

ROSIE & BEAR

Around the Year Quilt Book

Stitch twelve beautiful embroidered blocks to create your heirloom quilt



Helen Dickson

Around Twelve beautiful Rosie & Bear blocks.
One wonderful heirloom quilt.

The Year Quilt Book

HELEN DICKSON



Bustle & Sew
www.bustleandsew.com

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Helen Dickson started her online pattern business, Bustle & Sew, in 2009.

She creates designs for patterns that are lively, interesting and fresh, and that she hopes will inspire others to pick up fabric and thread to produce their own piece of work with all the sense of achievement that brings.

She loves stitching and is passionate about sharing with others through her blog and e-zine.

Connect with Helen through her blog:

www.bustleandsew.com/blog

Discover her patterns on her website:

www.bustleandsew.com

If you like Helen's patterns, then why not consider the Bustle & Sew e-zine, an eclectic mixture of her original designs, vintage stitching, features, articles and even a recipe page contributed by her now grown-up daughter Rosie? It's the nicest, best value way to build your library of Bustle & Sew designs. Learn more here:

www.bustleandsew.com/magazine

THE STORY BEGINS ...

The idea for my Rosie & Bear Calendar Quilt came to me as I was looking through my collection of photograph albums from those long-ago, far-away days when I had a very small daughter called Rosie ...



My albums contained photos of Rosie enjoying summer holidays, Christmas celebrations, picnics on the beach and parties in the garden. Even when he couldn't be spotted in the pictures, you could be sure that her faithful companion, Bear, was not too far away. Indeed, he was probably just out of camera range, getting into some mischief or other while nobody was taking any notice of him.

Although Rosie is all grown-up now, she still treasures Bear, who has become quite an elderly gentleman. These days he is content to wait quietly on the end of her bed, snoozing away the hours until Rosie returns home in the evenings to tell him all about her days. He is such a very good listener, and never reveals the secrets he learns.

I have always loved vintage blocks of the month, featuring all kinds of animals or flowers through the seasons of the year, so popular in the mid-20th century. Although I have discovered lots of lovely contemporary embroidery designs, when I started searching for calendar blocks to make into a quilt, I couldn't find any that really appealed to me. That was when I decided to create my own "Rosie and Bear" series.

I like to keep things simple when I'm designing and so, whether you're a quilter who is trying out freestyle embroidery, or a stitcher who wants to create a special quilt, you're sure to achieve a good result.

There's nothing complicated at all about this project. In fact, the only problem I had along the way was deciding what to put in and what to leave out of the set of quilt blocks. That's why you'll find some additional Rosie and Bear designs on my Bustle & Sew website if you'd like to stitch some extra Rosie and Bear pictures.

And of course if you have a special child of your own in your life, then why not consider customising Rosie, perhaps changing her hair, or skin colour to reflect your own child's? This is sure to make your quilt very special to, and treasured by, its lucky recipient.



I hope you have as much fun making your very own quilt as I had putting this book together for you.

Helen Dickson

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Calendar Bunnies also available from Bustle & Sew

USING THIS BOOK ...

You will find all the material requirements for making the whole quilt on page 15, before the individual patterns for each block of the month.

I am sure that some readers might be planning to make individual blocks - maybe stitching a single design for a particular project, or perhaps making their quilts over an extended period of time. To make it easier for those who intend to do this, I have also given the material requirements for each individual block at the beginning of its section.



As different stitchers prefer different methods of transferring the design to the fabric, I have provided the embroidery patterns both the right way round and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer. I have also included guidance on how to transfer your design.

As well as a glossary of perhaps the less familiar stitches at the back of this book, I have also included guidance for embroidering fur. Whether you're a newbie stitcher or more experienced, I recommend you read this before starting to stitch as you will find lots of hints and tips to help you make Bear's fur the best it can be. Lots of stitchers are put off by the idea of embroidering fur, but it really isn't that hard at all.

Bear is the only solid part of the embroidery - this is because he's the only character that remains unchanged to the present day. Childhood is very fleeting and the little Rosie in those blocks simply doesn't exist any more. Now my daughter is a lovely young woman, and I'm very proud of her, but she is quite different to the child of 20 years ago of course!

I think you'll discover that both the embroidery and piecing the quilt top are surprisingly easy, and very enjoyable to do.

And finally ... don't forget to label your quilt on the back when you've finished. I've included a Rosie & Bear label for you to use for this purpose. Future generations will thank you for taking the time and trouble to do this as "Granny's Quilt" is sure to be loved by your children and your children's children too!



TOOLS AND MATERIALS

One of the great things about a project like this is that you don't need to purchase lots of expensive tools and materials to get you started. But don't economise on the items you do purchase - you'll be investing a lots of time and energy in your Calendar Quilt, so purchase items that you'll enjoy using and that will give you good results.



You will need the following basic items:

FOR THE EMBROIDERY

NEEDLES

Did you know that the steel needles we use today were introduced in the 16th century? And since then needles have been developed for all kinds of techniques. Embroidery needles have sharp points and long eyes to make it easier to thread multiple lengths of floss. It's advisable to change your needle regularly as they can become blunt or even bent which will affect the quality of your work.

Choose a good brand of needle - cheaper brands may be roughly finished and any rough bits will snag on your floss or fabric. They may also bend or break more easily. For embroidery the needles of choice are "Sharps". The stitching in this quilt uses 1 or 2 strands of floss, and for this I would recommend a number 6 needle.

EMBROIDERY FLOSS

Floss is available in a huge variety of colours. I have specified DMC floss in this book as it is both good quality and widely available. You can of course substitute colours, but do please be aware that you are unlikely to find an exact match for the specified colour which will affect the look of your quilt.

Do not be tempted to economise by purchasing cheap floss as this is likely to tangle and break, will not give such a good finish and, in the worst case, may not be colourfast on washing.



I like to store my floss on bobbins as using them direct from the skein results (for me at least!) in a tangled mess. Also, you can label the bobbins with the floss colour number, whilst the paper bands on the skeins are likely to slip off and become lost, so you won't have any idea which is which.

Stranded cotton floss comes in six strands - most of the blocks in this quilt use just two strands in your needle at any one time. Cut a length of floss before splitting into strands - and don't make the length too long (the distance from your wrist to your elbow is generally accepted to be about right) or it is likely to become tangled.



HOW TO EMBROIDER FUR

The quilt blocks in this book feature my daughter, Rosie, and her childhood friend Bear. Although Rosie is very simple to embroider, using stem and back stitch, Bear is shown in all his furry glory. I know the thought of stitching fur can be a bit scary if you've never tried it before. But don't worry - it's really quite easy - and with Bear's help I'm going to show you how...

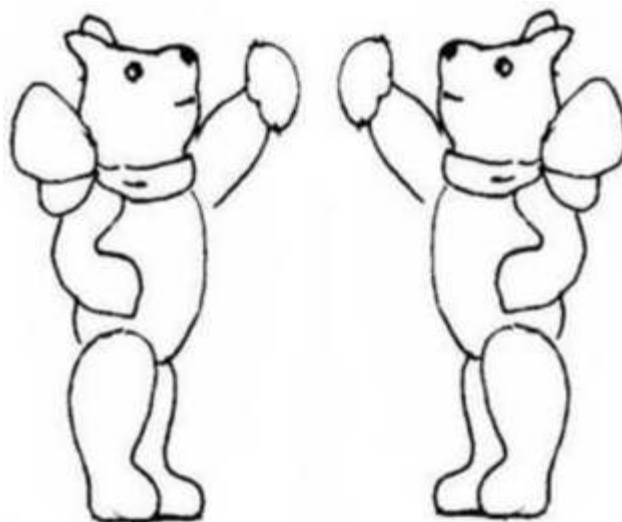
You might like to practise your fur embroidery before starting your quilt, in which case you will need a 6" square piece of cotton or linen fabric suitable for embroidery. You will also need stranded cotton embroidery floss in dark chocolate, milk chocolate, toffee and fudge colours (*OK that's very dark brown, mid to dark brown, light brown and golden yellow colours. But as I recall that Bear was always very fond of sweets I thought I'd use our common language!*) You'll also need some black for his eye and the tiniest little bit of white to put the sparkle in his eye. Using linen floss with the cotton gives interest to the texture as the linen is matt which contrasts nicely with the shine of the cotton. But if you can't get linen floss, then it's fine to use all cotton.



First transfer your Bear onto your fabric. My Bear measures between 2 1/2" and 3" tall - small enough so that there's not too much stitching but large enough to be able to delineate the different shades of fur clearly and effectively.

IMPORTANT: You will be using 2 strands of floss throughout unless specified otherwise.

Hoop up and take a good look at the soon-to-be furry fellow. If you have a pet, then take a good look at him or her too - or check out some animal pictures.



Notice the direction in which the fur grows. ALWAYS away from the nose



The nose, therefore, is the focus of all your fur stitches. And look at how their fur overlaps so that the fur nearest the nose lies on top of fur further down the body.

This is the first key to achieving realistic Bear fur - getting the *direction* of your stitching correct.

THE QUILT BLOCKS





*“January brings the snow,
Makes our feet and fingers glow.”*



***“February brings the rain,
Fills the frozen lake again”***



*“March brings breezes sharp and chill,
Shakes the dancing daffodil”*



*“April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daisies at our feet”*



*“May brings flocks of pretty lambs,
Sporting round their fleecy dams”*



***“June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children’s hands with posies.”***



*“Hot July brings cooling showers,
Apricots and gillyflowers.”*



*“August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.”*



***“Warm September brings the fruit,
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.”***



***“Brown October brings the pheasant,
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.”***



***“Dull November brings the blast,
Hark the leaves are whirling fast.”***



***“Cold December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire and Christmas treat”***