

Blog #100 - A Day to Remember:

July 2020

Goodness me. I can hardly believe I am penning my 100th blog!
And so many of you reading this have accompanied me on my needlework journey since I began writing the first blog in 2013.

I'm obviously not the only one reminiscing at the moment as recently received a message and photo from my friend, Pat Carson of Designs by Gloria & Pat. When I began my needlework shop in 1988 I used to sell Pat's 'Precious Moments' and other designs and 'Linen Stitches', Ginnie Thompson's book published by Pat and which I know many of you have on your bookshelves. I stitched several models of her designs for display and in February 1993 met Pat for the first time when I attended one of her classes at a 'Spirit of Cross Stitch Festival' event. This was at Winston-Salem in North Carolina. My first experience of a needlework retreat attended by thousands of needleworkers and at which over thirty tutors were teaching classes or giving lectures.

And what an unforgettable experience, especially as I was treated as royalty by the organiser, Jean Farrish (due to me being the first "international" to attend this event) by being interviewed by radio and introduced to everyone at every class or festival event.

I subsequently attended a couple of other 'Spirit of Cross Stitch Festivals' over the next couple of years - one at Des Moines, Iowa and the other at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Absolutely awesome events. Sadly they are no longer.

Getting back to my friend, Pat. The second time I met her was at my first wholesale Needlework Trade Show at Charlotte, North Carolina for needlework retailers and designers in August 1994 and at the end of that year Pat came to stay at our home for several days.

We were living at Taupo at this time and one evening I organised and hosted an event at Manuel's Hotel where attendees could meet Pat and hear her speak of her needlework journey as well as her sharing many needlework tips.



Touring Rotorua & about to leave for our evening at Manuels



I subsequently met up with Pat several other times at trade shows and the other 'Spirit of Cross Stich' events I attended.

The message and photo I received from Pat which I wrote about above at the beginning of this blog was - "Is this you with us?"
Yes - it is me in the photo. (I have changed a lot since then!!)

Pictured from left to right are -
Ken & Ginnie Thompson, Jytte Harboesgaard, myself and Pat.

It was taken at Ken & Ginnie's home, Pawley's Island, South Carolina in 1996.

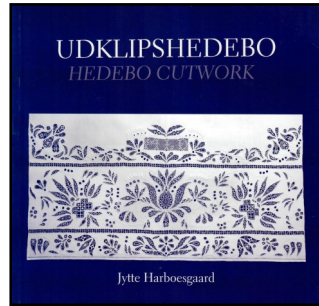
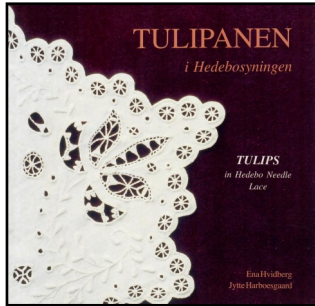
Many of you will know that Ginnie was known as 'The First Lady of Cross Stitch' as it was she who revived the art and interest of Cross Stitch and the author of the book, 'Linen Stitches' as mentioned above.



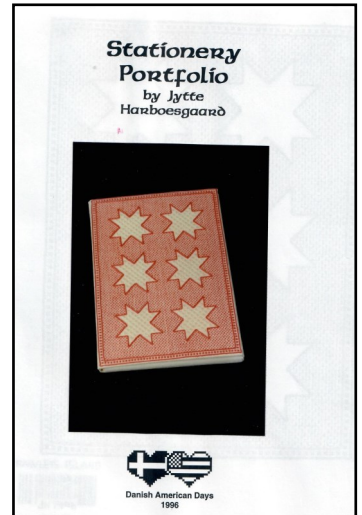
Ginnie also began the 'Danish American Days' - needlework retreats at which she and Ken organised for Jytte from the Danish

School of Needlework (Copenhagen, Denmark) to teach needlework classes over a weekend. Jytte was a very experienced needlewoman. At that time she had been teaching at the Danish school for over thirty years and written several books - mainly on Hedebo.

Pictured below are two of Jytte's books.



A little snippet -
Jytte came to NZ one year
to teach Hedebo
at various Embroidery Guilds
throughout the country.
Many of you may have attended
her class.
It was lovely to be able to have her
and her husband, Neils at our home.



After several years Pat took over the organisation of the yearly 'Danish American Days' event and at the time of the photo on the previous page, Pat had the responsibility of it and this particular year Pat had invited me as her special guest.

Pictured to the above right is one of the projects taught by Jytte that year.

From that time together, Pat, Jytte and I became close friends.

Sadly Ken, Ginnie & Jytte are no longer with us but here is a pic of Pat and I together at a needlework trade show at Nashville, North Carolina in 2018.



Enough reminiscing. Now on to needlework news.

Spent most of the days of July stitching Part Five of my mystery sampler -

Ackworth Flowers - in the mono colourings.

Here are pics of both the coloured and mono versions -



Also worked on and therefore added more stitches to a reproduction sampler - this very old sampler belonging to a faithful needlework customer, Margo, who has kindly given me permission to reproduce it for you. I've tried to reproduce it exactly as Maryanne (7) stitched it, but in the odd place have not reproduced her errors.

Other places though have stitched it as she did - errors and all.

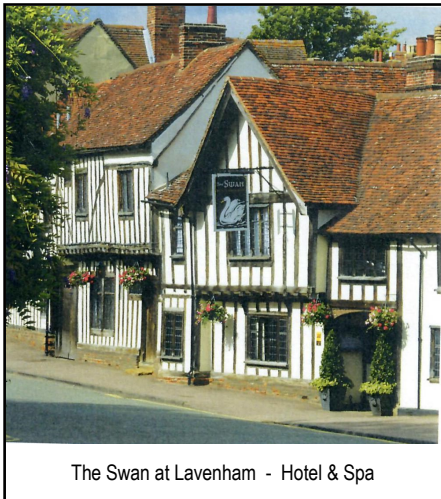
If you decide to stitch this piece once it has been published, you can decide whether you want to stitch it error free. However, if you do, please remember to write a note that you have made alterations and place it on the back of the frame and add your initials and a date to the front in addition to Maryanne's name and sampler date.

Pictured to the right is a sneak peek at a part of the original sampler.



And now to continue on with Day 7 of Lady Anne's Needlework Retreat - Wednesday, 25 September 2019.

As per my finishing note in blog #99, after touring Burghley House near Stamford, late in the afternoon we travelled to our next hotel / accommodation - the iconic, fabulous 15th century, enchanting, exceptional property - at Lavenham, Suffolk. The Swan at Lavenham.

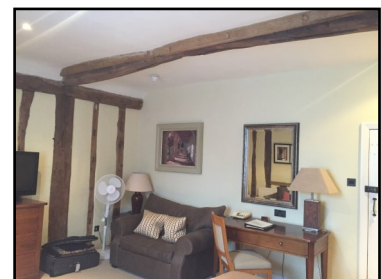


The Swan at Lavenham - Hotel & Spa

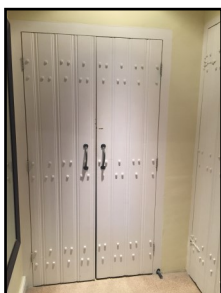
One couldn't help but wonder about all the persons who had stayed there over the past 500 years and wandered the narrow corridors, climbed up and down the few but various sets of steps dotted along the maze of corridors, ducking their heads to avoid hitting them on the low ceiling beams and clutching the occasional wooden railings.



The floor of my room was definitely on a lean and the crooked and unevenly sawn wall framing and ceiling beams that were exposed and were between the white-washed, plastered wall and ceiling panels were fascinating.



I especially loved the wardrobe and bathroom doors and their latches and the lovely, peaceful, outdoor areas of the hotel



(one such area pictured to the right) where one could relax and stitch.



And here - pictured to the right - is a view of the dining room.



Whereas we had spent the previous two days visiting historic homes and viewing the needlework displayed in them, today was a work day.

Classes all morning with a break for morning tea.

My class was a continuing of Alison Cole's beautiful gold work on rich green velvet.

Here are a few pics of our class concentrating on their work -



Note:
Lady Anne's
Needlework
Retreat
images
used with
permission

We broke for lunch and could choose where we wanted to go for lunch. I chose Munning's Tea Rooms at the Crooked House. Don't you just love it! So quirky!!



Following lunch we had time to explore the little town of Lavenham as our next class session did not begin again until 3pm.

Rather than explore, I chose though to visit a little fashion shop (named - Retail Therapy Clothing Shop) just a few doors down from the tearooms as had spied an unusual pair of trousers in the shop window and ended up purchasing a couple of pairs and then visited an antique shop - Timbers Antiques - nearby. Bought myself a 'Royal Albert' cup, saucer & plate set in the Flowers of the Month series - the decoration/pattern being 'Lily of the Valley'. The month of May flower. My birthday month.

Many years ago I had bought myself a miniature cup and saucer with the same pattern. Both sets now sit side-by-side in the 'butlers pantry' area of my kitchen.

Back to class at 3pm. As you know from previous blogs, counted thread work is my passion and so I was struggling with the gold work.

I was not happy with my execution of the stitches.



Not nearly neat enough for my liking! And so, I was becoming quite upset and frustrated with myself.

Many of you I am sure will have enjoyed a decadent, chocolate dessert often known as “Death By Chocolate”.

Well - for me - this afternoon was almost “Death By Needlework”.

Alison called for some of us to gather around her to watch her work a particular stitch but as I got up from my chair, my right arm suddenly fell down and my right leg gave way. I quickly sat down again hoping no-one had seen, as from this happening being at least my fifth experience, I knew what had occurred. Another TIA. But someone had seen, the outcome being that I was helped to my room by tutor, Alison Cole. Not long after she returned with Phillipa and another tour participant (Dorothy, a nurse from Australia) and whilst Phillipa held one hand and Alison the other and whilst a doctor and two ambulance paramedics attended to me, Dorothy gathered up all the bits and pieces she knew I would need for a stay in hospital.

And so - off in the ambulance (accompanied by Phillipa) for the twenty minute ride to the hospital at Bury St Edmonds.

Everyone was wonderful and I so appreciated all that they did for me. I will never be able to repay them but I know God will have blessed them.

It is now July 2020 as I am penning these few lines and I am pondering on the happenings of the months since that 25th day of September 2019. They have been filled with blessings, sadness and disappointments and unexpected events - but through it all God has been faithful.



Throughout His Word, God has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us and so I held on to this promise in the long dark hours of the night on my own whilst in my hospital bed in the UK with a right arm that was not working. Even when He seems quiet and we don't understand why some things are happening, He is working on our behalf behind the scenes.

Another verse I held on to was ...

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God ...” Romans 8 : 28.

Further Lady Anne's Needlework Retreat events and more of my experiences to relate in my next blog.

In closing, I again express my gratitude to those who helped me at that time and to everyone for your prayers, friendship, encouragement and support throughout the months that I have been back home. I have been touched beyond words.

May your days be filled with many blessings, joyous moments and many pleasurable hours spent with your needle and thread.

Bye for now from your friend,

