



N O T I O N S

WE LIVE IN A TIME OF HIGH-SPEED CONNECTIVITY, with hundreds of thousands of books, magazines, and newspapers online and in print, with texting, Twitter, Facebook, and patterns available for instant download. It's hard to imagine a world without them. But long before instant communication, before printing, even before books, needleworkers had developed their own way of communicating.

Some form of what we now call “samplers”—the physical examples of their work that needleworkers used to remember, communicate, and preserve patterns, stitches, and color combinations before books and printing—probably were in use circa A.D. 500, and some embroidery samplers excavated in Egypt have been dated to as long ago as 1250.

The advent of printing made a new way of communicating needlework information possible. It is very likely that the earliest printed matter containing patterns took some of those patterns from existing needlework. Single sheets with patterns for needlework were being printed in Germany by the late fifteenth century, and Johann Schönsperger the Younger printed what many believe was the first printed needlework pattern book in Augsburg about 1523.

Communication always has been the primary purpose of samplers. Commenting on the mid-nineteenth-century sampler that is the focus of her book *Knitting Lace: A Workshop with Patterns and Projects* (see page 20), Susanna E. Lewis writes: “The beauty of this sampler lies not so much in how it looks, but in what it can teach to those who study it.” The same is true for each sampler and sample book featured in this issue. If you have a sampler or sample book that you would like to share with other *PieceWork* readers, we'd love to hear from you; contact information is in the masthead at right.

This issue also brings you the winners of our 2010 Heart Ornament contest (page 15). We were overwhelmed by the originality and excellent workmanship of all of the entries. Many thanks to our generous sponsors: The National NeedleArts Association (TNNA), the grand prize; Presencia, first place, needlework; Lantern Moon, first place, knitting/crochet; Connecting Threads, first place, quilting; and Presencia, first place, lacemaking/tatting. Look for information about next year's contest in the September/October issue and do consider entering it.

For those of you who love working with fine threads, I can recommend three great projects in the Summer 2010 issue of *Interweave Crochet*, one of *PieceWork*'s sister magazines: the Moth Wings Shrug with its lacy four-round motif, the Lode-star Tunic with a motif belt, and the Victorian-Inspired Lace Bracelet inspired by some of the crochet projects featured in *Weldon's Practical Needlework*. (Interweave published facsimile reproductions of twelve volumes of Weldon's; volumes 2 and 5 through 12 are available at www.interweavestore.com.) This issue goes on sale June 21; visit crochetme.com for more information.

Read about samplers. Make some of your own. And have a happy, creative summer!

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