

Bustle & Sew Magazine

November 2012



Prepare for the festive season
with our Christmas makes ...

Explore the history
of Harris
Tweed



It's cosy inside



Hello, and welcome to issue 22 (yes really!) of the Bustle & Sew e-zine.

In this month's issue you'll find both Christmas-themed projects as well as great gift ideas - who wouldn't want to find a Podge (or a Hodge) in their stocking on Christmas morning? My little reindeer head pattern makes his debut, and the reindeer theme continues with a really easy and right on-trend Nordic applique cushion cover as well as a delightful baby deer enjoying a starry night with her friends. You'll also discover a

feature on Harris Tweed - I have some pieces arriving from eBay very soon - ready to incorporate into a new winter throw for Townie Husband's favourite snuggly armchair and I'll be telling you more about this project on the [Bustle & Sew blog](#) over the coming weeks.

Next month there will be some final Christmas gift ideas, the third in my series of seasonal vintage embroideries - this time "Autumn Lady" as well as the 2013 Rosie & Bear journal cover ready to stitch for the New Year.

I do hope you enjoy this issue - and if you're a regular subscriber don't forget to download your free gift - my printable Christmas Bunting based on a selection of vintage wrap and fabric.

Best wishes

Helen xx

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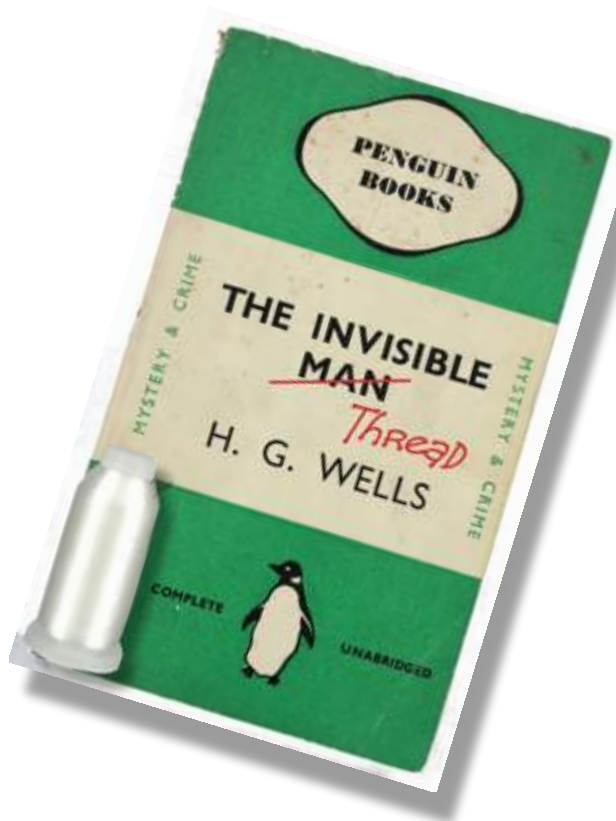


Cosy Cat Applique Cushion Cover

As the days grow shorter and the nights colder, November is the time to snuggle down on the sofa, in a nest of cosy blankets and comfy cushions.

This little applique kitten is the perfect companion to share your winter evenings - and is so easy to create - why not make one for a friend too?

Measurements given to fit 18" cushion pad.



I am sure that many readers will, like me have wrestled with their invisible thread, loving, yet hating it at the same time!

Invisible thread is one of those indispensable items for those who love to sew, but whilst it is amazingly useful, saving time and energy, it is (in my opinion) quite horrible to work with. The whole point of using invisible thread is that your stitches blend perfectly into the background of your work, rather than being prominent - either as a result of using a thread in a contrasting colour - or failing to match your thread properly.

It's fair to say though, that even though invisible thread is not nice to work with, it has improved enormously over the years. When I used to "help" my mum with her sewing I remember her invisible thread (also known as monofilament) being stiff and wiry with ends that poked at your skin. I also remember her becoming increasingly frustrated trying to set the correct sewing machine tension to work with her thread. Today invisible thread is much softer and lighter - some is as fine as a human

hair - though you can purchase different thicknesses.

Invisible thread is available in two fibres - nylon and polyester. This can be confusing, if you see that your spool states your thread is "polyamide" -but this means that it is actually nylon and not polyester. Polyamide is nylon's chemical name.

Polyester holds up well to UV light and higher temperatures than nylon and does not become brittle or yellow with age. Having said this though, many people like nylon as it feels softer and can be more "invisible" when used - it's really a question of personal preference. It's definitely worth checking out a few brands of thread before making your purchase as they do vary - some show more than others, having a shinier finish than others which can be quite matte.

You can purchase invisible thread in clear and smoke colours or tints. Clear blends with most light colours and smoke with darker ones.

Working with invisible thread

If you haven't used invisible thread in your machine before, then it's well worth practising on some scrap fabric to achieve the correct your machine settings.

You can use invisible thread both in your needle and bobbin or, more usually, it may be paired with conventional thread in your bobbin. Use the smallest needle you can. Because they are so fine and made from a single extruded fibre, monofilament threads don't relax to fill the hole left by your needle.

Depending upon your machine, you may find you achieve the best results with either the vertical or horizontal spool pin. You may also need to adjust your tensions. If the bobbin thread shows through out the top and so doesn't secure the invisible thread properly then stitches will easily become undone. In that case loosen the upper tension. If the reverse is true then tighten your upper tension.



Hodge and Podge the Hedgehog Softies

Who could resist these adorable little hedgehog softies? There's Podge - the little baby hedgehog, and Hodge, her big brother dressed in a smart stripey scarf to keep out those autumn chills (seen here with his cousins Horace and Humphrey).



As the nights draw in and the days grow colder, our affections shift from sun-bleached cottons, denim and canvas to heavier woollen fabrics, tweeds, tartans and plaids. Possibly the most famous Scottish fabric is Harris tweed - woven in the islands of the Outer Hebrides in Scotland.

From time immemorial, the inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland have woven a beautiful and intricate cloth the world knows simply as Harris Tweed.

Tweed is a rough, unfinished woollen fabric with a soft, open, flexible texture, resembling cheviot or homespun, but more closely woven. It is made in either plain or twill weave and may have a check or herringbone pattern. Subdued, interesting colour effects are created by twisting together differently coloured woollen strands into a two- or three-ply yarn.

The name “tweed” came about entirely by chance when, in about 1830, a London merchant received a letter from a company in Hawick about some tweels. (Tweel was the original name of this type of fabric - being Scots for “twill” as the cloth was woven in an twilled rather than a plain pattern.) The London merchant misread the handwriting, thinking that the cloth was called “tweed” after the river Tweed that flows through the Scottish borders. The cloth was therefore advertised as “tweed” and the rest, as they say, is history as the name has been used ever since.



The islanders of Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra produce this luxury cloth entirely by hand and have long been known for the excellence of their weaving. However up until the middle of the nineteenth century, their cloth was used only on their crofts or sold at local markets, but in 1846, Lady Dunmore, widow of the landowner of Harris, the Earl of Dunmore, chose to have their clan tartan replicated by Harris weavers in tweed.

The results proved so successful that Lady Dunmore began to devote much time and effort to marketing the tweed to her wealthy friends further afield and as a result of her enthusiastic work sales and trade





Winter Bunny Tea Cosy

Here in England, we are quite convinced that there is nothing better than a nice cup of tea to warm you up when it's chilly outside. And I'm sure that this little bunny with his cold red nose will be happy to keep your tea pot nice and cosy on even the coldest winter day.

Tea cosy will fit a 4-cup Emma Bridgewater teapot - but I have included instructions to resize to fit your own teapot - then just scale the applique pieces accordingly.





Nordic Reindeer Cushion Cover

I have always loved the trend for Nordic style at Christmas - taking inspiration from the landscape and natural motifs like stars, snowflakes - and reindeer of course!

And the colour scheme - red, white and green. Nordic style is easy to create in your own home this Christmas with this simple, but very effective cushion-cover, why not make a pair - you'll be finished in under a day!

Dimensions are given for a 16" pad, but for larger or smaller simply resize the template accordingly.



Little Geese Softies

These little geese stand about 10" high and are a great way to use up scraps of fabric and odd buttons. Make them in linen, or felt/woollen fabric scraps work just as well too.

A great Christmas decorating idea!



Starry Night Embroidery

Simple embroidery for you to enjoy - either mount and hang - or why not make into a cushion cover with some simple log cabin patchwork as I have here.

The only stitches used are French knots and back or straight stitch.

Finished embroidery measures 6" x 7".



Getting to know your Fabric

Remember the song from "The King and I?

"Getting to know you, getting to know all about you, Getting to like you, Getting to hope you like me..."

Now everyone's singing along - it's just as important that you get to know all about your fabric especially if, like me you love to rummage around thrift shops and bargain bins - so your fabric composition may not be easily identifiable.

As well as the more regular purchase of new fabric, it's fun to visit thrift and charity shops as there are often great finds and amazing bargains to be had. It's green to recycle old fabric - felting woollies and chopping into old jackets and skirts - and by taking this route you can be certain that your creation will be unique to you. You can often find really high quality fabrics that you couldn't otherwise afford in this way.

If you're going down this route, be sure to wash, or have dry-cleaned, your thrifted fabrics before you use them. You don't know where they may have been - they could have musty odours or even (heaven forbid!) nasties such as clothes-moths lurking in their folds - and even if they appear to be perfectly clean you need to pre-shrink them - just in case!

If you are washing rather than dry-cleaning your find, then it's important that you are able to identify the fibres used as this may not be immediately obvious. You'll particularly need this information if your project is likely to be washed at any time in the future.

The Flame Test:

Cut a small piece (about 1" square) from your fabric and hold it with tweezers (not plastic ones!). Ignite the fabric over a non-flammable surface in a well-ventilated room, or outside if your smoke alarm is quite sensitive. The way that your fabric reacts when you set fire to it will help you to identify its fibre content.

Wool, cashmere and other animal fibres will smoulder rather than burn brightly, whilst linen and cotton both smell of burning paper and produce a grey ash filament. Rayon burns in a similar way to linen and cotton, but will continue to burn after the flame is removed.

Polyester has a sweetish smell whilst burning, and acrylic gives off a pungent acrid smell. Both produce smoke and give you a hard black residue after burning.

If you unravel some threads from a small piece of linen or cotton fabric and slowly move a flame towards them you will see that they ignite as the flames draw near. Synthetic fibres will curl back from the heat and tend to melt rather than ignite and burn.



Fabric Reindeer Head

The final pattern in what has turned out to be a very reindeer-themed magazine this month is my mounted reindeer head. He's mounted on a 6" hoop and measures 14" from the bottom of his neck to the tips of his antlers.

Great addition to your Christmas decorations - and I'm tempted to make another in tweed and linen to display all year round!

An Alphabet of Stitches: Part One

A LGERIAN EYE STITCH (Diagram 1)

Worked by the counted thread and used as a chequer-pattern filling for large conventional forms or as a background effect. The complete stitch covers four threads (in both directions) of the ground material, canvas or linen. Bring the needle out in the centre, work two stitches into the corner, two into the centre of the side, continuing until the square is complete and always bringing the needle up in the centre to form a hole.

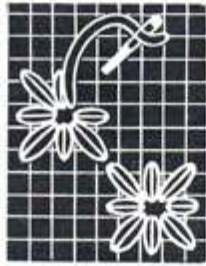


Diagram 1

dark colour and are worked by the counted thread on suitable linens or canvases so they are always geometric. Use straight stitches; cross stitch and satin stitch can also be introduced worked by the counted thread.

B RAID EDGING STITCH (Diagram 4)

Prepare the edge to be embroidered. Place this away from the worker and bring the needle out on the right hand side. Twist the needle round the thread and with the loop on the needle pass it under the edge, pull

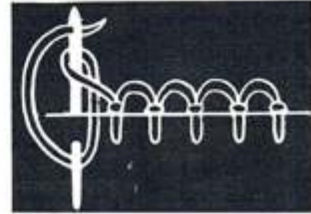


Diagram 4

through and away from the worker in order to tighten the knot right on the edge. Small even loops should be formed between the knots.



BULLION KNOT (Diagram 5)

With the needle pulled through to the front take up a piece of material on the needle the length of required knot bringing the point out where the thread first came through (A). Wind the thread several times round the needle (B), place left thumb on it and draw the needle through the coil. Pull in the opposite direction to make the coil lie flatly, then take the needle through to back and bring it out ready for the next stitch (C). Do not use a needle with a very large head. The beginner will have to experiment in



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Bustle & Sew designs



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