

# NEEDLEPRINT MORE BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

THE MARY WIGHAM FOREVER! SAL



After much soul searching we decided to make Mary Wigham a free download and trust in the kindness of stitchers to make a donation towards Mary's care and preservation at Ackworth School. We simply ask that you might think of donating \$1 every time you make a download, but you can make a one-off donation - or simply take a copy without making a donation.

If you wish to send a cheque to the school or make a donation by other means, then your point of contact is:

The Bursar  
Ackworth School  
Ackworth  
Pontefract  
WF7 7LT

All PayPal donations go direct to the school.

Mary will be available in 9 weekly downloads. We have a dedicated Mary Wigham SAL corner on the right hand bar of the blog, where you will also find other information concerning the SAL. By clicking on the picture of Mary's blog, you will always be taken to the page where you can make downloads. All the previous weeks' downloads will be there for you in case you missed one or have joined the SAL after the start of the download.

You can stitch Mary Wigham by yourself, or you might like to join your local language or country SAL group for company. You will find a list of contacts in the Mary Wigham corner. There are local blogs run by Head Girls who will help you with queries. You can also share pictures of your work in progress with your group. Once a month, your Head Girl will send images to the Needleprint blog and we shall have a big display of works. We'd like to see where you are stitching too. So do send in images of places and people who are part of your Mary Wigham stitching experience, won't you?

The first instalment of Mary Wigham starts in the top left-hand corner and will continue across the top for 2 more instalments before moving down to the middle left of the sampler and across and then finally the lower left finishing in the lower right hand corner.

There are thread and linen instructions with each download, but you can stitch the sampler using your favourite threads and fabric.

Charting Ackworth School samplers is always a challenge. The weave is uneven - and not regularly so! Floss is used and it varies in thickness and in shade, not only from fading, but because there are sometimes different dye lots, and sometimes variation in the way the silk has taken dye. It is hard to find matches to single shade threads. The colours of Ackworth School medallion samplers are astonishing bright and not always what we conceive as 'Quaker coloured', or 'harmonious', so sometimes the results can be a surprise! If you find a shade which you don't care for in the palette, I would say, choose another that you prefer.

Stitches are worked quite unevenly sometimes - it is not always obvious from photos, because the work is small scale and looks tidier from a distance than it does close to! No-one had instilled in the Ackworth girls that they had to work cross-stitches in one direction only. In fact, one of the beauties of the samplers to my eye is precisely this uneven approach because it creates a more interesting and variegated surface textures which catches the light and is enlivened by it.

Mary Wigham was a greater challenge than other samplers in the collection because part of the surface is distressed and there are interesting ghost motifs which I shall describe more fully in the downloads when you get to them. They cannot be seen from the images at all clearly.

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Mistakes - there are always a few, and some of them might be ours, but we work hard to ensure we get the charting as accurate as we can. However, there is always going to be some degree of compromise, since some of the stitches are squashed into the sides of other motifs and sometimes overstitched, or threads are pulled and the fabric is distorted.

The girls made mistakes and not all the symmetrical motifs are truly symmetrical as errors were compensated for during working. Some stitches are missing, sometimes they have been obviously omitted, sometimes it may be due to thread loss or partial unpicking. Perhaps now you can see some of the many dilemmas that face a charter. A chart seems to me like a translation, I learn so much from the hand of the stitcher as each stitch is inspected and placed on the graph. I ask myself why certain stitches seemed to work loosely, others more neatly, why certain areas of stitching appear congested. The stitching is never just binary. Imagine if you like a piano player. Their fingers play a key and there is a duration, a soft or forceful touch, it is never merely a difference between sound and an absence of sound. So it is with stitching - it is never just a case, as it would appear on a chart, of an absence or presence of a stitch. It is infinitely more rich and varied than that. The stitcher, like the pianist, has her own touch. Just as your samplers will reflect your quiet moments, the moments of anxiety, the interrupted stitch. Sometimes I see stitching on new work which is beautiful, flawlessly worked, and yet it appears dead almost. Its conscious perfection is like a face without wrinkles...

I cannot wait to see your Mary Wigham!

