



The Worshipful Company of Broderers of Lochac

The official newsletter of the needlework guild of Lochac – #31, Midwinter AS49

From the Build Master



elcome to the Company Newsletter!

It is with great pleasure that I write these words for the first issue of our revived Company Newsletter!

For those who are new to the Company, a brief background: The Worshipful Company of Broderers (WCoB) was established in in AS XXXII (1998) by Mistress Bess Haddon of York (Guildmaster) and Mistress Keredwin the Mouse (Patron) some years after the demise of the former Lochac Needleworkers Guild.

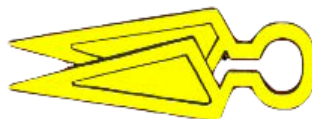
In the early years before the universal use of email and social media, a quarterly WCoB newsletter was printed and handed out at each Principality Kingdom event (or posted to those who did not attend), to keep members informed about Company projects, competitions and the like. It was also a great way to introduce prospective members to the Company.

The newsletter was produced regularly for many years with several editors, including Master Bartolomeo Agazzari, Mistress Morwynna Branwynt, Lady Jane Stockton (for many years) and Lady Madilayn du Mer. After a period of erratic publication, the newsletter ceased in 2010, with the email list and website taking over as the main communication. However, such channels are ephemeral and hard to refer back to – the past newsletters provide a great view of the Company through the years and remain both interesting and relevant today. (For back issues, see <http://broiderers.lochac.sca.org/newsletters>)


Many thanks to Master Bartolomeo Agazzari for reviving the Newsletter – I am sure the Company will benefit both now and looking back on this time in future years

Yours for the Company

Rowan



From the Chronicle

reetings all,
Welcome to the Midwinter ASXLIX (July 2014) edition of the Worshipful Company of Broderers newsletter. Apologies for tardiness, I had intended to have this issue out in time for the Midwinter Investiture but Rowan's busy schedule, and my recent bout of carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow (ugh!), both conspired to delay this issue.

Having a newsletter allows us to explore some topics in more depth, and especially the themes and techniques of future competitions. On page 3 of this issue there is a wonderful survey of blackwork by Lady Ceara Shionnach, and I hope this inspires you to pick up a needle and thread in time for the November Crown blackwork competition. Please see page 7 for more detail of the future competitions, and if you would like to contribute an article for a future newsletter please do!



It was wonderful to catch up with everyone who could make it to the Rowany Festival WcoB meeting this year (pictured above). For those who weren't able to attend, we sat, we nattered, there was wonderful show and tell (as always), and we discussed both the WcoB projects currently on the go and everyone's input into the competitions we would like to see over the next year.

Another major point worth noting is that we now have a very active Facebook group. If you search for The Worshipful Company of Broderers on Facebook it should take you straight to the group. To avoid spambots and other irritations we have set the group as 'closed', so it means you have to request membership. Rowan, myself and Hunydd are the admins, and we are usually able to approve new members within 24 hours or less. As of writing we are now up to 87 members of the group, so if you are on Facebook and haven't yet checked us out, please do. The aim is for it to be an adjunct to the email list rather than a replacement, as not everyone is on Facebook.

Bartolomeo



A Broad Overview of Blackwork References and Resources

by THL Ceara Shionnach of Burbage House, May 2014

For November Crown AS49, Lochac's Worshipful Company of Broderers (WCOB) will be holding a competition for blackwork embroidery in any style. The purpose of this article is to provide references that give an overview of the technique, some embroidery stitches and how they're done, references for extant blackwork from various periods and provide examples of period patterns and pattern inspiration.

Blackwork is known by many names, including Spanish work, Crimson work (specifically referencing the use of red thread) and monochrome embroidery. It was a popular and common style of embroidery during the 16th century throughout Europe. Blackwork embroidery may have evolved from the "*double-running stitch... [found] in the Islamic countries south of the Mediterranean in the 14th and 15th centuries*" (Laning, 2008). The author also suggests that this style may have become popular in Western Europe following the marriage of Catherine of Aragon to King Henry VIII in 1509 as prior to that time there appears to be a lack of solid evidence of the use of blackwork in Western Europe.



Resources for period examples of blackwork



Blackwork was used in to decorate many personal items for both males and females, such as handkerchiefs, coifs, other headwear, jackets, stomachers, stockings, shirts/chemises, as well as appearing on embroidery samplers.

There are several examples of extant pieces incorporating blackwork readily available in the online collections of various museums and blogs, including:

- Historical Needlework Resources has an overview of blackwork (particularly in the 16th century context), including materials, stitches and links to various extant examples: http://medieval.webcon.net.au/technique_blackwork.html
- Extant examples of 12th-15th century Middle Eastern blackwork and some embroidery charts of these pieces are available on *Miriam's Middle Eastern Research Blog* by THL Miriam bat Shimeon: <http://awalimofstormhold.wordpress.com/tag/embroidery/>
- [Victoria and Albert Museum – search the collections –search for blackwork](#) (and I recommend setting the latest year to 1600): <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>
- Metropolitan Museum of Art – [search the collections - blackwork](#): <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections>

Resources for some examples of stitches used in blackwork

In period, blackwork could include one or more different stitch types. Perhaps the most common examples consist of Holbein (aka double running) stitch or stem stitch (Historical Needlework Resources, 2013). Reversible patterns (that are the same on the back as on the front) and geometric patterns are often done in Holbein stitch. Some resources for the most commonly used stitches and how they're executed include:

- Holbein stitch: Wikipedia article on *Holbein Stitch* (last accessed May 2014) - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holbein_stitch
- Stem stitch: Historical Needlework Resources article on *Stitches* (last accessed May 2014) - http://medieval.webcon.net.au/technique_stitches.html#stem
- Cross stitch (of which there are many variants): Wikipedia article on *Cross Stitches* (last accessed May 2014) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_stitches



The colour of the embroidery used was typically black silk, however, red, blue and other coloured silks were also used (Laning, 2008; Root, 2004). Blackwork was also used in conjunction with other techniques such as plaited braid stitch in a metal thread (Historical Needlework Resources, 2013). Instructions for plaited braid stitch (and many others) can be found in *Elizabethan Stitches – a Guide to Historic English Needlework* by Jacqui Carey (2009): <http://www.careycompany.com/elizabethan-stitches.html>

Resources for extant blackwork pattern ideas

To begin a blackwork project, you first need to decide on the time and place, and then devise a pattern. Blackwork designs were published in various pattern books (also known as model books or modelbuchs) in period. The style of the pattern could vary anywhere from rigidly geometric to freeform and common motifs commonly included repetitive geometrics, flora and/or fauna. Designs can also be copied from contemporary portraits or extant embroidery pieces. Blackwork patterns can also be adapted from elements in correlating period illuminated manuscripts, given that model books were often used for embroidery and illumination (as well as other crafts - Historical Needlework Resources 2, last accessed May 2014) – resulting in shared motifs and patterns across the different art forms.

Examples of Period Model Books

- *Il Burato* by Paganino – 16th century Italian model book: <http://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books.html>
- *Modelbuch aller art Nehwercks und Stickens* by Egenolff – 16th century German model book: <http://www.cs.arizona.edu/patterns/weaving/books.html>
- Kingdom of Atlantia's *Online Facsimiles of Period Pattern-Books for Embroidery and Lacemaking*: <http://moas.atlantia.sca.org/wsnlinks/index.php?action=displaycat&catid=1103>

- *Period Embroidery Pattern Books and Modelbuchs: References and Links* published by Genoveva von Lubeck (last accessed May 2014) has a list of links to 16th century model books: <http://honorbeforevictory.com/period-embroidery-pattern-books-and-modelbuchs-references-and-links/>
- *A Bibliography of Pattern Books in the 16th Century* by Mathilde Eschenbach (2007). This site lists numerous pattern books for embroidery, lace, and other textiles: <http://home.comcast.net/~mathilde/embroidery/bibpatbk.htm>
- The West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild (2012) – *Annotated Booklist: Historic Model Books and Pattern Books*: <http://wkneedle.bayrose.org/booklist/Book-Model.html>

Portraits

Holbein stitch is thus named because the Italian artist [Hans Holbein the Younger](#) painted many portraits including examples of detailed blackwork in clothing and accessories in the 16th century. There are also many other artists who included detailed blackwork in their paintings. Some sources include:

- Scroll down to *Images of 16th and 17th portraits* published by Rissa Pearce Root (2004-2009) on *A Blackwork Embroidery Primer* website for some links to portraits showing blackwork: <http://www.prettyimpressivestuff.com/blackwork.htm>, and
- *The Art of English Blackwork* by Jane Zimmerman 2008: http://www.janezimmerman.com/Site/Needlework_History/Blackwork.pdf
- You could also search the *Web Gallery of Art* through period portraits matching the time/place you're interested in: <http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>

Needlework Samplers

Embroidery samplers were used for many purposes throughout history. They were known to be used as a tool (for recording stitches and patterns), decorative, and as a learning exercise (VAM, accessed January 2014). The samplers documented the ability of an embroiderer and documented not just the patterns they used, but the types of threads, stitch variables (e.g. types and lengths of stitches), the textures brought about by different techniques and they give the observer an insight into the 3 dimensional nature of embroidery.

The Victoria and Albert Museum online collections (VAM, last accessed May 2014) has a collection of SCA period samplers ranging from the 14th though 16th centuries, originating from countries including Egypt, Germany, Italy and England. Some specific sources include:

- Linen sampler embroidered with silk and metal, by Jane Bostock, England, 1598. Museum no. T.190-1960 (VAM, last accessed May 2014): <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O46183/sampler-jane-bostocke/>
- Linen sampler embroidered with silk and metal, by Jane Bostock, England, 1598. Museum no. T.190-1960 (VAM, accessed January 2014): <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O69669/sampler-unknown/>

References

Historical Needlework Resources (accessed June 2013). *Blackwork*.

http://medieval.webcon.net.au/technique_blackwork.html

Historical Needlework Resources 2 (accessed June 2013) – *Patterns and Modelbuchs*. This page includes a description of period pattern books, which can be used to design blackwork (and other) embroidery. http://medieval.webcon.net.au/period_16th_c_modelbuchs.html

Laning, Chris (last updated 2008). *The roots of blackwork embroidery*. The West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild.

http://wkneedle.bayrose.org/Articles/blackwork_roots.html

Mathilde Eschenbach – *A Bibliography of Pattern Books in the 16th Century*. This site lists numerous pattern books for embroidery, lace, and other textiles.

<http://home.comcast.net/~mathilde/embroidery/bibpatbk.htm>

Root, Rissa Peace (2004). *A Blackwork Embroidery Primer*. Accessed 2013.

<http://www.prettyimpressivestuff.com/blackwork.htm>

The German Renaissance of Genova – *German Blackwork Modelbooks: Patterns, Designs, and Motifs from the 16th Century*. This page provides links to German 16th blackwork patterns. <http://germanrenaissance.net/german-blackwork-modelbooks-patterns-designs-and-motifs-from-the-16th-century/>

The Met (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed 2013). *Search the collections*.

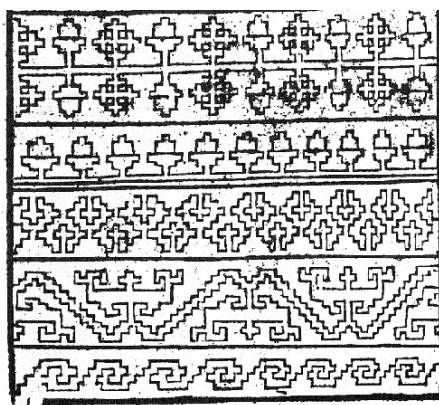
<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections>

The West Kingdom Needleworkers Guild – *Annotated Booklist: Historic Model Books and Pattern Books*. <http://wkneedle.bayrose.org/booklist/Book-Model.html>

VAM (Victoria and Albert Museum, last accessed May 2014). *Search the collections*.

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>

- Linen shirt embroidered in blue silk with similar motifs on the collar and cuffs. c1540, England, museum number T.112-1972.
- Linen coif embroidered in blackwork using red silk. 1600-25, England, museum number T.32-1936.



Competitions

The competition for November Crown is Blackwork (any style).

Remember that unlike other Arts & Science competitions, you can enter a piece that is still in progress (although completed pieces will of course rate higher!). If it is not possible to enter the actual piece (due to distance), it can be judged on the basis of detailed photos and documentation.

| November Crown Tourney – A.S. XLIX | 12 th Night Coronation – A.S. XLIX |
|---|---|
| Blackwork A piece of needlework with any documentable style of pre 1600 blackwork as the predominant technique. 31 st October - 2 nd November, 2014. Aneala (Perth, WA) | Birds A piece of needlework with a bird(s) as the predominant motif. Style, period (pre 1600) and technique open, but should be documentable. 10 th - 11 th January, 2015. Stowe on the Wowld (Werrington, NSW) |

| May Crown Tourney – A.S. L | Midwinter Coronation – A.S. L |
|---|---|
| Voided Work A piece of needlework using any documentable pre 1600 style of voided work (aka Assissi, Reversa) as the predominant technique. May, 2015 (exact date and location TBA) | Pattern Darning A piece of needlework using any documentable style of pre 1600 pattern darning as the predominant technique. July, 2015 (exact date and location TBA) |

| November Crown Tourney – A.S. L | 12 th Night Coronation – A.S. L |
|---|---|
| Appliqué A piece of needlework using any documentable style of pre 1600 appliqué as the predominant technique. November, 2015 (exact date and location TBA) | Drawn Thread A piece of needlework using any documentable style of pre 1600 drawn thread work as the predominant technique. January, 2016 (exact date and location TBA) |

Information on competitions, documentation and judging are on the website at:
<http://broiderers.lochac.sca.org/competitions>



Build Projects

The Laurel Cloak

The Laurel Cloak was presented at Midwinter in the Barony of Politarchopolis, and was worn in turn by all the members of the Order of the Laurel present at the event. There are still many pieces to be completed and added to the cloak, and it's still lacks its closing strap and brooch, but it can now be used by the Order for their ceremonies.

My thanks to the many people who have contributed so far – the work is beautiful and the effect is stunning. Perhaps it is time now to return to the 'project on hold' – the Masters Crown. More of this in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Presentations

Since its re-establishment, the Company has made a formal presentation to the Royalty of Lochac on the occasion of their divestiture. These presentations take the form of an embroidered article, in keeping with the persona of our Royalty, and are a personal gift to Their Royal Majesties of Lochac from the Company. The style and period of the items presented changes, and is usually decided by a request from the Royalty in question in consultation with the Guild.

If you are interested in volunteering please get in touch because the 6 monthly schedule of presentations means that many hands are needed, and also means that works of different styles and techniques are often available. The volunteers for this task are selected for the quality of their work and ability to meet the deadline!

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To subscribe, visit <http://lochac.sca.org/mailman/listinfo/wcob> and fill in the form. To post, mail to wcob@lochac.sca.org.

Facebook group:

[The Worshipful Company of Broderers of Lochac](https://www.facebook.com/TheWorshipfulCompanyofBroderersofLochac)

The Worshipful Company of Broderers is a craft guild that exists within the Kingdom of Lochac (Australia) in the Society for Creative Anachronism. The aim of the Company is to advance the study and practice of pre-1600AD European needlework in Lochac and in the Known World. The Company undertakes a wide range of activities, to encourage our members to explore new techniques, increase our knowledge and skill and support the Kingdom of Lochac. More information about guild activities, presentations, rankings, guild ordinances and more can be found on the Company's website at broiderers.lochac.sca.org.