



HORSHAM CREATIVE EMBROIDERERS

**Inclusive,
Enthusiastic,
Contemporary
and Friendly**

**Newsletter
February 2025**

Hello everyone,

Did it also feel to you that February, our shortist month, seemed as if it went on forever? Lovely to see signs of spring now, bulbs coming up and new growth starting to appear. The Japanese have 72 seasons throughout the year, each five days long, so I thought I would share their March Seasons: 1st to 5th - plants show their first buds, 6th to 10th - hibernating creatures open their doors (how sweet is that), 11th to 15th - the Butterbur flowers, its leaves traditionally used to wrap butter, 16th to 20th - the magnolia blooms, 21st to 25th - the sparrow build her nest and 26th to 30th - the first cherry blossoms appear. We might not fall precisely in line with their seasons but I expect we could see and note significant changes every few days.

Last month we had a lovely meeting with the start of our fabric collage project. We will continue working on sewing the strips together, adding stitching and various embellishments such as beads, buttons etc. This is a great project to play with variegated threads, different thicknesses and experiment with stitches you might not normally use. I have been assured that we will not have a problem with the heating again so hopefully it will be a lot warmer in the hall tomorrow.

We talked last month about our next project and working a design on canvas, traditionally with wool. Sarah has been featuring canvas stitches in the newsletter for a while and if you have any relevant books on canvas work or finished pieces please bring them in. We can have a chat about this whilst we are stitching.

There will be a designated table for us to display our hoops. Please bring yours in as Hazel would like to feature them on the website.

I thought you would all like to know that Jan is now at home, determined to find ways to use her left hand more so she can write and stitch.

Look forward to seeing you all tomorrow,

Janet

07801 137349 or 01293 884365

jan@janet-brown.co.uk

Raffle

February Fill-Dyke

A tiny shrew called Mildred came to live in the forest. She found a nice little house in the roots of the walnut tree next to the dew pond. She was a rather shy little creature and, to start with, she didn't make many friends.

It was February (February fill-dyke the old folks used to call it). The weather was cold and raw. There was lots of rain. Mildred looked at the pond every day. The level of the water got higher and higher and she began to worry and wonder whether she had made a mistake when she chose to live so close to the pond. It was such a pretty place to live, but ...

One night it was particularly wet. The rain fell relentlessly on and on. All sensible creatures were tucked up warm in their houses. The dew pond got fuller and fuller. Gladys, the country mouse, couldn't sleep. She tossed and turned. "Heaven help anyone out in that," she said to herself. After an hour or so she got up and went all round her house, checking that everywhere was water-tight. She made herself a warm drink, wrapped herself in a fleecy shawl and sat in bed listening to the rain.

Mildred, the tiny shrew, slept restlessly. The dew pond got fuller and fuller. The water level rose until it was hovering on the edge of the pond. The rain slackened off but it didn't stop.

Gladys was so restless that she felt compelled to get up again. She wrapped up warmly and went to the door of her cottage. She peeped outside. Still raining but at least the wind had dropped. "I wonder how the dew pond is doing," she said to herself and, against her better judgement, she decided to go and have a look. At about that very moment, the pond reached a critical point. Trickle of water had been escaping from the pond for quite a while and now, full to bursting, the pond overflowed. SWOOSH. The water raced down the bank.

Poor Mildred! Water rushed into her little house, picked her up roughly and swept her out of bed and out of the house. One minute she was safe and sound and the next she was tumbling through space surrounded by freezing water. However, the water couldn't maintain its forward momentum for very long and, as the stream slackened off, Mildred was able to stop tumbling and regain her footing. Shaking and spluttering she pulled herself to one side and lay there trembling.

Gladys, meanwhile, had seen the torrent of water racing down the bank and had jumped to safety. She saw poor Mildred and struggled across the soaking ground to reach her. "There, there, my dear. I've got you. Hang on, I'll soon have you safe again," she said as she comforted the tiny creature.

Gladys took Mildred back to her cottage where she was able to get warm and dry again. By the time morning came, the rain had stopped. After breakfast, the two of them went back to the pond and Gladys helped Mildred to find a safer place to live. They stayed firm friends after that.

[For interest, there is a nineteenth-century painting entitled February Fill-Dyke by Benjamin Williams Leader included in The Victorian Web: victorianweb.org/painting/leader/paintings/13.html]

Raffle: Bees, Buttons and Ribbons

© Frances Westwood, 2025

Stitch One Stitch - Canvas Work

Gate Stitch

— . . . —

This month we continue looking at composite stitches on canvas. On looking back at the records of the stitches we have covered in our monthly SOS we have already done 10 of these: Cushion stitch, Crossed Cushion stitch, Norwich and Brighton stitches, Algerian Eye, Ray Rhodes and Pinwheel stitches. So that's quite a few under our belt! This month we are looking at Gate Stitch.

Gate Stitch is only used on single canvas. It makes rectangular, textured blocks with are staggered (a bit like a brick pattern). It is quick and easy to work and is useful for filling large shapes and backgrounds. It is more effective worked in a soft wool rather than a shiny Perle. I have worked two examples, both "landscape" and "portrait" but the instructions are for the "portrait" layout. These are examples 1 and 2.

Each stitch covers five vertical and six horizontal canvas threads. First work four vertical straight stitches over 6 canvas threads. Then work an elongated cross stitch from corner to corner over this block. (Remember always to keep your cross stitches consistent so the top thread is always in the same direction). To finish, work a horizontal straight stitch over 5 canvas threads across the block, placing it two canvas threads from the top or bottom. Fill the shape to be filled by working vertical rows, dropping the subsequent rows by 3 threads. Position the horizontal stitch alternately at the upper or lower end of the block as shown in Diagram 1.

Happy stitching!

February 2025

— . . . —



