

# A TASTE OF HONITON

*Honiton Bobbin Lace Flower Motif to Make*

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*Photograph by Ann Swanson.*

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# Introduction



*I would like to thank my Honiton teacher, Sheila Wells, for generously sharing one of her beginning Honiton lace projects for this book. Sheila is an outstanding teacher and an inspiration. I am thrilled to study with her and learn more about a wonderful lace.*

—Jo Ann Eurell

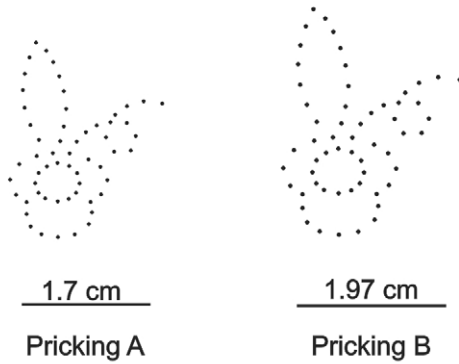
**H**oniton lace originated in Devonshire, England, in the sixteenth century, but it did not become a noncontinuous floral lace until the seventeenth century. Over time, it evolved further with changing grounds between the lace motifs and variations in design. Today, it is recognized as one of England's loveliest laces.

The motifs of Honiton lace are made first and then joined together by a bobbin- or needle-made mesh or brides (guipure) or appliquéed to machine-made net. Typical motifs include roses, thistles, leaves, birds, bees, and butterflies.

This project is a small motif with a flower, leaf, and scrolled rib. Topics covered include:

- ◆ **Prickings**
- ◆ **Working Diagram**
- ◆ **Honiton Lace Tools and Thread**
- ◆ **Dressing the Honiton Pillow**
- ◆ **Winding Bobbins**
- ◆ **Making the Lace**
  - ◇ Whole-Stitch Leaf
    - ◆ Starting the Leaf at a Point
    - ◆ Handling the Coarse Pair
    - ◆ The Edge Stitch
    - ◆ Adding Pairs of Bobbins
    - ◆ Taking out Pairs of Bobbins
  - ◇ Flower with Half-Stitch Petals
    - ◆ Working Petals in Half Stitch
    - ◆ Crossing the Coarse Thread
    - ◆ Blind Pins
- ◆ Sewings
- ◆ Bundling Pairs As a Finish
- ◆ Bowing off the Bobbins
- ◇ Ten-Stick Rib
- ◇ Leadwork in the Center of the Flower
- ◆ **Other Techniques**
  - ◇ Sewings
    - ◆ Edge Sewing
    - ◆ Top Sewing
  - ◇ Broken Threads
  - ◇ Knots in Your Thread
- ◆ **Bobbin Lace Stitch Glossary**
- ◆ **Further Resources**
- ◆ **Bobbin Lace Supplies**

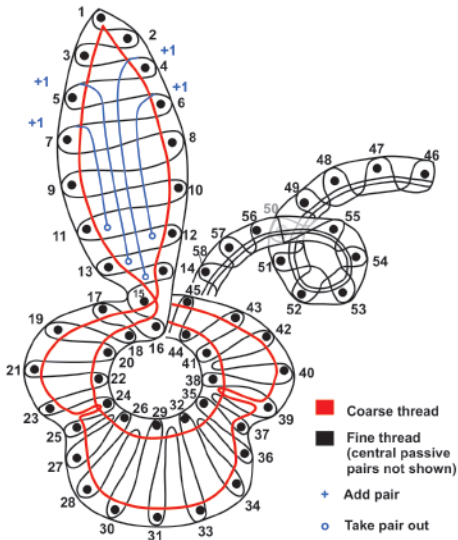
## Prickings



Prickings for two different thread sizes. Pricking A is for 120/2 or 140/2 cotton thread while Pricking B is for larger 80/2 cotton thread. If you are new to bobbin lace, due to the small size of the motif on the left and the fine threads required, you may find some prior practice with the larger pricking on the right to be helpful. When you photocopy or print the pricking, make sure that the line below the pricking is the specified length.

*Prickings may be photocopied for personal use.*

## Working Diagram



Working diagram for the project. Pinholes are numbered in order of work. The weaver pair (black undulating line) traverses back and forth through the vertical passive pairs not shown in the diagram except for the added pairs in the leaf, which are blue. The red line represents the path of the coarse thread only; the companion fine thread of the coarse pair is not shown.

## Honiton Lace Tools and Thread

### Pillow



Honiton lace pillows viewed from the side. The pillow on the left has an outer dense fabric covering (white fabric) on the working surfaces. Blue ribbon covers the fabric seam joining the two domes of the pillow. A large cover cloth is wrapped around the same pillow on the right.

Honiton lace is traditionally made on a Honiton pillow, which is a short cylinder with top and bottom domed work surfaces. The pillow measures 13 to 14 inches (33.0 to 35.6 cm) in diameter.

The cylinder region is about 3 inches (8 cm) high while the domes are each 2 inches (5.1 cm) high at the center, tapering to nothing at the outside edge. An outer dense fabric covering like a cotton canvas allows the pillow to be tightly stuffed with chopped straw. Bobbins hang under slight tension on the sloped working surface. A second working surface is available by flipping the pillow over and using the other dome. Consult with a lacemaking supplier about pillows other than the traditional Honiton pillow that could be used for this lace (see “Bobbin Lace Supplies” on page 16).

### Cover Cloths



Bottom of Honiton pillow, showing tacking stitches (white) that secure the cover cloth.

In preparation for work, the pillow is wrapped with a large 27-x-27-inch (68.6-x-68.6-cm) cover cloth (instructions for making cover cloths below) that

is sewn in place to hold it secure. The cover cloth provides a dark work surface that contrasts with light-colored Honiton threads, and the cloth helps keep the pillow clean. Additional strips of dark fabric are used to support and protect the work in progress.

To prepare cover cloths for a 13-inch to 14-inch (33.0-cm to 35.6-cm) diameter pillow, you will need a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  yard (0.7 m) of 45-inch (114.3-cm) dark blue or green cotton fabric. Cut a 9-x-27-inch (22.9-x-68.6-cm) long strip off each selvedge edge, leaving a 27-inch (68.6-cm) square from the center portion of the fabric. Do NOT trim away the selvages on the 9-x-27-inch (22.9-x-68.6-cm) pieces. The selvages are thinner than folding the fabric for finishing and create a flatter work surface under the lace threads. Hem the three raw edges of the smaller pieces to make two working cover cloths. Depending on the working method you choose (see “Dressing the Honiton Pillow” on page 4), you may also want to make a third 9-x-27-inch (22.9-x-68.6-cm) cover cloth from another piece of fabric with a selvedge edge. Wrap the 27-x-27-inch (68.6-x-68.6-cm) square over the pillow and secure it underneath with basting stitches, tucking and overlapping edges as necessary. It is helpful to use white thread when basting so the stitches can be more easily seen when removing them to wash the pillow cover.



Honiton tools include a cork pricking board (rear) and (right to left) a bobbin winder, pin lifter, Honiton bobbins (six shown), pricker, needlepin, scissors, sliders, pricking card, pincushion with pins, thread, cover cloths, and a magnifier.

### **Thread**

Most pieces of Honiton lace are worked with either 120/2 or 140/2 fine cotton thread. Pricking A is sized for 120/2, while pricking B is enlarged for 80/2 for those who would like to practice with a larger thread.

Egyptian cotton thread tends to be a little finer than Brok cotton thread of the same size, so you may want to make a sample to test your thread before committing to the entire piece. The project sample was done with Egyptian cotton 120/2. If you use a finer thread (140/2), you will need to add more pairs of passive bobbins to obtain the appropriate density.

When using 120/2 as the primary thread, DMC Cordonnet 80 or 100 is suitable as the companion coarse thread. The coarse thread is also cotton. For 80/2 primary thread, try pearl cotton size 12 as the coarse thread.

### **Bobbins**

Honiton bobbins are usually made of wood. They have a single, rounded head and taper to a point at the tail. For this project, you will need approximately 24 bobbins. More or less pairs are needed, depending on the density of the piece; it is ultimately the lace-maker's decision to add additional passive pairs as needed, so a definite number of pairs cannot be given at the start.

### **Pins and Pincushion or Pin Bowl**

Pins for Honiton lace are usually about 1 inch (2 cm) long and very fine with small heads. The first number of a numerical pin size represents the length of the pin in millimeters, while the second number is the width of the pin in millimeters. Recommended pin sizes for working Honiton lace are a length of 26 to 30 millimeters ( $1\frac{1}{32}$  to  $1\frac{3}{16}$  in) and a diameter of 0.53 to 0.65 millimeters ( $\frac{1}{64}$  to  $\frac{1}{32}$  in). If your pillow is very firm, however, you may prefer a shorter pin such as 17 x .45 ( $\frac{43}{64}$  x  $\frac{1}{64}$  in). Nickel-plated pins are more expensive but do not corrode in some environments as brass pins do.

Pins can be placed in a pincushion or a pin bowl (small wooden bowl) that is attached to the lace pillow, making the pins easily accessible.

### **Scissors**

You will need two pairs of scissors. One pair should have fine points and be very sharp to trim threads closely. The blades of the second pair should be dull. These scissors are used to tie the bobbins together in pairs as the bobbins are either wound or later cut off the work. The techniques are described further in “Winding Bobbins” on page 5 and at the end of the “Making the Lace—Flower Half Stitch with Petals” section on page 9.

### ***Needlepin***



A needlepin.

The needlepin is used to do sewings, a method to join parts of the lace (See “Other Techniques – Sewings” on page 13). A fine needle (sharps size 7 or 8) is mounted in a 2- to 3-inch (5.1- to 7.6-cm) wooden handle. The needle is straight, not bent as in the Belgian Duchesse lace hook.

### ***Beading Needle and Thread***



The beading needle is threaded with white fine cotton thread.

Sometimes, due to the angle or size of the pinhole, it is difficult to complete a sewing with a needlepin. An alternative technique for creating the sewing loop is to use a beading needle size 13 threaded with 12 to 14 inches (30.5 to 35.6 cm) of 120/2 or 140/2 white cotton thread instead of the needlepin. Do not use colored thread for this technique as the colored fibers may transfer to your lace. See “Other Techniques—Sewings” on page 13 for use of the beading needle and thread.

### ***Pin Pusher and Pin Lifter***



Pin lifter (left) and pin pusher (right).

Various designs of pin pushers are used to push the pins all the way down into the pillow, so they are not in the way when trying to work other pinholes nearby. The pin pusher is a metal post with a concave tip that is inserted into a wooden handle. The head of a pin fits into the concave area, which can then be pushed down into the pillow, avoiding sore fingers. A pin lifter has a forked metal post in a handle. The fork is inserted under the pin head and the pin is lifted, so it can be pulled out of the lace. The flat base of the fork also can be used to push the pin down.

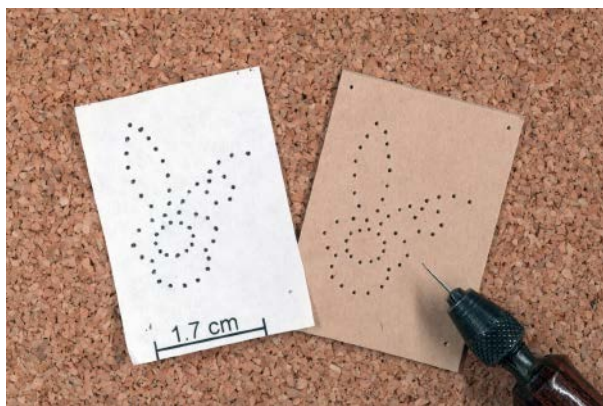
### ***Pricker***



Two different styles of lace pricker.

The pinholes for Honiton lace are pricked into pricking card stock before working so that the pinholes are more easily found for pin insertion. Pattern cards are thus called “prickings.” A pricker generally has a handle with a pin vise that holds an appropriate-size needle securely. The point of the needle is used to make a hole at each dot in the pattern where a pin should be inserted as the lace is worked. The needle chosen for the pricker should be about the same diameter as the pins used for the lace. A sharps needle size 10 (diameter 0.46 millimeter [ $\frac{1}{64}$  in]) is satisfactory when 17 x .45 ( $\frac{43}{64}$  x  $\frac{1}{64}$  in) pins are used, while a size 8 or 9 works better for larger pins (0.61 or 0.53 millimeter [ $\frac{1}{32}$  or  $\frac{1}{64}$  in], respectively). The needle is placed in the pin vise of the pricker with  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (6 mm) of the pointed end of the needle extending. Tighten the vise securely before use.

## Pricking Card



Pattern (left) next to glazed pricking card with pricked pinholes and a pricker (right).

Glazed brown card stock, or pricking card, is traditionally used for Honiton prickings. Cardboard similar to manila file folders is a satisfactory substitute for pricking card. The pattern drawn on a lighter piece of paper is secured over the pricking card by inserting pins at the corners through the pattern and the card into the cork pricking board. Each pinhole is then carefully pricked by inserting the pricker vertically through the pinhole on the pattern and the card underneath. Use magnification to increase your accuracy. Pinholes that are out of place will cause distortion of the lace.

## Sliders

A slider is a 2½-x-4¾-inch (6.3-x12.1-cm) piece of stiff, clear plastic acetate film. Originally, sliders were made from thin pieces of translucent horn. A pair of sliders is placed under the cover cloths above the pattern to prevent the working threads from catching on the pins or the edge of the pattern. They can be moved around as needed as the work progresses.

## Bobbin Winder

An electric or manual bobbin winder may be useful to wind thread onto the Honiton bobbins. Various styles are available. Bobbins can also be wound by hand.

## Bobbin Case



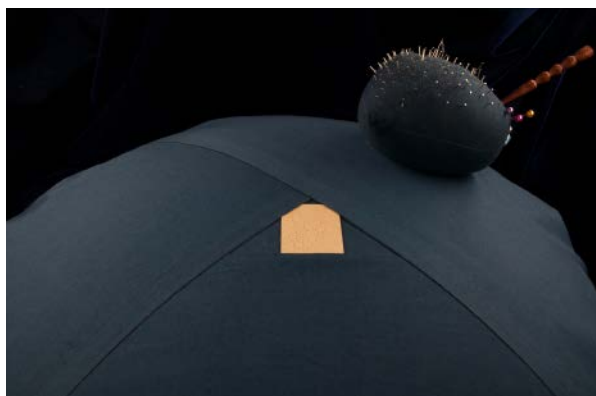
One pair with coarse thread (left) and five fine thread pairs (right) in a bobbin case.

As bobbins are wound or after they are removed from the pillow, it is useful to store them in a bobbin case to protect them and keep them from tangling with each other. One style of bobbin case is a fabric roll or zippered case with small pockets that hold each pair of bobbins individually.

## Dressing the Honiton Pillow

In preparation for starting the lace, the pillow is “dressed.” At this point, the pillow should already be covered with a sewn-on cover cloth (see “Cover Cloths” on page 1). The area of the pricked pattern to be worked is centered on the working surface of the pillow and pinned to the pillow securely at the corners. Use pins with flat heads to attach the pricking and push the pins all the way down into the pillow so threads do not catch on them.

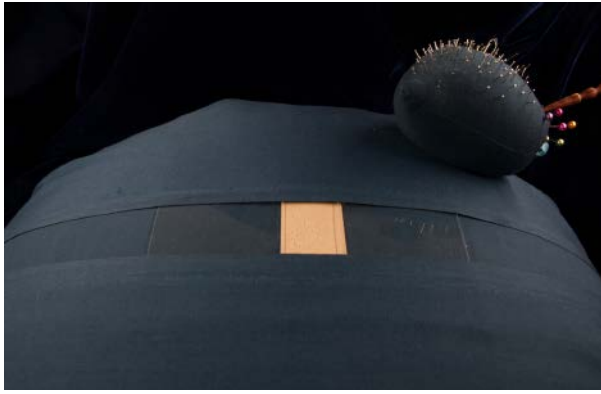
One method of dressing the pillow uses three cover cloths. The cover cloths overlap each other and leave a triangular area of the design exposed. Pinned on the sides of the pillow, the cover cloths are released and moved to cover pin heads as the work progresses.



Three cover cloths are used to dress this pillow. The pincushion is positioned within easy reach at the upper right.

A second method of dressing the pillow uses two cover cloths and a pair of sliders. The cover cloths are placed over the top and bottom edges of the pricking with the selvedge edges laying on the design. The cloths are stretched taut and pinned down on the sides of the pillow. Sliders are inserted on the left and right side of the design under the cover cloths. The sliders are not pinned so they can be moved around as the work progresses.

Honiton lace is worked with the back side of the lace facing the lacemaker. Technical necessities such as knots and various types of crossings will be worked on this side; they will not be visible when the finished lace is turned over to display the front side.



Clear plastic sliders are positioned on either side of the pricking and two cover cloths are placed at the top and bottom of the pricking and sliders. The pins in the pincushion are reflected in the slider on the right.

### Winding Bobbins



A single Honiton bobbin wound with thread (left), a pair of bobbins knotted (center), and a pair of bobbins with the knot wound back (right).

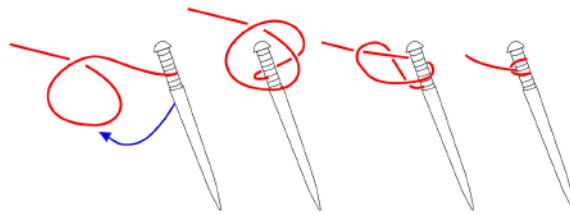
Honiton bobbins are wound individually rather than in pairs. All bobbins should be wound in the same direction. In England, bobbins are wound clockwise, so that as you view the head of the bobbin from above, the thread winds around the bobbin in a clockwise direction. Thread was wound on the bobbins in a clockwise fashion for this project.



Looking down on the head of the Honiton bobbin, the thread is wound clockwise around the bobbin.

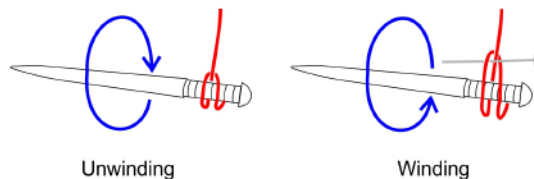
Several yards of thread can be wound on each bobbin, but the bobbin should not be over-filled to prevent the thread from contacting the pillow as it moves across and collecting stray fibers and dirt. As you wind, keep a consistent even tension on the thread. Wind 24 bobbins with fine thread and 2 bobbins with coarse thread to start. You may need additional bobbins as the project progresses.

A hitch is used to secure the thread on the bobbin and keep it from unwinding. A loop is made with the tail of the thread, dropped over the head of the bobbin, and snugged tight on the wound thread.



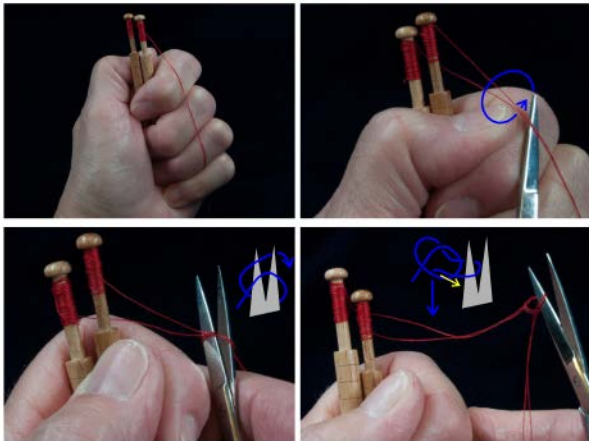
Hitch on a wound bobbin.

The hitch allows the bobbin to be unwound to let more thread out. Place the bobbin at a right angle to the thread hanging from the lace, and then turn the bobbin in a clockwise direction as you apply gentle tension. Thread coming from the lace to the bobbin can be shortened by lifting the hitch with a pin and turning the bobbin in a counterclockwise direction to wind more thread onto the bobbin.



Unwinding and winding thread on lace bobbins attached to work.

Once the bobbins are wound, they are tied together in pairs. This can be done with a simple overhand knot that is then trimmed short or more rapidly with the Scissors Method outlined below.

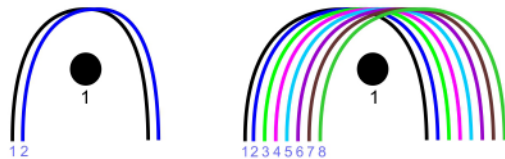


Scissors Method of knotting bobbin pairs: Hold both bobbins in one hand with the thread tails over your fingers (upper left). The ends of the tails should be held under your little finger. Insert the dull scissors under both threads from below (upper right). Rotate the tips of the scissors counterclockwise over and back under the threads to make a loop. Turn the scissors toward your little finger, open the blades, and insert the left blade under the thread tails (lower left). Gently grab the tails with the dull area of the blades and pull them through the loop (lower right). This will create a knot. After the knot is tightened, cut the tails by closing the scissor blades. Finally, pull the remaining cut ends of the thread out of the knot and discard them. The knot can then be wound back out of the way and the pair is ready to use again as needed.

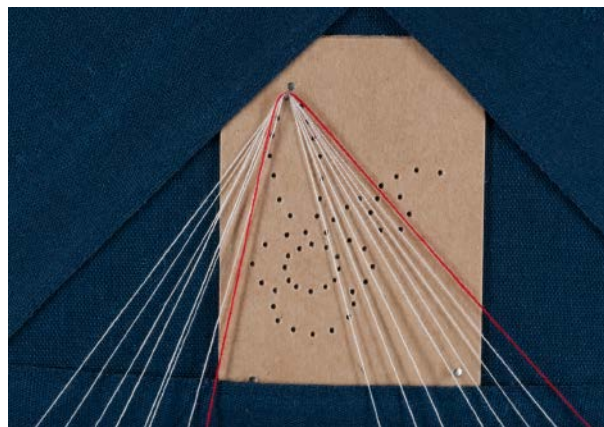
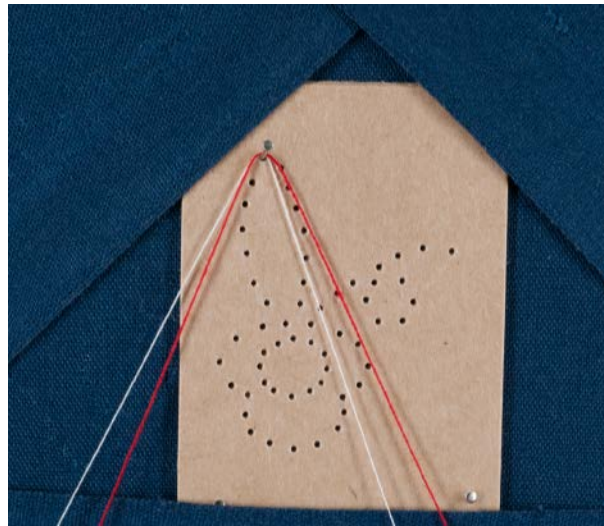
## Making the Lace

### Whole-Stitch Leaf

The whole-stitch leaf begins with a technique called **Starting at a Point**. Hang 8 pairs on Pin #1 as shown below (see the Working Diagram on page 1 for pinhole numbers).



Starting at a Point: The first 2 pairs are hung around the pin in Pinhole #1 (left). Note that the new threads lie to the right of the previous threads. Continue adding pairs until all 8 pairs are hung on the pin (right).



Two pairs are hung on the first pin (above). The white thread is Pair #1, while the red thread (color is for example only; the thread would be white in your actual project) is Pair #2. Continue adding bobbins until all 8 pairs are in place (below). The red thread represents Pair #8—the last pair to be hung on.

On the left side of the pin, move Bobbin 8 to the left of Bobbin 1 on the outside left. Move Bobbin 7 to the left of Bobbin 8 on the outside. Continue moving bobbins until Bobbin 1 has been moved to the outside. Repeat the process 1 more time to create a roll of threads behind the pin.

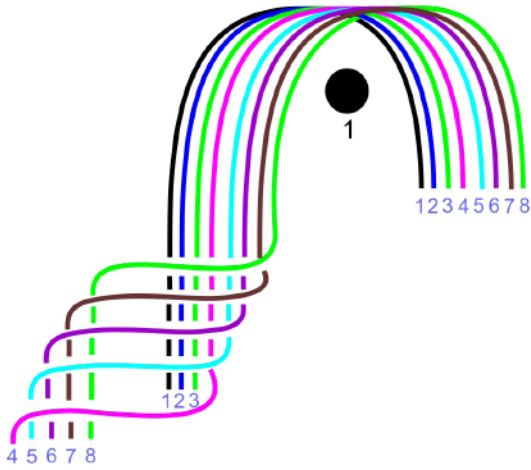
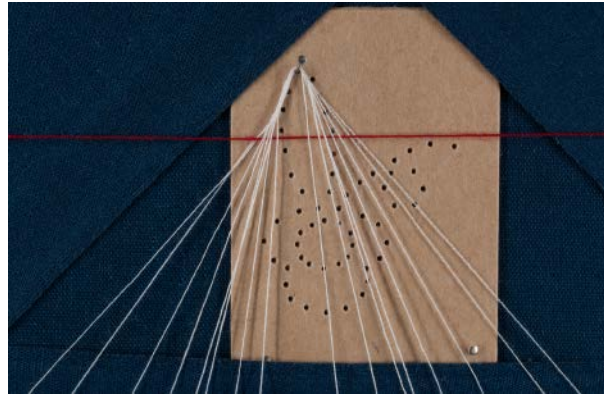
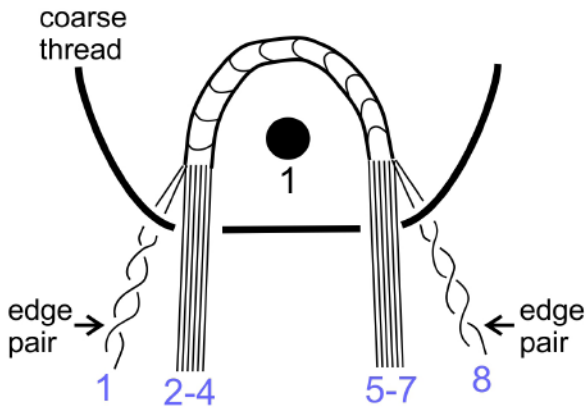


Diagram of bobbin movements for Bobbins 8 through 4. Continue in the same fashion for Bobbins 3 through 1. Then repeat the series of movements 1 more time to complete the starting cord.

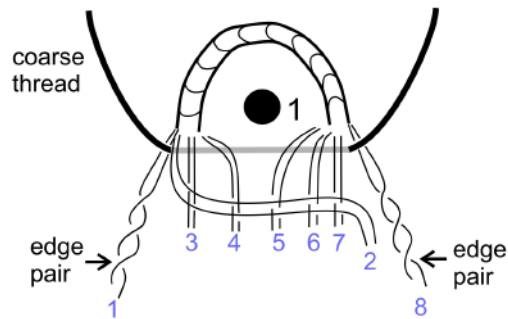
There are two basic movements in bobbin lace. Simply put, a “twist” moves the right-hand bobbin in a pair over the left-hand bobbin. A “cross” moves the left-hand bobbin in a pair over the right-hand one. (See “Bobbin Lace Stitch Glossary” on page 16 for diagrams of a twist and a cross.)

Lay the coarse thread under all center pairs (#2–7) and over both outside edge pairs (#1 and 8). Place the coarse bobbins to the back of the pillow. Twist both outside pairs 3 times.



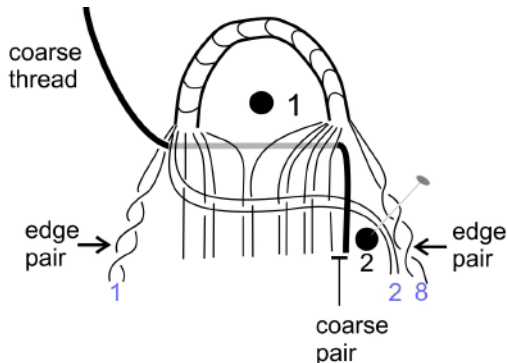
Lay the coarse thread (red thread in image above) under the central pairs and over the outside edge pairs.

**Work the whole stitch** (cross-twist-cross; see “Bobbin Lace Stitch Glossary” on page 15) across the first row starting with Pairs 2 and 3 (counting from the left). Work across to the right until the **worker pair** (#2) has reached the twisted edge pair (#8) on the far right. The **worker pair** (also known as runners or weavers) weaves back and forth across the rows; it forms stitches with **passive pairs** (down-rights) which remain in or near the same position.



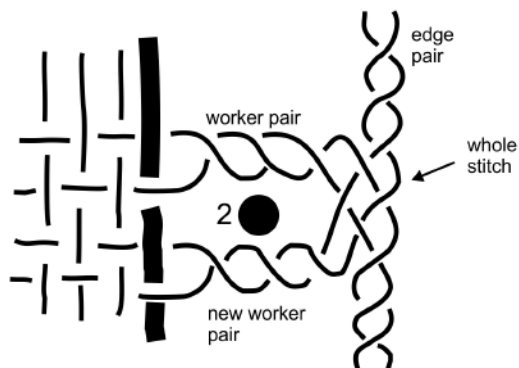
Work the first row to the right through the center passive pairs in whole stitch.

Place the right coarse thread inside (to the left of) the worker pair (#2). The coarse thread now forms a **coarse pair** with the first fine thread to its left. Set the pin in Pinhole #2 between the coarse thread and the worker pair.



Place the right coarse thread inside the worker pair (blue 2) and insert the pin in Pinhole #2.

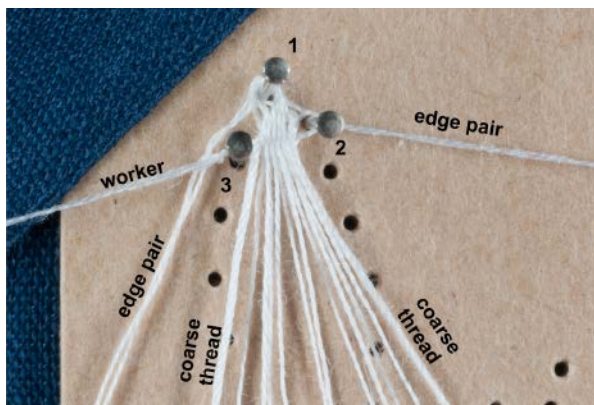
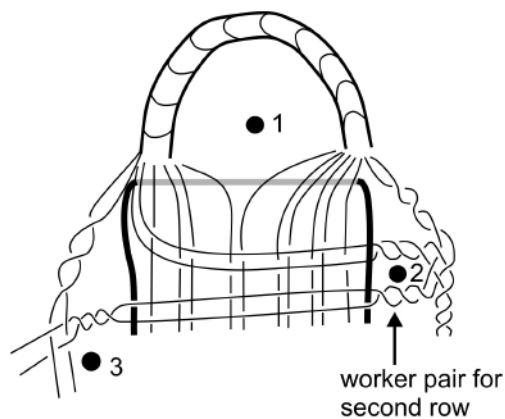
Work an **edge stitch** (also known as the end stitch). Twist the worker pair 3 times. Make a whole stitch with the worker pair and twisted edge pair together. (Note the worker pairs exchange during the whole stitch. The old edge pair becomes the new worker pair, and the old worker pair becomes the new edge pair.) Twist the new worker pair and the edge pair 3 times each.



The edge stitch is worked by twisting the worker pair 3 times. Next, use whole stitch to bring the worker pair and the edge pair together. Then each pair is twisted 3 times. The twisted edge pair is laid aside and the new worker pair continues the next row.

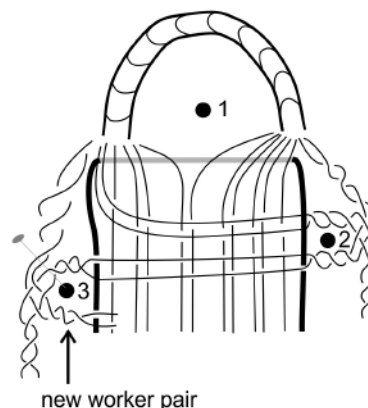
Now work the next row to the left using the new worker pair. Work through the coarse pair (1 coarse thread and 1 fine thread) with whole stitch. Tension the work before continuing across the row. Place the left coarse thread in the work as the third bobbin from the left. Continue across to the left in whole stitch through the center pairs and the left coarse pair. Place the pin in Pinhole #3 and push Pin #1 down into the pillow. Continue to push previously worked pins down into the pillow as the lace progresses. Leave only 2 or 3 of the most recently worked pins in the up position.

Do the left edge stitch with the worker pair and the left edge pair. Twist the worker pair 3 times. Make a whole stitch with the worker pair and edge pair together.



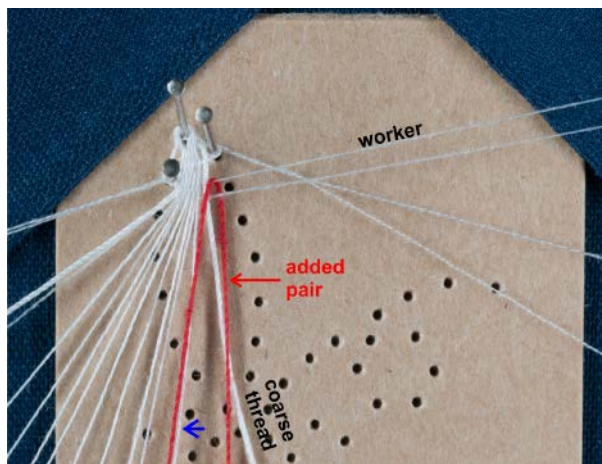
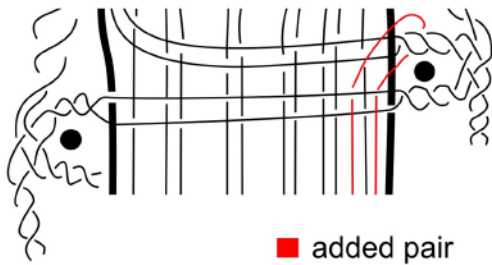
The second row of the whole-stitch leaf continues to the left from Pinhole #2 to Pinhole #3.

Twist the worker and edge pairs 3 times each. The new worker is then ready to continue the next row.



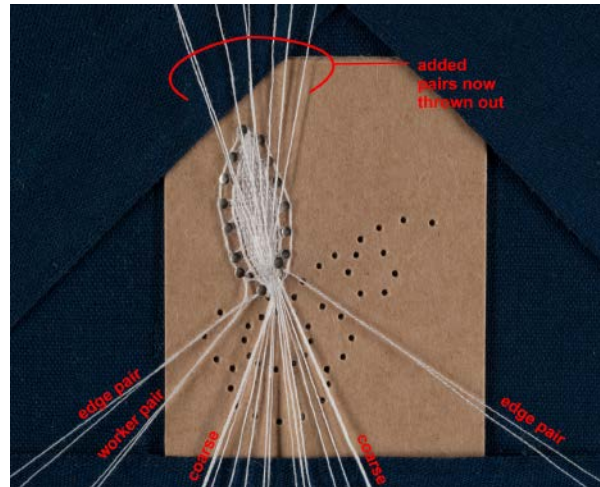
The beginning of the third row with the left edge stitch complete at Pinhole #3. The new worker pair continues in whole stitch across the next row.

Continue working the following rows of the leaf in whole stitch as described above. As the leaf begins to widen, **add additional pairs** as needed. For Egyptian cotton 120/2 thread, I added 4 pairs to the leaf. Examine the density and choose how many pairs you wish to add as the lace progresses. A pair is added at the end of a row after working through the coarse pair but before putting in the pin and doing the edge stitch. Hang the new pair over the twisted workers. Hold the worker pair up to support the newly added pair while you place the added bobbins and set the pin. When adding a new pair on the right side of the work, the right bobbin of the new pair is placed to the left of the coarse thread. The left bobbin of the new pair is placed to the left of the fine thread in the coarse pair. The added pair splits the coarse pair; i.e., the new threads alternate with the old. Once the added pair is placed, continue with the edge stitch and twists and then work across the row. Remember to tension after working through the coarse pair before continuing across the row.



Adding a new pair in whole stitch. The added threads (red) straddle the fine thread of the coarse pair. In the lower picture, the fine thread of the coarse pair is indicated by the blue arrow.

As the leaf starts to narrow, **remove pairs** to taper the leaf but maintain the density. Lift 2 of the center passive threads and lay the bobbins to the back of the work. Choose alternate threads to lay back rather than 2 threads that are side by side. The threads removed from the work will be cut off later.

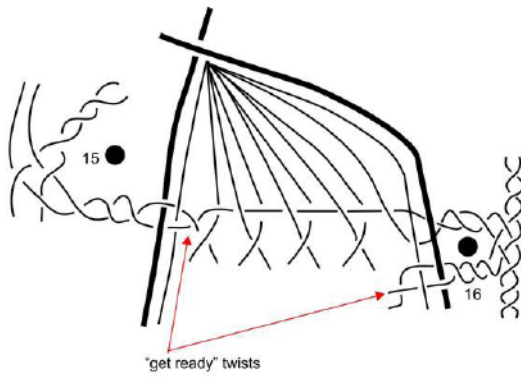


Approaching the bottom of the leaf. The 4 added pairs have been thrown out of the work by laying the pairs to the back of the pillow. The pairs will be tied and cut off later.

At the bottom of the leaf, exchange the coarse threads by weaving the left one through all the passives and placing it beside the right one. Then weave the right one across in the opposite direction to occupy the space vacated by the left coarse thread. This separates the leaf from the start of the first half-stitch petal.

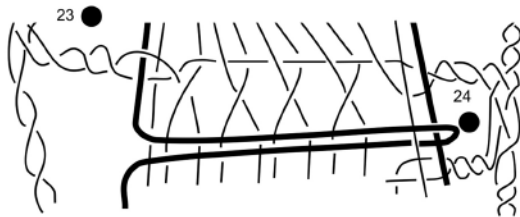
### ***Flower with Half-Stitch Petals***

Work the edge stitch on the left side of Pin #15. Bring the other pairs around the right side of Pin #15. Continue across the first row of the first petal working from left to right. Do a whole stitch with the left coarse pair. Prepare for half stitch by twisting the worker pair once (the "get ready twist"). Then work across the row in **half stitch** (cross-twist; see "Bobbin Lace Stitch Glossary" on page 15). Work a whole stitch with the right coarse pair, put in Pin #16, and complete the edge stitch. Continue working in this fashion until the end of the petal.



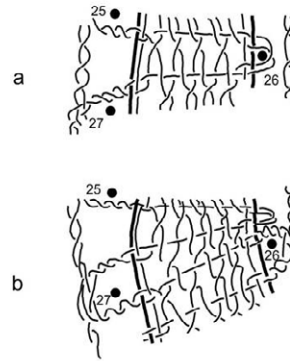
First row of the flower done in half stitch. Note the “get ready twists” between the whole-stitch coarse pair and the half stitch.

Upon reaching the point where the petal narrows, use the **cross the coarse thread** technique to define the petal: Weave the outside coarse thread through the pairs using half stitch to the inside coarse thread. Take the outside coarse thread around the inside coarse thread and weave it back out to where it started. Keep the inner coarse thread tight against the pin; it will have a tendency to pull to the outside when the outer coarse thread is tensioned.



Crossing the coarse thread: Weave the coarse thread through the pairs, take it around the inside coarse thread, and weave back to the original outside position.

Continue working the second half-stitch petal. Note that there are more pins on the outside of the flower than in the center. To accommodate the extra pins and keep the angle of weaving in the half stitch level, a special technique called a **blind pin** is used. See the Working Diagram on page 1 for the location of blind pins. Work from the outside of the petal to the inside on the first row associated with the blind pin. Stop after the coarse pair and do not do the edge stitch on the inside. Instead, twist the worker once and place the pin. Return to the outside, doing the edge stitch at the end of the row. For the next row, work to the inside through the coarse pair. Remove the pin from the pinhole on the previous row and reset it in the same pinhole under the returning worker pair. Tension carefully at this point—too much tension may cause the first row of the blind pin to distort. Twist the worker pair 3 times and work the inside edge stitch as usual.



The first row for the blind pin is worked through the coarse pair and twisted once (a). Return to the left and work the outside pin (Pin #27) as usual. Work back to the right (b), remove the pin, replace the pin under the worker in the inside pinhole (Pinhole #26 used a second time). Complete the inside edge stitch.

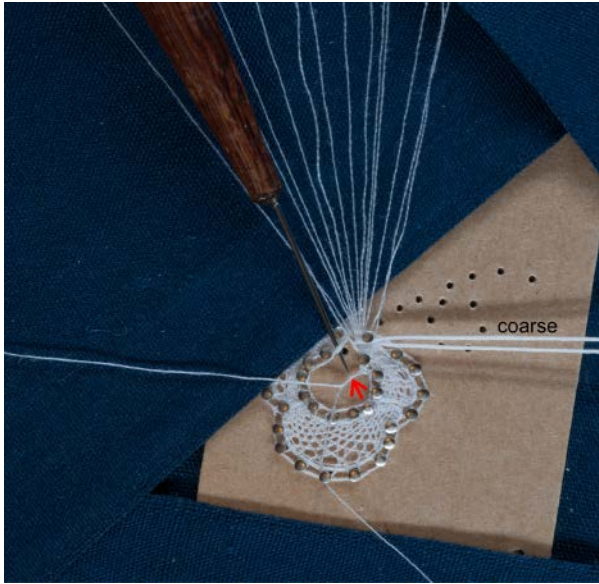
As the second petal narrows, carry the coarse thread across to define the petal as described above between the first and second petal.



End of second petal at Pinhole #38. The coarse thread is crossed and the third petal is started.

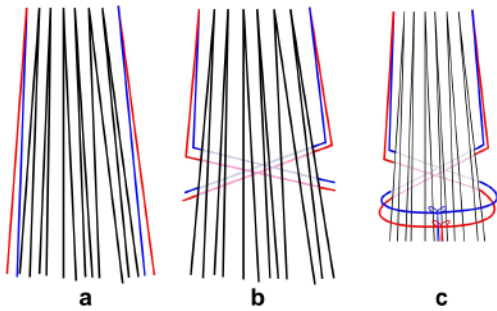
Continue working the third petal in half stitch as before. The last row of the petal is worked in whole stitch.

At the end of the last petal, throw back the coarse threads. Sew the remaining pairs into Pinholes #15 and #16 with **edge sewings** (see “Other Techniques—Sewings” on page 13). Divide the pairs evenly between the 2 pinholes. Multiple pairs will be sewed into each pinhole. If the sewings are difficult with the needlepin because so many threads are going through the same pinhole, try using a threaded beading needle for making sewings (also described in “Other Techniques—Sewings”).



Ending the third petal. The coarse threads are thrown back out of the way. A needlepin is inserted into Pinhole #16. A thread from the worker pair (red arrow) will be picked up with the needlepin and drawn out as a loop through the pinhole. The bobbin from the second thread of the pair is passed through this loop to create the sewing.

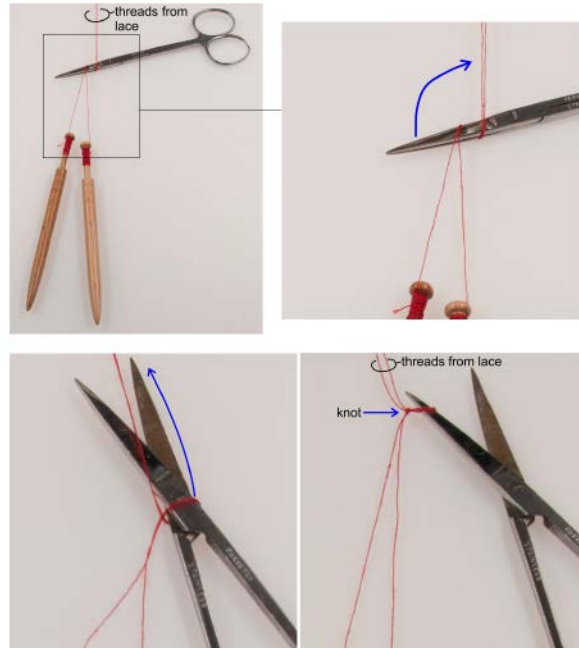
After all pairs are sewn, tie each individual pair left over right, right over left, left over right to form a reef knot and a half. At this point, you should have 8 pairs total. **Bundle** the pairs by crossing the outside pairs under the center pairs. Tie 1 bobbin from each of the outside pairs over the top of the bundle with the reef knot and a half. Lay the tied pair in the bundle. Tie the remaining 2 bobbins from the outside pairs over the top of the bundle.



Bundling threads as a finishing technique: At the end of the flower, 8 pairs hang from the pinholes where they were sewn (a). Cross the 2 outside pairs (red and blue threads) under the center pairs (b). Tie 1 bobbin from each outside pair over the top of the bundle (c; blue threads). Lay the tied pair in the bundle and tie the remaining 2 outside bobbins (red threads) over the top of the bundle.

When the bundle is complete, **bow off** the pairs. Bowing off is a technique that ties a knot in the threads from 2 bobbins and cuts the pair off in one action similar to the Scissors Method for joining

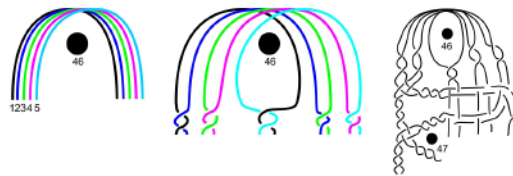
bobbins in pairs as described in “Winding Bobbins” on page 5.



Bowing off is a technique to cut off pairs and knot them for use again: The thread from a pair of bobbins is wrapped around dull scissors (upper left). The scissor tips are turned clockwise (top right) and the blades are opened (lower left). The dull blades are then carefully closed to grab the threads between them and the loop is slipped off the blades (blue arrow, lower left) to create a knot next to the left blade (lower right). Once the knot is tightened, the blades are closed to cut the threads and the knotted pair is gently slipped off the ends of the threads coming from the lace.

### Ten-Stick Rib

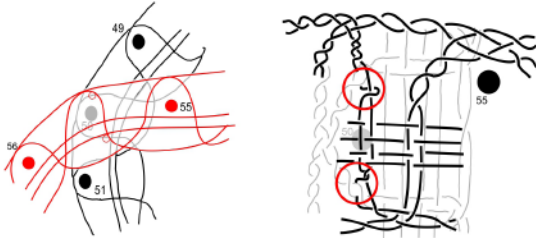
In preparation for working a **ten-stick rib**, hang 5 pairs on Pin #46 as shown in the left diagram below. Twist the threads twice as shown in the center diagram.



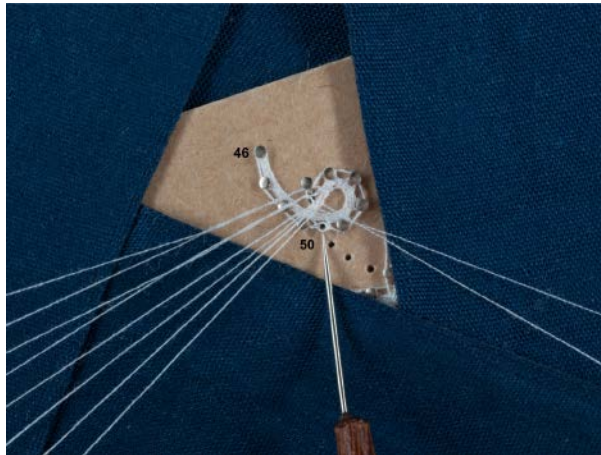
Setting up and starting the ten-stick rib.

Do a whole stitch with the 2 pairs on the far left (right diagram above). Twist both pairs 3 times. Continue to the right through all 3 remaining pairs in whole stitch. Twist the far right pair 1 time and put it aside. Start the next row with the second pair from the right as the new worker. Work in whole stitch to the left through 2 passive pairs. Place the pin in Pinhole #47 and twist the worker 3 times. Do an edge stitch with the left edge pair and the worker.

Continue the ten-stick rib around the circle until the ribs meet after Pinhole #55. Work over the top of the first part of the rib, anchoring the top layer to the bottom layer with a **top sewing** into each of the side bars of Pinhole #50. (See “Other Techniques—Sewings” on page 13 for how to work a top sewing.)

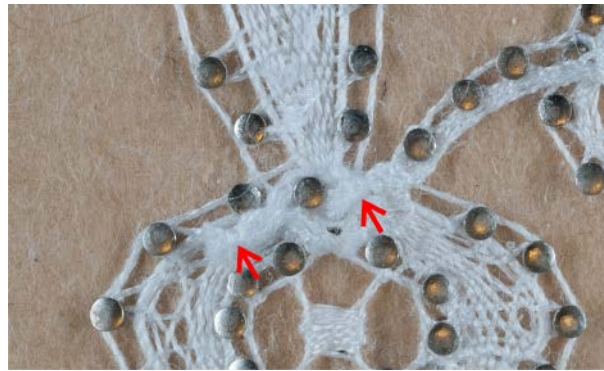


The diagram of the ten-stick rib on the left shows the path of the pairs at the crossing of the ribs. Small red circles denote the sewings. On the right, the sewings that anchor the top layer of the rib are constructed on the side bars of Pinhole #50 underneath. Lines in this diagram represent individual threads.



Pairs are sewn into the side bars of Pinhole #50 where the ten-stick braid crosses a previously worked section. The pin has been removed from the pinhole. The first sewing will be done into the right side bar of the pinhole with the pair just to the left of the needlepin.

At the end of the rib after Pinhole #58, work across the row in whole stitch and tie each pair in a reef knot and a half. Sew the left and right outside pairs to the left and right side bars of Pinhole #45 respectively. Tie and bundle the threads as done at the end of the flower.



At the end of the flower (left arrow) and the end of the ten-stick rib (right arrow), threads are tied and bundled so that they are hidden behind the work.

### ***Leadwork in the Center of the Flower***

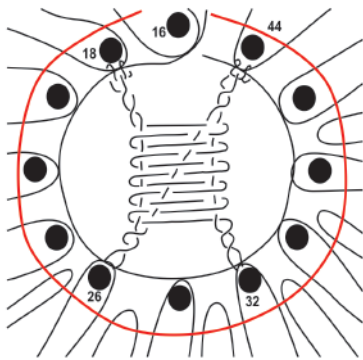
Sew 1 pair each into Pinhole #18 and Pinhole #44, using an edge sewing. (See “Other Techniques—Sewings” on page 13 for how to work an edge sewing.)



Two new pairs are sewn into the center of the flower with edge sewings. The pin is removed from Pinhole #18.

A **leadwork** is a woven square made with 2 pairs. Begin by twisting each sewn-in pair 2 times. Spread the 2 outside bobbins and maintain tension on them throughout the weaving process. Lengthen the thread on the second bobbin from the left and use it as the weaver. \*Weave over the center bobbin, under and

over the right bobbin, back to the left under the center bobbin, over and under the left bobbin. Tension the outside bobbins to square the leadwork. Return to \* and repeat several more rows. As you tension the 2 outside bobbins, notice that the leadwork will shorten, so continue weaving longer than you think you should. End with the weaver thread on the right after going under the right thread. Do not put tension on the weaver at this time. Twist the left pair twice and anchor the pair with an edge sewing into Pinhole #26. Gently twist the right pair twice and sew it into Pinhole #32. Use the left bobbin (nonweaver thread) of the pair to make the loop for the edge sewing. Pass the weaver bobbin through the loop. Tie both sewn pairs with a reef knot and a half.



Leadwork in the center of the flower. The finished leadwork has been sewn out at Pinholes #26 and #32 (near image).

Trim all threads in the piece close to the work. Unpin the piece and turn it over to reveal your finished lace.



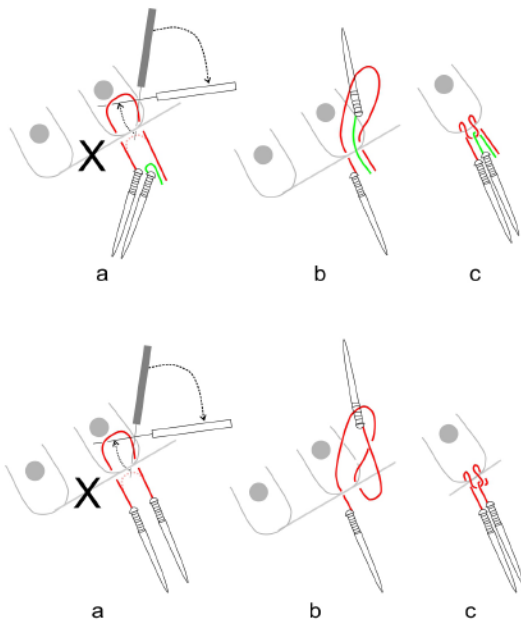
Finished piece before pin removal (wrong side up).

## Other Techniques

### *Sewings*

Sewings are used to join parts of the lace together or to add new pairs to the lace. An **edge sewing** (side sewing, ordinary sewing) is used to join an edge of the lace in a flat fashion to another already completed part of the lace. This type of sewing also is used to add new pairs to the lace. The edge sewing is made around the whole-stitch part of the edge stitch. The stitch is NOT made into the thread bar between pinholes.

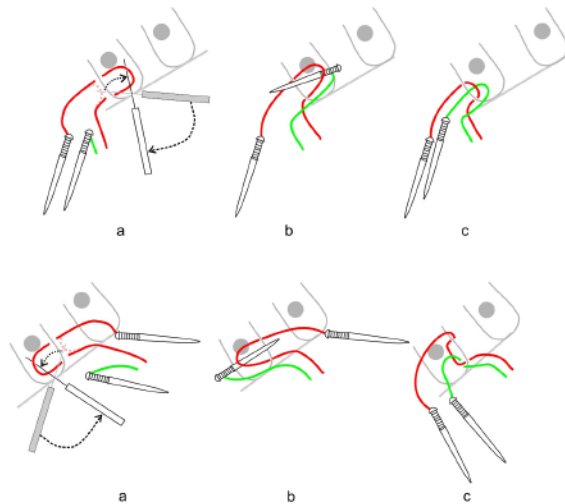
To make an edge sewing, insert the needlepin under the whole stitch of the edge stitch. Catch the thread of 1 bobbin of the sewing pair under the needlepin. Pull a loop through the pinhole. Insert the other bobbin of the pair into the loop and tension both bobbins to complete the sewing.



An edge sewing joining adjacent work (upper row of images) and an edge sewing adding a new pair of bobbins (lower row of images). In the upper row of images, threads from adjacent work approach the sewing pinhole, and a loop of thread (red) is pulled up through the pinhole with the needle pin (a). The other bobbin from the pair (green thread) is passed through the loop (b). The bobbins are tensioned to complete the sewing (c). In the lower row of images, a thread from a new pair of bobbins (red) is pulled through the pinhole (a). One of the bobbins of the pair is passed through the loop (b). The bobbins are tensioned to complete the sewing (c). Edge sewings are made at the pinhole—NOT into the edge bar (X).

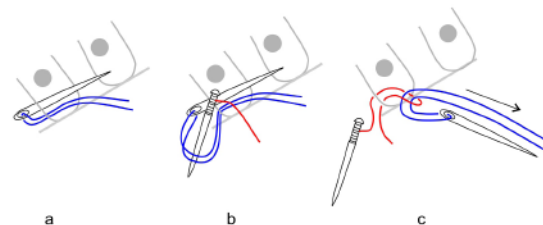
A **top sewing** (raised sewing) is used to anchor a new part of the lace crossing over a previously worked part or when a part of the work is raised and a junction or finish is hidden behind the raised layer. A top sewing is made around one of the side bars of the edge stitch. The lower bar is usually used for the sewing, but the upper bar can be used if better alignment results.

To do a top sewing, insert the needle pin into the pinhole and under the side bar of the edge stitch. Catch the thread of 1 bobbin under the needlepin and pull a loop up through the pinhole. Insert the other bobbin of the pair into the loop and tension the bobbins to complete the sewing.



A top sewing around the lower bar of the pinhole (upper row of images) and a top sewing around the upper bar of the pinhole (lower row of images). A pair to be sewn (red and green threads) approaches the sewing pinhole and a loop of the thread (red) is pulled up through the pinhole with a needlepin (a). The other bobbin of the pair (green thread) is passed through the loop (b). The bobbins are tensioned to complete the sewing (c).

If it is difficult to use a needlepin for the sewing, a **threaded beading needle** may be useful to create the loop for the sewing. Insert the eye end of a beading needle size 13 threaded with 120/2 white cotton thread into the pinhole. Pull up a double loop of the needle thread and insert the bobbin carrying the thread to be sewn through the loop. Gently draw the needle and the double thread back out of the pinhole. The loop of needle thread will pull a loop of bobbin thread through the pinhole. Remove the threaded needle from the bobbin thread loop, being careful that the loop doesn't twist. Complete the sewing by passing the other bobbin of the sewing pair through the bobbin-thread loop (see Figure b in the illustration for top sewing above).

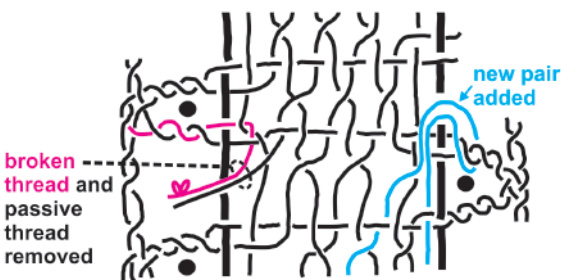
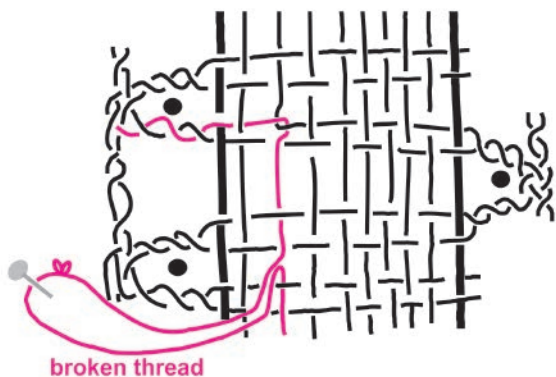


Creating a bobbin thread loop for a sewing using a threaded needle: The eye end of a threaded needle is inserted into the pinhole under a side bar of the edge stitch (a). A bobbin carrying thread (red) for the sewing is passed through the double loop of needle thread (b). The needle and thread are drawn back out of the pinhole, pulling up a loop of bobbin thread for the sewing (c).

## Broken Threads

Hopefully, you will not break a thread in your work, but if it does happen, there are different ways to fix the problem. If the broken thread is a passive thread in whole-stitch work, just replace it with a new thread that is hung on a temporary pin above the work and laid in place of the broken thread. Then continue working with the new thread. Thread ends will be cut off later.

If the broken thread is part of a worker pair in whole stitch work or an edge pair, it must be rejoined to the thread on the bobbin. Hopefully, the broken end in the work is long enough to attach the bobbin thread using a weaver's knot. If not, you may have to undo a few rows until you get sufficient length. Knot the broken ends and continue to work. Exchange the knotted broken thread with a passive thread by either crossing or twisting the pair with the broken thread one extra time as shown in the diagram below. Continue to work a few more rows. Then take the knotted passive thread out of the work and around a pin, making sure that the knot is away from the work. Return the thread back into the work to continue as a passive thread in the original position. The thread loop with the knot will be cut off later.



Exchanging a broken worker thread in whole stitch (above) or half stitch (below). In whole-stitch work, the broken worker thread (pink) is crossed 1 extra time with a passive thread to complete the exchange (left). In half-stitch work, the broken worker thread (pink) is twisted 1 extra time with the fine thread of the coarse pair. A pair, consisting of the broken thread and the adjacent passive, is removed and a new pair (blue) is added on the opposite side.

If the broken thread is in half stitch, work backward until the broken thread can be exchanged with the fine thread that lies beside the coarse thread (see diagram below left). The fine thread of the coarse pair and the broken thread are then taken out and a new fine pair is added on the opposite side of the work next to the coarse thread to maintain the density.

## Knots in Your Thread

A knotted passive thread in whole-stitch work can be gently pulled out and wrapped around a pin behind the work so that the knot is now out of the work. Then the same thread is laid back in the original position within the work to continue. When the work is complete, the knot and the loop created by laying the thread out of the work are cut off.

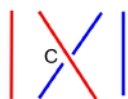
If the knot is in either the worker pair or the edge pair (which will later become a worker pair), exchanging the knotted thread with a passive thread in the whole-stitch work is the best solution. The passive pairs of a small Honiton motif use little thread when compared with worker and edge pairs. Therefore, if the knotted thread is exchanged to become a passive, the knot may be far enough down to complete the work without reaching the knot. Simply twist the knotted worker thread 1 time with a current passive thread in the whole-stitch work. After the twist, the knotted thread should be in the passive position, and the former passive thread should be a new worker thread. If the knot is at a location where it will eventually fall into the work, after a few rows of whole stitch, loop the knotted thread out of the work as described above.

If the knot is in half stitch, the knotted thread should be treated as a broken thread in half stitch as described in “Broken Threads” above.

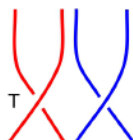
## Bobbin Lace Stitch Glossary

Bobbin lace stitches are made with 2 adjacent pairs of bobbins. The bobbins are crossed or twisted in various combinations to form the stitches. There are many bobbin lace stitches. Only the stitches used in this project are included in this glossary.

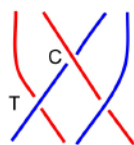
- ◇ **Cross (C)**—The 2 center bobbins of 2 pairs are moved left over right to form a cross.
- ◇ **Twist (T)**—The right bobbin of a pair is moved over the left bobbin of a pair to form a twist. When working 2 pairs at the same time, both pairs are twisted.
- ◇ **Half stitch**—A half stitch is cross-twist.
- ◇ **Whole stitch (cloth stitch)**—A whole stitch is cross-twist-cross.



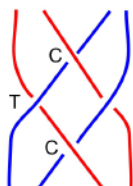
cross



twist



half stitch



whole stitch

### Further Resources

- Dorsett, Joyce. *Honiton Lace*. Basic Technical Instruction Book. Stourbridge, West Midlands, England: The Lace Guild. 1996.
- Luxton, Elsie. *The Technique of Honiton Lace*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1979.
- Thompson, Susanne. *Introduction to Honiton Lace*. McMinnville, Oregon: Robin & Russ Handweavers. 1985. Out of print.
- Wells, Sheila D. *Honiton Lace Step-By-Step*. Knoxville, Tennessee: Tennessee Valley Publications. 1998.

### Bobbin Lace Supplies

Supplies, books, and equipment for this project are available from Van Sciver Bobbin Lace ([www.vansciverbobbinlace.com](http://www.vansciverbobbinlace.com)) and other lacemaking suppliers.

JO ANN EURELL, a past president and honorary member of the International Organization for Lace, Inc. (IOLI), has been making lace for over thirty years. She lives in Palm Coast, Florida, but still volunteers at the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.