



Wednesday 11 November 2009

Welcome to your Midweek Moments. In this issue we continue the story of Hollywood costume designer Edith Head's meteoric rise to the top of the heap. We'll also talk to Blueberries customer Joy Hodge about one of her own creations in 'Show and Tell'. Enjoy.

Wardrobe Mistress

The life of legendary Hollywood costume designer, Edith Head.

Episode 3 - Departmental Head



Edith Head with Bill Ihnen

After her huge success with the seductive outfits for Mae West in the 1933 Paramount film *She Done Him Wrong*, Edith Head's star was definitely fixed in the ascendant. As the decade progressed, her fame and stature steadily grew. This was partly due to the fact that many of Head's clients were relatively unknown starlets when they first worked with Head, and later when they became famous movie stars, they specifically requested Head as their costume designer again, thus garnering her ever more attention. A case in point was Barbara Stanwyck, who was notoriously difficult to work with. Stanwyck was so impressed with Head that she specifically requested Head be her permanent costume designer, even for movies made by other studios.

In 1938, Travis Banton, who had been in charge of Paramount's costume department since 1927 when chief designer Howard Greer had left for a career as a retail designer, called it quits and left the studio. Paramount executives elected Edith Head as his replacement, which was the first time in Hollywood history that a woman was put in charge of a department of a major studio. Not surprisingly, Head's ascension also meant a lot more work, but this was something she relished, frequently working 16 hour days and designing costumes for up to 50 movies a year.

Only two years after her promotion, Head married Paramount art director Bill Ihnen, whom she had already been friends with for almost a decade. The marriage raised eyebrows in various quarters, not just because of their unlikely ages (Head was 42 and Ihnen was 52 at the time) but because it was well known that Ihnen was gay. This didn't seem to affect their marriage in the least, as they remained "companions" until Ihnen's death in 1979 at the age of 91. Head and Ihnen reportedly had separate bedrooms at home but for all intents and purposes remained a happy couple throughout their married life.

Throughout the 1940s there was a growing push for costume design to be officially recognised as an Academy Award category in its own right, but more conservative elements in the industry remained stubbornly resistant to this. So when Edith Head put all the force of her dynamic personality behind this crusade, it was inevitable that sparks would fly in the process.

Tune in next week...

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English Paper Piecing

Sue Daley visited our store recently by teaching over two days and bringing with her some English Paper Piecing treats, which included a great new book and various packs containing paper pieces. We would like to thank Sue for teaching at Blueberries and sharing her knowledge, everybody had a great time and learned some much.

English paper piecing is easy and an extremely old form of patchwork. This technique uses paper template shapes such as hexagons, triangles, squares, diamonds and jewels to name just a few to create beautiful designs. Enjoy the selection below!



A Road Less Travelled By Sue Daley from Patchwork with Busyfingers

Grandmothers flower garden is one of patchworks oldest, dearest and most frequently sewn designs. The design is based on a hexagon which has six sides. In days gone by they were an all over pattern made completely of hundreds & thousands of hexagons.

This book will bring to you a number of quilts using the same technique as days gone by with a few variations.

1. Various different shapes
2. Combinations of various shapes

Combine it with applique and embroidery and together with the art of fussy cutting.

\$35 [click here to purchase.](#)



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New Fabric - Antique Rose

Antique Rose fabric has now arrived at Blueberries, click on the picture below to view the selection.



Show and Tell

Show us the item and tell us the story

Joy Hodge – “The Elephant Quilt”

What was your inspiration for this quilt?

Elephants. I went looking for elephants. The quilt was for my new grandson and my daughter-in-law wanted something with elephants on it to match the jungle theme of the nursery.

Can you describe the quilt and how you put it together?

It's really just one panel with a large elephant as the prominent feature and a couple of other animals nearby like a tiger and some monkeys. I stitched around each of the animals and managed to give them a kind of a 3D effect. Also, there's some kids riding on the elephant, using a rein. The quilt is mainly green, because of the jungle foliage. I call it “The Elephant Quilt”.



The *Elephant* Quilt by Joy Hodge

How long did it take you to make the quilt?

About a month. It wasn't very involved as it's just the one panel. All I did was stitch around the animals and then put a border on it.

Have you been making quilts for very long?

No, I still consider myself to be a bit of a beginner. I'd always wanted to do quilts but I never had the time before. Now that I'm a Lady of Leisure, I have plenty of time. I did a brief tech course for beginners and made a cushion, but I didn't really like the atmosphere there. It was too much like going to school. Then I went and checked out Blueberries and was impressed with what I saw. And Jackie and Carmel and the others were so friendly and helpful as well, which made a big difference. Now it's become quite an obsession for me. I've learnt so much about it from Jackie.

Til next week!

The Blueberries Team.