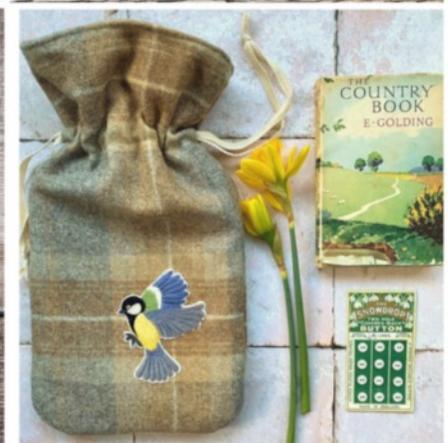




Issue 169  
February 2025

# BUSTLE & SEW MAGAZINE



Love is in the air this month, as Valentine's Day approaches. We celebrate the season with some romantic stitching and search for signs of spring in the countryside around us...

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## Welcome to the February Magazine

February is the month when nature begins to wake from its winter sleep. There are snowdrops in our garden now and the sharp green spikes of daffodils and other spring bulbs are an inch or two above ground. The birds that visit our feeders come now in pairs, and I am reminded of the old tradition that Valentine's Day is the day that they choose their mates - though it will be a while yet before they begin their families.

This month's issue reflects the changing season, with lots of early spring goodies inside - and one of my favourite projects for some time - the two little Rama Llama Llamas - sing-along anyone? We also have my final winter project, a hot water bottle cosy, for though the days are longer now the nights are still chilly and a hot water bottle is very comforting to snuggle up to. I hope you'll also enjoy reading about the remarkable Rachel Kay Shuttleworth and her life in guiding and collecting.

And finally, the March edition will be published on Thursday 27 February in four weeks time.

Until then...

Very best wishes

*Helen xx*



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## Issue 169

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# February

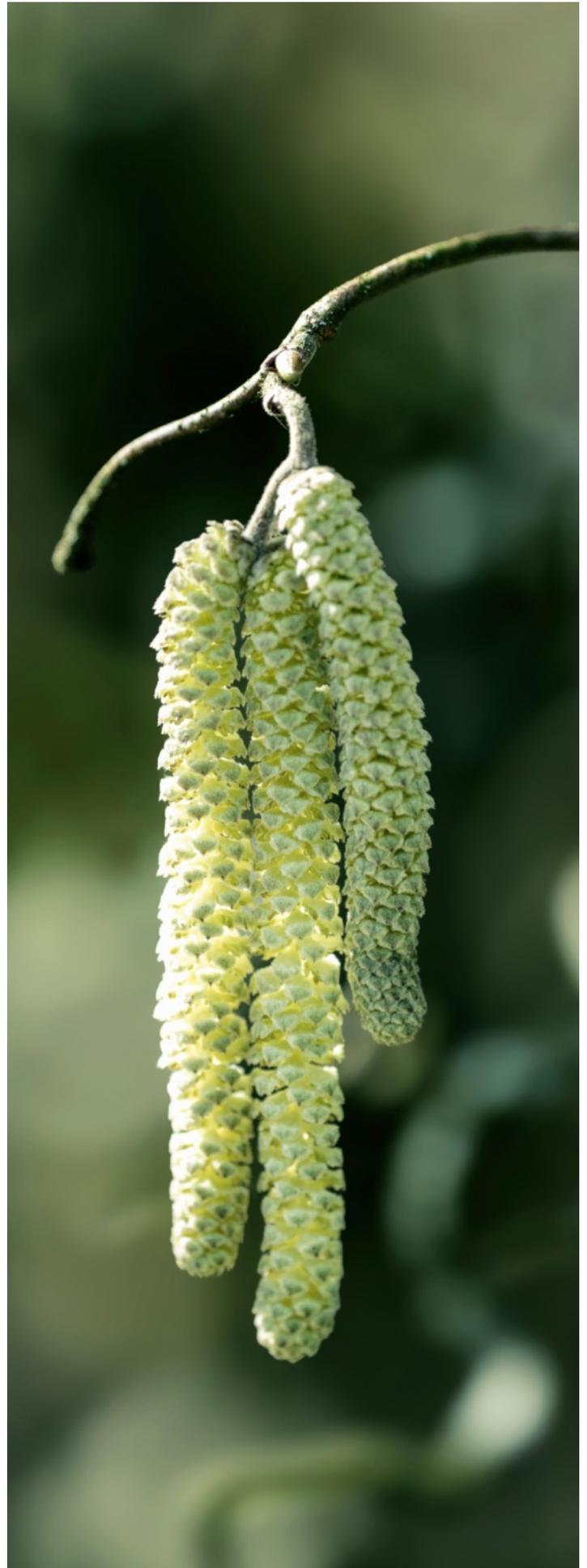
*In February nature itself appears to be marking time, while wild skies and snow flurries make it seem as though winter will never lose its grip. And yet the days are growing steadily longer and the first signs of spring are beginning to emerge from beneath the frost....*

Though it's less than six weeks since the winter solstice, the first day of February in London claws back an extra 53 minutes between sunrise and sunset. In the city on colder days there are pink evening skies, and by the time the night clouds pick up the yellow glow of the street lamps, the rumble of homebound traffic fills the winter air. Further north in Scotland, blizzards can whiteout the ski slopes above Aviemore and bring transport chaos in their wake. Throughout the UK, February can be the coldest and snowiest month.

Traditionally Candlemas, the second of the month, has been considered by farmers to be the halfway point of winter. Especially in the hill country, a prudent livestock owner would ensure that half his winter stores of hay and other feed remained in the barn. It may be late April before the last frosts are gone and the grass begins to grow once more. For many farmers February is a month to mark time and do those hundred and one jobs that always need attending to - a time for repairing fences and machinery and catching up with friends.

For those of us who have less contact with the land, this seems a season when nature itself is marking time with new growth reluctant to emerge whilst winter does its worst. But already there are snowdrops in abundance. The leaf tips of this winter-flowering lily, sometimes called snow-piercer, are specially hardened and pointed to penetrate the frozen ground and the flowers are protected by a special sheath as they emerge. Snowdrops were probably first introduced into this country into churchyards and monastery gardens from the more southerly parts of Europe where the winters are warmer and there are insects to help pollinate the flowers.

On the bare twigs of hazel trees, the first brownish-yellow catkins which began to form in autumn now open and become creamy yellow. These "lamb's tails" are the male flowers of the tree and produce clouds of dusty pollen.



The feast of Candlemas, falling on the second of the month is also known as the "Purification of the Blessed Virgin" and the "Presentation of the Lord." Forty days after the birth of Christ, in accordance with Jewish law, Mary went to the temple to be ritually cleansed (a custom later known as "churching") and to present her male firstborn child to the Lord. While she was there, a man called Simeon recognised the baby as "the Lord's Christ" and hailed him as "A light to lighten the Gentiles." In the Christian Church this event was commemorated with a special mass, preceded by a procession with candles hence the name Candlemas. Churchgoers also brought household candles for a blessing that was supposed to ward off evil in the home, but this practice was banned after the Reformation.

In former times, the Christmas season didn't official end until Candlemas and decorative evergreen branches were left in place until the eve of that festival, when superstition insisted that every trace of them should be removed.

In the USA, February 2 is known as Groundhog Day. The groundhog (woodchuck) is said to emerge from hibernation on this day to check out the weather: if it is dull or wet he stays up and about because winter will soon be over,

but if he can see his shadow (ie if it is sunny and dry) he goes back to his burrow to sleep for another six weeks.

The third brings the feast day of St Blaise, patron saint of wool-combers, who is also said to have saved the life of a young boy by miraculously removing a fishbone that was stuck in his throat. For this reason his name is invoked against throat ailments in a church ceremony performed on his saint's day. The priest blesses two candles, ties them together to form a cross and holds against the throat of anyone wanting protection or relief.

The most famous saint's day this month however, must be that of St Valentine on the fourteenth. Valentine was a third century martyr about whom very little is known. The association of St Valentine's Day with love and lovers, which has been traced back to the fourteenth century, probably originates from the date itself. February 14 is the eve of the Lupercalia, an ancient Roman festival of fertility, and is also the day on which birds are traditionally thought to choose their mates. Surprisingly many birds actually have found their partners by this time, but for others it's still too early to be sure of a successful partnership. Many species depend on insects to feed their young, and until the real warmth of spring

arrives, a union would be premature. Winter too, has not yet loosened its grasp upon the land and when a cold snap arrives, then many animals, already under pressure, will finally succumb. The rigours of winter stretches their powers of endurance to the limits and by this time their stored food supplies will be running very low. Keeping warm takes a lot of energy and for some small, warm blooded creatures, even a single night below freezing can spell their end. Wrens and long tailed tits will roost snugly together in small crannies, and have been seen to flock into postboxes, upturned flowerpots and, sensibly, into nestboxes intended for their use in spring. Sometimes as many as fifty birds have been counted as they tumble in from the cold! For seed eaters such as finches, grain and other cultivated seeds provide welcome supplements to the remnants of wild fruits and berries that still hang in the hedgerows.

President's Day, established in 1971, is a joint commemoration of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (12 February) and George Washington (22 February) that were formerly celebrated on these dates.

Washington was born in Virginia in 1731 and in his early twenties embarked upon a military career, which was so successful that by the time the American War of Independence broke out in 1775 he had established a national reputation that saw him appointed as commander-in-chief of the colonial army. After the war was won he turned his attention to politics, becoming the first President of the USA in 1789.

Lincoln's presidency was dominated by the American Civil War which broke out soon after his inauguration and ended with the surrender of the Confederates in the month of his death. In Washington on 14 April 1865, as he sat with his wife at the theatre, he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, an actor who supported the Confederate cause.

This month the dawn chorus gets underway, heralding the start of the mating season as birds begin to look for partners and defend their breeding territories. Beginning with blackbirds and robins towards the end of the month, other species will gradually join in the chorus through until late May when it reaches its glorious peak. The sunrise singing offers a

fascinating insight into the world of our garden birds. If you listen carefully you'll learn to distinguish individual species and the order in which they start to sing each day. This order is determined by the foods they consume and their ability to see in the dim early morning light. The early birds (blackbirds and robins) really do catch the worms. They have comparatively large eyes compared to their bodies and so they can see in the earliest, faintest light of dawn. As the sun rises and light levels increase, insect eaters (such as wrens) wake from their slumber. Finally the seed eaters such as finches and sparrows are up last of all and wait until just before daybreak before beginning to sing.





# Feathered Flight Water Bottle Cover

## Notes:

Stitches used are split stitch, satin stitch and back stitch. The bird is worked on felt before being applied to the cover fabric.

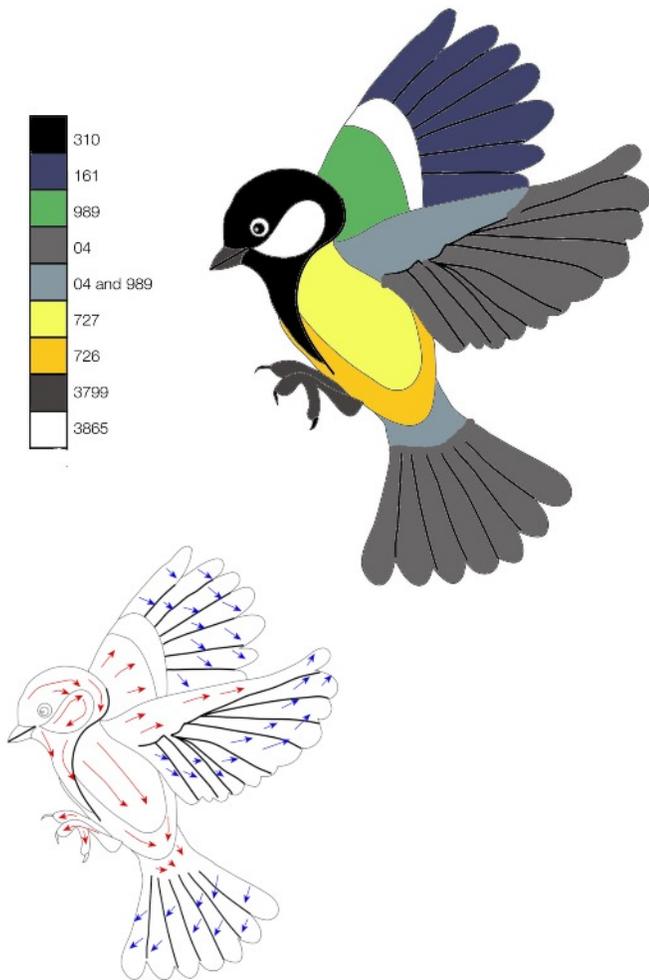
If you are unfamiliar with working any of the stitches, then I recommend you [visit the Royal School of Needlework Stitch Wall](#) where there are really clear full instructions, including video



## Materials

- 18" x 24" soft fabric for the exterior (I used a pure wool plaid remant)
- 18" x 24" soft fabric for the interior (I used a nice wool blend felt)
- 1 yard ½" wide ribbon or cotton tape
- 8" square cream wool blend felt for embroidery
- DMC stranded cotton floss in colours 04, 161, 310, 726, 727, 989, 3799, 3865
- Temporary fabric marker pen
- Hot water bottle
- Seam ripper

*It's February and spring is on the way - but it's not here yet and a hot water bottle is very comforting on those chilly early spring nights! I like this design as you don't have to keep opening the cover to fill your bottle, just loosen the gathering tape at the top.*



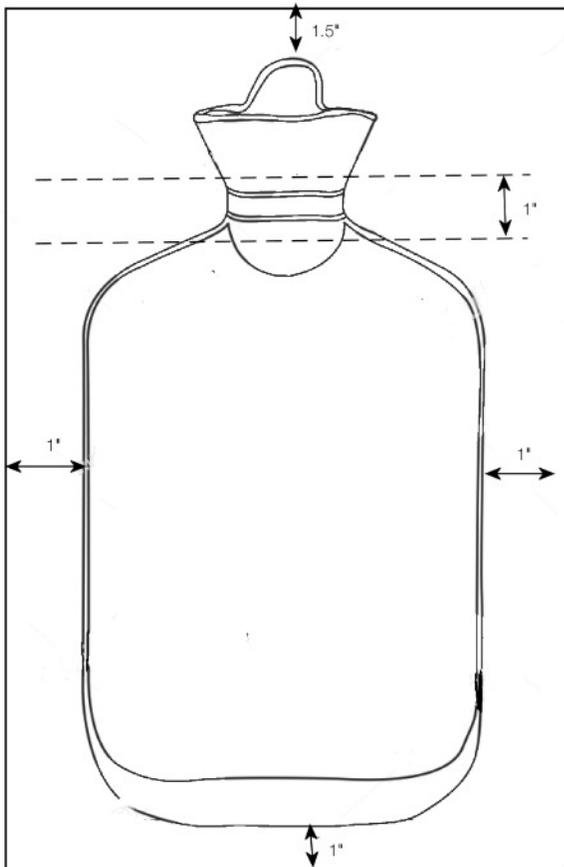
## Method

- First work the embroidery. Transfer the design to the centre of your cream felt and work as follows in the colours shown in the diagram above.
- Use two strands of floss throughout.
- The area marked with red arrows are worked in split stitch in the direction of the arrows. I have used a lot of split stitch as this is a strong stitch, not easily damaged, that will stand up to the wear and tear of the hot water bottle cover. To work split stitch using two strands of floss simply insert your needle between the strands thereby splitting the width of the thread evenly.
- The wing and tail feathers are worked in satin stitch in the direction of the blue arrows in the image above.
- Work long straight stitches in 161 between the areas of satin stitch on the lower wing and tail and the same in 3788 on the upper wing.
- The eye is a few short straight stitches in 310 with a tiny stitch in 3865 worked over the top to add a little sparkle and life. It is outlined with 3865 using tiny back stitches.
- The beak is straight stitches in 3799 with a single straight stitch in 310 along the middle to delineate the two parts of the beak.
- The feet and legs are split stitch and the claws are small straight stitches in 310.
- When your embroidery is finished press lightly on the reverse being careful not to flatten your stitches.
- Carefully cut around the bird leaving a very small margin of cream felt around the edge (be extra careful not to cut through any of your stitches). Take your time over this and be as neat and accurate as possible as any rough or jagged edges will show on the finished piece.



## Make up the Cover

- Lay your outer fabric right side down on a clean flat surface. Deflate your hot water bottle and place on top of the fabric. With your temporary fabric marker pen draw a rectangle around the bottle 1" wider than the bottle around the sides and bottom edge and 1½" wider at the top. (See diagram below - not to scale).



- Mark two lines (shown by dotted lines above where the bottle narrows at the neck. These will be the

position of the channel for the tape or ribbon that gathers the neck.

- To create nice rounded corners at the bottom I drew around a 3" hoop (any round object would do) and cut away the excess. (1)
- Cut the lining fabric the same as the outer fabric.
- Position your embroidery on the front of the outer fabric using the photographs as a guide. Machine stitch around the edge on the border of felt you left to secure it in place. I actually found it easier to use my embroidery foot for this as the outline is quite fiddly.
- Place the two outer pieces right side together and stitch around the side and bottom edges leaving the top open. Use a ¼" seam allowance. Repeat for the lining fabric leaving a 4" gap at the bottom for turning.
- Turn the lining right side out and insert into the outer so that the right sides are together. Line up the side seams and pin. (2) Stitch around the top edge of the cover so joining the pieces together. Pull the outer through the turning gap and topstitch the gap closed. Topstitch around the top edge of the cover. Press well.
- Stitch along the lines you drew at the neck of the bottle. This forms the channel for the ribbon or tape. Open between these lines at the seams with your seam ripper (3)
- Cut your tape or ribbon in half and feed through the channel. Knot at the ends (4).
- Insert your hot water bottle.
- FINISHED



When the Romans named this second month of the year they had in mind their own cleansing festival of Februa, but the name is just as applicable to the cleansing and purifying process in nature which is so silently, yet surely, proceeding now.

As a good housewife sets her house in order before a feast, so the earth is cleansed and renovated in readiness for the floral feast of spring. The rains of February wash away corruption and decay; her frosts and keen winds harden and purify. The earth no longer seems asleep; there is a stirring of new life abroad, of promise and anticipation. The air is still cold, the woods leafless, the hillside bleak and bare: but beneath the dark mould a thousand young green plants push upward, and the buds upon the bare boughs burn reddish-purple at the tips and thicken with promise.

Upon St Valentine's Day this year I found the first primroses. Just a crumpled rosette of soft green and three pale blooms; little enough in themselves, but how precious as a harbinger.

There was magic in them. All around was winter: the tiny plot between the mossed oak roots where they grew was hard with frost, the dead leaves which sheltered them crisped with time, and the sky between the bare boughs overhead glinted like steel. Even as I banked them round again a few icy splinters of hail edged in, but beneath the sheltering hedgerow those three pallid flowers had power to create a miniature spring. Immediately to the inward eye sprang a vision of lanes and meadows starred with their fellows, of bluebell copses, June gardens and August poppy fields, of all the sweet pageant of which they were the earliest forerunners.

# Harbingers of Spring



*Flora Thompson:  
extracts from The  
Peeverell Papers and  
other writings*

All round the ivied bank of the garden hedge the snowdrops hang their delicate heads, daring the wet and cold in their own miraculous way.

There is a mystic loveliness about the snowdrop, rising as it does from the dark and sodden earth, so pure and frail and spotless. It is everybody's flower, beloved of all in town and country alike, for is it not the first signal of all to tell us the year has begun, that soon the spring will be here and the flowers spring and the song birds carol again?

It is quite possible that England owes the introduction of the snowdrop to St Francis, for although botanists have surmised its importation by the Romans, there is no proof of it; and what more natural than some gardening friar under orders for England should take his last look round the Italian garden he was leaving and add to the selection of vegetable and pot-herb roots a few bulbs of the snowdrop, which, planted in the newly made garden of the English monastery, would serve as a memento both of the dearly loved founder of his Order and as a symbol of the pure grace and simplicity of that Lady Poverty whose servant he was?

One family of birds, and one alone, is both flocking and nesting this month. In the rookery it is spring already. Every day as I pass beneath the tall wind-tossed elms where their home is I see the nests taking

form and increasing. The noise and bustle the birds make over it is simply deafening; they seem never to take a twig or put it in place without a consultation of the whole tribe. But, unlike most great talkers, the rooks are good workers too, and their rough bundle of twigs will be in place and young birds within it before the hedgerow birds have put straw to straw.

Last year there were young birds in the rookery by the end of February, and some years they are said to have been earlier still. It may be so from immemorial custom, and Gilbert White may have had this particular settlement in mind when he wrote

*“Sooth'd by the genial warmth, the cawing rook anticipates the spring...”*

For his own parish of Selborne is only six miles away: and, standing as this group of tall elms does by the roadside, he must often have passed beneath it.

It is easy to imagine him, the very first of English nature writers, with his powdered hair and sober clerical garb, jogging along the road on his fat grey mare, stopping beneath the elms to gaze upwards at the noisy black birds about their business of nest-making, linger, perhaps, to jot down a date or caress some early spray of blackthorn with his riding whip; then jogging homeward away over the heath, the most sober and modest, yet happiest of men.





It is amusing to hear the starlings imitate the cawing of the rooks. These birds are back in possession of the cottage garden and roof again. All winter they have wheeled about the fields in flocks, sinking at night into the reed beds or bushes with a hubbub of chattering and surging of wings that only ceased with the withdrawal of the last gleam of daylight. Now they have separated, and the contingent to which this roof belongs are promenading like a human family inspecting their property after wintering abroad.

Like human travellers too, they have brought the newest and smartest fashion back; the shining black of their plumage is shot with fine metallic lustres of purple and green, each separate feather pointed with a pearl. Only the young birds of last year are still rusty and dingy; their time will come later in the spring.

Travelling has not improved their manners; they do not hesitate to dig up a bulb the moment they see a green spike appear, or tear the crocus buds to see what colour they are going to be. Between one piece of mischief and another they make premature attempts at

nest building. More than a fortnight ago one adventurous couple began to place straws in a junction of the water spout, and, though the heavy rain soon washed their foundations away, they have been at it spasmodically ever since.

For a few hours in the middle of the day, the scolding and chattering cease, and the whole flock fly off in a body to the sheepfold a few fields away. There they spend their time riding sedately upon the broad woolly backs and digging into the deep fleeces for insects. It is comical to see the critical, deeply-learned air with which they perform this operation, black heads poised while the sheep, as though unaware of their visitors' ministrations, go stolidly on munching their turnips or tending their lambs.

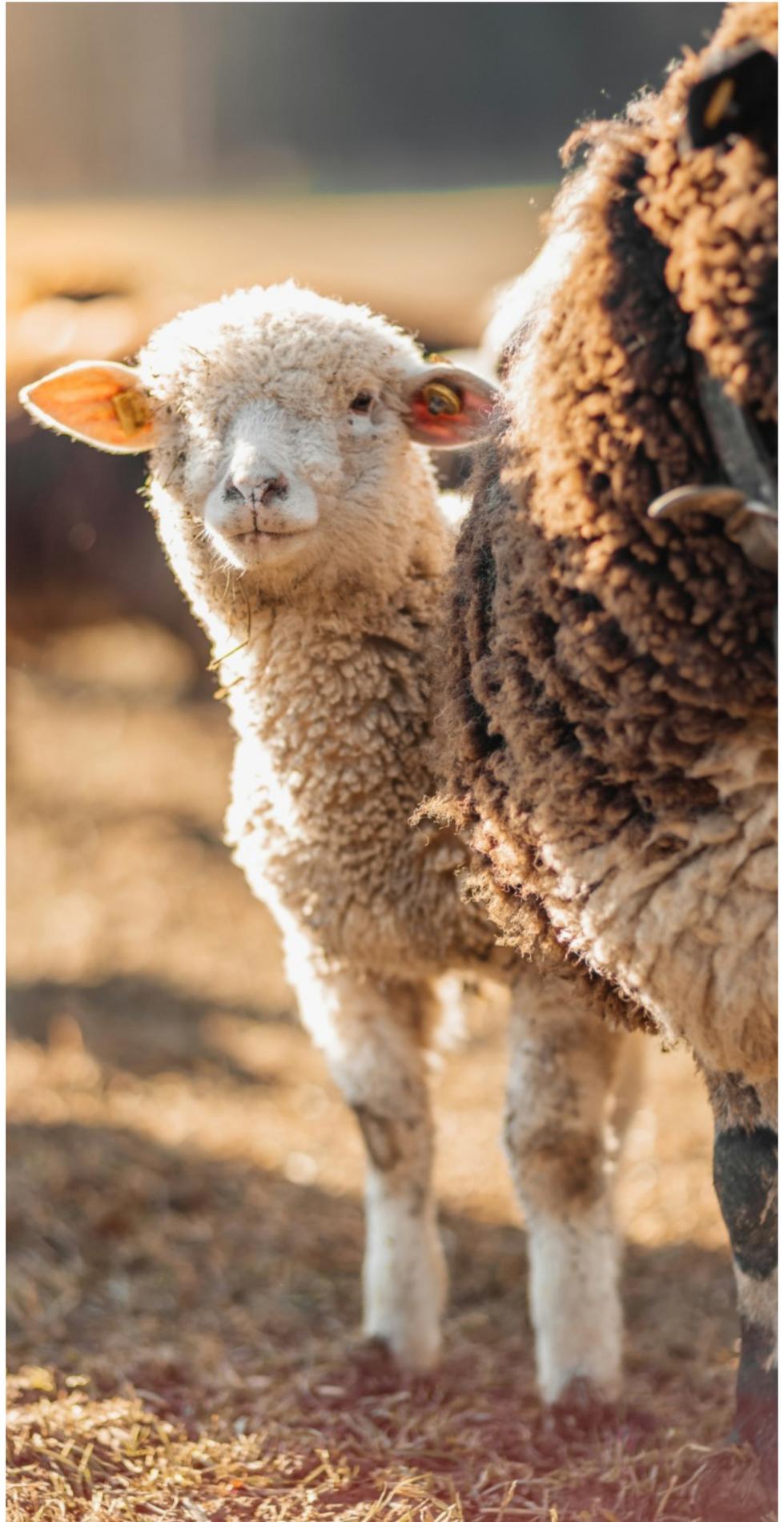
Other birds as well as the starlings are attracted to the warmth and comfort of the lambing fold. Wagtails run in and out briskly in the straw, while the robin, constant companion of man, sings from the hurdles in return for his share of the shepherd's lonely meals.

At a more respectful distance hover the one solitary pair of crows which has grown old in this area. At other times of the year they are seldom seen away from the heath; but at lambing time they are always to be found round the fold lying in wait for offal, or, failing that, a share of the sweet, juicy turnips which are thrown to the sheep.

Shepherd hates the sight of these “black gentry” a he calls them, for there is an old superstition that when crows hang around the fold, there will soon be a dead lamb to feed them.

“Not that I takes any stock of such trash,” he assures me, “for it stands to reason they can’t scent a dead lamb whilst it’s still alive. Besides, as long as the shepherd knows his job and the weather isn’t too hard on him, there won’t be many dead lambs about - not if the sky was black wi’ they gentry! But you know how it is, an old saying’s and old saying and it sort o’ works itself into the brain like, even when all the time you need not believe it at heart. Moreover, them crows be ugly, sooty-looking varmint, and I can’t say that I cares for the look of ‘em.”

The hedgerow is so crammed with interest that it would provide studies for more hours than there are in the day. It is one of the old double hedgerows which, thickened with trees, and twined about with creepers, used to be a common feature in English scenery.





Such hedgerows used to be, and still are where they have been retained, both gardens for every kind of wild flower and sanctuaries for birds and the lesser animals. Along the banks, between the double hedges, children have made small, well-defined paths, leading, for those small enough to explore them, to many a secret bower entwined with honeysuckle or wild hop. Between the roots of the hawthorns the earliest violets are always found, and later in the year, there are primroses and bluebells, with nuts and blackberries to follow.

# February Nature Notes: The Fox

If you live in the country, then now is the time you may be awoken at dead of night by the sound of blood-curdling screams like something out of a horror film. But don't worry - it almost certainly isn't somebody in trouble, but is much more likely to be the mating call of our native red fox. This time of year is their breeding season and foxes will travel long distances in search of a mate. Red foxes are very vocal - the males will bark to announce their territories, whilst the females make reassuring chirruping noises to their young. In fact they can make up to twenty-eight different sounds, but it's the ghostly shrieks at 4 am that will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end!



# We go Together

## Notes:

Stitches used are French knots, satin stitch, straight stitch and back stitch.

Shown mounted in 8" hoop.

If you are unfamiliar with working any of the stitches, then I recommend you [visit the Royal School of Needlework Stitch Wall](#) where there are really clear full instructions, including video



## Materials

- 12" square fabric suitable for embroidery
- DMC stranded cotton floss in colours 310 (black), pale pink and a selection of other colours of your choice for the llamas' necklaces and flower crowns. This is a great project for using up leftover floss.
- 8" hoop

## Method

*Use two strands of floss except where otherwise stated.*

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your stitches and mount in hoop for display.

*This hoop definitely makes me want to burst into song - courtesy of the musical "Grease" of course! You can watch Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta [here](#). Now all I need is to be able to fit into her super-tight trousers! (Most unlikely!)*



- The muzzles are also worked in black back stitch. The female's eyes are back stitch and the male's are black satin stitch with a couple of tiny stitches worked in white over the top to add a little sparkle.
- The flower crowns and necklaces are all worked in a SINGLE strand of floss in colours of your choice.
- The flowers are radiating straight stitch with clusters of French knots at the centre. The stems are back stitch and the buds French knots. The leaves are detached chain stitch. The feathers in the male's crown are also satin stitch.
- The flowers and tassels on the necklaces are all worked in straight stitch.
- The text is worked in a single strand of black floss using back stitch. Again you need to be very accurate in your stitching to follow the outlines of the letters and not have any gaps. Make longer stitches along the straight parts of the letters and much smaller ones around the curves so the curves appear nice and rounded in shape.

*This project is very suitable for a beginner as the actual stitching is very easy, but it's important to take your time and be extremely accurate when placing your stitches to achieve a good result.*

## Stitching Guide

- Begin with the outlines of the llamas' bodies. These are worked in back stitch using two strands of black floss. You need to be accurate when working your back stitch to avoid any ugly gaps in the line of stitching.



- The ear inners and the female llama's cheeks are worked in light pink floss using satin stitch. The male llama's cheeks are worked in the same colour but are 3 individual straight stitches.





## William Shakespeare: A Man of (many) Words

William Shakespeare may well have approved of the nonsensical words used in the llama pattern on the previous pages! We all know his name, as he is, without a doubt, the most celebrated playwright and poet in the English language. His surviving works consist of 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and several more shorter ones and have been translated into eighty different languages. He used as many as 20,000 different words in his works - to put this into perspective the Old Testament contains only 5,642 words and an uneducated lower class person in Shakespeare's time (late sixteenth and early seventeenth century) would probably have had fewer than 300 words in his or her vocabulary.

The works of Shakespeare also provide the first ever recorded use of about 1700 words and phrases. It's believed that he may have invented or introduced many of these words himself, either by combining words, changing nouns into verbs or adding extra syllables. Many of his invented words are still in common use today.

Did you know, for example, that technically the word "alligator" in the English language was invented by

Shakespeare? The first recorded use was in his play "Romeo and Juliet" when Romeo says, "An alligator stuff'd and other skins." Shakespeare adapted the word from the Spanish "el lagarto" which means "the lizard." The term originally was originally used to describe the large reptiles encountered by the Spanish explorers during their travels in the New World.

Other words first used by Shakespeare include "eyeball" and "bedroom." The concept of an eyeball had existed for centuries but he was the first to use the word in Henry VI. The word achieved instant success and popularity, and so he then went onto play around with the concept, using the words "eyesore," "eyewink," and "eyedrop." The word bedroom first appears in A Midsummer Night's Dream used to describe a room dedicated solely to sleeping and furnished with a bed.

The words downstairs (meaning on a lower floor) and undress (to remove your clothes) were also Shakespeare's inventions and are so useful and self-explanatory that it seems almost impossible to think of a time when they simply didn't exist.

Other surprising additions to the English Lexicon include skim milk, ie milk with the cream skimmed off the surface, puppy dog - a young domesticated dog and the transformation of the noun "kiss" into the verb "kissing". Shakespeare was the first to use this term in one of his plays, meaning "to touch with the lips."

As well as inventing new words, Shakespeare had an amazing skill for coining clever phrases, which forms one of the most important parts of his legacy. There are the well-known Shakespearean phrases like "jealousy is the green-eyed monster" which comes from his play Othello. But did you know that the phrase so commonly used today "break the ice," is also one of Shakespeare's?

"Break the ice" is especially intriguing as it's one of the very few Shakespeare idioms that didn't begin as something literal.

Breaking the ice literally refers to fishermen breaking through frozen rivers or an icebreaker boat cutting through ice to create a pathway through, and this is the image that Shakespeare used as a metaphor. He first used the term in his play The Taming of the Shrew to describe a social gesture that would help to ease an awkward situation.

And finally, if you've ever been "in a pickle" complained you "haven't slept a wink," "indulged in some gossip" or gone on a "wild goose chase," you might not have realised but you are actually quoting Shakespeare!



## A Lovely Idea: Cross Stitch Canvas



This is such a fun and effective idea - loving the quote from the Beatles, but you could choose your favourite song of course as it's easy to customise. Thanks so much to Amy at DIY Candy for sharing with us!

Free from DIY Candy: [Cross Stitch Quote on Canvas](#)

# Caring for your Hand Embroidery

Don't be frightened to use your embroidery as well as displaying it. If the ends of your threads are worked in well, then your work should be robust and you should be able to enjoy it without fearing for its survival. If you take care with laundering then most embroidery should last for a long time, especially if you used good quality materials to begin with.

If you have some old pieces, pretty but not valuable that you have inherited or otherwise acquired, you may be able to reuse them in different ways from what was originally intended. I have seen lots of lovely bunting and cushions made from vintage embroideries as well as incorporated into quilts. Where the original piece is stained or worn in places then the undamaged pieces can be appliqued onto various items.

Dust and strong sunlight are the main enemies of embroidery. However colourfast the threads are, strong sunlight will eventually bleach out at least some of their colour, while dust will cause natural fibres to deteriorate, especially wool. It is therefore very important to keep embroidery clean. With the exception of canvaswork, most embroidery is washable - and if they have been well worked in good quality threads you may even be able to machine launder them on a gentle cycle.

It's true though that the best way to wash embroidered clothes is by hand. I know it's not always realistic, but hand washing is much more gentle on delicate fabrics and stitches. Always wash the embroidered item by itself. Turn it inside out and allow to soak for a few minutes. Gently squeeze,, allowing the soap to sink in. Avoid rubbing the embroidery stitches if possible.



These days, due to environmental concerns, threads may not always be as colourfast as they were in the past. Cotton threads are best washed in plenty of hot water as lukewarm or cold water increases the risk of the colours bleeding. Use a mild non-biological detergent with no special additives (eg for whitening).

Do not spin or tumble dry embroidered pieces, instead roll up in a white towel and squeeze the water out very gently before hanging up to dry. Press the work while it is still a little damp, placing it face downwards on thick towelling to prevent flattening the stitches. The embroidery threads may not dry as quickly as the base fabric, so lay it flat after pressing and leave until it is completely dry.

Never ever wash canvaswork (sometimes called needlepoint or tapestry). Washing can shrink the canvas, and also soften it as washing will remove the dressing that is added to keep it in place. In addition the wool yarn can become felted and fluffy, spoiling its appearance. A thorough cleaning should remove any dust that has collected, but if the embroidery is really dirty, dry cleaning is recommended for the best results.

The best way to store embroidery that won't be used or displayed for a while is to lay it flat in a drawer, wrapped in acid-free tissue paper. Don't use plastic bags as the static in them will attract the dust and the textiles won't be able to breathe. Ensure that the pieces are fully covered with tissue paper, otherwise any protruding edges will yellow, and then lay a piece of sheeting over the top.



# The Perfect Pear

## Notes:

Stitches used are satin stitch, straight stitch and back stitch.

Shown mounted in 5" hoop.

If you are unfamiliar with working any of the stitches, then I recommend you [visit the Royal School of Needlework Stitch Wall](#) where there are really clear full instructions, including video



## Materials

- 9" square fabric suitable for embroidery (I used a nice soft white wool blend felt. I like a non-woven fabric when stitching text, especially if I'm only using one strand of floss as it makes it much easier to place the stitches accurately.)
- Small scraps of green fabric for pears.
- Stranded cotton floss in green, brown, black, light pink, red, green to match your fabric scraps and another green.
- Bondaweb

## Method

*Use two strands of floss except where otherwise stated.*

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your stitches and mount in hoop for display.

*This is another easy make for Valentine's Day - again you need to be careful and accurate with your stitching when working the text, but otherwise this design is very straight forward and beginner-friendly.*

## Stitching Guide

- Transfer the design to your fabric.
- Trace the pear shapes to the paper side of your Bondaweb using the REVERSE template. Cut out roughly and fuse to the reverse of your fabric with a hot iron. Cut out carefully, any jagged edges will show and peel off the paper backing.
- Position the pear shapes on the background fabric using the transferred design as a guide. When you're happy with their position fuse into place with a hot iron protecting your work with a cloth if necessary.
- Secure the shapes with short straight stitches worked at right angles to the edges of the shape using two strands of your green floss.
- Work the details. The eyes are a few straight stitches in black, the cheeks and the love hearts between the pears are satin stitch and the mouth is back stitch. The leaves are satin stitch worked at an angle to an imaginary centre vein in your second green.
- The text is worked in a SINGLE strand of floss using back stitch. Again you need to be very accurate in your stitching to follow the outlines of the letters and not have any gaps. Make longer stitches along the straight parts of the letters and much smaller ones around the curves so the curves appear nice and rounded in shape.



A Time for Love...  
Valentine's Day





Unlike many other traditional festivals and saints' days, St Valentine's Day is one of the few that has not only continued to be well known, but probably actually increased in popularity over the last few years. The day has a history spanning at least the last six centuries, though the origins of the festival have been lost in time, and it certainly has nothing at all to do with the saint from which it gets its name.

There were in fact many Valentines who achieved sainthood during the early years of Christianity, but the two famous enough to be widely known in late medieval England were a bishop from Terni (a city in Umbria, Italy) and a priest from Rome. Both were martyred by beheading during the reign of the Emperor Claudius some time around 269-73, but in neither case does their legend offer the slightest hint of a link with love and romance.

Another possible origin for Valentine's Day is that it falls the day before the annual festival of Lupercalia in ancient Rome. However this was primarily a festival of purification and apart from



the coincidence of the date again doesn't have any obvious links with any of the later Valentine customs. It seems to have been an eighteenth century priest, the Rev Alban Butler who first claimed this connection in his published in 1756.

Valentine's Day as we know it now was first mentioned by Geoffrey Chaucer and his contemporaries in the fourteenth century. Chaucer in his poem (1376-82) relates how birds choose their mates on St Valentine's Day every year, thus making the link between 14 February and love and romance although between birds rather than people! A century later however Valentine's Day was well-established as a celebration of romantic love - a letter written by Elizabeth Brews and sent to John Paston in 1477 refers to him as her "ryght welebeloved Voluntyne" and also mentions birds choosing their mates on the fourteenth. A year later, the two were married.

Fast forward two centuries and Samuel Pepys was buying gifts for his valentine - and for his wife! The theme at that time was one of romantic love, but in contrast to today's celebrations the choice of partner was left to fate and the whole affair was treated like an elaborate game. At a party or family gathering, names were written on pieces of paper, which were drawn at random, and people were paired up to play at being lovers. Even married people like Samuel and Elizabeth Pepys took part and had their "valentines" and were expected to pay each of them little compliments for the next few days while the men were required to buy presents. Adults also sometimes made pretend valentine arrangements with friends' children.

Commercially produced valentine cards didn't appear until the early nineteenth century after which they became very popular with potential lovers, ranging from simple engraved offerings to expensive handmade affairs involving real silk, feathers and lace. They often had space for hand written messages for the sender to personalise their offering. The custom of sending valentine cards declined towards the end of the Victorian period, though it didn't die out completely, struggling on until the end of WW2 after which it underwent a major revival, influenced by US customs and encouraged by commercial card manufacturers. Today an estimated 25 million valentine cards are sent in the UK and an amazing 145 million in the US!

## A Lovely Idea: Crochet Heart Door Hanger



If you're looking for a little bit of handmade love for some Valentine's Day decor or a gift, definitely give this crocheted heart hanger a try! It'll be sure to brighten up your day. Thanks so much to Erica at Dwell Beautiful for sharing with us!

Free from Dwell Beautiful: [Crochet Heart Door Hanger](#)

# Supper in Narnia

Mr. Beaver sat down quietly at the edge of the hole (he didn't seem to mind it's being so chilly) looked hard into it, then suddenly shot in his paw, and before you could say Jack Robinson had whisked out a beautiful trout. Then he did it all over again until they had a fine catch of fish.

Meanwhile the girls were helping Mrs. Beaver to fill the the kettle and lay the table and cut the bread and put the plates in the oven to heat and draw a huge jug of beer for Mr. Beaver from a barrel which stood in one corner of the house, and to put on the frying pan and get the dripping hot. Lucy thought the Beavers had a very snug little home ... There were no books or pictures and instead of beds there were bunks, like on board ship, built into the wall. And there were hams and strings of onions hanging from the roof and against the walls were gum boots and oilskins and hatchets and pairs of shears and spades and trowels and things for carrying mortar in and fishing rods and fishing nets and sacks.



*From "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" by CS Lewis*



Just as the frying pan was nicely hissing Peter and Mr. Beaver came in with the fish which Mr. Beaver had already opened with his knife and cleaned out in the open air. You can think how good the new-caught fish smelled while they were frying and how the hungry children longed for them to be done and how very much hungrier still they had become before Mrs. Beaver said, "Now we're nearly ready." Susan drained the potatoes and then put them all back in the empty pot to dry on the side of the range while Lucy was helping Mrs. Beaver to dish up the trout, so that in a very few minutes everyone was drawing up stools and preparing to enjoy themselves. There was a jug of creamy milk for the children and a great big lump of deep yellow butter in the middle of the table from which everyone took as much as he wanted to go with his potatoes and all the children thought—and I agree with them—that there's nothing to beat good freshwater fish if you eat it when it has been alive half an hour ago and has come out of the pan half a minute ago.

And when they had finished the fish Mrs. Beaver brought unexpectedly out of the oven a great and gloriously sticky marmalade roll, steaming hot, and at the same time moved the kettle on to the fire, so that when they had finished the marmalade roll the tea was made and ready to be poured out. And when each person had got his (or her) cup of tea, each person shoved back his (or her) stool so as to be able to lean against the wall and gave a long sigh of contentment.

# A Posy of Pansies

## Notes:

Stitches used are satin stitch, French knots and back stitch.

Shown mounted on 5" x 8" block

If you are unfamiliar with working any of the stitches, then I recommend you [visit the Royal School of Needlework Stitch Wall](#) where there are really clear full instructions, including video



## Materials

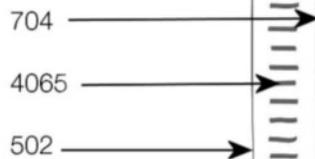
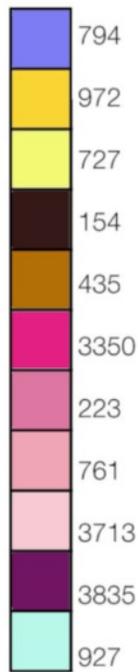
- 9" x 12" white linen or linen blend fabric suitable for embroidery
- DMC stranded cotton floss in colours 154, 223, 435, 502, 704, 727, 761, 792, 794, 927, 972, 3350, 3713, 3835, 4065
- 5" x 8" artist's canvas block
- Staple gun

## Method

*Use two strands of floss throughout.*

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your stitches mount on block for display.

*The pansy flower represents the thoughts of lovers, shared before a word is spoken. Named for the French word for "thought" (pensee), the pansy was said to be a charmed flower, possessing telepathic magic.*



## Stitching Guide

- This is a very straightforward design to stitch. The pansies are all worked in satin stitch angled towards the centre of the flower. Work the centres after the petals - they are clusters of small French knots.
- The borders are two rows of back stitch with single straight stitches between them.
- When you've finished and pressed your work place it face down on a clean flat surface and then place the artists canvas block on top. (I find it helpful to mark the position for the block with temporary fabric

marker pen to help me get the design straight and centred!)

- Fold the edges of your fabric to the back of the block and, beginning in the centre of each side, secure in place with your staple gun, pulling on the fabric slightly to hold it taut (but not stretched and distorted). Mitre the corners, trimming away any excess for a neat finish.
- This design would also work well as the centre of a patchwork piece, large pin cushion or book cover.



As the days  
lengthen...



There is an old saying that runs, “as the days lengthen, the cold strengthens,” and so the season for casseroles, soups and lovely warming English puddings has not yet come to an end, though it’s fair to say that it won’t be long before we begin to crave lighter fare once more.

As well as the seasonal staples - those reliable root vegetables, carrots, turnips, parsnips and swedes as well as over-wintering leeks and onions, seasonal goodies also include a glittering display of bracing seafood, from nutritious mussels to mackerel, as well as fabulously dark greens, such as curly kale and purple sprouting broccoli. Desserts are bright and beautiful at this time of year: consider using blood oranges and tender rhubarb to make a colourful seasonal pudding.

Cauliflowers in all their many varieties and colours (green, purple and even orange) are available throughout the year. However its most familiar creamy-white winter form is in season from late autumn through to mid-April and can make a significant contribution to our late winter diet. The fleshy buds, or florets, are packed full of stored vitamins making it the ideal super-food for this time of year. It’s another plant (along with forced rhubarb) that you can actually hear growing when conditions are right. In warm weather cauliflower heads can grow up to about an inch a day, causing a loud squeaking noise, known to growers as “cauliflower creak”!

So, cold though it may be, the days are definitely growing longer and if we look, the first signs that winter will soon be drawing to a close are all around us. In the pagan calendar the first of the month (which falls halfway between the winter solstice and spring equinox) was known as Imbolc. It marked the beginning of spring and the festival of Brigid, Celtic goddess of fire, fertility and early spring. Imbolc was seen as a time of great significance when it could be hoped that the worst of winter was over and the days were noticeably longer.

If ever there was a month we crave comfort food, then February is the time to indulge. It’s both the shortest month and the last month that we’ll feel the full frozen blast of winter. Winter’s ending is definitely worth celebrating and though this year we’ll have to wait until March for Shrove Tuesday and pancakes, there’s still Valentine’s Day to enjoy. And if that isn’t enough there are more very early signs of spring to look out for. There are snowdrops everywhere, and by the end of the month the first very early daffodils will flower, the garden birds will begin to sing again and the first lambs will be born.

The dawn chorus of birdsong signals the start of their mating season as they start looking for partners and defending their breeding territories. (St Valentine’s Day is traditionally thought to be the day the birds find their mates). The chorus begins with blackbirds and robins in late February, while other species will gradually join the chorus through to late May, when it reaches a glorious crescendo.



# Mashed Potato Pie with bacon, leeks and cheese

## Ingredients

- 1kg floury potatoes, peeled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 small leeks, thinly sliced
- 90g bacon or pancetta, diced
- 30g butter
- 250ml milk or single cream (or a mix of both)
- 1 egg, beaten
- Pinch of paprika
- Large handful of freshly chopped parsley
- 90g cup firm cheese, such as Gruyere, grated

Serves 4-6

## Method

- Cut the potatoes into chunks, place in a large saucepan, add sufficient cold water to cover, salt and bring to the boil. Simmer for about 20 minutes until tender.
- Meanwhile heat the oil in a frying pan set over low heat. Add the onion and leeks and cook gently for about 10 minutes, until soft. Add the bacon and continue to cook until just browned. Set to one side.
- Preheat the oven to 190C.
- Drain the potatoes and mash, mixing in the butter and milk or cream. Season well and add the egg. Stir to combine thoroughly.
- Stir in the leek mixture, paprika, parsley and half the cheese. Transfer to a well buttered baking dish and bake in the pre-heated oven for 35-45 minutes until well-browned. Serve immediately.

*This is a tasty and economical dish, ideal to fill hungry tummies on cold days. My mum used to make this when I was a child, and back then for me it was a particular favourite when served with a spoonful of baked beans!*



# Parsnip, Apple and Thyme Soup



## Ingredients

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon mild curry powder
- Few sprigs of fresh thyme
- 450g parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 1 Bramley apple peeled, cored and roughly chopped
- 1.25 litres chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3 heaped tablespoons crème fraiche
- Croutons to serve (optional)

*Serves 4*

## Method

- Put the onions, oil, curry powder and a good pinch of salt in a large saucepan. Cook gently over a low heat until the onions are soft. Add the thyme, parsnips and apple and stir well. Cook for about 5 minutes, adding a little more oil if needed and stirring often. Add the stock and season to taste.
- Simmer gently uncovered, until the parsnips are soft, about 15-20 minutes. Puree the soup with a handheld blender, or by transferring it to a food processor and returning to the saucepan once blended. Taste and season as necessary.
- Stir in the butter and crème fraiche and mix well. Ladle into serving bowls and top with croutons.

# Sticky Onion and Cheddar Quiche

## Ingredients

- 25g butter
- 500g small onion (about 5 in total), halved and finely sliced
- 2 eggs
- 284ml pot double cream
- 140g mature cheddar coarsely grated

### For the pastry

- 280g plain flour
- plus extra for dusting
- 140g cold butter
- *Serves 4-6*

## Method

- To make the pastry, tip the flour and butter into a bowl, then rub together with your fingertips until completely mixed and crumbly. Add 8 tbsp cold water, then bring everything together with your hands until just combined. Roll into a ball and use straight away or chill for up to 2 days. The pastry can also be frozen for up to a month.
- Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to a round about 5cm larger than a 25cm tin. Use your rolling pin to lift it up, then drape over the tart case so there is an overhang of pastry on the sides. Using a small ball of pastry scraps, push the pastry into the corners of the tin. Chill in the fridge or freezer for 20 mins.
- Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. While the pastry is chilling, heat the butter in a pan and cook the onions for 20-30 mins, stirring occasionally, until they become sticky and golden. Remove from the heat.
- Lightly prick the base of the tart with a fork, line the tart case with a large circle of greaseproof paper or foil, then fill with baking beans. Blind-bake the tart for 20 mins, remove the paper and beans, then continue to cook for 5-10 mins until biscuit brown.
- Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a bowl, then gradually add the cream. Stir in the onions and half the cheese, then season with salt and pepper. Carefully tip the filling into the case, sprinkle with the rest of the cheese, then bake for 20-25 mins until set and golden. Leave to cool in the case, trim the edges of the pastry, then remove and serve in slices.





# Cauliflower, Spinach and Shallot Gnocchi

## Ingredients

- 200g shallots, sliced
- 1 small cauliflower, trimmed and broken into florets
- 400g ready made gnocchi
- 3 garlic cloves
- 6-8 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 125ml white wine
- 200ml stock (or use some of the water used to cook the gnocchi)
- 100ml double cream
- 150g spinach
- nutmeg, to taste
- 125g ball of mozzarella
- Parmesan, to serve
- olive oil
- salt & pepper
- *Serves 2*

## Method

- Put a pan of salted water on to boil. Turn your grill on to heat up.
- Add the shallots to a large frying pan with 2 tablespoons of oil and a pinch of salt. Fry gently for 5 minutes over a medium heat, until starting to soften.
- Add the cauliflower and fry for a further 5 minutes, stirring often, until starting to take a little colour at the edges.
- Meanwhile, drop the gnocchi into the boiling water and cook for 3-4 minutes, until they start to rise to the surface. Use a slotted spoon to transfer them straight to the frying pan. Add the garlic and sage too and fry for a minute or so. Next, tip in the white wine and let it bubble and reduce by half, using your spoon to scrape and release any caramelised bits on the bottom of the pan. Stir in the stock and cream and drop it to a gentle simmer for a few minutes.
- While the gnocchi simmers, wilt the spinach briefly in pan of boiling water, it should only take 20-30 seconds. Drain, cool immediately under cold water, and then squeeze out excess water with your hands. Roughly chop the squeezed spinach.
- Taste the gnocchi sauce and season with salt, pepper and a little finely grated nutmeg to your liking.
- Stir in the chopped spinach and tear the Mozzarella across the top. Slide the pan under the grill until the Mozzarella is bubbling and golden. Serve immediately with Parmesan alongside to grate.

## Swede Shoots

*Miss Janet Esdaile, Writing from Fyfield, Milton-under-Wychwood, Oxon in 1930 said...*

“The other day my landlady served me with a delicious vegetable. It looked like very young and tender asparagus in the dish, but peach colour instead of pale green, and it had rather a strong smell. I was quite at a loss to identify it by colour and smell except that it reminded me of walking past a root field. Its taste was not unlike parsnips but not nearly so sweet and it melted in the mouth. It was swede shoots. My shepherd landlord told me he picked them off the sprouting roots when he unearthed the bury. They keep their delicate orange colour till they reach the light. They can only be had just at this time of year (April) and round here the gentry consider them a great delicacy. “Us poor folk don’t bother about ‘em” were his words.

### RECIPE

1. *My landlady says she ties the shoots together in a bunch to keep them from breaking because they are so tender.*
2. *They are cooked like asparagus for 20 mins to ½ hour in simmering slightly salted water*

*Drained and served with melted butter and white sauce.*

## Swede Turnip Tops

*C Pierpoint Johnson, 1862....*

“The Navew or Field Cabbage is sometimes found on the borders of fields and riversides in England, but is probably a naturalised plant. Varieties of it have long been cultivated for their seeds or roots. The most valuable of these to the British farmer is called the Swedish Turnip. It was first cultivated in England in about 1781. It is a very good vegetable for the table when boiled being by some persons regarded as superior to the white kind. The green tops form a far better vegetable than those of the common turnip and are indeed superior in flavour and delicacy to any variety of the cabbage. If earthed up in the spring, they become blanched and in that state furnish the best substitute for sea kale.





# Rhubarb and Orange Brown Betty

## Ingredients

- 600g chopped rhubarb
- 20g caster sugar
- Grated zest and juice of 2 oranges
- 25g demerara sugar
- 200g crushed digestive biscuits
- 50g breadcrumbs
- 50g flaked or chopped nuts
- 50g unsalted butter
- Cream or ice cream to serve

*Serves 6*

## Method

- Preheat your oven to 175C. Mix together the chopped rhubarb, caster sugar, orange juice and half the zest and place in a shallow, 20cm square, ovenproof baking dish.
- Combine the demerara sugar with the crushed biscuits, breadcrumbs and nuts and spread this over the rhubarb mix.
- Place small pieces of butter across the top of the crumb mix.
- Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes until the rhubarb is tender and cooked through and the topping is crisp and brown.
- Serve hot with cream or ice cream.

# Seville Orange Marmalade Pudding

## Ingredients

- 840g good quality thick cut Seville orange marmalade
- 200g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
- 700g caster sugar
- 4 eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- 200g self raising flour
- Grated zest and juice of one orange
- *Makes eight*



## Method

- Grease eight 150-200ml ovenproof pudding basins. Place 30g of the marmalade into the bottom of each.
- In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla essence. If the mixture separates just stir in a little of the sifted flour. Fold the remaining flour into the creamed mixture and stir well. Finally add the orange zest and juice.
- Divide the mixture evenly between the pudding basins. Seal with lids or foil and steam for 45-60 minutes until cooked. Turn out and serve with custard.

*Seville oranges are only available for a short season at the beginning of the year, so look out for them around now if you want to make your own marmalade.*

# Rhubarb Cake



## Ingredients

- 200g softened butter, plus extra for greasing
- 200g caster sugar, plus 3 tbsp for the topping
- 3 large free-range eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or almond extract
- 200g ground almonds
- 200g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 300g slender young rhubarb, trimmed and cut into roughly 2cm lengths
- *Serves 4*

## Method

- Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4. Grease a 23cm/9in cake tin with butter and line the base with baking paper.
- Put the butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla or almond extract, almonds, flour and baking powder in a food mixer or food processor. Beat until smooth and thick.
- Spoon the cake batter into the prepared tin. Top with the rhubarb, pressing it down gently. Sprinkle with the reserved 3 tablespoons of sugar.
- Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Cover with foil if the cake starts to over brown before it is cooked in the centre.
- Cool in the tin for 20 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack. Serve warm or cold.



## The Bath Bun...

I am very lucky to live just half an hour's drive from the beautiful Georgian city of Bath, nestled in a green valley with its Roman Baths and elegant wide streets and circuses built of the local golden hued stone. And even luckier that Bath is home to not one but two delicious, and famous, varieties of bun - the Sally Lunn and the Bath Bun. Both buns even have their own tearooms dedicated to them.

The Sally Lunn is a soft white brioche-like bun with a shiny golden brown top and has been around since the mid to late eighteenth century.

The Bath bun was usually called a Bath cake in the eighteenth century. According to Elizabeth Raffald's 1769 book, *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, the Bath cake is the size of a French roll and had to be served hot for breakfast. Jane Austen, who lived in Bath for a while, was a fan of Bath buns and wrote in 1801 that she would make herself ill by eating so many if her sister, Cassandra, would not accompany her on a visit (and presumably discourage her from stuffing herself with buns!).

Both Bath buns and Sally Lunn buns were exclusively a delicacy for the well-off. In the eighteenth century ordinary people didn't eat sweet pastries for breakfast. Sweet yeasted bread and buns were only slightly more distributed among the various classes in Victorian times, when bakeries became more industrialised and the price of sugar fell.

The Bath buns known to Jane Austen would have been flavoured and decorated with caraway seeds or caraway comfits, made by covering the seeds with layers of sugar. Making caraway comfits is a time-consuming task with the seeds being dried between each layer, resulting in something that looks like "hundreds and thousands" sugar sprinkles, but in flavour more similar to Indian *mukhwas*, which still contain the seeds. Caraway comfits were, along with other varieties of comfit, were served at the end of a meal to aid digestion.

In later Victorian times candied peel, lemon peel and/or dried fruit and mixed spices became popular additions. Today Bath buns aren't made or decorated with caraway seeds or comfits but are baked with a lump of sugar in the centre and decorated with a few sugar nibs and currents.

During the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London nearly a million Bath buns were sold to visitors. According to stories of the event, people noticed that the Bath bun sold in London was much less lavish, hence it was renamed the "London bun." In a cookery book of the time there is a recipe for cheap Bath buns which confirms this story.

# Classic Bath Buns



## Ingredients

- 300ml whole milk
- 3 medium eggs
- 600g strong white flour plus extra for dusting
- 120g unsalted butter softened
- 80g golden caster sugar
- 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
- sunflower oil for proving
- clotted cream and jam, to serve

## For the glaze & topping

- 40g golden caster sugar
- 1 ½ tsp caraway or fennel seeds
- 2 tbsp white sugar pearls, or 3 white sugar cubes, crushed

## Method

- Warm the milk in a small pan over a low heat until just steaming, then leave to cool for about 15 mins until cool enough to touch. Beat 2 of the eggs into the warm milk. Tip the flour into a bowl, then rub in the butter using your fingertips to a breadcrumb-like texture. Mix in the sugar and 1 tsp salt. Stir in the

yeast, then make a well in the centre. Stir in the milk and egg mixture using a wooden spoon to create a sticky dough. Tip onto a floured surface and knead for 10-15 mins until smooth, or use a stand mixer with a dough hook and knead for 5 mins. Put in an oiled bowl and cover with a tea towel. Leave to prove for 1 hr, or until doubled in size.

- Line two baking trays with baking parchment. Tip the dough out onto a floured surface and knock out the air, then divide into 12 pieces, weighing for accuracy if you like (about 100g each). Shape into balls and arrange on the baking trays, well spaced apart. Cover with tea towels and leave to prove for 1 hr.
- Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/ gas 6. Beat the remaining egg and brush it all over the buns. Bake for 20-25 mins until risen and golden brown. Put on wire racks to cool.
- To make the glaze, put the golden caster sugar in a mug with 20ml boiling water from the kettle and mix until the sugar has dissolved. Crush the caraway or fennel seeds using a pestle and mortar.
- While the buns are still warm, brush over the sugar glaze, then sprinkle over the sugar pieces and crushed seeds. Enjoy warm with clotted cream and jam, or leave to cool first. Once cool, will keep for 48 hours in an airtight container.

# Embroidered Scissors Case

This is a lovely simple project - and one that will surely prove to be very useful too! The most important thing is to make sure that your back stitch is nice and smooth and even as any irregularities will be very obvious when your work is finished.

The actual case is very simple to assemble, it's just two parts joined by blanket stitch.

I have given instructions and measurements to make a case to hold embroidery scissors, but you could easily resize the templates if you wished.

Case measures 5" long 2 3/4" wide at the widest point.



## Materials

- 6" square white or cream felt
- 6" x 3" printed cotton fabric
- Fusible webbing
- Stranded cotton floss in black, white or cream, green, pale yellow and pale pink.



1



2



## Method

- First work the embroidery. I recommend stitching onto the felt before you cut out the shape (working out where you will place both pieces on the felt before you transfer your pattern and begin to stitch).
- Use two strands of floss throughout.
- The scissors are worked in back stitch. Be sure to make small stitches around the curves of the handles and take especial care that your needle leaves and re-enters your fabric through the same hole.
- The leaves are worked in lazy daisy stitch and the stems are back stitch. All the flowers are bullion stitch worked in clusters of three stitches, closely spaced at the base then angled outwards to form the petals of the flowers.
- When you have finished press your work lightly on the reverse being careful not to flatten your stitches.
- Cut out the front of the case using the printed pattern on the template to help you position it correctly (1).
- With two strands of white or cream floss work blanket stitch along the straight top edge. Place to one side.
- Fuse your printed fabric to your felt using your fusible webbing (follow manufacturer's instructions and protect your work from your hot iron with a cloth)
- Cut out back of case.
- Place the front and back together with the printed fabric towards the front of the case. Pin or baste in place (2).
- Work blanket stitch all around the edge of the case to join the front and back pieces together and also around the top of the back.
- Insert scissors. Finished!





## Early Spring

February 24

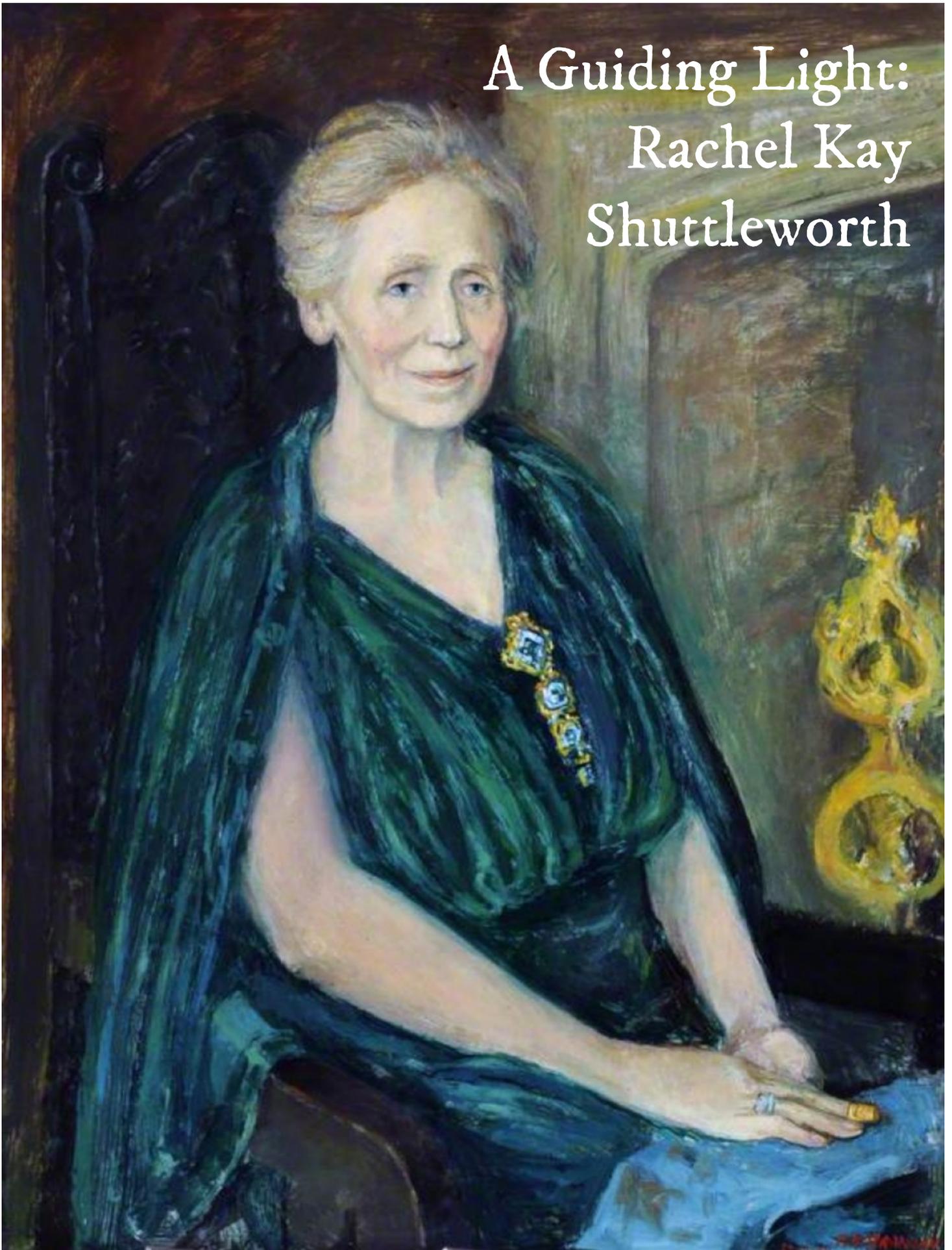
I cycled to Packwood House through Solihull and Bentley Heath, passing a rookery on the way. The Rooks were all very busy building up their old nests, and a great deal of chatter they made over it. I saw a little Robin gathering material for its nest, at one place on the bank, and further on, a Thrush with a beak full of long straws.

Everywhere the branches of the Willow bushes were tipped with downy white balls and Alder catkins were showing very red.

In the garden of Packwood Hall, adjoining the churchyard, the borders were full of large clumps of single snowdrops. I brought away a great bunch.

*“Diary of an Edwardian Country Lady”  
Edith Holden 1871-1920*

A Guiding Light:  
Rachel Kay  
Shuttleworth



**“I have a vision of a place of meeting where neighbours will come for many reasons to seek stimulating thought by meeting other active minds, to find refreshment and inspiration and a joy in beauty”.**

**Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth, 1912**

The Honourable Rachel Beatrice Kay-Shuttleworth MBE (1886-1967) was the last member of the Shuttleworth family member to live at [Gawthorpe Hall](#), described by the National Trust as an Elizabethan gem in the heart of industrial Lancashire.

Rachel was taught to sew, draw and paint from a young age under the guidance of her mother, Lady Blanche and the family governess. When at her family's South Kensington residence in London, Rachel's passion for textiles and design was further fuelled by regular visits to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Gawthorpe was not a large house, and as a child when visitors came to stay, Rachel often found herself sleeping in different rooms around the Hall,

*“I used to be packed in anywhere, and in that way I made my exciting discovery of design. Different rooms had different patterned ceilings, usually with a basic geometrical one, and long before I could read I invented a lovely game by which I invented other patterns by drawing out this line and cutting a line across here. And when I grew up and read books on design I thought this is silly, everybody knows this and that... but it was because I'd educated myself in design with the ceiling patterns!”*

*Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth when interviewed by Michael Conroy in 1963*

Inspired by the teachings of the Arts and Crafts Movement which surrounded her as she grew up, Rachel was confident in the knowledge that creativity and craft unlocked health, social and economic prospects for those in the community most in need. She became a maker, teacher, philanthropist and social activist who began collecting textile and craft items as early as 1912 to help with her teaching. She built up an amazing and eclectic collection of textiles over her lifetime. This collection eventually became the Gawthorpe Textiles Collection and for many years was still housed in Gawthorpe Hall.

This Collection was largely acquired through donations from an extensive network of family, friends and acquaintances. The collection was not intended to be merely observed and looked at through the glass of display cabinets, but to be held, touched, and used for educational purposes.



Some of the most significant pieces in the collection were made by Rachel herself. They are evidence of her skill and keen eye for colour and design.

The objects that form the Collection were each collected to demonstrate design and craftsmanship as a source of inspiration. Each item has its story to tell, of tradition and skill, creativity and innovation.

Alongside her love of crafts, Rachel had many other roles that occupied her time. She played a key role in the development of the Girl Guides movement in Lancashire, being involved for over 30 years. She was one of the pioneers, well known for raising the standard of handicrafts (especially needlework) throughout the association and for her work as the first Heraldry Adviser. She received their highest award for service, the Silver Fish.

Rachel served as a Justice of the Peace, worked with the Red Cross, Women's Voluntary Service, and the Civic Arts Association, amongst many other community roles and duties.

Rachel taught in the community and opened up her home at Gawthorpe Hall to the public as her "Craft House". She campaigned tirelessly to raise the funds to secure its future. By the time of her death in 1967, Gawthorpe had become a favourite destination for schools, colleges, craft societies and anyone keen to learn. The Craft House was a living centre for creativity with textiles out on display around the Hall – a working collection, a precious teaching resource.

The collection amassed by Rachel during her lifetime comprised of approximately 11,000 items spanning lace, embroidery, woven and printed materials, costume, accessories, books, tools and other craft related items from across the world. Items range from the highly functional to the finest decorative or ceremonial pieces and span five centuries. It was her wide network of friends, acquaintances and of course, family members, who donated items and helped her to acquire items from all over the world.

She collected objects that demonstrated exceptional design and craftsmanship, each with its own story of tradition, skill, creativity and innovation. Rachel was interested in the everyday textiles which filled Lancashire homes as well as those made by skilled craftsmen and women from across Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. Rachel added handwritten labels to the items that she collected, often written in a distinctive green ink. Following her death in 1967 the Collection continued to grow and now numbers over 30,000 items.



*A small white silk hexagon forms the central piece of this patchwork wedding quilt top which was donated to the Collection in 2005. It is printed with the words "SAMUEL MILTON MARRIED TO SARAH SAGE ON JANUARY, 30TH 1868". It's very typical of the printed silk inserts used in greetings cards of the time, and may be from one of their wedding invitations.*

*Sarah Sage, aged 37yrs, married Samuel Milton, 40, on 30th January 1868, at the Parish Church in the small village of Colaton Raleigh, Devon. Samuel was the son of John Milton, labourer and Sarah the daughter of Thomas Sage, farmer. Samuel's occupation is listed as a servant. Sarah is listed as a lace maker.*



*This white silk pincushion from the 1st World War was donated to the Collection in 1961, and is in the shape of an eight pointed star. Each point is edged in gold braid and hand embroidered with crossed French and British flags. The flags of the Allies and a green wreath are in the raised centre, surrounded by a ruched pink silk ribbon tied in a bow. The reverse is made from a black and white check woollen fabric and dark and light blue cotton. Card has been used to stiffen the individual panels, and there is also a hanging loop.*

*Postcards and greetings cards of this type were already being made in France long before the outbreak of war. The embroidery was done by French or Belgian out-workers in their own homes. Pre-printed repeat designs were worked on narrow rolls of silk, and then sent to Paris, or other cities, to be cut up and assembled. Although their production peaked during the war, similar embroidered cards continued to be made until the 1950s, but later ones were machine embroidered rather than by hand.*

*The pincushion is in excellent condition, considering that it is now over 100 years old, but it is very doubtful that it was ever intended to be used. According to the Accessions Register, the donor, a Miss D E Hinton, told Rachel that the pincushion was "made by the two old ladies, with whom her brother had been billeted in France. When he was killed in battle, the ladies had sent this souvenir to his mother, together with a letter written in French". Having lost both of her own brothers in the war, Rachel obviously felt that this information should be recorded, but there was nothing more about the donor herself.*



Rachel's family, the Shuttleworths, were a major family in the county of Lancaster (as it was formerly known) with great landholdings and power across the north west. During the seventeenth century the head of the family was Colonel Richard Shuttleworth, a man who fought in the English Civil War and rallied troops at Gawthorpe Hall in 1642 for the parliamentary cause.

Another notable family member was the physician, social reformer and educationalist James Kay-Shuttleworth was the first Baron Shuttleworth and the first to form the Kay-Shuttleworth name after he married Janet in 1842. The family continued to enjoy a high standing in society. In the 1850s, Sir Charles Barry redesigned Gawthorpe Hall, he was a handy man to know as he also drew up architectural plans for the Houses of Parliament. Author Charlotte Brontë stayed at the Hall twice at the invitation of the family in 1850.

But the family line was soon to be broken. Both Rachel's brothers were killed in the First World War, and the estate was eventually to pass to a cousin who died in the Battle of Britain in the Second World War.

Rachel was the only one left and remained unmarried throughout her life, spending much of her time caring for her aging father after her mother died in 1924. She also served

as a Justice of the Peace, worked with the Red Cross, Women's Voluntary Service, and the Civic Arts Association, amongst many other community roles and duties.

By the time of Rachel's death in 1967, Gawthorpe had become a favourite destination for schools, colleges, craft societies and anyone keen to learn. The Craft House was a living centre for creativity with textiles out on display around the Hall – a working collection, a precious teaching resource.

As well as founding and developing her collection and Craft House Rachel was one of the founding members of the Girl Guiding movement. She believed that girls should have an organisation like the boy scouts and set up groups for girls in the 1920s.

Rachel was appointed north east Lancashire's first County Commissioner for the Girl Guides' Association in 1916 when the national movement was in its infancy. She started new Girl Guides' companies, found and trained leaders, and allowed rallies and camps to be hosted at the Hall. She was one of the pioneers, well known for raising the standard of handicrafts (especially needlework) throughout the association and for her work as the first Heraldry Adviser. She received their highest award for service, the Silver Fish.

# Spring Lamb Napkins

## Notes:

Stitches used are split stitch, French knots and straight stitch.

Work on purchased napkins or make your own by hemming a square of linen or cotton.

If you are unfamiliar with working any of the stitches, then I recommend you [visit the Royal School of Needlework Stitch Wall](#) where there are really clear full instructions, including video



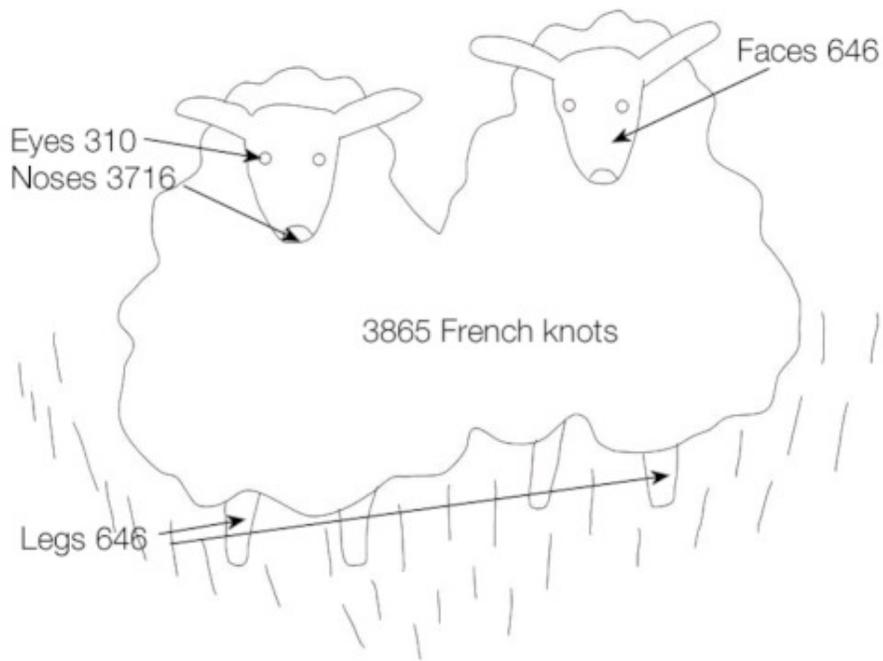
## Materials

- Napkins - either home made by hemming a square of linen or cotton or purchased. I chose to hem blue linen as the colour reminded me of spring skies, but other colours would work too, just be conscious that there needs to be enough contrast with the French knots for the sheep to show up well.
- DMC stranded cotton floss in 310, 646, 3865, 3716, plus a few shades of green and yellow for the grass and spring flowers.

## Method

*Use two strands of floss throughout.*

- Iron your background fabric well before beginning.
- Stitch design in accordance with guide on following pages.
- When finished press lightly on the reverse being very careful not to flatten your stitches.



## Stitching Guide

- Position the lambs in the corners of your napkins using the photographs as a guide for positioning.
- Their fleeces are worked entirely in French knots.
- Their noses are horizontal satin stitch.
- Their faces and legs are vertical split stitch.
- Their eyes are small straight stitches worked over the top of the split stitch.
- The grass is straight stitches worked in a mixture of greens (a good way to use up leftover floss).
- The spring flowers are French knots in spring colours - I used light pink and yellow - dotted among the blades of grass.
- These items are likely to be washed frequently and the back of your work will be visible so be sure to keep it as neat as possible - no long carrying threads - and fasten off the ends securely.



# Everlasting Winter

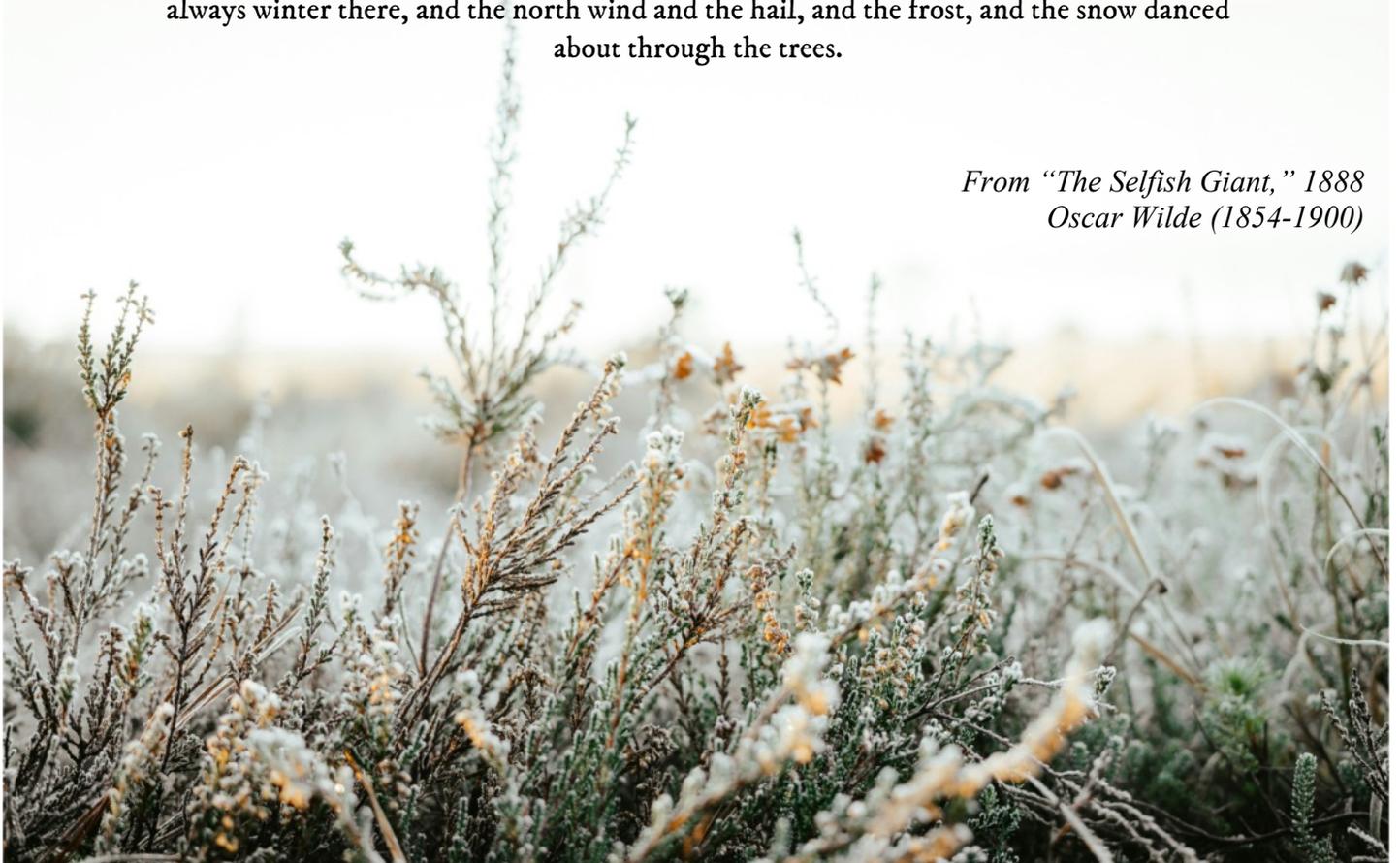
## “TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED”

Then the spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the selfish giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the snow and the frost. “Spring has forgotten this garden,” they cried, “so we will live here all the year round.” The snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak and the frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the north wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney pots down. “This is a delightful spot,” he said, “we must ask the hail on a visit.” So the hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

“I cannot understand why the spring is so late in coming” said the selfish giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; “I hope there will be a change in the weather.”

But the spring never came, nor the summer. The autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the giant’s garden she gave none. “He is too selfish,” she said. “So it was always winter there, and the north wind and the hail, and the frost, and the snow danced about through the trees.

*From “The Selfish Giant,” 1888  
Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)*



## Hope

O thrush, is it true?  
Your song tells  
Of a world born anew,  
Of fields gold with buttercups, woodlands all blue  
With hyacinth bells;  
Of primroses deep  
In the moss of the lane,  
Of a Princess asleep  
And dear magic to do.  
Will the sun wake the princess? O thrush, is it true?  
Will spring come again?

Will Spring come again?  
Now at last  
With soft shine and rain  
Will the violet be sweet where the dead leaves have lain?  
Will winter be past?  
In the brown of the copse  
Will white wind-flowers star through  
Where the last oak leaf drops?  
Will the daisies come too,  
And the may and the lilac? Will spring come again?  
O thrush, is it true?

*E Nesbit (1858-1924)*



# RSN

ROYAL SCHOOL  
OF NEEDLEWORK

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Founded 1872

The Royal School of Needlework was founded in 1872 with a mission to preserve the art of hand embroidery.

To mark its 150th anniversary the RSN launched the RSN Stitch Bank to continue this mission.

The RSN Stitch Bank aims to digitally conserve and showcase the wide variety of the world's embroidery stitches and the ways in which they have been used in different cultures and times.

The RSN Stitch Bank is an ongoing project and new stitches are added regularly. The RSN will be working with partners around the world to include stitches from different traditions.

Every year we lose historic textiles through wear, age, and the more aggressive routes of war, neglect and destruction.

We know that stitches from history have been lost because they fall out of use. Then, when an older embroidered piece is discovered, curators and museum staff cannot recognise the stitches. Textiles and the knowledge of stitches throughout the world continue to be threatened by wars and other disturbances, as well as changes in manufacturing processes.

Stitchers can use the RSN Stitch Bank to find a new stitch to use in a project and learn how to make it using videos, written instructions, illustrations and photographs for each stitch. Researchers, curators, historians and students can use the site to learn about the use, structure and history of each stitch in a range of embroidery techniques and to identify a stitch on a textile.

You can browse the stitch wall [here](#)

You can also create your own folder and save the stitches you are most interested in. It is all completely free and an amazing resource for stitchers!



# KITCHEN CONVERSION CHART

GLOSSARY	
<b>AL DENTE</b>	Food should be tender but firm.
<b>BAIN - MARIE</b>	A container holding hot water in which another pan is placed for slow cooking.
<b>BASTE</b>	To moisten food during cooking with juices from the pan.
<b>BLANCH</b>	To briefly cook food in boiling water and then quickly immerse in ice cold water.
<b>PARBOIL</b>	To partially cook food in boiling water.
<b>POACH</b>	To cook by simmering in a small amount of water.
<b>REDUCE</b>	The process of thickening and intensifying the flavour of a liquid.
<b>RENDER</b>	To turn solid fat into liquid by melting it slowly.
<b>SAUTE</b>	To cook quickly in a small amount of hot fat.
<b>SEAR</b>	To cook by browning quickly under intense heat.
<b>SIMMER</b>	To be cooked over a very low heat.

LIQUID		WEIGHT	
METRIC	IMPERIAL	METRIC	IMPERIAL
0.625ml	1/8tsp	10g	0.25oz
1.25ml	1/4tsp	20g	0.75oz
2.5ml	1/2tsp	25g	1oz
5ml	1tsp	40g	1.5oz
10ml	1dstspn	50g	2oz
15ml	1tbsp	60g	2.5oz
60ml	1/4cup	75g	3oz
75ml	1/3cup	110g	4oz
175ml	3/4cup	125g	4.5oz
250ml	1cup	150g	5oz
100ml	3.5fl oz	175g	6oz
150ml	5fl oz (0.25pint)	200g	7oz
250ml (0.25l)	9fl oz	225g	8oz
284ml	10fl oz (0.5pint)	250g	9oz
500ml (0.5l)	15fl oz (0.75pint)	350g	12oz
426ml	18fl oz	450g	1lb
568ml	20fl oz (1pint)	700g	1lb 8oz
852ml	1.5pints	900g	2lb
1l	1.75pints	1.35kg	3lb

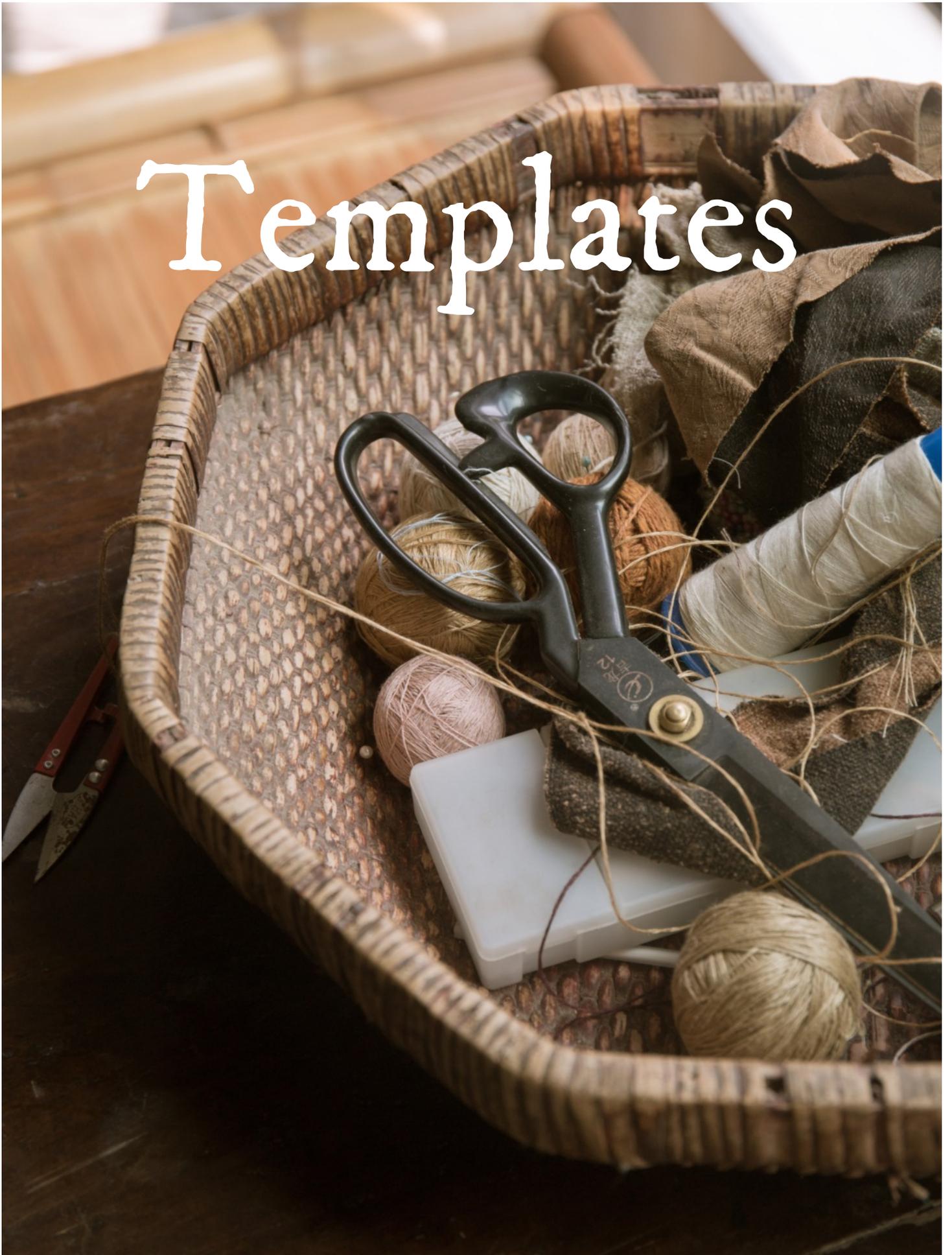
DRY		TINS	
<b>FLOUR</b>	<b>ICING SUGAR</b>	<b>ROUND</b>	<b>ROUND</b>
1/4 cup = 32g	1/4 cup = 32g	6inch	15cm
1/2 cup = 64g	1/2 cup = 64g	8inch	20cm
1 cup = 125g	1 cup = 125g	10inch	25cm
2 cups = 250g	2 cups = 250g	12inch	30.5cm
		14inch	35cm
<b>SUGAR</b>	<b>BUTTER</b>	<b>LOAF</b>	<b>LOAF</b>
1/4 cup = 50g	1/4 cup = 55g	9x5inch	23x13cm
1/2 cup = 100g	1/2 cup = 112g		
1 cup = 200g	1 cup = 225g	<b>SQUARE</b>	<b>SQUARE</b>
2 cups = 400g	2 cups = 450g	9inch	23cm
	1 stick = 113g		

INTERNAL MEAT TEMPERATURES	
<b>RARE</b>	
52°C Beef, Lamb & Veal	
<b>MEDIUM</b>	
60°C Beef, Lamb & Veal	
63°C Pork Roasts, Steaks & Chops	
<b>WELL - DONE</b>	
71°C Beef, Lamb & Veal	
71°C Pork Roasts, Steaks & Chops	
74°C Chicken, Turkey & Duck	
60°C Fish	

BOILED EGG	TEMPERATURES			
	GAS	FAN	°C	°F
SOFT (RUNNY)	1/4	90	110	225
	1/2	110	120	250
4-6 MINUTES	1	120	140	275
	2	130	150	300
	3	150	170	325
HARD	4	160	180	350
	5	170	190	375
	6	180	200	400
8-12 MINUTES	7	200	220	425
	8	210	230	450
	9	220	240	475

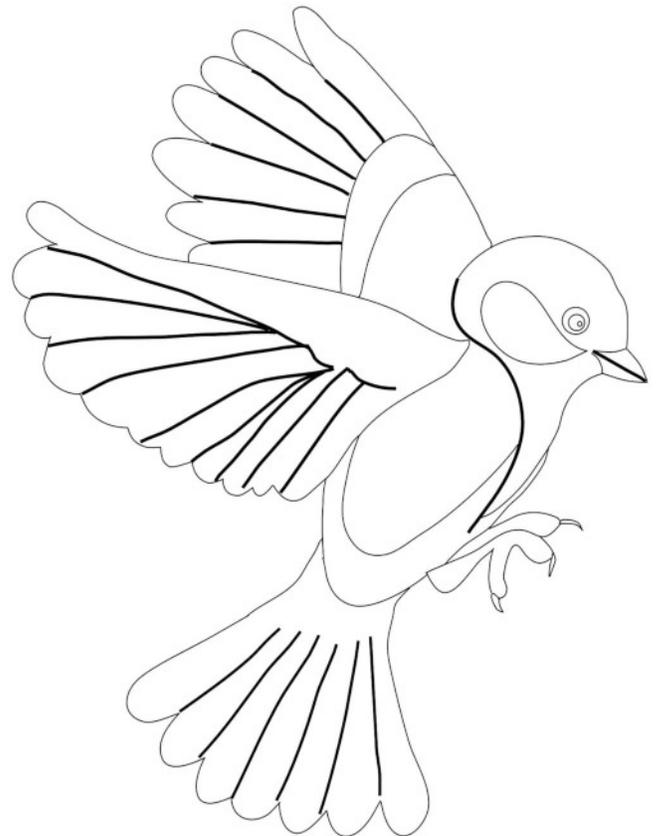
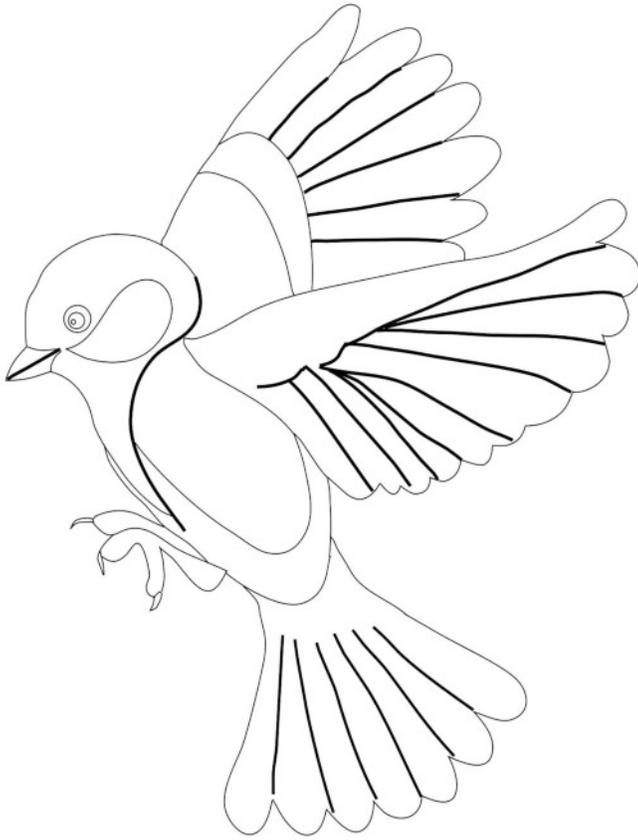
\*guidelines only

# Templates



## Feathered Flight

Pattern is full size and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.



# We go together....

Pattern is full size and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.





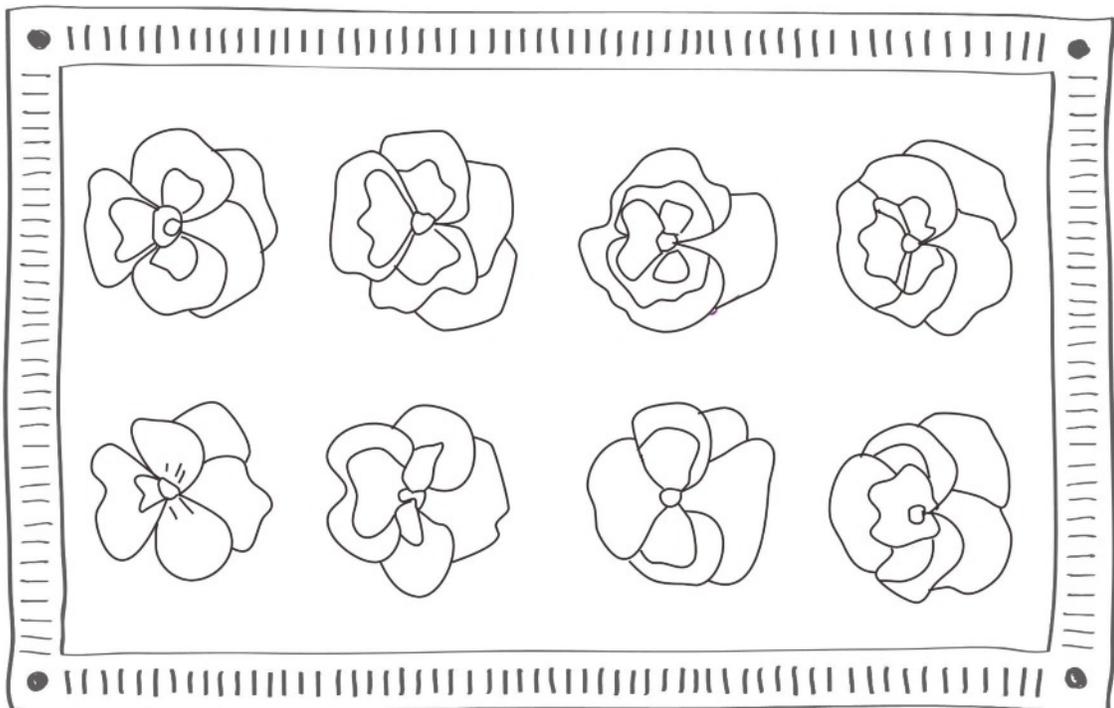
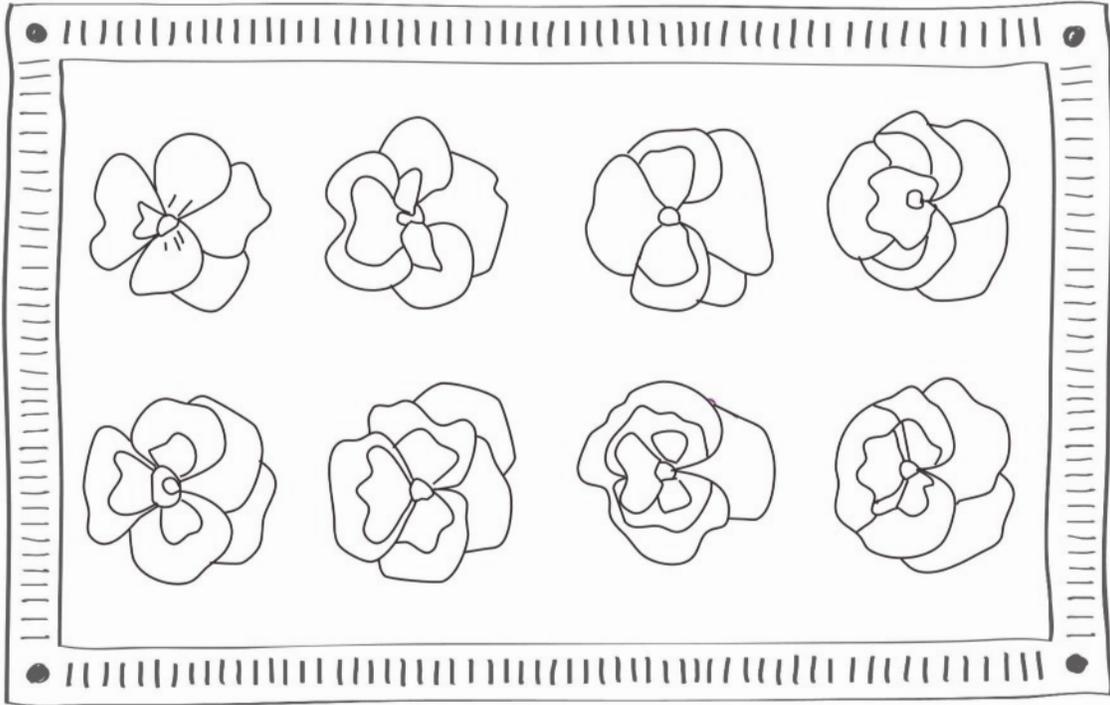
# We go together....

Pattern is full size and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer. Trace the pear shapes from the REVERSE template.



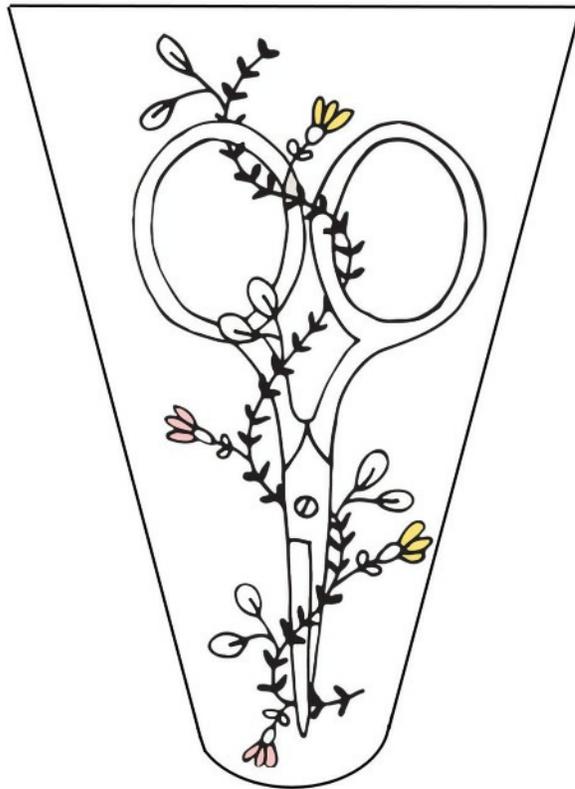
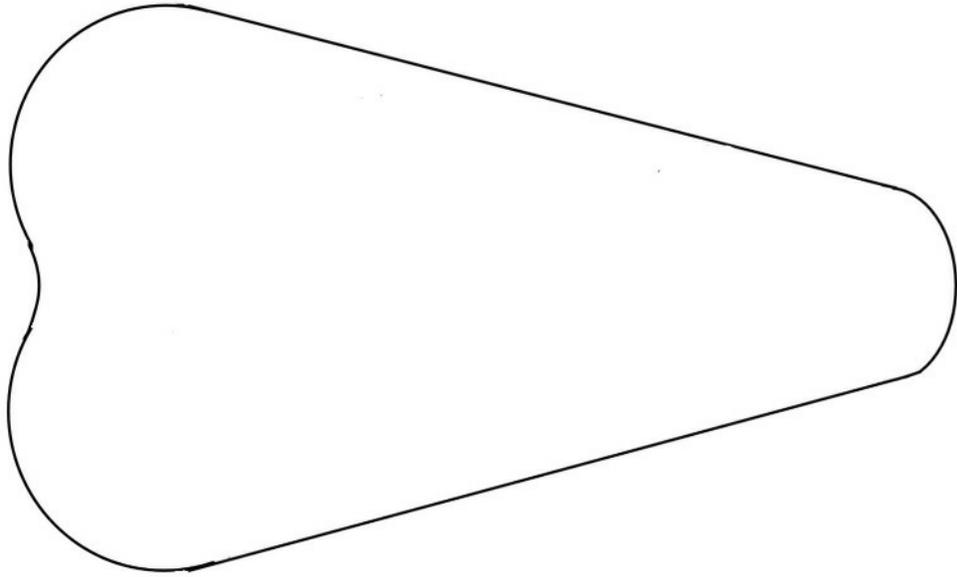
# A Posy of Pansies

Pattern is full size and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.



# Embroidered Scissors Case

Pattern is full size. You do not need to add any seam allowance. Use two strands of floss throughout.



## Spring Lambs Napkins

Pattern is full size and reversed to suit your preferred method of transfer.

