

## Cassell Illustrated Dictionary of Lacemaking

Alexandra Stillwell

The NELG library is a great resource for NELG members. Most items in the library are either intended for teaching a particular technique or a collection of patterns that can be used. However, not all the items in the library fit into these categories. We have some books that should be classified as reference books. This category can run from history of costume that feature lace to books that show fine photographs of lace that aid in identification.

The *Cassell Illustrated Dictionary of Lacemaking* by Alexandra (Alex) Stillwell fits into the reference category. Alex is well suited to writing such a book given her broad range of interests in lace. She has written many lace books running from Tenerife to Mechlin, her latest contribution to the world of lace.

The origins of this book are the introduction of the City and Guilds Lacemaking Course. It became apparent that lacemakers from different places often have different words to describe the same thing. What can become even more confusing is that the same term can be used by different lacemakers to describe different things. A common example of this is the term "whole stitch" in bobbin lace making. There is always a discussion about this when two or more lacemakers with at least one trained in the English tradition and one trained in the continental tradition.

This dictionary is an attempt to solve the problem. The covered terms come from many different laces, so there is an attempt to be comprehensive. Bobbin lace, needle lace, netting, crochet, Armenian, Tenerife, and tatting are all mentioned. The terms are well illustrated where it is appropriate as well as being cross referenced to let the reader know that there are multiple terms for a technique.

This is certainly a book that would be handy to have on a shelf for quick lookup of term, but if that were the only use, it is a failure as a library book since the act of checking out a book is usually too much bother for that activity. However, this is fun book to just thumb through and read some of the definitions. Who knows? You might accidentally learn something interesting.

Sharon Sacco

