

Itinerary : Italy / Belgium
28 August 2015 - 2 October 2015

Friday, 28 August : Napier - Auckland - Hong Kong

Sunday, 30 August - Thursday, 3 September : Hong Kong - Rome, Italy

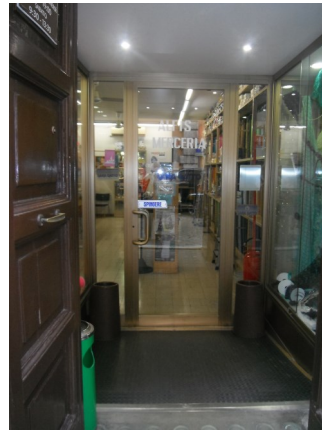
Explored the city and visited the usual historical sites



and down two different little alleyways located two embroidery shops - one was closed, one was not.

Shop quite different in layout to our NZ shops.

Most items away in drawers - not on display - and so one had to ask to see particular items. Certainly no "self-service".



Itinerary : Rome, Italy

Thursday, 3 September - Sunday, 6 September : Rome - Foligno - Assisi, Italy

Walked the many little streets in this delightful town.

Found lots of shops selling the traditional Assisi needlework and other beautiful embroidery items.



One day we travelled about thirty minutes from Assisi in a taxi to another ancient hill top town - Valtopina - to view their embroidery exhibition.



The theme of the exhibition was - PEACE



Itinerary : Assisi, Italy

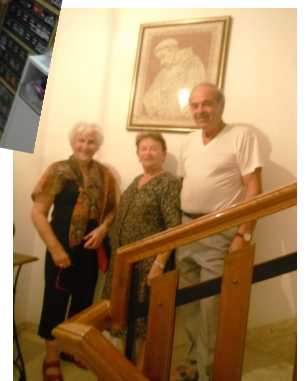
Thursday, 3 September - Sunday, 6 September : Assisi, Italy

Whilst at the exhibition venue - the museum - also looked through drawer after drawer of exquisite needlework!



Another day went down to the lower village at the bottom of the hill to visit another needlework shop owned by a husband and wife. They opened especially for us despite it being their rest time in the afternoon.

Lovely couple. Their home was above the shop.



Itinerary : Bologna, Italy

Sunday, 6 September - Tuesday, 8 September : Assisi - Arezzo - Bologna, Italy

Another museum full of more exquisite needlework that is hundreds of years old!



Itinerary : Venice, Italy

Tuesday, 8 September - Tuesday, 15 September : Bologna - Venice, Italy

Mostly “rest” days in Venice - but some days visited the many places where Italians are known for their artistic skills.
Burano - the island known for it’s lace making & Murano - the island known for it’s glass blowing.



The Lace Museum - Burano



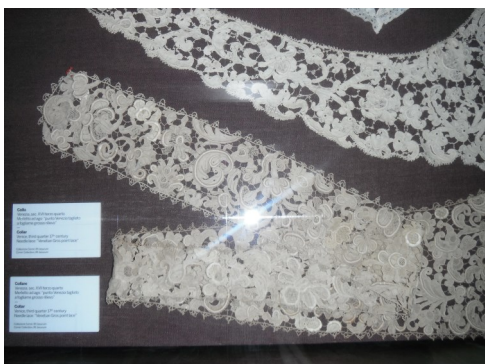
Itinerary : Venice, Italy

Tuesday, 8 September - Tuesday, 15 September : Burano, Italy

Traditional lace making today is mostly done by the older ladies on the island.



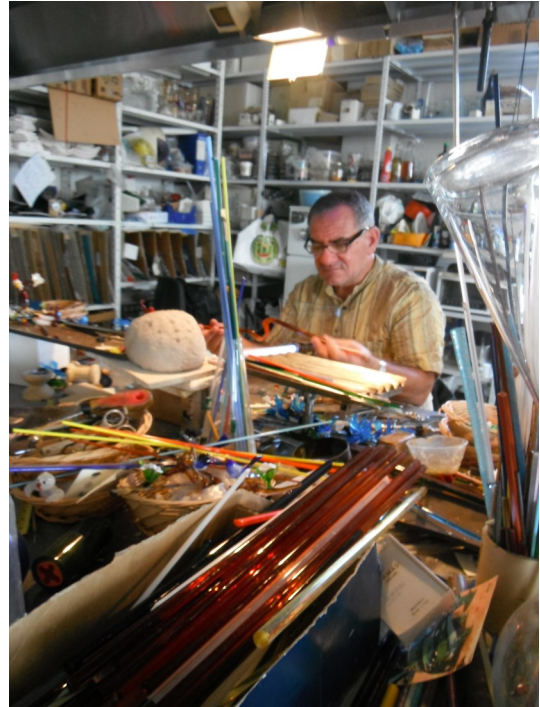
A display of very old lace fans and lengths of lace



Itinerary : Venice, Italy

Tuesday, 8 September - Tuesday, 15 September : Murano, Italy

The beautiful artistry of the glass blowers on the island of Murano



Itinerary : Venice, Italy

Saturday, 12 September : Formigine, Italy

Up early to travel from Venice to Formigine by train to visit a Needlework Show, returning to Venice later that day. My Italian friend, and needlework designer, Nicoletta Farrauto of Niky's Creations was to be exhibiting at the show.



At the show was invited
by the organiser, Tania
to participate in their show
in 2016 or 2017

Itinerary : Florence, Italy

Tuesday, 15 September - Friday, 18 September : Venice - Florence, Italy

A city full of amazing buildings and statues - but **NOT ONE** needlework shop!

The owner of this fabulous confectionery & gift shop had finished pieces of needlework created by her grandmother and aunt on display on the walls of her shop.

This business is a family business which was started many generations and hundreds of years ago.



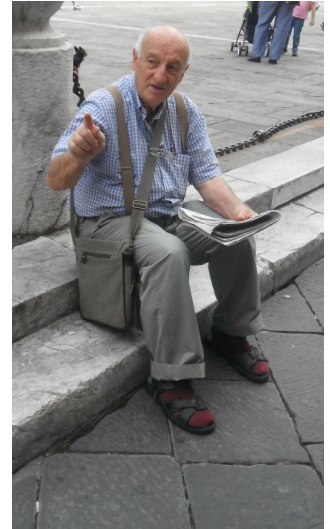
Itinerary : Massa, Italy

Friday, 18 September - Wednesday, 23 September : Florence - Massa, Italy

Travelled by train to Massa to stay with very special friend and world renown Italian needlework designer & tutor,

Giulia Manfredini of *Giulia Punti Antichi "GPA"*

and her husband, Mario at their home.



Together we visited many churches, monasteries, etc. to look for inspiration for our next needlework designs whilst her patient husband waited outside and read the paper.



I also found a shop that sells figs.
Took photos of some of the products on sale for my friends, Murray & Helen, who own *The Figgery* in Havelock North and have award winning cuisine products.

We have begun growing figs for them.



Itinerary : Massa, Italy

Friday, 18 September - Wednesday, 23 September : Massa, Italy

As per my Blog #44, Giulia took me up into the hills behind their town to view all the wonderful & famous Carrara marble. Fabulous!

Way up in one of these hills is a little village where her friend, Roberta is a silversmith, and who makes all the beautiful and intricate silver pieces - chatelaines, jewelled pins, etc - that adorn many of Giulia's needlework designs.



Captimonte have made the doll on the left exclusively for Giulia to sell with her doll designs

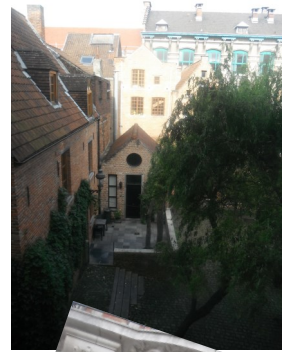
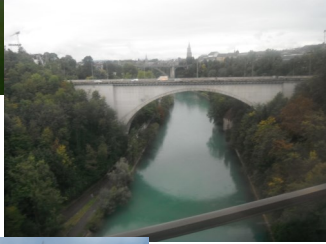
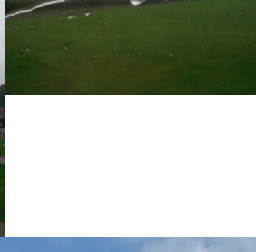
Itinerary : Enroute to Brussels, Belgium

Wednesday, 23 September - Wednesday, 30 September : Massa, Italy - Brussels, Belgium

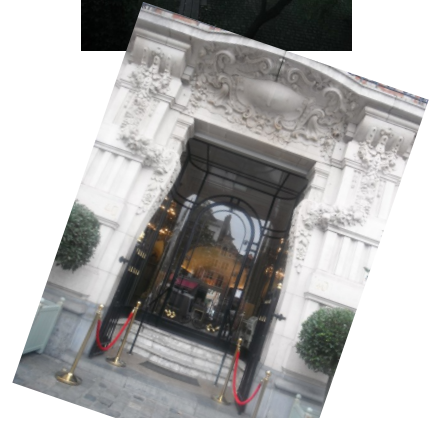
Left Massa, Italy by train very early in the morning and after travelling through Italy, Switzerland and France

I finally arrived at Brussels in Belgium about midnight.

A very long journey.



Spent the next two days in my room (below) of my hotel (above) unpacking, sorting and pricing all the boxes of stock that I had posted from New Zealand and were awaiting my arrival in Belgium. Enjoyed the view from my window (pictured right & left)



Itinerary : Brussels, Belgium

Wednesday, 23 September ~ Wednesday, 30 September : Brussels, Belgium

Over the next few days (after all my preparations were completed for the upcoming exhibition on the Sunday) my friend, Monique - needlework designer, distributor for several European needlework designers & companies and organiser of the needlework show - met me at the hotel and took me to her place and the exhibition venue to help her where I could and for me to set up my exhibition site.

The needlework show was all day on the Sunday and then we had to pack up that evening.

Not a very successful show for me. The continual comments were that my designs were "too hard".

Yes - I have to agree that they are rather complex. Obviously not to the European's liking.

Had to send as many boxes of stock back home to New Zealand as sent over!

Sales figure VERY low. Spent all monies obtained from sales on buying pieces of Batenburg lace and Bruges lace that is made in Belgium.



My other lovely Belgium friend, Gigi

also exhibited at the show.

Gigi is also a needlework designer - *GigiR*.

She reproduces charts for the samplers that are in her private collection - which is reputed to be the largest private collection in Europe.



Itinerary : Belgium

Wednesday, 23 September - Wednesday, 30 September : Bruges, Belgium

On the Monday - the day after the exhibition - I spent most of the day packing up unsold stock and then taking it to the post office to post it home to NZ and repacking my suitcases for my return home. Rather heart-breaking after all the work before leaving NZ, carting all my needlework models around Italy in my suitcase, preparing and setting up for the exhibition, etc.

On the Tuesday Monique met me at the hotel and then drove me to Bruges for the day to buy the hand-made Belgium lace and to visit the needlework shops in that beautiful city.

A lovely day for the last day of my wonderful trip and amazing experience.



One of the needlework shops.



Surprised to see that most of the stitched models on display and the designs for purchase were designs ONLY in kit form.

Mostly the Danish kits - Permin.



The second needlework shop. Not very inspiring.



The Bear Necessities
 ~
 A delightful shop for anyone who loves to make hand-made teddy bears!



I was amused by the sign on this shop window



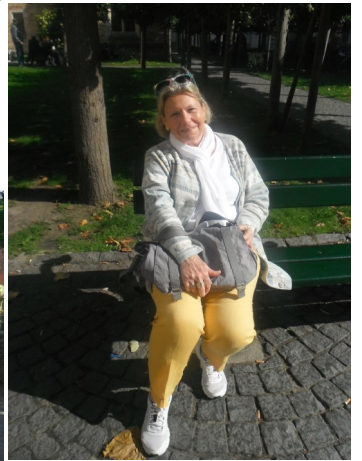
Had to purchase some of this confectionery for my eldest granddaughter as she loved it when she was living in Belgium for a year as a Rotary Exchange student.

Itinerary : Farewell Europe

Wednesday, 23 September - Wednesday, 30 September : Bruges, Belgium

A lovely last day in Europe !

Thank you, Monique



Had lunch at the café situated in the white building pictured to the left.

Café owner asked about my accent.

His son was touring New Zealand in a camper van and loving the country and experience!

Small world, isn't it ?!!