

Summer
A.S. XXXVI (2001)

Filum Aureum

Newsletter of the Needleworkers Guild in the Kingdom of the West (SCA)



Sabrina de la Bere
P.O. Box 1809
El Granada, CA 94018

Guild calendar & projects

JUNE CROWN

Join us at June Crown, where we will once again have the honor of hosting the A&S pavilion. Plan on bringing a project to display! Everyone who brings something will receive a small token as a thank-you.

Our Mentor's Corner — a one-on-one chance to get help with needlework projects, or just to stitch — will be on Saturday after Invocation. More experienced members of the Guild will be available to answer questions about your latest project.

At **2:30 pm** in the pavilion we'll be holding a short meeting, followed by a panel presentation on "What Stitches are Period" — our #1 most asked question! This is not a how to do a stitch, but rather when should you use a stitch and how. Bring your questions! —🧵

ARTS & SCIENCES TOURNAMENT

Join us at this summer's Arts and Sciences Tournament on July 28th and 29th for two days of classes! There will be plenty of needlework at all levels. Stay tuned to the Guild website for updates.

ZOOMORPHIC COLLAR

Catherine Lorraine, OL

(BEGINNING) LIMIT: 4 \$3 MATERIALS
Learn more about that wonderful piece of embroidery adorning early collars and the fronts of garments. Stitches covered will be stem, french knots, satin, and chain.

FROM DESIGN TO FABRIC

Isela di Bari, OL

ALL LEVELS NO LIMIT \$2 HANDOUT
Learn how to transfer your favorite embroidery design to fabric of any color using "hands on" period methods.

BAYEUX TAPESTRY STITCH AS A FILLER STITCH

Octavia Jenon de Treves, OP

BEGINNING LIMIT: 10 \$2 MATERIALS

Each student will be given a motif to embroider. We will use back stitch to outline our pieces. Bring scissors and a small to medium hoop.

BEGINNING SMOCKING

Ella Gajewi von Pommern, OP

BEGINNING LIMIT: 6 \$2 MATERIALS
Basic instructions in fabric selection and preparation for smocking, along with basic smocking embroidery stitches. Bring a small sharp embroidery needle and scissors.

VERSATILE CROSS STITCH & LONG ARM CROSS STITCH

Elspeth Mossman

BEGINNING LIMIT: 6 \$3 MATERIALS
Bring a 4-6" hoop and scissors.

COUCHED OUTLINE APPLIQUE

Christian de Holacombe

BEGINNING NO LIMIT \$6 MATERIALS
In this historical applique technique, make a pouch big enough to hold your wallet and checkbook, adorned with our Kingdom of the West populace badge — the demi-sun! Bring sharp scissors.

SHADING WITH SPLIT STITCH

Letitia de Scotia, OL

INTERMEDIATE LIMIT: 10 \$2 MATERIALS
Discuss and learn how the historic embroiderers shaded using split stitch. Bring hoop and scissors.

INTRODUCTION TO BLACKWORK

Sabrina de la Bere

BEGINNING LIMIT: 8 \$3 MATERIALS
Learn 3 basic stitches used in blackwork on a period band pattern. Bring scissors.

OPEN SEWING CIRCLE

Bring your projects to work on and chat! Stay tuned for time and place! —🧵

COMPETITIONS!

A&S TOURNAMENT (July 27-29)

Open Knitting

MISTS CORONET (Sept 21-23)

Open Needlework

CYNAGUA INVESTITURE

Open Embroidery (Oct 26-28)

TWELFTH NIGHT 2002 (Jan 5)

Metal Thread & Goldwork

We are lucky this year; there are **four** competitions on the Arts and Sciences calendar that are right up our collective alley! They are all very open as to technique and subject, so you may already have a project started that will be eligible. If you are a beginner or intermediate level needleworker, **do not be intimidated** —it's a great way to get feedback and see how you are doing, and the others in the competition will probably be people just like you! Think about entering one or more of the contests being held this year! —🧵

Subscribe NOW to Filum Aureum!

\$10/YEAR

At the Guild officers meeting in February, we decided that we needed to make some changes in the format of *Filum Aureum*. We have received many compliments since we began this format a year ago, but it is also expensive to produce copies like the one you are currently holding in your hands.

Beginning with the fall (October) issue, we will e-mail an announcement to everyone when a new issue is posted on our Guild web site, and anyone is welcome to download the pages. As an added attraction, we will now be able to offer illustrations in color on the Web version!

If you would like paper copies mailed to you, we ask for a \$10 per year donation to cover the costs of printing and mailing. (For check information and address, see the bottom of this page.)

(P.S. If you know someone for whom \$10 is a difficulty or who does not have e-mail or Web access, please encourage them to contact us privately.) —🧵

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!

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Puffed, stuffed & bombasted!



— by Elspeth Semstress of Dunkeld

Fabric that is puffed, stuffed, quilted, corded, gathered, appliquéd, and otherwise manipulated is all included in our Guild program's sixth and last category, called "stitched fabric."

QUILTING

Quilting is the process of stitching two or more layers of fabric together. Sometimes there will be a middle layer of soft padding such as carded cotton, colorfully referred to as "bombast" in Elizabethan England!

The exact origins of quilting are unknown, though it is believed that it may be traced to the Middle East as early as the Egyptian First Dynasty (3400 B.C.). There is a carved ivory figure, dating from this time period, who is depicted wearing a mantle or robes with a lozenge shaped pattern. This pattern is believed to represent quilting in the garment, although it could also represent a woven or printed pattern. Pictures of this figure can be found in *Quilting, Patchwork, Applique, and Trapunto* by Thelma Newman as well as Averil Colby's *Quilting*. Another early quilted piece is a quilted carpet from Mongolia, now in the collection of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad, that is believed to date to some-

(ABOVE) Detail from the Cornwall stuffed quilt

time between the first century B.C. and the second century A.D.

Quilting may have been brought to Europe and the British Isles by the return-



(ABOVE) Detail from the Karel V quilt

ing Crusaders in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is believed that during the Crusades the Europeans discovered that the quilted garments not only offered them a certain degree of protection against arrows, but also protected against chafing when worn underneath chain mail. Today these

garments are known as *aketons*, *gambesons* or *pourpoints*.

There are very few surviving quilted pieces remaining from our period of study. We do have records from inventories and warrants (as in Janet Arnold's books) that indicate the existence of quilted garments such as waistcoats, petticoats and doublets. We also have written records and descriptions of bed quilts, though very few survive today. One such record is from the 1584 inventory of the belongings of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, which probably refers to a decorative quilt rather than one meant for sleeping under:

AA faire quilte of crymson sattin ... all lozenged over with silver twist, in the midst a cinquefoil with a garland of ragged staves, fringed aboute with a small fringe of crymson silke, lined through with white fustian.

One of the surviving quilts from our period is in a private collection in Belgium. In 1544 this quilt was a gift from Karel V, the Hapsburg Emperor, to his court physician. The quilt is red silk and is embroidered with many colors of silk, is filled with raw cotton wadding (batting), and the edges are finished with silk fringe. The motifs used in the embroidery of this quilt include a double-headed eagle, narrow borders of fish, a bird of paradise, and floral and plant ornaments.

TRAPUNTO

Trapunto is sometimes referred to as Italian Quilting, Stuffed Quilting, or Padded Quilting and is a form of quilting in which the design is outlined with stitching, and then cording or other padding is inserted from the back of the quilt, creating a raised effect.

This technique was used in a pair of quilts known as the Tristam Quilts which were created in Sicily during the late 14th century. These quilts, one of which is in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, feature scenes from the Tristam legend, with descriptive text as well as pictures. These quilts are made from two layers of heavy linen with the outlines of the principal characters stitched in brown linen thread and the outlines of other figures stitched with a natural color thread.

The raised areas in trapunto are achieved using several methods. The first is to fill the motif as you stitch that area of the quilt by placing the filling material between the two layers of cloth.

Puffed, stuffed... continued on p.4

One of the most frequently asked questions is, "What stitches are period?" This article, the sixth and last in this series, looks at another category of the Apprenticeship Program, *Stitched Fabric*.

Puffed, stuffed... continued from p.3

Another is to insert cotton cording or loose batting (such as carded wool or cotton or fiberfill) into the area to be filled after all the quilting has been completed. This can be achieved by either cutting a small slit in the back of the motif, stuffing it, then sewing it closed, or by threading cording through using a needle and moving the threads of the fabric to allow the needle and cord to pass through.

The third method is to place your filling between the layers of the quilt and to create the raised areas by quilting the areas surrounding them very closely so that you compress the filler enough to make the unquilted or less-quilted areas stand out.

More information about trapunto is available in the *Trapunto & Stippling Workbook* by John Flynn and Mary Morgan & Dee Mosteller's *Trapunto and Other Forms of Raised Quilting*.

Another surviving quilt that is believed to date back as far as the early 1600s is a whole cloth, stuffed silk quilt from Cornwall. Like the Tristram quilts, this quilt features scenes and figures which have been stuffed to bring them into relief against the background. This quilt features motifs such as a ship at sea, hounds, double headed eagles, unicorns, gryphons, and hunters and is thought to be Indo-Portuguese in origin.



(ABOVE) Appliquéd flowers and bands from a piece at Hardwick Hall, 16th c.

APPLIQUÉ

Appliqué is defined as cutting pieces of one material and applying them to the surface of another. As with other forms of embroidery, no one knows exactly when it began, but it is said to go back as far as Siberia in the fourth century B.C.

We have many examples of appliqué from our period of study. Not only were fabrics and leather applied to other fabrics, but sometimes embroidered pieces — such as floral “slips” — would be applied to a ground fabric after the embroidery was completed, or perhaps after the original ground fabric became worn.



(ABOVE) Stuffed roses with corded stems from one of the Tristram quilts

Two examples of decorative needlework that use appliqué are a heraldic panel from Hardwick Hall and a 14th century wall hanging from Germany that depicts scenes from the Tristan legend. There are also examples of appliqué used in heraldic armorial display on clothing, banners, etc., though one must sometimes look closely to tell whether the piece in question is embroidered or painted.

STITCHES

The two stitches found most often in hand quilting and trapunto are the running stitch and the back stitch. The main considerations when using the running stitch for hand quilting are that your stitches need to go through all three layers and that your stitches are the same size on the front and back. It doesn't matter so much how large or small the stitches are, just that they are consistent in size. If your stitches are fairly large in the beginning, that's okay: as you get more practice you will be able to create smaller stitches.

There are several books available today that discuss nothing but how to perfect your quilt stitch. Two to look for are *Hand Quilting* by Alex Anderson and *That Perfect Stitch* by Roxanne McElroy.

There are many stitches that can be used for appliqué. When sewing your appliqué to your ground fabric, a stitch such as a blind stitch or slip stitch works well, as does buttonhole stitch. You may want to embellish around the edges of your appliqué by couching cord along them or with surface embroidery such as stem stitch, outline stitch, or flat stitch.

MATERIALS

When we think of quilting, we often think of a modern bedcovering with a front, a back, and a filling of some sort. Modern quilters often use manufactured batting for the filler, which can be made from cotton, silk, wool, or polyester. Carded cotton is actually the most common filling in the surviving pieces of historical quilting.

Surface and backing fabrics include linen, silk, and wool. If you are quilting for the first time you might be more comfortable trying the technique on a smaller, less expensive scale by using a good quality cotton muslin.

THREADS

For all of these techniques any good quality sewing thread will work well. In the historical pieces we have, usually linen fabric is quilted with linen thread, silk with silk thread. If you choose to go that route, some fabric stores are starting to carry more silk thread. Other threads that work well for any of these techniques are cotton quilting threads which are sometimes glazed or treated to travel through the fabric more easily. YLI carries a glazed cotton thread in a range of colors that works very well for hand quilting. Gutermann also makes a range of threads including linen (for hand sewing), silk, and cotton quilting thread.

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The Guild Apprenticeship Program:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

—by Sabrina de la Bere, Guild Minister

The Needleworkers Guild sponsors an Apprenticeship Program to foster breadth of knowledge in the field of historical needlework. The full program is detailed in the Guild's introductory brochure. This is not an "apprenticeship" program in the sense of one-to-one relationships, but an educational program to encourage members to try different styles and techniques of historical needlework and to increase skills.

There are four levels in the program: Apprentice, Artisan, Journeyman, Needlemaster. To pass from one level to another, you must demonstrate skillful accomplishment in one CATEGORY. There are six categories, and you may take them in any order. (And since there are only 4 levels, you don't have to do all of them.)

Here are some of the questions that come up the most often.

Q: If I'm a member of the Guild, do I need to participate in this program? **A:** No. The Apprenticeship Program is purely voluntary. It is open to anyone who wishes to gain a greater understanding and breadth of experience in historic needlework in a "lightly structured" setting.

Q: Do I need to approach the categories in any order? **A:** No. Each category is independent from the others. In terms of practicality, it may help to do Surface Embroidery prior to Metal Thread Embroidery, as some of the skills learned will be of help.

Q: Is there a time limit for completing the Apprenticeship Program? **A:** No. Take as long as you like. Just keep us informed that you are still interested and are still working toward your next level.

Q: I was part of the old program, how will that transfer into the new program? **A:** The short answer is 1 piece = 1 piece. If you did 1 needlepoint it will equal 1 canvaswork. If you submitted 2 needlepoint and 1 applique pieces, then you get credit for 2 canvaswork and 1 stitched fabric. If you need to know where you stand in the program right now, please ask me.

Q: When you are looking to see if someone has "demonstrated skillful accomplishment" in a category, what does that mean? **A:** The easiest way to remember is the 2-3-3 rule: 2 or more different techniques within the category; 3 stitches or more in each technique, where a technique contains multiple forms; 3 pieces that are nearly completed and neatly done.

That being said, we are looking to see that you understand the different stitches and how to use them to make this technique work in a historic manner. The program is geared toward trying to ensure that you gain some breadth as well as some depth of experience in the different techniques that make up historic needlework.

Q: What makes a piece period style? **A:** There is no easy way to answer this question other than to say "CONTEXT." I like to look at historic pieces and see how the stitches were used. There are lots of books on the market that show actual pieces in reasonable detail to begin to get an idea of how stitches were used.

Q: Can I use a Guild kit as one of my evaluation pieces? **A:** Yes you can, but only one per category, please.

Q: Can I use class pieces as evaluation pieces? **A:** Yes you can, but for the most part you will use the class piece to make your mistakes and then do a separate project for evaluation.

Q: Do the pieces that are submitted for evaluation need to be large or hugely time consuming pieces? **A:** No. The pieces need to show that you understand the different stitches and the technique and are now ready to apply the technique to other projects. Usually the evaluation piece will not be the first piece you have done in a technique. So make your mistakes on a practice piece and then do a comfortably sized project for evaluation.

Q: Who are the evaluators? It says you will print a list in the newsletter?? **A:** We haven't printed a list in quite awhile, because in practice nearly all of the evaluation is taking place at kingdom events. At most major events, the Guild Minister will be happy to collect items to be evaluated and find evaluators for you. Anyone who has achieved the rank of Needlemaster, or who has received a Laurel for needlework, may be an evaluator if they like, but not everyone wants to take part, so check with the Guild Minister first before asking someone to evaluate your work.

Q: Where do I get the evaluation forms? **A:** Forms are available from the Guild Minister, or can be downloaded from the Guild website or the WKNeedle mailing list files section.

Q: If I live out of the main area and don't get to Kingdom events, how do I get my stuff evaluated? **A:** Send it to me, the Guild Minister, registered and insured. I'll take it

to the next event for evaluation.

Q: Does reaching a particular Guild level connect with receiving any Kingdom or Principality award? **A:** No. Awards within the Guild are just that, within the Guild. The Apprenticeship program is for your own enjoyment and feeling of accomplishment. Of course, the Mentors and Guild Minister try to be aware of anyone deserving reward, and from time to time may send letters of recommendation to the Royalty, as any member of the Kingdom can do.

Q: Who are the Mentors and how are they chosen? **A:** The Mentors are individuals who have been shown to have a good understanding of historic needlework and have actively supported the Guild. Mentors undertake to do service for the Guild by providing one-on-one guidance on projects for members, helping with outreach to their local areas, teaching at events, and undertaking other active supporting roles. We try to have mentors in all major regions of the Kingdom. If you are interested in undertaking such a role, let the Guild Minister know. —

Categories & techniques:

1. CATEGORY: COUNTED THREAD
TECHNIQUES: (a) cross stitch, (b) Assisi work, (c) counted-thread blackwork, (d) pattern darning.

2. CATEGORY: CANVAS WORK
("NEEDLEPOINT")
TECHNIQUES: (a) tent stitch, (b) cross stitch on canvas, (c) queen or eye (Algerian) stitch, (d) upright (Gobelin) stitch, (e) counted-thread satin stitch

3. CATEGORY: WHITEWORK
TECHNIQUES: (a) drawn thread, (b) pulled thread, (c) Hardanger (*through 2001 only*), (d) cutwork, (e) Buratto work, (f) Reticella

4. CATEGORY: METAL THREAD
TECHNIQUES: (a) surface couching, (b) Ornué, (c) bullion, (d) underside couching

5. CATEGORY: SURFACE EMBROIDERY
TECHNIQUES: (a) basic stitchery (mastery of at least 4 period stitches), (b) laid work, (c) beadwork, (d) split stitch (including shading), (e) raised work

6. CATEGORY: STITCHED FABRIC
TECHNIQUES: (a) quilting, (b) trapunto, (c) smocking, (d) applique

The Guild is open to adding other techniques to this list if they can be documented; please consult with the Guild Minister. —

Appliquéd rose

— by *Elspeth Semstress of Dunkeld*

When I volunteered to create one of the Queen's Rose pouches for the Royal gift exchange at Pennsic this year, my biggest dilemma was what technique I wanted to use. I finally settled on appliqué. I have done a good bit of machine appliqué and I was pleasantly surprised to discover that working this piece by hand was *less* time-consuming and *less* frustrating than my other appliqué adventures have been, and I'm far happier with the results.

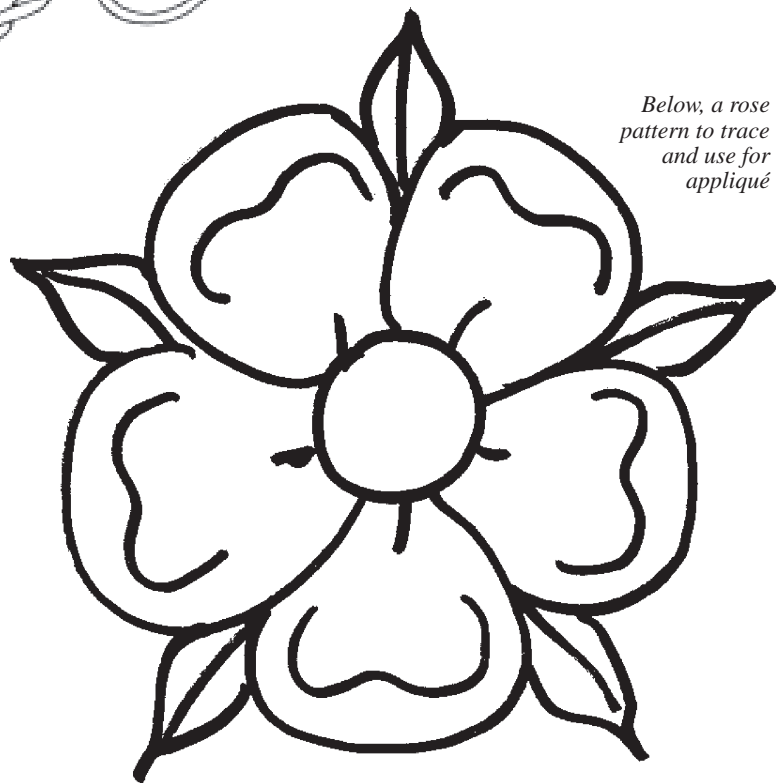
The materials I used for this project were all extra bits that I had in my stash, and depending on the motif, the amount of fabric required may be minimal. The rose I did is antique gold dupioni silk that was left over from a pair of sleeves I'm making, and all the pieces were cut from a strip of fabric about 5" x 24". The edges of all the pieces were turned under as I stitched them; this technique is known as "needle turning." Another option for turning the edges under, a thoroughly modern one in this case, is to sew a piece of lightweight sew-in interfacing to the right side of your appliqué, trim your seams, cut a slit in the appliqué, and then turn the interfacing to the back of the appliqué.

If you'd like to try your hand at appliqué, a simple pattern, such as the heraldic rose given here, is a good piece to start with. The pattern can also be scaled up or down in size to be adapted to other projects — and the Guild is always looking for more goodies for the Queen's Treasure Chest!

— E

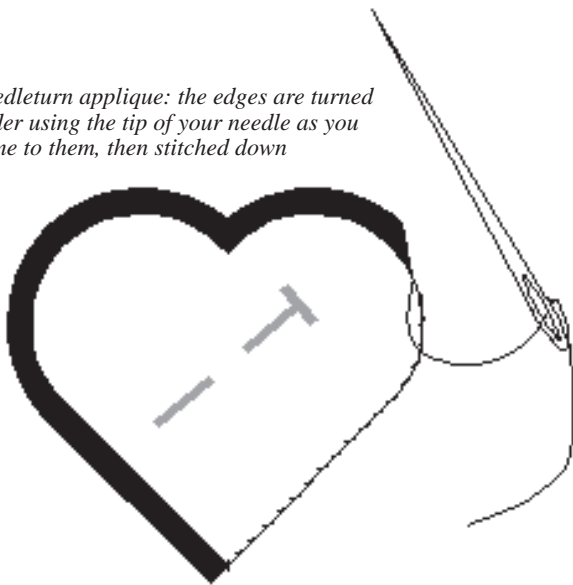


At left, stem or outline stitch, which can be used to embellish appliqué edges



Below, a rose pattern to trace and use for appliqué

Needleturn applique: the edges are turned under using the tip of your needle as you come to them, then stitched down



Some Internet gems

Greetings from Sabrina —

Research can be difficult, but the web provides much information at your fingertips. Yes you need to look at the sources carefully, but there are gems. Here are just a few that I've found and return to when reminding myself to work toward a more medieval/renaissance esthetic. Enjoy!

COSTUME WEBSITES:

The prints of Heinrich Aldegrever (1501-61), a German artist whose works are in a Polish museum. Includes some portraits
http://www.dcg.com.pl/aldegrever/start_en.htm

Directory for loads of paintings online, many by artists in the Renaissance -
<http://cgfa.kelloggscreek.com>

The Web Gallery of Art is a searchable database of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods (1150-1750). Click on a picture for a full screen view in fairly good detail for studying fabrics and embroidery depicted in paintings.
<http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/>

Drea's Elizabethan Costuming Website is the one of the best for this time period. There is information about costume bits and the applicability and styling of embroidery which went on some of the costume pieces.

Included is a "gallery" of portraits and pictures containing over a dozen links to picture sites.

<http://www.dnaco.net/~aleed/corsets/>

NEEDLEWORK WEBSITES:

Master Richard Wymarc's website contains 6 different styles of needlework with historic examples and patterns to reproduce them.

<http://home.flash.net/~wymarc/>

Joyce Miller's Medieval Embroidery Page also has several wonderful extant examples and how to reproduce them.

<http://www.victoriana.com/shops/andrews/slips.htm>

16th and 17th Century Coifs - information and pictures are available from

<http://www.dnaco.net/~aleed/corsets/headwear/coifpics.html>

Examples of Slips done in canvaswork from the 16th and early 17th C.

<http://www.victoriana.com/shops/andrews/slips.htm>

LA County Museum of Art has an online display of some of the items from their fabulous textile collection. Click on the main address, then go to Permanent Collections, then Textiles. Items include Eliza-

bethan Gauntlets and an example of Buratto embroidery.

<http://www.lacma.org>

MAILING LISTS:

Linn Skinner has created a list for people interested in early needlework design books. As you know there are lots of them! There are bits scattered in different libraries around the world. Linn writes, "As some of you know, getting permission to publish some of these has been difficult as some of the libraries feel that they hold rights to them. Now at least we will know where they are and can begin to feel our way around to gaining greater access."

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/earlydesignbooks>

Sabrina de la Bere



IN STITCHES . . . NEWS AND NOTES OF GUILD MEMBERS

HUZZAH to Keridwen the Mouse, Guild Patron to the Company of Broderers in Lochac, who has been elevated to the Order of the Laurel! Also to Elspeth the Semstress of Dunkeld and Ella Gajewi von Pommern, recently elevated to the Order of the Pelican, and to Brid Hecjwiht, who was recently awarded a Rose Leaf.

Thanks to Anahita al-Shaziyya for updating the Guild website with lists of sites organized into a "how-to" for all the Apprenticeship categories ... we also now have a book list of over 150 needlework books, with comments on content and usability, and applicability to historic needlework ... to Judith of Stormhold who has done lots of work for the Guild making up many Journeyman mini pouches and Needlemaster velvet belt pouches ... to Kreinik and Needlepoint Inc. Silks for donating items to the Guild for use in classes and prizes ... and to Eliska z Jihlava for donating fabric for use in the Guild kits.


Elspeth the Semstress is coordinating a new set of Kingdom kneeling pillows.

She is looking for help with the actual canvas embroidery (needlepoint). She can be contacted at <ladybug@neei.com>, or call her at 408-229-2646 if you are interested in volunteering.

To encourage Darkwoodians to display their wonderful needlework on their garb, the Darkwood Baronial Needleworkers Guild recognized 4 barony members at the White Shield event held in March. Those people included Baroness Elizabeth of the Blue Rose with a display of heraldic embroidery on her sideless surcoat; Mistress Sabrina Goldbender with beautifully embroidered trim on her wool dress, Lady Rowan Oldway with beadwork on a pouch using pearls and garnets; and Lady Brid Hecjwiht with a time consuming darned pattern on the upper front placket of her garb. Those members received from Mistress Catherine Lorraine of Stonegate Manor a beautiful black & gold ribbon bookmark edged with beadwork.

Welcome new Guild member John Paul Blacklore to the rank of Apprentice, and well on the way to Artisan. Congratulations to Elspeth Mossman for reaching Apprentice Level as well, and to Theiadora Groves for completing her Artisan level! Remember to bring your pieces for evaluation to the Guild pavilion at June Crown.

ROSE POUCH PROJECT

We only have 2 kingdom pouches left to embroider! These pouches, which will be presented to Their Majesties in 2002 for next year's Pennsic event, can be done in the stitch of your choice. Fabric, thread, cording and either a counted or non-counted design are all provided. To view samples of pouches already done, visit the guild website (address on p.8). We will be presenting the pouches we have received so far to Their Majesties at June Crown. For information, contact Isela di Bari at <dcobb@mail.meyernet.com> or phone her at 831-385-3040. 



The Bayeux Tapestry Embroiderer's Story.

— reviewed by Isela di Bari

You can't tell a book by its cover — that is certainly the case with *The Bayeux Tapestry Embroiderer's Story*. What looks to be a simple book of caricatures from scenes of the Tapestry is actually a well researched “thesis” written by Jan Messent, who has studied Anglo-Saxon history, embroiders and has written numerous books on the subject of needlework.

Writing from a woman's point of view, Messent takes on the historians who have written volumes on the political interpretation of the Tapestry but have failed to analyze the embroidery itself. Looking at the tapestry from an embroiderer's perspective, she strives to balance this inadequacy.

Yes, the “tapestry” itself is a narrative leading up to a Norman victory. Messent claims that this embroidery is as much a “cornerstone in English embroidery” as it is a source of pride for the Norman French. She addresses the “personal and technical aspects” of the embroidery such as the designer's intentions, the draftsmanship, the Anglo-Saxon embroiderers, the workshops or nunneries, and the English royal female influence.

Admittedly, there's a lack of hard facts regarding the embroidering of this masterpiece. However, Messent doesn't shy away from theorizing about the stitching techniques, plant dyes, threads, framing, the design transfer process, design errors, design motives, design problems, and design methods. Based on her research and her own experience as an embroiderer, Messent tries to explain how such a large undertaking could be accomplished.

On any one of these subjects, she could have written volumes. Instead she opted to condense tons of information into a 112 page book. Just enough to wet your appetite for more! Her theories are admittedly just that, although well researched and justified. Although she did not have the opportunity to physically

Finger the embroidery itself and study it under a microscope, she did research extensively the political, historical, and so-

cial conditions at the time the Tapestry was created. She also studied the fabrics used, dyes, threads, etc..

Her hand drawings are accompanied by her calligraphied text which is difficult to read. However, in the last third of her book, all her calligraphy is translated into

easy-to-read type. Flipping the pages back and forth is frustrating, but her research is well worth reading. Her book was published by Madeira Threads (U.K.), and follows the creation of her reconstructed 8 foot embroidery called the Bayeux Tapestry Finale (commissioned by Madeira Threads).

Hopefully, her efforts will inspire others to delve even further into this fascinating subject. —



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GUILD WEB PAGES

WK Needleworkers Guild Website	http://www.users.drak.net/needlework
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THIS ISSUE'S COVER and the Hardwick Hall panel on p.4 are from **Elizabethan Treasures, The Hardwick Hall Textiles**. On pages 3 and 4, the picture of the Karel V quilt are from **Silk Quilts**. The Cornwall quilt is from **Quilt Treasures of Great Britain**, and the Tristan quilt is from **Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers**. (See the article bibliography for full references.) The pattern and photo on p.6 are by **Elspeth Semstress of Dunkeld (Carol Newby)**. —