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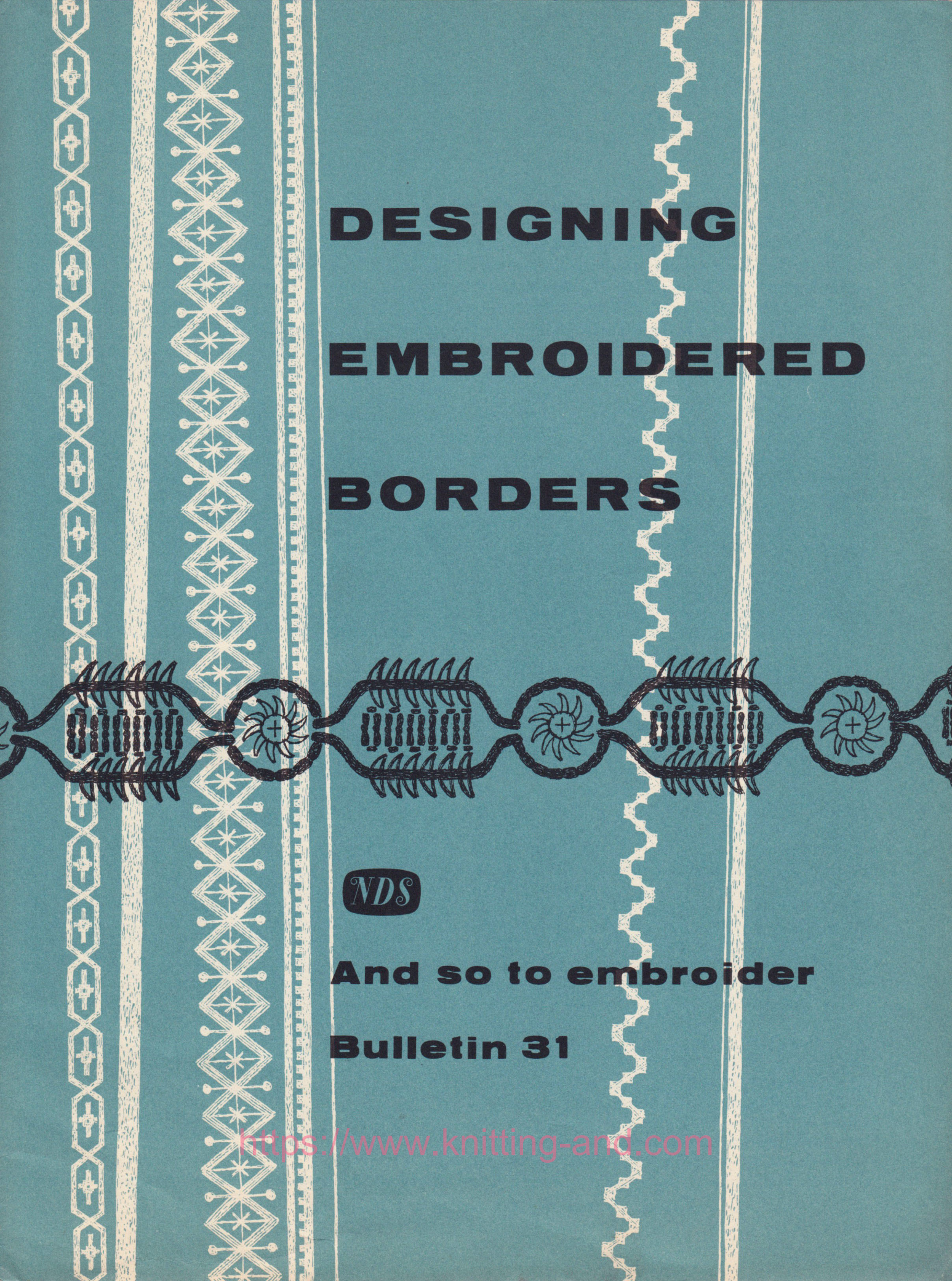
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# **DESIGNING EMBROIDERED BORDERS**



**NDS**

**And so to embroider**

**Bulletin 31**

<https://www.knitting-and.com>



# Designing Embroidered Borders

A well thought-out border design can be a most satisfactory form of decoration, and it is interesting to analyse the very simple forms of construction on which the pattern can be based. A zigzag line, a series of scallops, embattlements, or a flowing wavy line may prove to be the basis of the most elaborate decoration. The same fundamental lines can be found if you study the primitive arts of different countries and civilisations. These have gradually been developed according to the artistic and cultural life of the people, but the underlying shapes have much in common. Pick out the Court cards from a pack of playing cards and examine the border designs on the costumes. Compare these with the decorations on ancient Greek and Egyptian pottery, and notice the similarity.

The materials with which you work have, of course, a strong influence on your design. In embroidery the colour, texture and weave of the background fabric must be considered in relation to the choice of stitch, thread and method of work. It is these things which are so important, giving character and originality to the interpretation of the most simple design.

This bulletin contains a selection of embroideries decorated with border patterns planned, in each case, to suit the varying types of background fabrics. Some use an even-weave fabric so that the border is worked by counting the threads, some are of felt on which a bolder treatment of surface embroidery is necessary, and one is of checked gingham to show the use of a patterned fabric.

When planning your embroidery, consider carefully the placing of any border design in relation to the edges of the work, in order to achieve a perfect balanced effect. Sometimes turning a corner in a border may require a little thought — you will see how we solve this problem in some of the borders included in the bulletin.

## **Cross Stitch Table Runner** ( $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. $\times$ 25 in.)

This table runner is made from an evenly woven fabric with an embroidered border pattern decorating the two long sides. The embroidery is worked in three strands of stranded cotton in dark brown, white and pale green. Several patterns were tried out first of all on graph paper and worked out in embroidery (sampler A) before one was selected for the table runner.

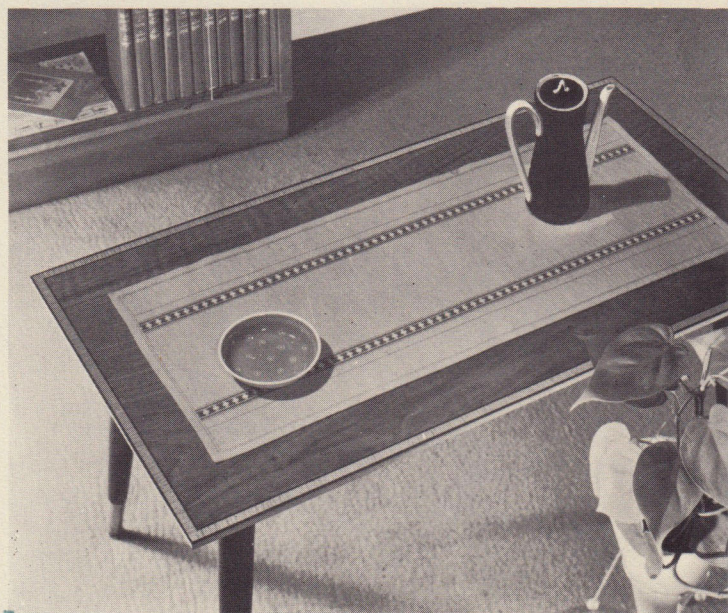
The borders are placed about 2 in. in from the narrow hemstitched edge, and lines of Back Stitch are added to complete the decoration.

Sampler B shows how this border can be adapted for a corner.

## **Child's Dress**

This useful little play-dress can be made from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards of gingham with a  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. check. We have chosen a blue and white fabric but there are many other attractive colour variations available. The square yoke is lined with matching fabric and fastens on each shoulder with two tiny buttons. The full skirt is gathered in at the top, using the checks as a guide, and smocking is worked in white and red to make a band  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep. Information about smocking will be found in our bulletin 21B, "Designing Children's Dresses".

A border design, built up with Cross Stitch worked on the checks, is embroidered round the skirt. The deep hem



*ABOVE; Cross stitch table runner.*

*RIGHT; Sampler A shows several patterns.*

*Sampler B shows the border adapted for a corner.*



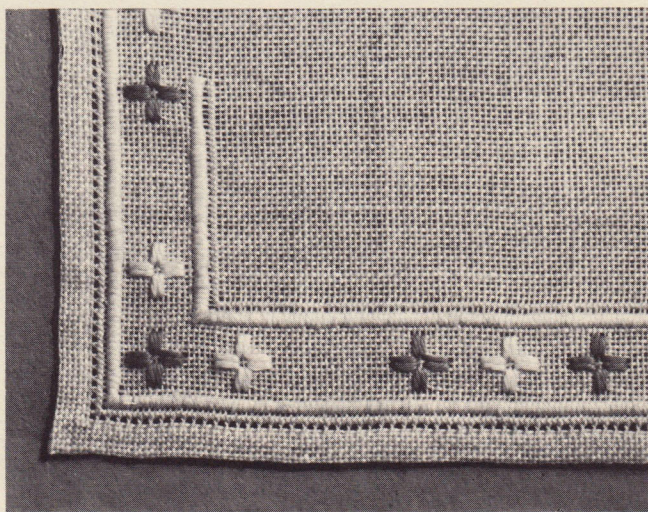
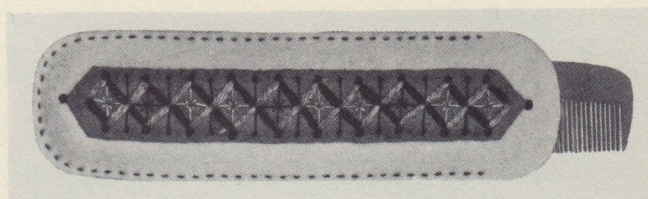
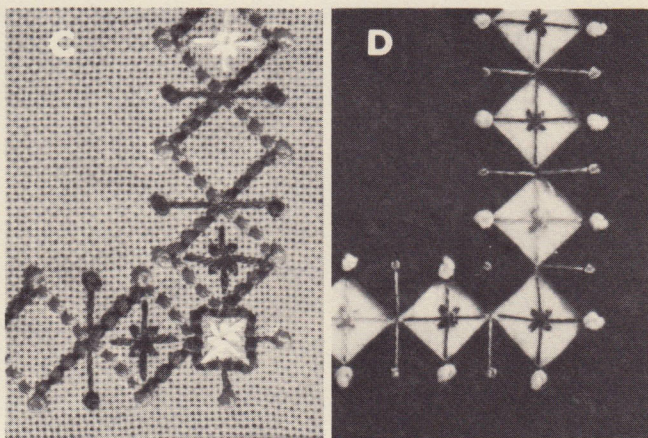


is turned up and slipstitched to the back of the embroidery. When the dress requires lengthening, the embroidered border can be made more important with an added row of Cross Stitch, if necessary, to adjust the balance.

### Comb Case

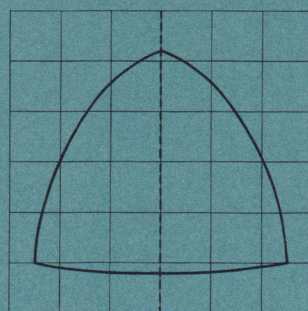
A simple case for holding your pocket comb can be made from two pieces of felt joined together with stab stitch. We have worked a border in Straight Stitch and French Knots on a strip of felt and applied it as a decoration on the front of the case. This is a quick and easy way of making an attractive gift.

Samplers C and D show the same border using different treatments. Notice how the corner has been turned in each case.



**Border on Coarsely Woven Fabric.** The small flower motif in geometric Satin Stitch is repeated in groups of three with a space to mark the interval.



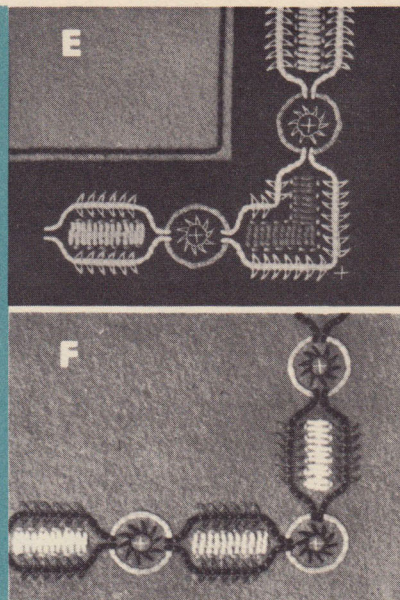


PATTERN FOR CAP

1 sq. = 1 in.

No turnings allowed

Cut four sections



### Little Girl's Hat

The richly embroidered brim and bright red crown make this a very gay little hat.

To make the crown, cut out in paper four pattern pieces from the squared diagram, 1 sq. = 1 in. Pin the paper sections together and try the shape on the child's head to see that it is a good fit, before cutting out in red woollen fabric. Remember to allow for turnings on the fabric sections. Seam these together on the wrong side.

The brim is made from a band of black felt. Transfer the embroidery design, which is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. deep, by one of the methods described in bulletin 24B. Work the embroidery in thick soft cotton and stranded cotton in Couching, spaced Buttonhole Stitch, Back Stitch and Running Stitch. The solid blocks are in Roumanian Stitch. Line the band with white felt to project  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. above the black, and insert a narrow strip of red felt, with a pinked edge, to show between the black and white felt. Join the band to form a circle to fit the crown and attach it to the inside so that the turn-up of the brim is approximately  $2\frac{1}{4}$  in. deep. Stitch in a cotton lining to neaten the inside of the hat and add an embroidered button to the top as a finishing touch.

The band of embroidery decorating this hat is an example of a border based on an undulating line. Compare this with the designs using a similar basic construction illustrated in bulletin 26B on the trolley cloth, cushion and piece of Ayrshire work.

Samplers E and F show two different ways in which the border on the hat brim can be adapted to turn a corner.

### Traycloth with Blackwork Border

This method of embroidery has been known in Britain since the sixteenth century. As the name suggests, the intricate patterns worked out on the counted thread, were traditionally worked in black. By carefully examining examples in museums and reference books you will discover many lovely patterns. Work these out on graph

paper, then try experimenting with different types of evenly woven fabrics. Notice how the appearance of a filling can be completely changed by using a thread of a different thickness, or perhaps by introducing a second colour. White embroidery against a dark background can also be most effective.

The traycloth measures 14 in.  $\times$  21 in. and is made from an evenly woven fabric with approximately 30 threads to the inch. The border is embroidered in black and tan, using only one strand of embroidery cotton throughout.

The pattern can be clearly seen in the diagram. Work out a small section, then carefully count the threads on your cloth so that the design can be fitted in accurately. This is essential, particularly when dealing with corners. Work the basic black pattern first, then add the second colour to this scaffolding. Complete the border with a line of Four-sided Stitch and finish the cloth with a narrow hemstitched edge.

