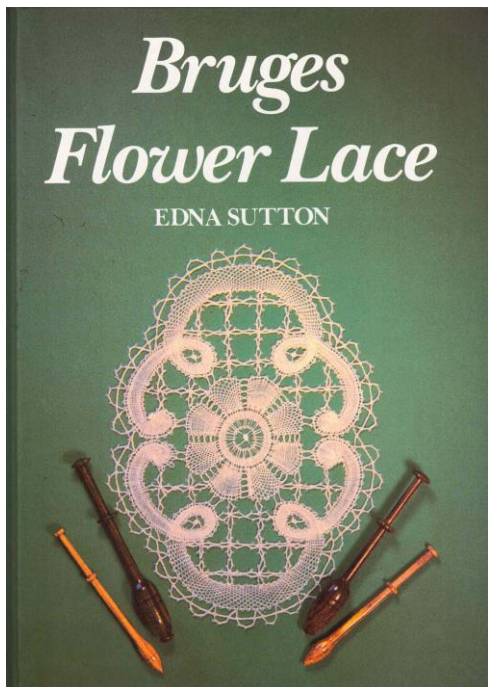


## Bruges Flower Lace

Edna Sutton



Bruges Flower Lace, sometimes referred to as Bloemwerk, is a discontinuous lace in the same family as Honiton and Duchesse. Its history goes back to the mid nineteenth century after the Napoleonic wars. No doubt there were many destitute widows with no source of income, so as was common in those days, someone said making lace could help the problem. While it would be interesting to study the economics of this given that they were already competing with machine lace, we have the legacy of Bruges Flower Lace today because of these times.

Edna Sutton's book is intended as an instructional book for someone without a teacher. Given that this was written in the 1980s while lace making was starting to take off, the instructions start with how to make a pillow. Apparently it was either much easier to find bobbins, or the skill to make them was impractical to describe in this small volume. It also has basic bobbin lace instructions for beginners.

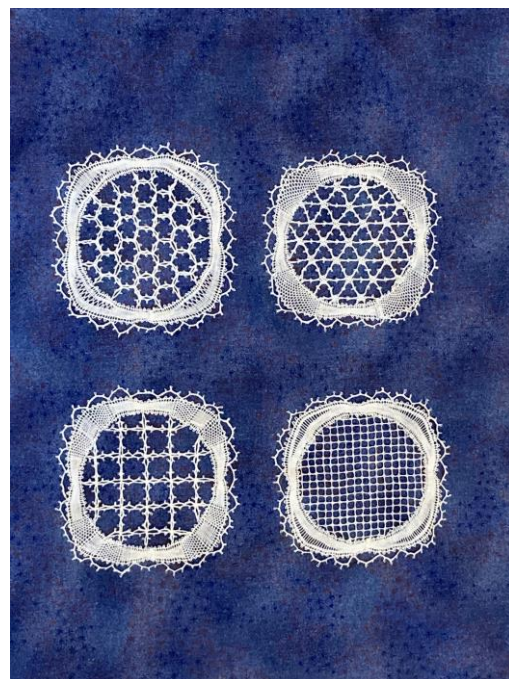
That being said, once you get past the very basics at the start, you will find a step by step program to learn Bruges Flower Lace. Each pattern which is original, is well laid out. Many of the patterns are

marked with where to set up the pins to start the pattern. There are diagrams to help understand what to do where appropriate. There are also English instructions to get you started and how to finish. (Note that she uses English lace terminology.) It does assume that the reader is familiar with the preceding explanations. I might add that the instructions for a "Bruges finish" are also included, although not labeled.

As I prefer, since this is instructional material, it is always good to take it for a "test drive". I chose to make the fillings samples. These use both some of the tapes as well as the fillings. (And yes, indeed, you can enter such things in the Big E.) There were some decisions that I had to make for myself. On the plus side, the instructions were good for getting you started on the braids, in particular where to start the design feature. However, I had to make decisions as to where they ended. I don't think that this is a big problem. I made choices, and then, I made sure that I was consistent with those choices.

Making the fillings also took some problem solving. She shows you how to get the filling started, but not the complete solution. I actually found some of them were interesting to think out. I will note that part of the decision making was which hole to sew into in the braid. The ground didn't exactly align with the braid, and perhaps that choice was made to show real problems that you can encounter. All in all they were quick to make up.

There are a couple downsides to this book. First of all, having been published in 1986, color printing is very expensive. The working diagrams are not color marked for the stitches as a result. The reader will either get that information from the written instructions or by looking at the pictures. The second problem is the pictures themselves. I find that with a high-resolution picture, I can get a lot of



information about how the lace was made. Given that Edna Sutton is meticulous in giving credit to anyone who contribute to the book and there is no mention of a photographer, I have to assume that she did most of the photography herself. The lighting is sometimes off, particularly with overexposure. She also does not seem to have had the camera and lens for closeup photography. Many of the pictures are close to out-of-focus, either from not focusing exactly or magnifying the image too much. While these are noticeable, I could figure out the stitches from the photographs despite the deficiencies.

So, if you want to learn Bruges Flower lace, this is a resource. It has a lot of small patterns that should be good for learning. If you have a lot of experience with bobbin lace, its weaknesses should not keep you from learning it. If you have gone through a beginner's course, I recommend it with caution. For those who like learning with problem solving they should be fine. If your learning style needs a lot of questions to confirm the next step, you might need a more experienced lace maker handy to help guide you on this.

Sharon Sacco