktown Dr.
Sunnyvale CA 94087

Guild calendar & projects

COLLEGIUM OCCIDENTALIS

SATURDAY, MAY 13

— 9:00-10:30am —

WHITEWORK

(on going class)

Caterina nic Sheamus

— 9:00am- 12:00 —

PRICKING, POUNCING, PAINTING, & GOLDWORK

Iulitta Rowan

(2 class periods)

Goldwork: twist, Japanese gold and purl pearl, (advanced)

LIMIT: 6 COST: \$10

— 10:45am- 12:00 —

BEGINNING EMBROIDERY STITCHES

Aine ingen Fhinn

LIMIT: 7 COST: \$5

— 1:00-2:15PM —

EMBROIDERY THROUGH THE AGES

Leticia de Scotia

NO LIMIT NO COST

— 4:00-5:00PM —

COUNTED GERMAN EMBROIDERY

of the 15th century

Felicia Amondesham

This style of embroidery is both easy and relatively quick. You will be using brick stitch to create very colorful or subtle motifs and geometric patterns.

LIMIT: 6 COST: \$5

COMING IN THE SUMMER ISSUE OF FILUM AUREUM:

Pattern darning

JUNE CROWN

The Guild will be hosting the **Arts and Sciences Pavilion** at June Crown.

— Saturday, 9:00-10:00am —

We will have a display of members' works so please bring your beautiful items for the display to the A & S pavilion between 9:00 and 10:00am. Please pick up your items at 5:00pm. The Royal Rose needle cases for Pennsic will also be on display.

— afternoon —

Come and enjoy a leisurely afternoon in the Guild pavilion at June Crown. The Guild gathering will commence at 1:00pm. There will be a class on basic embroidery for garb taught by Hilary of Serendip at 2:00pm and Mentors Corner at 3:30pm.

BASIC EMBROIDERY FOR GARB

Hilary of Serendip

Learn the use and placement of simple embroidery designs to spiff up your garb. Beginning stitches will be taught. All materials provided.

NO LIMIT NO COST

— Sunday 9:00am —

ARTISANS DISPLAY

The continuing Artisans Display will be on Sunday morning at June Crown. Bring your items to the A & S pavilion at 9:00am. The display will be from 10:00am-12:00.

SCISSORS & HOOP!

Please remember to bring an **embroidery hoop & scissors** to any class where you will be stitching. Also, take care of your eyes: if you need special glasses or **magnifiers** to do needlework, bring them too!

BEE-GINNERS

Classes marked with the "bee" are especially recommended for beginning needleworkers.

KINGDOM ARTS & SCIENCES:

July 22- 23

Needlework classes will include:

- Wool Appliqué with Gilded Leather *Kira Leon Zhemnadushina*
- Embroidering an Elizabethan Shirt *Francesca von Hesse*
- Italian Whitework *Ascelin Meer of Ravenslock*
- Area Beading *Kiriana Michaelson*
- Fancy Edgings *Caterina nic Sheamus*
- Beginning Blackwork *Katherine de Langelei*

NEEDLECASE EXCHANGE!

FOR OCTOBER CROWN:

Hand stitch a needle case any size, using what ever materials and techniques you wish. Bring them to the Guild gathering at 1:00pm. They will be placed in a basket: each person who brought one may then draw a different one from the basket.

WEST KINGDOM KNEELING CARPETS

In 2002, Mistress Anne of Bradford came forth with the idea of creating two kneeling carpets for the West Kingdom in the style of the Gifford carpet. After much design drafting and discussion with the members of the West Kingdom Needle-workers Guild, the Commission gave their final approval to the project and to the designs at the November 2005 meeting.

Since the November meeting the charts for the carpets have been finalized. Each section will be worked by one or 2 needleworkers in wool, in tent stitch on canvas. The wool is a tapestry (paternayan) from France that is

(continued p.7)

The Needleworkers Guild of the Kingdom of the West

All are welcome to join us in making and enjoying historical needlework, furthering our knowledge, and developing our skills. We meet Saturday afternoon at every Crown Tourney, and we look forward to seeing you and your needlework!

Filum Aureum ("The Golden Thread") is published by the Needleworkers Guild of the Kingdom of the West; it is not a corporate publication of the SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA, Inc. policy. Articles and illustrations are copyright © 2006 by the West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild, unless otherwise stated. Chronicler: Christian de Holacombe, <claning@igc.org>. For a subscription, we ask for \$12 per year for printed copies mailed to you. If this is a problem for you, please let us know. Make checks payable to "SCA, Inc., West Kingdom" with a note "Needleworkers Guild" and send with your name and address to **Catherine Lorraine**, c/o Conny Fitzsimmons, 1062 Yorktown Drive, Sunnyvale CA 94087.

Prose, poems, points & purls:

EMBROIDERED BOOK COVERS

— by Christian de Holacombe

Artisans have probably been decorating book covers for as long as there have been books — and before the invention of the “codex,” the book with pages that has been the mainstay of literature in the West for a thousand years or so, the long Judaic tradition of rich covers for the Torah scroll tells us that there were fancy covers for scrolls, too.

Particularly precious are the many covers that have been made for sacred scriptures, such as the Psalms, or the four books of the Gospels. Many “treasure” covers survive, whole or in pieces, decorated with gold, ivories, enamels and precious stones.

Needlework, however, seems to be a relative latecomer to the book cover trade. If that’s true, one reason for it may be that, for books written on parchment or other animal skins, covers tended to be rather rigid and heavy. Parchment is not completely flat by nature, and to keep the pages of a parchment book flat and smooth, it helps to store them between rigid covers that can apply a bit of pressure. Not until books came more commonly to be written, and then printed, on paper, did soft covers really become practical. So the oldest and most precious books often have wooden, metal, or thick leather covers that can be firmly fastened with clasps or ties. These can be stamped, carved, painted, or set with metalwork, but are not a very good medium for needlework.

The earliest English needlework book cover to survive is two rather worn panels of *Opus Anglicanum*, now inset into a leather cover. The book they cover is a manuscript psalter that was written in the 13th century



and later belonged to Ann Fellbrigge, a late fourteenth-century nun in Suffolk. The front cover is a scene of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and the back cover is a Crucifixion scene. The subjects and framing suggest that these really were worked as a pair of book covers and not cut down from something else, as they are very similar to the central layouts of earlier Gospel book covers. The figures are worked in bright colored silk split stitch and the backgrounds are gold underside couching in a pattern of fine zigzags. They aren’t illustrated here because they don’t reproduce well in photos, but you can see a color illustration of what the front cover may have looked like



when new in Cyril Davenport’s *English Embroidered Bookbindings*, available online (see *Bibliography*).

Later book covers appear in a variety of techniques. Especially popular in the Renaissance were small editions of books of psalms or prayers, which could be heavily ornamented and carried in a pocket or hung from a belt. As particularly precious objects, a number of these have survived, in sizes ranging from the 5x7-inch book at left, down to miniatures just two or three inches high.

Canvas covers

The most basic embroidered book covers are in plain, close stitching of one kind or another. A number exist in simple canvas work, including tent stitch, as in the example at bottom left on this page. Others are in rococo stitch, or in what appears to be very tightly packed chain stitch solidly covering the surface. The British Library has an example (see p.8) with a repeated floral motif worked in simple stem and running stitches in red silk on heavy twill.

These covers are usually worked in silk, with some wool thread in the case of canvaswork. The dense stitching makes these covers sturdy and long-wearing. Some have geometric stitching, others have curling vine motifs with flowers like those seen on sweet bags. Still others, like the tent stitch example here, have scenes of Biblical or symbolic characters; the left-hand woman on our example carries an open book identifying her as “Faith,” and her companion at right holds an anchor symbolizing “Hope.”

The book cover at the top center of this page is another worked mostly in stitchery, a famous example in colored silks in dense brick, chain and buttonhole stitches. It was made by the future Queen Elizabeth I as a young girl, as a New Year’s gift for her stepmother Queen Katherine Parr — hence the KP initials on the front. Princess Elizabeth also copied out the manuscript inside, the popular devotional work *Mirror or Glasse of the Synneful Soul*, which she translated “out of French ryme into English prose... as well as the capacite of my symple witte and small lerning could extend themselves.”

The background is a solidly worked brick stitch in pale blue silk, on top of which are worked the raised initials and knotwork in gold and silver chain stitch, and the “heart’s ease” or pansies in purple and yellow buttonhole stitch with green leaflets, lightly padded.

(continued next page —>)

(Book covers, continued)

Gold twist

Another common type of embroidered book cover, especially in the 15th and 16th centuries, is worked on plain velvet, usually a dark color, with twisted gold cord and bits of gold and silver “purl” or wire. The cover of this issue shows a pattern (available online, see p.8) taken from one of these, a very large cover worked on crimson velvet for a Bible for Henry VIII, with the initials “HR” (for Henry Rex) in the center (missing in this reduced version). This issue’s “Show and Tell” piece (p.6) is also taken from this pattern.

The example below is another in gold and purl, covering a book from Geneva, the *Orationis Dominicae Explicatio* (*The Lord’s Prayer Explained*) of 1583, which belonged to Queen Elizabeth. The outlines



are all in gold cord, and most of the fillings are silver purl over padding, with some red and green silk on the roses and leaves.

Gold and silver wire, though very decorative, are fragile and cannot simply be used in embroidery as though they were thread. Stitching in and out with gold wire would also leave too many inches of this extremely expensive stuff hidden on the back of the embroidery. So instead, gold may be flattened and wound around a silk core to make gold thread, or gold or silver wire may be tightly wound around a thin rod to make a springlike “purl”, lengths of which can be cut and invisibly sewn down like beads to decorate a surface.

Gold thread can also be plied and twisted to make a very flexible gold “twist” or cord, used for the outlines. This can also

be sewn down quite invisibly with small stitches hidden between the plies of the cord. Gold thread can also be made into more complicated braids, like the one used around the edge of this book cover, which is a several-stranded flat braid with little loops of gold wire along one edge.

Satin and spangles

A third common type of luxurious book cover is embroidered on satin, often light colored, with long stitches of bright silks, and is often further decorated with spangles and sometimes pearls. This style, and the previous one, become even more popular in the generation after 1600, appearing not only on book covers but also on sweet bags — which were sometimes specially made to hold a particular book. Above at right is a delightful 1630s example of this style, which has, however, lost all but about two of its spangles. But the silks and the gold corded outlines are still in good shape.

This particular example is rather informal in design, with flower and insect motifs filling the space very nicely but not at all symmetrically. Other examples feature formal “arabesques” like the book cover at left, coats of arms, Biblical scenes, or symmetrical leafy arrangements. Some examples have areas thickly covered with seed pearls. Others have needlework portrait panels, raised flowers in detached buttonhole stitch, or coils of gold or silver wire that have been carefully flattened to appear like braid made from a close series of wire loops. Again, all these are also found on contemporary sweet bags, glove cuffs and other small ornamental items. A few examples are so thickly encrusted with decoration that to modern eyes they seem like overkill!

Who and why

Who was actually working these elaborate bindings? In large cities there were professional embroiderers in plenty. There were also independent craftsmen, who could be hired to design or execute large embroideries for noble households in the country, such as Bess of Hardwick’s embroiderer Thomas Lane, who appears in her account books off and on for nearly twenty-five years.

We also know that women wealthy enough to have some leisure time also did competent embroidery on their own, usually of smaller items. This is especially likely when the items were intended as special gifts, as with the book cover worked by Princess Elizabeth already mentioned. She may also have worked the cover for a small copy of the Letters of St. Paul bound in black velvet with a design in silver and gold twist. And we know other women worked book bindings as well: at least one slightly later book, a copy of the Psalms



from 1633, has a note in the manuscript that the cover was worked by “Elizabeth, wife of Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely.”

Books were valued possessions in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, even after the invention of printing had brought down their price somewhat. Whether done as a tribute to the value of the words inside, or simply as a piece of wearable art, an embroidered book binding was something to work with care and show with pride.

Bibliography & sources

British Library Catalog of Bookbindings Online — Over 100 BIG pictures of embroidered bindings, ranging from about 1500 into the 20th century. Go to:

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/keysearch.asp> and enter the keyword “embroidered.” The first 100 or so books are mostly pre-1600.

Davenport, Cyril: **English Embroidered Bookbindings**, ed. Alfred Pollard 2006 (originally published in 1899)

Available for FREE download online at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/17585>

Or to download a copy of the whole thing (including plates), right-click on <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/17585/17585-h.zip>

Be warned, it’s a BIG file — almost 18 megabytes. I had trouble printing it on my computer from the first HTML site — it kept telling me I was “out of memory.”

Foot, Mirjam: **Pictorial Bookbindings**, 1986, British Library; ISBN# 0-7123-0099-6 (pbk.) (This only has a few pages of discussion on embroidered bindings, but quite a few nice pictures in color.)

Prick & pounce: Marking designs on difficult fabrics

— by Christian de Holacombe

Transferring a design to light colored fabric is usually fairly easy. If the embroidery fabric is thin, it can simply be laid over a design and traced. If the fabric is stouter and less transparent, the “window trick” usually works — taping the design to a window, then taping the fabric over it. Light from the window shining through the pattern lets you see and trace the design, as shown in this 16th century woodcut.



Marking a pattern on dark, textured, or fuzzy fabric, however, is not so easy. With dark fabric, you can't see the design, and fabric with a fuzzy or textured surface makes it difficult to draw clear lines with a pen or pencil, even if you can see where the lines ought to go.

Add to this the requirement that markings either need to be removable, or inconspicuous enough not to show in the finished work, and you have quite a challenge.

Making a mark

A number of years ago, I went down to an art supply store and bought one of every kind of white pencil they had, and ran a test. I made marks with them all on a piece of dark fabric divided into squares, noting which ones were easiest to use. Then I labeled the squares with a marker I knew would not wash out, and tossed the cloth into the washing machine. The results gave me an idea of which markers would work well and still wash out (assuming my finished piece could be washed).

The champion was Schwann Stabilo “Aquarellable” pencils, white only (color #8052). This showed up well, did not rub off easily, but washed out completely. The last I checked, it was still being made. The drawback is that it's a relatively soft pencil, so it doesn't make a very fine line unless

you keep sharpening it — so it's not the best for something that can't be washed.

Another possibility is to buy a new metal pen (like a fountain pen) that has never been used with black ink. Fill it with white **watercolor** ink (also from the art supply store). Test it first, of course, but this will work well and wash out when you are done. White tempera paint (common for kindergarten children to paint with) usually washes out too, but it may be too lumpy for the pen.

Transfer by stitching

For a particularly difficult project, I once decided to do a very detailed small piece of embroidery on a background of navy blue pinwale corduroy. (I had a reason at the time, but will avoid this in the future!)

None of the methods I knew at the time seemed suitable. What I ended up doing was printing out the pattern on tissue paper, fastening it lightly to the fabric with water-soluble gluestick, and doing a small running stitch in a contrasting color through all the pattern lines into the fabric. Then I tore away most of the tissue and soaked the piece in warm water to remove the glue and any remaining tissue bits. That worked pretty well. The drawing wasn't as detailed as I would have liked, but all the tissue did come off, since it was only held by a few running stitches, and I could then go on and do the actual embroidery, pulling out or hiding the running stitches as I went along.

Marking the pattern on soluble interfacing would also work, but I never trust so-called “tear-away” stabilizers; in my experience they inevitably leave little matted bits of fiber partly caught under your stitching, which are difficult to remove, even with tweezers.

Prick and pounce

I had been more reluctant to try the period transfer method known as “prick and pounce” because I knew that the chalk lines it creates rub off easily, and I wasn't sure my hand was steady enough to follow through in the period manner by painting a fine line along the chalk marks. But Iulitta Rowan gave a class on the subject, and my sample went a lot better than I'd thought. So I can now heartily recommend this. And it works even on pile fabrics like velveteen.

First, find your pattern, and draw it out on stout tracing paper to the exact size you want. It's important that the paper be transparent enough to trace through, but heavy enough that it won't distort easily. In class we used what Iulitta recommends, 29-

pound vellum from Staples, 50 sheets for \$9.99. It's a bit heavier than normal paper.

When the pattern has been traced onto the vellum, take a large sewing needle and prick holes along the design lines about every $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch — not so close the paper will tear, but close enough to make a clear line. Then place your pattern on the cloth, and pin it securely.

Take some ordinary chalk powder, which you can make an almost endless supply of by buying a dollar's worth of ordinary classroom chalk, putting it into a heavy plastic bag, and pounding it to dust with a hammer. Make yourself a soft, but firm “dauber” an inch or two in diameter by rolling up a piece of felt, fuzzy scrap wool or cotton quilt batting. Use the end of this cylinder to rub or “pounce” the powdered chalk through the holes in your pattern onto the fabric. In the second woodcut on this page, you can see a lady doing exactly this.



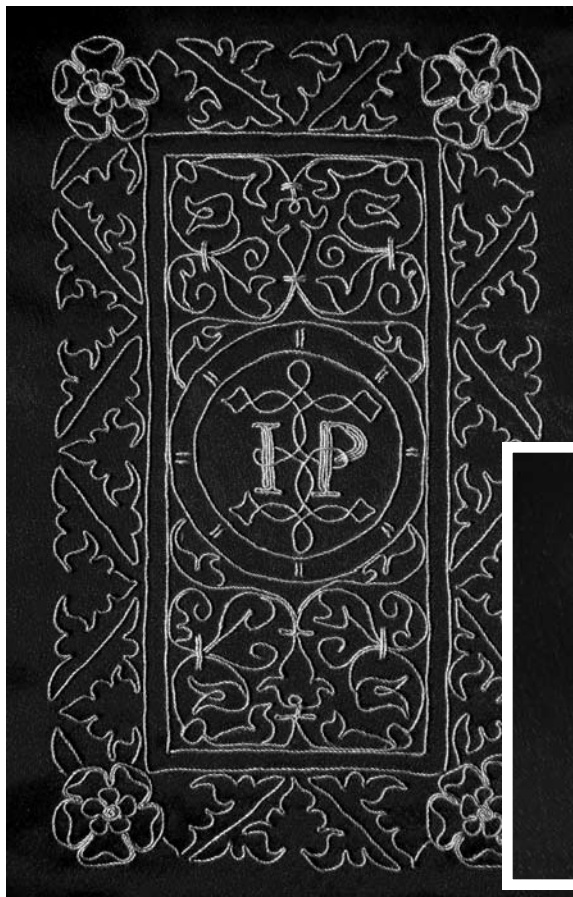
Lift a corner and peek under the pattern to be sure enough chalk is getting through.

Blow off any loose powder and carefully lift off the pattern. Then take a fine brush and watered-down watercolor paint, and “connect the dots” to paint a fine line along where you will stitch. The brush we used was a Winston & Newton sable brush, size 00, available at Michaels for \$4.99 each. (Cheaper nylon brushes work well for some people, not for others.) The paint we used was Winston & Newton watercolor. Since we were using both gold and silver twist on our pattern, we painted the lines for silver twist in a very light gray, and the lines for gold in pale yellow ochre.

You can see the result at the bottom of p.6. As I said, it worked better than I expected, and the result was a nicely marked line ready to stitch. Try it! —

A period bookbinding

— by Iulitta Rowan of Arran



had gone out of fashion on the Continent has been ascribed to the personal taste of Queen Elizabeth I. A number of books presented to her, or bearing the royal arms or emblems, are preserved in their original embroidered covers.

This project is a book cover inspired by the embroidered binding of a Bible presented to King Henry VIII of England in 1543. The original is a large book, measuring 15¹/₈" tall by 9¹/₂" wide.

The thread used is metal twist, made with a flat ribbon of



From the early years of the fourteenth century, rich textiles such as velvets and silk brocades were used in royal and lay circles for covering favorite or especially valuable manuscripts. From the fifteenth century, in particular, the velvet cover was often adorned with embroidery.

Unfortunately, the fragility of most textiles as a binding material has resulted in a scarcity of surviving specimens. Very few well-preserved textile bindings survive from before 1500, because prior to 1500 the velvet was either pasted directly onto wooden cover boards or made into a loose envelope or "chemise" into which the volume was tucked.

In the sixteenth century on the European continent, the embroidered fabric binding gave way to the more durable leather binding decorated with gold-tooling, but in England embroidered bindings remained widely popular until the mid-seventeenth century, dying out only with the Civil War, after which leather became more generally used for bindings in that country as well.

The fact that embroidered covers remained popular in England long after they

metal wrapped in a spiral around a central silk core. The design is a deceptively simple-looking single-line drawing. The outer border is a reversible flame pattern, separated from the inner pattern by a double straight-line box. The inner design is a flowing pattern of flowers and leaves surrounding a central double circle. The pattern incorporates points, curves, circles, straight lines, right angles, sharp corners, and the solid initials ("HR") of the intended recipient, Henry Rex. I reduced it to fit my book, adapted it slightly for simplicity, and changed the initials to "IP," the initials of the friend for whom I made this.

I thought the design was very attractive, and the single line of twist looked as if it would be a relatively simple pattern to duplicate. (This last assumption was an error, as I later learned!) The original is stitched on reddish-brown velvet, with the nap of the velvet running sideways on the book from the front cover edge around to the back. I used satin instead of velvet for the cover fabric on this first try; again, I discovered later that velvet is actually easier for this project!

The satin was then stitched onto a

backing of heavier cotton to provide strong reinforcement for the metal thread embroidery. The heavy cotton was stitched into a wooden slate frame, then pulled and laced until it was "drum-tight." This tight tension is necessary for high-quality metal thread embroidery, and was maintained throughout the embroidery process.

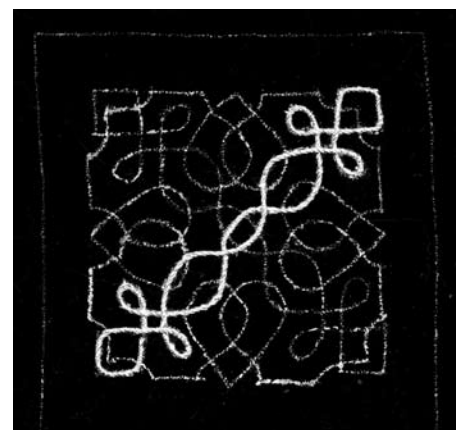
The twist I used is a three-ply thread, rather than the original two-ply, because I couldn't find two-ply twist for sale. I was able to compare the overall thickness of the twist I used to the original on the binding, and the twist I used is twice as thick as the two-ply used on the Henry Rex cover. I also used imitation metal twist rather than 2% real gold twist because of the cost involved in purchasing real gold metal thread.

The twist was attached by laying the thread along the line of the pattern, separating the plies of the twist, and stitching ("couching") between the threads (over one ply, but under the other two). When the plies are twisted closed into a single thread, each finished stitch should be hidden by the remaining top plies. The ends of each piece of twist were pulled through the fabric to the underside of the embroidery (called "plunging"), and secured to the backing fabric with three or four small stitches.

The bookbinding took me almost ten months to complete.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- M.M. Foot, **The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society**, British Library (1998)
- P.J.M. Marks, **The British Library Guide to Bookbinding: History and Techniques**, British Library (1998)
- **Textile and Embroidered Bindings**, Bodleian Library Picture Books, Special Series No.2, (1971)



A pricked, pounced & painted sample, with one line couched with cord (see p.5).

We have a new Guild Minister!

At March Crown, Aelia Apollonia stepped down as our Guild Minister, and **Mistress Catherine Lorraine of Stonegate Manor** was acclaimed by the members present as our new Guild Minister.

Aelia writes: "I want to thank you all for supporting me during my time in office and for being such inspirational fellows of the needle. Your work in and for the guild has made me so proud to lead it for even such a short time. Please continue your good works throughout my successor's term and beyond."

Catherine adds: "I'd like to thank the members for putting their trust in me to pick up the mantle that our past Minister, Aelia Apollonia, has laid down. I thank Aelia for her service to the Guild and wish her well in her current endeavors."

We have a charter!

One of Catherine's first acts as our Guild Minister was to unearth our Guild Charter for review. Our previous charter dates from A.S. XXXIII, and it was never (as far as we know) actually accepted or signed by Their Majesties. Catherine took the opportunity to consult with the Guild Advisors and Mentors to make some much-needed revisions, and Their Majesties signed the new charter in the last days of A.S. XXXX!

Special thanks

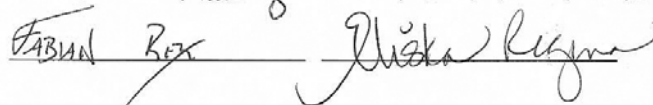
A special thank you to Caterina nic Sheamus for filling in at the last minute and teaching two classes at March Crown, lacs and beginning embroidery.

Charter of the Needleworkers Guild of the kingdom of the West

- R**ow ye by these presents that we, the Needleworkers Guild of the West Kingdom, do petition the Crown of the West for affirmation of the Guild in its ancient rights and privileges ❖
- ist The purpose of the Guild is twofold: to promote the art and enjoyment of historical needlework in the context of the SCA, and to further our knowledge and develop our skills in the full breadth and depth of this art ❖
 - iind Membership in the Guild is open to any person who is willing to support the Guild's purpose ❖
 - iiird Advisors and Mentors are appointed by the Guild Minister to act as faithful counsel to the Guild Minister. The Guild Mentors shall encourage others to pursue the art of historical needlework and to support the Guild's purpose ❖
 - ivth The Guild Minister shall guide the Guild, support the Guild's purpose, and represent the Guild in all matters concerning the Guild and the SCA. Any decisions deemed important by the Minister and the Advisors shall be brought before the Members at large either at a pre-announced meeting or through the West Kingdom Newsletter or through official Guild communication to all members ❖
 - vth The Guild Minister shall be affirmed annually or a new Minister acclaimed by the members at large at a meeting held at a Kingdom event. The time, date and location of the meeting at the event shall be provided to the members through the West Kingdom Newsletter or through official Guild communication to all members ❖
 - vith Programs may be established by the Guild to teach needlework skills, encourage study, and assist members in assessing and improving their own work ❖
 - viith The Guild shall serve the Crown of the West faithfully and truly, especially through the art of needlework ❖
 - viiith Furthermore, the Crown of the West shall from time to time, at its option, confirm the Guild in its rights and privileges as it sees fit ❖

Witnessed: 

Given by Our hand at Kingdom Officers meeting on the 23rd of April in this 40th year of the Society ❖



CARPETS, *continued from p.2*

designed to be long wearing. Each carpet will be approximately 3' x 4.5' when completed, backed by waterproof canvas.

Two teams of people have signed up to do the two center sections, which are double sized. Eight stitchers will each do a single section, and in addition, more workers are needed to assemble the pieces, stitch an outer border and edging, block the finished rugs, and add the linings and rug tape. The rugs will also need explanatory labels, and canvas carryalls made for them to travel safely and be stored when not in use.

Many people have been interested in working on this project. Due to the intricacy of the design, a high degree of uniformity of

stitching and detail work will be required. Participating needleworkers will need to be able to

- Read and follow a chart;
- Work in continental stitch throughout the piece to ensure solid front and back coverage;
- Stitch smoothly with multiple plies of WOOL yarn;
- Work with multiple colors easily (possibly keeping several threads going at the same time);
- Keep a relatively uniform tension on the stitches (x number of inches of thread to y number of stitches) on 10 count canvas;
- Work on a frame, approximately 2.5'

x 2.5' (or 2' x 6' for centers); and

- Complete their portion of the project within 6 months.

If you are interested in helping with this project, please e-mail Sabrina de la Bere at <sabrinadelabere@coastside.net> and let her know your name, mailing address and phone number.

Sabrina anticipates "kits" will be put together and distributed in July. Finished sections are due back to Sabrina around 12th Night 2007 for assembly and finishing work. The current target for presentation is June Crown, 2007.

This is a big project, but with the many skilled hands of our needleworkers, the rugs will finally emerge to add to our Kingdom's splendor.

Question: What's your favorite needlework technique and why?

First — Or nue. My mind just boggles that ordinary human hands can turn out stuff that is that incredible (and yes, I'm thinking specifically of the Vestments of the Order of the Golden Fleece). I *will* learn to do that before I die.

Second — Opus Anglicanum. Split stitch is my very favorite stitch of all time. I love the delicate shading that you can do with OA. The metal thread work that often accompanies OA "ain't too shabby" either. It's as splendid as Or nue, just different.

Third — probably stumpwork. The stumpwork pictures are just simply enchanting. — *Jerusha Kilgore (Meridies)*

I can't decide between Opus Anglicanum and Elizabethan silk and metal thread work. Although the split stitch in Opus tries my patience, I love the underside couching stitch and the way the colors of the silk play off the gold metal in the light. In Elizabethan embroidery I love working with silk and metal threads because of various techniques: satin, detached buttonhole, long & short; plaited metal thread. I'm in the process of making too many medallions in Opus for my lord's garb. I should finish in the year 3000 A.D. For Elizabethan work, I've done a fan pouch and a belt pouch. — *Isela di Bari (West)*

I really like gold thread embroidery. We had Linn Skinner teach a workshop, and that was great. I've taken two classes at Collegium, with Albra and Jania. Really, really like gold thread. Like it even better with beads and colored silks. Sparkly! Ooooh! — *Edwinna of Hawk's Bluff (Caid)*

I don't play SCA but I can't resist answering anyway. I used to do needlepoint (and a tad of *rosashi*), hate cross stitch but I'll do it in a pinch. Once upon a time I designed my own surface stitchery. Now I spin and weave. I keep thinking about weaving the ground fabrics for embroideries. The linen fabric in the York book fascinates me. — *Cynthia the mundane (Calontir)*

My preferred needle work style is the combination of outline and chain stitches. This is a very commonly found combination in early period extant embroideries. Most specifically 7th Century Persian and other Near Eastern extant embroideries. These two stitches were also used to great effect in Europe. I draw from the motifs used in the few textile pieces existing, as well as motifs from silver works. I mostly work in natural motifs, rosettes, lotus blossoms, etc. The outline stitch provides a very clear and

elegant border to the chain stitch. I think I enjoy chain stitch so much because you can fill in an area relatively quickly and still have an elegant, polished product!

— *Jahanara Vivana (Drachenwald)*
<<http://homepage.mac.com/humemarketing/SCA/PhotoAlbum32.html>>

I am partial to blackwork, to look at (after the first project I did, I found succeeding ones a little tedious), and I particularly like crewel embroidery to do (speedier results). I also have a photocopied turn-of-the-century embroidery book by Mrs. Archibald Christie which has a detail of a white-on-white altar cloth from the 1400's, done entirely in chain stitch....it looks really nifty, and I was hugely impressed that



such a neat result could be achieved using only one very simple stitch! — *Sarah Telyn (Barony of the Angels, Caid)*

My first love is Bargello. It is easy, quick and stunningly beautiful if done right. My second love is gold work. Because when done right, it too is stunningly beautiful. — *Huette von Ahrens (Caid)*

Favorite stitch? Ah, it would have to be cross-stitch, but then, I am a simple soul! — *Ingvild Josefsdatter (Atlantia)*

THANK YOU

to everyone who has responded!

NEXT TIME:

What's the ugliest (or worst!) piece of historical needlework you've seen?

E-mail your answer to **WKneedleowner@yahoo.com** by June 1st. Please sign your full SCA name and Kingdom. Responses may be edited.

C R E D I T S & C O N T A C T S

GUILD MENTORS

These people are here to help you with your needlework questions!

- Aldith St. George El Cerrito 510-215-5879 aldith@goldenstag.net
- Francesca von Hesse El Cerrito 510-525-1401 ehmoody@yahoo.com
- Letitia de Scotia Pinole 510-741-9885 vfrazier@pacbell.net
- Kaitlin MacPherson Sacramento 916-331-8066 carolee@fenris.net
- Mairghread nighean Eanruig Colusa 530-458-4144 ettrick@mako.com
- Tashi of Falcons Claw Modesto 209-824-0931 djgreco2001@yahoo.com
- Jania of Call Duck Manor Palo Alto 650-493-7756 mspeliduck@mindspring.com
- Caiterina nic Sheamus Vacaville 707-628-4473 KyrinnaArias@aol.com
- Jenna Whitehart S.Luis Obispo 805-934-9252 originalzaena@yahoo.com
- Sabrina Goldbender Santa Cruz 831-429-9020 stephaniefey@yahoo.com
- Anne of Bradford Oertha 907-338-4692 quidnon@micronet.net
- Annora de Montfort Oertha 907-344-5753 cinquefoildor@hotmail.com

LOCHAC LIAISONS (Worshipful Company of Broderers)

- Bess Haddon of York, Guildmaster srandles@adfa.edu.au
- Keridwen the Mouse, Guild Patron jheron@comtech.com.au

DEPUTY MINISTER & CHRONICLER

- Christian de Holacombe Davis 530-758-5407 claning@igc.org

GUILD MINISTER

- Catherine Lorraine Sunnyvale 408-732-8581 connyftz@inreach.com

GUILD PATRONS

- Isela di Bari Monterey 831-385-3040 dcobb@mail.meyernet.com
- Sabrina de la Bere El Granada 650-712-8405 SabrinadelaBere@coastside.net

WEB PAGES

- WK Needleworkers Guild Website <http://www.bayrose.org/wkneedle/>
- WKNeedle Mailing List <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WKNeedle/>

Many thanks to Iulitta Rowan of Aran for her classes on "pricking and pouncing" and gold twist, and for photos and help with this issue. A copy of the pattern on the front cover (without lettering) is available on the Guild website and in the WKNeedle mailing list files with the other files for this issue.