

*A Lace Life:*  
The Alwynne Crowsen  
Collection Curated by Anna Miles

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# 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

and Withof, have been invented as recently as the late twentieth century. In my own ‘Craft Life’ I have encountered few individual contemporary works as rich and resonant as the *Honiton* lace Weta.

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

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 Embroidry Guilds are now suffering from their members becoming older.” Currently the Embroiders 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.43 —Honiton Lace Weta, Early 1990s  
Honiton lace

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 loads 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

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-

woman who had immigrated to NZ, focused this interest further. In 1998 Greenwood’s 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 uncashed, 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 less-regimented 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’. I paid two Maltese collars and a Maltese cuff. I out \$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”.

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 Soughton, Alexa Johnston, Frances Walsh, Jane Wild and the University of Auckland have been very helpful.

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Case No. 12  
MISCELLANEOUS

Withof/Duchesse BOBBIN LACE, FLANDERS LACE HANDKERCHIEF & CIRCULAR MAT, VENETIAN NEEDLE LACE CARDS, MILAN LACE HANDKERCHIEF, LUTAC BROOCHES, FREESTYLE NEEDLE LACE JARS OF LOLLIES, NECKLACE, BELT, ROBIN, SHELL & CRAZY BIRD

Flanders Lace THIS LACE DEVELOPED FROM A SIMPLE TORCHON GROUND TO WHAT IS NOW CALLED A 5-HOLE GROUND. THIS GROUND REQUIRES MORE BOBBING THAN THE TORCHON GROUND. SMALL MOTIF CALLED TART APPEARS 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 HAND-WEAVING LACE, WITH A WATER-SOFT APPEARANCE.

Lutac Lace NAMED AFTER LUCIGNETTE LACE, A LACE MAKER, WHO FROM 1987 BEGAN TO EXPLORE WAYS TO BRING “RELICT” ELEMENTS INTO HER ARTISTIC DESIGNS. HER TECHNIQUES ARE SIMILAR TO HONITON AND DUCHESSE LACES, BUT HER DESIGNS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT. ASYMMETRIC, CURVILINEAR ELEMENTS ARE OUTLINED WITH PADDED AREAS CONTRASTING WITH FINE NETS AND FILLINGS. A LOT OF COLOUR IS USED.

Freestyle 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 NOT SO REGIMENTED. THE JARS OF LOLLIES WERE DESIGNED INVENTED, FOR A WORKSHOP AT KARENKE, EXPLORING THE DIFFERENT FILLING STITCHES USED IN NEEDLE LACE.

Case No. 21  
TROLLEY LACE

Bucks Point Ground, Bevers, Trolley, Baynes, Chantilly, Lille

Bucks Point Ground BUCKS IS SHORT FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, ONE OF THE ENGLISH MIDLAND COUNTIES. BUCKS POINT GROUND IS THE NAME THE LACE MAKERS OF BEFORSHAMIRE AND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE. BUCKS POINT GROUND IS A TULL LACE SIMILAR TO LILLE LACE WITH FORMAL PATTERNS. AS A POINT OF INTEREST, THE ENGLISH LACE MAKER MAKES HER LACE WITH THE FOOTING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE PILLOW, WHEREAS THE EUROPEAN LACEMAKERS HAVE IT ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE PILLOW. TROLLEY LACE IS AN OFF SHOOT OF BUCKS POINT GROUND. PATTERNS FOR TROLLEY LACE WERE DESIGNED IN 1700. 70 PATTERNS WERE FOUND IN A LOT OF A SCHOOL IN DEVON. SOME OF THESE HAD NOW BEEN PUBLISHED AND A FURTHER BOOK IS BEING PRODUCED.

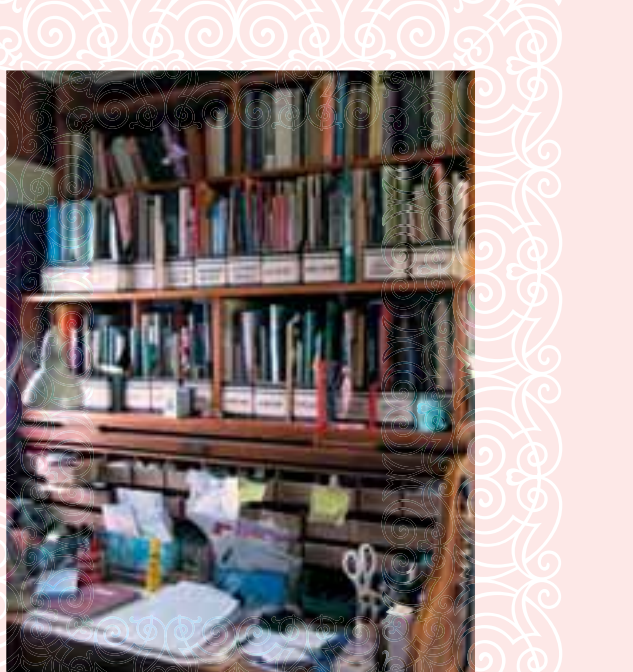
Baynes ROSE DURAND IS THE NAME ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OF THE LAST WOMEN TO HAVE A SCHOOL FOR LACE MAKERS IN BAYeux IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. SHE WAS A LACE CARPENTER IN CAEN FROM 1920-1927 AND WROTE A HANDBOOK FOR LEARNERS. SHE ALSO LEFT A LARGE PILLow OF LACE IN PROGRESS, WHICH IS IN THE MUSEUM OF NORMANDY IN CAEN. ONE OF ROSE DURAND’S LAST PUPILS, MADAME CORRENTIN, CONTINUED HER LACE AS A HOUSEWIFE. IN 1990, ROSE DURAND’S HANDBOOK WAS PUBLISHED ALONG WITH EXPLANATIONS AND DRAWINGS BY MARIE-CATHERINE NONCOEURY AND JENNIFER POTT. IN APPARANCE, BAYeux LACE IS SIMILAR TO BUCKS POINT GROUND LACE. IN 1999, MICK FOURSHOOT OF LE PUY LACE CENTRE PUBLISHED ANOTHER BOOK ON BAYeux LACE TWEING THE LACE FURTHER INTO MODERN TIMES WITH SOME VERY BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS.

Case No. 29  
CROCHET, KNITTING & TATting

Irish Crochet THIS WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE DEVELOPED FROM TANGOUR WORK. CROCHET IS A VERY VERSATILE CRAFT, ABLE TO IMITATE ALL KINDS OF EMBROIDERED LACES SUCH AS VENETIAN LACE AND FLAT WORK. THE NAME OF CROCHET WAS FIRST USED IN CAEN FROM 1920-1927 AND WROTE A HANDBOOK FOR LEARNERS. SHE ALSO LEFT A LARGE PILLow OF LACE IN PROGRESS, WHICH IS IN THE MUSEUM OF NORMANDY IN CAEN. ONE OF ROSE DURAND’S LAST PUPILS, MADAME CORRENTIN, CONTINUED HER LACE AS A HOUSEWIFE. IN 1990, ROSE DURAND’S HANDBOOK WAS PUBLISHED ALONG WITH EXPLANATIONS AND DRAWINGS BY MARIE-CATHERINE NONCOEURY AND JENNIFER POTT. IN APPARANCE, BAYeux LACE IS SIMILAR TO BUCKS POINT GROUND LACE. IN 1999, MICK FOURSHOOT OF LE PUY LACE CENTRE PUBLISHED ANOTHER BOOK ON BAYeux LACE TWEING THE LACE FURTHER INTO MODERN TIMES WITH SOME VERY BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS.

Rosaline Lace FROM ABOUT THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY LACE KNITTING BECAME POPULAR WHEN QUEEN ELIZABETH I WAS PRESENTED WITH CLOTH ENDOWING WITH ORNAMENTAL ‘TODDIE’ ON THE SIDE. EVERYONE AT COURT WANTED TO PAIRt AS THERE WERE NO WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS, SAMPLERS WERE NECESSARY. SOUVENIR E. LEWIS HAS PUBLISHED 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 EASY WEARING. EXCELLENT FOR COMMEMORIES BY BUS TRIP.

Tarting SUPPOSEDLY EVOLVED FROM CHINESE KNITTING, THIS TYPE OF WORK HAS ALSO BEEN FOUND IN AUSTRIA AND IN EGYPT. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY Mlle. ELISABETH RIGOD DE 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 EASY WEARING. EXCELLENT FOR COMMEMORIES BY BUS TRIP.



Case No. 2  
TAPPE LACE

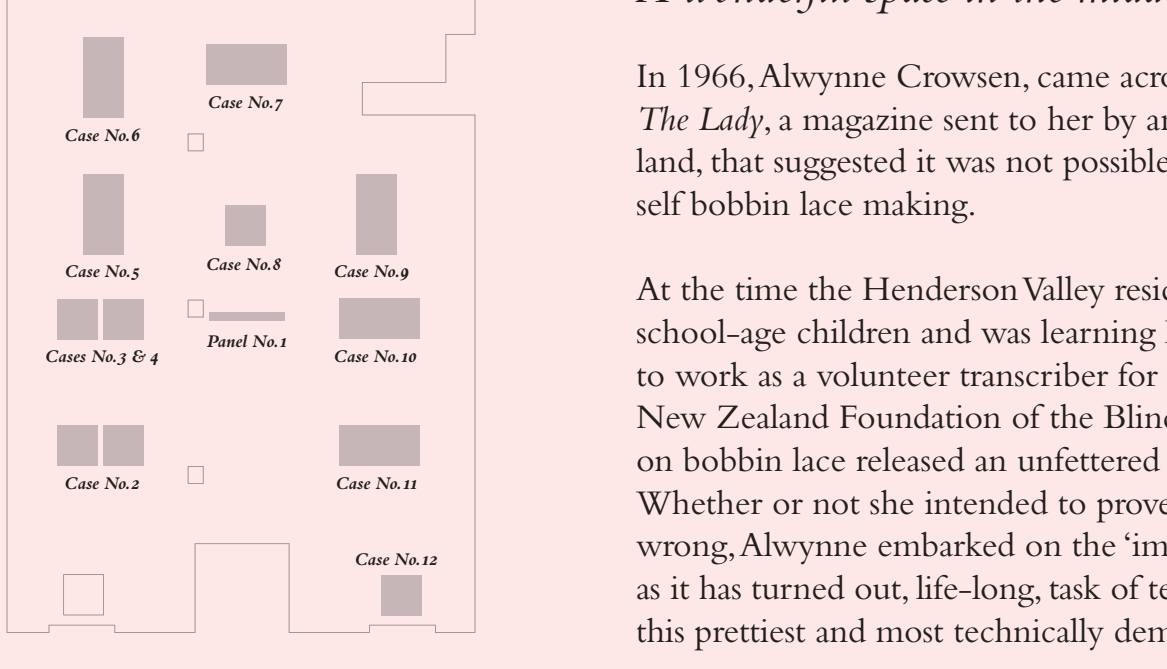
Tappe Lace THIS TAPPE LACE, THE TAPPE HAS A GOOD NUMBER OF VARIATIONS, INCLUDING A VARIETY OF COLOURS. THE FANCY PART ABOUT RUSSIAN LACE IS THE METHOD OF MAKING THE ORNATE FILLINGS. TWO PAIRS OF BOBBINS ARE TAKEN OUT OF THE TAPPE AND BY DEVISIVE ROTATIONS AND METRIC STITCHES THEY EVENTUALLY REACH THE CENTRE AND CONTINUE. LACE, ORNATE COLLARS AND TALLECOCHES CAN BE MADE WITH RELATIVELY FEW BOBBINS.

Case No. 8  
PIECE LACE

Honiton Lace LACE MAKING IN HONITON AND NEIGHBOURING TOWNS GOES BACK TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. IT IS A NON-CONTINUOUS LACE. MANY LACE MAKERS SPENT ALL THEIR TIME DOING ONE MOTIF. WHEN LACE WAS DEVON IN 1984, I WAS SHOWN A TRUNK FULL OF YET-TO-BE-SORTED EXAMPLES. THERE WAS A BUNDLE OF FORMAL MOTIFs WITH YET-TO-BE-SORTED PATTERNS. I WAS SHOWN MOTIFs 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 MOTIFs. I FELT THAT HONITON WAS A SPECIAL LACE AND THE LACE OF ROSES ON IT AT THAT TIME MEANT I NEEDED TO FIND MYSELF A TEACHER. IN 1972 I WROTE TO AN EMBROIDERY GUILD IN DEVON AND ASKED IF THEY HAD ANYBODY WHO WOULD TEACH HONITON LACE BY CORRESPONDENCE. AFTER SOME TIME I RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MAYD RADFORD, WHO WOULD BE IN EXEMOUTH, AND SHE SAID SHE WOULD BE WILLING TO TEACH ME. WE CORRESPONDED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. SHE HAD A FAVOURITE PHRASE, “USE YOUR COMMON SENSE.” IN 1984 WHEN I WENT TO ENGLAND ON A QEII ARTS COUNCIL GRANT, I FINALLY MET HER.



Fig.42—The Key Sampler, Circa 1980  
Milanese, Rosaline, Withof, Honiton, Rosocco & Duchesse lace



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 (1980) EMBODIZES THE PANORAMIC APPROACH SHE HAS TAKEN TO HER DISCIPLINE. CROWSEN HAS INCORPORATED SAMPLES OF LACE TRADITIONS AND PRESENTED THEM AS THE KEYS TO THE ‘SATTLE OF LACE’. HER PANORAMIC CONCEPTION ACCOMMODATES A MILANESE MANSON, ROSALINE ROOM, WITHOF WING, HONITON HOUSE, ROCCO RECEPTION AND A DUCHESSE ENTERTAINMENT.

LACE’S REPUTATION AS THE PRETEXT OF THE NEEDLE ARTS HAS OCCASIONALLY PRODUCED SOME PARADOXICAL WORKS. FROM TIME TO TIME VARIOUS MAKERS HAVE RENDERED UNBELIEVEDLY 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 ENDOWING INDO NOT HAVE EVER BEEN MADE IN HONITON LACE, THE REVERED ENGLISH LACE CHOSEN BY QUEEN VICTORIA FOR HER 1840 WEDDING GOWN. — Jane Miles



Notes by  
Alwynne Crowsen

Case No. 2  
CONTINUOUS LACE

Danish, Swedish, German, Torchon, Valenciennes, Paris

Danish Tonder A FINE TULL 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 COARSE THREAD.

Swedish, BUTCH COARSE LACE, GEOMETRIC IN DESIGN AND SIMILAR 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 LINDEN. IT WAS A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY FOR ME, MATCHING UP THE PATTERNS TO THE SAMPLES AND HAVING A GO AT MAKING SOME OF THEM.

French A FINER COARSE LACE FOR THE MOST PART. MANY OF THE PATTERNS ARE SIMILAR TO TORCHON AND CLUNY PATTERNS. ON THE WHOLE THE DESIGN HAS MORE OF A BOX BEING, EVENHIA KORFEITANT PUBLISHED SEVERAL BOOKS FROM 1976-1998 IN WHICH SHE DEVELOPED CERTAIN PATTERNS OF FLOWERS AND LEAVES, AND ALSO PICTORIAL PATTERNS. THESE WERE POPULAR WITH LACEMAKERS BECAUSE OF THEIR ORIGINALITY.

Torchon THIS LACE IS A COARSE LACE, VERY USEFUL FOR HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS. TORCHON MEANS QUINTER OR DESIGNED LACE. THESE DESIGNS ARE GEOMETRIC AND PLEASING TO THE EYE. ORIGINALLY MADE WITH LINEN THREAD, BUT NOWADAYS OTHER MADE WITH COTTON, OR EVEN SILK. SWEDISH, FRANCE AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MADE SLIGHT VARIATIONS OF TORCHON. A GIMP (OUTLINING) THREAD OR BIASD TULL (LITTLE SQUARES). EVERYWHERE THE ADVENT OF MACHINES WHICH COULD COPY THE PATTERNS FROM EARLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AFFECTED THIS TRADE. THURSDAY DE DILLMONT’S LES DENTELLES AUX FUSEAUX WAS MY TEXTBOOK WHEN I FOUND THE ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONS FOR TORCHON LACE MADE TO FOLLOW!

Valenciennes ORIGINALLY FLEMISH UNTIL 1678 WHEN FRANCE TOOK IT OVER. LOUIS XIV NOW POSSESSED A FLEMISH TOWN, WHICH WAS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT COMMERCIALLY. THERE HE RENAMED THE FLEMISH LACE MAKING INDUSTRY AS FRENCH. ONE PAIR OF HUFFLES TOOK A LACE MAKER 10 MONTHS TO COMPLETE WORKING A 3 HOUR DAY. IT WOULD COST A PURCHASER 100 ENGLISH POUNDS. VALENCIENNES LACE IS A CONTINUOUS LACE, THIS LACE FANT WITH FORMAL 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 WAS MORE DISTINCTION IN ITS SIMPLE PATTERNS. IT IS AN OLDER LACE THAN EITHER TORCHON OR CLUNY LACES. WIRE GROUND IS ALSO KNOWN AS FORD DOUBLE, ALSO KNOWN AS RAT STITCH, AND ALSO KNOWN AS SIX POINT STAR.

Case No. 3  
CONTINUOUS LACE

Guipure, Beds, Bucks

Guipure GUIPURE LACE IS A COARSE LACE WITH A VERY CHARACTERISTIC SCALLOP SHAPES. RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM LE PUTEN-VILAYE WERE THE RESULT OF A BOX BEING FOUND IN A BARN, WHICH CONTAINED MANY PATTERNS FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THESE HAD BEEN REDDATED TO TWENTIETH CENTURY REQUIREMENTS AND ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE.

Bedfordshire COMMONLY CALLED BEDS OR BEDS MATES, BECAUSE MANY OF THE PATTERNS ARE SIMILAR TO THE MALTSEE LACES IN DESIGN. THE FIRST MAKERS FOR MAKING LACE WERE INVENTED IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY. EXPERTS WERE MADE TO DESIGN LACES WHICH COULD BE MADE MORE QUICKLY BY HAND TO COMPETE WITH THE MACHINE. THE SETTING OF THE CRAFT, THOMAS LESTER, A LACE DEALER, WAS ABLE TO COPY SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF MALTSEE LACE AND PRODUCE WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS BEDS MATES. THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851 WAS A TREMENDOUS INCENTIVE TO ALL LACE DEALERS AND DESIGNERS TO IMPROVE THEIR BUSINESS. THIS LACE IS CHARACTERISED BY A TOWEED TAIL, PLATS AND PICTOS AND A 9-PIN EDGING. THE 9-PIN EDGING WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PATTERNS I LEARNT IN 1966.

Buckinghamshire SOME OF THE PATTERNS FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DO NOT INCORPORATE THE TULL GROUND THAT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF BUCKS POINT GROUND. THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COLLECT IN THIS CASE IS BASED ON A PATTERN FROM PANOLA NORTHAMTON. 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.

Case No. 4  
PIECE LACE

Rosaline & four Honiton handkerchiefs



Case No. 5  
PIECE LACE

Duchesse, Withof, Blinche, Bruges

Duchesse Lace A FINE FORMAL-BASED LACE WITH BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS. THIS IS A PIECE LACE. EACH FLOWER IS WORKED SEPARATELY, AND AS THE WORK PROGRESSES, JOINED TO AN ADJACENT MOTIF OR STEM. THE FIRST TEXTBOOK THAT USED WAS IN DUTCH WHICH, WITH THE HELP OF A DICTIONARY, I WAS ABLE TO DECIPHER AND THEN TRANSLATE THE ENTIRETY OF THE BOOK AS IT WENT.

Withof Lace 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 PATTERN BY MAKING THE OUTLINES MORE PROMINENT, THE LACE COMPOSES MOTIFs, RATHER THAN LENGTH OF LACE. THE CIRCULAR LINES, FLOWERS AND BIRDS ARE PLEASING TO THE EYE AND REMINISCENT OF ART NOUVEAU.

Blinche

A BELGIAN TOWN TWENTY MINUTES EAST OF VALENCIENNES. THIS CONTINUOUS LACE WAS ORIGINALLY VERY SIMILAR TO VALENCIENNES. IN 1678 BOTH TOWNS WERE ANNEXED TO FRANCE BUT WHENHIA VALENCIENNES STAYED IN FRANCE, BLINCHE WAS RETURNED TO FLANDERS IN 1688. A PUGNANT’S BIG GROUND AND OTHER SNOWFLAKE LANCES ARE TYPICAL. IT IS A VERY FINE LACE AND VERY BEAUTIFUL. ANNEWAARE VERBERGE-LOOT OF KANTERBURY IN BRUGES HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING BLINCHE LACE INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS FOR THE KEEN LACE MAKER STARTING IN 1985.

Bruges ORIGINATED IN THE MID NINETEENTH CENTURY IN BRUGES. A PIECE LACE, I.E. EACH PART OF THE DESIGN IS WORKED SEPARATELY AND JOINED TO AN ADJACENT AREA AS THE WORK PROGRESSES. FORMAL IN CHARACTER, NO RAISED WORK, THREAD USED IS GENERALLY LINEN AND RATHER COARSE. COLLARS AND BIRDS ARE PLEASING TO THE EYE AND REMINISCENT OF ART NOUVEAU.

Case No. 6  
A SELECTION FROM THE LACE LIBRARY

A SAMPLE OF THE BOOKS AND PERIODICALS ALWYNNE HAS CONSULTED. THE FIRST PIECE OF LACE SHE MADE, AND THE DAYD FARMER FOLDED ITS INSTRUCTIONS WERE SOURCED FROM.

Case No. 7  
NEEDLE LACE

Lower Level

Youghal A WIDE VARIETY OF NEEDLE LACES WERE PRODUCED IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURES IN IRELAND. YOUGHAL LACE IS A FLAT LACE WITH NO RAISED AREAS. LACE

MAKING WAS TAUGHT IN YOUGHAL FROM 1845, BY THE PRESENTATION SISTERS. MOTHER MARY ANN SMITH REVERSE-ENGINEERED SOME ITALIAN LACE TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT WAS MADE AND THEN PASSED THE TECHNIQUE ON TO LOCAL WOMEN. A THICKER OUTLINING THREAD KNOWN AS A CORBOONET EMPHASISES THE SHARP OF MOTIFs. MANY DIFFERENT FILLINGS WERE USED AND PIECES WERE OFTEN OUTLINED WITH A VENETIAN BOUND. AMONG THE FINEST PIECES OF LACE MADE IN YOUGHAL WAS A TWIN FOR QUEEN MARY VICTORIA ON HER VISIT TO INDIA IN 1911 AS EMPRESS OF INDIA.

Rosellote

THIS IS A GEOMETRIC NEEDLE LACE IN WHICH A SERIES OF ARCS, SQUARES AND SEMICIRCLES FORM THE DESIGN. THIS LACE DATES FROM THE ‘FIFTEENTH CENTURY’ WHEN IT BEGAN AS A FORM OF CUTOFF IN WHICH THREADS WERE PULLED FROM LINEN FABRIC TO MAKE A GRID ON WHICH THE PATTERN WAS RENDERED USING BUTT-HOLES STITCH. LATER NEEDLES USED A GRID MADE OF THREAD RATHER THAN A FABRIC GRID.

Venetian

FAMOUS FOR ITS RAISED AREAS AND GOLD FOLDED DESIGNS.

Upper Level  
VARIED NEEDLE LACES ON BELT

Emirick

THIS WAS INTRODUCED TO NEW ZEALAND ABOUT 1824. REV. CHARLES WALKER HAD MARKED THE DAUGHTER OF THE OWNER OF THE COGGESHAL LACE FACTORY IN ESSEX WHICH MADE HER MACHINE THAT WAS DECORATED BY HAND BY FAMOUS WORKERS. REV. WALKER AND HIS WIFE SETTLED IN LIMERICK AND EMPLOYED OUTWORKERS TO EMBROIDER DESIGNS ON MACHINE-MADE NET. BEGINNING WITH A WORKFORCE OF 20 GIRLS, THE BUSINESS GREW TO EMPLOY 1,500. NUMEROUS FILLING STITCHES WERE DEVELOPED AND LIMERICK BECAME FAMOUS FOR THEM.