

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

When you read this, ALL of you shop owners will be in the panic mode. Alas Easter is coming, ready or not! As is always the case, when Easter comes in March, no matter which week, it is 'early' for sewers. Most of us relate Easter to April – don't know why – perhaps it is the cliché about showers and flowers, but when Ash Wednesday approaches, the panic attacks hit. It might be a good idea – NOW – to go through your pattern racks and be ready for some suggestions for the novice sewer that is not too complicated. Remember, sometimes the simplest style, made of a beautiful Swiss fabric with just a touch of lace or trim, in the end, becomes the most elegant of all. As their mentor, the key is not to appear panicked yourself..."remain calm and carry on", as the Brits like to say. You will then not be eroding their confidence.

I hope you enjoy this issue and when Easter sewing is finished, try your hand with the Heirloom Eyeglass Case. A gift for yourself or for an upcoming Mother's Day gift, it is sure to be a fun project.

Happy Stitching,

Sheila

EASTER MORNING ADVICE

As harried as you will be, and as excited as the kiddies will be with their Easter Baskets, you might want to remember that they will, at best, be cheating by eating whatever Easter Eggs they can get their hands on! Plan to pack some wet wipes and spot remover wipes in the car.

AND REMEMBER that:

"No outfit is complete without a few cat hairs." - Anonymous



‘HEIRLOOM EYEGLASS CASE’

As many of us age, eyeglasses are an appendage of our hand that we cannot live without. But why not at least make the transportation of this necessary item as fashionable and feminine as possible! I have designed this eyeglass case to be lovely as well as roomy enough to include a hanky and lipstick. Follow these easy directions to make your unique version. You are free to teach this in your shop, and see how many variations your students will realize. It is a great way to use small leftover lace and trim pieces, or you may plan around a color and purchase accordingly. Students will want to make several to be ready for the last minute Holiday gift list.



- 1) Make a paper pattern from a heavy paper such as a grocery bag. It is a simple 8" square with rounded 90 degree corners. Make sure you begin with a piece of paper at least 2 inches larger than the 8" pattern on all sides. Or you may print and use the pattern herein.
- 2) Begin with 2 squares of fabric approximately 12 in. each. I choose the Bear Threads Swiss Flannel because of its' softness. Trace the pattern onto one square of the fabric. Place a thin layer of batting between the 2 squares and baste the 3 layers together. You are now going to quilt the 3 layers. I chose a simple geometric design using the width of my ruler as a guide. Lightly draw the diagonal lines in pencil. Start by positioning the ruler from the top right hand corner to the center of the bottom left hand curved corner. Lay the ruler down and draw a line on either side, repositioning until you

have reached the corners. Repeat in the opposite direction. If you are an accomplished quilter you might like to use a different pattern, but I have followed the KISS principle for this project.

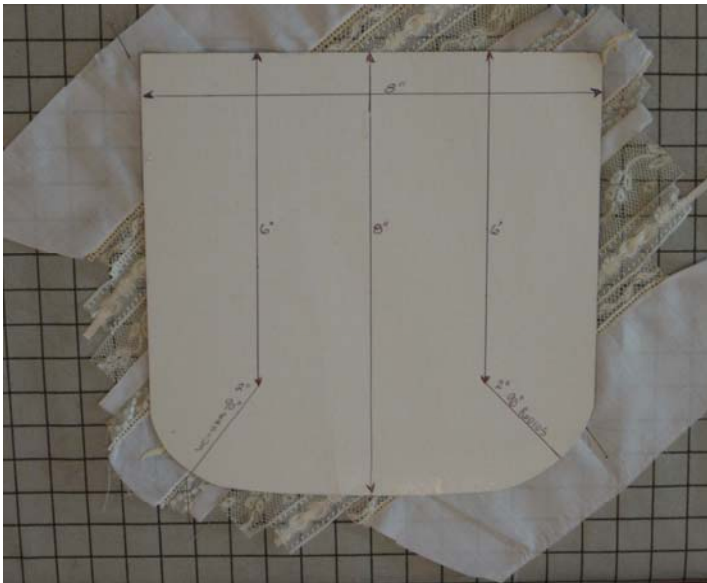


- 3) Using a thread color matching the fabric, quilt along the pencil lines. IF you have drawn these lines very lightly, the graphite will almost brush from the flannel as you quilt. Lay the pattern on top of your quilted lining, and mark ½" outside the pattern line. This will be your cut line. Cut out and set aside. This is your 'lining'.
- 4) Using the paper guide, lay small pieces of French Lace and Swiss Embroideries on the pattern. Pin the pieces to the paper and stitch them together, or you may simply stitch each strip right sides together until you have 'made' the lace fabric to fit the pattern. I suggest every 2-3 rows of lace, inserting entredeux or an embroidery with entredeux for stability. CAUTION: Make sure that the laces extend at least an inch outside the pattern to allow for seam allowances. Remember that this lace fabric you are making is a fold over, meaning it is the front and back of the glasses case. If you have a lace or embroidery that you want to feature, make sure it is on the RIGHT HAND side of the diagonal center. Also, if you are using ribbon beading, bead the ribbon through the holes and finish the ends with Fray Check or similar.

Please note – A full size pattern is attached at the end of our newsletter. The pattern page should be printed on 11" x 17" size paper. This size paper will insure that the pattern is printed full size without distortion.



5) When you think you have made a large enough piece of "lace" fabric, iron it. Now pin again to the paper pattern and check that it is as large as the pattern PLUS a 1/2" seam allowance. With a solid line, trace the pattern onto the 'lace fabric' you have made and machine stitch on this pattern line. This stitch may be a straight stitch or a zigzag stitch. Just use a medium length stitch as a tiny stitch will tend to pull and pucker the delicate laces. Now, measure 1/2" outside this stitched pattern and mark with your pencil around the perimeter. This will be your cut line and you are ready to cut here.



6) With right sides together pin the lace top and lining together. Begin on the side, NOT the top of the case leaving a 3" opening to turn right side out. Stitch around perimeter using a 1/2" seam allowance. (You may wish to stitch again if you have used some really heavy laces or embroideries) Trim corners.

7) Turn right side out and slip stitch the closing. Fold over with the rounded 90 degree corner at the bottom right corner. Fold the case over and baste the seams together. Now you are ready to gather lace to the two seams picking up a bit of BOTH the lining and front of the front and back.

Voila – You have completed a beautiful Heirloom Eyeglass case!
Enjoy.



Note: The Blue/Green version pictured has a typical batting – the kind with batting sandwiched between two pieces of cloth and 'quilted'. This provides more cushioning, but I found in the White version, that bamboo cloth was easier to work with. The corners turned easier and resulted in cleaner edges. Also, note that on the White/Ecru version, I used velvet ribbon. This was an experiment that worked fine. It serves as a substitution for an entredeux for stability, and added a pleasant touch of elegance.

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Easter Eggs – Bear Threads Style



Baby Blue Bubble

Our new Swiss Lawn is the perfect fabric for this adorable bubble. When you want pleats, you want them to be crisp and stay pleated. You have heard the cliché ‘location, location’, but in this instance it is ‘finish, finish’. We are fortunate to have a mill that knows how to really finish fabrics. There are lots of fabrics on the market called ‘lawn’, but only one is the real thing – Bear Threads Swiss Lawn.



Pink Confection

This sweet baby dress from Old Fashioned Baby reminds me of the baby dresses I had with the puff sleeve crisply ironed with a pleat around the puff. It took a lot of blue starch in those days, but no more! Use Bear Threads Swiss Lawn and you are there!



White Delight

Nothing is more fitting for a toddler for any occasion than white. Again this Children’s Corner pattern needs a fabric to hold those precious pleats, and look how sweet this is. The photograph may not show, but the sleeves and collar are piped in pink. It is the icing on the cake.



Daffodil Sherbet

Yellow is not always the first color chosen, but our Voile Stripe Dotted Swiss shares its’ yellow stripe with a white stripe with the famous flocking. It truly is a sherbet color, so delicate and light. I would have called it lemon sherbet, but tis the season for daffodils!

FYI HELPFUL RIBBON HINTS

Ribbon is a lovely and luxurious finishing touch to any sewing project, especially in Heirloom sewing. Here are some helpful hints I have learned over the years of sewing and washing many projects with ribbon.

Most ribbons shrink when washed and most especially if they see the automatic dryer – whoever would do that! Therefore when making an Heirloom project, especially a garment that will be worn and washed many times over its life, DO NOT sew the ribbon into a seam. This will allow you to replace the ribbon when it becomes worn, or if you are really fastidious, you can remove it when washing the garment and replace it after ironing. It might also allow you to change the color ribbon of a white dress to make it suitable for another occasion.

HOWEVER, I have always heard that ‘rules are made to be broken’! So, on that note as I mentioned in the Heirloom Eyeglass Case project this month, the ribbon needs to be sewn into the seam. Ribbon ravel terribly, and in this case, I would secure the ends of the ribbon with fray check or similar. Also, since the bulk of the layered fabrics do not lend themselves to French seams, the raw ribbon edge will wear from constant movement of the glasses in and out. I am a purist to a great extent, however, I seriously doubt that your eyeglass case will make it two or three generations down the line, so let’s be practical. A touch of fray check will only extend the life of your case.

And now you know – Sheila

History of the Easter Bunny

The Easter Bunny is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit. The Easter bunny has its origin in pre-Christian fertility lore. The Hare and the Rabbit were the most fertile animals known and they served as symbols of the new life during the spring season.

The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. The bunny as an Easter symbol seems to have its origins in Germany, where it was first mentioned in German writings in the 1500s. The first edible Easter bunnies were made in Germany during the early 1800s. The first bunnies were not made of chocolate; they were made of pastry and sugar.

It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter by its self was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.

As I mentioned the Easter bunny was introduced to American folklore by the German settlers who arrived in the Pennsylvania Dutch country during the 1700s. The arrival of the "*Oschter Haws*" was considered "childhood's greatest pleasure" next to a visit from Christ-Kindel on Christmas Eve. The children believed that if they were good the "*Oschter Haws*" would lay a nest of colored eggs.

The children would build their nest in a secluded place in the home, the barn or the garden. Boys would use their caps and girls their bonnets to make the nests. The use of elaborate Easter baskets would come later as the tradition of the Easter bunny spread.

Early American children built nests of leaves and sticks in their gardens for the Easter Hare to fill with colored eggs. By the 19th century in America, the Easter Hare had become the Easter Bunny delighting children with baskets of eggs, chocolates, candy chicks, jelly beans and other gifts on Easter morning.



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