

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

What a frigid beginning to 2014! As I sat at my computer beginning our series on lace, it was difficult to imagine such a delicate fabric – what with me in my knee socks and wool booties, two sweaters and cords!!! But, alas, I have been wishing to REALLY introduce you to the world of lace for several years. For so many of you lace is either domestic – yuck! or imported – \$\$\$, embroidery or netting. Until now I could hardly imagine condensing such a broad, historical subject into 2 or 3 issues of the newsletter. However, if you will *bear* (no pun intended!) with me for a few months this daunting subject may just become clearer, and you will find your appetite for lace will be starved for a more in-depth study. I will give you some references for future study but note that some books may be out of print. However, persistence will be rewarded!

First, I will offer some basics from a historical standpoint, moving to terminology and on to basic identification. From there we will study the basic 4 groupings of lace, and finally – last but not least, an introduction to Calais, France – with its' own unique history, as well as being home to the wonderful laces we use today in Heirloom Sewing.

One of the greatest joys of producing this newsletter is seeing the vast array of ideas our designers have. Truly, I think if 20 ladies were given the same fabric and lace there would be 20 widely differing designs to emerge. This month it is my pleasure to welcome Sylvia Fooshee as our guest. Quite honestly, I would never have thought

to use the Dotted Swiss for a slip. Sylvia has opened an entirely new area of design, as she used Bear Threads Multi Colored Dotted Swiss with its' pink, blue, mais and seafoam dots. The pastel colors just peep through the sheer white Swiss batiste providing a hint of color. Great creative thinking Sylvia!



So, grab your hot chocolate, enjoy your Valentines, put on your creative sewing caps, and enjoy our February issue of *Bear In Mind*.

Happy Stitching –

Sheila

A Study of Lace

A general definition of lace would be that it is an openwork flimsy fabric patterned of a spider-web nature. Although it is not actually wrong to call such fabrics lace, it does not convey much information. The holes can be formed via removal of threads from a previously woven fabric, but more often open spaces are created as part of the lace fabric. Therefore drawn thread work, cut work, certain types of embroidery and crochet all come under the general heading of lace. So, in the broad spectrum, guipure, embroidery, macramé, Hardangar, and Battenberg might be considered lace.

The word lace is derived from the Latin *laqueus* meaning a noose, a noose being a hole outlined by a rope, string or thread. But to be specific, a true lace is created when a thread is looped, twisted or braided to other threads independently from a backing fabric. Needlepoint lace, or needle-made lace, is produced by the sewing and over-sewing of a design with a needle and thread. Pillow lace, or bobbin lace, is made by the weaving and plaiting of many threads. Both these laces are made entirely with thread. By this I mean that the lace starts from nothing. No piece of material is required as a foundation to make it lace-like by cutting, embroidery, or drawing threads. One could also very broadly divide the main types of laces by the centuries in which they were at their peak:

Sixteenth century - embroidered laces

Seventeenth century - needlepoint laces

Eighteenth century - bobbin laces

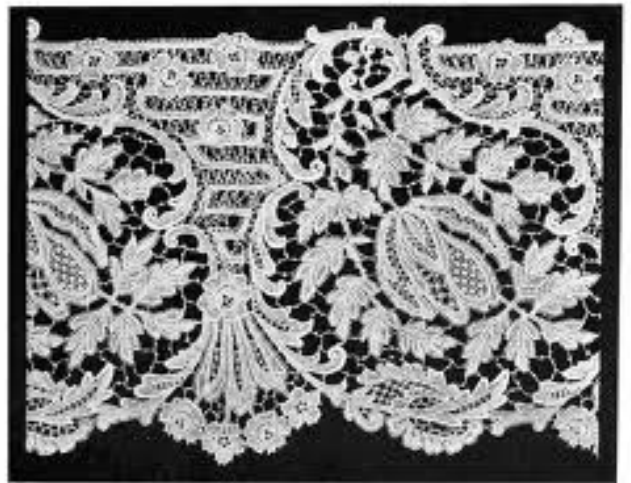
Nineteenth century - machine laces, embroidered nets and other 'imitation' laces

We will begin with a history of lace, continuing with an issue of *Bear In Mind* devoted to each of the

above categories, and an overview of Calais, France the lace capital of the world.

History:

Rather strangely, although thread and fabric go back to prehistoric times and embroidery and patterned weaving almost as far, there is little evidence of the existence of lace itself before the end of the sixteenth century, apart from slender references to crochet and a kind of netting in the 1300's. 'Laces' as recorded in fifteenth-century manuscripts appears to refer to boot laces or to braids; and gold and silver laces which archaeologists claim to have found, from earlier times, may be simply pieces of embroidery from which the cloth they were worked on has rotted away. Strangely, lace in its rich variety appears to be a European phenomenon only, and no lace developments occurred in the other five continents.



Early laces, those from the 16th century, were little more than a form of embroidery that consisted of making holes by manipulating threads. Most of these laces were from Italy, Spain and France and were widely used in Churches. These embroidered 'laces' evolved into needlepoint lace. Bobbin laces were derived from weaving techniques. One could argue that bobbin preceded needlepoint lace or needlepoint preceded bobbin, but in fact both were in fashion in the 17th century. When we read that Charles I of England required 994 yards of lace edging for a dozen collars and cuffs and 600 yards of bobbin lace for his nightwear, we are amazed,

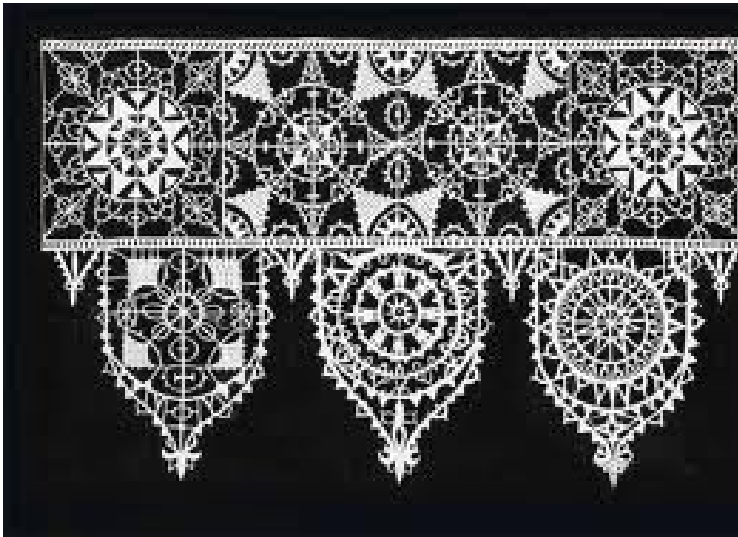
but it is only when we realize the enormous amount of time and labor that such an order required that we fully understand why the Puritan leaders forbade the wearing of lace in the New England colonies.

There were only slight variations in early ecclesiastical lace and it was restricted in use due the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Secular lace, however, was dependent only on the fashion of the times. And so, it was the change in style of the neck decoration from ruffs to collars that began the rise in popularity of bobbin lace as opposed to the needlepoint lace that had edged the ruffs. Also, the fact that bobbin lace was relatively inexpensive compared to needlepoint lace, favored its development.



The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the period of the fontange, lappets, and frills and flounces of female dress. The expenditure on lace became even greater than in Stuart times. Soldiers at this time had not only to fight but also to appear elegant, and they went into battle wearing silk stockings and lace cravats. Pickpockets and other thieves went for lace rather than jewels, and eventually lace became a form of currency.

Next month: Part II - History cont. 18thC. Onward



Both bobbin and needlepoint laces were imported into England resulting in the English lace industry suffering. Home based lace cottages were promoted and taxes were levied on luxuries. At this point the import of gold and silver was prohibited and the melting down of gold and silver coins to make lace thread in England was forbidden. Further between 1649 and 1660, the wearing of gold and silver trimmed clothing was forbidden. Ironically, in 1662 Charles II passed a further law prohibiting the import of foreign laces. Any lace discovered being smuggled through customs was to be forfeited, and a fine of 100 pounds paid. Charles, however, regarded himself as above the law and in the same year ordered huge quantities of foreign lace for his family!

St. Valentine's Day Flower Trivia

- *110 million roses, the majority red, will be sold within a three day time period. Mother's Day means more pastel roses.
- * California produces 60% of American roses, however the vast number sold on Valentine's Day in the United 'states are imported, mostly from South America.
- *15% of U.S. women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day.
- *73% of people who buy flowers for Valentine's Day are men, while only 27% are women.





Many of us remember the birth of Prince William in 1982. A company called Terry Jane designed a darling baby bubble with the newborn Prince in mind. After seeing the now adorable Prince George's somewhat chubby christening pictures, we think that this bubble would be perfect for him. The smocking creates a very full torso. The leg openings are fully gathered as well, ending in pleats where the crotch buttons. All of this allows for a roomy and comfortable bubble that also can be smocked in plates appropriate to the season. Ours is made of the wonderful Swiss Silky Cotton, the fabric that everyone loves to sew on. The Silky Cotton is available in 10 colors, but we chose medium blue for our little prince. The lace is L-462 White, a geometric Maline lace.

The pattern "Royal Babe" from Terry Jane is still available from Peanut Butter and Jelly Kids, Mobile, AL (ph. 251-479-8811) or Chadwick's Heirlooms, Richmond, VA (ph. 804-285-3355)

Enjoy!



BABY DAYGOWN, SLIP & BONNET

By

SYLVIA FOOSHEE, DELICATE STITCHES BY SYLVIA

The infant daygown is stitched from the Ginger Snaps Baby Daygown Book I. The slip is Ginger Snaps Slip Collection and the bonnet is Old Fashioned Baby Bonnets Two. The supplies used for the ensemble are: gown-Swiss Batiste; slip-Bear Threads Pastel Dotted Swiss, Baby Entredeux, Lace Insertion L-142 white, Lace Edging L-138 white; Bonnet fabrics-Swiss Batiste & Bear Threads Pastel Dotted Swiss, Bonnet edging L-125 white, 5, 2-hole mother of pearl buttons, 6 tiny mother of pearl sequin buttons, 2 larger mother of pearl sequin buttons, and DMC embroidery floss



Other special details were using baby entredeux in the shoulder seams and for attaching the sleeves to the garment. I stitched by hand using the Shell stitch to finish the neckline of the slip and a simple blind stitch to hem the gown with the fine sewing thread. To enhance the theme of the pastel Swiss dots, I attached the tiny sequin mother of pearl buttons with bullions in the thread color of the Swiss dots. I also used colored bullions to attach the buttons down the back of the gown with the addition of satin stitched leaves to mimic flowers. The sides of the bonnet sport a bit of 4mm silk ribbon in the colors of the Swiss Dots under the sequin buttons as an additional accent.

I love stitching unique baby garments even if a baby only wears it for a special picture. I enjoy the tiny details whether using heirloom by machine techniques or fine hand embroidery skills. The features of this daygown that caught my eye were the few tiny tucks, the semblance of a “T-gown”, both insertion and gathered lace and a spot for a bit of hand embroidery. Simple design elements without being too fussy are key to me. My philosophy is always “simplicity is best”.

In putting together this ensemble, my starting point was a small remnant of the exquisite Bear Threads Pastel Dotted Swiss. It made a welcome companion with the white Swiss



MEET THE DESIGNER SYLVIA FOOSHEE

Delicate Stitches by Sylvia is owned and operated by Sylvia Fooshee in the small community of Sand Springs just west of Tulsa, Oklahoma. I have been sewing since the 5th grade and for most of my life, or at least through my 20's, I sewed primarily for myself making a large portion of the clothes I wore. It wasn't until the birth of my second daughter, in 1986, that I was introduced to smocking and heirloom sewing. I puttered around for several years, and then in the mid-nineties I began stitching some heirloom baby items for some specialty shops in Tulsa. Then, when there was no place in Tulsa to purchase smocking and heirloom supplies, I decided to start my home based business. I sold by appointment out of my home and taught lessons around my dining room table. In 2006 I branched out to having a website built. The website has given me better access for customers all over the US and in several other countries, the opportunity to see firsthand, smocking and heirloom sewing supplies. I also enjoy stitching garments for "inspiration" in the fabrics and patterns I sell to give ideas to fellow stitchers.

Delicate Stitches by Sylvia has always worked at supplying the basics for any type of smocking or heirloom project, while having other traditional supplies for baby and children sewing. The ambitious seamstress will find fabrics and laces for adult heirloom garments too. I learned early on that "being a business of one", I can't be all things for all stitchers, but I do strive to offer the best variety of laces, Swiss fabrics, Liberty of London prints, trims, buttons and more. Along with offering quality products I also work at providing excellent customer service and prompt shipment of orders. I have never lost my love of teaching and enjoy private lessons or small groups in areas of smocking, heirloom and hand embroidery techniques.

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There are various theories on the origin of Valentine's Day, but the most popular dates back to the time of the Roman Empire during the reign of Claudius II, 270 A.D. Claudius didn't want men to marry during wartime because he believed single men made better soldiers. Bishop Valentine went against his wishes and performed secret wedding ceremonies. For this, Valentine was jailed and then executed by order of the Emperor on Feb. 14. While in jail, he wrote a love note to the jailor's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine."

Sound familiar?

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