

A Lace Life: The Alwynne Crowsen Collection

Curated by Anna Miles 12 April - 17 May 2008

Fig. 02—The Key Sampler, Circa 1980 Milanese, Rosaline, Withof, Honiton, Rococo & Duchesse lace

# Introduction Philip Clarke / Director

There are many reasons why it is a great pleasure, and very appropriate, for Objectspace to celebrate the career and work of Auckland lace maker Alwynne Crowsen. The survey A Lace Life: The Alwynne Crowsen Collection curated by Anna Miles presents us with the evidence of a career of outstanding and innovative practice.

Looking at the lace in any of the cabinets or at the video of Alwynne working reminds us that lacemaking is intellectually and practically very complex work. This exhibition presents much of the work that Alwynne has produced in her over 40 year career. This is a career of sustained practice that has enabled this maker to attain a very high level of mastery. The fine work of both the maker and the curator highlight the fact that while lacemaking has a long history it is a contemporary and developing - not an archaic - practice. Some of the featured laces, such as Lutac

At a certain level of established practice the formidable qualities of mastery and sustained practice might be assumed as givens. What I believe is unusually distinctive about Alwynne Crowsen is something that isn't immediately discernible by looking at the lace; that is her mode of practice. This is a mode of practice which is focused on public rather than private good and which at its heart is socially engaged. A practice characterised by; the acquisition of knowledge, the making of an extensive reference collection and an ongoing commitment to knowledge dissemination. Thinking of Alwynne's practice in these terms I believe it is accurate to describe it as having the dynamics of a public institution. Alwynne's choices about her mode of practice have been shaped by such diverse factors as location, the economic status of lace and her own preferences. However it seems completely appropriate for a lace practice – a practice that essentially is about working-net or net-working - to

and Withof, have been invented as recently as the late

encountered few individual contemporary works as

twentieth century. In my own 'Craft Life' I have

rich and resonant as the Honiton lace Weta.

be co-ordinated to social engagement rather than to the more usual co-ordinates of production for consumption. The Times reviewer of Richard Sennett's new book The Craftsman recently wrote "that craftsmanship is more than the desire to do a job well for its own sake. It involves the desire to make a gift of the result, a gift ...to the community..."This reviewer could have been writing about the practice of Alwynne Crowsen.

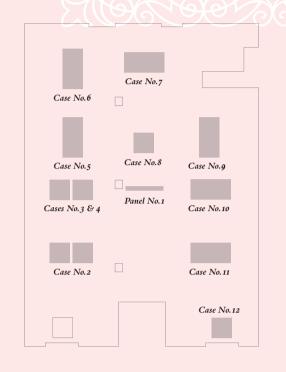
A Lace Life: The Alwynne Crowsen Collection will be on display on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Objectspace opening. This fact in itself is not particularly significant other than that A Lace Life has its own Objectspace lineage. In 2004 Anna Miles was an outstanding contributor to Talking About. In 2006 she was the curator of Talking About's successor Bespoke: the pervasiveness of the handmade. Bespoke was a wonderful exhibition which has very recently been reviewed in the new and prestigious journal The Journal of Modern Craft. And it was while working on Bespoke that Anna first encountered Alwynne Crowsen and her work. Once again it is my great pleasure to thank Anna for her outstanding work as the curator of a deeply interesting exhibi-

tion. Anna has been a generous and lively person for us to work with and we have enjoyed working with her very much.

Many other people have contributed to the making of this exhibition. The project could not have proceeded without the support of Alwynne and Hylton Crowsen and I want to thank them for their openness, generosity and helpfulness. Alwynne Crowsen has long been a volunteer at the Auckland War Memorial Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira and Museum staff have been especially generous with their assistance and support and I want to particularly acknowledge Julia Gresson, Finn McCahon-Jones, Louis Le Vaillant and Graham Soughtton. Alexa Johnston, Frances Walsh, Jane Wild and the University of Auckland have been very helpful.

Without the continuing support our major funder Creative New Zealand and the significant support of Auckland City Council and The ASB Trusts Objectspace would not be able to present projects such as A Lace Life: The Alwynne Crowsen Collection which enable us to put objects into play.

# A Lace Life: The Alwynne Crowsen Collection Anna Miles/Curator



# Exhibiton Floorplan

#### Panel No.1 The Key Sampler and The Honiton Lace Weta

THIS SELECTION OF LACE WORK EXEMPLIFIES SOME OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK OF ALWYNNE CROWSEN. THE KEY SAMPLER (C1980) EPITOMIZES THE PANORAMIC APPROACH SHE HAS TAKEN TO HER DISCIPLINE. CROWSEN HAS INGENIOUSLY SAMPLED SIX LACE TRADITIONS AND PRESENTED THEM AS THE KEYS TO THE 'CASTLE OF LACE'. HER FANTASTIC CONCOCTION ACCOMMO-DATES A MILANESE MANSION, ROSALINE ROOM, WITHOF WING, HONITON HOUSE, ROCOCO RECEPTION AND A DUCHESSE DEPARTMENT

LACE'S REPUTATION AS THE PRETTIEST OF THE NEEDLE ARTS HAS OCCASIONALLY PRODUCED SOME PARADOXICAL WORKS FROM TIME TO TIME VARIOUS MAKERS HAVE RENDERED UNBELOVED SMALL CREATURES IN THIS PRETTY MEDIUM. ALWYNNE CROWSEN HAS TAKEN HER OWN TURN AT THIS CURIOUS TRADITION. HER HONITON LACE WETA (EARLY 1990s) IS PROBABLY THE ONLY NEW ZEALAND ENDANGERED INSECT TO HAVE EVER BEEN MADE IN HONITON LACE, THE REVERED ENGLISH LACE CHOSEN BY QUEEN VICTORIA FOR

HER 1840 WEDDING GOWN.



## Notes by Alwynne Crowsen

CONTINUOUS LACE

German Torchon, Valenciennes, Paris

Danish, Swedish, German

**Danish Tonder** A FINE TULLE LACE. I STARTED TO MAKE THIS BEFORE PHOTOCOPIERS CAME ON THE SCENE AND THE BOOK I WAS

LEARNING FROM SUGGESTED USING A FINE THREAD. WHICH WAS UNAVAILABLE. THESE DAYS WE CAN PHOTOCOPY A PATTERN AND ENLARGE IT TO COPE WITH A COARSER THREAD

IN MANY WAYS TO TORCHON LACE. AN OUTLINING THREAD CALLED A 'GIMP' PLAYS AN IMPORTANT PART IN THESE DESIGNS. IT IS VERY SUITABLE FOR HOUSEHOLD USE, BEING HARD-WEARING AND ATTRACTIVE. I WAS ABLE TO PURCHASE A SAMPLER BOOK, ALONG WITH THE PATTERNS, WHICH HAD BELONGED TO A NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRANT, MARTHA NILSSON. IT WAS A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY FOR ME, MATCHING UP THE PATTERNS TO THE SAMPLES AND HAVING A GO AT MAKING SOME OF THEM

A RATHER COARSE LACE FOR THE MOST PART. MANY OF THE PATTERNS ARE SIMILAR TO TORCHON AND CLUNY PATTERNS On the whole the designs have a bold look. Eeva-Liisa KORTELAHTI PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS FROM 1976-1998 IN WHICH SHE DEVELOPED PATTERNS OF FLOWERS AND LEAVES AND ALSO PICTORIAL PATTERNS. THESE PROVED POPULAR WITH LACEMAKERS BECAUSE OF THEIR ORIGINALITY.

THIS LACE IS A COARSER LACE, VERY USEFUL FOR HOUSEHOLD objects. Torchon means duster or dishcloth! The DESIGNS ARE GEOMETRIC AND PLEASING TO THE EYE. ORIGINALLY MADE WITH LINEN THREAD, BUT NOWADAYS OFTEN MADE WITH COTTON, OR EVEN SILK. SWEDEN, FRANCE AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MADE SLIGHT VARIATIONS INCLUDING A GIMP (OUTLINING) THREAD OR RAISED TALLIES (LITTLE SQUARES). EVERYWHERE THE ADVENT OF MACHINES WHICH COULD COPY THE PATTERNS FROM EARLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AFFECTED THE TRADE. THERESE DE DILLMONT'S LES DENTELLES AUX FUSEAUX WAS MY TEXTBOOK WHEN I FOUND THE ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONS FOR TORCHON

ORIGINALLY FLEMISH UNTIL 1678 WHEN FRANCE TOOK IT OVER. LOUIS XIV NOW POSSESSED A FLEMISH TOWN, WHICH WAS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT COMMERCIALLY. HE RENAMED THE FLEMISH LACE MAKING INDUSTRY AS FRENCH. ONE PAIR OF RUFFLES TOOK A LACE MAKER 10 MONTHS TO COMPLETE WORKING A 15-HOUR DAY. IT WOULD COST A PURCHASER 160 ENGLISH POUNDS. VALENCIENNES LACE IS A CONTINUOUS LACE, THIN AND FLAT WITH FLORAL AND FEATHER-LIKE DESIGNS. IT IS HARD TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAND AND MACHINE-MADE VALENCIENNES LACE

Point de Paris THIS LACE HAS A 'WIRE' GROUND AND HAS MORE DISTINCTION IN ITS SIMPLE PATTERNS. IT IS AN OLDER LACE THAN EITHER TORCHON OR CLUNY LACES. WIRE GROUND IS ALSO KNOWN AS FOND DOUBLE, ALSO KNOWN AS KAT STITCH, AND ALSO known as Six Point Star.

#### Case No.3 CONTINUOUS LACE Guipure, Beds, Bucks

GUIPURE LACE IS A COARSE LACE WITH VERY CHARACTERISTIC SCALLOP SHAPES. RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM LE Puy-en-Velay were the result of a box being found LOCALLY, IN A BARN, WHICH CONTAINED MANY PATTERNS FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THESE HAVE BEEN PEDPAFTED TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REQUIREMENTS AND ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE

COMMONLY CALLED BEDS OR BEDS MALTESE, BECAUSE MANY OF THE PATTERNS ARE SIMILAR TO THE MALTESE LACES IN DESIGN. THE FIRST MACHINES FOR MAKING LACE WERE INVENTED IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY. EFFORTS WERE MADE TO DESIGN LACES WHICH COULD BE MADE MORE QUICKLY BY HAND, TO COMPETE WITH THE MACHINE, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE CRAFT. THOMAS LESTER, A LACE DEALER, WAS ABLE TO COPY SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF MALTESE LACE AND PRODUCE WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS BEDS MALTESE. THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851 WAS A TREMENDOUS INCENTIVE TO ALL LACE DEALERS AND DESIGNERS TO IMPROVE THEIR BUSINESS. THE LACE IS CHARACTERISED BY A DIVIDED TRAIL PLAITS AND PICOTS AND A 9-PIN EDGING. THE 9-PIN EDGING WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PATTERNS I LEARNT IN 1966.

Some of the patterns from Buckinghamshire do not INCORPORATE THE TULLE GROUND THAT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF BUCKS POINT GROUND. THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COLLAR IN THIS CASE IS BASED ON A PATTERN FROM PAMELA NOTTINGHAM. OWING TO THE POSSESSIVENESS OF LACE MAKERS ABOUT THEIR PATTERNS, NO COLLAR PATTERN WAS EVER SUPPLIED IN ITS ENTIRETY, TYPICALLY, AS IN THIS CASE, THE CENTRE BACK PART OF THE DESIGN, WAS MISSING.

### PIECE LACE Rosaline & four Honiton handkerchief

A PRETTY, VERY DELICATE LACE MADE UP OF TINY FLOWERS, SEMI-CIRCULAR SCROLLS AND HORSESHOE SHAPES. EACH FLOWER HAS A NEEDLE MADE 'COURONNE', A BUTTONHOLE CIRCLE, AT THE CENTRE. IT IS A LATE NINETEENTH BRUSSELS BORRIN LACE REDEVELOPED IN PATTERNS AND INSTRUCTION

BOOKS PUBLISHED 1985-1990. IT IS A PIECE LACE, THE VERY

DIFFERENT AREAS BEING JOINED AS THE WORK IS IN PROGRESS.

A wonderful space in the middle of the day

In 1966, Alwynne Crowsen, came across an article in The Lady, a magazine sent to her by an aunt in England, that suggested it was not possible to teach yourself bobbin lace making.

At the time the Henderson Valley resident had six school-age children and was learning Braille in order to work as a volunteer transcriber for the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. The article on bobbin lace released an unfettered determination. Whether or not she intended to prove *The Lady* wrong, Alwynne embarked on the 'impossible', and as it has turned out, life-long, task of teaching herself this prettiest and most technically demanding of arts.

Today, over forty years, since beginning her first handkerchief, Alwynne Crowsen has surveyed a world of lace. Her approach has been panoramic and archival; like an expert wildlife preservationist she has dedicated herself to tracking and retaining the DNA. She has seldom undertaken commissions or given her work away, instead she has made her own collection of almost five hundred pieces, and carefully catalogued and stored it in a filing cabinet under her home.

Alwynne has also taught lace making to countless others in the community classes she has been teaching weekly since 1975 and under the auspices of the Auckland Embroiderers and Lace Makers' Guild, which she co-founded in 1970. Since 2004 she has served as a voluntary curator of Lace at Auckland Museum where her formidable knowledge of her craft has been tapped as she has identified many and varied pieces of lace of which limited information was available. In 1984 she was awarded a QEII Arts Council grant to travel to the United Kingdom to attend six lace workshops and visit lace collections in Honiton, Exeter and Exmouth. In December 2005, Alwynne was honoured with a QSM for services to the community, specifically her contribution to the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind and her contribution to lace making and embroidery in New Zealand

Alwynne Crowsen was born Alwynne Browne in Istanbul in 1928, where her English parents were working as missionaries. Her father, Laurence Browne, a Doctor of Divinity and Rector of a Parish in Gayton in Northamptonshire, who later became a Professor of Theology at Leeds University, was also practical. "My father was very good with his hands. He made a beautiful dolls' house for my half sister." Her mother, Gladys Dearden, came from a Leeds family of painters and decorators and had been unusually well educated for her age, gaining a BA in History from Leeds University in 1912. The couple had met had during the First World War, in a library in Calais, where Gladys was working.

The Browne family did not remain in Turkey long. By the time baby Alwynne was about three months, she had returned to England with her parents and older sister, Monica, who had been born in Calcutta seven years earlier. The following year, a brother, Stanley, was born in Cambridge. When Alwynne was three, the family was off again on missionary business this time in Pakistan, where they lived in Lahore and summered at Dalhousie in the Western Himalayas. Two years later they were back again in England. During their first winter, Gladys, probably recovering from the impact of the long sea voyage, took her two youngest children off to the coast at Whitby. Alwynne enjoyed herself very much, especially, "going down to the beach where the Salvation Army used to teach us ditties like, 'I'm H-A-P-P-Y'." When she was a little older she recalls her mother initiating an introduction to lace. "I have a shadow memory of her taking me to a cottage and seeing a lace maker with a big pillow and lots of bobbins."

At the age of eight however, Alwynne's peripatetic and happy life changed. Her mother died and her father remarried. As soon as she was able, Alwynne left the family home in Gayton, moving to Surrey to train as a nurse, an occupation she found herself unfortunately neither suited for, or attracted to. Eventually with the assistance of an aunt, she gave up nursing and attended St James' Secretarial College in London. Holidays from the College were spent working at the J. Lyons Pie Factory, as she remembers "on the bottom piece of pastry on the meat pasties for about six weeks."

She found office work was most enjoyable and became a skilled book keeper, employed by two London firms, the P&O Shipping Line and O.W. Roskill Market Researchers. At the latter she found herself typing up material about stainless steel tubes for R. & W. Hellaby in Auckland, New Zealand. She became interested in sewing, and from the early 1950s subscribed to the annual catalogue from The Needlewoman Shop in Regent St. By the time she met her future husband, Hylton Crowsen, a South African plasterer working in London, Alwynne had formed the idea of wanting to get out of England. She had also acquired the skills to make her own wedding dress, decorated with machine-made lace, for her marriage to Hylton at Putney Church on the 2nd of April 1955.

### This smells nice

Alwynne and Hilton planned to see the world together and in June 1955 they embarked for Canada with the idea of travelling onto New Zealand. Work for a plasterer in Montreal was hectic — due to the climate they only worked for 6–7 months of the year. One of the upsides was that after 3 months the couple had saved enough to take the Trans-Canada Railway to Vancouver. 7 months later they took the boat onto New Zealand. On arrival, Alwynne's quixotic nature made itself felt. "As soon as I got off the boat in Auckland in March 1956, I took one sniff of the country and thought — this smells nice. It was just a little old fashioned compared to Canada — that appealed to me. Jobs were to be found at the drop of a hat. I went for two interviews and became a secretary at Lion Clothing Company. It was interesting. In a new country everything is different. I had learnt in Canada that people don't like immigrants. You have to go a bit cautious, get as much like the people who live there as quickly as possible."

# Loved it because it was so hard

By 1966 when Alwynne read the article about bobbin lace making in *The Lady*, the six children were at school and for the first time in many years she could report, "a wonderful space in the middle of the day." However inclination seems more important than time in explaining the will to first take-up, then work across every available skerrick of information related to this diverse and demanding craft. The combination of inaccessibility and difficulty, identified by *The Lady*, had insistent and lasting appeal. One might surmise as Alwynne did in regard to Binche, the intricate Belgian lace she later mastered, that she, "just loved it because it was so hard."

In the late 1960s, there were very few instructions for beginning bobbin lace. "Until 1975, pickings were slim. Doreen Wright wrote a book but you couldn't read through each sentence and work out what to

fillings is arguably unsurpassed, although Brussels/ Duchesse has more attractive designs."The lack of books available on it at the time, however, clinched her decision to seek a teacher. In 1972, she wrote to a guild in Devon asking if they had anybody who would teach her. Eventually a letter arrived from Mayd Radford of Exmouth. The two corresponded for several years. Radford suffered from ill health and often it would take six months before the answer to a pressing Honiton question arrived by post. As a teacher, Radford was probably well suited to her avid and independent pupil. "She had a favourite phrase, 'Use your common sense."

By 1970, what had begun as a private escape began to take on a more public character. In pursuit of lace, Alwynne was driven to contact others."I became friendly with a Mrs Sheffield, who had lost her son and husband in the London blitz, had come to New Zealand, and was employed by a Southland community organisation to teach embroidery. Mrs Sheffield started the Southland Embroidery Guild in the early 1960s. She came and visited and gave me antique bobbins and a bobbin lace pillow. I also got to know someone in Te Atatu. We would meet once a week or month at each other's homes. I decided — can't we start an embroidery guild, an embroidery and bobbin lace guild?

The great day came. We found a hall in Kelston and had an inaugural meeting after advertising around dairies. A good selection of people turned out, 20-25. Because of the time it started, The Guild developed quickly. Women didn't necessarily go to work at the time but soon afterwards they started going back to work in greater numbers, so things changed a lot. All the North Island Embroidery Guilds are now suffering from their members becoming older." Currently the Embroiderers and Lace Makers Guild has between 45 and 50 members.

"People at the inaugural meeting wanted to know how to do embroidery. They said, 'we want to do bobbin lace as well'. So the idea of a project each



Fig. 03 - Honiton Lace Weta, Early 1990s

do." An early step was to renew contact with The Needlewoman in Regent St. Alwynne sent for a dozen bobbins and a leaflet. "Hylton made me a lace pillow from McCall's Needlework and Crafts — a rudimentary one." Her first piece was a plaited lace handkerchief, probably Bedfordshire, from Dryad leaflet No.142, Pillow Lace by Margaret Waller, Domestic Science Mistress at Harper Central School, Bedford. The very fine gauge thread for the handkerchief's 9-pin edging was unavailable, necessitating an unsatisfying level of improvisation.

Books were requested from the National Library via the local Henderson library. With no photocopier and loans of only two weeks, Alwynne's practice was to copy out as many lace (and embroidery) patterns as she could manage, then turn to the back of the book and request any others she could find a reference for. Degrees of difficulty kept on coming. The instructions of her second book, Therese de Dillmont's Les Dentelles aux Fuseaux, first published around 1900, were in French. With the assistance of a borrowed dictionary she decoded the work of this famous Austrian embroiderer, (1846-1890). This was an exigency she has repeated on many occasions. She is now capable of following lace instructions in French, Swedish, German, Dutch and Italian. "I worked through Les Dentelles aux Fuseaux. I was so proud — I was a proper lacemaker." Later, however, Alwynne would berate herself for mistranslating one phrase and putting, "an extra twist in". Her technical standards are fastidious and as soon as this unintentional embellishment was picked up, it was quickly noted and she never produced these particular pieces of lace in front of other people.

Lace making proceeded according to the sources that were available. "If I'm following a book, my first inclination is start at the beginning and work through it. I haven't got a tutor hanging over my shoulder." Alwynne is well aware however of the esoteric and practical pitfalls of book learning. "The problem of joining on a new thread was one that occupied me for a long time. Eventually I got a new book and picked up a great idea. A woman knew I was interested in how to do this properly, but she never told me." Probably this was the first of many encounters with the territorialism of lace makers.

Only on one occasion has Alwynne felt it necessary to find herself a tutor. In 1970 or 1971, Judy Smith, keeper of textiles at Auckland Museum, showed her the Honiton collection. This revered English form of lace, which had received a great boost after Queen Victoria chose it for her 1840 wedding gown, was one Alwynne held in high regard."The variety of its

month was formed. From 1971, I produced a bobbin lace and an embroidery lesson a month for about two years and made up a course. The first 14 examples were taken from Therese de Dillmont's book. Many pupils learnt by correspondence."

Establishing the guild had been motivated by a straightforward desire. "I wanted to see if I could find any other lace makers, so I could see if I was doing it right!"The ambition to learn brought with it social challenges."When I started the guild, I had never been to a public meeting. Unintentionally I trod on so many toes."

Alwynne was not to be deterred. One of the remarkable aspects of her story is how rapidly her teaching of herself led to the teaching of others. Through the guild she had been providing a lesson each month since 1971, but by 1975 she began teaching at Outreach in Ponsonby for the WEA. In 1976 this class moved to the Titirangi Community House where Alwynne continues to teach each Thursday. In about 1977 she was invited to take a night class at Lynfield College, where she has also been teaching ever since. "Then I was rung and asked by Rutherford College to make up a three-year course. I asked if I could have a lace class. Then car-less days came in. Lace was on Wednesdays which was a car-less day for many people, so I combined the lace and the embroidery

Many of Alwynne's pupils have been attending almost as long as she has been teaching. Their teacher's exhaustive knowledge of needlework traditions means she is able to furnish them with a seemingly endless array of techniques, however, often their reasons for coming back are social. Carol Bracher, who has attended the Lynfield College class for over twenty years, describes Alwynne's sense of humour and the way in which the class has become part of her weekly routine. Even at the very early classes, Alwynne's grasp of her subject made an impression. Margot MacDonald, who took a twice-weekly class in the Ngaire Avenue Church Hall in Epsom, for a year in the early 1970s, recalls Alwynne as an already very accomplished needlework demonstrator. "She was wonderfully competent in every aspect. She could thread a needle so easily. We were sitting there poking and prodding."

The process of making exemplars for teaching was particularly motivating. Alwynne's interest in building up a selection of examples was spurred by an embroidery course run by The Correspondence School in Wellington. Her acquisition of a handmade lace sample book that had belonged to Martha Nilsonn, a Swedish

woman who had immigrated to NZ, focused this interest further. In 1998 Greenwoods Corner Embroidery Shop had rung her about Martha's book that they had received. "It was a voyage of discovery for me, matching up the patterns to the samples and having a go at making some of them."

# The book came out, so I learnt

From the mid 1970s new lace opportunities began to emerge. Many needlework traditions survived industrialisation virtually unscathed, due to being the occupation of affluent women, or utilitarian in character. This was not the case with lace, which was largely handmade by peasants and accumulated by the church or wealthy individuals. Only towards the end of the modernist period was this time consuming and ornamental art beginning to be revived by women with leisure time to explore it. One of the most important developments was the founding of the English Lace Guild in 1975. "It sent a storm of people off to the continent to learn and come home and write a book These were not histories but 'how-tos' but I bought the histories as well and built up a library for the guild and myself."

In many ways Alwynne's collection is less a re-creation of an endangered tradition than an astute reflection of the period in which a lace recovery has taken place despite the craft's continuing unviable economic status. The progress of her making accurately records the lace information that has become available since 1966 when she started. Her own notes on the many traditions she has sampled, are punctuated by references to the discovery of lace stashes; trunks of yet-to-be-sorted examples uncovered; a box of Guipure found in a French barn; 70 Trolley Lace patterns found in a loft of a school in Devon. As publishing in the area opened up, Alwynne's interest in surveying as many as possible of the world's lace traditions gathered speed."I got the magazines, Kant and La Dentelle, and had an account with a Rotterdam Lace Bookseller who sent me catalogues. I also deal with Barbara Fay, a specialist bookseller in Gammelby, Germany."

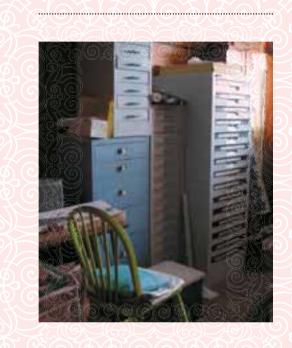
The more widespread use of photocopiers was also making a difference. "To begin with, photocopiers were frowned on by the traditionalists owing to the very slight distortion of the patterns that sometimes occurred. However, they became so useful — you could photocopy a pattern from a book four times to save from repetitively going over a previous pricking. We bought a second hand copy machine. The first one didn't reduce or enlarge, so when it packed up, I stipulated the next one should be able to reduce and enlarge." Alwynne regards the use of colour-coded diagrams as having had a particular impact on bringing lace into the contemporary arena, and contrasts the ease with which they can be followed with some of the more difficult instructions she first encountered. "My first Bucks Point Ground book was written you had to read one sentence then work out what it meant before moving onto the next one."

Alwynne stands out from her peers due to her panoramic approach to her discipline. Talking to her it seems that no lace tradition has failed to capture her attention. She is excited by the way world events can sometimes lead to the recovery of previously buried lace traditions. For instance, after the Berlin Wall fell, material on Russian lace came to light. In comparison with many other lace makers, Alwynne has produced a relatively small volume of 'Freestyle', the lessregimented lace that allows for deviation from tradition. However a few gems in this idiom are contained within her archive. The 'Jars of Lollies', included in the Miscellaneous case, are an ingenious Alwynne invention — intriguingly enough designed to showcase the variety of 'fillings' that can be created in needle lace.

Alwynne's zeal for cataloguing may reflect the influence of her librarian mother. It is also possible to understand her archival approach as a pragmatic response to her awareness that, "Lace doesn't fit the economy". She has given very few pieces away. "It's foolish. People don't appreciate it." She has seldom attempted to sell her work."I was commissioned to make a Kea by a Lace dealer in Rotterdam [his daughter worked for the Forestry Service in Christchurch]. Very early on in the 1970s I made a bookmark for the Masons for their bible." More frequently she has taken on the role of lace rescuer. "Early on I used to visit a Mrs Pemberton, a woman in Henderson I met through St Michael's Anglican Church. She said, 'I've got stuff for the jumble sale in the garage,' and let me go through it for clothes for the children. I started with two boxes labelled 'miscellaneous' that Mrs Pemberton called 'stuff for dressing up'. Out came two Maltese collars and a Maltese cuff. I paid \$2 for these (quite a lot at the time). Now they are part of my antique collection." Few \$2 needle lace photograph frames at the Salvation Army shop will have been left to languish by Alwynne.

One of the sayings Alwynne has used when we have met is, "Don't dwell on the past". Her explanations for a lifetime's lace making are straightforward; "Just loved it because it was difficult"; "It grew like topsy"; "It was my hobby"; "It was an escape"; "I just like pretty things." However, Alwynne will leave you in little doubt as to which is the prettiest lace of all. When I ask if it is Rosaline, the late Nineteenth Century bobbin lace she treasures, she is uncharacteristically emphatic. "Yes, it is!"

Only on one other occasion has Alwynne been so direct. We are discussing her 'Honiton lace Weta', probably the only New Zealand endangered insect to have ever been rendered in the English lace chosen by Queen Victoria for her 1840 wedding gown. I suggest there might be something rebellious about her lace making. Her response, "You hit it on the head".



WITHOF/DUCHESSE BOBBIN LACE, FLANDERS LACE HANDKERCHIEF & CIRCULAR MAT, VENETIAN NEEDLE LACE Freestyle Needle Lace jars of lollies, necklace, belt, ROBIN, SHELL & CRAZY BIRD

Flanders Lace WHAT IS NOW CALLED A 5-HOLE GROUND. THIS GROUND REQUIRES MORE BOBBINS THAT THE TORCHON GROUND. SMALL MOTIFS CALLED 'PEAS' APPEAR HERE AND THERE IN THE GROUND. THE MAIN DESIGN IS IN CLOTH STITCH OUTLINED WITH A THICKER THREAD CALLED A 'GIMP'. FLANDERS LACE IS A HARD-WEARING LACE, WITH A RATHER SOLID APPEARANCE.

# NAMED AFTER LUCIENNE TACK, A LACE MAKER, WHO FROM

1987 BEGAN TO EXPLORE WAYS TO BRING "RELIEF" ELEMENTS INTO HER ARTISTIC DESIGNS. HER TECHNIQUES ARE SIMILAR TO HONITON AND DUCHESSE LACES, BUT HER DESIGNS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT. ASYMMETRIC, CURVACEOUS ELEMENTS ARE OUTLINES WITH PADDED AREAS CONTRASTING WITH FINE NETS AND FILLINGS. A LOT OF COLOUR IS USED.

FREESTYLE LACE IS THE NAME GIVEN TO LACE WHERE THE LACE MAKER CAN GO EXPLORING DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF THEM. I HAVE FOUND NEEDLE LACE EASIER TO EXPLORE FREESTYLE THAN BOBBIN LACE BECAUSE IT IS NO SO REGIMENTED. THE JARS OF LOLLIES WERE DESIGNS I invented, for a workshop at Kerikeri, exploring the DIFFERENT FILLING STITCHES USED IN NEEDLE LACE.

#### Case No.11 TULLE LACE Bucks Point Ground, Beverse Trolley, Bayeux, Chantilly, Lille

BUCKS IS SHORT FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, ONE OF THE English Midland counties renowned for their lace MAKERS. THE OTHER COUNTIES ARE BEDFORDSHIRE AND Northamptonshire. Bucks Point Ground is a tulle lace SIMILAR TO LILLE LACE WITH FLORAL PATTERNS. AS A POINT OF INTEREST, THE ENGLISH LACE MAKER MAKES HER LACE WITH HE FOOTSIDE ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE PILLOW, WHEREA THE EUROPEAN LACEMAKERS HAVE IT ON THE LEFT SIDE OF the pillow. Trolley Lace is an off shoot of Bucks Poin GROUND. PATTERNS FOR TROLLEY LACE WERE LOST. RECENTLY, 70 patterns were found in a loft of a school in Devon Some of these have now been published and a further

ROSE DURAND IS THE NAME ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OF THE LAST WOMEN TO HAVE A SCHOOL FOR LACE MAKERS IN BAYEUX IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. SHE WAS A LACE MISTRESS IN Caen from 1920-1927 and wrote a handbook for LEARNERS. SHE ALSO LEFT A LARGE PILLOW WITH WORK IN progress, which is in the Museum de Normandie in CAEN. ONE OF ROSE DURAN'S LAST PUPILS, MADAME Constantin continued her lace as a hobby. In 1990, Rose Duran's handbook was published along with EXPLANATIONS AND DRAWINGS BY MARIE-CATHERINE Nobecourt and Janine Potin. In appearance, Bayeux lace is similar to Bucks Point Ground lace. In 1999, MICK FOURISCOT OF LE PUY LACE CENTRE PUBLISHED ANOTHER BOOK ON BAYEUX LACE TAKING THIS LACE FURTHER INTO MODERN TIMES WITH SOME VERY BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS

### Case No.10 CROCHET, KNITTING & TATTING

Irish Crochet THIS IS THOUGHT TO HAVE DEVELOPED FROM TAMBOUR WORK. CROCHET IS A VERY VERSATILE CRAFT, ABLE TO IMITAT ALL KINDS OF EMBROIDERED LACES SUCH AS VENETIAN LACE AND FILET WORK. THE NUNS OF THE URSULINE CONVENT. BLACK ROCK, CO. CORK INTRODUCED IRISH CROCHET TO ALI OTHER CONVENTS IN IRELAND AROUND 1845. THE ADELAIDE Industries School founded by Mrs Susannah Merediti BECAME A LARGE COMMERCIAL MANUFACTORY. THEY HAD ABOUT 12,000 OUTWORKERS MAKING CROCHET ARTICLES. AT THE TIME OF THE POTATO FAMINE IN 1846-7 THIS WORK WAS ENCOURAGED TO ALLEVIATE THE SUFFERINGS OF THE POPULATION. THE CROCHET IS COMPRISED OF RAISED FLOWERS AND DENSE LEAVES JOINED BY TRAILING STEMS. THE DESIGNS WERE IOINED BY A NETWORK SPRINKLED WITH CLONES KNOTS AND PICOTS

**Knitted Lace** FROM ABOUT THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY LACE KNITTING BECAME POPULAR WHEN OUEEN ELIZABETH I WAS PRESENTE WITH SILK STOCKINGS WITH ORNAMENTAL 'CLOCKS' ON THE SIDE. EVERYONE AT COURT WANTED A PAIR! AS THERE WERE NO WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS, SAMPLERS WERE NECESSARY SUSANNA E. LEWIS HAS PUBLISHED A BOOK IN WHICH SHE CHARTED ALL THE DESIGNS FROM A 9 x 457cm SAMPLER. IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY MARIANNE KINZEL, A REFUGEE FROM EUROPE CAME TO ENGLAND AND PUBLISHED MANY

Supposedly evolved from Chinese knotting. this type OF WORK HAS ALSO BEEN FOUND ON BURIAL GARMENTS IN EGYPT. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY MLLE. ELEANORE RIEGO DE LA BRANCHARDIERE STARTED TO TEACH A NEW METHOD OF TATTING WITH WRITTEN PATTERNS. SHE PUBLISHED MANY OF THEM WITH DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS. THE CRAFT HAS MANY DEVOTEES; IT IS EASY TO TRANSPORT, TAKES UP VERY LITTLE ROOM AND IS HARD WEARING. EXCELLENT FOR COMMUTERS BY



# Case No.9 TAPE LACE

Rococo, Idrija, Chrysanthen German, Russian, Finnish, Milanese, Netherlands

I WAS SENT SOME IDRIIA PATTERNS BY A LACE MAKER IN AUSTRALIA IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME HONITON LACE INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO ME BY MAYD RADFORD. THE IDRIJA PATTERNS REQUIRE ONLY ABOUT 5-7 PAIRS OF BOBBINS AND ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE. A LACE SCHOOL BASED IN CANTU WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN REVIVING THE LACE INDUSTRY AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. TAPE LACES OF VARIOUS TYPE WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO BE DEVELOPED THERE. AN ITALIAN MAGAZINE, <u>MANI DE FATA</u>, ADVERTISED MANY TAPE LACE KITS IN THE 1980s.

Rococo Lace This lace first came to my notice in A Rococo Adventure by Caroline Coffield, published in 1988. DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS WERE GIVEN FOR PATTERNS FROM BELGIUM. ABOUT TWELVE YEARS LATER A BOOK OF VENETIAN PATTERNS WAS PUBLISHED WITH SEVERAL PATTERNS OF SIMILAR DESIGN WHICH COULD BE WORKED IN BOBBIN OR NEEDLE LACE. ROCOCO IS A PIECE LACE AND A TAPE LACE. LITTLE BRANCHES AND FLOWERS ARE WORKED AND JOINED

THIS IS A TAPE LACE. THE TAPE HAS A GOOD NUMBER OF VARIATIONS, INCLUDING A VARIETY OF COLOURS. THE FASCINATING PART ABOUT RUSSIAN LACE IS THE METHOD OF MAKING THE ORNATE FILLINGS. TWO PAIRS OF BOBBINS ARE TAKEN OUT OF THE TAPE AND BY DEVIOUS ROUTES AND METHODS THEY EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE TAPE AND CONTINUE. LARGE, ORNATE COLLARS AND TABLECLOTHS CAN BE MADE WITH RELATIVELY FEW BOBBINS.

### Case No.8 PIECE LACE

Honiton & one example of Duchesse Honiton Lace

NON-CONTINUOUS LACE, MANY LACE MAKERS SPENT ALL THEIR TIME DOING ONE MOTIF. WHEN I WAS IN DEVON IN 1984. I WAS SHOWN A TRUNK FULL OF YET-TO-BE-SORTED EXAMPLES THERE WAS A BUNDLE OF FLORAL MOTIES TIED WITH STRING WHICH WAS SIX MONTHS WORK BY ONE LACE MAKER. HONITON LACE IS FAMOUS FOR THE GREAT VARIETY OF ITS FILLINGS. THESE FILLINGS WERE PLACED IN THE CENTRE OF FLOWERS AND OTHER MOTIES. I FELT THAT HONITON WAS A SPECIAL LACE AND THE LACK OF BOOKS ON IT AT THAT TIME MEANT I NEEDED TO FIND MYSELF A TEACHER. IN 1972 I THEY HAD ANYBODY WHO WOULD TEACH HONITON LACE BY CORRESPONDENCE. AFTER SOMETIME | RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MAYD RADFORD, WHO LIVED IN EXMOUTH, AND SHE SAID SHE WOULD BE WILLING TO TEACH ME. WE CORRESPOND ED FOR SEVERAL YEARS, SHE HAD A FAVOURITE PHRASE, "USE YOUR COMMON SENSE." IN 1984, WHEN I WENT TO ENGLAND

ON A OEII ARTS COUNCIL GRANT, I FINALLY MET HER.

LACE MAKING IN HONITON AND NEIGHBOURING TOWN

GOES BACK TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. IT IS A

### PIECE LACE Duchesse, Withof, Binche, Bruges

A FINE FLORAL-BASED LACE WITH BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS. THIS IS A PIECE LACE, EACH FLOWER IS WORKED SEPARATELY, AND AS THE WORK PROGRESSES, IOINED TO AN ADIACENT MOTIF OR STEM. THE FIRST TEXTBOOK THAT I USED WAS IN DUTCH WHICH, WITH THE HELP OF A DICTIONARY, I WAS ABLE TO DECIPHER AND STICK THE TRANSLATION BETWEEN THE PAGES OF THE BOOK AS I WENT.

THIS IS AN OFFSHOOT OF DUCHESSE LACE, DEVELOPED BY A NUN, SISTER JUDITH, IN THE 1980S, IN AN EFFORT TO BRING MORE DEPTH INTO THE PATTERNS BY MAKING THE OUTLINES MORE PROMINENT. THE LACE COMPRISES MOTIFS, RATHER THAN LENGTHS OF LACE. THE GRACEFUL LINES, FLOWERS AND BIRDS ARE PLEASING TO THE EYE AND REMINISCENT OF ART

AND OTHER SNOWFLAKE GROUNDS ARE TYPICAL. IT IS A VERY FINE LACE AND VERY BUSY. ANNEMARIE VERBEKE-BILLIET OF KANTCENTRUM IN BRUGES HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGIN BINCHE LACE INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS FOR THE KEEN LACE MAKER STARTING IN 1985.

A BELGIAN TOWN TWENTY MINUTES EAST OF VALENCIENNES

ORIGINATED IN THE MID NINETEENTH CENTURY IN BRUGES. A PIECE LACE, I.E. EACH PART OF THE DESIGN IS WORKED SEPARATELY AND IOINED TO AN ADIACENT AREA AS THE WORK PROGRESSES. FLORAL IN CHARACTER, NO RAISED WORK, THREAD USED IS GENERALLY LINEN AND RATHER COARSE. COLLARS AND LARGE MATS, DRESS MOTIFS WITH PLAITS (BRIDES) IOINING THE VARIOUS AREAS. IT IS WORKED ON A LARGE FLAT PILLOW.

THIS CONTINUOUS LACE WAS ORIGINALLY VERY SIMILAR TO THE LACE LIBRARY VALENCIENNES. IN 1678 BOTH TOWNS WERE ANNEXED TO FRANCE BUT WHEREAS VALENCIENNES STAYED IN FRANCE, BINCHE WAS A SAMPLE OF THE BOOKS AND PERIODICALS ALWYNNE HAS RETURNED TO FLANDERS IN 1698. A PHEASANT'S EYE GROUND CONSULTED. THE FIRST PIECE OF LACE SHE MADE, AND THE DRYAD PAMPHLET ITS INSTRUCTIONS WERE SOURCED FROM.

Case No.6

A SELECTION FROM

A WIDE VARIETY OF NEEDLE LACES WERE PRODUCED IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES IN IRELAND.

# NEEDLE LACE

YOUGHAL LACE IS A FLAT LACE WITH NO RAISED AREAS. LACE

HOW IT WAS MADE AND THEN PASSED THE TECHNIQUE ON TO LOCAL WOMEN. A THICKER OUTLINING THREAD KNOWN AS A CORDONNET EMPHASISES THE SHAPE OF MOTIES. MANY DIFFERENT FILLINGS WERE USED AND PIECES WERE OFTEN OUTLINED WITH A VENETIAN EDGING. AMONG THE FINEST PIECES OF LACE MADE IN YOUGHAL WAS A TRAIN FOR QUEEN MARY WORN ON HER VISIT TO INDIA IN 1911 AS EMPRESS OF INDIA.

THIS IS A GEOMETRIC NEEDLE LACE IN WHICH A SERIES OF ARCS, SOUARES AND SEMICIRCLES FORM THE DESIGN. THIS LACE DATES FROM THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY WHEN IT BEGAN AS 1.500. NUMEROUS FILLING STITCHES WERE DEVELOPED AND A FORM OF CUTWORK IN WHICH THREADS WERE PULLED FROM LINEN FABRIC TO MAKE A GRID ON WHICH THE PATTERN WAS RENDERED USING BUTTONHOLE STITCH. LATER RETICELLA USED A GRID MADE OF THREAD RATHER THAN A FABRIC GROUND.

MAKING WAS TAUGHT IN YOUGHAL FROM 1845. BY THE

REVERSE-ENGINEERED SOME ITALIAN LACE TO UNDERSTAND

PRESENTATION SISTERS, MOTHER MARY ANN SMITH

This was introduced to Ireland about 1824. Rev. CHARLES WALKER HAD MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF THE OWNER OF THE COGGESHALL LACE FACTORY IN ESSEX WHICH MADE NET BY MACHINE THAT WAS DECORATED BY HAND BY TAMBOUR WORKERS. REV. WALKER AND HIS WIFE SETTLED IN DESIGNS ON MACHINE-MADE NET. BEGINNING WITH A

WORKFORCE OF 24 GIRLS, THE BUSINESS GREW TO EMPLOY

VARIED NEEDLE LACES ON NET

LIMERICK LACE BECAME FAMOUS FOR THEM.

FAMOUS FOR ITS RAISED AREAS AND BOLD FLORAL DESIGNS