

Blog #102 - My Day in Lavenham:

September 2020

Having concentrated on and completely finished so many needlework pieces last month, decided to put my needle aside and began a jigsaw puzzle, but rather than concentrate on it for a day or two until it was finished, enjoyed working on it for a short time each day.

A lovely puzzle which I have had for many years and completed many times before.

However, did stitch a little, but did not completely finish anything this month.

Stitched one side of another letter of the alphabet series. The letter 'O' and prepared the 'O' and 'V' for finishing.

And too, worked a few more rows of Maryanne Crozier's 1823 sampler that I had charted from an original sampler belonging to a friend.

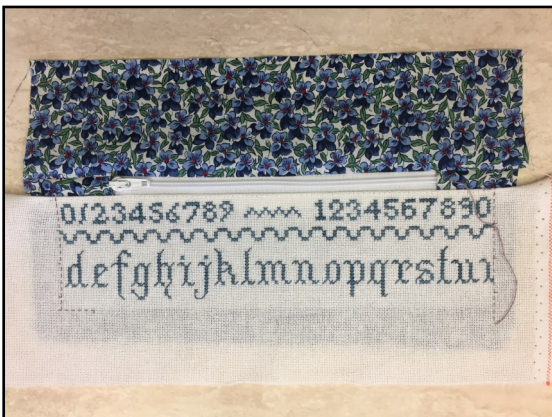
In addition to the above prepared and sent more fabric and threads to those ladies who wanted to participate in the Ackworth Flowers project beginning on the 1st of October.

Also, ensured that the written instructions and charts for Part One were all correct and could be printed.

And too, designed a 'Welcome' note for all the participants to accompany Part One (pictured to the right).

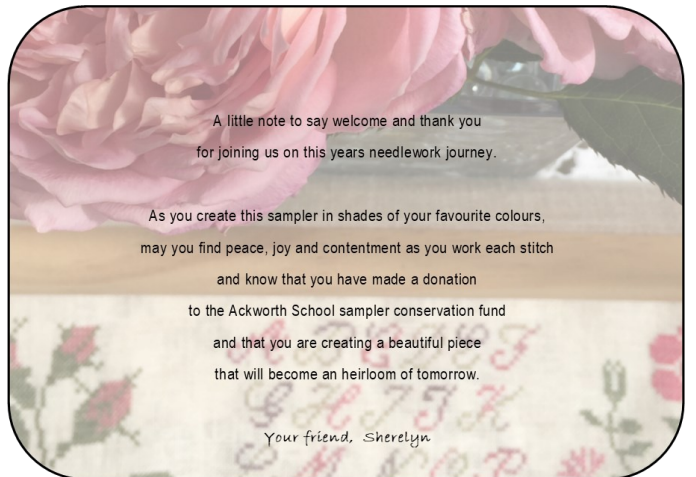
Some time ago I designed and stitched pieces for a needlework project pouch but had not constructed this pouch and so asked a friend, Clare (who has constructed many beautiful project bags) to help sort out the best method of construction for my piece and I began writing the instructions.

Not an easy task to find the right words to describe each step. Here is a pic of part of the process -



Blue Version : Simply Shaker Sampler Thread - 7044 : Dungarees
Brittney (28 count) - Antique White

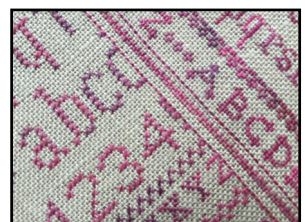
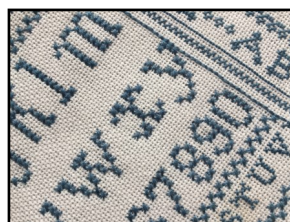
Pink Version : Sampler Thread - 0340 : Red Grape
Belfast Linen (32 count) - Summer Khaki



I have to confess that this task has not been completed and it is currently sitting in the "too hard" basket.

Therefore, not sure when the design will be available. However, when published it will contain charts for two different counts of fabric (28 & 32) but the finished project bag will be the same size for both counts.

Pictured below are sneak peeks at the needlework on one side of each of the project bags.

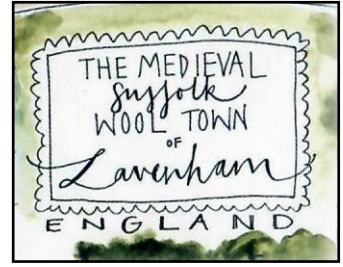


And now to continue on with happenings of Lady Anne's Needlework Retreat.
Day 9 - Friday, 27 September 2019.

At 8.30am I waved farewell to all the ladies as they left Lavenham for their next destination - a two hour bus trip to the home of Meg Andrew to view her collection of antique textiles.

As for myself, once the bus had left and despite the light continuous drizzle of rain, I slowly wandered a few of the streets of the town - another wonderful English town full of history.

Lavenham is situated in Suffolk and is largely thought of as being one of the finest surviving examples of a medieval town, founded on the wool trade which brought to the population its livelihood and wealth in the 15th and 16th centuries.



The Swan played an important role in Lavenham, for since the early 1400's through until the present day, it has been the focal point of the town.



In 1257, Lavenham was given its first Market Charter, and less than a century later records show that the town had already become a cloth-making centre.

Initially, the British Cloth industry was concerned

with the export of raw wool to its Flemish counterpart, but in the thirteen hundreds many Flemish weavers emigrated to England. It was from this period that the town's great involvement with wool began.

Primarily a cottage industry, the trade was controlled by the few who held the reins of power and wealth.

They formed themselves into Guilds, often believed to be solely craft organisations, but which were in fact, religious institutions. Four existed in the town:

the Guilds of Corpus Christi, Holy Trinity, Our Lady, and Saints Peter and Paul.



Each Guild built itself a meeting place and, since membership was extensive, these needed to be large, with cooking, storage and meeting facilities.

Two of these medieval Guildhalls survive in Lavenham -

Corpus Christi and Our Lady.

The latter is now known as 'The Wool Hall' and is an integral part of The Swan Hotel and is pictured to the right. Entrance to it is from the street at the back of the hotel.

Not only do the Guildhalls stand testimony to the town's wealth - fine buildings abound everywhere, and the local skyline is dominated by the tower of Lavenham's Parish Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, which soars 141 feet into the Suffolk sky.

The tower houses the Lavenham Bells, which are well known in bell-ringing circles. The tenor bell, described as 'the finest toned bell in England, probably the world', was cast in 1625 by the famous bell founder, Miles Graye.

So many crooked streets and crooked / quaint houses & buildings in this unique little town.

Here are a few images of some of them -



The following nursery rhyme was said to be inspired by the crooked houses of Lavenham & was published in the 1840's

THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN
HE WALKED A CROOKED MILE
HE FOUND A CROOKED SIXPENCE
UPON A CROOKED STILE
HE BOUGHT A CROOKED CAT
WHICH CAUGHT A CROOKED MOUSE
AND THEY ALL LIVED TOGETHER
IN A LITTLE CROOKED HOUSE

Another building of note in Lavenham is ... *Shilling Grange* in *Shilling Street*.
This house was built by wealthy clothier, *John Shilling* in the 15th Century.



In the 1780's, *Shilling Grange* was the home of the engraver, *Isaac Taylor*, whose daughter *Jane* wrote the endearing nursery rhyme, '*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*'.

And another building that has become very well known is the *De Vere House* in *Water Street*, where carvings of the family emblems, the star and boar, may be seen.



This house became well known due to it being featured in the *Harry Potter* film - '*The Deadly Hallows*'. It was depicted as *Harry Potter's* birthplace.

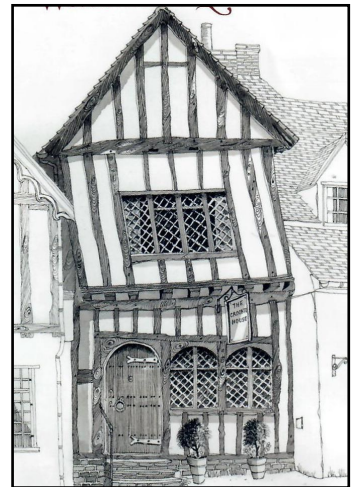
I wandered to *The Market Place* and checked out a few of the little shops but did not visit any of the other old buildings such as the *Guildhall of Corpus Christi*, *The Great House*, *Little Hall* (now a museum & the headquarters of the *Suffolk Preservation Society*), *The Angel Hotel* or *Molet House* (where *Queen Elizabeth I* stayed on the 24th of March, 1586).

Evidently the *Market Place* is quite unusual because of its location: in most towns and villages the *Market Place* is an integral part of the *High Street*, but here it stands alone, quite separate from that thoroughfare. In the fifteenth century the *Market Place* was called, '*The Forum*'.

Due to the establishment of the spinning trade in *Lavenham* and the surrounding villages, *Lavenham* lost the title of 'wool town' in favour of 'new draperies'. This business continued well into the 1700's and in 1720 *Lavenham* became the chief centre of the industry. By the early 1800's the major source of employment was yarn making which in turn gave way to horsehair weaving. This too died out, so that by 1930 all the cloth factories had finally closed down, ending a 600-year tradition in the town.



And so,
after a morning
of leisurely wandering
about this historical town
and soaking up
the atmosphere,
I headed to
Munnings Tea Rooms
at the
Crooked House
for some lunch



and afterwards I travelled south for several hours by private hired car to *Langshott Manor* at *Horley* in *Surrey* to await the arrival of *Phillipa* and the other tour ladies.

My intention when I began writing this note was to include all that *Phillipa* and the ladies experienced this day, but as I have so many lovely images to share, made the decision to write about and show you their experiences in my next blog.

I was sad that I could not experience it too, but knew in my heart that I had been blessed by being able to leave the hospital with only minor effects and not serious effects to my unfortunate episode.

Till I send my next blog,
continue making time to restore peace to your soul
with needle, thread and fabric in your hands.

Bye for now.

