



Mid Week Moments #68

Wednesday 14 July 2010

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Welcome to your Midweek Moments. For those of you who like to mark Bastille Day with a couple of croissants and the very best French Champagne, be careful that the croissants don't leave any crumbs behind when you dunk them in the bubbles. Not a very elegant look.

In today's Midweek Moments we hear about Sue Bambury's experiences in Anne Sommerlad's Miniature Sampler class two Fridays ago. We also put another well-known item of headwear under the spotlight in the Who Wants to be a Milliner? column. This week, there's an unexpected dose of girl power in the story. Read on to see why...

Changes to Susan's Evening Patchwork School

Starting this week Susan's Evening Patchwork will be held **every week on a Thursday evening from 6pm to 9pm.**

In Susan's patchwork school each student can work on their chosen project whilst being given instruction and guidance by Susan. With classes held every Thursday evening and once a month on Saturday, this is a great class for those who work through the week and have limited time to attend classes.

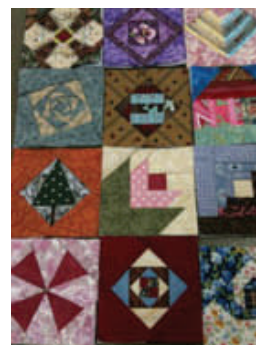


And it is only \$15 for the evening...click [here](#) to book a seat!

Class Report

The column where pupils give us a report from the class.

Pupil: Sue Bambury
Class: Miniature Sampler
Friday 2 July 2010
Tutor: Anne Sommerlad



What did you do in the class?

We were taught to do foundation paper piecing with miniature blocks. Our finished blocks came out two inches square.

How was the tutor?

Anne was great. She always explains things really well and is easy to understand. She helped with individual people who were having small difficulties along the way and didn't make anyone feel inferior or self-conscious about it. She has great people skills.

What was the best part of the day?

It was all so good, but one of the best parts was learning a lot of new tips and techniques. It was such a good day all-round, it flowed really well.

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Did the class meet your expectations?

Yes it did. I'd done some foundation piecing before, but not a lot, which is why it was so wonderful to pick up all the new tips and techniques. I'm keen to do more.

Would you encourage others to do the class?

Most definitely.

Anne Sommerlad's classes are on the first Friday of the month, from 9.30am to 3.30pm, click [here](#) to find out more.

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Who wants to be a Milliner?

The Secret Life of Hats, Episode 18 - The Bonnet

The easiest way to see lots of bonnets in the same place at the same time is to watch any English period drama based on the works of Jane Austen or Charles Dickens. The female characters are almost always coiffed in bonnets, ranging from the plain and dowdy to the highly decorative, festooned with ribbons, lace and frills.



Claire Foy in Little Dorrit (2009) which is currently screening on the ABC



Dames Judi Dench and Eileen Atkins in Cranford (2007)



Kate Winslett in Sense & Sensibility (1995)

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Ironically though, 'bonnet' was originally a word with masculine connotations. In the Middle Ages it was used to describe almost any item of headwear, which was almost exclusively the domain of men, an assertion of masculine dominance and authority. In the 15th century, when the church decreed that women's hair must be covered, females began to wear either hoods or flat caps, usually with veils attached. These items provided a stark contrast with the towering 'bonnets' of archbishops, priests and nobles, so met with male approval.

However, it was the Marie Stuart Hood, named after Mary Queen of Scots, that was the first vaguely bonnet-like design. Heart-shaped and trimmed with lace, it disappeared with the head of its unfortunate wearer, but had already inadvertently laid the groundwork for the evolution of what would become the ladies' bonnet.

This still took a while though, as the first recognizable female bonnet didn't appear until after the French Revolution. Throughout its first couple of decades, the bonnet size slowly increased dramatically, often with wide, deep brims that hid the wearer's face. These changes occurred so gradually that men didn't seem to notice or object. These new, super-sized bonnets were made from a range of materials including taffeta, leghorn straw, silk and even specially pressed cardboard.

By later in the 19th century, bonnets were shrinking again, but not because the men of the time had finally noticed women's headwear was outflanking their own, but simply because many women now carried parasols, which proved awkward while wearing a large bonnet. This reduction in size and style led to many women choosing from the ever-increasing range of ladies hats that were becoming more and more fashionable. Bonnets therefore became the choice of headwear for a more modest appearance, leading many religions, particularly the more conservative ones such as the Amish, the Mennonite and certain orders of Catholic nuns, to adopt bonnets as part of their official dress. These religious bonnets were inevitably simple, plain and dark in colour. Often they denoted various things about their wearers, such as whether or not they were married or baptized. Throughout the 20th century, ladies bonnets virtually disappeared as an item of fashion, but survived as religious dress even as late as the 1960s. The only surviving bonnets in modern 21st century western society are the popular Easter bonnets made by schoolchildren.



*Kelly McGillis
as an Amish mother in Witness (1985)*



*Meryl Streep and Amy Adams
as Catholic nuns in Doubt (2008)*

Incidentally, the word 'bonnet' originally referred to a parapet-like structure erected atop a fortress, and, in sea-faring terms it was an addition to a sail. Back in the Middle Ages, applying the word to items of male headwear must have seemed a natural progression, as hats were considered a kind of fortification of the head. When the first recognizable ladies' bonnets finally started appearing, they had brims with such a sail-like appearance, that they effectively usurped the word 'bonnet' as their own. This may be the earliest recorded example of girl power.

Quote of the week: If there are no Quilting Bees in Heaven, I ain't going!

Til next week!
The Blueberries Team