

Blog #101 - Every Day May Not Be :
August 2020

Spent lots of pleasurable time this past month - often many hours in a day - with a needle, thread and fabric in my hands. It has been wonderful!

Finished stitching the monochromatic version of Part Six of the 'Ackworth Flowers' Mystery Sampler in preparation for the release of the project at the beginning of October. Below are complete pics of this final part in both options -



A reminder that the date of 1779 in the bottom left-hand corner is the date that the Ackworth School for Quaker children at Pontefract, near York in the UK was opened and at the bottom right-hand corner is where a needleworker can add the date or just the year they stitched their sampler or place their name or initials. You will note that I placed my initials inside the rose wreath and added my Christian name and year date.

During this month a lot of time was also spent cutting fabric, sorting threads and packaging and sending the supplies for this sampler to those ladies who had enrolled for the project.

Really encouraged by the number of participants as from the proceeds of this project a pleasing donation amount will be sent to the Ackworth School for their Sampler Conservation and Restoration Fund.

As for other needlework projects worked this month, finished a couple of other pieces.



Firstly, another letter in the alphabet series.

This time the letter, 'I'.

The word I chose for this letter was 'Integrity' and the name I chose for on the back of the ornamental was 'Isabella'.

This letter has been worked with three shades of Blue/Violet - 340 : 341 : 3746 but can be worked in three shades of your favourite colour.

Alternative colour choices are given with the design chart and instructions.

This design is now available for purchase.

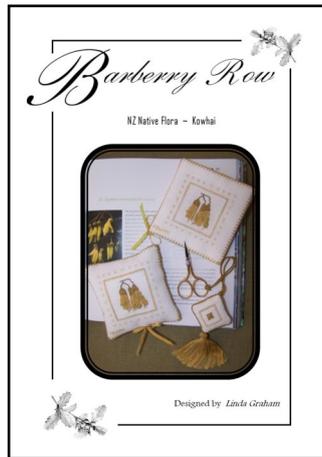


BARB 1026I : The Letter 'I' is for : \$ 25.00

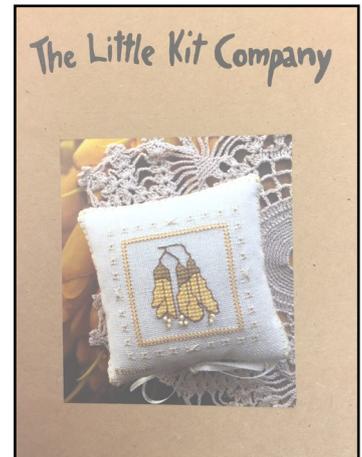
Secondly, the other finished piece of needlework was a model piece for 'The Little Kit Company'. The pincushion only of the Kowhai set of needlebook, pincushion and scissors fob designed by my friend, Linda Graham of Christchurch for publication by Barberry Row.

A reminder of that design is pictured to the right.

Subsequently had to rewrite and redesign the instructions as all 'The Little Kit Company' designs are packaged differently and are only presented/available as a kit - that is, fabric, threads, needle, chart & instructions.



BARB 004
NZ Native Flora - Kowhai
\$ 25.00

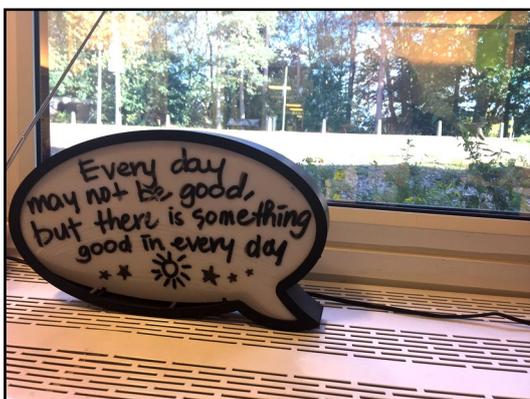


LKC : KP
Kowhai Pincushion
\$ 34.50

This kit is also pictured to the right.

And now to continue on with Day 8 of Lady Anne's Needlework Tour - Thursday, 26 September 2019.

Well - for me, not the day planned as per the tour itinerary. After a long night of uncertainty, ponderings and wondering what was to happen, the day dawned and sadly a gentleman in a bed across from me passed away with no-one (family or nursing staff) beside him. As you can image, all sorts of thoughts raced through my mind. Fortunately I had been able to phone Melissa (reaching her at 4.30 in the morning) before I left for hospital the previous afternoon and Keith had phoned me and so the family knew of my predicament. By mid-morning my arm had regained some ability to move but there was no strength in it.



Pictured to the left is a sign that was standing on the radiator near my bed. It read ...
"Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day"

A real encouragement after being told by the Doctors that I could not fly home to NZ for at least 2 - 3 weeks and they were not sure whether I would be able to leave hospital that day. That decision would depend on the response to the tests I would have to undertake that day. Consequently I made a determined effort to show that I could manage walking in a reasonably straight line and up and down stairs and answer and complete all their multitude of mental questions and puzzles, all the time wondering what I would do, would the hotel 'hold' my room or would they or who would pack up my belongings that

were in the hotel room so that they could be stored, where was I to stay until able to fly home, how could I cope on my own for the next few weeks. However, despite my lack of arm use, I was able to leave the hospital that evening, thus returning to the Swan Hotel at Lavenham by taxi, arriving there about 8pm.

Fortunately the needlework tour had not moved to another location that day but been busy visiting a couple of wonderful venues.

Phillipa was again so lovely to me and the decision was that I should continue travelling with the tour group but not participate in any further excursions. As you can imagine, this decision was like a burden being lifted and I headed to my room and bed with a happy heart for the blessing I had received.

As mentioned previously, I missed out on visiting the wonderful venues that day, however with permission to use and share with you, the following pics are some of what the tour ladies saw and experienced that day

Their day began with nearly a two hour bus trip to the stately home of Blickling Hall located in the village of Blickling north of Aylsham in Norfolk.

In the 15th century, Blickling was in the possession of Sir John Fastolf of Caister in Norfolk (1380-1459), who made a fortune in the Hundred Years War and whose coat of arms is still on display at the Hall. Later, the property was in the possession of the Boleyn family, and home to Thomas Boleyn, later Earl of Wiltshire, and his wife, Elizabeth (eldest daughter of Thomas Howard, 2nd Duke of Norfolk) between 1499 and 1505. Although the exact birth dates of their children are unknown, historians are confident that all three surviving children were likely born at Blickling – Mary in about 1500, Anne in about 1501, and George in about 1504.



The house of Blickling seen today was built on the ruins of the old Boleyn property in the reign of James I in 1616.

Another few pics of the exterior of this wonderful hall and outer buildings -



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© Lady Anne's Needlework Retreats September 2019



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The library at Blickling Estate contains one of the most historically significant collections of manuscripts and books in England. Pictured below is part of this magnificent library and look at the equally magnificent tapestry hanging above the fireplace.



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© Lady Anne's Needlework Retreats September 2019

In addition to awesome tapestries, most of the bed canopies, bedspreads, bed drapes and wall hangings throughout the hall were all hand embroidered, many featuring Phillippa's needlework passion of crewelwork.

Pictured are some of these pieces -



However, had I been there, I think my favourite piece of needlework would have been the pedestal firescreen.



I LOVE them and would dearly love to own one.

From Blickling Hall it was about another hour bus trip to Oxburgh Hall - a moated country house in Oxburgh, Norfolk, built by Sir Edmund Bedingfield in 1482. Although ownership of the house passed to the National Trust in 1952, the Bedingfield family still live there at the hall and have done so almost continually since its construction.



The most significant feature at Oxburgh Hall is
The Marion Hangings.

Now on permanent loan to Oxburgh Hall
from the Victoria and Albert Museum,
these finely crafted embroideries were the work
of Mary, Queen of Scots and Bess of Hardwick,
between 1569 and 1584.

Elizabeth I considered Mary a threat to the throne
and kept her captive for eighteen years,
much of which was spent under the watchful eye
of Bess of Hardwick's fourth husband, George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.

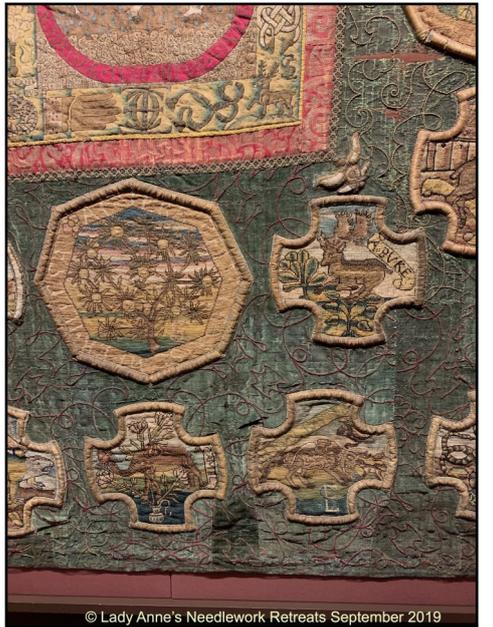
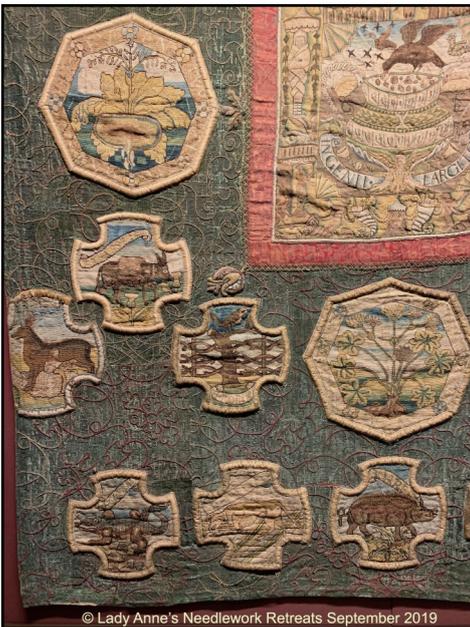
It is a common misconception that Mary was imprisoned at Oxburgh Hall, but this was never the case.



Mary, Queen of Scots
1542 - 1587

~
Bess of Hardwick
1527 - 1602

Some of the needlework pieces -



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Only a baby when her father, James V of Scotland died, Mary had been brought up as a Catholic in the French court. Forced into exile in 1568, it was around this time that it was suggested she marry the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Howard.

In 1572, the Duke of Norfolk was found guilty of plotting to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, for which he was executed for treason. The evidence against him included the embroidery that now forms the centrepiece to the Marian Hangings.

Embroidery was not only a pleasurable pastime, but a form of communication for Mary. The motifs expressed Mary's most private thoughts, at a time when all her written correspondence was being monitored by her captors. She used emblems of plants and animals in her embroidery, which were copied from books by well-known authors and wood-cut illustrations of the time.

Within the centrepiece of the Marian Hangings she had depicted a hand holding a pruning hook, cutting back a barren vine to make it more fruitful. Mary's supporter, John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, confessed under interrogation that Mary had sent this embroidery to the Catholic Duke of Norfolk as a cushion cover.

Its precise message remains unclear, but it is one of a number of allegedly incriminating emblems within her needlework, which were cited as evidence that she was involved in Catholic plots to unseat Elizabeth.

Although the Marian Hangings were not created at Oxburgh, they were worked on by Mary at the same point in history as Sir Henry Bedingfield was himself subject to considerable penalties and placed in jeopardy by Elizabeth I.



Instead, their arrival came in 1761, after they had been mounted onto three green velvet hangings to make two bed curtains and a valance, perhaps by Bess of Hardwick's granddaughter, Alethea Talbot.

Passed down through descendants, it was the marriage of Mary Browne, of Cowdray Park, to Sir Richard Bedingfield that would result in these historical treasures making their way to Norfolk. This probably saved the hangings as shortly after Cowdray Park was largely destroyed by fire.

The 9th Baronet sold them to the National Art Collections Fund who presented them to the Victoria & Albert Museum. As mentioned previously, they are on permanent loan to the National Trust and are still remarkably vibrant after 450 years.



As mentioned in Blog #93, the inspiration for the design that tutor, Meredith Willett of the USA was teaching during our tour was from one of the small pieces of needlework from the Marian Hangings.



The original design



Meredith's Adaptation

I was disappointed that I was not able to see this wonderful piece of needlework but also so thankful that my unfortunate experience was not worse than it was.

Another disappointing experience was missing out on the lecture before dinner that evening given by Dr. Lynn Huse on embroidered garments and accessories of the Tudor & Jacobean period. I am sure this would have been fascinating as well as enlightening.

And so another day came to an end.

Next morning the itinerary was for everyone to board the bus and travel to their next destination, stopping off at another couple of venues enroute to admire the needlework housed there.

Plans for me was that I remain in Lavenham until early afternoon and then travel by private hired car to the next destination, thus meeting up with everyone there for dinner and to stay there with them for the next few days so that we could finish our needlework projects.

Bye for now. Until next time, take care of yourselves.

