

**Blog #105 - An Unexpected Needlework Project:**  
December 2020

Another year has drawn to a close. A busy month of end-of-year functions and several JBW designs stitched this month (Christmas & a Sampler design) and the celebration of remembering the birthday of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

One of the end-of-year functions was a luncheon get-together with one of my special stitching groups at 'Birdwoods'.



A favourite place for us all and a MUST GO TO destination for visitors to the Hawkes Bay.

Louise has created a beautiful, peaceful place to spoil oneself, loved ones and friends, indulging in a delicious lunch or morning tea or afternoon tea followed by a wander through the sculpture gardens, purchasing one or more of them or buying a gift from the gift shop (where everything has a story), enjoying an icecream and finally visiting the grannies in the old-fashioned, traditional style sweet shop to say hello and purchase some old time favourite sweets to take home for hubby or the grandchildren.



Birdwoods founders Louise and her husband Bruce are from third generation Zimbabwean families, emigrating to NZ in 2004 with their three children. Birdwoods originally started in 1991 when Louise started a business creating metal birds out of recycled oil drums on their farm in the Mazowe district of Zimbabwe. This grew into a highly successful export-based enterprise with Louise's metal birds being sent all over the world until 2003 when politics took a grip of Zimbabwe and almost everything was lost to a lawless government.

Upon emigrating in 2004, Bruce & Louise established Birdwoods in Havelock North. They travel back to Africa yearly to select textiles, artwork, craft, stone and metal sculptures for sale at Birdwoods.

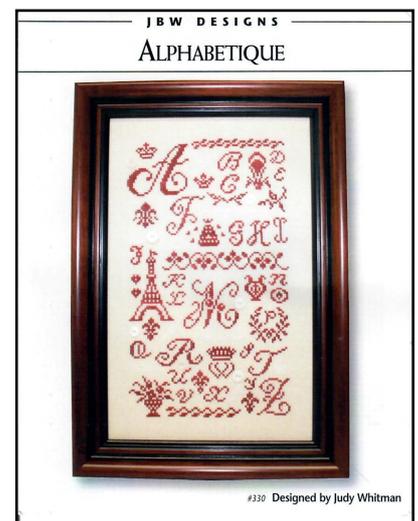
Prior to going to lunch at Birdwoods I had gathered up several sampler type designs for the girls so that they could choose which of the samplers they wanted to stitch to fulfil Gigi's yearly January "blessing" challenge - that is .... begin and complete stitching a sampler in the month of January to receive blessings throughout the year.

Each year Gigi chooses a particular sampler - a new one published by her - but at the time of our get-together I did not have all Gigi's information.

Pictured to the right is the design they chose - *Alphabetique* by JBW Designs.

**JBW 330 - Alphabetique \$ 27.50**

The next decision was whether they wanted to stitch the design as per the model colours or choose their own fabric and thread colours. Once these choices were made, I had to



quickly stitch this piece as most had chosen an overdyed thread and I wasn't sure if the design would require one or two skeins. By stitching it myself I was able to ascertain the quantity.

I was then busy cutting fabric and packaging the threads for each of those participating in the project so that they would have these items to begin stitching on the 1st of January.

Pictured to the right is my stitched piece.

Fabric: Permin Linen - 35 count - Lambswool

Thread: Sampler Thread - Cherry Wine

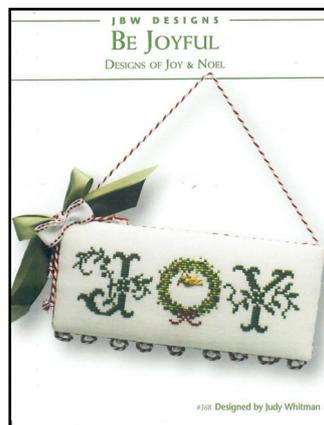
The other stitching I did this month was one of two Christmas pieces of Judy's design - Be Joyful.

Stitched the NOEL piece.

Will stitch JOY after our January Challenge and then finish both pieces as ornamentals.

I forgot to photograph my progress and so will show you this in another blog.

In the meantime, pictured to the right is the cover of the design.

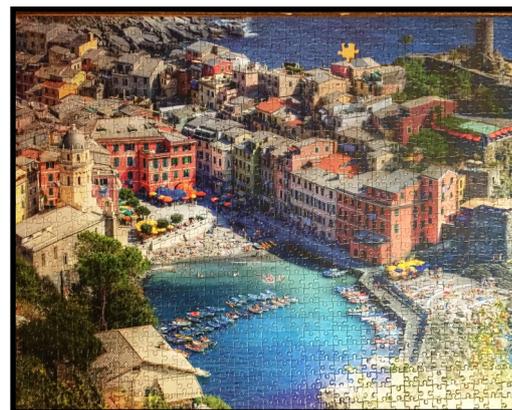


JBW 368  
Be Joyful  
\$ 25.00

As you know, every Christmas I receive at least one jigsaw puzzle as a gift. And this year was no exception.

This puzzle was from our granddaughter, Madison, and as she knows that I loved my time in Italy, gave me a puzzle of one of the coastal towns - Vernazza, Liguria.

I began this puzzle on Boxing Day and it was all finished the next day. If you have sharp eyes you will see that there is a puzzle piece missing. I found it after I had taken the photo. It had slipped down the side of the cushion seat of my armchair.

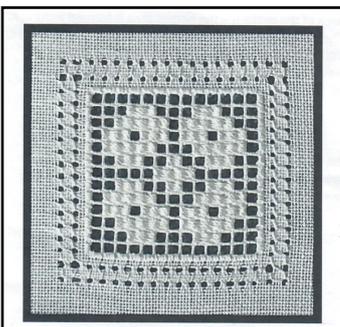


And now to continue on with Lady Anne's Needlework Tour:  
Day 11 - Sunday, 29th of September 2019

This day was another day at Langshott Manor. One could choose what they wished to do - that is, personal stitching time or spend the time continuing working on their project with the tutor of that particular project. There was an alternative in the afternoon to the options already mentioned. One could learn another project by a recent graduate (Nicola Fairhurst) from The Royal School of Needlework - this tutor having been a recipient of a sponsorship/grant from Phillipa's company - Crewelwork.

I stitched by myself in one of the gorgeous old sitting rooms of the manor (pictured to the right) during the morning and in the afternoon chose to take the class.

On receipt of the tutor's design/project I was thrilled to see it was a counted thread project (you know how I LOVE counted thread work) and quietly voiced to her my pleasure by saying, "How lovely - it's filet".

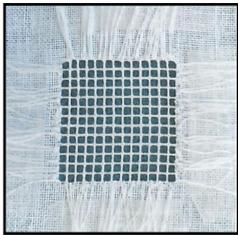


She immediately 'jumped on me' and said, "It's not filet - it's Sicilian Whitework from the 1500's".



She then proceeded to place a small reel of adhesive tape in front of every class participant.

Of course, you know, to work filet one needs to firstly create a grid by cutting certain fabric threads at the centre of the design area, and then these cut threads are withdrawn to the edge of the design area and are held in place by a padded border of Satin Stitch or Four-Sided Stitch and the remaining fabric threads are whipped together in a particular way so as to form a grid and therefore create the background for ones design.



Back View  
Threads withdrawn  
before being held in place  
by the border stitches

After telling everyone which threads to cut, the tutor then instructed us to use the tape to hold the cut fabric threads out of the way until such time that they could be held in place by the border stitches once the whipping/grid stitches had been completed.

You can imagine my thoughts to the use of adhesive tape.

Over my thirty years of teaching I never have and never would recommend an adhesive be used on any piece of needlework \* and I'm certain that they would not have used it in the 1500's.

And so I proceeded to tack my threads out flat and away from the grid.

On seeing what I had done the tutor said to me, "You shouldn't have done that. That will never work".

Normally I would never say a disrespectful word to a tutor, but to my shame I replied, "Would you please leave me alone".

She did not look at my work again and I happily created my grid, almost finishing it completely by the end of the class in readiness to begin the Four-Sided Stitch to firmly hold the withdrawn threads in place, removing the tacking stitches as I worked towards them.

I have to confess that on first seeing this project, my intention was to finish it - but after my experience, not sure that I will finish it as it will always be a reminder of my bad manners.

To her credit though, the tutor had done some beautiful needlework. She had brought many of her finished pieces of various styles of needlework to show her achievements over her years of training at the Royal School. Some of these are pictured down the right side of this page. She told us that she didn't begin stitching until her middle years. Due to illness and the inability to work she made the decision to learn needlework with the view to earning an income from designing and teaching.

After dinner that evening, as it was our last evening together, we sat around and on a big screen looked at the images of the places and things and the embroidery that we had seen and shared our experiences of the time we had had together.

For me, despite the unexpected hospital happening - the most wonderful experience! Certainly one to be remembered with a thankful heart. Truly blessed.

My ancestral country - loved every minute of it and felt very much at home there.

And my passion for needlework and all things beautiful - awesome!

Bye for now.



\* The only time I will use adhesive tape on fabric is internally (where it will never be seen) during construction of an ornamental to hold a fabric seam to a piece of cardboard or similar backing material.



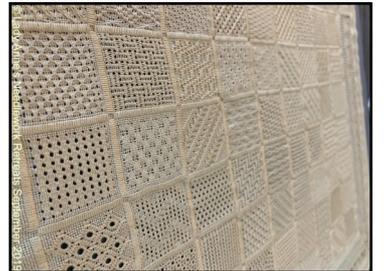
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