

An
Introduction
to
Bucks Point Lace



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Threads for Bucks Point lace

A variety of fine threads have been used for the samples in this book: Madeira Tanne (Cotona) 50, DMC Broder Machine 50, Brok 100/3, and Aurifil 50. These are all approximately the same thickness and could be used on any of the patterns, which have all been drafted at about the same scale. Even finer threads e.g. gassed cotton 80, could also be used on the same prickings for a more delicate lace — see p.30.

A thicker thread, cotton pearl 8, has been used as the outlining thread, known as a gimp, in most of the samples. This is a soft 2-ply thread that takes curves easily. Coton á broder 16, used in some of the later samples, is another soft thread of similar thickness. If a suitable thick thread is not available, a good substitute is eight strands of the fine thread used for the lace, wound together on a bobbin.

Introduction

Bucks Point lace is one of a group of bobbin laces which developed towards the end of the eighteenth century. The light open ground known by various names such as *Lille*, *fond simple*, or just *point ground* is a common feature of these laces, which were made all over Europe. The name of the English version comes from the East Midlands county of Buckinghamshire and the French word *point*, meaning stitch, which was used when referring to fine laces. Bucks Point was widely made not only in Buckinghamshire but also in the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.

Bucks Point is a delicate lace worked in fine thread with the design outlined in a thicker gimp thread. Many of the patterns, particularly the simpler ones, are geometric. However, flowing floral designs, which are a real test of a lacemaker's skill, are a feature of Bucks Point lace.

In this book the basic techniques of Bucks Point lace are introduced in a series of patterns, some traditional, others designed recently. This is not a book for complete beginners to lacemaking — readers are expected to know the basics and be familiar with winding bobbins, making prickings, working cloth stitch, half stitch etc.

Step-by-step instructions are given for the first six patterns, while for the remainder detail is given where needed. It is best to work through the patterns in order — a short sample is enough — to ensure that no necessary techniques required for the later patterns are missed.

Equipment and materials

Pillow: traditionally Bucks Point was made on a large, straw-filled bolster pillow, but any flat or gently rounded pillow, either straw-filled or of polystyrene, is suitable. A roller pillow is useful for edgings.

Bobbins: 28 pairs are needed for the widest pattern; spangled bobbins are traditional but not essential; larger bobbins are useful for the thicker gimp threads.

Pins: fine pins (0.55 × 26 mm) in either brass or stainless steel.

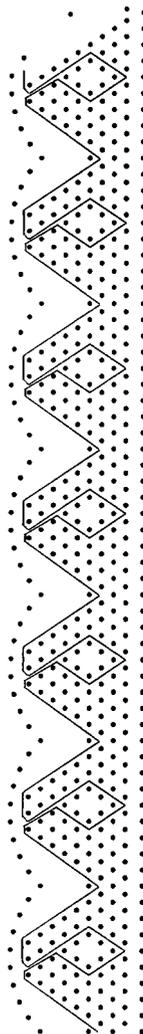
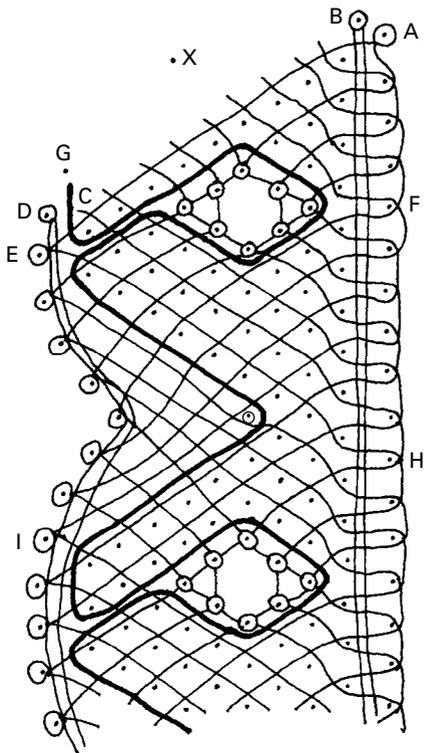
Thread: the threads used for each sample are given, similar threads can be substituted (see opposite page).

Pricking card, pricker, cover cloths etc.

Pattern 6: Peacock's Eye

Technique introduced

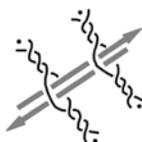
Gimps side by side



This attractive pattern has been drafted from an edging in The Lace Guild Collection (JW.7.1987iii). The way in which the cloth-stitch triangle in the headside is worked is unusual but very effective.

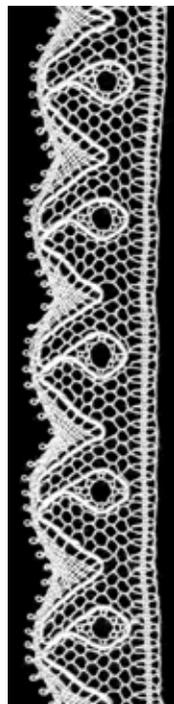
1. Work the first row of ground stitches from *A* to *C*, take gimp through left-hand pair, work through passives on *D*, work picot at *E*, return through passives and leave.
2. Continue with the ground until footside pin *F* has been worked.

3. Take the gimp to the right through eight pairs from the ground. Twist twice the six pairs needed for the honeycomb filling but do *not* twist the two pairs on the left.
4. Work all eight pins of the honeycomb filling, bring the gimp through the six pairs used, the two untwisted pairs, and the pair that worked the picot at *E*. Twist all the pairs three times — the gimp threads are kept tightly together because the two pairs which hold them were not twisted until after the gimp had been taken through them for the second time.



Gimps lying side by side
The pairs holding the gimp threads are twisted on each side of both threads but not between them.

5. Continue with the ground until footside pin *H* has been worked. Take the gimp through the seven pairs needed to work the cloth-stitch triangle. With each pair from the ground in turn work cloth stitch with each pair to the left then a picot, return through two passive pairs and leave. After working picot *I* bring the gimp to the left through seven pairs — a pin (circled) is placed at the bottom of the triangle to hold the gimp in place.



Sample worked with 15 pairs
DMC Broder Machine 50, 1
single gimp DMC
Coton Perlé 8.

Points to remember when working with gimps

1. The gimp is held in place between the threads of a pair.
2. At least two twists on a pair before a gimp, two or three afterwards depending on the stitches to be worked.
3. The gimp always goes under the left-hand thread of a pair. *Lift Left* is a useful mnemonic.
4. Cross gimps right over left.
5. When two gimps lie side by side, the pairs holding them are twisted on either side of both gimp threads but not between them.