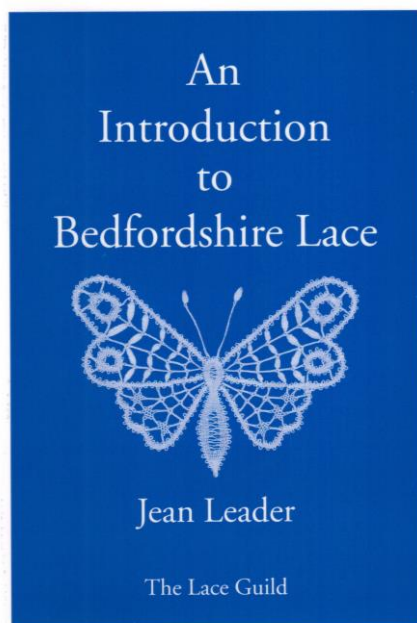


An Introduction to Bedfordshire Lace

By Jean Leader



As a beginner, I learned from Pamela Nottingham's books. After the very beginning parts that included tape lace and Torchon lace, the books seemed to diverge either to Bucks Point or Bedfordshire. For some odd reason, I was attracted to Bedfordshire, much to the concern of the late Marni Harang who was my teacher at the time. It was only later that I concluded that Bedfordshire was a challenging lace for a beginner.

An Introduction to Bedfordshire Lace is an unassuming looking small book. But remember that looks can be deceiving. Packed within this small volume is a lot of technique and practice pieces.

The initial patterns are designed to cover some of the basic techniques necessary to Bedfordshire, plaits, picots, windmill crossings, and leaf tallies. All of these are illustrated in detail. After that, it is onto the traditional Bedfordshire patterns.

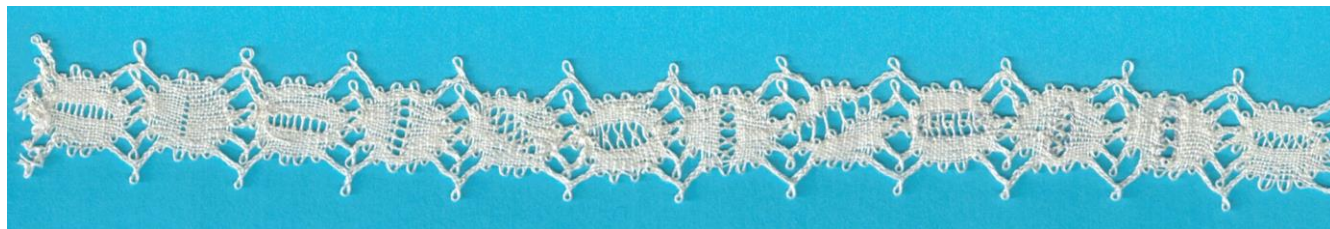
Historically, Bedfordshire was a reaction to changing fashions and industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century. It was hoped that this style of lace would not be easily reproduced by modern lace machinery. Many of

the traditional examples in this book are taken from the Lace Guild's collection and include whatever notes that have survived, including some pricing.

There is also advice on designing this lace. She recommends a square grid and then gives the reduction to give a workable pattern. There is also advice on drafting circular patterns similar to a few of the circular patterns it contains.

The latter part of the book contains butterflies and other patterns that assume the reader has mastered the earlier part of the book. The first butterfly has a full working diagram. By the time the reader gets to the two leaves example, only part of the motif is diagrammed. It is on this example that the reader also learns that there is no unique way to work this. A lot of how the motifs are implemented is left to the lace maker.

I should warn those who have taken lessons from other teachers that the techniques here are probably traditional and may not match modern techniques. I think in this case that you need to remember that the leaves example does tell you that there are multiple ways to implement the pattern. If you want to use more modern techniques, the lace will still be lovely.



My example is the Dancing Spiders exercise. The purpose here is to explore different methods of producing veins. Most of the spiders have very clear diagrams. The last one would have been impossible to diagram without adding color to the book. The brief description was adequate based on the experience of making the other spiders. I used Finca 50 with an Anchor 12 perle cotton for the gimps. The Finca was a bit heavier than the Tanne Madeira that it called for, but it did let me do the pattern.

This little book is a wonderful resource for anyone who would like to learn or loves Bedfordshire. It is clear enough for someone who is ready to move on from the Torchon beginners start. I recommend it.

Sharon Sacco