



# **HORSHAM CREATIVE EMBROIDERERS**

**Inclusive,  
Enthusiastic,  
Contemporary  
and Friendly**

**Newsletter  
January 2025**

Hello everyone,

First of all a happy and peaceful New Year to you all. I look forward to all our meetings this year.

Our last meeting might well have a disaster with the double booking of the hall (for which I have not yet had an adequate explanation) if Jan had not offered us the use of her home instead. We enjoyed a lovely afternoon, learning Chicken Scratch Embroidery and eating nibbles and chocolates from the Christmas Cracker (thank you so much Teresa). Thanks also to Jan and Wim for their warm hospitality, it was appreciated by us all. The latest I have heard from Jan is that she is slowly progressing, has been moved to Crawley Hospital for rehabilitation and is going mad with boredom! Jan, if you are reading this, we all send out love and best wishes to you on your road to recovery.

The Christmas Craft Fair was an interesting experience; we had a stand in a corner with not much room to move around but the event, despite the torrential rain, was very well attended. So many stalls had tombolas, which all the children loved and might be a good way to move on some of our Christmas gifts, but our sales were only £42.00. However when I checked the Inventory two peg dolls were not accounted for, and the value of these was not in the cash taken, so I have assumed they were taken from the table and added the money. So as the hall cost us £35.00, this was not successful in terms of income but was another learning experience. Thank you to all of who who have contributed goods for us to sell and to those who helped on the day.

The Nativity display at the Methodist Church was more positive. Several leaflets were picked up so hopefully they will generate some interest in our group and there were beautiful Nativity scenes, many hand carved. Our felt and knitted nativities added a lot of colour - thank you Anna and Sarah for the loan of these.

Jan and I had discussed the programme for the next few months. We have spent several meetings experimenting with different ways you can create your own fabric, felt for example and a variety of techniques to create your own patterns to stitch on as our book covers, block printing and the use of transfer paints demonstrated. We thought we would look at different ways to collage fabric, papers etc to create a pleasing piece to stitch into and perhaps embellish with beads, buttons etc. See over for more information.

**Janet**

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## Fabric Collage

The two examples below are based on specific City & Guilds briefs and illustrate contrasting ways you can consider when designing your collage - you may wish to explore colour combinations, the use of a variety of fabrics both plain and printed, papers, stitches (hand or machine), embellishments such as buttons, ribbons, feathers, lace, beads etc. Consider also the effectiveness of frayed edges, of small inserts and other decorative techniques. Perhaps you have a favourite artist whose work inspires you, especially in terms of colour.

This project will be worked over two months so you will have time to consider the layout of your piece and we will focus on this first. I would suggest your design should be about A4 in size, either landscape or portrait. I will bring in a stash of fabric and some papers that you can dip into and I expect there might be some sharing between us all. If you prefer not to design a collage do bring in your own work to stitch.

You will need to bring:

A piece of calico or cotton as a backing fabric

Assortment of fabrics that would work well together when assembling your collage

Assortment of papers if you have any, printed napkins, tissue paper, printed pages etc

Scissors, pins, cutting board and rotary cutter, sewing kit and tacking thread if you are ready to assemble your strips.



## **What's On!**

30/1/2025 to 1/2/2025

Quilt Show @ South of England Showground  
Selsfield Road, Ardingly RH17 6TL  
Quilt Displays, Traders, Car Parking

28/2/2025 to 1/3/2025

Crafting Live @ Sandown Racecourse  
Portsmouth Road, Esher KT10 9AJ

20/3/2025 to 23/03/2025

Stitch Festival @ Business Design Centre  
52 Upper Street, Islington NI 0QH

Traders, Workshops, Demonstrations, Catwalk  
Shows etc

For tickets to these events go to their websites.

### **Raffle - The Magic Seed**

It was a cold, crisp, clear morning in early January. Gladness (Gladys), the Country Mouse, decided to go for a walk. She thought she might do a bit of foraging while she was out so she took her foraging apron, as well as a nice warm scarf that she had got for Christmas. "I think I'll go up to the Standing Stone. It's about time I paid my respects again," she said to herself.

The Standing Stone was located on a little hillock, surrounded by a ring of beech trees, on the far side of the forest. It was quite a trek so Gladness decided to take a little sandwich, in case she got hungry. "Better to be safe than sorry," she thought. She bustled about and soon had a nice little sandwich filled with butter and hazelnut spread. Off she went. My word! It was cold but she kept up a good speed and soon felt quite a glow.

The forest was always beautiful but in Winter it had a special, spare kind of beauty that appealed to Gladness and, of course, even at the time of year things were still growing. Gladness saw buds on bushes and the very tips of bulbs pushing up through the dark soil.

She made good time to the Standing Stone and stood quietly at its foot. It was almost silent, even the wind had dropped and there were few sounds from the trees. It was a special sort of moment and Gladness put her hands on the stone. She imagined all the creatures who might have come to the stone from ancient times and whose hands might have touched the stone, just as her hands were touching it. She took a deep breath.

Gladness decided to walk all the way round the stone and then, maybe, to sit down and eat her sandwich before heading home again. Off she went. It had been quite shady on the side where Gladness had been but, as she progressed, she emerged on to the sunny side of the stone. She scuffled about until, suddenly, she spotted a huge seed partly buried under the leaves. The seed was brown and pointed at one end. It was shiny and ... maybe she was imagining it but it seemed slightly warm to the touch. But that could just be the Sun, of course. Gladness cleared some of the leaves away and had a good look at it. It really was huge, much too big to go in her apron. She considered eating it there and then but that didn't seem right, somehow. She decided to take it home and maybe to plant it and see what grew. So, she cleared all the leaves away and made sure that she could carry it. Then she sat down and ate her sandwich.

Fully refreshed she approached the seed. "One, two, three, up you come," she said. She hugged the lovely warm seed to her chest and off she went. It was easy at first but it wasn't long before her arms were aching. There were plenty of times when she almost gave up and left the seed by the side of the path, but she hated giving up and so pressed on. Eventually they got home and Gladness was able to let go of the seed. Her arms were aching and trembling. She left the seed in the garden and went inside for a cup of tea and a sit down. Once she had recovered, she went back outside to deal with the seed. She found a big pot and pulled it indoors, then she filled it with compost (that took ages) and then she planted the seed, pointed end up, and sat back. It was almost dark by the time she had finished. That night she went to bed early.

Gladness slept well and woke with a feeling of hope and expectation. "How are you, my giant seed?", she wondered. She got up and put on her dressing gown. It was a lovely morning. She pattered downstairs and into the living room. "OH! Whatever's this?" The pot with the seed was now full of shiny, stripey leaves and from amongst the leaves there was a tall, strong stalk at the top of which there was a beautiful huge white flower. The petals seemed to glow and the room was suffused with perfume. While Gladness was still trembling with shock the flower began to play the most heavenly music. It sounded like silver trumpets and magical xylophones all combined and finished with a triumphant flourish.

Gladness sat down all of a tremble. It never did that again but Gladness equally never forgot the morning that the magic seed greeted her with enchanted music.

**Raffle:** Piece of felt, gold and silver ribbon, gold ricrac braid, flower trim, 4 tiny pegs, 3 heart buttons.

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## Stitch One Stitch - Canvas Work - Roumanian Couching

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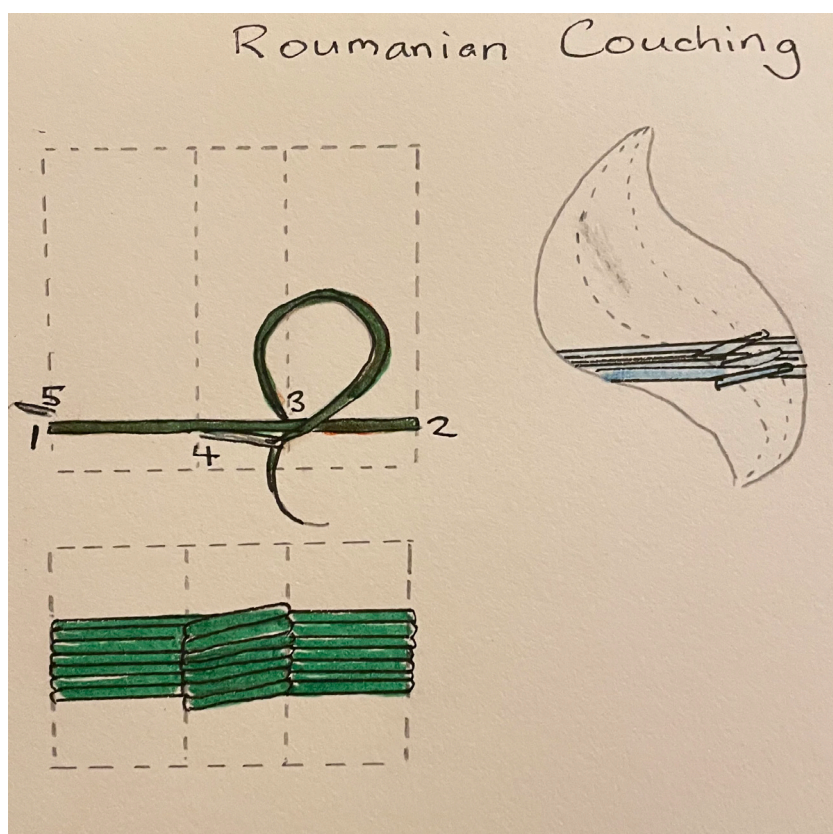
Both Janet and Jan have suggested we look at composite stitches. We have already looked at one of these - Brighton Stitch last month. This month we are looking at Roumanian couching. You all know how to do ordinary couching where a long surface thread is held in place by small stitches that loop over the surface thread, anchoring it in place. The anchoring threads can be either the same or a different thread to the surface thread. In Roumanian couching the long surface stitch is held in place by a long anchoring stitch in the same thread as the surface stitch.

Roumanian couching can also be called laid Oriental stitch, antique couching, Oriental couching or figure stitch. It is worked with a continuous thread and gives a smooth, flat surface without a definite pattern and is used to fill large spaces and background areas. It can be worked on both canvas and plain evenweave type fabrics but in all cases the fabric must be held taught in a frame or hoop so the long surface stitch does not warp. It is helpful to mark not just the outline of the shape but also two lines (or more pairs of lines) down the centre to keep the anchoring stitches the same length. Depending on the length of the surface thread there can be more than one anchoring stitch but they should ideally be the same length.

Begin at the lower edge of the shape and bring the needle up at 1 and down at 2, making a long surface stitch across the width of the shape. Do not pull the laid thread too tightly as the anchoring stitch will hold it in place. Bring the needle up at 3 on one side of the laid thread and down at 4 on the other side of the surface stitch. Bring the needle up at 5 to start the next line. Continue in this way, filling the shape. The lines should be close together with no background fabric visible between them.

Both my examples have been worked on canvas as I am still filling in my canvas work sampler. On plain evenweave curved outlines can be used where a medium to large area such as leaf shapes need to be filled.

Sarah (January 2025)



## Examples of Roumanian Couching

