



## June Newsletter 2016

Dear All,

It is far too long since I have written a newsletter but things have been so busy with many different projects many of which are now complete so this newsletter is full of all sorts of work.

Many of the panels for the “[Stitching Wantage 2016](#)” sampler have now been completed, and are hanging in the “Stitches in Time” exhibition in the [Vale and Downland Museum](#) which is open until 16<sup>th</sup> July. Each building has been embroidered using very different techniques, unfortunately it is not so easy to photograph the detail and skill, but there are a huge variety of different stitches, and appliqué using all sorts of different fabrics. I think my favourite part is looking at how each stitcher has tackled the windows, all in very different techniques.

The buildings we have stitched are temporarily mounted on a linen background which will also be used for the final piece when the borders and last panels are complete. The good news is that there is some more funding available and we will be able to stitch four additional buildings which will be the Wantage Novel Library, The Fire Station, The Bear Hotel and The Hospital which is sadly under threat of closure. Some of the buildings we have already stitched have had a change of use since the project began so far sooner than anticipated the sampler has become a record of the changing face of Wantage in 2016.



The Alzheimer's patients have now finished their “Twiddle Blanket” (a blanket with lots of textures and objects that patients can fiddle with) we started by buying a selection of buttons, large beads, lace, velcro and wool. The first session was to look at the fabrics and sort them into piles of different colour or texture, in other sessions we made pompoms, knitted and threaded beads onto elastic all of which have been stitched onto the blanket.

Working on this project has been a steep learning curve for me. I am used to running workshops where there is an end product and participants learn a new skill or technique but these sessions were much more about the process - working with patients, drawing out stories or memories and engaging with them and their past. It was lovely to see Rachel pictured on the right here with the finished blanket, begin to knit again after having stopped for several years.

I hope that the final blanket will be of use to some of the patients, I know I will certainly miss the cheery conversations and fun we have had, and although Alzheimer's is still a scary disease, I certainly feel I have learnt as much as I have taught and there is still plenty of positivity to be taken from the quality of life that is enjoyed by everyone I have met.



There have been so many other talks and day schools from Suffolk and Essex across the country to Bristol and Bath, also at the [National Needlework Archive](#) and [Ardington Arts](#) in the last couple of months and it is impossible to list them all, but I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who as always, has made me feel so welcome. I do hope we will meet again soon!

This is an image of handmade paper made by the Tollesbury Textile Group.

As for upcoming courses and workshops, the "Gardens" residential course in Cornwall was as always beautiful, the food so good that I came home several pounds heavier and the weather was kind to us. In fact it was so successful that in 2017 I will be offering two weeks working on the subject of ["BEACH"](#). As the years go by, the subject still seems to offer so many different possibilities that the second week 3<sup>rd</sup> March which will be full of friends who are coming back for up to the third time there are still plenty of spaces on first week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> February so do get in touch if you would like to come.





In addition to the Cornwall courses, I will also be running a shorter 3 day workshop ["COLOURS OF INDIA - NATURAL DYEING"](#) in a beautiful location just outside Shepton Mallet in Somerset from 19<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> September. [The Manor House](#) in West Compton is owned by Harriet and Bryan Ray from where they run a bed and breakfast .

Harriet spent much of the 1980's in the North-West Frontier of Pakistan working with Afghan refugees where she started a small weaving project for traditional silk weavers who had fled their homes and villages in Afghanistan to escape the war. In 1991 she was asked by UNESCO to organise and implement a similar project inside Afghanistan and for three months she worked alongside the last remaining ikat weavers of Afghanistan learning their traditional methods of vegetable dyeing. Today, Harriet markets a range of [carpets, rugs, clothing, jewellery, cushions and other decorative items from Central Asia and India](#) from one of her barns and it is here we will run the workshop.

On the first day you will use traditional tie dye, folding, clamping and other resist techniques to create a range of beautiful blue fabrics and threads. On the second, we will look at how the same techniques can be extended to add brown to your cloth using potassium permanganate and then discharge this dye back to white. For anyone who was unable to come to the Oxford Summer School Plus, the first two days are the same programme as I ran there. This image is of some beautiful fabrics dyed by Julia Oxlade on the course. On the final day we will look at common dyestuffs you may have in your kitchen and discuss the use of mordents.



On the second evening, Harriet will give an illustrated talk about her experiences working in Afghanistan and she will also be available throughout the time to share her experiences in weaving techniques.

The cost of the workshop is £150 for the three days, this includes refreshments throughout the day, a light lunch in the Manor House and your dyes. You will need to bring a range of natural fabrics to dye, a full list of materials to bring will be available on booking. If you require accommodation, there are many local Bed and Breakfasts and a list of these properties can be supplied on request. Alternatively, if you wish us to arrange your accommodation, the cost of the three day course will be £250.

We are also planning a followup workshop which will focus on a variety of Indian embroidery techniques, If you are interested in this, want any more information or just want to book do either email or give me a ring.

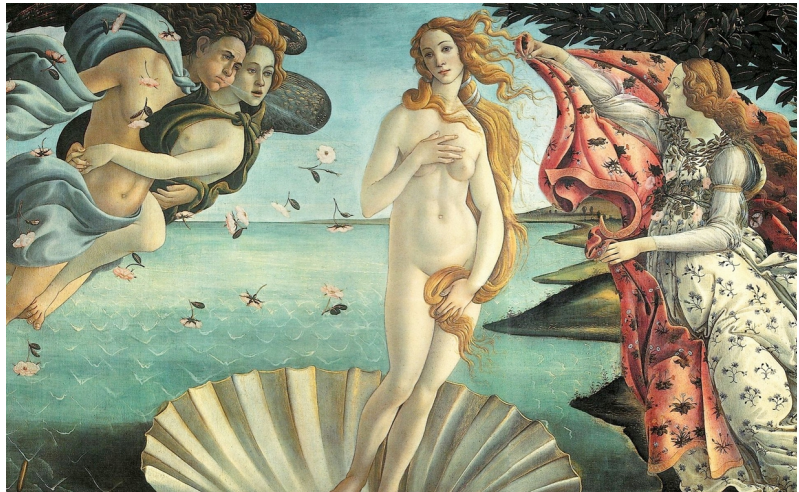
There are just two Distance Learning packages to show since last time, what has happened ladies, are you all as busy as me with your different projects? These are both lovely though and worth a look! [Beth Irvine, Unit Five](#) and [Viv Shanahan Unit Three](#).

For those of you who are unable to get up to as many of the London exhibitions as you would like, I will just write about my exhibition highlight from the last couple of months, the [Botticelli Reimagined](#) exhibition at the V&A. I was particularly interested in seeing this exhibition as I had referenced Botticelli's Venus and many of the other pieces shown, in an essay on [Hans Peter Feldmann's Medici Venus](#) which I saw at Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg a couple of years ago.

Botticelli is unique among the Old Masters, in that unlike Michelangelo or Raphael his reputation was forgotten after his death and he was only rediscovered in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century beguiling Dante Gabriel Rossetti after he purchased a portrait in an auction for a mere £20 and inspiring the Pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement amongst many others. Since then his work has been reproduced in every medium from high fashion to street art.

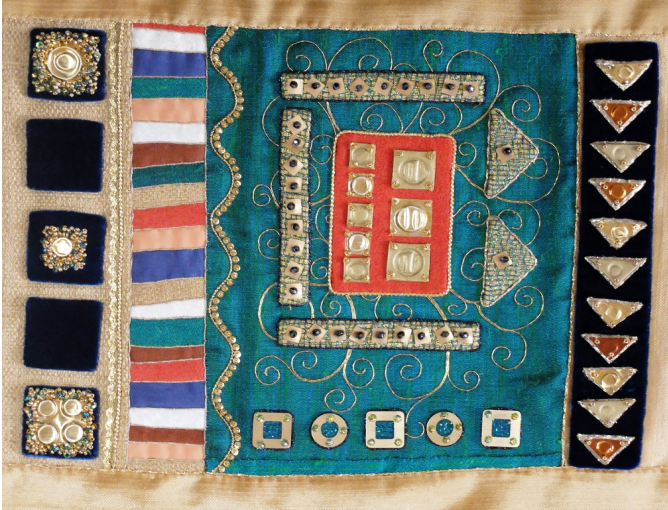
Probably his most famous work, *Birth of Venus*, has been the [inspiration for artists designers and film directors](#).

Dolce & Gabbana created patchwork compilation fabrics, the most recognisably worn by Lady Gaga who was also adorned in a scallop-shell bikini for the BBC launch of her single 'Venus', Salvador Dali, the Japanese Superflat movement whose extreme version of the image emphasises the style and defined outlines used by the artist, the image of Honey Rider in Dr. Know and glossy brash C-print of David LaChapelle who replaces the distant, goddess apparition with an overtly sexualised image of a woman where beautiful young men trumpet her arrival with conch shells.



Perhaps the most disturbing pieces from the exhibition though, were the French artist ORLAN's photographs of herself in the operating theatre undergoing a series of cosmetic procedures. Posed with her are life size nude self portraits in which she poses as Venus evoking the idealized beauty of the youthful body.

I have focused on the more modern interpretations in this review of the exhibition, but if you are interested in the more traditional then there are as many exhibits from the renaissance that will also appeal. The exhibition continues until 3<sup>rd</sup> July so if you can get there it is well worth the trip.



By the time I write my next newsletter, I will be back from my big New Zealand adventure!

After speaking at the Association of New Zealand Embroiderers Guild conference I will be teaching workshops on Kimono, Klimt and Illuminated Letters in Auckland, Gisbourne, Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch with a couple of stops in Tokyo and San Francisco en route - you can imagine how excited I am?

Here is an image of one of the samples for the Klimt workshop. I wonder if there will be any room in my case for anything but samples and materials? You can always keep up to date with all the trip on my [facebook](#) page, otherwise, until the next newsletter.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne".