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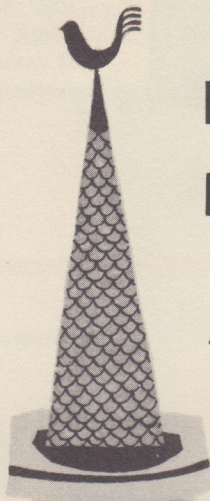
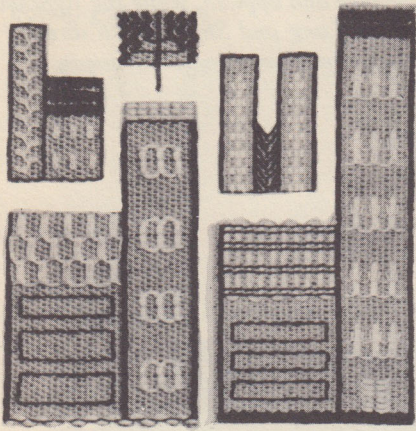
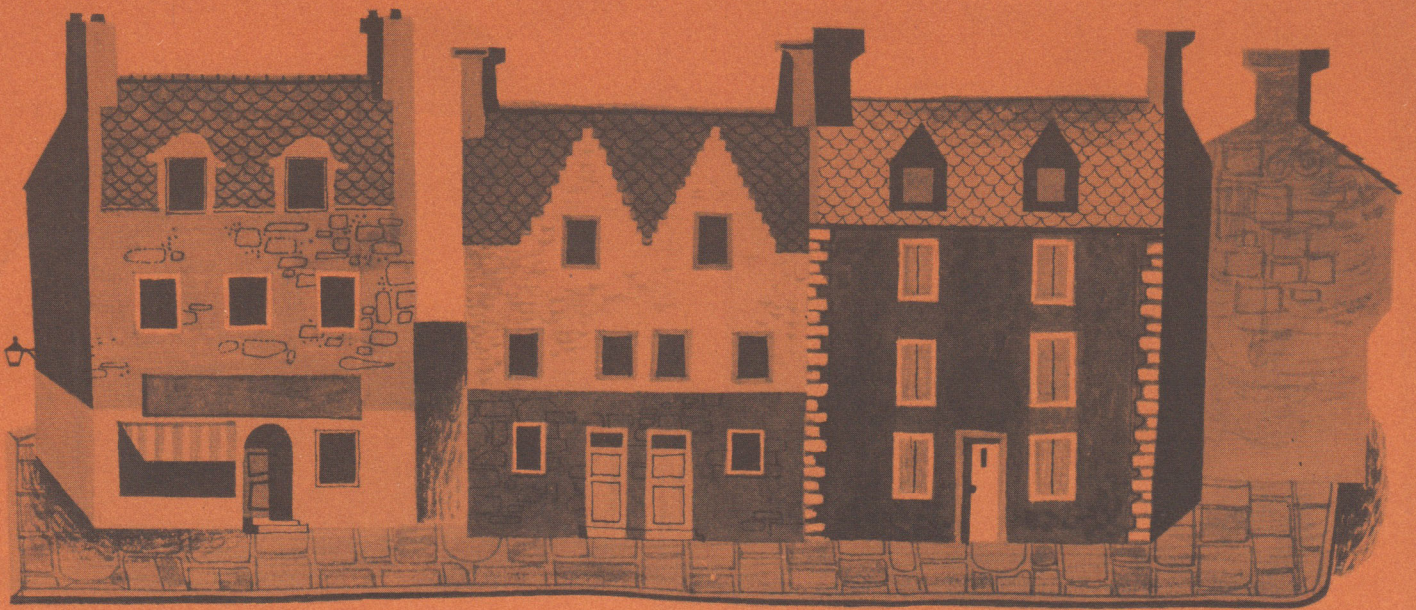
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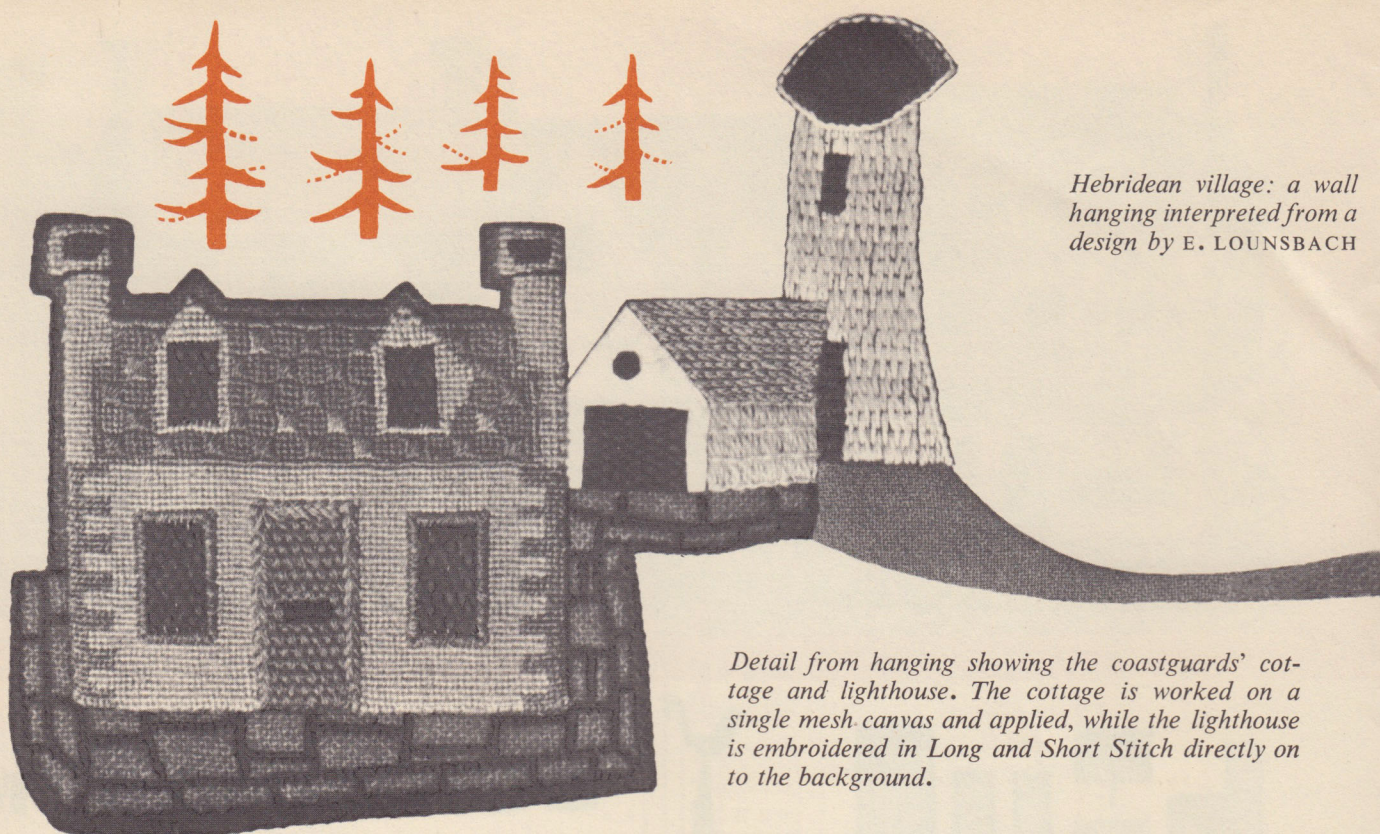
BUILDINGS IN EMBROIDERY

And so to embroider

NDS Bulletin 34



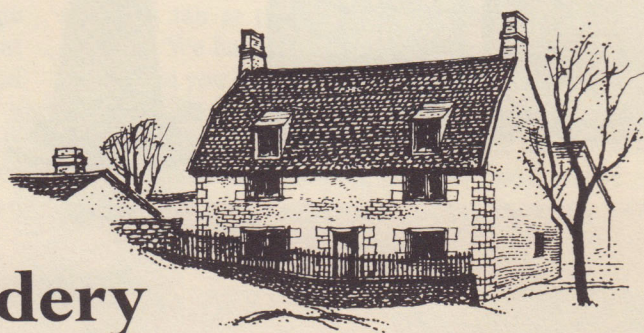
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Hebridean village: a wall hanging interpreted from a design by E. LOUNSBACH

Detail from hanging showing the coastguards' cottage and lighthouse. The cottage is worked on a single mesh canvas and applied, while the lighthouse is embroidered in Long and Short Stitch directly on to the background.

BUILDINGS in embroidery

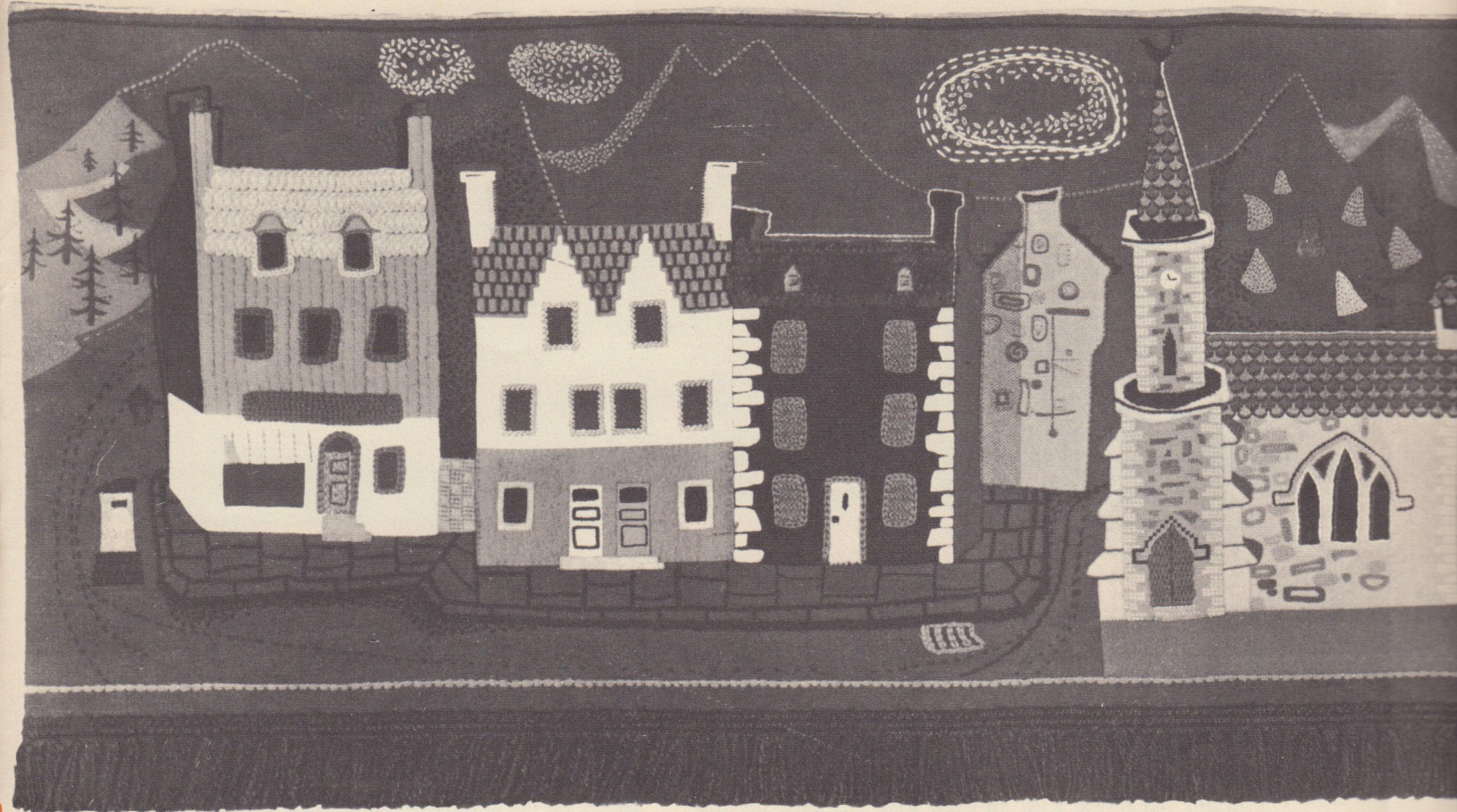


Buildings of all types are often a source of inspiration to artists. In this bulletin we show how designs for embroidery can be created from the study of various kinds of architecture to be found in this country.

Look around the town or village where you live, and see how many interesting buildings you can find. Perhaps you have an old Town Hall, a Market Cross, or a Church with a lovely spire. If you live in one of the new towns there will probably be a modern shopping centre and block of flats, for example.

Spend a short time sketching the building of your choice. It is a good idea to photograph it also, so that you can have a permanent record beside you to which you can refer when making your design. Alternatively, you may be able to buy a picture postcard of your subject. Avoid perspective whenever possible, and choose a simple straightforward view. Sketch in the main silhouette, then select the details which are most interesting for your purpose. For instance, study the proportion of the panels on a front door; how the chimney pots are fitted to a stack; or the way windows and roof are constructed. Very often the building may include some beautiful wrought iron work or have surrounding railings and gate which would make very decorative additions to your design.

In all embroidery, the method and materials which you choose play an important part, and you will see from the fabrics and techniques used on the specimens illustrated here, how varied can be your approach to the subject.



Wall Hanging: Hebridean Village (Size 18 in. × 60 in.)

Our wall hanging is an embroidered interpretation of a design by a Scottish artist who has made many sketches of houses, crofts and churches in the Hebrides off the North West coast of Scotland. In this fishing village you can see typical buildings to be found there. Notice how the artist has simplified the landscape, seeing it primarily as a design and omitting much of the unnecessary detail. This is one of the ways in which a design differs from a photograph, as a camera records exactly what is present, while the creative artist can select, emphasise and arrange, to make the best possible pattern for his or her own purpose.

An early approach to pictorial wall hangings is made in the Primary and Junior Schools, where appreciation of the texture and colour of fabrics is acquired by the creation of imaginative pictures and friezes. This also serves to encourage an understanding of simple pattern shapes and it is not necessary at this stage to consider problems of technique – simple tacking stitches or even paste being used to hold the applied fabric in position. As more skill in sewing is gained, however, so more care and thought is given to the most suitable method of applying the cut out shapes and of working any additional embroidered decoration.

When making a hanging of this type, the design should be enlarged to the required size and the position of the main shapes marked out in tacking stitches. Next, decide which

areas are to be interpreted in embroidery, and which are to be applied. For the stitchery, use different thicknesses and textures of threads to give interest and variety to the buildings, and when selecting fabrics from your piece box for the appliqué, remember that it is important to choose different textures as well as to make a balanced colour scheme. Several methods can be used for sewing the appliqué shapes to the background, according to the type of fabric concerned and the effect which you wish to achieve. To avoid puckering, ensure, whenever possible, that the grain of the fabric being applied runs in the same direction as that of the background.





Detail from Hebridean Hanging

In the interpretation of this Church, you will see the combination of several techniques. The wall, window and buttresses are in felt, with embroidered details in wool and cotton threads. A single mesh canvas is used for the tower, worked mainly in Tent and Cross Stitch. Before hemming the canvas to the background, the raw edges were neatly turned to the wrong side. A further texture is added to the building by working the roof and steeple in geometric Satin Stitch, using a dull and a shiny thread.

Detail from Hebridean hanging.

This Highland croft is worked entirely in embroidery, using fine wools and stranded cotton. The thatched roof is in Rosette Chain Stitch, the walls in Chain Stitch, and Back Stitch is used for the rafters.



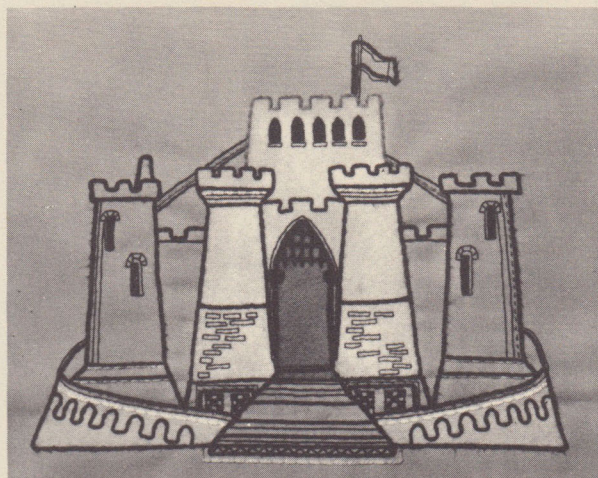
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Curtain (Size 56 in. × 34 in.)

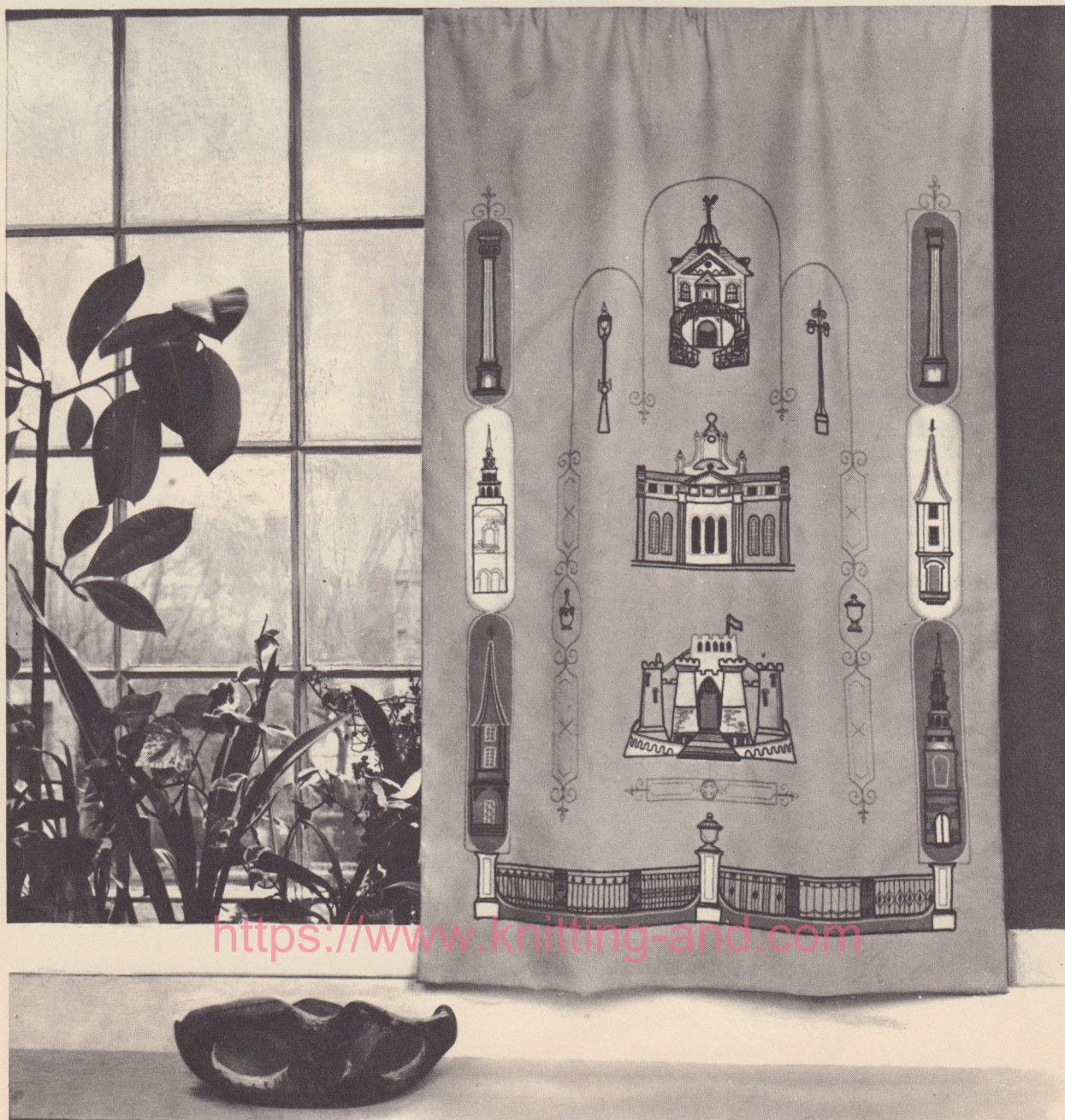
In any community you will find buildings which are not just dwelling houses, but which play an important part in our daily lives. Perhaps there is a town hall full of interest and character, a castle, art gallery or historical monument which you could sketch and use as designs for your embroidery. We have made a selection of such buildings to decorate our curtain. Notice how the buildings are placed to make a purely formal pattern as opposed to the much more free arrangement of the Hebridean design.

The curtain is of bright yellow sailcloth with solid areas applied in white and grey felt. The embroidered details are worked mainly in Couching and Back Stitch using different thicknesses of black thread, but some variation is given by the introduction of a little dark yellow, white and grey. Notice the simplicity of treatment which relies on architectural detail to make an interesting pattern.

As the curtain contains so much Couching, it is advisable to use a circular tambour frame large enough to contain one building at a time.



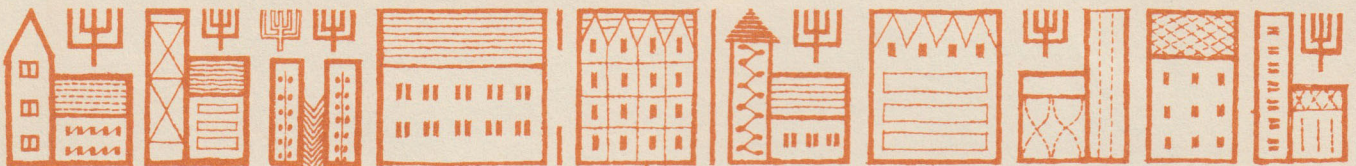
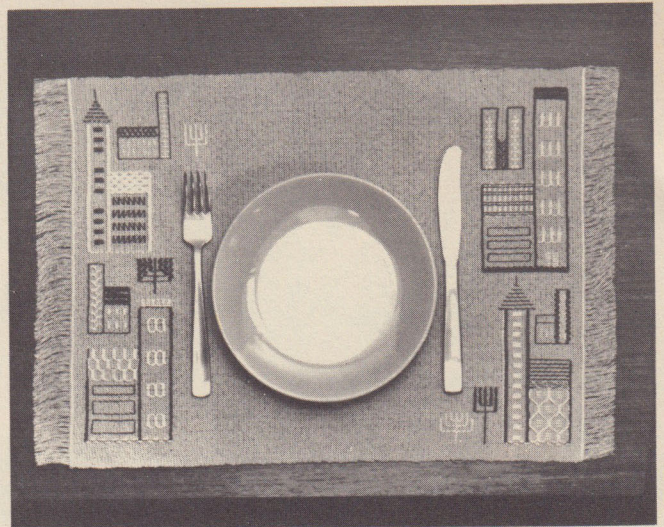
Motif from the curtain showing a castle worked in applied white and grey felt with details in Couching and Back Stitch.



Place Mat (Size 12 in. × 18 in.)

Houses and buildings form the main units of design for this place mat. They are not placed symmetrically, but are arranged to make two balanced border decorations, with tiny trees to add further interest. The embroidery is worked in dark brown and white against a dull pink evenly woven straw fabric which is fringed at each end. Among the stitches used are Pekinese, Back, Running and varieties of Threaded Running.

It is interesting to compare the buildings on this mat and on the workbox, with those on the hanging and curtain, all of which are illustrated in this bulletin. On the two large embroideries, the buildings stand out as the most important features in the design. In the case of the mat and the workbox, however, the use of buildings as motifs is much less obvious, this approach being considered more suitable for these particular articles.



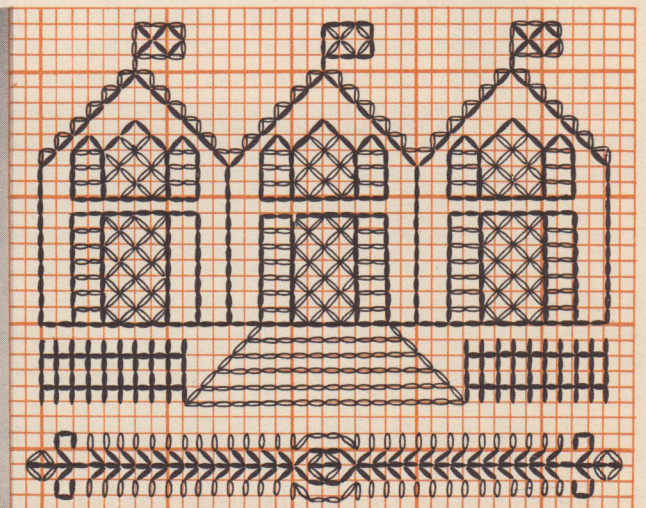
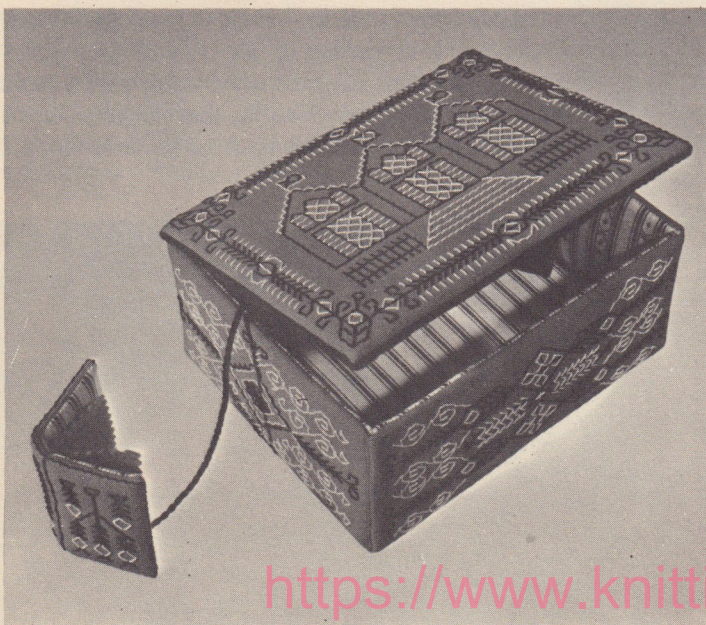
Workbox (Size 7 in. × 5¼ in. × 3 in. deep)

A bright red fabric with an even weave is used for this workbox. The embroidery is on the counted thread in Back Stitch and Double Running Stitch, using black and white pearl cotton No. 5. Plan the design on graph paper so that the border patterns and the houses on the lid are combined to form a unity.

It is important to see that all measurements are accurate when making a box of this type. The lid should be about ¼ in. larger than the base, and the lining sections a fraction

smaller than the outside sections.

Work all the embroidery first, then mount each piece of outside fabric and lining over card, and sew together, inserting a tab at the front of the lid section for ease in opening. We have chosen a striped pillow ticking for the lining, and you can see that a little embroidered decoration has been added to this also. Sew the various sections of the box together, and neaten the edges of the lid with a narrow hand-made cord. If desired, you can make a little needle-book to match, and attach it to the box by a length of cord.



Part of design on lid of workbox, worked out on graph paper, one square=one stitch. The design will vary in scale according to the weight of fabric chosen.

The title of our next bulletin will be 'Designing with Textures'

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