



'Daisies', Cecilia Slinn

— FIRST AND LAST — **Cecilia Slinn**

This month Cecilia Slinn tells us how her little Elna brought her to great things!

Having retired early and moved from the South of England to the glorious border town of Montgomery I found myself looking for a new hobby. I have always sewn ... like most quilters my dolls were always impeccably dressed!!!! I came across a book by Lynne Edwards called 'The Sampler Quilt Book' and embarked on working my way through the book learning numerous patchworking skills along the way. Well, what started as a series of blocks soon morphed into a king size quilt which is still in daily use today.

I was immensely proud of making it on my little Elna sewing machine until it came to quilting it ...

I soon discovered this was way beyond my capabilities then and not only because of its size. I had included Flying Geese, so edge to edge quilting was apparently not possible and was told it would need to be custom quilted. The simple fact is I was really disappointed with the quilting on my quilt which led to the decision that I needed to learn how to Free-Motion-Quilt to finish my quilts for myself the rest, as they say, is history.

My work has developed over time. Always exploring, discovering and adapting new techniques I have worked my way through many approaches including of course patchwork and appliqué. At one point I was playing with the idea of a colour-wash quilt and 'Daisies' was born. The petals are each individually turned and sit proud on top of the colour-wash background ... some are trapunto; some not and there are also trapunto daisies as illusions in the background. The centres of the daisies, again turned, were also padded and beaded to complete the look. The whole thing was then FMQed in a simple relaxed style. Another appliqué piece is 'After the Party'. Experimenting with various methods of appliqué; I finally decided to turn the edges, trapunto and invisibly



'First Sampler Quilt', Cecilia Slinn



'After the Party', Cecilia Slinn

stitch the bottles ... you'll notice a daisy crept in here too. Experimenting with these various methods has eventually led to a class where students explore these numerous appliqué methods and styles utilising the stitches available on their own machines.

The turning point in my Free-Motion-Quilting was 'Bubbles'. What started out as a simple FMQ sampler became something special. (My only regret with this piece is I didn't use a better quality fabric!) It won an on-line competition and my new teaching career began. At about the same time I also joined the Quilters Guild and then things really took off. I now spend a great deal of my time teaching and it has become as big a passion as the quilting itself. There is nothing better than watching somebody develop their fear of FMQ into a skill and go away from my classes passionate about free-motion-quilting. I do teach many other classes but the FMQ classes I teach as a series of three (with plenty of time in-between for homework/practice) are perhaps the most rewarding. Another area of quilting I have been exploring is working on Vintage Quilts ... using 'found' linens, I treat them as Wholecloths. As well as a normal sandwich I also include an underlay under the top vintage piece. I then stitch-in-the ditch around all the original work: Be it embroidery or cutwork, lacy or indeed 'whatever', my job is to enhance the original sewers work; not detract from it. Then I can begin the quilting however, the piece can live on my worktop for several weeks whilst I 'cogitate' how to quilt it. Each piece is very distinctive and is of course driven by the original work ... sometimes the work cries out for beading too.



'Bubbles', Cecilia Slinn

"My work has developed over time. Always exploring, discovering and adapting new techniques..."



'Vintage - beaded', Cecilia Slinn



'Mind the Gap', Cecilia Slinn

One of my latest pieces is 'Mind the Gap'. It is very obviously the London Underground Map. All the individual 'routes' and getting them in 'exactly' the right place and order was, shall we say, a challenge. The background is white on white and includes iconic London landmarks set amongst 'metro tiles'. I was extremely honoured to receive a Highly Commended at the 2019 Festival of Quilts for this piece.

I no longer work on my little Elna but am the proud owner of several Bernina sewing machines including a Q20 sit-down longarm ... a sheer indulgence. All my work has been a learning curve and will of course continue to be so and I love taking part in fellow Tutors workshops and courses to further develop my skills. Incidentally I bumped into Lynne Edwards at the Festival of Quilts one year and thanked her warmly for introducing me to our wonderful craft. x

To see more of Cecilia Slinn's work visit her at www.ceciliaslinn.com. For more information about workshops or to get in touch email her at cecilia.slinn@btinternet.com or call 01686 668 120