

Beth Russell's
**WILLIAM MORRIS
NEEDLEPOINT**

Nilka



Special photography by Jan Baldwin

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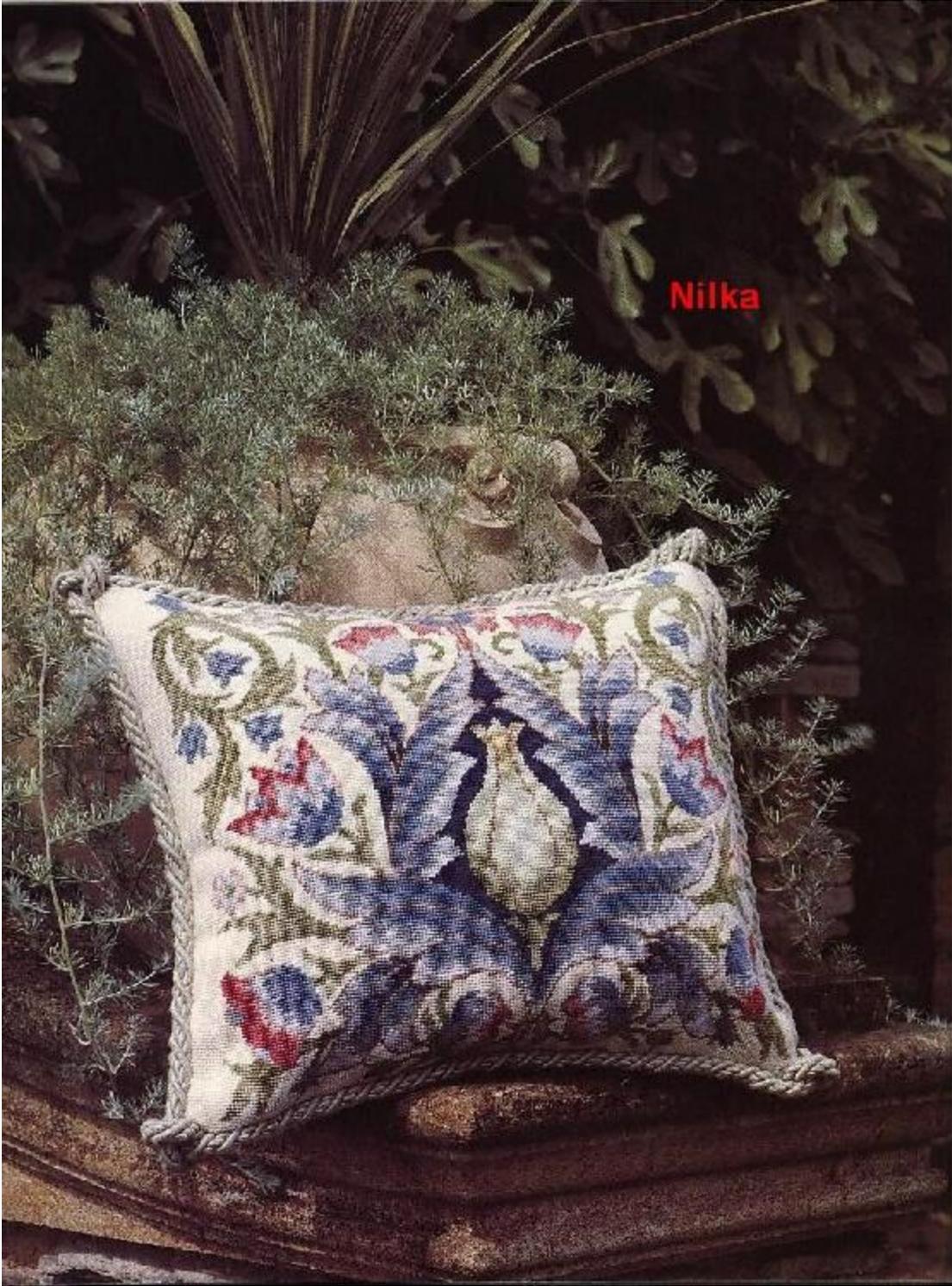


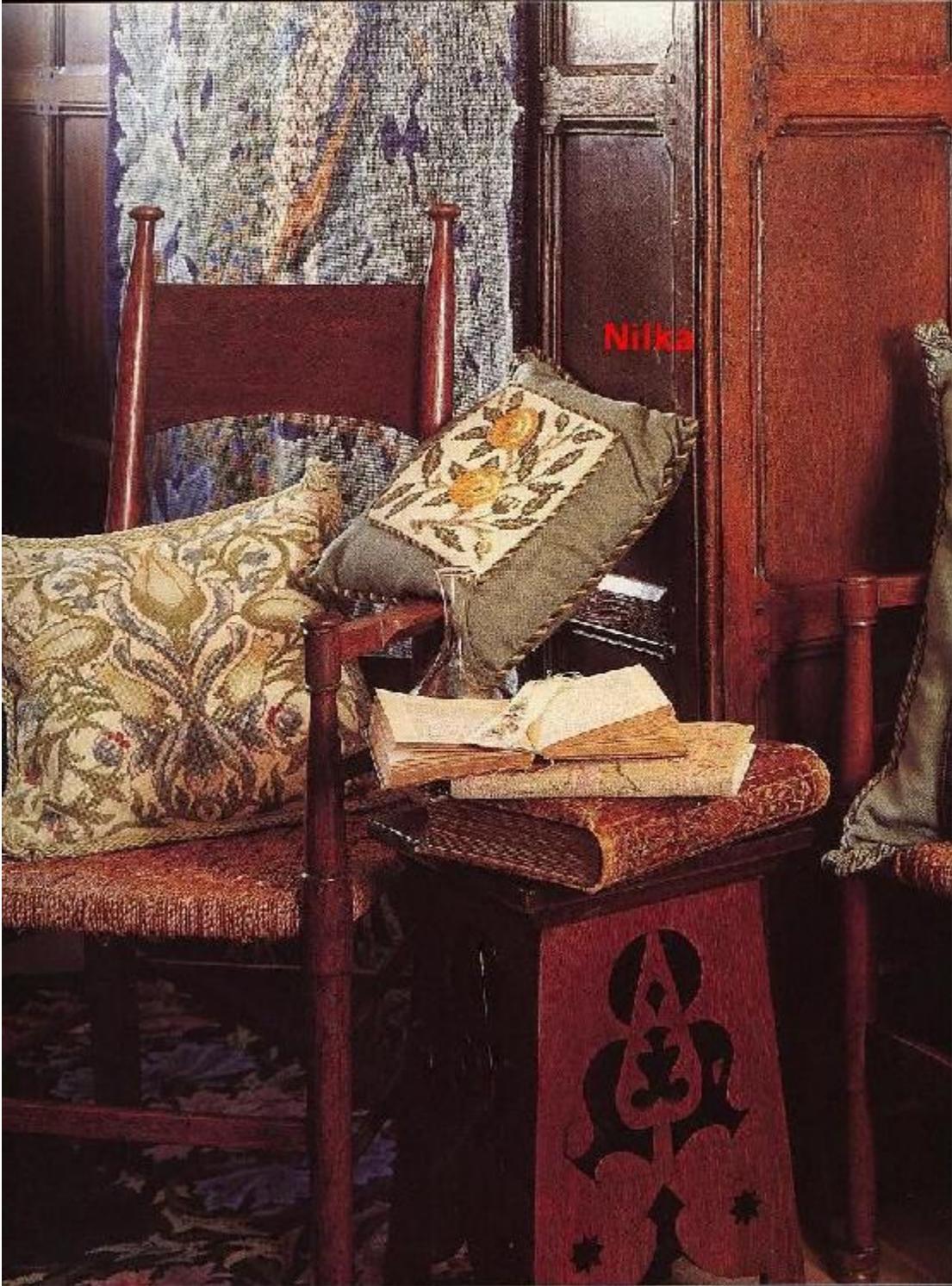
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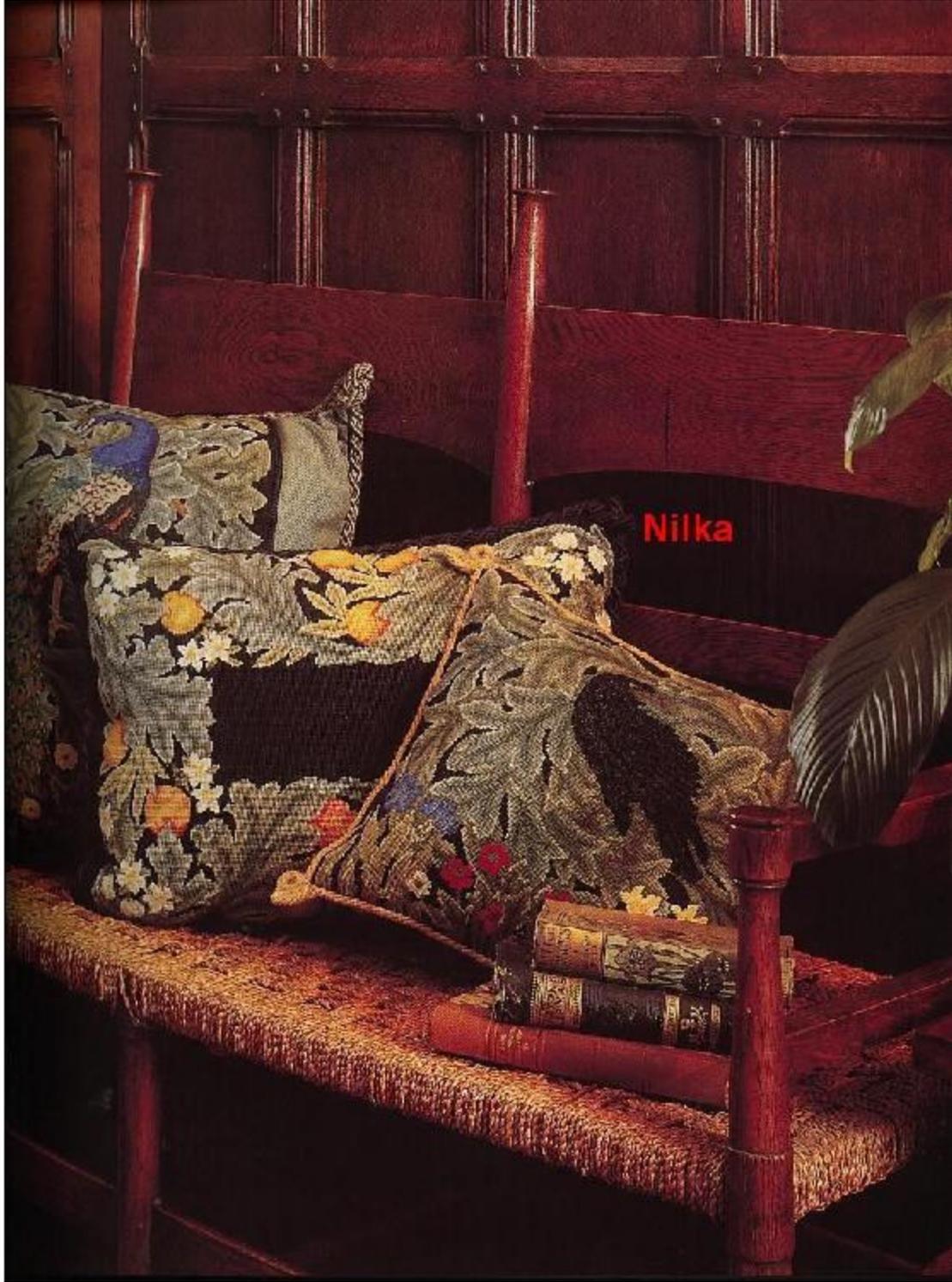
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FOREWORD

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*What business have we with art at all,
unless we can share it.*

It is surprisingly difficult to pinpoint Morris's greatness. Designer, weaver, writer, eye, lecturer – to excel at just one would have been impressive enough, but it is the sheer scale of his achievements that makes Morris truly great. Nonetheless, he provides inspiration and encouragement; the creative process was for him, as it is for us, a challenge as well as a reward.

Through all Morris's many talents runs a thread, which for me is unique. He is a weaver of dreams. He weaves them into his tapestries and draws them into his designs. They take us out of ourselves and into the safe world of gentle colours, soft lines and interesting complexity. His poems and romances, with their mythical people in dreamlike landscapes, teach us not historical facts but a way of life, morality and how to lose ourselves in a well-told tale.

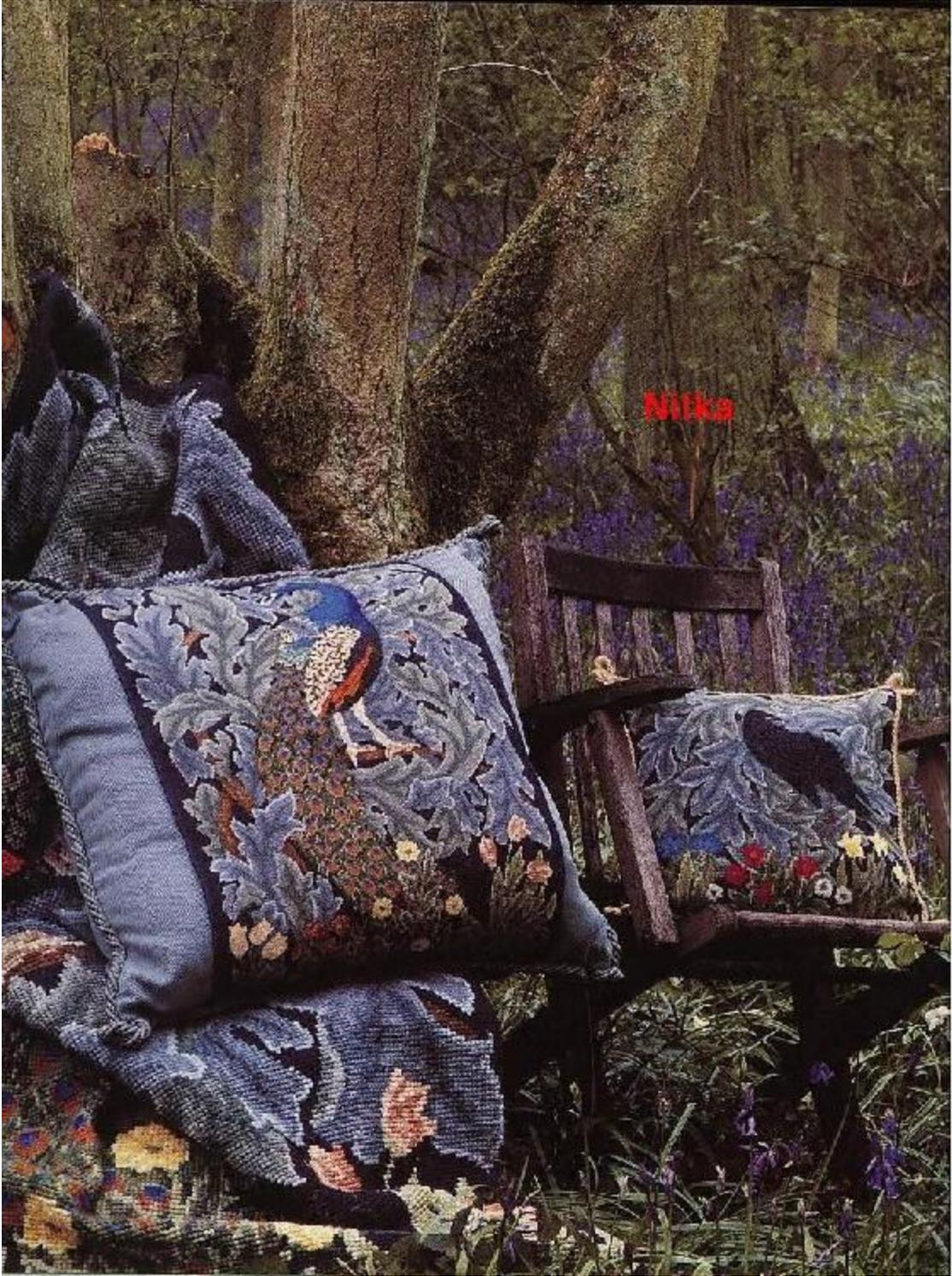
As all stitchers know, when we pick up a needle we pick up, too, the threads of the dreams we had put down the last time we stitched; and so it is with all creative pursuits. This is partly what Morris wanted us to experience – the trials and joys of creation and the peace we can experience in the process.

Many of us, I know, find tranquility in the quiet stitching of a prescribed design in pre-determined colours. Morris would have urged us to use the design as inspiration. He would have suggested that we take his designs as a starting point to strive to produce our own versions, to test ourselves and our creative ability and, indeed, find ourselves. I hope that through this book you will find the courage to explore new fabrics, threads and ideas – and the peace of dreams.

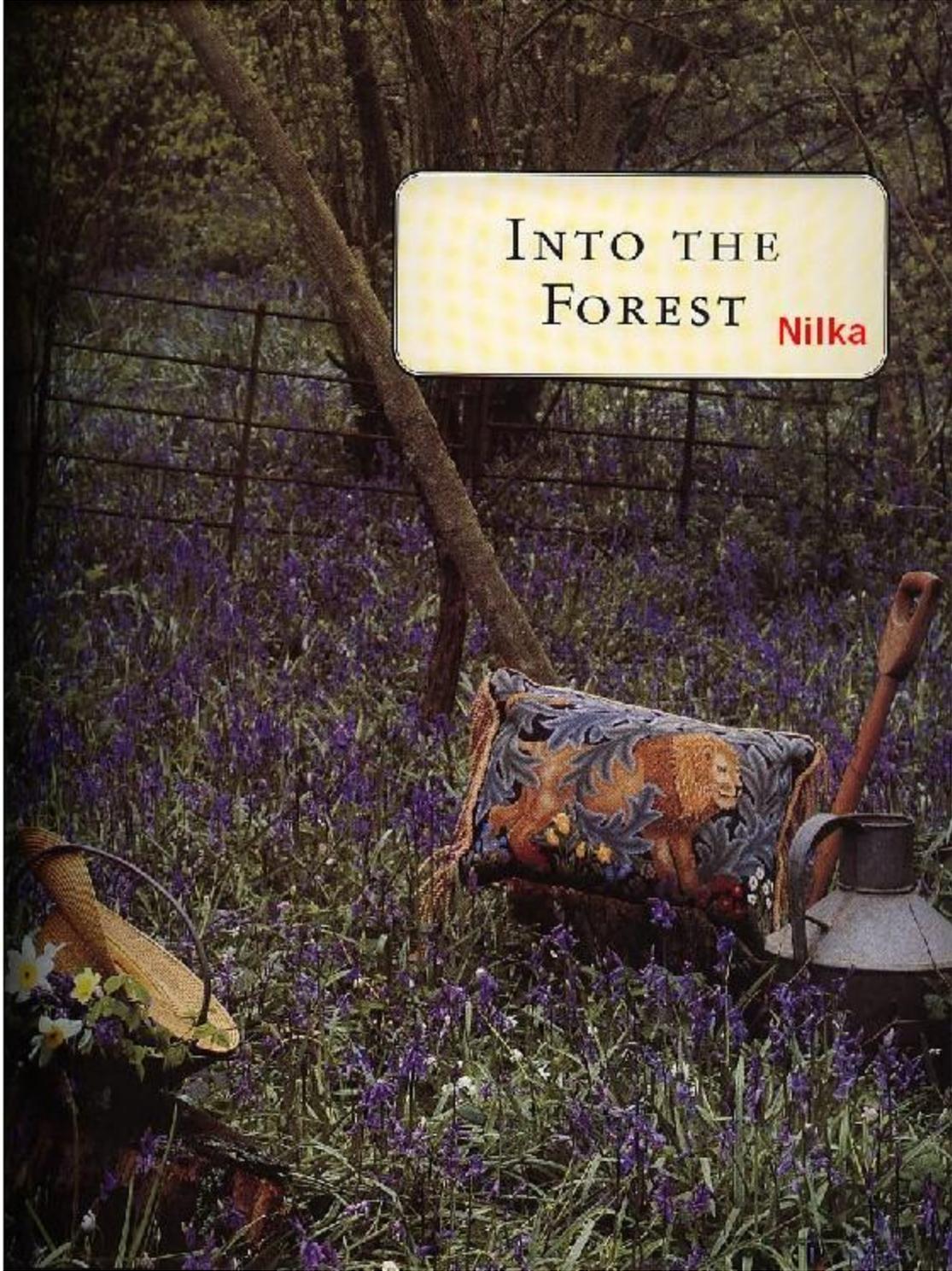
William Morris has become so much a part of my daily life that it is easy to imagine that I knew him. My childhood is a jumble of happy memories of wood shavings, oil paints and French polish as my father strove to master a new skill. Like Morris, my father was never content until he thoroughly understood the process of creating. Recently, I read a letter that Morris wrote to his dye specialist, Thomas Wardle, in 1877, which echoes something of what I feel about my own work: 'I suspect you scarcely understand what a difficult matter it is to translate a painter's design into material. I have been at it 16 years and have never quite succeeded.' I find this most heartening!

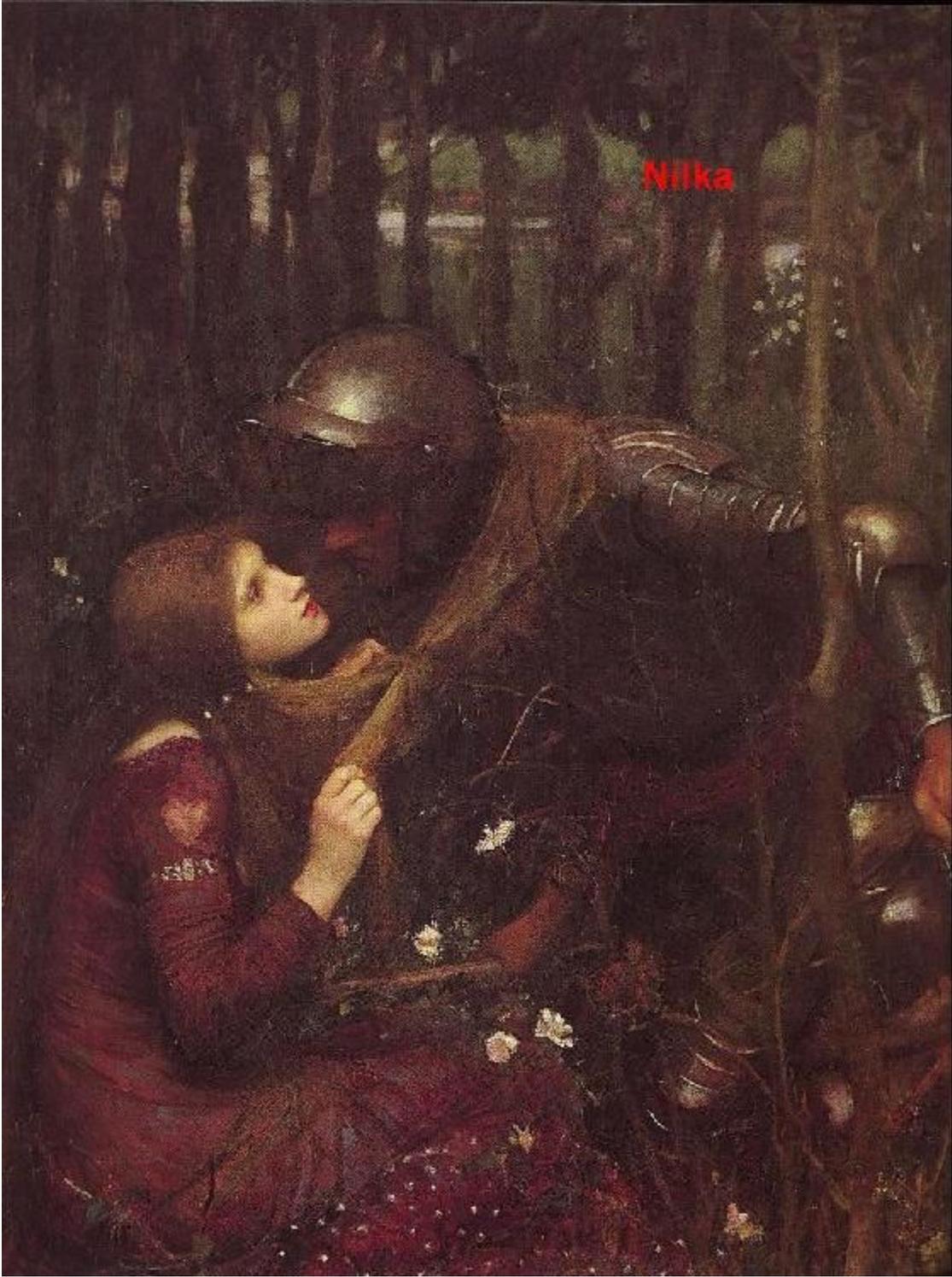
In my efforts to draw a thumbnail picture of William Morris I am anxious to show not just some of his work but a little of the kind, expansive, determined, far-seeing character that I have admired most of my life. If you glean only a little of his enthusiasm for art, practised 'by the people and for the people', and a little of his confidence to learn and experiment, then I will not have totally failed. Our best motto is the one that Morris adopted for his own – 'IF I CAN'.

THE SCRAP BY G. J.
WALLS WAS FOUND BY PHILIP
MORRIS IN 1846. WHEN I
LOOK AT IT, I AM REMINDED
OF WHAT THE HISTORIAN
L. E. HUGHSON SAID OF
MORRIS: 'HE IS ONE OF
THOSE MEN WHO LIVE BY
THEir OWN HANDS.'



INTO THE
FOREST **Nilka**







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Fair now is the springtide, now earth lies beholding
 With the eyes of a lover, the face of the sun
 Long lasteth the daylight and hope is unfolding
 The green growing acres with increase begun

The Message of the March Wind, 1886

As Peter Dinklage once wrote,
 "Morris was born knowing these things".
 Indeed, it must have seemed so, for
 during a comparatively short life he was to show a stunning range of talents.
 Morris was an exceptionally gifted child, born into a wealthy family living on
 the edge of Epping Forest. Delving into his childhood, it is fascinating to see the
 tiny shoots that were the beginnings of a forest of knowledge. His medieval
 romanticism was formed by reading the entire works of Sir Walter Scott before
 the age of seven. On his pony, he explored the forest so thoroughly that he knew
 it 'yard by yard from Wanstead to Theydon and from Hale End to Fairlop Oak'.
 We find similarly quaint names in much of Morris's romantic writing. In the
 forest he found old churches, the architectural details of which he could recall as
 an adult, and discovered his love of wild plants and trees. One of Morris's
 recollections of this time conjures up a lovely picture of a happy child: 'to this
 day when I smell a May tree I think of going to bed in the light'.
 'This dreamer of dreams had a springtime of life of which we all might dream.
 It is easy to understand why, having once enjoyed this happy state of mind,
 Morris should always aspire to it; and, however idealistic it might seem,
 he wanted everyone else to experience it. He saw no reason why labour



ABOVE: *The Peasant Tapestry* by William Morris, woven at Merton Abbey in 1887. Originally commissioned for Alexander Forbes, it is now the property of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

LEFT: A detail from the medieval Book of Hours *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, showing pieces of work, with their respective jobs and intricate Gothic patterns, inspired Morris and his followers.

should reduce the excitement, achievement and contentment in life. So, aside from providing inspiration for his later creative work, his childhood helped lay the foundations for his socialist beliefs.

Life changed for Morris when he was thirteen. His father died and he was sent away to board at Marlborough College. I think that this was a much less happy period for Morris. He was clearly not a team man in the sporting sense of the word and intellectual leaguers are not best suited to incarceration in a boys' boarding school. Characteristically, he turned to the school library and the surrounding meadows, buildings and prehistoric monuments to occupy himself. Letters to his young sister expressed his desire to return home to Epping Forest, while letters written in adulthood show him fighting for the conservation of this very curious and characteristic wood such as can be seen nowhere else.

It was during his childhood in Epping Forest that Morris first discovered tapestry. He came upon Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge where he saw a

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room 'hung with faded greenery'. This experience triggered an everlasting fascination with medieval tapestries. Tapestry weaving as an art form had died during the Industrial Revolution and Morris, later in life, set about reviving what he considered 'the noblest of all the weaving arts'. However, it was not until he had mastered the techniques that Morris & Co. started to produce tapestries commercially.

With the help of a French book dating from before the French Revolution, Morris taught himself the *Hautlouis*, or High Loom, technique on a loom set up in his bedroom at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith. This must be the most difficult weaving technique, as the weaver faces the back of the fabric and has to view his work through the warp threads in a mirror set in front of him. Morris clearly loved the work; his diary tells us that he often rose at five or six-thirty in the morning to do three or four hours before the start of his normal day. One letter from Kelmscott Manor states how he longed to return to his 'dear warp and weft at Hammersmith'.

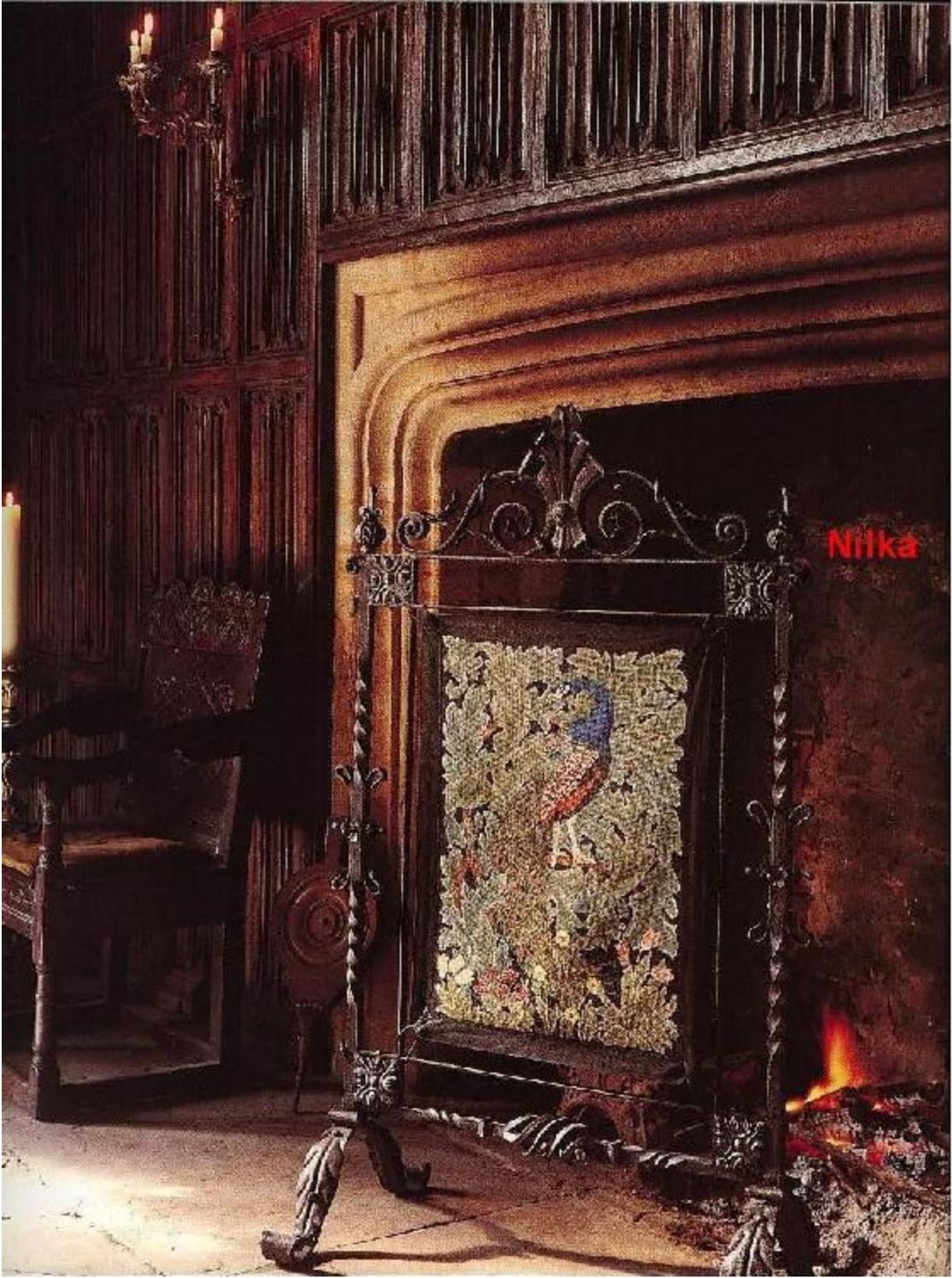


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In 1887 Morris designed *The Forest* tapestry for Alexander Bonnies, one of his most loyal patrons. This is a staggeringly lovely work, unusually much wider (15 x 42/4.5 x 1.2m) than it is tall. The combination of the rolling, all-enveloping acanthus, the dignity of the remarkably realistic animals and the élan of the millefleurs gives the tapestry rich depth and perspective that to look at it is like reading a story of magic and mystery.

One of Morris's great strengths was to recognize ability in others and to give encouragement. He departed with ease and generosity. Philip Webb, his close friend, frequently drew the birds and animals in Morris's designs. Webb's architectural background is evident in the fine, accurate drawings for *The Forest*. Henry Dearle was Morris's first tapestry apprentice and became the chief tapestry weaver at Merton Abbey; it was he who designed the foreground foliage for *The Forest*. It is a tribute to Morris's genius that this great, improbable piece works so astonishingly well.





Peacock

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THE PEACOCK WAS A very fashionable bird during the nineteenth century; the Victorians had a taste for the exotic and there is hardly a creature that better suits this description. An amusing story concerns the painter Whistler. In 1876, he was commissioned by Lord Leyland to advise on the decoration of a room at 49 Princes Gate, Kensington. Without Leyland's consent, he joyfully painted the walls, ceilings and shutters with peacocks and secretly invited the press, public and friends to view. Leyland was furious and banned Whistler from his house. The Peacock room was eventually dismantled and moved to the Fraser Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In 1866, Halsey Ricardo's brilliant Peacock House was built for Lord Debenham, also in London's Kensington. It contains the world's largest collection of William De Morgan tiles *in situ*, with peacocks on tiles, stonework, mosaics and paintings.

As with most things in nature, colours and shapes flow gently into each other. This is less so with birds but the peacock exhibits a remarkable collection of patterns and colours which, when seen separately, one would hardly expect to blend together as a whole. As you can see on pages 14-15, *The Forest* tapestry has faded and I was torn between depicting my Peacock as Morris's appears now or as I feel it really had been – both options in their own ways being faithful to the original. I was also aware that Morris definitely preferred the faded colours of old medieval tapestries. After some soul-searching and very many trips to photograph the peacocks in Battersea and Holland Parks, I made up my mind about which colours I would use. It is comforting to know that it was not an easy decision for Morris to make either. In his diary for 20th May, 1881, he wrote: 'Up at 5-3/4 hours tapestry. To Grange. To Queen Square. The green for Peacock all wrong... Dined A. Ionides.' Alexander Ionides, a Morris patron, was the original owner of *The Forest* tapestry.

It was with a sigh of relief that I placed the completed Peacock with the other needlepoints in the series. In spite of the intensity and variety of colours in the bird, as a stitched piece it sits well with Raven, Lion, Fox and Hare – and dominates no more than it would in life. At first, I thought that the gleam of the neck could be achieved only by using the shine of silk or cotton threads, but the wonderful range of Applleton wools and the skill of my colleague Selina Winter proved me wrong.

My Peacock was first stitched on 14 threads/in canvas which, happily, made it the perfect size for a fire-screen. Some time after it was completed, I was wandering through the William Morris Gallery in Willemstown on a gloomy, winter Sunday and stopped to admire the magnificent *Woolfensker* and *Artichoke* hangings; I envied the warmth and welcoming air they give in a room. Suddenly, I had a longing to see how my Peacock would look as a very large hanging. For days I pondered on gauges of canvas, sizes of hanging and how to stitch it since, at that time, there was no chart of the design. Zweigart very kindly sent me the 48 threads/in canvas, 59in (150cm) wide, which made it possible to increase the size of the hanging to 73 x 50%in (185 x 128cm). I also found a stitcher who is brilliant at copying from a stitched piece on to plain canvas. At the outset I had no idea if this would work. One of the true tests of a design is to change its size drastically, and so I eagerly awaited the outcome. To say that I was thrilled by the result is an understatement!



ABOVE: DETAIL FROM A 16TH-CENTURY BOOK OF HOURS THAT BELONGED TO ANTOINE LE BOS, DUC DE LORRAINE.

BELOW: THE GREAT HALL, AT ATTERHAM, IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF 17TH-CENTURY DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE. MY PEACOCK ON THE EXTRAORDINARY FIRE-SCREEN LOOKS AS IF IT WOULD BLEND FOR THE MOST PART PERFECTLY.

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ABOVE WANDA CRANE'S BEAUTIFUL PAIR OF PEACOCKS IN AT LITTLETON HOUSE IN WEST LONDON. SHE SET AS A "HOUSE BEAUTIFUL" IN 1966 FOR THE ARTIST PETERER, LORD LITTLETON. LITTLETON HOUSE IS NOW A MUSEUM, WITH A FINE VASCINATING COLLECTION OF VICTORIAN ART.

FAR RIGHT: MOORE SAYS "DID YOU LIKE TO KEEP THE BUBBLE UPON REVOLVING IN CHAIR, AND TO GO ON AT THIS POINT AND KINDLY? I HOPE HE WOULD HAVE APPROVED OF MY LARGE PEACOCK HANGING, THEN HELD AT A HILTON, 17, 1966."

MATERIALS FOR THE PEACOCK FIRE-SCREEN

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart

fluo canvas measuring 27 x 29in (69 x 74cm)

Threads: Applique crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 23 x 16in (58.5 x 40.5cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

The fire-screen version of the Peacocks, which is charted on pages 20-3, might also be made into a large floor cushion. A cushion does, of course, need to be at least as wide as it is tall. The finished needlepoint can either be appliqued on to the front of the cushion, or two strips of fabric can be sewn on either side. A strip of flat braid can be sewn on to help soften the joins between the fabric and the needlepoint.

The glorious Peacock wall hanging (see far right) was a total experiment; I had wanted to see how it would look as large as I could make it. It was intended to show the versatility of charts and so obviously it could not be drawn on the canvas – it had to be counted stitch for stitch and I had to be sure that the canvas was wide enough to accommodate the design. This is a simple matter of mathematics. With 228 stitches in the width of the design and 48 stitches to each inch (1.6 stitches to each centimetre), the design takes up 50½in (128cm), so the canvas needed to be at the very least an extra 4in (10cm) in width, that is 54½in (138cm) in all.

Cross stitch is very desirable for a large piece of work as it is much less likely to distort the canvas and, of course, stretching something this large can pose some problems. Two threads of Applique tapestry wool cover just about well enough for a hanging, but for a piece that might need greater wearing properties, I should be inclined to use seven threads of crewel wool on this 48 gauge.

Due to the experimental nature of this piece I cannot be certain about correct wool quantities. However, the result has given me enormous pleasure and, should you wish to see a large Peacock, I urge you to try it. The size should be determined by your particular needs – where you would like to display it, how large a piece of canvas you feel you would be happy to stitch on and, indeed, the availability of the canvas. As to wools, my advice is to buy in stages: the different dye lots one normally worries about might well be an advantage in the design and would hardly be noticed on such a fragmented background.

There are a number of very close shades in the Peacock. It would be advisable to sort and identify the colours in daylight. If they are kept in separate groups, it is much easier to select the correct threads when working in a poorer light.

The colour codes for working the body of the bird are as follows:

Head: 665, 824, 998, 989, 488, 761, 966

Neck: 465, 874, 464, 488, 566

Centre back: 831, 526, 553, 556

Main wing: 136, 583, 761

Orange underwing: 477, 478, 769

Breast: 998, 455, 833, 647

Legs: 989, 761, 302

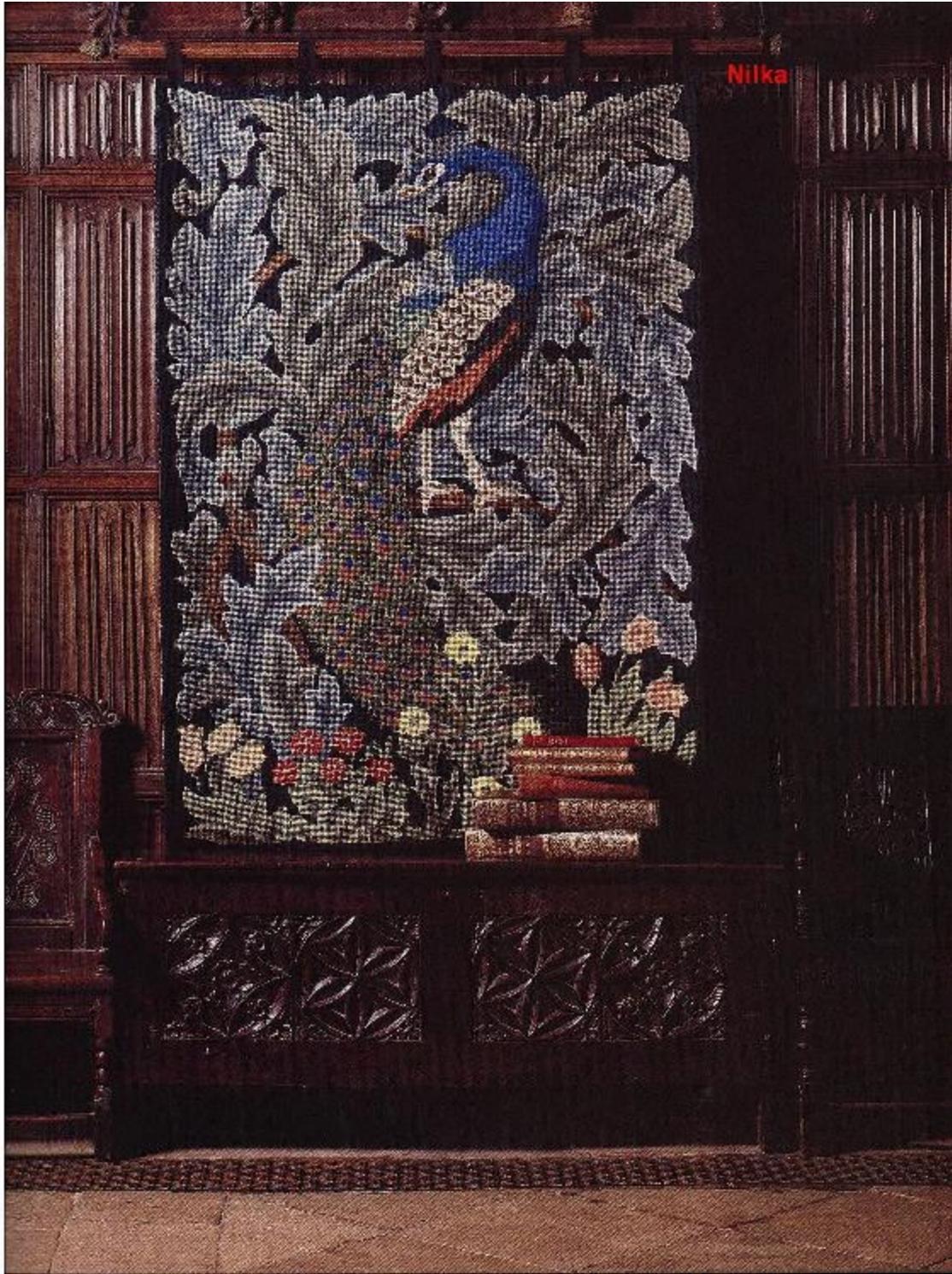
Background to top of train: 647, 356, 966

Eyes at top of train: 526, 765, 824, 464

Background to bottom of train: 356, 833, 353, 966, 526

Eyes at bottom of train: 831, 755, 824, 464

Please note that the acanthus leaves are stitched in two 'sets' of colours, the greener sides of the leaves with 156, 644, 642 and 641, the other sides with 156, 155, 154 and 521. Both sides have 158 for the veins.



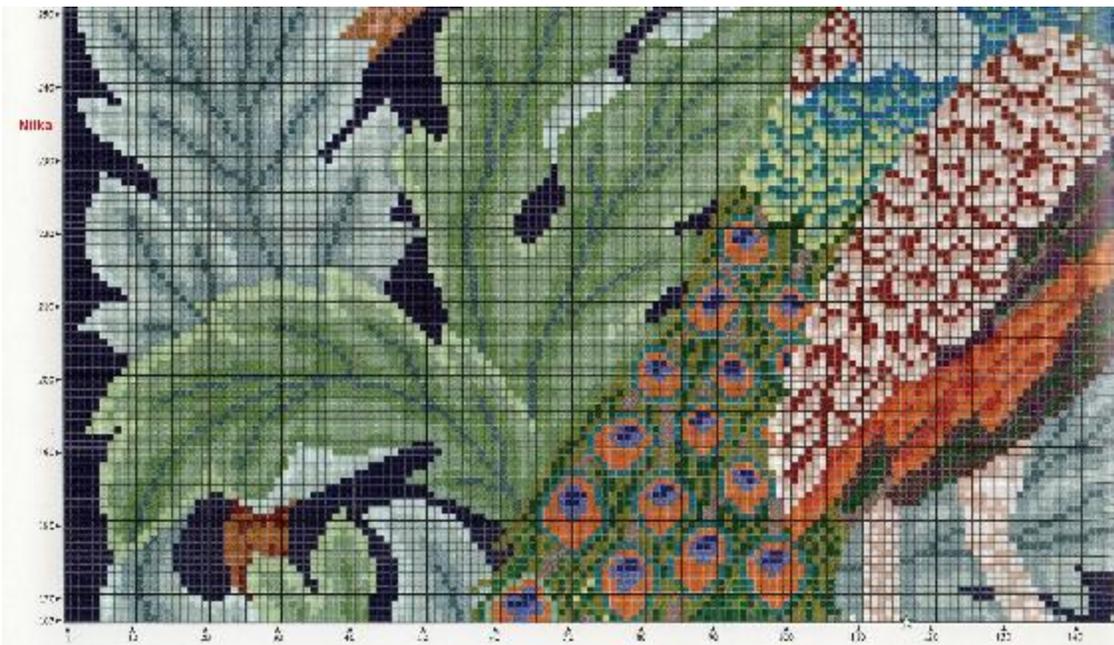




CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The *Beech* flowers are made in Applique thread work. The flowers in the chart appear on page 227.

Nilka	
354 Scarlet 1 skein	462 Light olive green 1 skein
454 Dusky pink 1 skein	463 Light grey-blue 1 skein
728 Light pink 1 skein	467 Darkest green 2 skeins
478 Dark orange-ginger 1 skein	484 Dark yellow-green 2 skeins
477 Old orange-ginger 1 skein	484 Light olive green 1 skein
785 Ginger 2 skeins	486 Darkest grey-blue 2 skeins
471 Yellow 1 skein	488 Mid grey-blue 2 skeins
477 Beige yellow 1 skein	484 Light grey-blue 2 skeins
186 Teal 2 skeins	484 Turquoise 1 skein
912 Mid brown 1 skein	481 Light turquoise 2 skeins
422 Light sea-green 1 skein	460 Marine blue 2 skeins
741 Light tan 1 skein	468 Bright aquamarine 4 skeins
358 Dark teal-green 3 skeins	463 Very dark royal blue 1 skein
288 Green 1 skein	424 Dark royal blue 2 skeins



355 Green 1 skein	Nilka	424 Dark royal blue 1 skein
354 Mid green 5 skeins		461 Mid sea blue 2 skeins
460 Light sea-green 1 skein		498 Charcoal 1 skein
352 Lightest green 1 skein		916 Dark grey 1 skein
291 Grey-green 2 skeins		905 Light tan 1 skein
644 Mid blue-green 8 skeins		482 Navy blue/grey 2 skeins
		⊙ Middle point

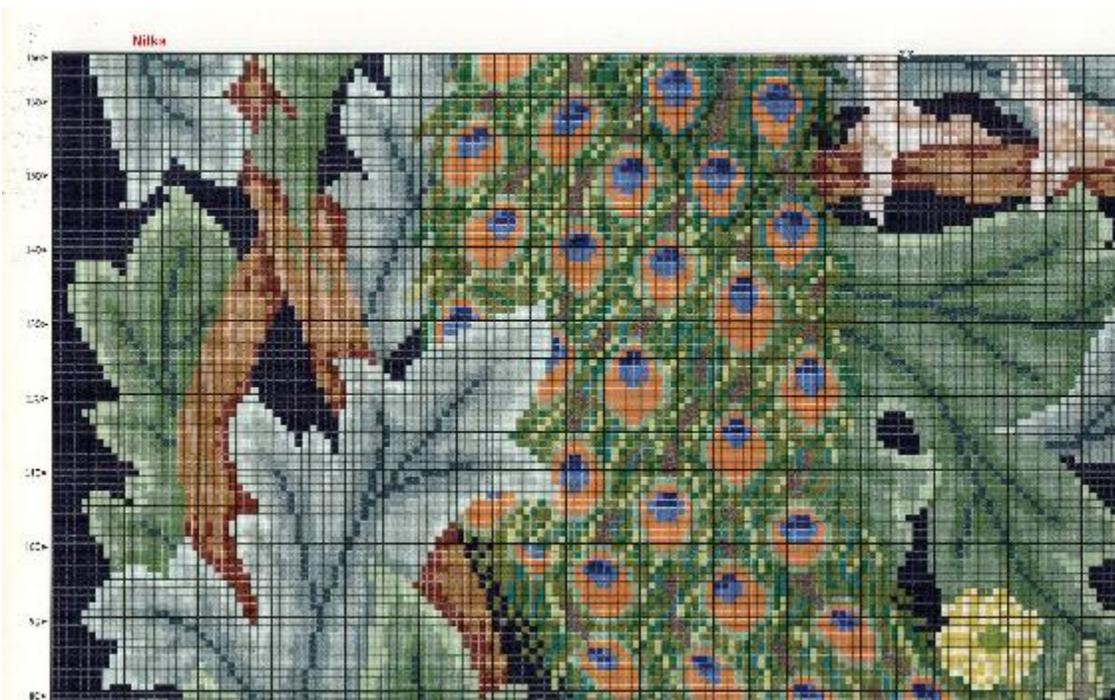




CHART AND COLOUR KEY
 This is the bottom part of the
 Panache chart. See the key on
 page 1 for the top part.

Nilka

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 704 Scarlet | 412 Light blue-green |
| 236 Dark pink | 441 Light dusty turquoise |
| 238 Light pink | 447 Darker green |
| 473 Dark orange-ginger | 355 Dark jade green |
| 477 Mid orange-ginger | 331 Light sage green |
| 760 Ginger | 154 Darker grey blue |
| 491 Yellow | 188 Mid grey blue |
| 372 Pearly blue | 151 Lighter grey-blue |
| 181 Dark chocolate | 326 Turquoise |
| 415 Mid brown | 321 Light turquoise |
| 339 Light pinkish grey | 166 Mottled blue |
| 761 Light blue | 488 Regal blue-golden |
| 156 Darker teal green | 460 Very dark muted blue |



- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 761 Light blue | 484 Bright emerald blue |
| 336 Darker teal green | 460 Very dark muted blue |
| 133 Green | 324 Dark royal blue |
| 131 Mid green | 461 Muted blue |
| 133 Light sage green | 998 Charcoal |
| 132 Lighter green | 966 Extra grey |
| 298 Cress green | 989 Light grey |
| 144 Mid blue-green | 152 Navy (background) |
- © Heidi Paine



Nilka

Raven Nilka

EDGAR ALLAN POE describes a raven best: 'In there copped a stately Raven of the stately days of yore...Ghastly grin and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore'. What a mystical bird it is. Why, however, does it sit like an imposing punctuation at the edge of Morris's tapestry *The Forest*? In my search for an explanation I became quite fascinated, and the more I learn, the more I admire this powerful and most intelligent of birds. Ravens can live for 60 years and are said to mate for life; when one dies, a younger bird replaces it, so it could be said that the couple are immortal.

Since Noah sent it from the Ark, the raven has symbolized different things in many cultures. It can be seen on the totem poles of some North American Indians, who considered it to be the discoverer of fire. In Ireland, the raven was domesticated and its different calls were interpreted as divinations. In Christian symbolism it is Satan. In Welsh folklore, it is looked on more gently – blind people are said to recover their sight if they are kind to ravens. And a Celtic myth tells us that King Arthur may return in the form of a raven. For hundreds of years ravens have been kept in the Tower of London with their wings clipped, as legend has it that if they leave the Tower, the Kingdom will fall.

The Anglo Saxon word for raven is *Hrafn* and the chief Norse god, Odin, was also the *Hrafnagud*, the Raven God. Now I feel we are closer to Morris, for he loved and indeed translated many of the Norse legends. Odin had two ravens and carried one on each shoulder; they were called Hugin, who represented thought, and Mugin, memory. Each day they were sent to question the living and the dead and returned before nightfall to report to their master on the state of the world.

Now I had found the inspiration and could hardly have been more enthusiastic; the interpretation was the next task. The overpowering impression left



by the raven is that it is completely black. Tackling the colours, or rather the lack of them, was a problem. Encouraged by the fact that Morris had faced the same problem with woad and had overcome it, I started to sketch. I made several birds. Using primarily black simply produced a silhouette; introducing blues and greens to indicate the sheen often resulted in a better shaped bird but the plumage was too colourful. Obviously, I could use only the darkest colours, but how was I to show the rounded wing against the head and tail, and indicate the feathers? After much time and studding, my colleague Selina Winter hit on the idea of two 'sets' of colours to differentiate between the various parts of the bird, so the wings became very slightly blue and the rest green. We had quite a lot of fun as the Raven developed. It is now just as I had wanted – strong, slightly ominous and very mysterious.

ABOVE: THIS WOULD BE EDUCATION FROM THE 15TH-CENTURY *ALPHABET DEVEZE*. IT HAS ALL THE EVIL HUNGER OF SOME OF WILLIAM DE MORRIS'S BEST. WHAT STYLE AND IMAGINATION THESE ILLUSTRATIONS DEMONSTRATE.

PARALLEL: THE GRIFIN STANDS GUARD IN FRONT OF A 16TH-CENTURY HERPESACE IN QUEEN ANNE'S BEDROOM AT BRIDGTON CASTLE IN WEST SUSSEX'S COUNTRYSIDE. THE CARVED HEAD AND FEET ARE THE WORK OF WILLIAM MORRIS.



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COLOR AND COLOUR KEY

	503 Darker red 1 skein
	147 Red 1 skein
	555 Dusky yellow 1 skein
	501 Light yellow 1 skein
	672 Faded yellow 1 skein
	575 Faded blue 1 skein
	155 Darker sage green 2 skeins
	154 Mid sage green 2 skeins
	152 Light green 2 skeins
	293 Grey-green 2 skeins
	644 Darker blue-green 6 skeins
	642 Mid blue-green 6 skeins
	641 Light greenish turquoise 3 skeins
	159 Deep green blue (see mixture below)
	157-159 Green-blue 1 skein of each
	156 Darkest grey-blue 3 skeins
	155 Mid grey-blue 4 skeins
	154 Light grey-blue 4 skeins
	321 Light turquoise 2 skeins
	328 Deep marine blue (see mixture below)
	326-328 Marine blue 1 skein of each
	422 Darker coral-flesh 1 skein
	461 Lighter coral-flesh 1 skein
	967 Dark grey 1 skein
	965 Mid grey 1 skein
	993 Black 3 skeins
	152 Navy blue (see mix)
	M.O.G. paint

MATERIALS FOR THE RAVEN CUSHION

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 18 x 18in (46 x 46cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 14 x 14in (35.5 x 35.5cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

This unusual design can be made into a cushion, fire-screen, stool or workbox top. On very fine canvas it would make a lovely top for a jewellery box or a really interesting book cover; it might be fun to try it in silks or cottons, but do make sure that you have the colours for the Raven itself before you start.

Always remember that you can change the size of the design by changing the canvas gauge. As a chair seat it would probably need to be larger, so choose a coarser canvas and be prepared to extend the foreground flowers to cover the front of the chair. Work your sizes out carefully.

The challenge of giving shape to a black bird has been met here by using two 'sets' of colours and by making the lightest shade in each set by blending two colours. In the chart the greener portions of the bird are clearly defined from the bluer parts. Work the lightest shade in the greener parts with one thread of 157 and two of 159 in the needle, the next shade with three threads of 159, and the darkest shade with three threads of black (993). Similarly, in the bluer areas, work the lightest shade with one thread of 326 and two threads of 328. The chart shows clearly where the various shades in the feathers are positioned.

Work the entire pupil of the eye using black (993), and create the glint in the pupil by oversewing a tiny cross using white sewing cotton.

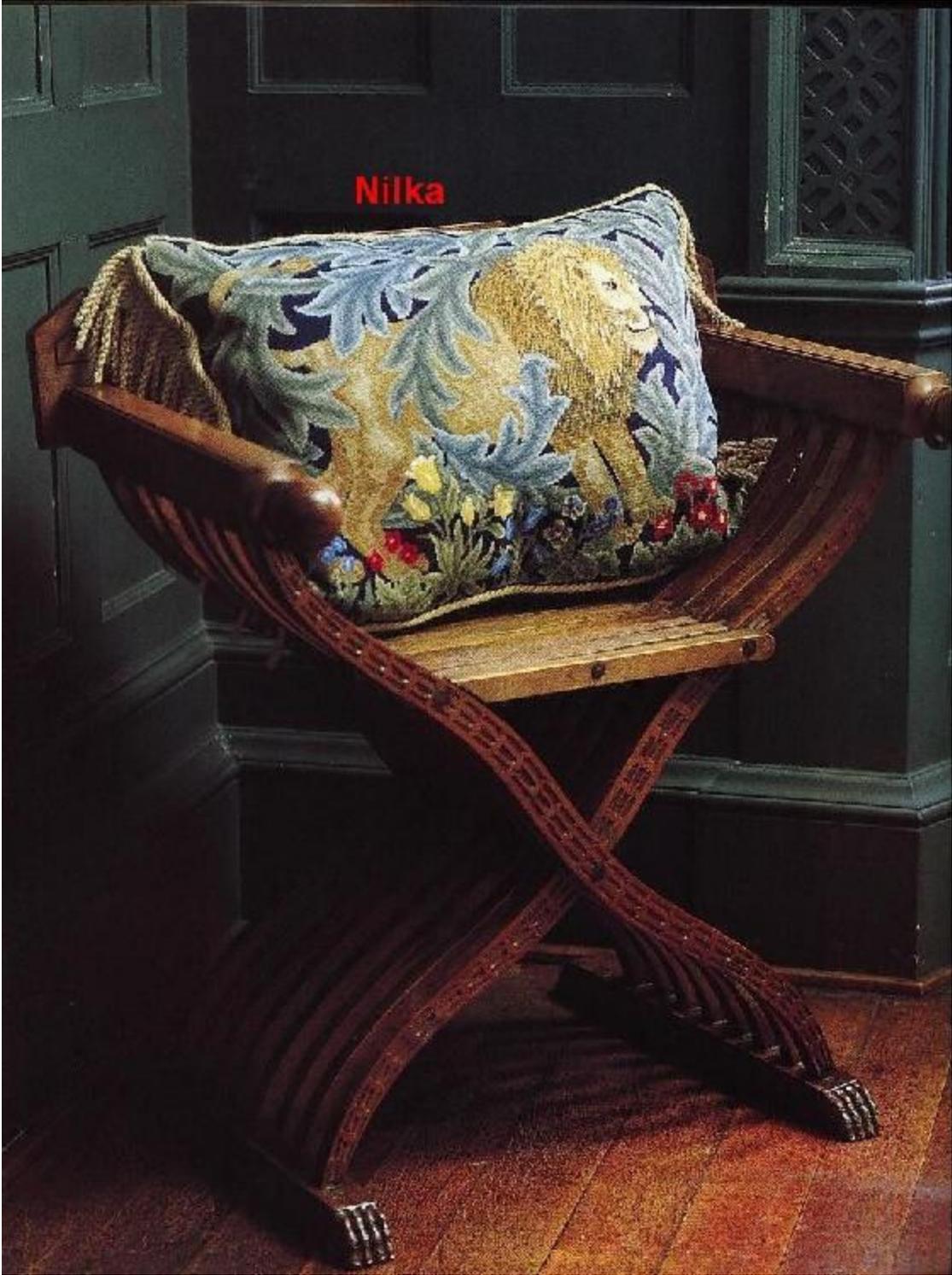
The large acanthus leaves in the background are worked in two 'sets' of colours, the greener sides of the leaves with 156, 644, 642 and 641, the bluer sides with 156, 155, 154 and 321. All the leaf veins are worked in 156. Please note that 156 is also used in the leaves in the foreground.



THIS BEAUTIFUL BAYON, TAKEN FROM THE WATER-COLOURS PAINTED BY PHILIP WEBB FOR *THE FOREST* TAPESTRY, ACCOMPANIED THE ARTIST'S CIRCULAR IN THE JOURNAL *THE GARDEN* OF JULY 1911. WEBB WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF MORRIS'S AND OFTEN JOINED THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS THAT WERE DEPICTED IN HIS DESIGNS.







Lion **Nilka**

The crest of heraldic symbols, the lion, looks incredibly lifelike as it moves majestically through Morris's medieval *Forest* tapestry, illustrated on pages 14-15. With his dignified self-confidence, he quite rightly takes centre stage.

While Morris was at Oxford, he had been obliged to keep his hair and beard well trimmed. When he left, he quite abandoned those niceties and his hair and beard grew pretty well uncontrolled for the rest of his life. This is a description of Morris's reaction when someone made the mistake of criticizing the work of his great friend and colleague Edward Burne-Jones: 'His eyes flamed as with actual fire, his shaggy mane rose like a burning crest, his whiskers and moustache bristled like pine needles, he stormed up and down the room like a caged lion.' It was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that Morris was likened to the King of Beasts.

Although used to seeing films and photographs of lions, I was quite unprepared for the excitement I felt when I first saw one in the wild. At the time, I had already started work on my Lion design; he was drawn and I was at the colour-choosing stage. My two-week holiday to Kenya with my husband was intended as a total break from stitching, and I had not anticipated any connection between the two. Everything about that first wild lion was so powerful – its size, the smoothness of movement, the deceptively slow turning of the head. I was awestruck. On my return from Kenya my mind was a complete jumble of soft, sandy, smooth tones, and I was terribly anxious not to lose the precise memory of what I had seen.

The drawings for all the creatures depicted in *The Forest* had been completed some time before our trip, and the Raven, Fox and Hare had all been stitched and sewn together as a triptych. As the Peacock's colourings were still causing me to hesitate, I decided to work on the Lion next.

The usefulness of a finished piece of stitching is not of primary importance to me; I want it to work as a piece of art in its own right. I wanted to make the Lion in the correct proportion to the other creatures. It was not until it was completed as a rather grand cushion, with the trimming fringe, that I realized what a handsome stool cover it would make, if I could only find the perfect piece of furniture. The success of the large Peacock hanging, which is shown on page 19, has given me the urge to see the Lion on that broader gauge of canvas, too. I can hardly imagine a more dramatic wall decoration.

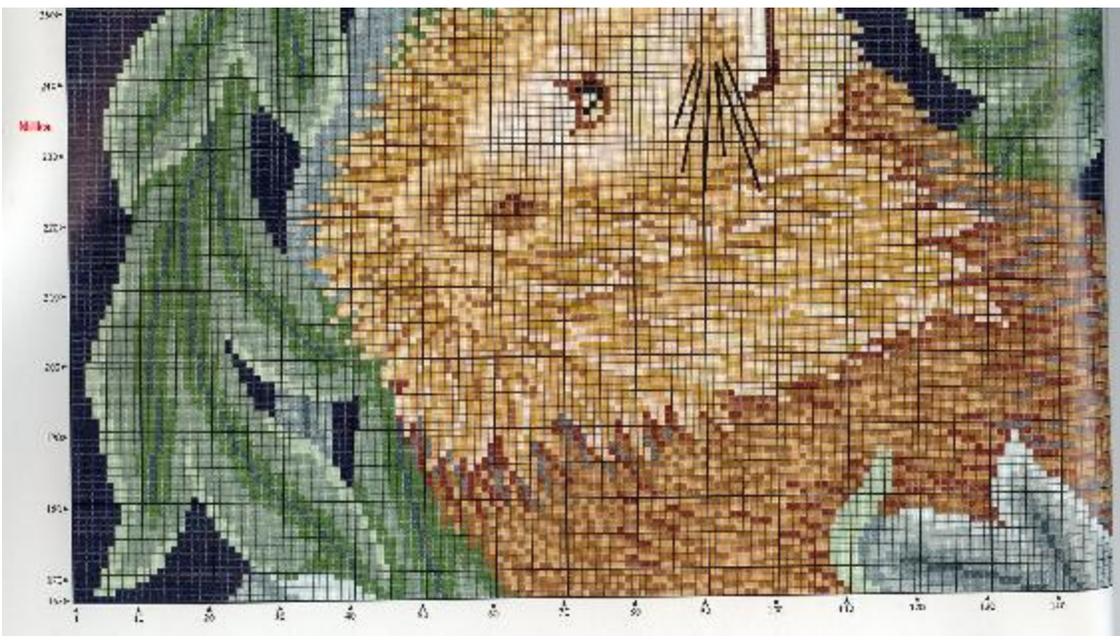
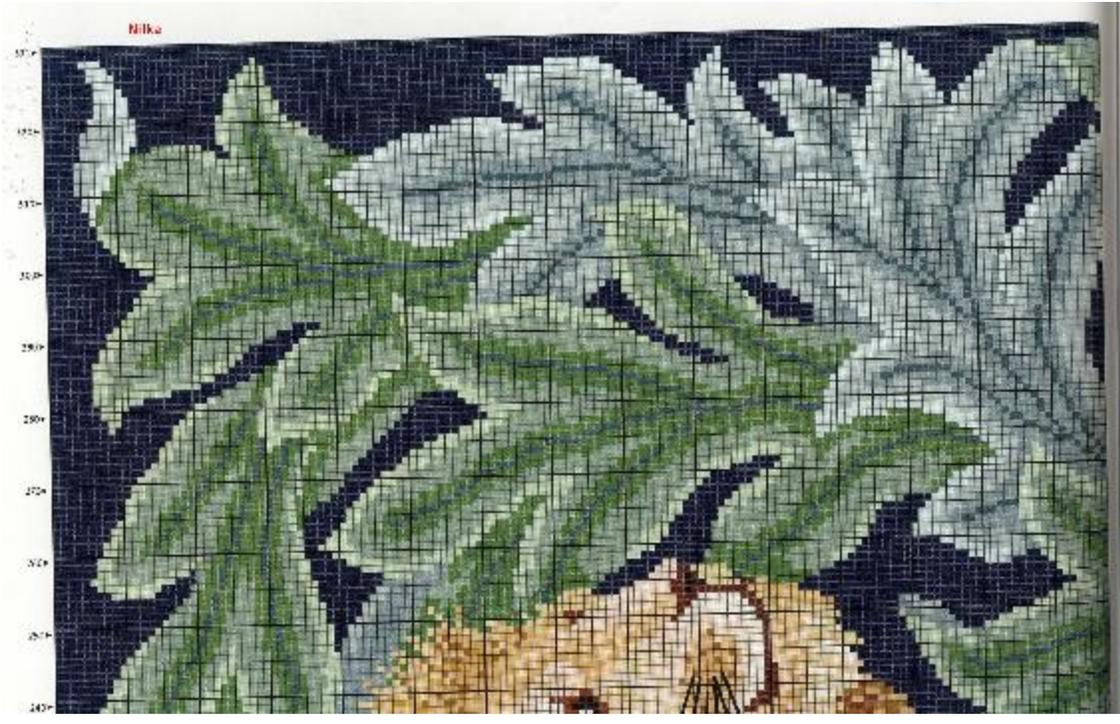
The branches that wind through Morris's huge original weaving look a little confusing when viewed in small pieces, and I therefore omitted them in my Lion. They do make sense with the Peacock, however, because he is standing on one of them, so I included them only in that design. I also left out the motto, as there was no sensible place to put it in the divided sections. I thought a great deal about the border that frames the original tapestry so well, but I felt that it would become too dominant around the creature on my designs and separate them more than I wanted.

The sheer size of the original did offer Morris's weavers more scope for detail. I was worried that the Lion's face might not be quite right on my needlepoint – a few stitches can result in a totally different expression or a complete lack of realism. The different textures of hair, from the light and then dark manes to the smooth, muscular back, were as difficult to achieve in their way as were the variety of colours in my Peacock design and the shades of black in my Raven.



ABOVE THIS QUANTUM LION IS FROM A 1970s-INSPIRED BECKER COLLECTION. THE ARTIST HAS NOT, HOWEVER, WELLED AND PAINTED WITH LIONS!

FAR LEFT THIS SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HERRINGBONE, EVELYN T. MUIR (1858-1920), IT SEEMS JUST THE THING TO PHOTOGRAPH A CUSHION. LION SETS IT PERFECTLY. THE WELLED PILLIO WELLS HOUSE WAS DECORATED FOR THE BRACE FAMILY BY MORRIS & CO. IN THE 1890s.





NOTE: The flowers were added after the background was completed. However, as a few shades of green were used, the natural colour can be used to make the straight stitching. Or, if you wish, you can try making a pattern of the flowers.

Notes

SHADE AND COLOUR KEY
The colour key was made in Australia and is of the same size as the original model.

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|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 50 Dark red
1 skein | 52 Red
1 skein | 104 Dark green
1 skein | 100 Light green
1 skein | 472 Deep yellow
1 skein | 470 Yellow
1 skein | 882 Light green
7 skeins | 210 Grey-green
1 skein | 644 Dark forest green
2 skeins | 642 Mid forest green
1 skein | 640 Light green turquoise
1 skein | 64 Dark grey blue
1 skein |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|



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| 472 Deep yellow
1 skein | 470 Yellow Notes
1 skein | 465 Deep honey
1 skein | 462 Light honey
1 skein | 472 Pastel yellow
1 skein | 455 Dark chocolate
1 skein | 461 Chocolate
1 skein | 465 Dark brown
1 skein | 455 Ginger
1 skein | 452 Gold brown
1 skein | 450 Light gold brown
1 skein | 461 Mid beige
2 skeins | 455 Light sage green
2 skeins | 454 Mid sage green
4 skeins | 640 Light sage turquoise
1 skein | 634 Darkest grey blue
1 skein | 632 Mid grey blue
1 skein | 630 Light grey blue
1 skein | 628 Light turquoise
1 skein | 625 Mid turquoise
1 skein | 622 Light turquoise
1 skein | 620 Light blue
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CHART 200 (continued)

This is the left-hand side of the
Lionhead. See the key on page 52
for the colour codes.

304 Dark red	350 Light green
305 Red <i>Milka</i>	393 Grey-green
104 Dark mauve	344 Dark blue-green
102 Light mauve	442 Mid blue-green
473 Deep yellow	443 Light green turquoise
472 Yellow	196 Teal/sea grey-blue
695 Terra berry	195 Mid grey-blue
692 Light berry	254 Light grey-blue
472 Partial yellow	521 Light turquoise
903 Dark cinnamon	468 Blue seaflower
186 Chestnut	441 Top seaflower
912 Dark fawn	581 Tiger hazel



186 Chestnut	462 Light seaflower
915 Dark brown	581 Light hazel
903 Ginger <i>Milka</i>	993 Charcoal
902 Gold-brown	974 Elephant grey
901 Light gold-brown	986 Light beige
703 Kid beige	988B Blue
195 Dark sea green	452 Navy blue special
351 Mid sea green	or <i>Milka</i> teal

MATERIALS FOR THE LION CUSHION

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart

100.00 canvas measuring 21 x 27in (53 x 69cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

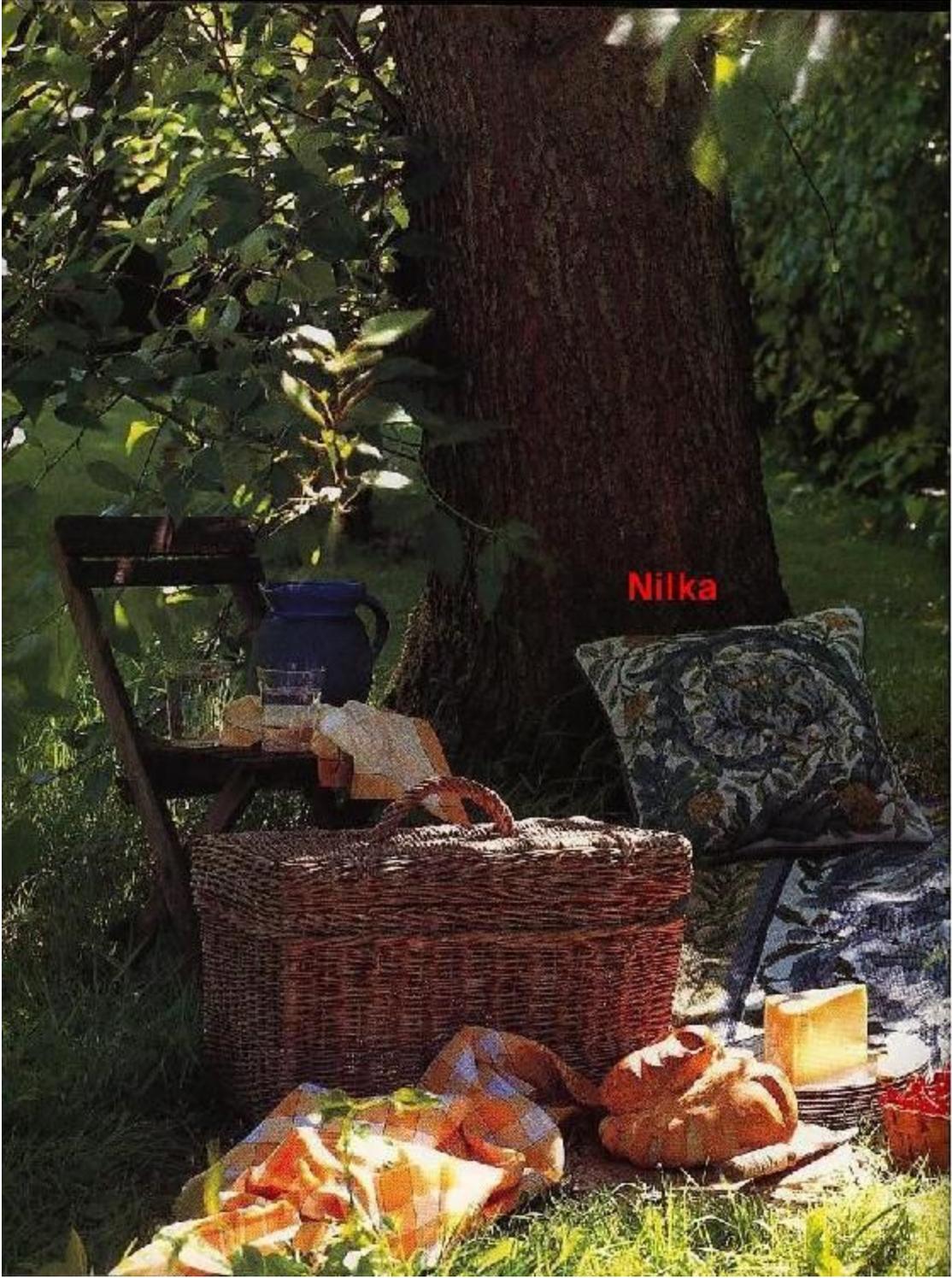
Needle: Size 22 tapestry

Finished size of design: 17 x 23in (43 x 58.5cm)

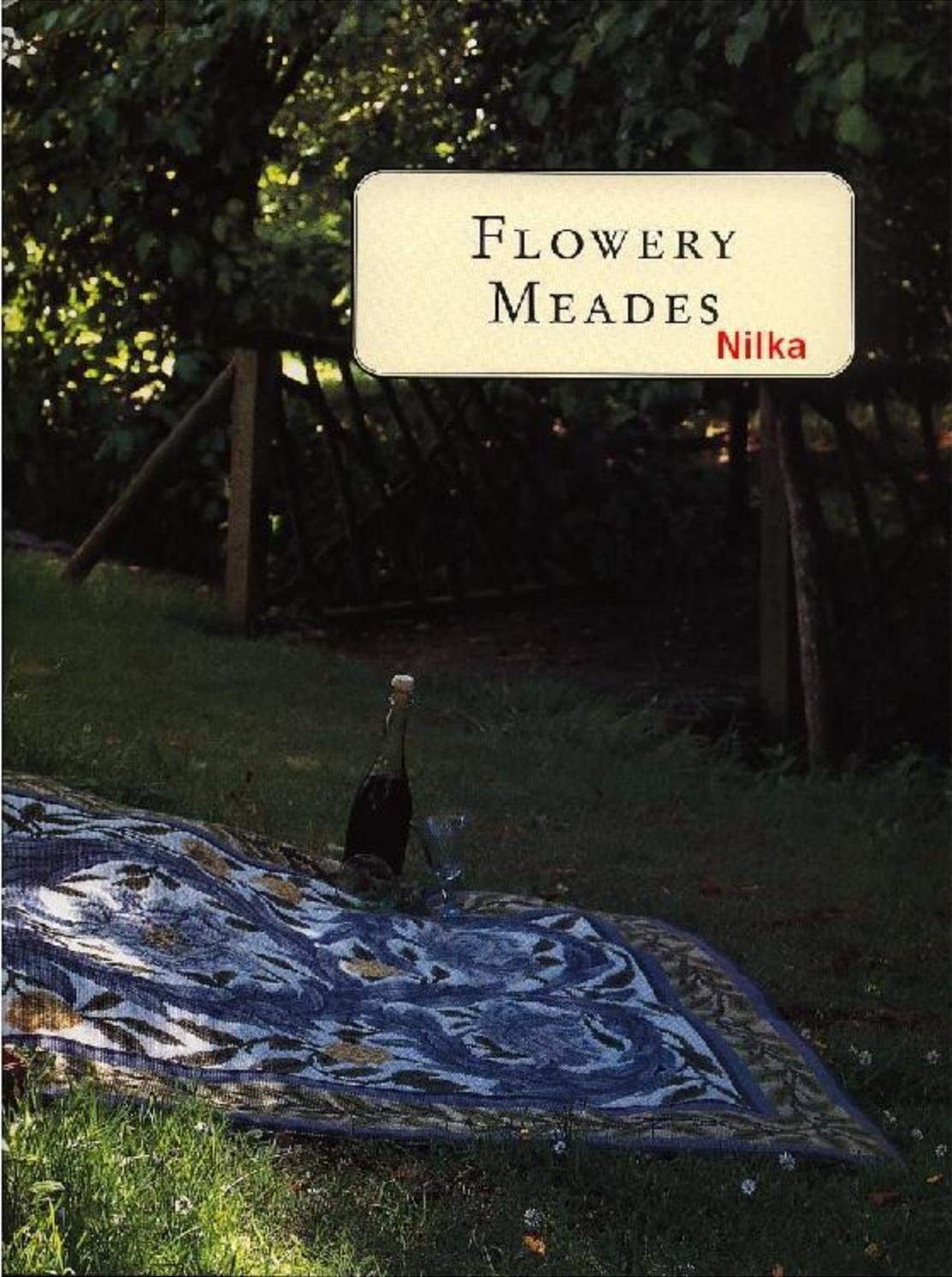
Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

The Lion can be finished off as a cushion/pillow,
wall hanging, picture or stool top.

See the Peacock for details of the acanthus leaves.



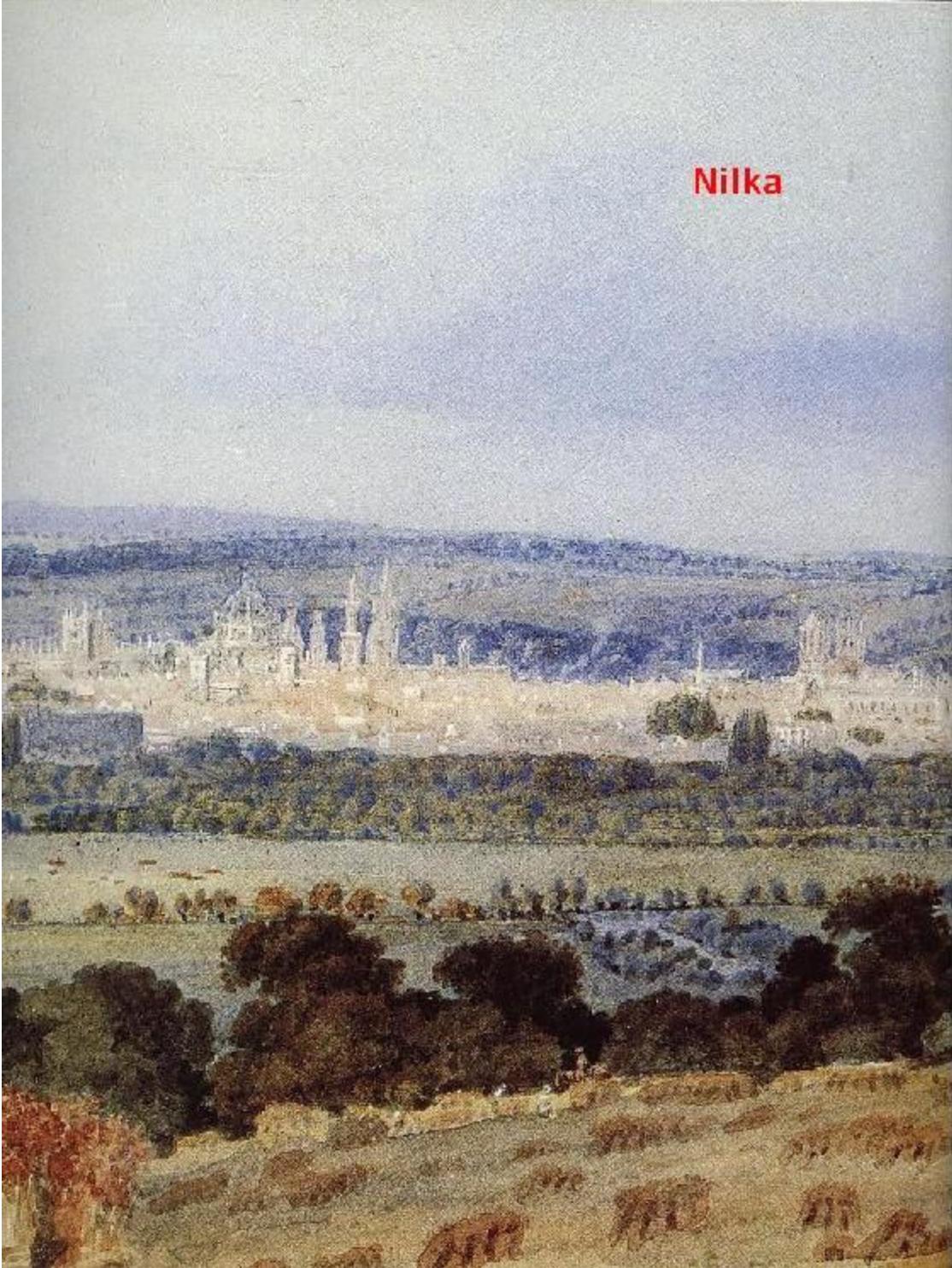
Nilka

A photograph of a meadow at dusk. In the foreground, a blue and white patterned picnic blanket is spread on the grass. A dark bottle of mead and a glass are on the blanket. In the background, a wooden fence and trees are visible under a dark sky with some light filtering through the leaves.

FLOWERY
MEADES

Nilka

Nilka





Nilka

And as we slipped between the lovely summer
greenery I almost felt my youth come back to me...
when I was too happy to think that there could be
much amiss anywhere

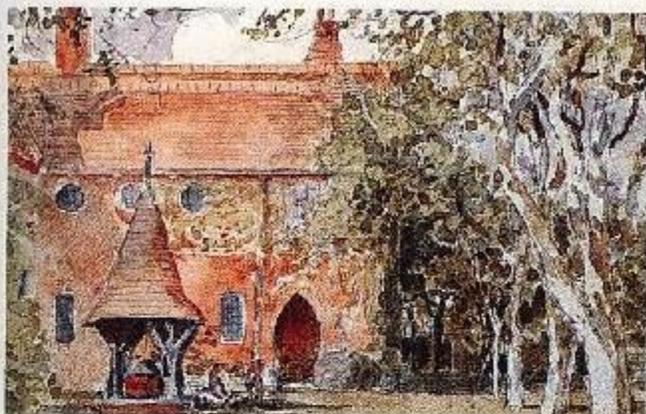
Notes from Nilka, 1890

MORRIS ENTERED OXFORD UNIVERSITY in 1853 at the age of nineteen. It was here that he met all the people who were to have the greatest influence on his future. With a group of very close friends, this was a time of uninhibited enjoyment—political discussions, poetry readings, practical jokes, enormous comradeship and the burgeoning of all the gifts that Morris was to develop so fully.

At the Oxford entrance examination Morris sat next to Edward Burne-Jones and their friendship and artistic collaboration were to last a lifetime. Their studies, ostensibly to enter the Church, provided less of an inspiration than did the atmosphere of Oxford—‘an astounding, romantic and medieval city’, rich in architecture, art, literature and history. The summer vacation that they spent together walking in France, rhapsodizing about cathedrals and churches, established their joint enthusiasm for ‘a life of Art’, and at the time Morris wrote a gentle letter to his mother explaining, ‘I do not hope to be great at all in anything but perhaps I may reasonably hope to be happy in my work and sometimes when I am idle and doing nothing, pleasant visions go past me of the things that may be.’ Morris was rarely to be found doing nothing, but he retained the ability to see pleasant visions all his life. His mother had to wait many years before he was to find his true destiny.

A DETAIL FROM A DEERBY
VIEW OF OXFORD FROM
KINGSYARD, PAINTED BY
WILLIAM TURNER (1789-
1857). MORRIS WAS VERY
HAPPY IN THIS MEDIEVAL
CITY DURING HIS
UNDERGRADUATE YEARS. IN
1877, HE WAS INVITED TO
BECOME PROFESSOR OF
POETRY, BUT HE DECLINED.

Nilka



ABOVE: WIFE AND MORRIS PLANNED THIS URBAN HOME TOGETHER. QUITE REVOLUTONARY IN DESIGN, RED HOUSE LAY THE SCENE OF MORRIS AND JANIS'S LIFE TOGETHER AND THE FOUNDERS OF 'THE FIRM'. RED HOUSE IS NOW THE HOME OF THE ARCHITECT EDWARD FORTY-NINE.

EARLIGHT RUSSELL PAINTED THIS PORTRAIT OF JANIS IN 1865 AT MORRIS'S REQUEST. HIS INSCRIPTION IS LATELY TRANSLATED AS 'HER VARIOUS GRACES AND HER PURE SENSE SUFFICED, LET NONE WHO'S AFFECTION MAKE US MIST, NOT UNDESIGNED, MORRIS WAS UNCONSCIOUSLY PUT THE PREDICATIVE PRINTING AND SENT IT BACK TO BE REWORKED. FINALLY, HE CONTESTED HER GRACE WITH CLAIMING THAT THE FRAME WAS IN OTHER HANDS. SHE SEEMED TO BE MORE BLOOD

Morris believed that architecture was the basis of all art and so, after completing his ecclesiastical studies (to please his mother), he apprenticed himself to E. J. Street, the architect responsible for the gothic-style Law Courts in the Strand, London. Here, Morris formed a close and lasting friendship with Philip Webb, who was destined to design both his married home, Red House at Becheybeath, and his tombstone at Kelmscott.

Like a shadow, the Pre-Raphaelite painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti entered Morris's life and his influence can hardly be underestimated. He tutored Burne-Jones in the art of painting and it was not long before he had seduced Morris to join them in lodgings in Red Lion Square, London, where they were all to paint. Morris's mother was distraught at yet another change of direction in her son's career and unjustly blamed Burne-Jones.

The summer of 1857 was spent at Rossetti's suggestion back at Oxford. He introduced his new young model, 15-year-old Jane Burden, to the group, and Morris fell immediately and lastingly in love. Her strange beauty was much admired and it was this that provided her with a passport from her poor family background to the fashionable world of the Pre-Raphaelites. Although 'Janey' was so say

later in life that she never loved Morris, they were married in Oxford, two days after his 25th birthday.

Around the time of his marriage, deeply in love and very happy, Morris eagerly made plans with Philip Webb for his dream house; this was Webb's first commission. They found the perfect site in an orchard, which was only a short train journey away from London. Although he was to remain there for only five years, it is at Red House that we see the most complete picture of Morris. This homely home, where the gardens and orchard flowed into the house, was where his children were born, where Burne-Jones and his wife Georgiana, Rossetti and his wife the painter Lizzie Siddal, and many other friends spent weekends painting walls, ceilings and furniture. There was much discussion, reading aloud, eating, drinking and playing of games.

While at Red House, Morris at last found his way; he abandoned painting and, as he said, became a 'celebrator'. With a £100 loan from his mother, Morris and his friends – Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Webb, Ferd Madox Brown, Marshall and Faulkner – formed 'The Firm'. This multi-talented group wished to re-create the standards of craftsmanship lost in the Industrial Revolution. At their premises in Red Lion Square, all the partners and their families were involved in making stained glass, furniture, embroidery, carving and metalwork, and their creative business was often continued at weekends at Red House.

Morris planned to move the whole enterprise to Red House and hoped that Burne-Jones and family would move in, too. Webb prepared plans for an extension to the house. Tragically, ill health struck the Burne-Jones's and, not having the cushion of financial security that Morris had, they decided not to leave London. Morris was bitterly disappointed and later confessed that he had cried at the news.

In the autumn of 1863 the Morris family sadly too to leave of their perfect home and moved with the business, which had outgrown Red Lion Square, to Queen Square, London. Red House featured much in their dreams, but they were never to return.

Nilka





African Marigold

Nilka

THE BEAUTY OF the painted design for Morris's *African Marigold* fabric is its exquisite delicacy of line and colour; I found it breathtaking when I first saw it at the William Morris Gallery. The large blue leaves look as if they are being blown by a breeze – this marvellous movement, interwoven with the smaller foliage, can only be a Morris creation.

Morris had a passion for colour and he was extremely knowledgeable about it. We can only imagine his anger when he discovered that the colours he so admired in old fabrics belonged to a lost age, that the relatively new chemical dyeing had eradicated all trace of old methods. The new colours were not just unpleasant but unstable.

Characteristically, when Morris first decided to develop his own dyes, he turned to old books to learn how to dye with madder, walnut shells, indigo and other natural ingredients. He set up experiments in the scullery at his home in Queen Square and, in fact, dyed embroidery threads there.

The manager of 'The Firm' was George Wardle, whose brother Thomas owned a dyeing factory in Leek, Staffordshire. Their father had been a renowned silk dyer who had used the old methods 50 years earlier but, sadly, had taken much of the knowledge to his grave. Thomas Wardle was as keen as Morris to rediscover his father's skill.

Morris, exhibiting the usual uninhibited eagerness that emerged each time he worked on a new project, spent weeks at a time in Leek, more often than not in the dye house. He happily refers to himself as a dyer's mate and describes a morning helping Thomas Wardle and four others dye 20 pounds of silk in a copper vat, six feet wide, sunk nine feet into the ground. For three years, Morris's hands were almost permanently blue, which caused great hilarity among his friends and a certain amount of embarrassment to him when he returned to the London social scene.

Blue was Morris's favourite colour and it was intended that the *African Marigold* fabric be dyed blue using the 'indigo discharge' method – a process requiring a great deal of skill. At first, this method proved to be most elusive. Thomas Wardle was always very anxious to please the exacting Morris, but he failed in the final printing of *African Marigold*. After five months of experimentation with indigo, he must have despaired and used the much easier Prussian blue. Morris, of course, let his disappointment be known. The harsh colours of that printing were as different as they could be from the gentle blues in the original painting. Morris had to wait until he moved his company to Merton Abbey before he successfully printed with indigo.

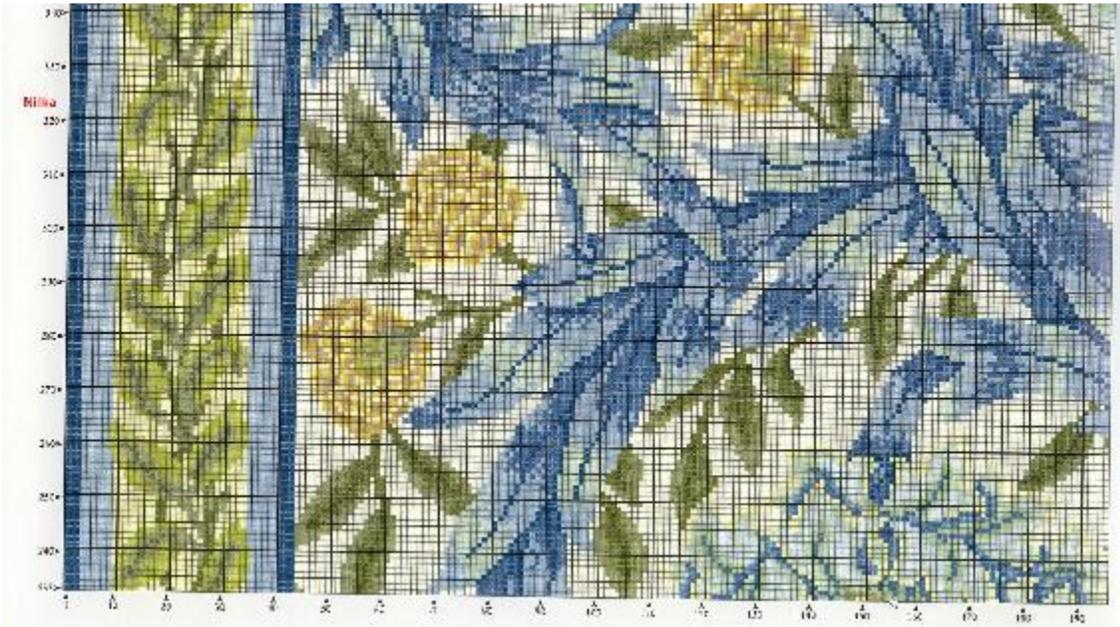
Interestingly, the first time that *African Marigold* appeared in front of the public was as a silk version under Thomas Wardle's name at the Paris Exhibition in 1878. Nowadays the fabric is still produced by Liberty of London in a variety of colours, including a soft grey-blue.

African Marigold has, of course, a repeating pattern, but a glance at the painting always puts me in mind of a rug. Several years ago I produced a cushion using the central flower and loved the result, pleased that I had retained the delicate feel of the water-colours. This made the development of my rug design much easier. I tipped the central flower upright for the sake of symmetry. The small repetitive climbing leaves in the border do not compete with the generous swirls of the centre and frame the rug gently.



ABOUT MY INSPIRATION FOR THE AFRICAN MARIGOLD TEXTILE: I LOVE THIS BEAUTIFUL WATER-COLOUR AND PENCIL DRAWING, WHICH MORRIS DID IN 1876. YOU CAN SEE IT AT THE EXCELLENT WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY IN WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON.

PAULEY: THE BIG SWIRLS, THE MOUNTAIN STONE FLOOR OF THE ORANGERY AT HASTEDORRE HOUSE, SWITZERLAND.





CLARITY AND COLOUR KEY

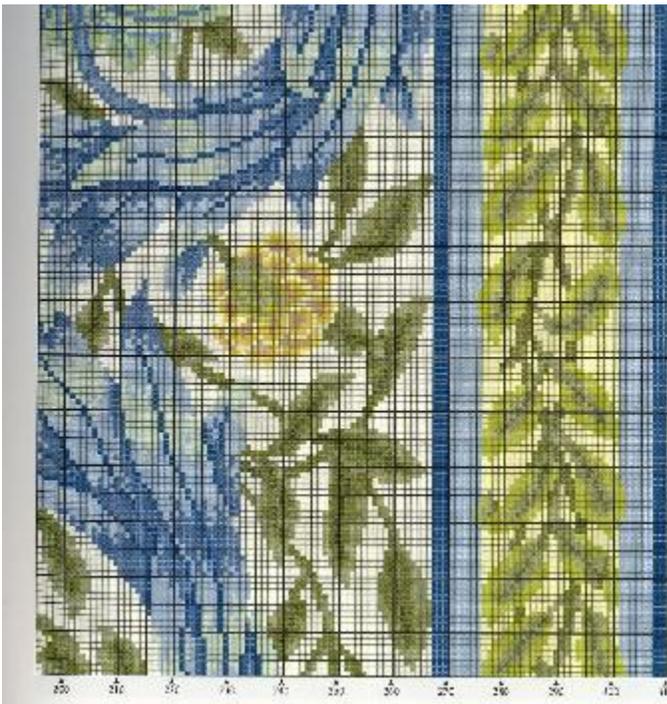
The African Marigold rug was made in Appleton tapestry wool. The use of the chart appears on page 157.

Notes

698 Deep yellow 3 skeins	541 Light green-turquoise 2 skeins
692 Soft yellow 1 skein	531 Light turquoise 4 skeins
690 Very pale yellow 6 skeins	425 Darkest neutral blue 3 skeins + 2 skeins
621 Light brown 2 skeins	334 Dark neutral blue 3 skeins
794 Olive green 3 skeins	542 KG neutral blue 1 skein
286 Dark grey-green 1 skein	521 Light neutral blue 11 skeins
284 Midway green 1 skein + 1 skein	436 Very pale blue 1 skein
294 Light grey-green 3 skeins + 2 skeins	692 Ivory background 8 skeins
	8 White/glass

MATERIALS FOR THE AFRICAN MARIGOLD RUG

Canvas: 8 threads/in (3/cm) Zweigart interlock rug canvas measuring approximately 48 x 67in (122 x 170cm)



MATERIALS FOR THE AFRICAN MARIGOLD RUG

Canvas: 8 threads/in (3/cm) Zweigart interlock rug canvas measuring approximately 48 x 67in (122 x 170cm)

Notes

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

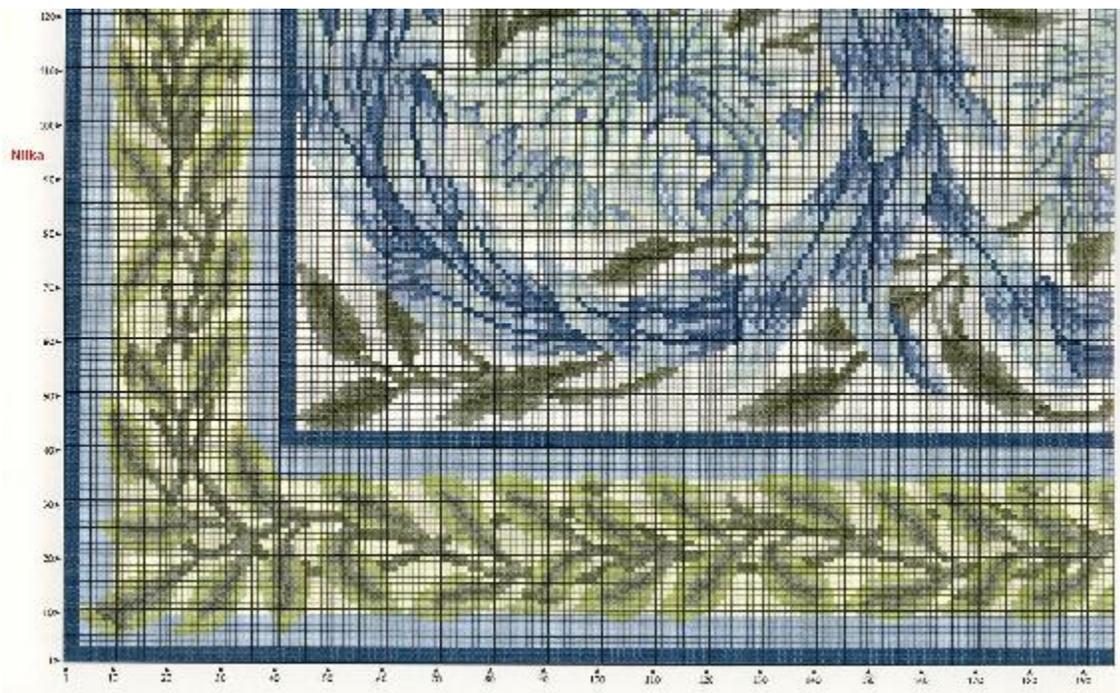
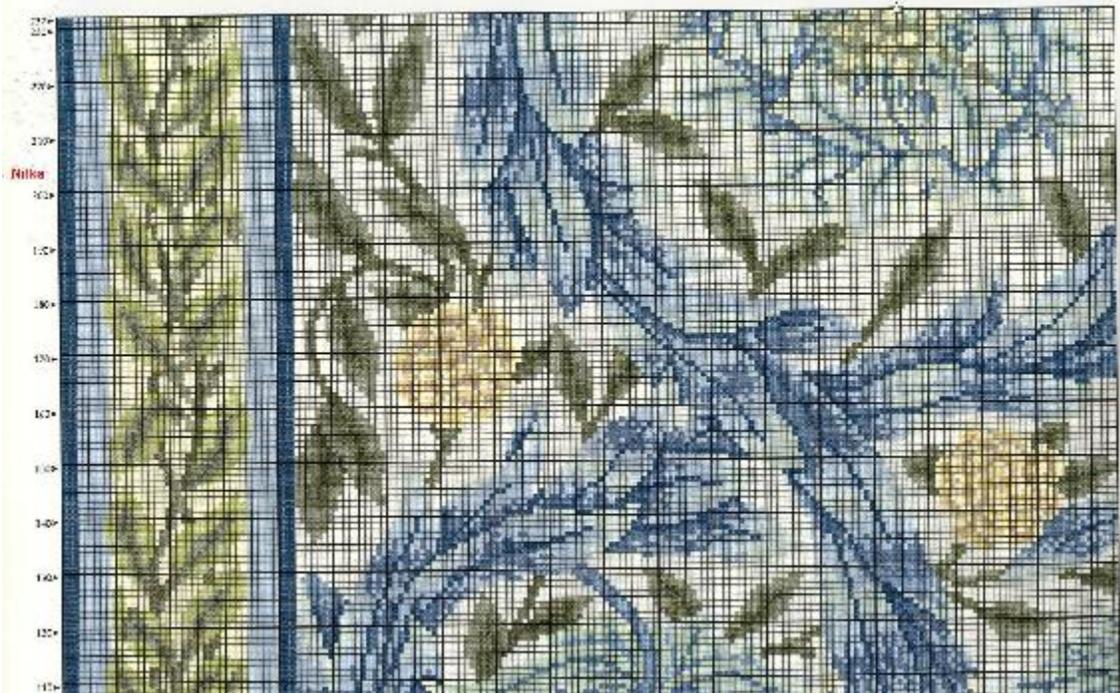
Needle: Size 16 tapestry

Finished size of design: 42 x 61in (106.5 x 155cm)

Stitch: Cross stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

This chart by Ethel Danielson is a masterpiece. I am always amazed at how he manages to indicate the different colours so clearly without losing their subtlety. The design is not symmetrical, so it is charted here in its entirety. I am thrilled to see the large rug miniaturized – and what a pretty dressing-room stool it would make.

Please note that 692 appears as the centres of the central flower only. 521 is the main shade in the lighter petals of the four blue flowers, and also appears in the wreaths and next to the very pale blue in the central flower. 641 is the main shade in the darker petals of the four blue flowers and is around the veins in the central flower.





LEAFY AND COLOR KEY

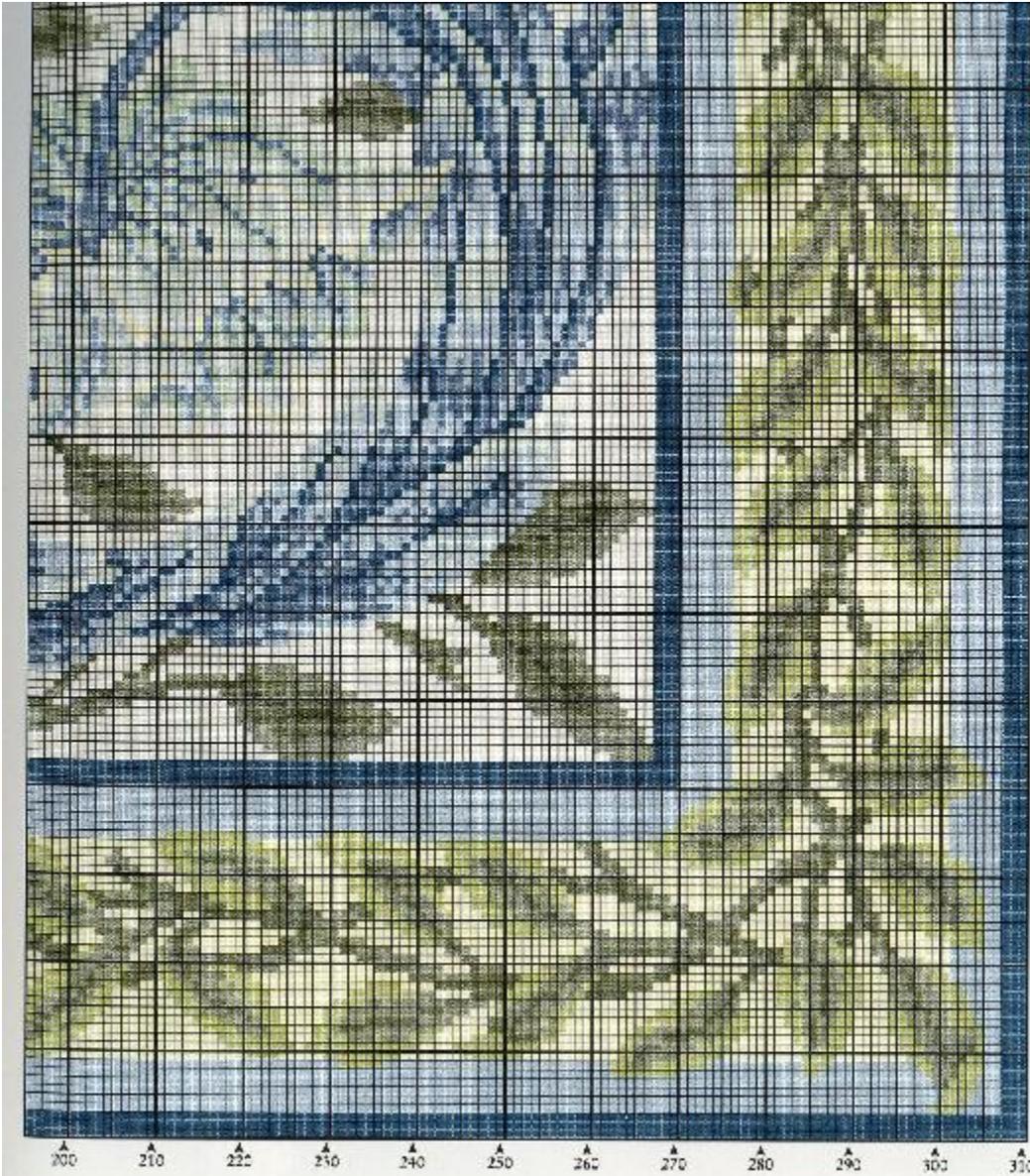
This is the color of the Adarian
 kit (gold chain). See the key on
 page 97 for thread amounts.

Nilka

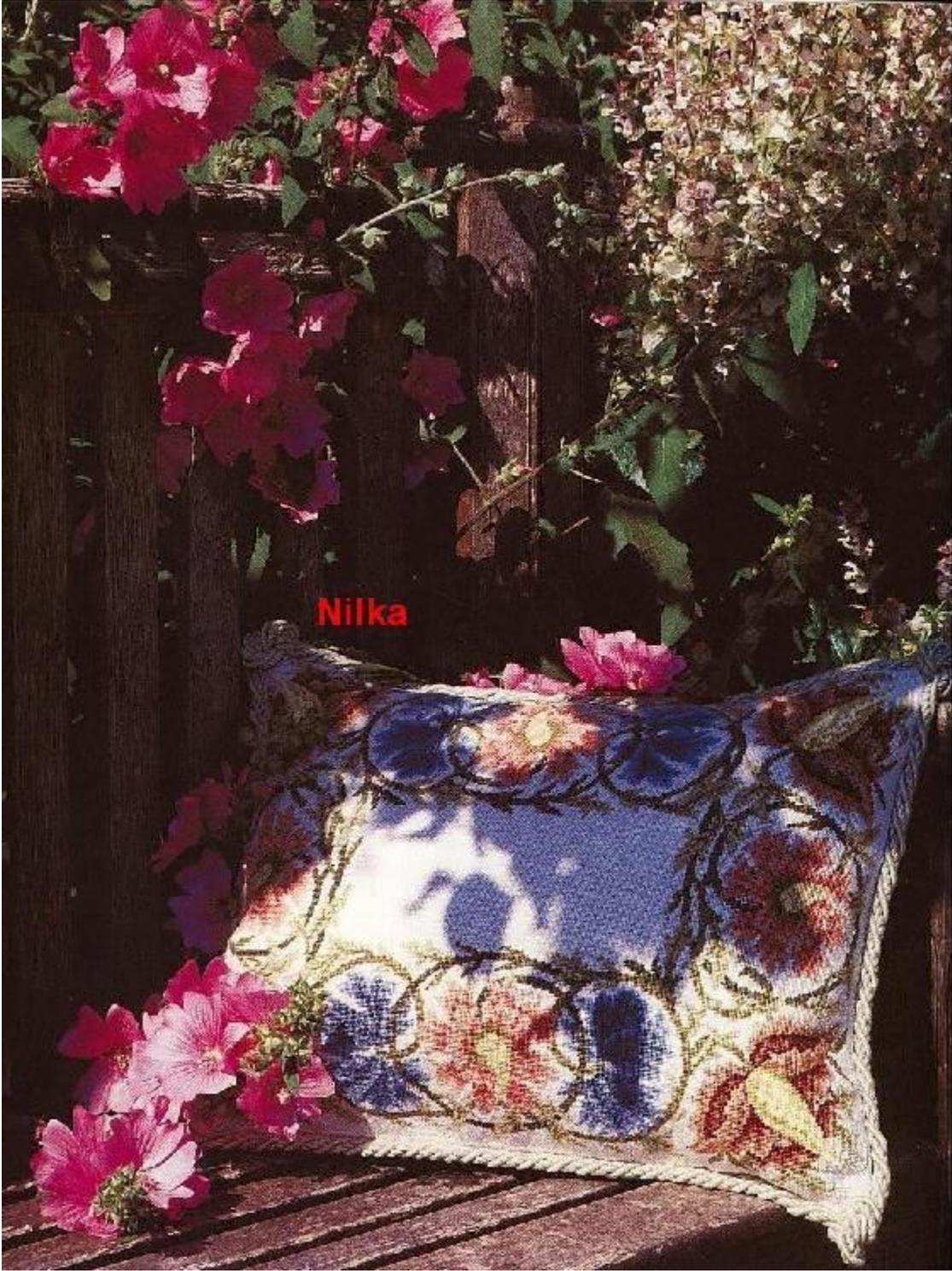
- 682 Dazzle yellow
- 682 Soft yellow
- 691 Dirty ivory
- 920 Light brown
- 884 Clear green
- 286 Dark grey-green
- 284 Mid grey-green
- 288 Light grey-green

- 691 Light creamy turquoise
- 521 Light turquoise
- 175 Dark cyan/blue
- 126 Dark washed blue
- 177 Mid marine blue
- 121 Light marine blue
- 476 Very pale blue
- 952 Ivory (background)

• Middle point.



Nilka



Flower Border

Nilka

IN THE MAJORITY of Morris & Co.'s commissions – whether they were tapestries, stained glass or illustrations – Morris himself designed the borders. He had this wonderful ability to pull things together, to frame the work appropriately. His borders are beautiful but, unlike his backgrounds, which frequently take on an importance as great as the subject, they do not overshadow or dominate – just complement the centres. As with all great designs, they can also stand on their own. It was only after I had focused on the honeysuckle border around his own *Woodpecker* tapestry that I properly appreciated this skill and set myself to study Morris's borders for their own sakes.

Once involved in this hungry hunt for borders, I could not stop, and produced the designs for my Honeysuckle, Orange and Flower Borders in quick succession. I was more interested in the result of the stitching than what to do with the needlepoints when complete. After three designs and five cushions – the result of my experimenting with background colours – I reluctantly listened to the pleas of my family and friends about a limit to the need for balsa-size cushions. However, these three border cushions, as I now call them, have kept me enthralled, and I know I could keep busy designing variations for a considerable time.

My drawing of the Flower Border had been lying dead in my studio for longer than I care to remember. As with many things that I consider very special, I tend to save them for a suitable occasion. Unlike the Honeysuckle and Orange Borders, this is clearly intended as a border only – not as a frame for something else. The flowers are too powerful to lay second fiddle to another design.

Morris had an intense interest in plants; even under pretty adverse conditions during a stay in Iceland he was able to note down and name the wild plants growing there. Everything in his design work

was based on nature. His first design for embroidery was an absolutely simple and realistic sprig of daisies. Later in life, his drawings became more complex, his plants were enlarged or diminished or twisted and changed to suit the design. The flowers in this border design are rather tropical-looking and can be seen in much of Morris's and also Henry Dearle's work.

My first interpretation of the Flower Border was a large bolster cushion, and I do like the soft background. However, it had always seemed to me to be intended as a carpet or rug. I wanted to see it as large as possible and the worry now was to find a canvas wide enough. I was rather reluctant to use the 48 threads/in canvas that was so perfect for the large Peacock hanging, shown on page 19; two threads of Appleton tapestry wool were adequate for a hanging but perhaps not for a rug, which might receive rather more wear. At 6 threads/in, the widest canvas I could find was 46in (1m), and when I had added a border, making the total width 255 stitches, the rug would measure a little more than this. However, 6 threads/in is perfect for two threads of tapestry wool, so once again I called Zweigart, who in my view make the best canvas. They helped me out by sending a length of their very wide 6 threads/in canvas and we were able to make the striking rug shown overleaf. An alternative might have been to join the border to the sides of the canvas after stitching – or use a slightly finer canvas and make a slightly smaller rug.



ABOVE: THE TREE FORTALEY TAPESTRY BY HENRY DEARLE. THE UNUSUAL FLOWERS CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN MORRIS'S WOODPECKER AS A MORRIS'S WIGER. THIS IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF REGULAR WEAVING WITH A DEEPER BIAS.

BELOW: THE FLOWER BORDER CUSHION BY WIFE DEAN SUSSEX.







CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Flower Border cushion was made in Appleton crewel wool, the rug in tapestry wool. Quantities for the cushion are given first, followed by quantities for the rug.

Mika			
	127 Dark terracotta 2 skeins/28 skeins		294 Dusky green 4 skeins/12 skeins
	125 Mid terracotta 2 skeins/7 skeins		356 Mid green 6 skeins/19 skeins
	123 Light terracotta 4 skeins/12 skeins		352 Light grey-green 7 skeins/24 skeins
	121 Pale terracotta 4 skeins/12 skeins		326 Dark marine blue 1 skein/3 skeins
	215 Deep pink 2 skeins/7 skeins		374 Mid marine blue 2 skeins/9 skeins
	212 Mid pink 2 skeins/14 skeins		322 Light marine blue 2 skeins/3 skeins
	211 Light pink 2 skeins/7 skeins		742 Frie blue 2 skeins/3 skeins
	210 Light olive green 1 skein/2 skeins		852 Navy (background) 4 skeins/12 skeins or 875 Faded grey-blue
	101 Light yellowy-green 2 skeins/6 skeins		0 Middle green
	602 Pearly yellow 1 skein/2 skeins		

MATERIALS FOR THE FLOWER BORDER CUSHION

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 20 x 25in (51 x 64cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 16 x 21in (40.5 x 53cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

MATERIALS FOR THE FLOWER BORDER RUG

Canvas: 6 threads/in (2.4/cm) Zweigart interlock rug canvas measuring 46½ x 58in (118 x 147cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 16 tapestry

Finished size of design: 35 x 47in (89 x 119cm)

Finished size of rug: 40½ x 52in (103 x 132cm)

Stitch: Cross stitch, using 2 threads of tapestry wool

There is the equivalent of six skeins in each hank of tapestry wool, if you prefer to buy it in hanks.

To make the outside edge of the rug, which is not shown on the chart, stitch five rows of the background colour outside the design, followed by five rows of dark terracotta (127), then ten rows of the background colour again.



Honeysuckle Border

Nilka

THE WOODPECKER TAPESTRY is unique. It is the only tapestry designed entirely by Morris and there is only one example of it. Measuring an impressive 967 (2.9m) in height, it was woven at Merton Abbey in 1885 and was displayed at the first Arts & Crafts Exhibition in 1888. Now we are fortunate enough to be able to view it in the William Morris Gallery at Walthamstow.

The *Woodpecker* tapestry is unique, too, in that there is nothing else remotely like it. Morris did not believe in copying; he liked to take the elements that pleased him, such as a plant or a colour or a style, and produce something individual and really original. We can see the influence of medieval designs in the acanthus leaves and the orange tree, but Morris has used them so differently and added his own poem and, of course, the border.

Honeysuckle was a favourite of Morris's. He first used it in a design he made for Janey to embroider and we can see it meandering through many of his designs. He made it rather a secondary feature in the printed linen called *Honeysuckle*, produced at Merton Abbey in 1876 by Thomas Wardle. May, his daughter, used it in the best of her three wallpapers.

Honeysuckle is an ideal plant for decoration. As well as being extremely pretty, its delicate soft shades will blend with most colours. It also climbs and curls naturally so that it can be made to appear anywhere in a design.

On both sides of Morris's *Woodpecker* tapestry there is honeysuckle climbing a branch. I had already been tempted by this pretty scene and stitched it many years ago as a hell pull. Now I wanted to see how it would look as a complete frame. Phyllis Stead, who does the initial sketches for many of my designs, provided a superb drawing that quite solved the problem of how best to maintain the flow of the design around each corner. Interestingly, it takes a while to notice

Morris's honeysuckle around the *Woodpecker*, but how dominant it is framing a small space on my Honeysuckle Border cushion. Like the Flower Border design, this would make a lovely rug.

Each time I stitched a different background, I looked at the Border designs afresh (and I must confess I looked eagerly at some new ones, too). They are really versatile, a fact that I'd quite missed when making up the cushions. The designs can be used upright as fire-screens or lengthways on a stool, as well as cushions. They can be reduced in size to frame a picture or a mirror, or greatly enlarged to make a rug. They can be dominant or delicate. With a little ingenuity you can change the proportions of the frame by elongating two sides.

The very light background on one version of the Honeysuckle Border initially disappointed me as I felt that I had lost the flowers; but now having lived with it, I like it more – nothing is really lost and I find its subtlety very restful. The background in the dark version is a colour that always surprises me; it never looks the same when stitched as it does in the hand. It can look mauve or brown, depending on the design colours it surrounds. Another very good background colour is the soft blue Appleton 324, especially if you intend to insert the Bees design (see page 62) into the rush or centre. It allows the bees to show up well without backsitching an outline.



ABOVE THE WOODPECKER TAPESTRY ALONE IS WORTH A JOURNEY TO THE WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY.

PHILLET TWO OF THE HONEYSUCKLE BORDER CUSHIONS, SHOWING THAT A DIFFERENT BACKGROUND COLOUR CAN MAKE





CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Honeysuckle Bush cushion was made in Appleton crewel wool.

- 706 Pink 4 skeins Nilka
- 702 Light pink 3 skeins
- 877 Pastel pink 3 skeins
- 854 Mid coral 2 skeins
- 861 Light coral 2 skeins
- 911 Brown 2 skeins
- 932 Mid fawn 3 skeins
- 931 Light fawn 2 skeins
- 294 Mid grey-green 3 skeins
- 292 Light grey-green 6 skeins
- 356 Mid red-green 3 skeins
- 354 Light clear green 5 skeins
- 352 Past green 8 skeins
- 935 Dark mauve (background) 4 fanks + 1 skein or 875 Pastel grey-blue
- Midle point



ABOVE: A DETAIL FROM MORRIS'S WOODSUCKER TAPESTRY, WITH ITS HONEYSUCKLE BERRIES.

MATERIALS FOR THE HONEYSUCKLE BUSH CUSHION

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 20 x 25 in (51 x 64cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 16 x 21 in (40.5 x 53cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

This chart shows 935 (dark mauve) as the background colour, although 875 (pastel grey-blue) or 324 (soft blue) can be used instead. The pastel grey-blue background can be seen on the cushion illustrated on page 54.



Orange Border

Nilka

THE BEAUTIFUL *ANGELI LAUDANTES* is one of a pair of magnificent Morris tapestries, each showing two angels on a millefleur background surrounded by lovely fruit borders. Burne-Jones designed the angels originally for stained glass windows in the South Choir at Salisbury Cathedral in 1878.

Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. ('The Firm') had now become Morris & Co. and had moved to much larger premises at the rather romantic Merton Abbey in south London. Once in these spacious surroundings, Morris was able to devote a long, sunny, ground-floor room to weaving. With three looms and up to nine people, he was ready for what proved to be a boom in the demand for wall hangings for both homes and churches.

The first two tapestry designs produced by Morris & Co. were called *Flora* and *Pomona*, each depicting a romantic female figure dressed in flowing robes. They proved very popular, sold well and were subsequently produced in a variety of different sizes and with different backgrounds. Burne-Jones was the principal designer for Morris & Co. and it was he who drew these figures. *Angeli Laudantes* and *Angeli Ministrantes* share some similarities with *Flora* and *Pomona*, so it is not surprising that Morris wanted to see if they would work well as tapestries, too. Sixteen years after their conception in 1878, they were woven.

As the illustrations provided by Burne-Jones were usually of figures no more than 15in (38cm) high, they were photographically enlarged to the required size. In the early years, Morris would add his wonderfully flamboyant backgrounds and borders. Later, this became the responsibility of Henry Dearle, Morris's first tapestry apprentice, who, in turn, became the teacher of the many great weavers to emerge from Merton Abbey. Although Dearle was tremendously influenced by Morris – and sometimes their work is mistaken –

Dearle did, in fact, develop a style of his own. The delicate millefleurs in the backgrounds of both the *Angeli* tapestries are unmistakably his.

However, it was the border of *Angeli Laudantes* that first attracted me. The ever-present, all-enveloping acanthus leaves wind their way around, allowing a glimpse of an orange or blossom or fresh green leaves to relieve their drama. There are very few people who are able to 'layer' a design so successfully and these borders have all the hallmarks of Morris. It is thought by some that at the time the tapestries were woven, Morris was so involved with his Kelmscott Press that he had stopped designing for tapestry. In the end it is of little importance. The Orange Border makes a most dramatic cushion, and tempted though I have been, it is not yet a rug! I know it would look wonderful.

The border of *Angeli Ministrantes* is every bit as tempting as its partner's. The acanthus is still there, with pomegranates and slightly pinky blossom instead of oranges – delicious! Both hangings have a luminescence that never seems to show in photographs; they are well worth searching out and enjoying.

The *Angeli* tapestries were first exhibited in 1890 by the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in Manchester. The Victoria & Albert Museum in London bought *Angeli Laudantes*, while *Angeli Ministrantes* rather disappeared into private ownership. Happily, they have now been reunited and can be seen at the V & A.



ABOVE: THE *ANGELI LAUDANTES* TAPESTRY. THE ANGELS WERE ORIGINALLY DESIGNED BY BURNE-JONES FOR STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, BUT BY 1878 WALL HANGINGS HAD BECOME FASHIONABLE AND HIS DESIGN WAS COPIED AGAIN – WITH AN ADDED BORDER – FOR TAPESTRY.

BELOW: ORANGE BORDER CUSHION IN THE GARDEN OF HESTERCOCK HOUSE.





CHART AND COLOR KEY

The Orange Border cushion was made in Appleton crewel wool.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------|
|  | 877 Rust | Mika |
|  | 474 Golden yellow | |
|  | 474 Mid yellow | |
|  | 471 Light yellow | |
|  | 968 White | |
|  | 353 Dark green | |
|  | 193 Mid green | |
|  | 351 Light grey-green | |
|  | 874 Light mint green | |
|  | 944 Dark blue-green | |
|  | 642 Mid blue-green | |
|  | 641 Light grey-blue | |
|  | 196 Darker grey-blue | |
|  | 155 Mid grey-blue | |
|  | 186 Light grey-blue | |
|  | 521 Light turquoise | |
|  | 852 Navy blue | |
|  | 926 Middle point | |



ABOVE: A BORDER DETAIL FROM *ANGEL'S LADYBIRD*.

MATERIALS FOR THE ORANGE BORDER CUSHION

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 20 x 25in (51 x 64cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 16 x 21in (40.5 x 53cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 3 threads of crewel wool

So far, I have experimented with three different blue backgrounds – pastel grey-blue (875), indigo (926) and navy (852).



Bees

ONE OF THE CRITICISMS of my Border designs had been that there was a hole in the middle of each one. I pointed out that this was because they were borders and that if I filled in the centres, they might lose their purpose. However, the criticism must have nagged me and, determined to justify my choice, I pondered on the puzzle of the Border centres and how I could possibly fill them.

Our younger son Paul was in favour of bees. I was rather hesitant as they did not spring to mind as being very 'Morrish', but I tried them out and am now rather fond of them. They give the Orange Border cushion, shown on the left, a summery feel. Here you see four bees, worked in tent stitch, but you should decide how many to have and their positions for yourself. It is easier to make these decisions after completing the design and, of course, before the background is stitched.

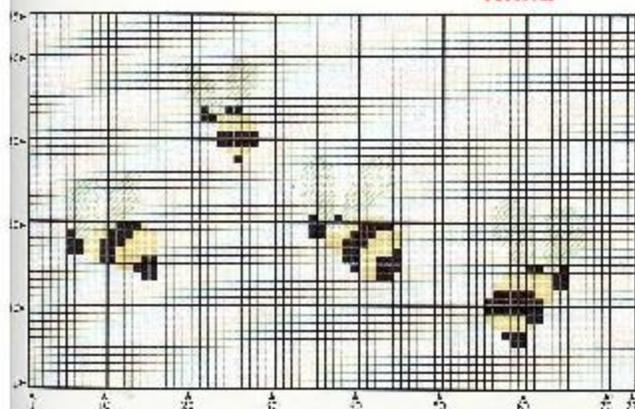
The wings of bees are actually transparent and I have used to give this effect by stitching two threads of white (91B) blended with one of light greeny-cyanise (941). With the exception of black, all the

colours are to be found in the wools for the Orange Border and you will almost certainly have sufficient. However, with the Honeysuckle Border cushion, you will need a skein of each of the four colours.

I have not tried stitching anything in the centre of the Flower Border. The flowers are very distinctive and seem quite complete in themselves – however, one can never be certain!

I have had great fun with the backgrounds of these cushions. An old favourite of mine, Appleton 926, is close to Morrish's indigo and looks wonderful with the oranges, but even though it is lighter than the original navy (852), it did not allow the bees to show clearly. So, I worked a line of backstitching around the black parts of the bees with a light sewing thread. Should you find the bees disappearing on a very light background, try backstitching around the lighter areas with a dark sewing thread. They show well against a soft blue (324), which I have used for a Honeysuckle Border cushion, but I would not suggest this colour for the other Border cushions as it is too close to some of the actual design colours.

Nilka



START AND GO! OR BE!

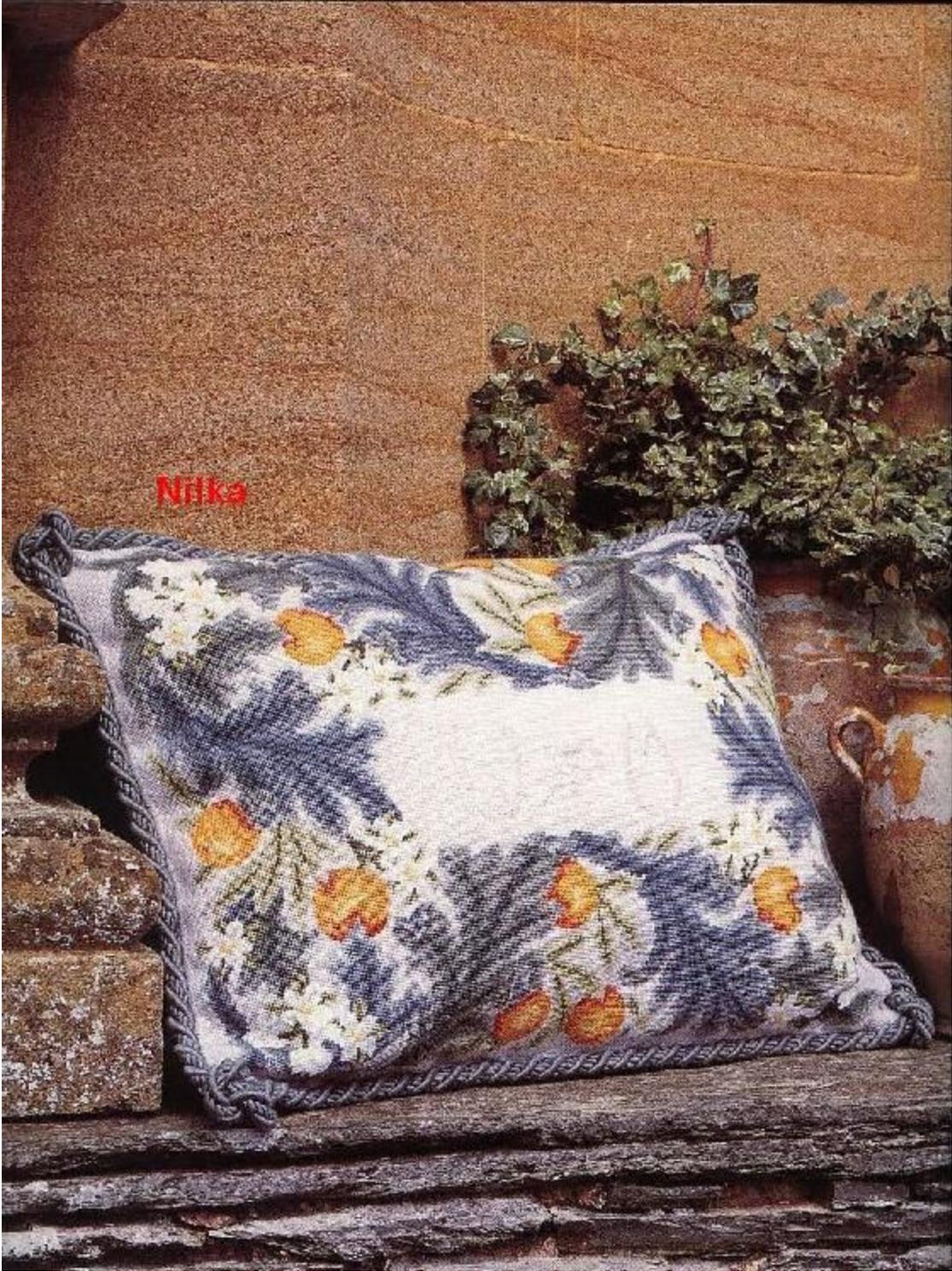
The Bee and was used in Appleton 926.

- 47 Yellow (body)
- 99 Black (legs)
- 91B-941 White (wings)



ABOVE: A FINISHED BEE FROM A 19TH-CENTURY BORDER DESIGN. THE BEES RETURNING TO THE APPOINTMENT WOULD KNOW THAT I HAD YET TO TRY AND RETAIL MORE CROSS-STITCHING!

SMALLER: THE PARTIALLY STITCHED ORANGE BORDER CUSHION, WITH THE BEES ALREADY COMPLETE. BEES STITCHED IN THE FINISHED STATEMENT OF LASSIE IN COLOUR.



Arts & Crafts Alphabet

For Roman cushions look very handsome with plain backgrounds, but should you wish to add some detail you could choose your own centre, add your initials or stitch the Bees shown on page 65, for example. This Arts-&-Crafts style alphabet could also be stitched in tent stitch in a different colour above working the background. However, I liked the subtle embossed look achieved by stitching over the already completed background using the same colour. The single flower motif is taken from a recent issue space-filler frequently used by Morris in his Rosemont Press publications.

Whether you are going to work the tent stitch or the embossed letters, it is vital that you plan the positioning carefully, preferably using squared paper, find the centre of the cushion and tack along the

horizontal and vertical centre lines with coloured sewing thread. Use sewing thread, too, to indicate exactly where you want to position each letter.

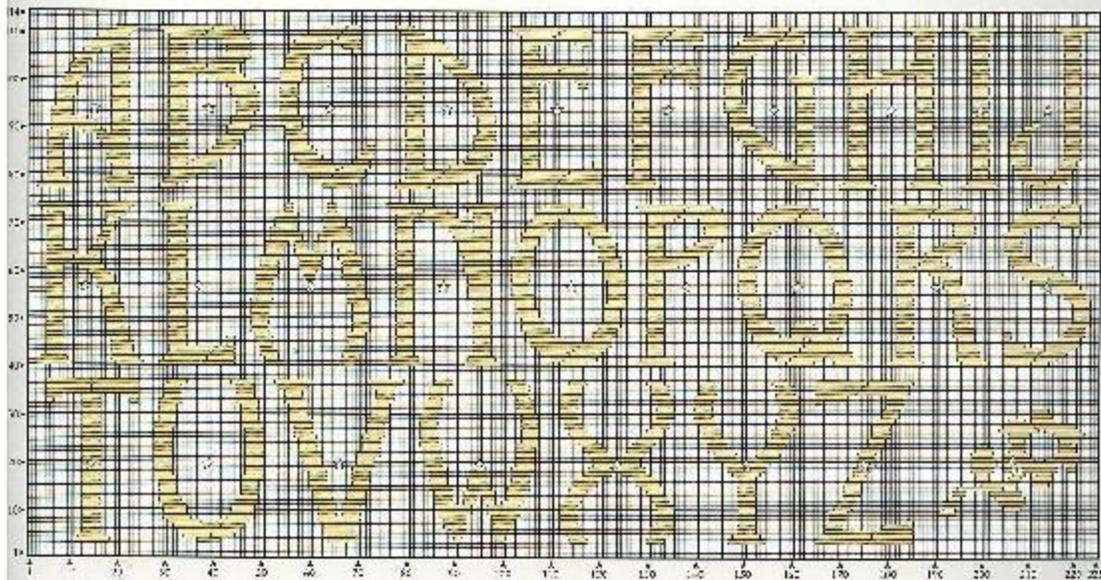
The stitching is easy. For the embossed look, use three thricks of crewel wool; make long, horizontal stitches over the background tent stitch, following your chart. Note that where the required stitch was too long to be practical, I have used two shorter stitches instead. One square on the chart is the equivalent of one background tent stitch, try to keep the tension of your long stitches even. One extra skein of the background wool shade should be sufficient to stitch four letters.

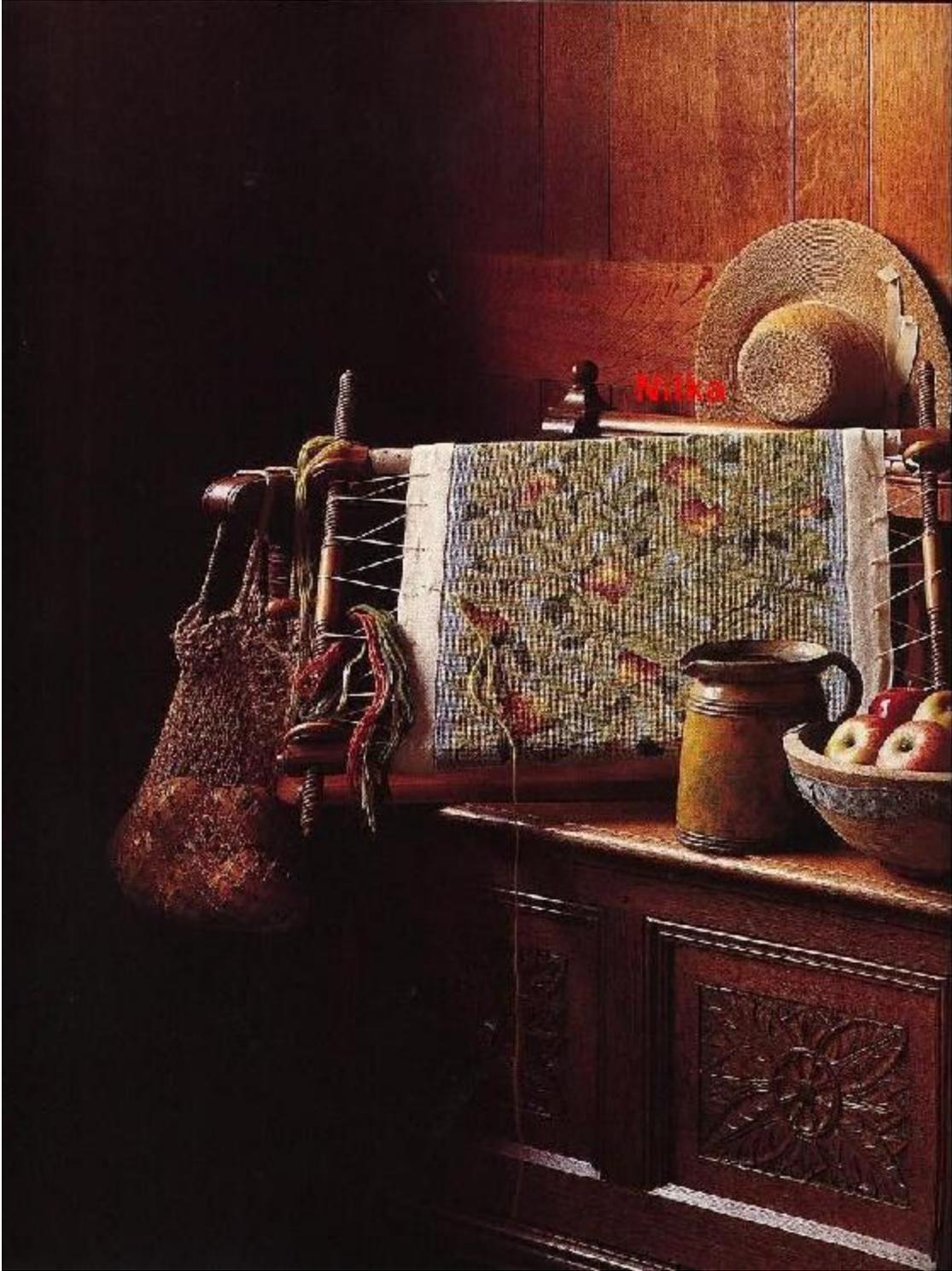
For clarity, the letters on the chart are in yellow. If you want the embossed effect, these stitches should naturally be the same colour as your background.

FOR THE 'THE ORANGE BORDER CUSHION' SEE: 'VERY DAZZLING COLOURS AND MORRIS'S INITIALS ARE FLOWERS AT HISTORIC HOUSE' (10/04/2014) PAGE 17

Nilka

© Middle point





FRUITS OF
LABOUR

Nilka





Nilka

Nilka



The thing which I understand by real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour. I do not believe he can be happy in his labour without expressing that happiness

The Art of the People, 1875

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1867, Morris returned to the part of London he knew so well. The family moved into a large house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, which they shared with 'The Firm'. In effect, Morris was living above the shop and able to devote all his working hours to experimenting with natural dyeing techniques, practising calligraphy, designing his first three wallpapers, translating Icelandic sagas, writing poetry and, of course, running the now flourishing business.

During this time, through Rossetti's influence, a very prestigious commission was obtained to decorate part of St James's Palace. Lizzie Siddal, Rossetti's wife, had by now killed herself after losing a child and Rossetti was spending more and more time with Janey. Morris commissioned a portrait of her, but I suspect that by the time it was completed Rossetti and Janey's indiscreet relationship had become too distressing for Morris to appreciate the painting, with its unkind inscription. This portrait is shown on page 41.

Morris, in his usual positive and blunt way of dealing with life, went in search of a country house to share with Rossetti. It seems an extraordinarily kind and sensible act to present Janey and Rossetti with the opportunity to be together without causing a scandal. Intended only as a weekend holiday home, Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire was to replace Red House in Morris's life and dreams.

IT IS APPARENTLY NOW
WAS ASPECTS OF MORRIS'S
LIFE THEM TO BE DEPICTED IN
THE FAINTING, FIBROUSE BY
JOHN KODERAN S. ENGLER
HE HELD THE CAPABILITY
STYLED WITH THEIR LOOSE
OVER AND BLINDLY SOFT
CLOTHING, THE ON LINE AND
OASIS AND, UP HIMSELF, A
MAGNALLY TO BRID TO PASTOR
ON A METROPOLITAN SCENE.



Nilka

It was a sixteenth-century house, which he described as an idyllic home. He loved the garden and spent hours on the river and walking in the countryside.

Morris and Rossetti shared the lease and it was Rossetti who moved in with Janey and the children in July 1871 while Morris went to Iceland. Rossetti was never as fond of Kelmscott Manor as Morris. He, like another of Janey's lovers fourteen years later, found the corridors creaky and the landscape flat, although this did not deter either of them from spending time there with Janey. It is said that the house, which should have been Morris's perfect medieval haven, was somewhere from which he was on occasions forced to escape. We can argue that had his private life been more content, Morris might

have had less reason to channel his enormous energy into so many creative avenues. And we can only reflect on how much poorer we would have been.

By 1872, it was apparent that 'The Firm' needed even more space. Morris moved his family's London home from Queen Square to Hurlingham House in Turnham Green near Chiswick. Webb referred to it as 'the little shed on the High Road'. Janey found it too small, but Morris was content there for the next six years. He was closer to 'The Grange' where Burne-Jones lived, and a routine developed that was to last twenty years: each Sunday Morris would join the Burne-Jones's for a huge breakfast and then spend the following few hours with his old friend discussing books, art and life.



The Orchard Tapestry, showing two maidens in an orchard of deities, apples, grapes and pears was a special design by Morris for a special ceiling in Jervis College, Chapel, Cambridge. The words on the banner are from one of his poems. Henry Deane designed the background.

Back at Queen Square the family scullery became Morris's dye works and a carpet loom was erected upstairs so that he could learn the hand-knotting techniques used in Persian rugs. Rossetti was almost permanently at Kelmscott Manor during 1872-3, which proved too much for Morris. He wrote a disappointed letter to Rossetti enclosing his share of the rent and suggesting that Rossetti take over the whole payment in future.

For the first time in his life, Morris's financial situation was insecure. The value of the shares that his father had left him had steadily declined. Now it was essential that 'The Firm' continue to thrive and Morris felt that he needed to have total control of the company. His six partners were no longer

directly involved in its running, but Rossetti and Brown, now both occupied with their painting, and Marshall the engineer wanted to remain partners. There followed some bitter wangling and Morris eventually agreed to pay each partner £1,200 for their shares. His good friends Burne-Jones, Webb and Faulkner all waived their claims, but Rossetti cruelly asked that his share be paid to Jney.

So, May 1875 saw the end of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. ('The Firm') and the start of Morris & Co. with Morris as the owner. He wrote to his mother: 'I have got my partnership business scaled at last and am sole Lord and Master now.' It was Morris who renewed the lease at Kelmscott Manor and Rossetti was seen less and less frequently there.

Nilka



Nilka

PART OF THE ENORMOUS attraction of Morris's designs is their abundant detail. The eye passes hungrily from foreground to background and back again, perceiving more detail each time.

We know about some of Morris's methods of working from his lectures. All his designs were very carefully considered before reaching paper and each drawing, he tells us, should have 'beauty, imagination and order'. Henry Dearle was his best known pupil and so absorbed his master's ideals that many of his designs have been taken as Morris's. Dearle drew the backgrounds for the *Orchard* and *Famona* tapestries, which are illustrated in this book, and it was these that first inspired my Apples design. I love the maleness of the fruit and the dense foliage in these tapestries. They make me think of Morris's happy days in Epping Forest and his beloved Red House, built in an orchard.

Creating the dense foliage in my Apples was to prove something of a challenge. To show the shape of each leaf as it lies on another can be difficult in non-stitch. At first, I thought that I could achieve this effect only by using an enormous number of different greens and, in fact, I coloured and re-coloured this design many times before deciding it was quite feasible. I work with coloured pencils, attempting to match the Appleton wools I am thinking of using. This helps me to decide on the number of colours I need to keep the shapes distinct in each part of the design. In spite of the wide variety of pencils now available, I can never find the range of colours that I do in the wools, so the intended shades of some of the drawn colours remain in my mind's eye until stitched.

Next came the decision about the apples – which variety? There are surely many more found in modern times than were growing in Victorian gardens. I stitched a very deep red apple, shading to yellow on the less ripe side.

Apples

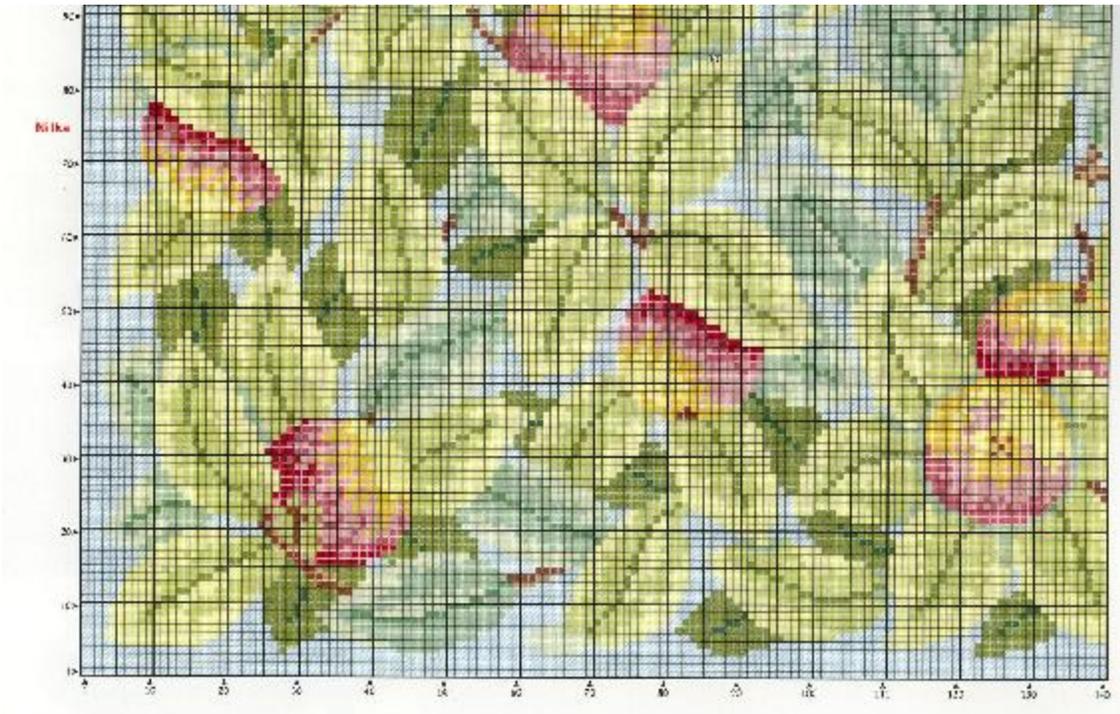
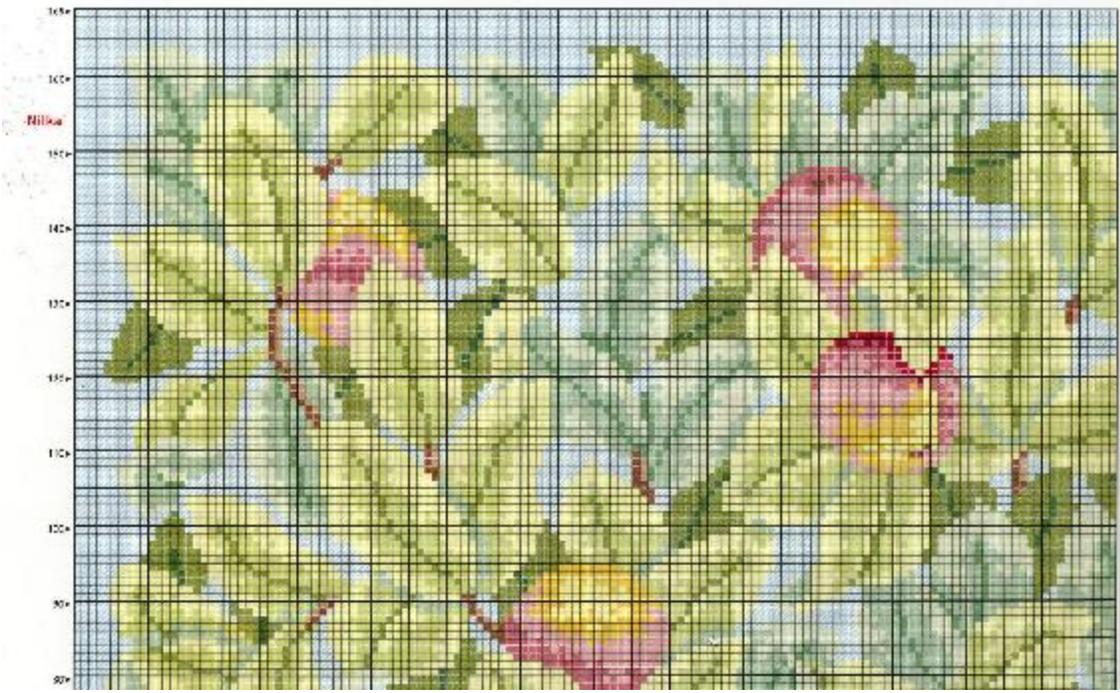
The first examples of my new needlepoint designs are usually stitched by my colleague Selma Winter, who is infinitely more skilful with the needle than I and who taught me so much when I was at the Royal School of Needlework. When I visited her during the early stages of my Apples design, it was with armfuls of stitched pieces, drawings, masses of wools and pounds of apples to put with her bowl of Cox's Orange Pippins. We discussed the green leaves and examined the apples. This is always an enjoyable time for me; I have done my soul-searching and can now delegate with enthusiasm.

Earlier, when discussing the Border cushions, I mentioned how much a background can change the appearance of a design. It is normally the last decision to be made and it is always nerve-racking. So much effort goes into the completion of a design that it would be heart-breaking to choose a background that does not do it justice. Colours change when used over a large area and, in turn, alter the colours of the stitching they surround; my tendency is to return to the security of my tried and tested backgrounds. Blue sky seemed a sensible background for a tree, but what shade? I finally settled on a mixture of two blues, and now I'm taken with the idea of creating clouds and adding more shades of blue, as I once did with a design taken from a window by Tiffany.



ABOVE: *Pomona*, which was woven at Merton Abbey, is a Burne-Jones figure with a typical Dearle background.

EARLIER I WAS DELIGHTED TO HAVE THE ST AGNES TAPESTRY AS A BACKGROUND FOR MY APPLES DESIGN AT STANBEN IN SUSSEX.





MORRIS' APPLE COLOUR KEY

The Apples design was made in Appleton tapestry wool with the background in crewel wool.

Morris

- 725 Dark red
1 skein
 - 722 Soft red
1 skein
 - 205 Pink
1 skein
 - 473 Dark yellow
1 skein
 - 991 Lemon
1 skein
 - 914 Brown
1 skein
 - 332 Light brown
1 skein
 - 547 Darkest green
1 skein
 - 545 Bright clear green
1 skein
 - 543 Light lime green
1 skein
 - 542 Light grey-green
1 skein
 - 255 Dark yellow-green
1 skein
 - 252 Yellow-green
1 skein
 - 251A Light yellow-green
1 skein
 - 561+876 Pale + Pastel Blue
(background)
8 skeins of 561
6 skeins of 876
- ★ Middle point.



ABOVE MORRIS' APPLES
DESIGN FOR WALLPAPER.

MATERIALS FOR THE APPLES DESIGN

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de Luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 18 x 18in (46 x 46cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry and crewel wools

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

Finished size of design: 14 x 14in (35.5 x 35.5cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool or 2 threads of crewel wool.

It is hard to believe but, at the time of writing, I have still not made Apples into anything. Perhaps I am subconsciously waiting for the perfect piece of furniture to display it, a Victorian pole screen (a fire-screen on a pole to shield the face from heat) or a table with a drop-in glass top. On page 74, Apples can be seen on a table frame, which is said to have belonged to May Morris. In the background of this picture taken at Standen, you can see the *Sr Agnes* tapestry hanging on the stairway. Webb built the house for the Beale family and each detail of his and the Morris & Co. furnishings is a treat to see.

The main part of the Apples design was stitched in tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool in the needle. The background was worked in crewel wool, blending two threads of pale blue (561) and one thread of pastel blue (876) in the needle.



Vine

Nilka

Morris's VINE DESIGN brings to mind Bacchalian feasts, good health, hospitality and happiness. There are several references in Morris's life to occasions when he was seen with bottles of wine in his arms in jovial mood determined to celebrate, either with friends at Red House or to drink to the health of the new Kelmscott Press. It is rather alarming that the careful, concerned financial manager of 'The Fico', Warrington Taylor, once wrote to Morris warning him to make economies in his household expenditure and to contain his own wine consumption to £80 a year, or two and a half bottles a day! We can take heart remembering the amount of entertaining that Morris undertook.

The vine is a decoration that has been used through the ages; its curving stems are perfectly malleable and can be wrapped round pedestals or draped across doorways. The flat leaves and the round grapes lend themselves wonderfully to carving; we see them in marble, stonework and wood in old buildings all over the world. They are symbols of plenty. Morris used the vine extensively in his woodcuttings for the Kelmscott Press.

Vine was produced as a wallpaper in 1874. It is a brilliant design, one of Morris's best. The vine seems quite random, so cleverly is the repeat hidden. Morris lectured that the true test of a good design is if the pattern covers the ground equably and richly. In *Vine* he used willow as a backdrop. We are not surprised to learn that he said, 'the more and the more mysteriously you interweave your sprays and stems the better'.

At first I found it difficult to establish the scale for my version of Morris's *Vine*. I could not decide how much of the piece to show and how large to make the grapes. Then there were other decisions to make – which colour version to follow, the olive or blue leaf variety – and finally the all-powerful, all-changing background colour. As usual, Phyllis Stead

bailed her way brilliantly round the problems created by taking only a part of a design. Morris lectured severely on the importance of 'rational growth' and 'that no stem should be so far from its parent stock as to look weak'. It is important for everything to make sense and that stems appear from somewhere logical.

I decided on the blue vine leaves in the end because the blue binds the leaves more to the grapes and allows the soft green willow to act as a better ground to them both. As to the grapes, it took a great deal of stitching on my 'scrap' canvas before I was happy. I produced several bunches – some small, some large and luscious, some black, green and purple. The colours are subtle and the bloom deceptively

difficult. One of the bunches that I had bought to study had a mixture of black and red grapes, and this gave me the idea of using the two colours.

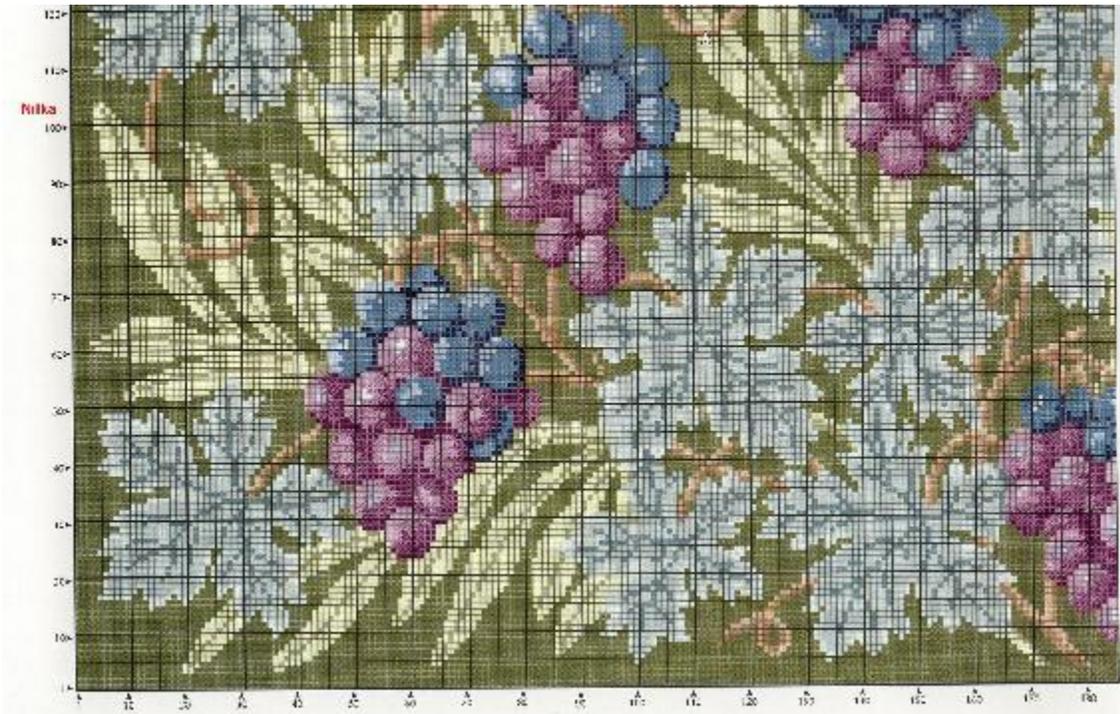
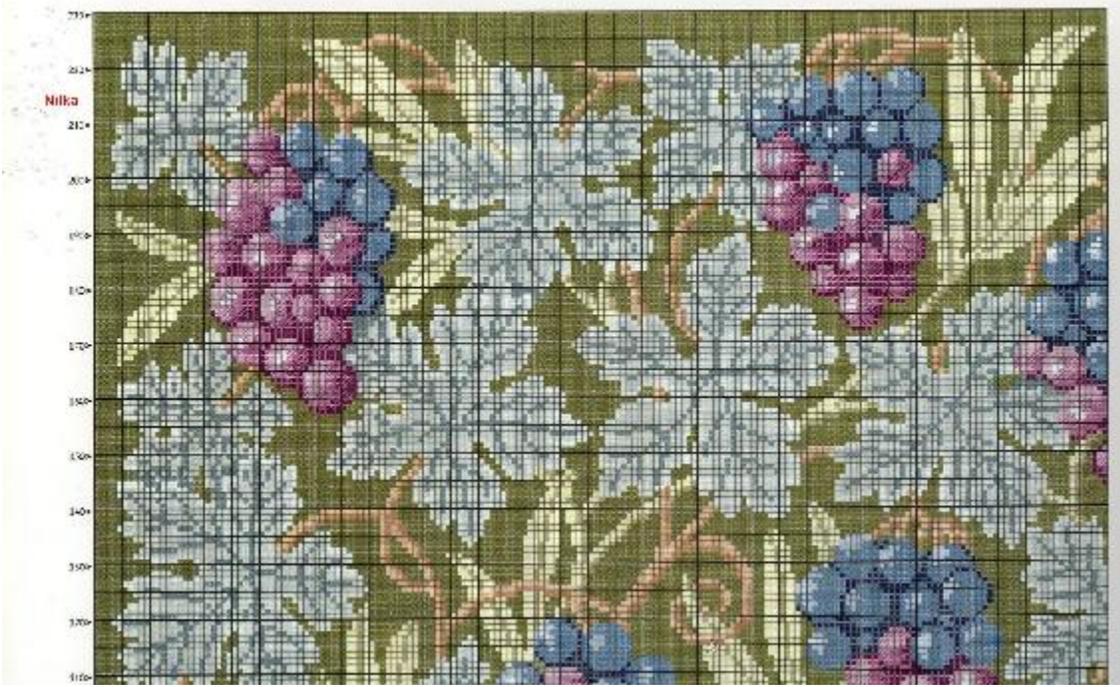
The dark olive background was an experiment which worked well. Arthur Sanderson & Sons offer two weights of furnishing fabrics using Morris's original *Vine* wallpaper design; they have used this olive background and I thought I would like to try it. It has made my design really dramatic.

As soon as I saw the Arts & Crafts fire-screen, I wanted to show it in this book – it looks so like the work of the architect C. E. A. Voysey, one of Morris's contemporaries, who also designed fabrics, wallpapers and furniture.



ABOVE: MORRIS'S ORIGINAL PINK AND PAPER-GOLD DESIGN OF *VINE* IS NOW AT THE VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM IN LONDON.

FAIRLEY HOUSING USES MY *VINE* DESIGN ON THE FAMOUS WEDGWOOD AT RED HOUSE. MORRIS, JANET AND ERIN'S LITTLE CHILDREN AND HAPPY NEIGHBORS IN THIS ROOM, READING ALOUD AND EMBROIDERING.



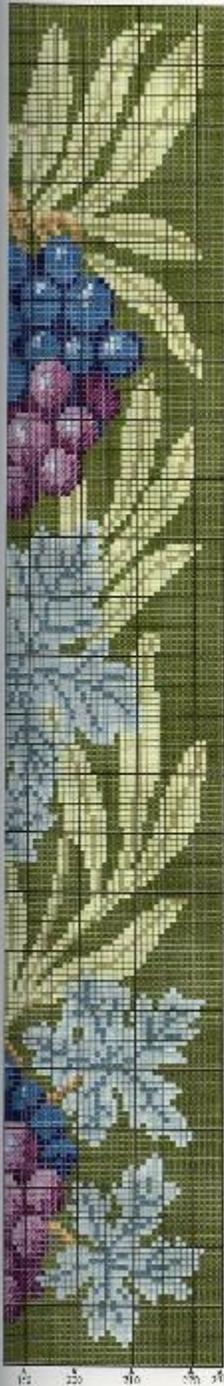


CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Vine fire-screen was made in Appleton crewel wool.

- 915 Dark brown
1 skein
- 901 Light brown
1 skein
- 365 Mid green
4 skeins
- 382 Light green
8 skeins
- 136 Dark blue-green
5 skeins
- 124 Mid green-blue
8 skeins
- 511 Light turquoise
4 skeins
- 852 Darkest blue
2 skeins
- 326 Dark blue
2 skeins
- 331 Mid grey-blue
1 skein
- 921 Light grey-blue
1 skein
- 935 Fuschia
1 skein
- 714+935 Shades
(see single colours)
- 714 Mid fuschia
1 skein
- 714+932 Shades
(see single colours)
- 932 Light dull mauve
2 skeins
- 244 Turquoise
(see ground)
1 skein

• Multi-point

MATERIALS FOR THE VINE FIRE-SCREEN

Canvas: 14 threads/in (5.5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 25 x 20in (64 x 51cm)

Threads: Appleton crewel wool

Needle: Size 20 tapestry

Finished size of design: 16 x 15½in (40.5 x 40cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 2/3 threads of crewel wool

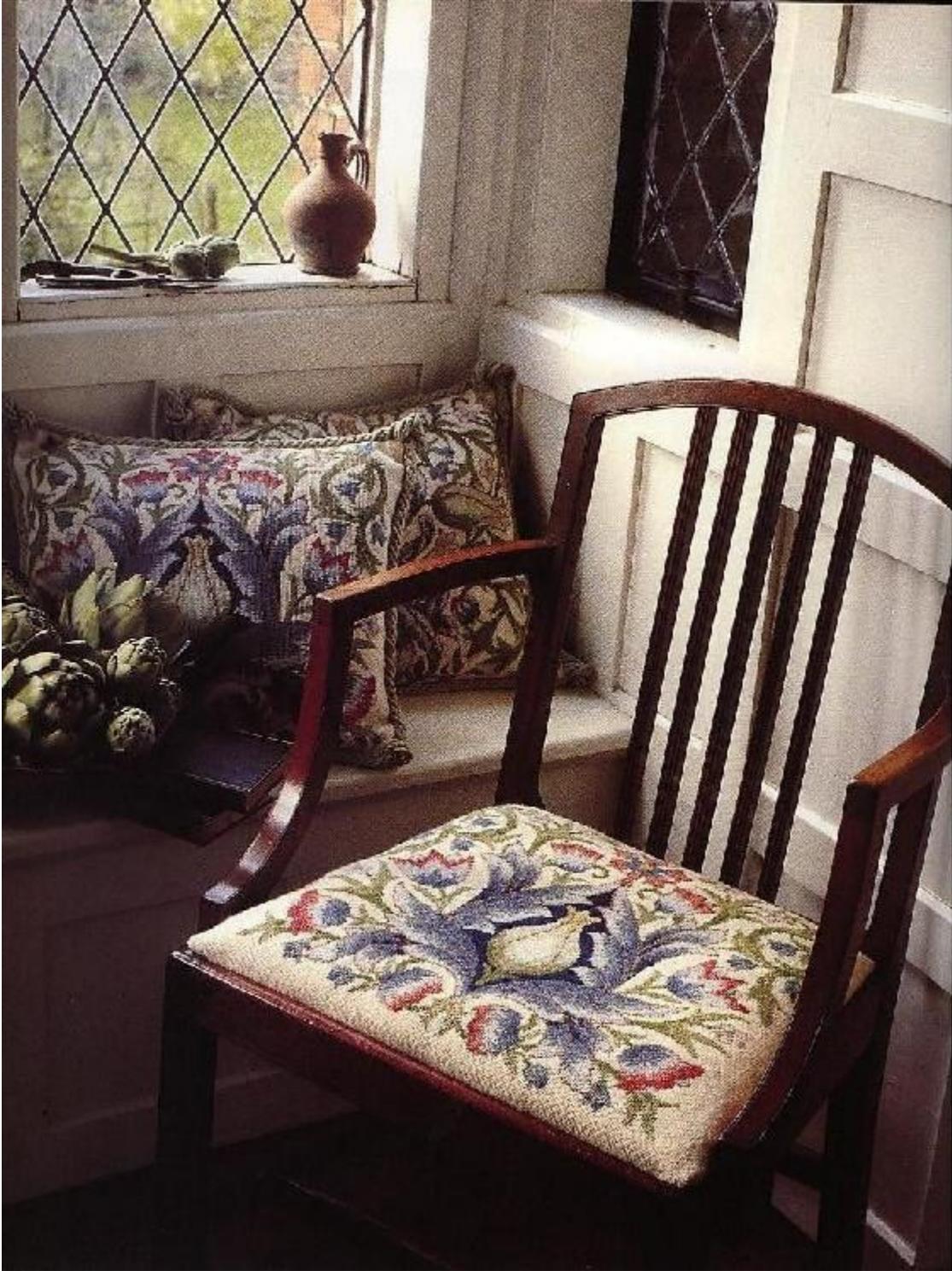


ABOVE: MOORE'S USE OF DESIGN FOR TEXTURE

Vine was stitched using just two threads of crewel wool in the needle, which is sufficient for some stitchers. However, I have given wool estimates as if three threads are used. With three threads the colour blending will be a little different and will give you room to experiment for yourself. The background was worked using three threads.

The black grapes are stitched with 921 as an occasional highlight, 321 as the lightest colour or the bloom, 526 as the main colour and 852 as the shadow. The red grapes are made with a variety of colour mixes, not all appearing in each grape. They have 321 again as the highlight, 932 as the lightest colour; then the stitches can be of 932 and 714 blended, all 714, or 714 and 935 blended. All the shadows are solid 935.

When Vine was first stitched, it was too small for the fire-screen, but happily it was on a large piece of canvas, and I considered enlarging it by using the chart and repeating some of the fruit and leaves. Edward and Doris Hollamby had kindly agreed to allow us to take photographs in Red House, but there just was not enough time to finish it before our visit. Florentine stitch was the perfect solution. It has a marvellous texture and is quick to do, worked over four threads of canvas using four threads in the needle. Vine would also look superb made up as a cushion with a thick, flamboyant cord or as a chair seat. It was an exciting coincidence to find that the Hollambys had covered their chair in a fabric of the same design.



Artichoke

ANOTHER TREASURE to cherish at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow is the first example of Morris's embroidered panel called *Artichoke*. The embroidery, which was executed by Ada Phoebe Godman, looks clean and unfaded in spite of the complexity of the design; the colours are particularly appealing. I really love this. It would be fascinating to see how a wall of these lovely panels would serve to soften the harsh angles of modern homes. There are few, I fear, who would have the patience to find out. I can only marvel at that of Mrs Godman, whose diary records her eagerness to get started in August 1877 and who, in 1900, was still stitching one of the many *Artichoke* panels she made! It was the practice then, as it is today, for groups of friends and family to stitch together, and I can only hope that she had some help.

Morris was introduced to the art of embroidery by G. E. Street, the architect. As with everything, Morris strove to learn the techniques before he started designing. He collected old embroidered fabrics and unpicked the threads to learn the stitches. He practised on an embroidery frame copied from an old one until he was confident he had mastered the art. Popular at the time was Berlin work – cross stitch worked on canvas from a chart – but both Street and he felt that it was too rigid a discipline which did not allow enough room for creativity.

Anxious as always to share his knowledge, Morris then taught the housekeeper at his home in Red Lion Square, 'Red Lion Mary', as she was known, was made to bring her embroidery frame to work so that Morris could note and, no doubt, comment on her progress. Later Janey, her sister Bessie, Georgiana Burne-Jones and Charles Faulkner's wife and sister (and others!) were shown the delights of long and short stitch and of laying and couching, which stitches to use and how to place them – in fact, all the complexities of free

embroidery. Morris's preferred medium was wool, both for backing and thread. As early as 1857 he was having his threads dyed specially for him.

In their early days at Red House, Morris and Janey embroidered clumps of daisies on to indigo-dyed serge to hang around the bedroom walls. They created a fashion amongst their friends in which embroidered panels became part of the interior decor.

Embroidery of all kinds was offered in 'The Firm's' first catalogue. The work was done by the friends and relations of the partners, supervised by Janey and her sister. Morris was delighted by Janey's natural ability with the needle. He also encouraged Elizabeth Wardle, the wife of his dye specialist, to learn to embroider. He sent her some old pieces to unpick as he had done and offered to design her a carpet. She responded and was responsible for setting up the Leek School of Embroidery. The Royal School of (Art) Needlework had Morris as one of its very first designers.

Each of Morris's enterprises is like a stem. We can watch it grow, strengthen, branch out and produce fruit. His influence on the development of embroidery as a recognized art form was enormous, and through this he helped to change the general perception of women. Stitching was considered no more than a respectable way for ladies to occupy themselves. By elevating embroidery to an art form



ABOVE: ONE OF SEVERAL ARTICHOKE TABLES THAT WERE EMBROIDERED BY MRS ADA GODMAN.

FAREWELL: ARTICHOKES AS A LEAFY SEAL BY THE MORRIS RING OF IN THE DRAWING ROOM AT RED HOUSE, WHERE JANEY AND FRIENDS WOULD SIT AND EMBROIDER.



ABOVE: THE FINELY
REPLICATED SILK VERSION
OF *Artichoke*, STITCHED BY
MARGARET BEALE AND HER
DAUGHTER AT STANDEN IN
ABOUT 1946. IT CAN STILL BE
SEEN ON THE WALL THERE IN
THE NOBLE BEDROOM.

TO THE RIGHT: *ARTICHOKE*
EMBROIDERED BY A MEMBER
OF THE WEBB FAMILY AT
STANDEN IN BRITAIN'S
CASTLE, OXFORDSHIRE.

which both men and women could enjoy, he helped to alter the way that the world viewed women and, more importantly, he altered the way that women perceived themselves.

In the 1890s, when Morris and Janey were living in Kelmscott House, the home of their married daughter May was a few doors away and was the centre of the Morris & Co. embroidery business. May supervised a much larger group of assistants than had her mother in Red Lion Square. Amongst them were the sisters of W. B. Yeats and William De Morgan, and Annie Jack, the wife of Morris's chief furniture designer. As in all Morris's workplaces, the pay was better than average and the atmosphere seems to have been relaxed, with the river only a few yards away. Morris made casual daily visits. Here, commissions for completed embroideries were undertaken and embroidery kits produced.

Artichoke proved to be one of the most popular of Morris's designs for embroidery. It could be supplied ready to be traced on to linen as it was for Mrs Godman, or as a kit with part of the design already worked to indicate the placing of the colours and the type of stitch. It was Philip Webb who obtained the *Artichoke* design commission from Mrs Godman for Morris. He was by then a well-known architect and often recommended Morris's furnishings for the interiors of his houses. He had completed Smeaton Manor in 1876, and it was there that Mrs Godman hung her *Artichoke* panels.

Another famous Webb house is Standen in East Grafton, built for the Beale family. It is now preserved with much of its Morris interiors intact and is looked after by the National Trust. Margaret Beale and her daughter also stitched a version of *Artichoke*. They completed two matching panels in silk in different colourings from the wool hangings. It is interesting to see how well both versions work. I wonder how much the silk has faded over the years and exactly what it looked like in 1877.

There are four distinct repeating motifs in Morris's *Artichoke* panel, linked by the oval terracotta root and interspersed as always with

pretty meandering plants. Dismissing my dreams of wall hangings meant that I could use only parts of the original for my design, unless I stitched something incredibly fine. The dominant blue flower is an awkward shape, too tall for a square design and not tall enough for a fire-screen. The artichoke surrounded by the pink cup flowers is most attractive and seemed a natural starting point. The root that connects the whole design makes little sense on its own and detracts from the overall design, so I left it out in favour of the tiny background flowers. Completed on the easily stitched 12 count linen canvas, my *Artichoke* makes a full and elegant chair seat. I wondered about the practicality of the light background, but it was the whole colour scheme that had originally pleased me and I could not bear to risk springing it.

I now realized that my second *Artichoke* design was going to look rather strikingly different from the first. As I had dismissed thoughts of the impractical large blue flower, my choice lay between the smaller blue flower and the pale group of artichoke buds. I finally opted for the latter but knew that I will not be able to resist the other for long. The colours in Mrs Godman's hangings vary slightly, presumably to avoid the tedium of repeating herself, but it had been her panel in the William Morris Gallery that had first attracted me and the extremely pale greens or the off-white background were a challenge.

The problem with outlining in canvaswork is the different thicknesses one achieves according to the angle of the stitch. In crewel work this does not occur, as one can lay the stitch in its natural direction. I tried the pale artichokes without the outline and with many shadings. I was worried that *Artichoke* II would look insignificant next to *Artichoke* I and that with far less blue and pink in the former, they would not look like a pair. They are different, of course, but blend well together as I should have expected, and they have retained some of the clarity I had so liked in the original at Walthamstow. I wonder how the third one will affect the set.



FRUITS OF LABOUR

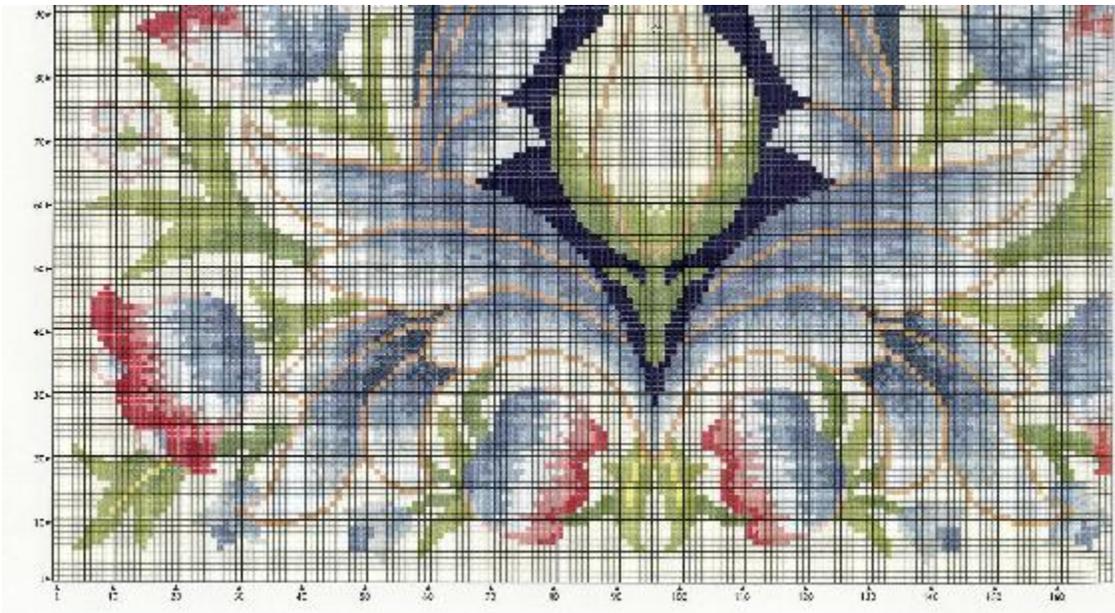
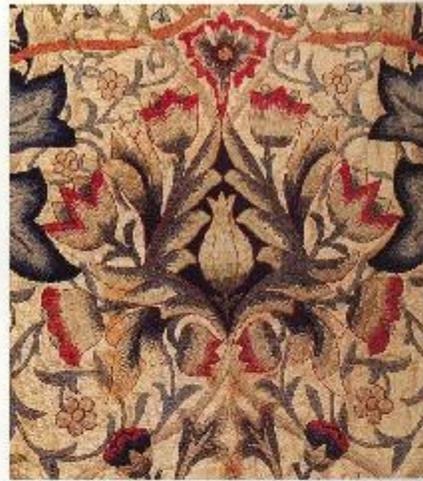




CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Artichoke cushion was made in Appleton tapestry wool.

- 225 Dark red 1 count
 - 222 Mid-pink 1 count
 - 221 Light pink 2 counts
 - 122 Dull brownish-pink 2 counts
 - 331 Pale yellow-green 1 count
 - 402 Dark green 4 counts
 - 401 Mid green 5 counts
 - 874 Mint green 1 count
 - 875 Pastel green 1 count
 - 926 Dark bright blue 7 counts
 - 325 Dark dull blue 1 count
 - 523 Mid blue 3 counts
 - 311 Light marine blue 4 counts
 - 132 Light grey-blue 3 counts
 - 376 Pastel blue 5 counts
 - 892 Off-white (background) 2 counts
- © Mollie Pearce



MATERIALS FOR THE ARTICHOKE CUSHION

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 19 x 20in (48 x 51cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

Finished size of design: 14½ x 16in (37 x 40.5cm)

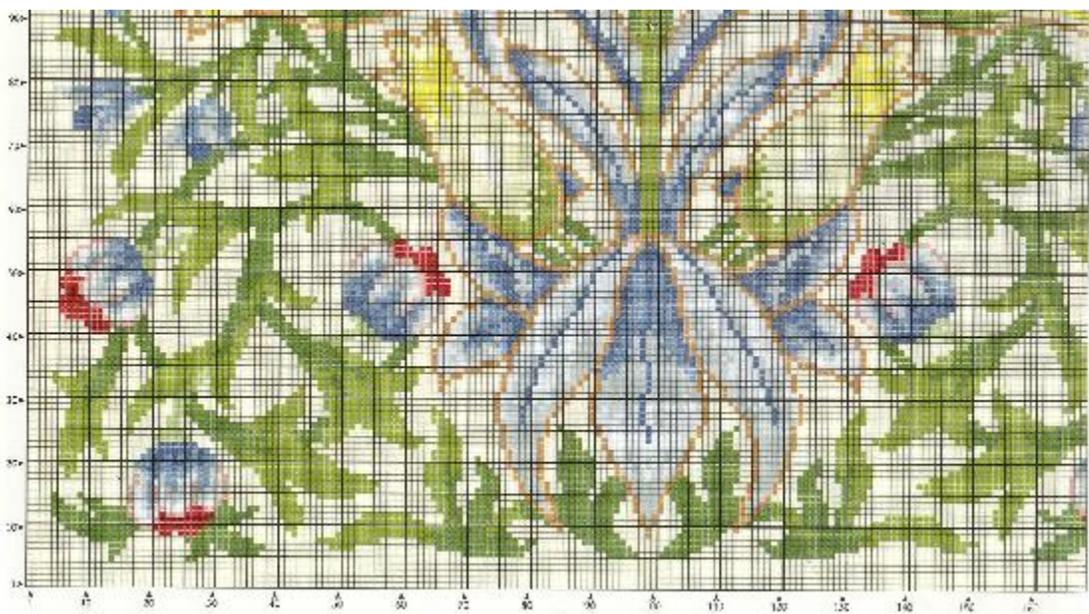
Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

ABOVE: A DETAIL FROM MORAN'S ARTICHOKE CUSHION WHICH INSPIRED MY FIRST ARTICHOKE DESIGN.

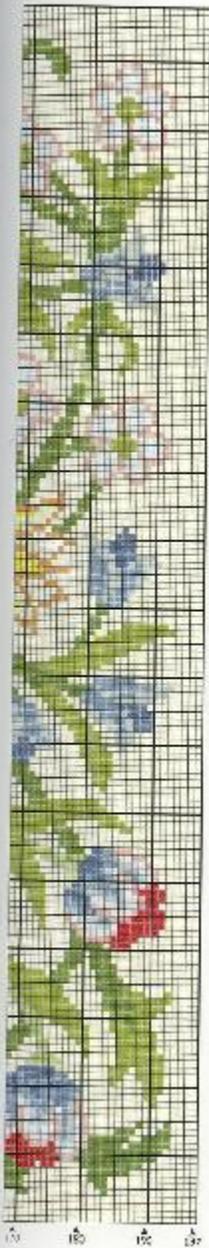
The dark blue in the centre of this Artichoke design gives it dramatic depth, and it has such a clean-cut look that it would enhance most things. On 12 threads/in (5 threads/cm) canvas it is a very good size for most chair seats, with plenty of design and not too much background. I should also like to see it on top of a workbox or as a footstool.

Please note that the centre of the artichoke bulb should be worked in pastel green (873).

FRONT OF LASSOUA



FRUITS OF LABOUR



STAKE AND COLOUR KEY

The Artichoke II cushion was made in Appleton tapestry wool.

- 223 Dark pink
1 skein
- 221 Light pink
1 skein
- 122 Dull broomy-pink
3 skeins
- 481 Pale yellow-green
2 skeins
- 122 Darker green
5 skeins
- 401 Mid green
6 skeins
- 882 Light green
1 skein
- 874 Blue-green
4 skeins
- 873 Pastel green
1 skein
- 325 Mid blue
2 skeins
- 322 Light marine blue
4 skeins
- 152 Light grey-blue
3 skeins
- 376 Pastel blue
3 skeins
- 982 Off-white (background)
7 skeins - 1 skein
* Middle point



MATERIALS FOR THE ARTICHOKE II CUSHION

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de luxe Zweigart

minu canvas measuring 19 x 20in (48 x 51cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

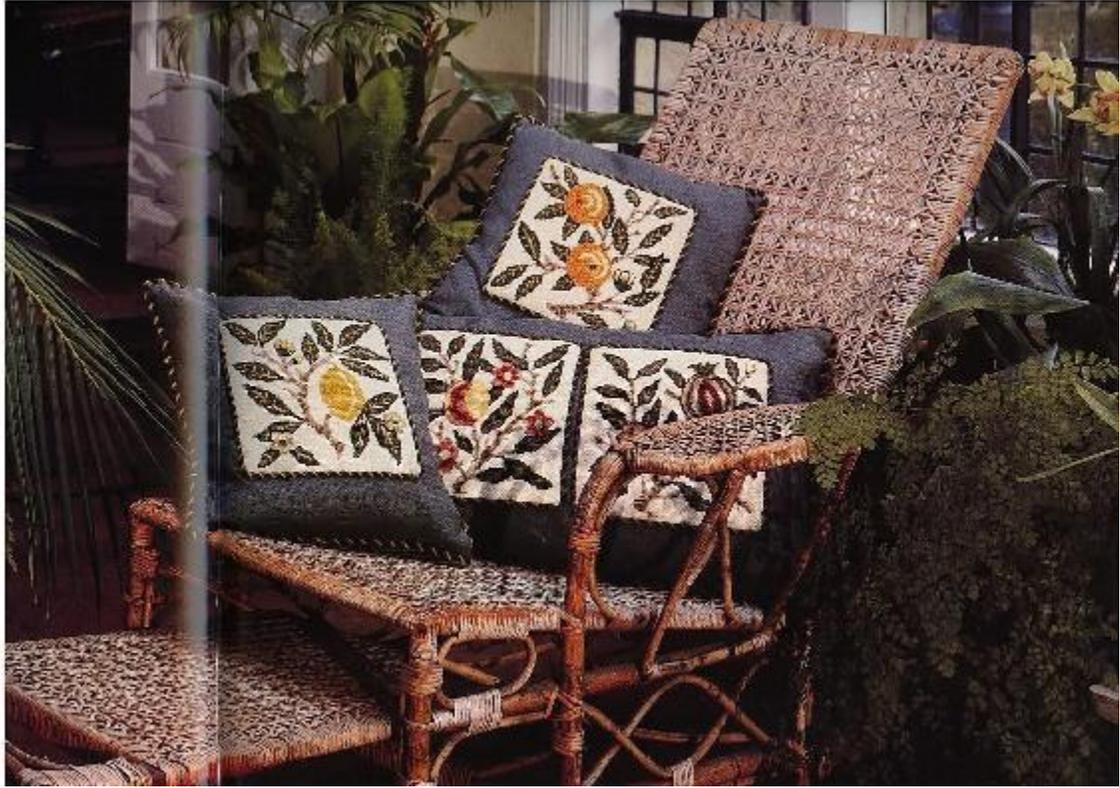
Finished size of design: 15 x 16in (38 x 40.5cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

ABOVE: A DESIGN FROM
MORRIS'S *ARTICHOKE*, 1911
INSPIRED BY SECOND
ARTICHOKE DESIGN.

This pretty design makes an interesting partner for Artichoke I, as either a cushion or a chair seat. Its soft colouring tempts me to try a darker background; I would want to experiment before committing myself, but it is an exciting prospect. Its delicacy would also lend itself to fine linen and silks. Once I concentrate on the shape of a design, dozens of applications come to mind – all one needs is the time!

Please note that the centres of the artichokes should be worked in pastel green (873).





Fruit

Nilka

FRUIT, OR POMEGRANA, is one of the group of three wallpapers Morris designed in Red Lion Square, just a year after the founding of 'The Firm' in 1861. They were in defiance of the rather regimented heraldic papers available from Pugin and Owen Jones, which Morris enthusiastically disliked. The other two designs were called *Trellis* and *Daisy*. *Trellis* was based on the rose trellis at Red House, with birds said to be designed by Philip Webb; *Daisy* was reminiscent of the hangings Morris and Janey had stitched for their bedroom there.

These three designs are quite different from the wallpapers we most usually associate with Morris. The complex, carving, multi-layered designs were not produced until the 1870s, Morris's most prolific 'wallpaper' period. They covered the walls of many fashionable houses in Britain. From old photographs we can peep into the past and see *Daisy* decorating a bedroom in the Burne-Jones family home and *Trellis* in Morris's bedroom at Kelmscott House. We know that *Fruit* and Rossetti's painting of Janey were in the dining room of Kelmscott House. The familiarity of these papers makes me feel closer to that time – now a century away.

Peaches, oranges, lemons and pomegranates – all featured in Morris's *Fruit* wallpaper – would have been seen in the conservatories of the larger Victorian houses and, I am sure, considered very stylish. I have tried unsuccessfully to grow a small orange tree at home and have recently found some tiny lemons from which I am hoping to cultivate a lime plant from the pits – another dream!

The pomegranate fascinated the Victorians, including Morris. It appears frequently in all forms of art of this time. The ripe fruit was a symbol of fertility and perhaps a lady holding one could be defined as an empress. Rossetti drew a series of paintings of Janey holding a pomegranate, the most famous of which can be seen on the left.

Morris's *Fruit* wallpaper was produced in a variety of colourways, with light, grey and sky blue backgrounds, as illustrated below, covered with a fine tracery of irregular stems. The pomegranates and peaches have matching leaves, as do the oranges and lemons. Unlike the other fruits, which are shown in profile, the pomegranates appear from all angles and in different degrees of ripeness. *Fruit* is a very romantic paper with a medieval air and exotic fruit to remind us of sunny lands. The effect it has on a room is that of a shady corner of a lush garden.

The *Fruit* wallpaper had been on my mind for eight years. It is a favourite of Phyllis Steed and graces the wall of her and her husband Robert's pretty sitting room. It is she who is responsible for the lovely line drawings that are so often the start of a new project of mine. She finally grew tired of waiting for me to produce a kit based on this Morris wallpaper and stitched her own cushion. I was tentatively intrigued to see that, virtually free-handing it on to the canvas, she had made it so like the wallpaper that when placed against it the eye quite lost the cushion. All the naïveté and rather fat colours were captured perfectly.

When I wanted a series of small but simple designs, *Fruit* sprang to mind again. Now I could see what I would do with the colours. As usual, I outlined parts of the design on to my 'scrap' canvas and stitched away, trying different greens for the leaves and yellows for the lemons, and so on. Whenever I am working out colours, I stitch and then leave the stitching in a prominent place so that I can glance at it, or study it, or see it accidentally.



ABOVE: ONE OF THE VERSIONS OF *Fruit* OR *POMEGRANA* DESIGNED BY MORRIS & CO. AND PRODUCED BY LITTLE & CO. IN 1861.

TABLET: *POMEGRANA*, PAINTED BY ROSSETTI IN 1874. ONE OF THE CARBONS OF JANEA AS THE EMPRESS QUEEN OF HADES. THIS PORTRAIT DATES FROM JUST AFTER THE TIME ROSSSETTI VISITALLY MOULDED INTO KE. ROSSETT: MARCH WITH JANEA AND THE CHILDREN.



I find it helps me to make up my mind about it. I can remember my father placing half-completed paintings in the centre of my mother's carefully polished and tidied sideboard where they might remain for days, even weeks, to her dismay.

I was disappointed when I saw that I had made my plants far too realistic. This should have been a case of 'less is more', but I had used too many colours and over-elaborated. I had no intention of copying Phyllis Steed's version; I was quite determined to make it myself. I stole another look at her cushion and started again.

In the meantime our elder son Nick had devised a program that enabled me to design on the computer. I had first tried it when designing the Kelmscott Frame, as shown on page 124, and although I was working with the unfamiliar cottons, it had turned out well. This seemed the perfect solution. Now I could experiment with colours without stitching unsuccessfully for weeks. I battled for a while – my

Nika



CHEAT AND COLOUR KEY

The lemon cushion was made in
Appleton tapestry wool.

 342 Yellow 1 skein	 291 Olive green 1 skein
 315A Soft greenish yellow 1 skein	 256 Dark green 1 skein
 918 Brown 1 skein	 294 Mid green 3 skeins
 911 Mid fawn 1 skein	 352 Light grey-green 1 skein
 980 Light fawn 2 skeins	 992 Off-white (background) 2 skeins
	⊗ Middle point

MATERIALS FOR THE LEMON CUSHION

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de luxe Zweigart
mono canvas measuring 12 x 12 in (30 x 30cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

Finished size of design: 8 x 8 in (20 x 20cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

computing skills leave a lot to be desired – often changing my mind about leaf-vein colours and the shapes of the branches, but feeling confident.

Finally, off to the stitchers went the four little canvases, fewer shades of wool than before and the rather smart new charts.

The simplicity of my Fruit designs gives them great versatility and, while waiting for their return from the stitchers, I decided to try the Lemon on linen. The surprising result is that the cross stitch has the primitiveness I sought originally, whereas the wool cushions are all still looking rather realistic. However, I do think they are pretty and should like to see them all in cottons, like the Lemon shown on the workbook on page 119. On much coarser canvas, all four Fruit designs might also make a rather charming tiled rug.

EIGHT ORANGES ON A DECORATIVE ROSSINI CHAIR.
TALLEST LEMON ON THE BED IN THE WILLOW BED ROOM
AT STANDEX IN SUSSEX.



Nilka



CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Orange cushion was made in
Appleton tapestry wool.

 476 Dark orange 2 skeins	 240 Olive green 1 skein
 474 Mid orange 2 skeins	 295 Dark green 1 skein
 672 Peach yellow 1 skein	 294 Mid green 2 skeins
 411 Brown 1 skein	 182 Light green 1 skein
 931 Kie fawn 1 skein	 992 Off white Backwash 2 skeins
	 Middle plain

MATERIALS FOR THE ORANGE CUSHION

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de luxe Zweigart
mono canvas measuring 12 x 12in (30 x 30cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

Finished size of design: 3 x 8in (20 x 20cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

MATERIALS FOR THE PRACH AND POMEGRANATE CUSHIONS

Canvas: 12 threads/in (5/cm) de luxe Zweigart mono canvas measuring 12 x 12in (30 x 30cm)

Threads: Appleton tapestry wool

Needle: Size 18 tapestry

Finished size of design: 8 x 8in (20 x 20cm)

Stitch: Tent stitch, using one thread of tapestry wool

CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Prach cushion was made in Appleton tapestry wool.

 227 Dark red 1 skein	 951 Light brown 2 skeins
 206 Mid pink 1 skein	 296 Dark green 1 skein
 224 Light pink 1 skein	 294 Mid green 2 skeins
 471 Yellow 1 skein	 322A Soft green-yellow 1 skein
 913 Brown 1 skein	 992 Off-white (background) 9 skeins
 911 Mid fawn 1 skein	

Nilka

1 Middle point

CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Pomegranate cushion was made in Appleton tapestry wool.

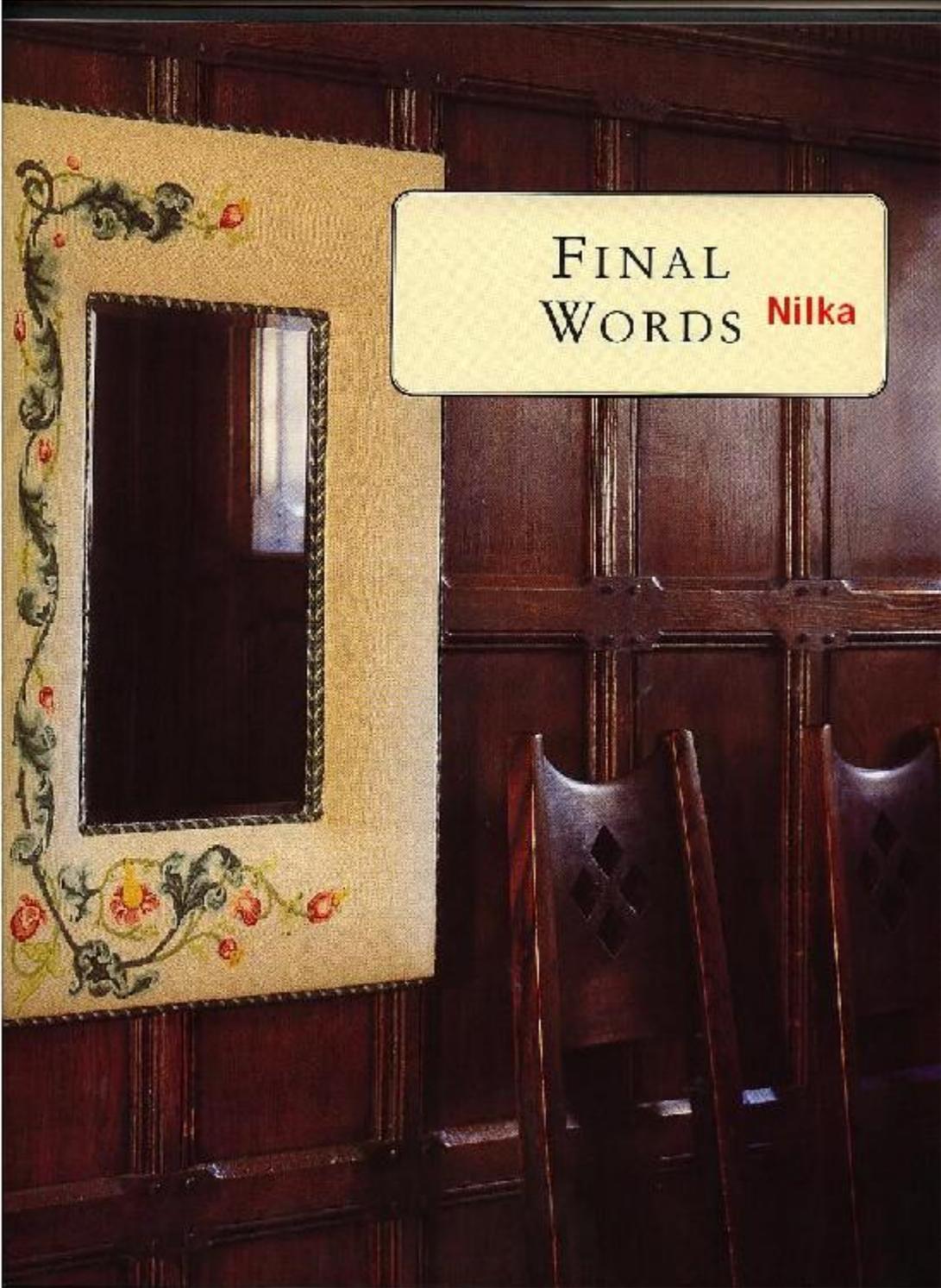
 207 Dark red 1 skein	 951 Light brown 2 skeins
 254 Light pink 1 skein	 296 Dark green 1 skein
 372 Pale yellow 1 skein	 294 Mid green 2 skeins
 913 Brown 1 skein	 352 Light grey-green 1 skein
 911 Mid fawn 1 skein	 992 Off-white (background) 9 skeins

1 Middle point

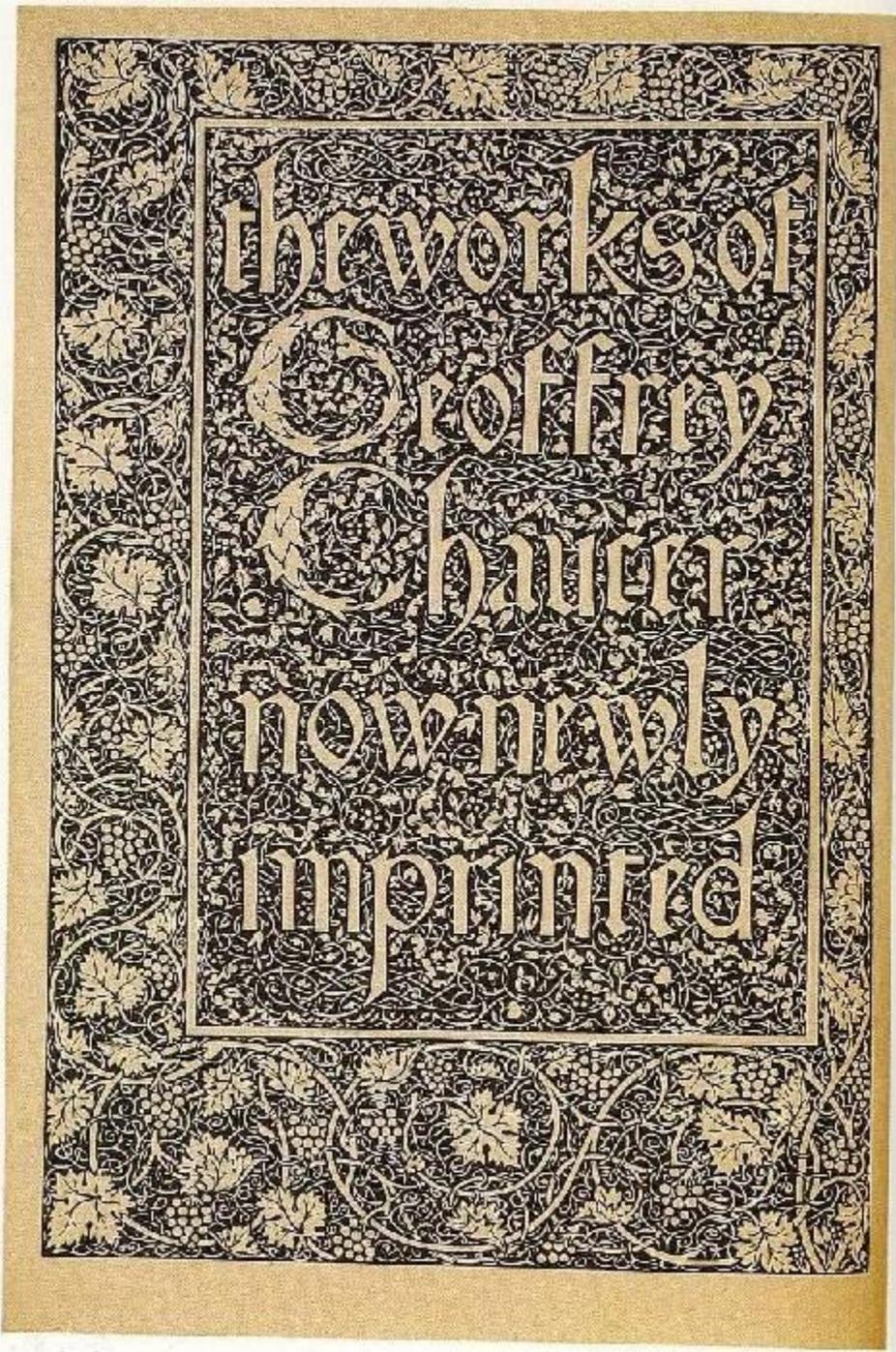


BACK RIGHT: STANLEY IS FULL OF SURPRISES. HERE WE HAVE THE ORIGINAL MORRIS FLOW WALLPAPER TO SHOW OFF THE PRACH AND POMEGRANATE CUSHIONS.





FINAL
WORDS **Nilka**



the works of
Geoffrey
Chaucer
now newly
imprinted



I do not want art for a few, any more than
education for a few, or freedom for a few

Nilka

The Lesser Arts, 327

IN THE SPRING of 1879, while Janey was in Italy, Morris found his last home, Kelmscott House, as it was to be re-named, tucked over the same river that flowed near his beloved Kelmscott Manor. Morris liked the garden and the large room, with long windows facing the Thames; he wrote to Janey describing it all. Rossetti had previously viewed the empty house and had also written to Janey secretly and disparagingly. She later said that she liked it more than she had expected. The William Morris Society is thankfully still housed in the basement, but it is a tragedy that we are unable to see the house as it was.

More than Red House, which was before the days of 'The Firm', and more than Kelmscott Manor, this home was a perfect example of the use Morris made of all his furnishings. George Bernard Shaw – later to be romantically linked with May Morris – said that 'there was an extraordinary discrimination at work in this magical house... everything that was necessary was clean and handsome and everything else was beautiful and beautifully presented'. It was in his bedroom here that Morris wove his tapestry *Acornhus and Vine*.

In 1881, with his friend William De Morgan, Morris found the perfect site for Morris & Co. Merton Abbey was close to London and on the River Wandle, with dye vats already installed. At last, Morris had enough space for his needs –

A PAGE FROM THE ARTS AND CRAFTS
COURSE. THIS PUBLICATION
WAS THE CULMINATION OF A
LIFE OF TEACHING AND
STUDYING FOR EDUCATION BY
MORRIS. IT MUST HAVE
BEEN AN ALPHABETICALLY



ABOVE: *The Pond at Menton* by L. L. Pannock. This very romantic view of Menton is one of Morris & Co.'s designs. The picture above is copied & sold out from the illustrated edition.

LEFT: *A Cornfield and Windmill* - designed Cassage and his at his friend's house. The picture is 500 ft. long to make the space in his bedroom. The picture is 100 ft. long.

seven acres to house his fabric-printing, tapestry and cloth-weaving, carpet-making and stained glass production. He excitedly raised roofs and planted trees. The picture we have is a romantic one: 'The room is full of sunlight and colour. The upright frames face you at right angles with a long row of windows looking close upon the bright shining river.' Outside, there were herbs, vegetables and wild flowers growing and newly dyed fabrics spread out to dry in the sun.

Within three years there were one hundred employees, and Morris started designing wallpapers again. This was his most prolific period; he wrote: 'I am drawing patterns so fast that last night I dreamed I had to draw a sausage; somehow I had to eat it first, which made me anxious about my digestion.'

Secure in the financial success of his company, Morris devoted the next few years to the security of others. He worked incredibly hard for the Social-

cause, writing, speaking and marching; but he was bitterly disappointed by what he saw as his failure to make any appreciable difference to the standard of living of the working classes. He showed great courage and probably ruined his health.



His last and, to my mind, greatest achievement was the Kelmscott Press. Long an admirer of ancient illuminated manuscripts, Morris set about learning all aspects of book production, from paper-making to typography. His intention was to produce works of art. He designed three new typefaces and over 600 decorations. Twenty-three of his own titles were produced on the three hand presses in the little cottage near Kelmscott House. His masterpiece was *The Kelmscott Chaucer* – five years in the making. Morris received first copies of it just three months before he died. We can but wonder what he might have done next, had he lived longer.

William Morris died at Kelmscott House in October 1896. Jancy, May and Georgina Burne-

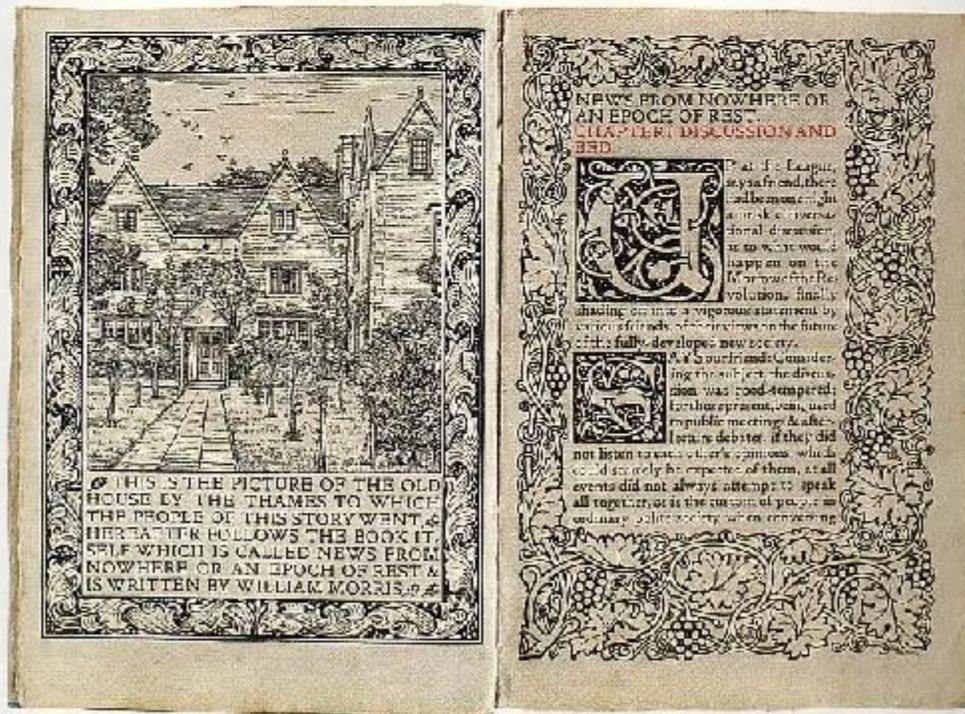
Jones were with him. A doctor at the time gave the cause of death as just being William Morris and doing the work of ten men.

His coffin was plain oak; he was taken by train through Oxford to Lechlade and from there in a moss-lined, yellow-painted haycart, decorated with vines and willows, through the rain, to the pretty little church at Kelmscott.

Robert Blatchford wrote in *The Clarion* of 18th October, 1896:

He was our best man. We cannot spare him; we cannot replace him. In all England there lives no braver, kinder, honester, cleverer, heartier man than William Morris. He is dead, and we cannot help feeling for a while that nothing else matters.

THE FIRST PAGES OF MORRIS'S KELMSCOTT PRESS PUBLICATION OF *NEWS FROM NOWHERE* GIVE A SENSATION OF THE AMOUNT OF WORK MORRIS PUT INTO THE DESIGNING OF HIS LOVELY BOOKS. THE HOUSE SHOWN IS ACTUALLY KELMSCOTT MANOR.



THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE OLD HOUSE BY THE THAMES TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THIS STORY WENT, & HEREABOUTS FOLLOWS THE BOOK ITSELF WHICH IS CALLED NEWS FROM NOWHERE OR AN EPOCH OF REST & IS WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS.

NEWS FROM NOWHERE OR AN EPOCH OF REST. ILLUSTRATED DISCUSSION AND BED.

At the League, says a friend, there had been some of the old-fashioned discussion, so so what would happen on the 1st of the Revolution, finally showing on that a vigorous statement by the workers of the future of the fully-developed new society.

So our friends, considering the subject, the discussion was good-tempered; for the present, we used to public meetings, & after-noon debates, if they did not listen to each other's opinions, which could only be expected of them, as all events did not always attempt to speak all together, as is the custom of people in ordinary public society, when concerning



Kelmscott Frame

Nilka

ON 20TH MAY, 1897, Edward Burne-Jones was heard to say: 'There are two arts which others don't care for that Mr Morris and I have found our greatest delight in – painted books and beautiful tapestry.'

The enormous enthusiasm that Morris displayed for everything he admired was particularly evident with books. His early love of literature developed into a passion for its decoration. He bought his first great book in 1854 at the age of 30; it was the 1473 Ulm edition of Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus* and it cost £26. Twenty-eight years later he spent £900 on the *Tropes Missal*. At the time of his death he was considered an important collector, owning 800 early printed books and 100 illuminated manuscripts. Unfortunately, his collecting coincided with a drop in income and his slightly guilty need to justify his later acquisitions hugely amused his friends. When Morris stated that 'prudence is a great mistake', Burne-Jones knew at once that his friend was about to purchase another medieval book!

In later life, Morris was to realize a dream. He produced his own writings on his own Kelmscott Press. Here, he controlled the size, the paper, the ink, the illustrations and the type. He wanted to print books 'that would have a definite claim to beauty'. Just a glance at any one of the Kelmscott Press titles confirms that he certainly succeeded.

I was fortunate enough to read one of his romances, *The Well at the World's End*, in the original version. It was an absolute delight. It is not just the story that makes the turning of each page so compulsive; on each spread there is something new to charm. Single leaves and simple flowers punctuate Morris's own large and legible print. Beautiful illuminated letters start each section. A border might be filled with a tangle of grapes or a flourish of foliage. Although the influence of medieval manuscripts is obvious, each of the Kelmscott books is definitely Morris's own creation.

The casual way a three-sided design in *The Well at the World's End* framed the page fascinated me. I so wanted to see if the black and white original would work in embroidery. It is an intricate design and even on fine linen I needed to enlarge it considerably to retain its marvellous flamboyance. Linen is ideal; its natural colour looks beautiful on the unworried side of the frame and of course it negates the need for background stitching.

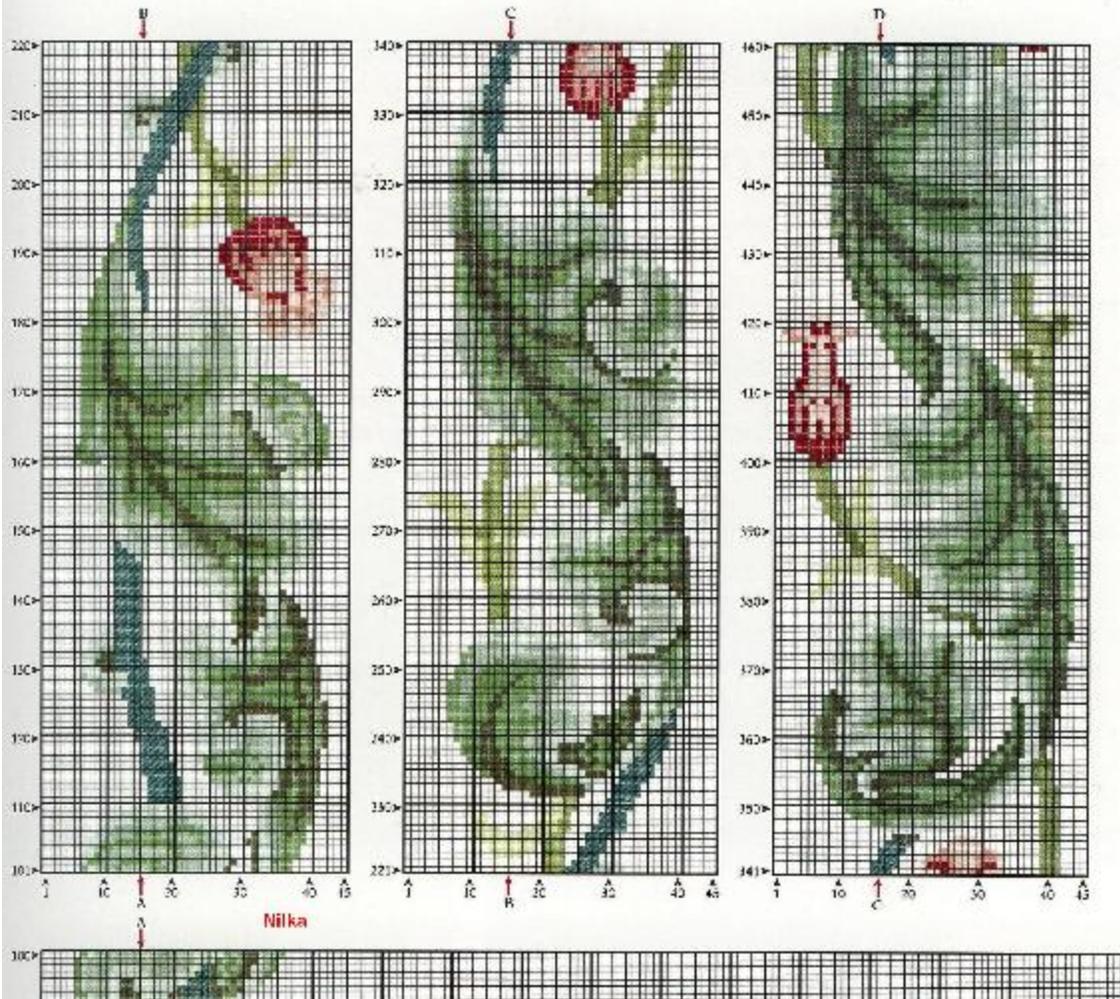
I am not as familiar with cottons as I am with Appleton wools, and this unnerved me as I started my experimental stitching. Fortunately, this was when I was rescued by my son Nick's new computer program, which allowed me to match the threads that I had chosen and to 'stitch' on the screen. It was so exciting watching my frame grow – I could go back and correct stitches without unpicking – what a joy!

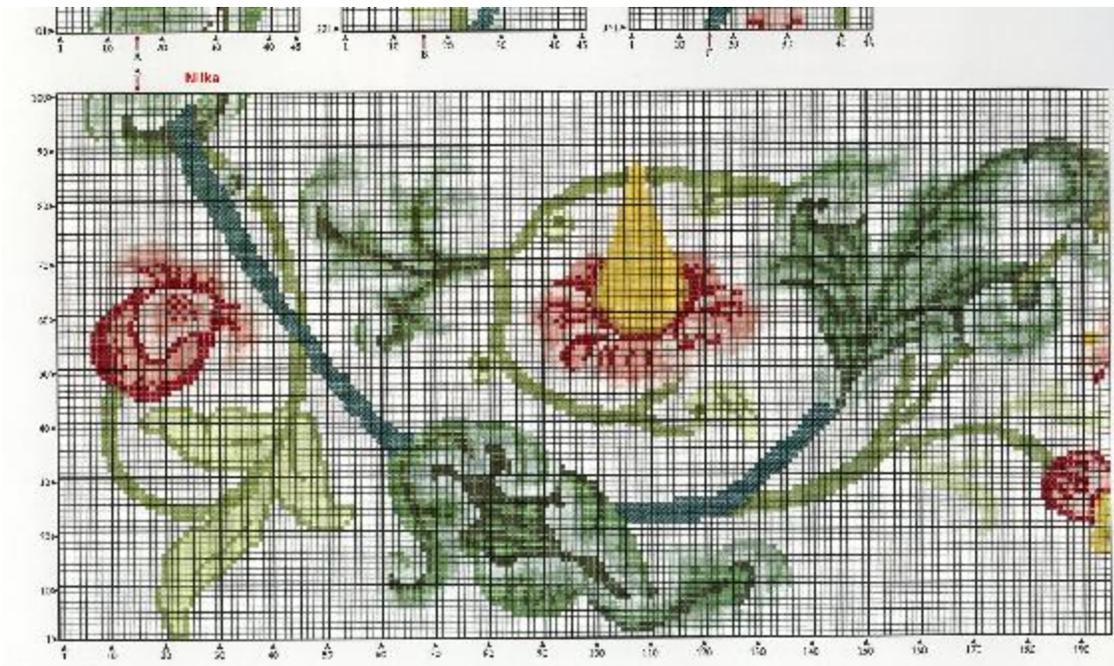
There was a disadvantage to using so many stitches – the chart had to be printed in sixteen parts. It was with these stuck together in an unwieldy shape, along with the linen and the cottons, that I approached Angela Reader, who is an extremely experienced stitcher. Fortunately, she is not easily daunted, understood my explanation for the lopsided design and calmly matched the centres and started stitching. I do not think that I have ever seen one of my designs turn out so exactly as I had expected. The beautiful leaves especially pleased me, and Angela's stitching is smooth and even – much better than mine!



ABOVE: A SUPERB EXAMPLE OF A 15TH CENTURY QUADRIE FROM THE CATHEDRAL OF SION, WHICH MORRIS & CO. HAVE STITCHED AND ADORNED.

EARLIER MY KELMSCOTT FRAME ON MARQUENY FANTAILIN IN LIBERTY'S COUTURE DEPARTMENT.





MATERIALS FOR THE KELMSCOTT FRAME

Linen: 18 threads/in (7/cm) evenweave linen measuring 40 x 33in (102 x 84cm)

Threads: DMC stranded embroidery cotton

Needle: Size 24 tapestry

Stitch: Tent stitch, using 1 strand of cotton

Finished size of frame as shown: 31½ x 24½in (80 x 62cm); width 6½in (16.5cm)

The Kelmscott Frame was a tremendously satisfying project and I must confess to being slightly stunned by its elegance. I know it looks a little daunting,

but I hope that you will not be frightened by it. If you plan carefully, it will be well. Perhaps you can take comfort in the fact that at least you can see how it will look when complete – I was not at all sure! If you like the design but have no need of a frame, you could use the chart to make a bell pull, curtain tie-back or pelmet.

Check with your framer about fabric before you start. An extra 4in (10cm) of linen all around the frame gives you margin for error.

It is simpler to start at the top of the design. Stitch a guide line down the vertical centre of your linen. Measure 7in (18cm) down from the top of the fabric along this line. Take this point as the intersection of 200 x 490 (see the *x* in the chart above). Starting with the red-and-yellow flower and its leaf, work in tent stitch from right to left to the corner. Continue stitching down the side sections from D to C, C to B and down to A at the bottom corner.

Nikka

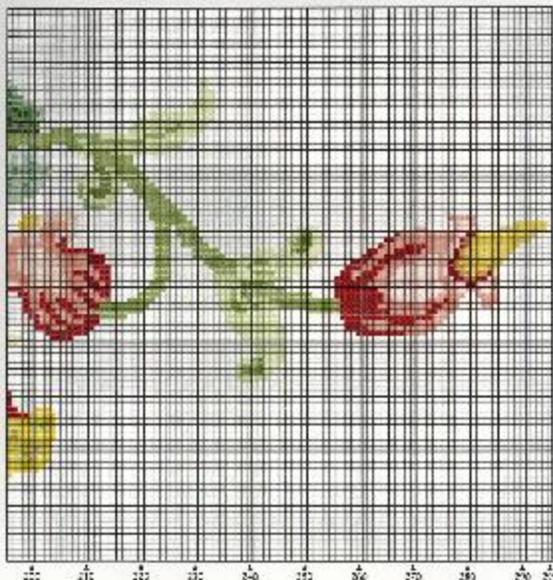
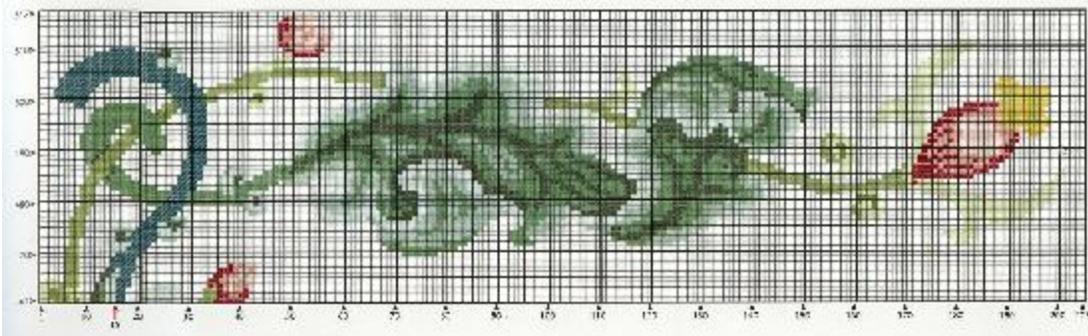


CHART AND COLOUR KEY

The Kelmscott Frame was made in DMC or similar cottons.

872 Red 1 skein	3545 Light green 2 skeins
3775 Mid pink 2 skeins	382 Carbon turquoise 3 skeins
3778 Light pink 2 skeins	561 Dark turquoise 2 skeins
3822 Yellow 2 skeins	3816 Mid turquoise 3 skeins
734 Yellow-green 1 skein	3817 Light turquoise 3 skeins
851 Brown 1 skein	9014/20 Dark blue-green 1 skein of each
2846 Carbon green 1 skein	

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