

Blog #94 - Lockdown & Lady Anne 2

Friday, 3 April 2020

Oh, dear! Lockdown. I've often said - due to always having so much to do and wanting to fulfil the ideas in my head and never seeming to have enough time - that I wished the world would stop and let me catch up.

Well the world has stopped, but, oh, for such a tragic reason.

The sadness with all those so sick and the deaths. Heart-breaking for the families of these precious persons as they were not/are not able to visit them in hospital and they were not/are not able to be with their loved ones when they pass away, have a funeral or memorial service for them or be at their graveside.

And too, lockdown has impacted so many lives with such devastating consequences with the loss of jobs, incomes, businesses, etc. I am SO thankful that from my very early childhood I was brought up to 'save for a rainy day'.

Also, I am SO thankful that I have never had to go through a world war when there were thousands and thousands of deaths in a day.

And what about the Spanish flu pandemic and number of precious Jews who lost their lives during World War II - millions.

Whilst stitching the other day I was watching/listening to a TV programme on the History Channel and they were talking about the Great Plague of 1665.

In ONE day in London alone, 8,000 people died!

They showed a church in London

(St. Olave at the corner of Seething Lane and Hart Street)

where one now has to walk down four steps to go into the church.

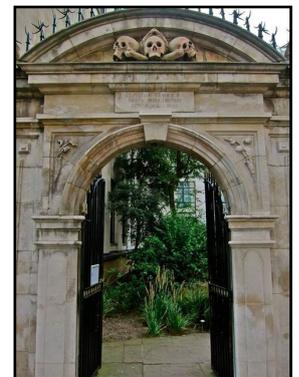
In the picture to the right, the steps leading down to the church entrance can be seen.



According to the narrator of the programme, originally this church was at street level but due to the number of persons buried around the church at that time the ground became raised.

Evidently St. Olave is one of the smallest churches in the city of London and is documented from the 12th century, dedicated to the patron saint of Norway, was rebuilt in the 15th century, survived the Great Fire in 1666, was heavily damaged during the blitz in 1941 and restored in the mid 1950's. Samuel Pepys (the diarist / 1633-1703) is buried here. So too, William Turner, known as 'the father of English Botany'.

Charles Dickens referred to the church as 'St. Ghastly Grim' because of the macabre ornamentation above the church gateway.



Between 1665 and 1666 the Great Plague of London was responsible for the deaths of 100,000 people - roughly about twenty percent of the city's population. Many inhabitants fled the city but those who contracted the disease were shut in their homes and a large red cross was painted on their doors together with the words - LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US.

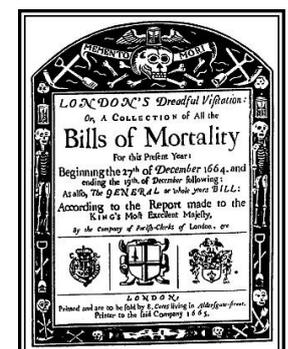
Like us, to avoid the spread of disease, they too experienced 'lockdown' as theatres & other places of congregation were closed.

Carts were pushed along streets by men who would call out to the inhabitants of the houses to : "BRING OUT YOUR DEAD". The dead were loaded on to the carts and transported to a Plague Pit which was originally in the grounds of a church but when they were full, dedicated pits were hastily constructed around the fields surrounding London.

The parishes of London maintained a weekly record of the number of deaths.

The number provided by each parish was printed on what was termed 'Mortality Bills' with the greatest number being recorded in September 1665.

Victims were treated by 'Plague Doctors' who were specifically hired by a community for this purpose and were required to treat both rich and poor victims. As a result of their work, they were also subject to quarantine and not allowed to mix with the well. Most of these physicians



were not normally professionally trained physicians while some were often professionals of poor reputation or else at the start of their careers.

Some 'Community Plague Doctors', as they were called, wore a beak-like mask, which was filled with aromatic items that were believed to protect them from the putrid air.

Fortunately we have not had to endure the treatment of our homes being 'marked'.



Of course, my Needlework Gallery has had to close but I have to confess that I'm not too concerned about that as I can now take my time with setting it up.

Apart from having the time to do this, plus catching up on some neglected tasks, I'm looking forward to not having to live to a daily timetable. It's only been eight days since lockdown began but already the days and I have become more relaxed and I no longer have to stress if the vacuuming, dusting and polishing of the brass door handles and front step are not done by 'opening time'.

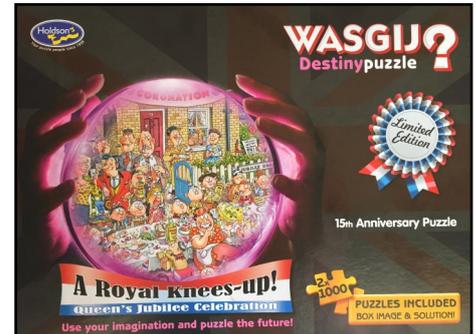
Also, apart from the Needlework Gallery not being open and no-one coming for our stitch days or our NATTER Days, lockdown will not be too different to my normal routine as I work every day at home, going out once every two weeks for a regular appointment and buy some groceries at the same time and perhaps the odd time to go to the Bank or Post Office, or to the picture framers or for a six-monthly dental appointment and maybe a movie once in a while. I never have to go to the hairdresser as she comes to my home to attend to my needs. I very rarely go out for lunch or shop.

I think the hardest part of lockdown to come to terms with, has been that because of age or vulnerability we are **not allowed** to go out. I think this will become more difficult as time goes by. Fortunately Melissa lives nearby and so will do our grocery shopping for us.

To help overcome the feeling of '**not being allowed**' I immersed myself in doing another jigsaw puzzle.

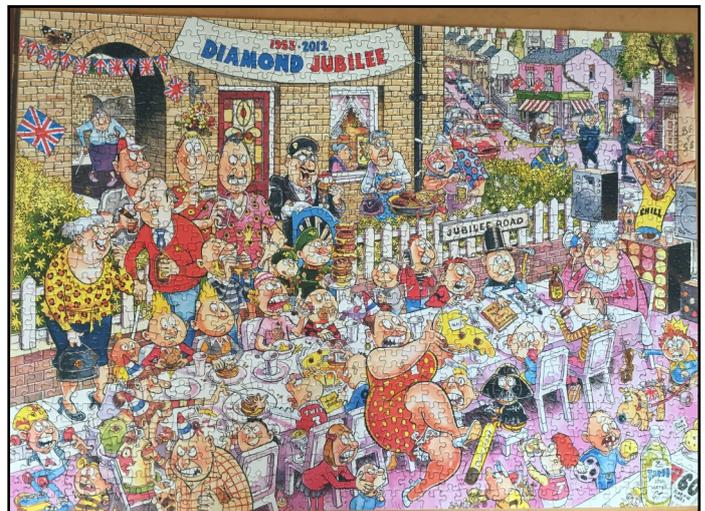
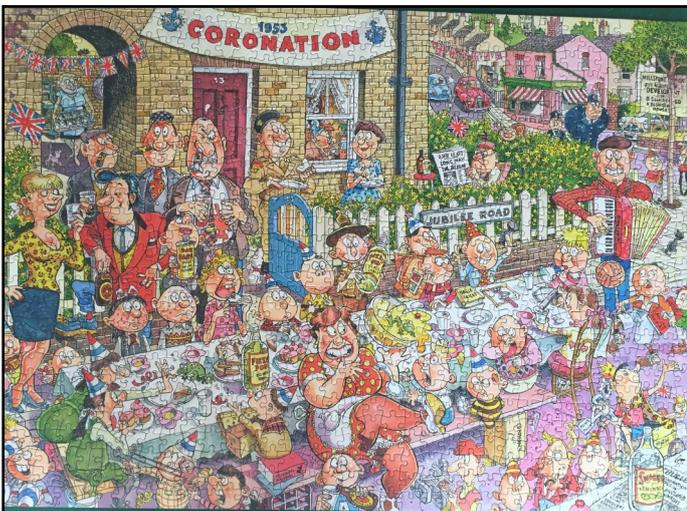
This time a companion piece to one I had completed at Christmas time in 2018. It was a Limited Edition Wasgij puzzle - that is, two puzzles in the one box.

The first puzzle as per the pic on the box lid was a street party scene celebrating Queen Elizabeth's 1953 coronation and the second puzzle was the same address but the street party scene was a celebration of her diamond jubilee as Queen.



But - as no pic - one had to use their imagination.

Below are pics of both puzzles.



When finished I did have to smile at all the differences!

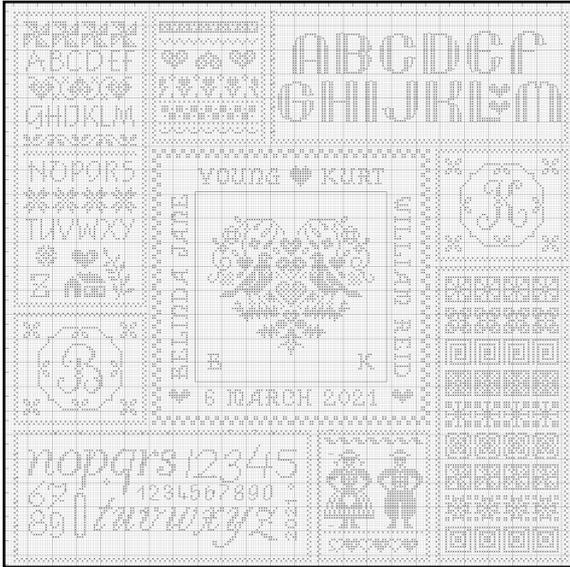
Especially the woman on the left by the fence. Just like me.

In my youth I was such a skinny wee thing and now - well! I don't like this aging process!!

I forget exactly when I did this, but earlier in the year a friend (Ruth) called to say that she was having a little difficulty designing a sampler for her son's upcoming wedding. Previously she had designed and stitched samplers for her other two sons but just couldn't get this one to work out and would I be able to help. She had all the elements that she wanted in it and so I spent a lovely time over several days 'playing around with it'. Really pleased with the final outcome.

Received an email from her the other day with a pic of what she has stitched to date. Her comment was that she was so pleased being able to stitch during the lockdown. She has decided not to place the wedding date on it yet as that may have to change.

Below are pics of the final chart and Ruth's progress to date -



As for needlework that I have been doing, I've been working on my Mystery Sampler and here is a sneak peek at a couple of pics of Part Three -

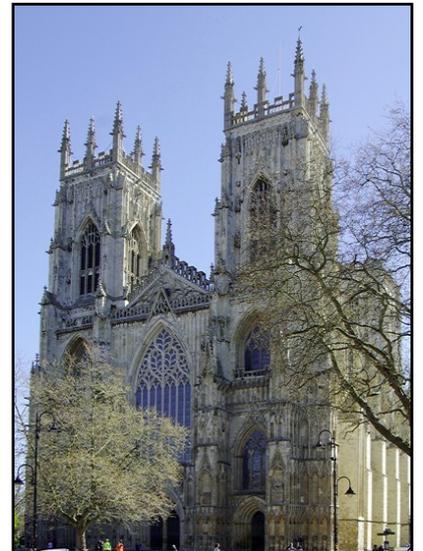


Flowers
in
urns/vases
are
either side
of a
central
alphabet



And now to continue on with my UK experience - Lady 2:
After breakfast our day began with a short walk from the hotel to York Minster where we were escorted by the textile curator, Pippa Foulds throughout the magnificent building to various areas and various chapels to view and hear the history about the lovely needlework pieces - kneelers, chair cushions, altar cloths, etc.

Here are a couple of pics of some of the many pieces -



And some more pics -



All above images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats. Used with permission

We also gathered together to hear about the role of the broiderers today (volunteers, about seven in number), see samples of their current projects plus see and touch some of the beautiful robes worn on Sundays and special occasions by the clergy. I was curious as to how they cleaned the robes and was told, "with stale bread".

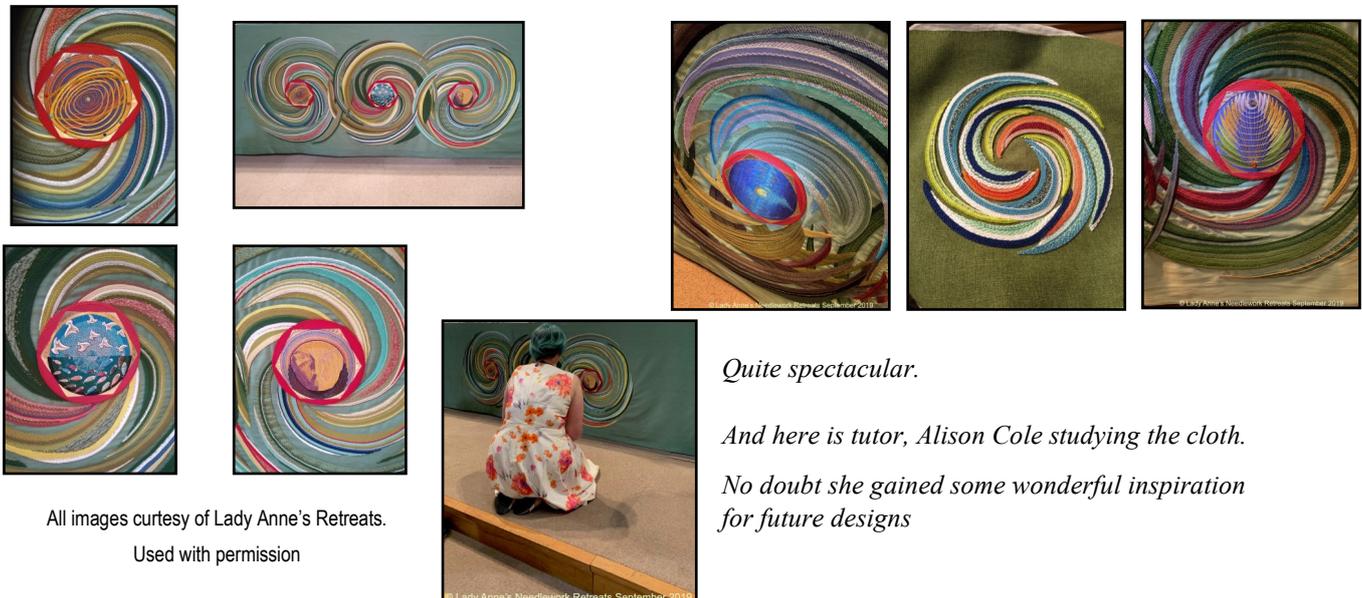
Here are few pics of work in progress -



All above images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats. Used with permission

And here are some images of the needlework on one side of the huge altar cloth in the main cathedral -

And here are some images of needlework after the same style being works in progress -



All images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats. Used with permission

Quite spectacular.
And here is tutor, Alison Cole studying the cloth.
No doubt she gained some wonderful inspiration for future designs

From the Minster it was a short walk to Treasurer's House - the house and garden I loved and which I wrote about in blog #88.

Before touring the rooms we were given an introduction to the house, its history, its occupants and the needlework pieces it contained by National Trust Volunteer, Glennis Whyte.



Images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats.

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In her childhood, Elizabeth Montagu, lived here. Her sister, novelist Sarah Scott was also here and she later encouraged women to make and sell their own hand-sewn items such as fingerless gloves and stockings.

Another family was the Morritts, and one of the daughters, Anne, lived here between 1726 and 1775. She achieved national fame as a 'needle painter'. That is, she created copies of painted masterpieces using embroidery. Her numerous works are on display to visitors to her last home, Rokeby Park, near Barnard Castle.

The last private owner of Treasurer's House was Frank Green. He purchased the property (named by him as Treasurer's House) in 1897 and he converted it into his York home and furnished it with antiques, objects d'art, beautiful fabrics and textiles and enjoyed showing guests around. However, it is believed that his primary passion was his wardrobe as he would often change his clothes several times in a day. Whatever the occasion, he was adamant that his family and staff should be dressed 'correctly'. In his household Frank had his own livery of green and gold, which male servants were expected to wear, whereas female servants were to change into black dresses for the afternoon and evenings.

In 1930 he went to live in Somerset and he died there in 1954, leaving Treasurer's House, a number of commercial properties in the city, a considerable part of his antique collection and a substantial financial endowment to the National Trust.

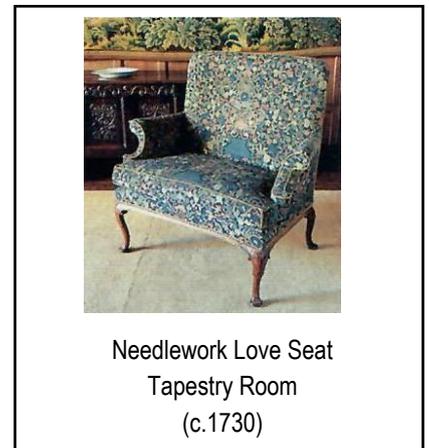
And here are only some of the pieces of needlework to be seen in this house -



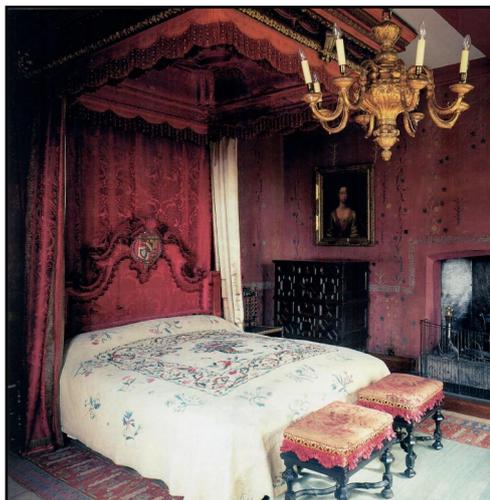
Needlework Pole Screen
Blue Drawing Room



One of a set of walnut chairs
in the Blue Drawing Room
covered with needlework (c.1725)



Needlework Love Seat
Tapestry Room
(c.1730)



The
King's
Room

More pics of some of the beautiful pieces of needlework to be seen in Treasurer's House -



The Queen's Room



Some images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats.

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Most images courtesy of Lady Anne's Retreats.

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17th century stumpwork needlework in the Tapestry Dressing Room.

It tells the Old Testament story of Esther, who interceded with the Persian King to prevent the massacre of the Jews.

After lunch it was back to the classroom for a couple of hours to work on our various projects, two hour's break and then there was a lecture on 'Samplers: A Child's View of Embroidery, Their History and Conservation' by Jacqui Hyman, a well respected textile conservator. For those of you who know me - LOVED it! I took pages and pages of notes.

In addition to conserving textile pieces, Jacqui also supplies conservation products. Her address is - Restore Products 2 Talbot Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3JD · Phone: +44 161 928 0020 Email: products@textilerestoration.co.uk · Web: www.restore-products.co.uk

Our evening meal, then it was bedtime after a very intense but a wonderful, inspiring and fulfilling day.

Rest up for another exceptional day!

