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projects

Christmas Special

Fabulous festive houses, shops
& roomboxes to inspire you



contents

small details

December 2016 ● Issue 291

To reach us: Call +44 (0)1903 884988

Or write to: Dolls House World,
PO Box 2258, Pulborough RH20 9BA
Great Britain

email: support@ashdown.co.uk

Website: www.dollshouseworld.com

Editor: Richard Jennings
Email: richard@ashdown.co.uk

Feature writer: Sandra Harding

Advertisement sales:

UK office: Maria Fitzgerald
Email: maria@ashdown.co.uk

US office: Sara Vix
Email: sara@ashdown.co.uk

Design: Richard Jennings &
Wendy Crosthwaite

US office: Ashdown Inc., 68132 250th
Avenue, Kasson, MN 55944, USA.
Tel: 507 634 3143

Subscriptions:

UK: support@ashdown.co.uk

US: usoffice@ashdown.co.uk

ISSN 0961 - 0928. Printed in the UK.
Distributed to the newstrade by Comag.

Subscription prices:

Per year: UK £59.99 (12 issues).
European and worldwide prices will be
adjusted to local currencies. See online
for details at www.dollshouseworld.com
or call +44 (0)1903 884988. All of our sub-
scriptions are handled by us here at DHW.



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“where little things matter”



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welcome

THERE'S nothing better than miniature Christmas festivities. After all it's a time for us to deck the

twelfth scale halls and fill our homes with decorations and fun. Even maybe time for us to tackle those projects which have been gathering dust for the past year or so!

In this issue you will find plenty to get those creative thoughts twinkling like the fairy lights on a tree.

We show you how to make your own beautiful gingerbread house and of course the scene would not be complete without an old-fashioned sledge to lean outside.

On the cutouts page there is plenty to inspire you with miniature wrapping paper and cards. And there is oh, ho, ho, ho so much more besides.

But whatever you do this holiday season make sure you fill your doll's house with love and laughter. A few days of escape to a miniature world where we can lose ourselves sounds the best present ever.

From the entire team of busy elves here at the Dolls House World grotto we wish you a fun filled happy Christmas.

Richard

email: richard@ashdown.co.uk

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HOUSE HUNT

Find the little house hidden inside.
Last issue it appeared on page 40.



Quote of the month:

People have a real love of looking at small worlds - something inside them is innately attracted to that 'miniature' realm.

John Lasseter



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Roxanne's sweet little shop is festive treat

Roxanne Fern has created a delightful bakery that uses pastel colours to create a different look for the season

BY DEB WEISSLER

One doesn't often associate pastel colours with the Christmas season, but miniaturist Roxanne Fern has ensured that her bakery can weather all four seasons well. Once the holiday decorations are taken down and put away, the bakery continues to provide joy and satisfaction to its maker and its baker!

With the exception of a few purchased items such as the display cases, glass candy jars, and the room box itself, everything else has been hand-crafted by Roxanne. Her pastel décor is as bright and cheerful as the delectable looking confections on display, and with her Christmas trees

decorated with dozens of cookies and sweets, her shop is brimming with delights for mini holiday shoppers.

"The room box is from a kit that I put together," Roxanne points out. "I painted the walls, miniaturised and printed out the wallpapers, and created and decorated most of the items—the round tiered tables, all the cakes, cupcakes, cookies, candies, the menu board, even the cupcake-themed wall clock."

Filling the glass jars with tiny candies took hours of time and patience, but the effect was well worth the effort as they line up on her cupboard shelves and display case. When she



decided to trim her Christmas tree with baked goods and candies, she had no idea how many pieces it would take to fill an entire tree.

The whole bakery was a labour of love, but Roxanne admits her very favourite is the filled bakery case with tiny handmade menu cards. Inspired by the full sized Miette Bakery, which now has shops in several locations throughout her area, the word "Miette" is French for the word crumb, which the bakery states aptly describes the scale of their petite pastries and minimal decorations. One would almost think they were describing a miniature!

Of course like any good bakery, good things come and go. "I started with an idea and layout in mind, but changed the layout again and again before finding the right one," Roxanne explains. "Then I worked on filling



created brings personal satisfaction and Roxanne admits she is her own biggest fan. "I love what I do so very much, and enjoy every moment of the process. I'm excited every time I get an idea or inspiration to create something in miniature. Something as simple as a striped drinking straw, cupcake wrappers, or cookbooks can look so amazing and add so much life to your miniature settings."

Roxanne began making miniatures in 2006 and opened up her Etsy shop and turned it into a full time business in 2010, where she focuses on kitchen

Left: This bakery is a wonderful tribute to the famous Miette Bakery.

Above right: Filling the windows with special cakes was Roxanne's favourite task.

Right: Rearranging the shop for many photos is a fun way for Roxanne to get the most out of her creation!

each area with a theme; cakes in one section, cookies and chocolates in another, an area for my sweets-decorated wreaths, and a candy bar section."

In one corner a round three-tiered table displays a delightful collection of gingerbread houses, iced and trimmed with coloured candies. Nearby sits a mini Christmas tree decorated with cookies and confections. Wherever one turns there's a veritable sweet feast for the eyes.

For a self-taught artist, each item



and bakery-themed items. Living in New York City, it's nice to work from home and avoid the hustle and bustle of the morning commute. Her family eagerly supports her work and her children are fascinated by mum's many creations.

And even though her studio is close by, her greatest difficulty is "the feeling that I never have enough time to complete all the projects I want to work on. Many of my miniatures are so very time consuming and there is never enough time in the day. My home life and miniature life co-exist side-by-side."

In addition to keeping her Etsy shop inventory full, Roxanne takes on special commissions for collectors desiring a custom piece. Her personal and growing collection of bakery room boxes attest to the fact there are times she makes such a special piece she just can't bear to part with it. It will become a part of her private collection and she will make another.

"I love being able to create anything my heart desires with my own two hands, lots of passion, and my love of miniatures. My miniature world is very much a part of both my personal and home life, every single day."



Above: The tiny menu cards placed by each cake are a fun addition to the bakery's window display.

Far left: The small candy jars, lined along the shelf, took hours to fill.

Below: Christmas wreaths made from cookies and garland fill the shop and add much cheer!



WHERE I WORK

This month we visit the workspace-with-a-view of Lorraine Cooper of Lorraine Miniatures and can quite appreciate why it's her 'dream space'

How long have you been making miniatures? 15+ years

Where do you work? In my workshop at home

Do you always make your minis in the same place?

Mostly, but sometimes on my lap whilst watching TV in the evenings

Do you work at set times?

No, I try to but I end up working all hours of the day and night

What makes your space for mini making so special?

It was built specifically for the purpose and it is in the garden looking down our field into open countryside.

Do you keep your workspace private or do you let other people in?

No, it is my domain, though my



labrador lays on her bed in the corner and watches me. She keeps my secrets!

Do you listen to music while you work? Occasionally. It's soothing and therapeutic

Name one thing that is banned from your workspace. Human food!

Describe your workspace in five words. Peaceful, tranquil, busy and organised.

What is the one thing that your workspace can't be missing? My printer!

Where would be your dream workspace? Right here

● Lorraine Cooper, Lorraine Miniatures

www.lorraineminiatures.com

lorraine@dollshousestore.com



"PEACEFUL, TRANQUIL,



BUSY AND ORGANISED."

Create a stocking for the festive fireplace

Santa is coming! Let's get ready for him by making a miniature stocking to hang with care so he can leave the tiniest of surprises for us

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

I decided to add some stockings to my little fireplace for Christmas. Note that these stockings are for before Santa pays a visit and fills them up! This is a project that you can have such fun with and make stockings that will specifically match your mini decor. Finish them off by adding all the fun details like tassels, glitter, beads, and anything else that tickles your fancy.

Step 1: Trace the solid lined stocking pattern onto the backside of your fabric. Be sure to flip over the pattern piece when you trace the second one.



Step 2: Cut out the patterns around the dotted lines.

Step 3: With a very sharp craft knife, cut the dotted lines on the corners as shown on the pattern.

Step 4: Use a toothpick to spread Tacky Glue along the edge of the stocking and fold over the extra fabric. I used the glue free end of the toothpick to fold and press each piece.



Press again as you go to be sure the fold stays down.

Step 5: Cut some small pieces of felt to fit inside of the stocking.



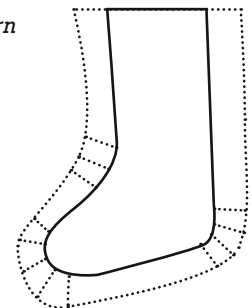
Step 6: Using your toothpick, put glue all around the edges, but not the top opening of the stocking. Press the pieces together and keep pinching until they are adhered.



You will need

- Fabric
- Ribbon
- Felt
- Scissors
- Toothpick
- Wax paper
- Tacky Glue
- Craft knife
- Thread and needle
- Embroidery thread

Stocking pattern



Step 7: Once dry, if there are uneven edges, then trim them off.

Step 8: Glue your choice of decorative trimming around the top.

Make tassels



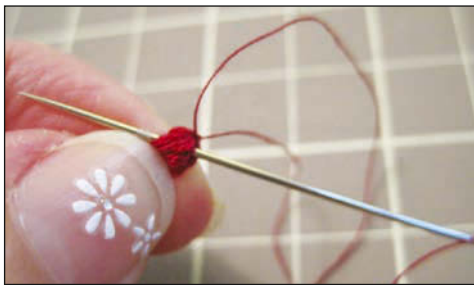
Step 1: Wrap embroidery thread around a 1/2" wide piece of mat board, 3 times and then cut off the excess.



Step 2: Thread a needle and insert it at the top of the tassel and pull through until you have enough thread to tie two knots. Keep the thread in the needle.



Step 3: Slip the craft knife under the embroidery thread at the base of the wrapped thread and slice it off the board.

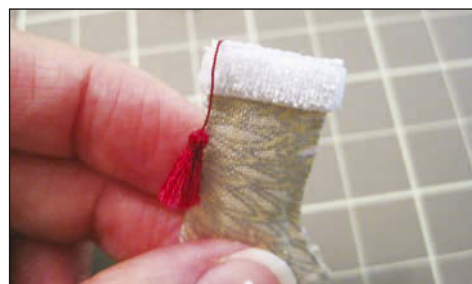


Step 4: Pinch the top and push the threaded needle through the pinched area and then wrap in around the top about seven times. Then push the needle through and wrap once and push it



through again. Snip the thread off close to the tassel.

Step 5: Lay the tassel on your cutting board and run the tip of the needle through the embroidery thread to open up the strands. Press in between fingers to shape.



Step 6: Put a blob of glue inside the

back of the stocking. Position the tassel or tassels where you want them and pinch them against stocking. Push the thread inside the stocking into the glue with a toothpick. Pinch and hold until set.

I used a red marker around the base of the ribbon to make it more festive. Have fun creating your own little Christmas stockings just in time for Santa!



Garlands & bows adorn this busy sparkling store

Christmas is here and it's time to decorate and find the perfect gifts. Gabriele Layne has made a miniature store that fulfills both these festive aims

BY ALICE MONROE

If you are familiar with Gabriele's work you know that she loves making shops in miniature. We have seen many shops from her in the past, such as bakeries, floral shops, clock shops, a party store, and so many more. Here we take a tour of Gabriele's Christmas shop.

This industrious miniaturist has filled every corner with an amazing assortment of tiny treasures she has collected over the years. Originally from Germany, Gabriele always adds a little something from her home country. Many of the items in this Christmas shop were made by some of her favourite miniature artists, but Gabriele also has hours of fun making her own small pieces.

This festive room box measures 20" wide x 10" deep x 9" tall and was constructed with angled walls to create an open showcase for all of the items. The floor was pieced together using one-inch squares that she cut out from wood veneer. The floor squares were glued down alternating the wood grain pattern to give a patchwork effect.

The walls have an assortment of wreaths that were made using various materials. One is made from paper pine strands that were wired and shaped into circles and then decorated with miniature ornaments. Another is a brush wreath with white paint to give it a dusted snow look before clay cookies were added.

She has also added garlands with

red ribbons and bows along the wall and across the shelves. A string of printed holiday cards were hung with joy.

On the left side of the shop, just below the wreaths, are a few children's toys, a basket of holiday ornaments, boxes of decorative bulbs, and a wooden box of holiday mail. Sitting on a wooden step stool is a glorious gingerbread house!

The first shelf on the far left has an assortment of candies displayed in dishes, bowls, baskets, and a jar. A beautiful spun glass basket and footed candy dish were also filled with colourful candies. Gold and silver bowls that were made from jewellery findings are filled with oranges and more delicious holiday sweets. Up on the very top of the shelf are a gingerbread man and woman leaning against a small mug filled with lollipops that were made by Elaine Langley. To the right of those swirly lollipops are a Santa tea set and a plate of wrapped gingerbreads and cookies.

As we continue to stroll to the right we are presented with a very large shelf on the back wall, which is stocked with wood figurines that are beautifully hand-painted. These were originally on a bracelet that Gabriele found in an antique shop.

The candle holders are from the Erzgebirge region of Germany and are some of Gabriele's favourite miniatures. Some of the other small figurines



were collected over the years. She took much time and patience to make a good number of Advent wreaths to fill the shelves. She used tiny brads that have a star shape to hold the four candles that were made from real wax.

Many toys fill the bottom shelf including a Snoopy Hallmark ornament with a Christmas tree that sits on the floor. A print of a gingerbread house was folded and then covered with glitter. That along with other folded boxes with Christmas motifs were made by Gabriele using her computer.

On the far right of the holiday shop is another shelf that is filled with boxes of ornaments. Schwipbogen, traditional German wood cut-out ornaments are displayed on the top of the shelf. It was customary to place these in a window at Christmastime and they are normally used to hold candles. For safety reasons, electric lights are used instead.

The Advent calendar she made on her computer actually has a few doors that open. The countdown to Christmas has begun! Wall ornaments surround the display shelf and there are also a few Santa-themed Coca-Cola



Above: Gabriele's Christmas shop shown in full. This mini project is full of sparkle and holiday spirit!

Below: The items on the shelves are a great example of what can be created with jewelry findings and beads.

Right: Gabriele's specialty is shown here in that every space is filled with something extra special.





advertisements. The small wall shelf holds wonderful hand-painted objects including a Santa and an elf made by Karen Markland.

Just under that small shelf on the floor is a nativity scene that can be used as a mini yard decoration. It was made using miniature nativity dolls, a wood base covered with fine gravel, moss, and straw. For the finishing touch, a baby Jesus was added. The wood shelter for the manger was made from scrap pieces of wood.

Both beautiful display tables were made using paper tube pieces and then draped with fabric. The one on the left has a Christmas tree topped with a gold angel and both tables are overflowing with gingerbread houses, gift boxes, candy, and cookies. Surrounding the tables are shopping bags of wrapping paper, boxes of tree decorations, wrapped presents that are ready to be picked up, and a doll

in a box.

If you happen to be five inches tall then this is the place to shop. Everything you will need for the holidays—from decorations to gifts—you can find here. Getting into the Christmas spirit is easy while browsing through a lovely Christmas shop like this one!

Gabriele leaves us with this message; "The Christmas season is the time to use the creative talents that we have to add holiday cheer to our doll's house. What fun it is to transform a miniature living and/or dining room into a festive place for the little residents to celebrate?

"So have some fun collecting special mini items that are available in your favourite craft store or on the Internet. Or even better, get inspired and make your own decorations or a delicious feast to display on the dining room table. The satisfaction from having made your own little pieces is priceless."



Top left: So many decoratively wrapped presents with perfect tiny bows.

Top: A twelfth scale gingerbread house that is fully decorated and adorned is the centre-piece on this Christmas table.

Above centre: A very small manger scene complete with the baby Jesus.

Above: A few laser cut wood miniatures sit on the shelf.

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Creative roots can be traced back to the old Silk Road

With a passion for Victorian and European royalty, Mzia has turned her inspiration into fabulous miniature creations that owe much to her childhood home in Georgia

BY DEB WEISSLER. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PUFF UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

What Mzia Dsamia's Manhattan apartment lacks in size, this talented artist makes up for in her work that spans continents and generations. From beautifully costumed dolls to re-purposed furniture, Mzia's work encompasses a broad range of offerings that highlight the very best of 17th through the 19th century designs. Her love for Victorian and European royalty shines through in every piece with her use of lush fabrics, glittering jewels, opulent trimmings, and her own hand-painted fabrics and furnishings.

From her desk by a window, her world is quite literally at her fingertips; her precious dental tools and drawers filled with fabrics, paints, and trimmings all within reach and, outside her window, a world of inspiration. With New York's storied garment district just minutes away, her workspace is filled with designer fabrics she buys from vendors who supply New York's fashion industry. When she can't find exactly what she's looking for, she doesn't hesitate to alter her fabrics with paints and dyes. That's what creativity is all about.

"I use trimmings such as vintage lace for the dresses and some of my beds," Mzia says. "Silk and metal tassels for my drapes. Silk chiffons, taffetas, wool, and leather are regularly incorporated into my designs. It is so

much fun to take a piece of silk fabric and adorn it with paints to transform it into a miniature scale Victorian design."

While many miniature artists choose to concentrate on a single genre, Mzia's line keeps expanding: historically accurate dolls, clothing, hats, scarves, handbags, jewellery, lamps and chandeliers, perfume sets, candleholders, china, dogs, and re-purposed classic furniture.

"Inspiration comes from everywhere," Mzia says, "a glamorous party in the city; a film setting; a book or magazine; the theatre or opera; or a piece of fabric or flower. I'm very lucky to be living in this vibrant city,

which offers such a variety of new and old, glamour and style, and constant creativity. It is really incredible to see a piece of jewellery and then build a dress based upon that theme."

A native of the country of Georgia, Mzia's homeland provided her first inspirations into the world of fashion. Since the 6th century, Georgia lay on the Silk Road that wound its way between Byzantium and Persia. The West craved the riches of the East—tea, spices, silk, cotton, carpets, and fine porcelains. Georgia was in an ideal location to absorb the multi-cultural riches that flowed through its region.

Under Soviet rule, Georgia lacked many of the goods and services they enjoy today, so Mzia put her innate talents of designing and making clothes to good use. "I used to dress my kittens when I was young; then I moved on to making clothes for my daughter

Top: Queen Elizabeth I. Photo by Kote Murvanidze

Left: Twelfth scale Madam de Pompadour, based upon a 1756 painting by Francois Boucher.

Above right: Lady in lingerie reclines on a refurbished chaise beside a table with a hand-crafted crystal lamp.

Right: A hand-crafted candlestick sits atop this table.

Far right: Regency-inspired lady and gentleman.



“Sometimes I will change the doll's face by filing it down and, by adding make-up and hair, changing their looks completely.”





Hand-painted loves eat beside a table with hand-crafted table lamp with painted silk shade.

Above left: These lovely Victorian girls are wearing hand-painted dresses.

Above: Pink and cream 18thc.-inspired draperies.

and nieces and nephews still living in Georgia. Of course none was in the style or scale which I use now, which is certainly more challenging."

Mzia and her family often summered in upstate New York and one day on their way to their summer house, they stopped in a small village

where an arts and crafts fair was under way. She discovered a small miniature shop and was so fascinated with what she saw, she bought a few items. Like many of us who suddenly discover this tiny world, Mzia began searching for miniature shops wherever she went. It wasn't long before her creative roots

inspired her to make her own minis.

Entirely self-taught, Mzia's first major work was a museum room box depicting a Gilded Age exhibition. Filled with mannequins dressed as European royalty from the 17th to 19th centuries, furniture, lamps, jewellery, and a carved bible; all of it hand-crafted.

Her dolls were an instant hit and she began concentrating more and more on creating dolls' costumes. "As I live in a two bedroom apartment there's just not enough space to make the porcelain dolls myself so I use kits. Sometimes I will change the doll's face by filing it down and, by adding make-up and hair, changing their looks completely."

Mzia is particularly enamoured with the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I. "Her dresses were so carefully selected; every detail had a special meaning and all of them had names," Mzia points out. "Her gown depicted in the famous Rainbow Portrait has eyes and ears, meaning she sees and hears all. Another has a serpent on it, which



Above: Hand-painted round banquette and matching chairs.

Right: Two beautifully dressed 18thc. European-inspired mannequins.

signifies wisdom; still another has an ermine, an emblem of chastity. All her portraits have a special meaning that I find fascinating." And she's not the only one fascinated; one of her clients owns six of her Elizabeth I figures, while another owns four.

Mzia has also created Marie Antoinette, Madam de Pompadour, and Maria-Teresa, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia. All were powerful women who thrilled and influenced the courts of Europe with their fashion styles. "They had no fear of going all out on their costumes, jewellery, and furnishings. Everything was tastefully adorned and pure luxury; I love it!"

Her furniture is primarily repurposed Bespaq pieces or occasionally vintage pieces she comes across in her travels. Once Mzia has added her personal touches in the form of paints and fabrics, the originals are unrecognisable.

Mzia refers to her dolls and miniatures as her "lovely little family". "Every time I sell an item, I feel a bit sad.



It's silly but I really do love all my minis. Whenever a client visits to look at an item, I quickly pick it up, hold it close, and describe every detail with all my passion. This occasionally startles some of my new or shyer clients," Mzia laughs. When it's time to say good-bye, she does so reluctantly; hoping her

creations will find good homes.

Mzia welcomes commissions and visitors to her show tables at various shows which can include, the IGMA Guild Show, Good Sam, Philadelphia Miniaturia, Kensington Dollshouse Festival, and City of London Dollshouse Festival.

Victorian market is alive with tradition

Gemma Figueras brings a long-time dream to life with her twelfth scale Vienna Christmas market stalls

BY DEB WEISSLER

Austria's annual Christmas markets are the highlight of the holiday season for many winter tourists. Spanish miniaturist Gemma Figueras's dream of strolling through one was a lifelong dream that finally came true!

For as long as she can remember, Gemma can recall celebrating the Christmas season with great enthusiasm. She and her fellow Barcelonans decorated their homes in traditional style and regional accents that makes Christmas in Catalonia uniquely their own.

December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, is the start of Spain's Christmas season. Gemma's home, then and now, was suddenly transformed into a winter wonderland with decorations and the family's Christmas tree, hung with a collection

of ornaments where it became a tradition that each member of the family had to hang at least one glass ball on the tree.

"Of course there was always at least one ball that was broken, if not by us then by the romping dog," Gemma recalls fondly. But that was par for the course. The centerpiece of their Christmas celebration was the Nativity, not only in Gemma's own home but throughout Catalonia.

The crèche is depicted as a scene set in the iconic Bethlehem stable, featuring the traditional figures of the Holy family, the three Magi, and the beloved stable animals. But Catalonians add their regional touches as well—figures of a fisherman, a baker, and the local clergy, set against a backdrop of mountains and snow. To Gemma the tiny figures in the nativity always re-

minded her of doll's house miniatures.

And then there's Caga Tió! From elaborately carved figures to simple logs painted with smiley faces wearing a traditional red beret, the name Caga Tió quite literally translates to 'Poo Log'. Every day between December 8th and Christmas Eve the children of Catalonia cover him with a blanket to keep him warm and feed him Turrón (almond nougat candy) every evening, to ensure he is nice and full so that when he's beaten with a cane on Christmas Eve he will poo out lots of sweets and treats!

Gemma adores Christmas and has collected glass balls for her Christmas tree from her various travel destinations—Paris, London, Florence, Oslo, and San Francisco, to name a few. Each ball represents a special memory. But there was one trip she had always desired, and that was to visit the traditional Christmas markets in Germany and Austria, so last year Gemma convinced her husband to travel to Vienna in December and that's where she fell in love with their holiday market stalls.

Christmas markets can be found in every major city throughout Austria. Vienna alone hosts more than two dozen, the tradition dating as far back as 1294. For more than a year Gemma



Left: Santa and his sleigh are on the way to deliver many presents!

Right: Inside, this market stall is packed full of tiny books and toys and miniature decorations.



“Gemma couldn’t wait to visit an actual market for inspiration.”

had dreamed of creating a traditional Christmas market in miniature, accumulating appropriate items while shopping miniature shows and on the Internet. She had also hand-crafted quilts, aprons, and the like and she couldn’t wait to see an actual market to get inspiration for what she hoped would be a Viennese market vignette. Arriving back home filled with ideas, Gemma set to work re-creating the sights and flavours she had experienced.

She bought two market stall kits; the third structure from Germany was





Above: Gemma's holiday market stalls shown in their setting with snow, lights, and lanterns.

Left and below: Gemma made the mini quilt in the back of the stall and then filled it with Christmas themed miniature decorations.

already assembled and suited her purposes with very little work. The first stall is trimmed with halved wooden dowels to look like a log hut. It's filled with wonderful laser-cut wooden figures in a Christmas theme. Tiny lights and garlands trimmed with lemon and orange slices add a festive touch.

The second stall is painted forest green and filled with a collection of patchwork quilts and apparel, many of which Gemma made herself. Bedecked with lights and a tiny Santa's sleigh and reindeer on its roof, it overflows with tiny treasures. The third stall, trimmed in lights and red and white gingham stars, is filled with a fabulous collection of children's toys.

Now that the stalls were complete, Gemma set about creating a street scene reminiscent of northern Europe. Lined up along a snow-covered street with Victorian-style street lamps mounted at either end, the scene comes alive with the addition of sleds, Santas, reindeer-drawn wagons, greenery, and baskets filled with goodies.

"I made a sled from a kit and bought a reindeer from a gift shop that I transformed with a harness and bells," Gemma points out. "I also added a small Llama my son's girlfriend brought me back from Peru."



Creating realistic snow was one of her biggest headaches. At first she tried using polyurethane spray foam; then tried a concoction of baking soda and glue. When neither one gave her the affect she desired, she resorted to sculpting snow using Sculpey, then painting and ageing the snow for just the right look.

Of course she had to add some regional touches to her market scene. After all Gemma couldn't forget Caga Tió! How else will her little people come to collect their toys and candy on Christmas Eve? Feliz Navidad!

Above and right: This stall displays the most intricate wooden art pieces some of which are laser cut.



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A mini project that's perfect for a snowy day

This old-fashioned sledge will add an authentic touch to any miniature scene. Use it in a Victorian setting or add it as decoration to a modern home

BY PRICILIA OF TRESPETITE

After making a few prototypes I finally came up with a solution for making a miniature sledge. This is a weathered one, but have some fun making sledges of all colours!

Step 1: Cut out the pattern wood pieces using a craft knife.



Step 2: Sand all edges to be smooth. If you would like a weathered wood effect, then use a small pair of scissors to run gouges into the grain.



Step 3: Paint all the wood pieces with Barnwood, Folk Art paint (or similar) and let dry. Sand lightly and then use a wash of black so that the dark paint gets into the gouges. Put to the side.

Step 4: Use tracing paper to transfer

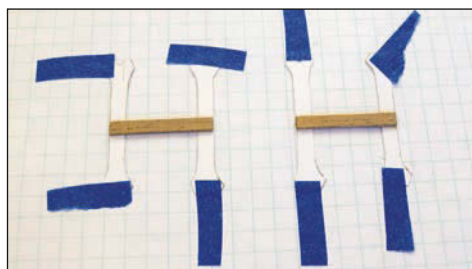
the templates for the blades and seat brackets to a heavy card stock paper and cut out the shapes.

Step 5: Glue two pieces of rust coloured card stock paper together so that the rust colour is on both the front and the back. I prefer to use Yes! Paste for this.

Step 6: Put your heavy card stock paper with the blade holds cut out on top of the rust coloured paper and mark the lines with a pencil and then cut out.



Step 7: Use bracket stencil you have made to cut out four brackets. Mark a centre line on the back of all of the brackets with a pencil.



Step 8: I preferred to use graph paper to help me line up my pieces. Tack



down two brackets on graph paper using blue tape or another type of tape that comes off easily. Line up your small painted pieces of wood from end to end in the centre of the brackets.

Step 9: Glue them down with a small dot of wood glue using a toothpick.



Step 10: Once dry, put a small dab of wood glue on both sides of the pieces of wood, fold-down the brackets and clamp with clothes pins.

You will need

- Rust coloured stock paper
- Wood
- Craft paints
- Yes! Paste
- Scissors
- Craft knife
- Wood glue
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Clothes pins
- Graph paper
- Toothpicks
- Blue tape
- Paintbrush



Step 11: Once dry, take the clothes pins off of the brackets and use a scrap piece of thick paper to centre on the brackets and then pinch them so the paper folds.

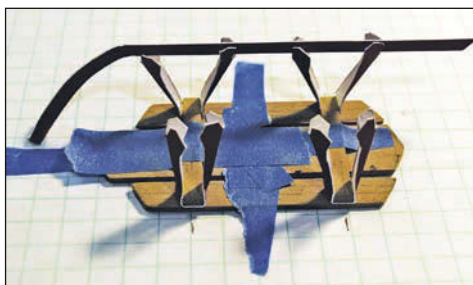
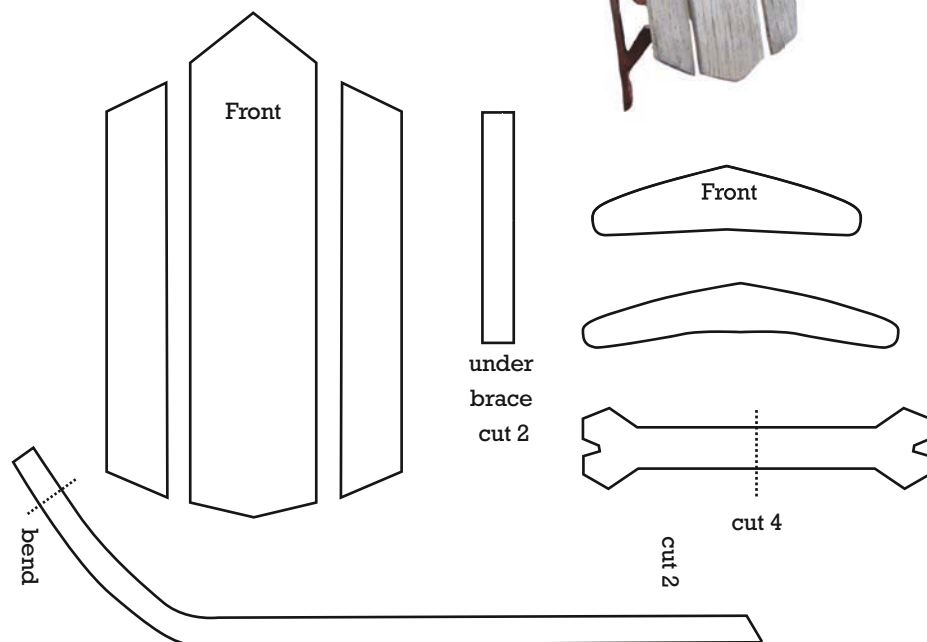


Step 12: Glue the bracket bars under the sledges.

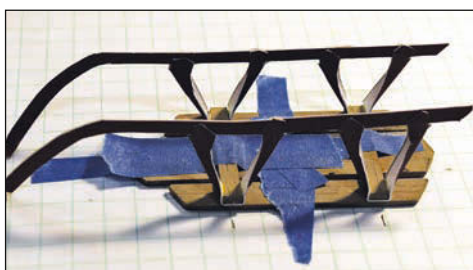
Step 13: Make the marks on your blades where the brackets will fit using the template.

Step 14: Fold the tips at the end of the blade as shown on the template.

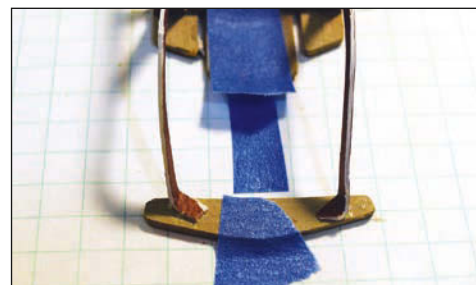
Sledge template



Step 15: Test fit one blade and make adjustments by snipping the brackets if needed.



Step 16: Glue in one blade and then glue in the other.



Step 17: Slip the front piece of wood under the two bent front blades.

Step 18: Snip the tip off the blades off at an angle if needed and glue onto the wood. Let dry.



Step 19: Glue the two side rails onto the sled.



Step 20: Slip a strip of rust paper under the front and glue it and then lay the other piece of wood on the two rails and glue the strip of paper over it and onto the seat as shown.

Step 21: Use rust colour paint to touch up the edges and back sides of paper. To bypass this step use paper that is coloured front and back.

Decorate your sleigh with evergreens or a wreath and make it festive for the season!

See more of Pricilia's minis at Tres-Petite on Etsy.



show&tell

WHERE SHOW ORGANISERS TELL ALL ABOUT THEIR EVENTS



Gail Tucker, of MGM Fairs, chats about everything from her love of computer games to how a boxing ring posed a problem with setting up

Hi Gail. We know you've been running shows for a long-time, but you took a break for a while. Why was that? Five years ago I had to give up my shows due to the ill health of my father, who subsequently passed away. It took several friends two years to entice me back into the business.

What had changed while you'd been away? Coming back to fair organising with fresh eyes I noticed that some fair organisers were retiring or not continuing due to health issues. It had resulted in fewer of the smaller, local shows that give the trader their selling opportunities and fewer shows for miniaturists to come to. I hope to continue to try and offer accessible shows, but there will always be a limit to the number I can do.

It doesn't seem like it! Well, next year I will have 16 shows, with four new ones being organised. I am not afraid to experiment with the formula to see if we can improve it, or look at new locations to fill some of the larger geographical gaps in the miniature fair map.

Where was your first show? It was at Crickhowell in Mid Wales in

1998. I took over from Vera Jackson, of Jackson's Miniatures. I ran that show for about 12 years and I think because it was my first one, it was also one of my favourites.

What made you do it? I had been out and about on the circuit as Merry Gourmet Miniatures, with my mother Aileen, for about 11 years and, after attending several shows that appeared to have no real structure, I actually said to her: "Well, I think I could do a better job, than this." And she said: "Well, why not try?" Vera had closed her little show and sold her shop in Crickhowell several years before and, as we knew her, I decided to call and ask if I could take it over. She was thrilled and delighted to let me, and I went from there.

What were the initial problems you had?

The same problems I have now, which is the promotion of the shows. With doll's house shops closing and clubs getting fewer, it's very difficult to contact the

keen hobbyists. I have to cover all the bases to get the word out there, and although the internet and social media are a great help, the age demographic of our hobby is such that not everyone has, or even likes the computer so the old-fashioned methods of advertising need to

continue.

What did you do before show business? I was a secretary/personal assistant for nearly all of my professional working life, until I hurt my back. Then Aileen and I founded Merry Gourmet and we started to make period food to sell.

What do you love about running the shows? Meeting the traders and the customers and chatting away all day. I try and create a relaxed but organised atmosphere because traders don't need any extra stress from an organiser. I also love going to different places and seeing a bit of the country. I am making a bit more time now to see places in and around the show locations, and that's great.

What makes you pull your hair out? Venues that let you down, because that means I let my traders down. An



example was our recent South Wales fair. I have been doing the fair in the same venue for three years and sent the floor plan through the week before the event. But their office hadn't bothered to notify the duty manager and when I walked in at 7am to check the room, nothing had been done; we had a completely empty room with traders arriving in 20 minutes. We were an hour late setting up, and really all that does is heighten stress levels, before we even start the show.

Pet hates? Getting up early to put out the road signs. If I can do it the night before I try and get it done, as it is so helpful to both traders and customers, but it's not my most favourite job.

Who's your favourite exhibitor?

Anyone who makes handmade items, as these traders are both clever and talented. I am not able to weave twelfth scale baskets or stitch, or knit in twelfth scale, and I certainly don't have the patience to dress dolls or make furniture, but we have some amazing talent on the circuit and they allow me to give my customers a good show.

Does anything surprise? Very little now, but many customers who win something in our free prize draws tell me they have never won anything in their lives, and are thrilled to get the little gift for coming along. It is such a nice surprise for them, but it also makes my day.

What's the strangest thing that's happened?

At Buxton a few years back the venue had hosted a boxing match the night before and the ring was still up the following morning. So it was chaos trying

to set up around them – then half way through the morning, the guys turned up to take it down. Panic did set in for that one, but fortunately nothing like that has happened since.

Running shows is a very stressful experience. How do you relax?

I don't find it too stressful, because I do a lot of prep work beforehand, but it is tiring. The way I relax best is with a glass of wine, and I am also addicted to some computer games and play almost daily to unwind.

Do you have time for hobbies?

Yes, some. I love reading but sadly lack the time to indulge a great deal. Mostly I catch up with my reading on holiday. But I love the movies so I have joined a new scheme by Odeon which is called 'Limitless' whereby I can see as many films as I want, when I want. I have already taken full advantage of this by making the time to see most of the latest releases.

If you weren't running shows what would you love to do?

I wish I had more time to make food for Merry Gourmet Miniatures. Aileen and I have some great ideas for new products and for our website, but it's finding the time to pull it all together. I also like computers and feel I have a real handle on it now. I have my B.Sc. (Hons) in Applied Computing, so messing about on the computer would also be great.

How did you discover miniatures? Through my mother Aileen.



It has been her hobby for over 40 years. One weekend she asked me to take her to Miniatura at the NEC, and I was captivated by the miniature shop items. I came home and asked my dad to make me a roombox so I could start collecting.

Do you own a doll's house? Yes, actually I currently have two. My main one is a shop with an office above and a bed-sitter on the second floor, and I am also converting a 1930's structure into a Tudor manor house. Both are not finished and in various states - they are what one would call "ongoing projects".

● **We all know what you mean Gail. Thanks for chatting with Show&Tell.**



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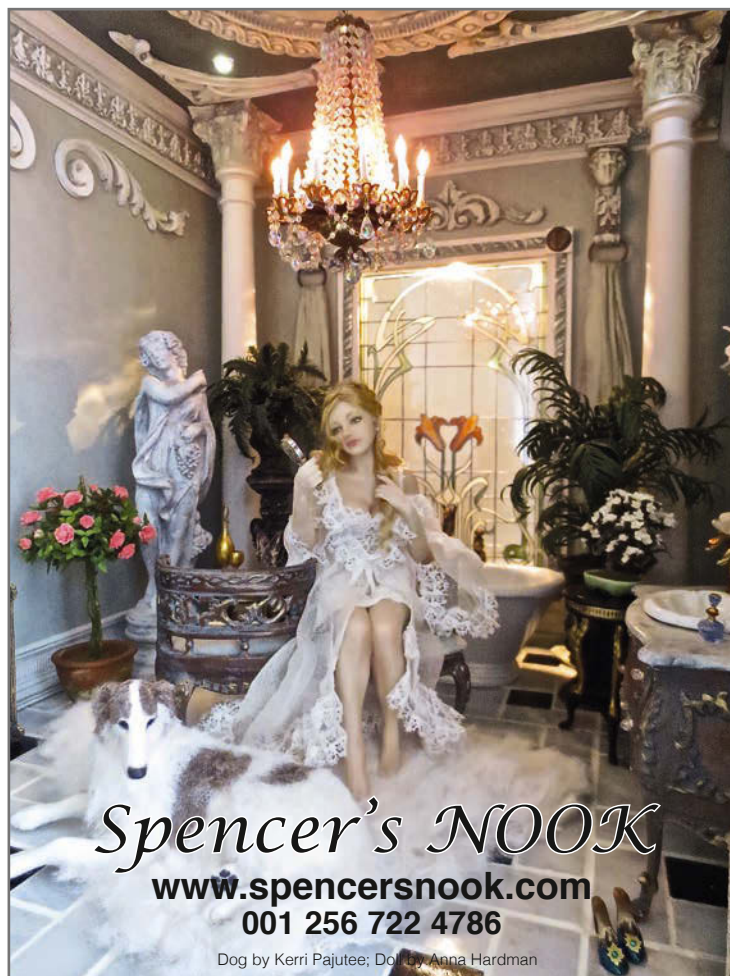


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Mill Christmas store has grand opening

Jean Caff's Coplestone Mill reflects this talented miniaturist's love of Christmas and her work on a wonderful watermill gives the old building the respect it deserves

BY CHARLOTTE MERRYMAN

There's a good way to test if you've captured the spirit of Christmas in your seasonal projects and that is – the tingle factor. We're so lucky here at DHW, we get Christmas twice a year; once in the magazine and once for real. Even so, producing the December issue months in advance as we do, it can be difficult to summon up the festive spirit. But when Jean Caff brought her Christmas house into the office one fresh, sunny, September morning, we had no problem at all.

Wrapped lovingly in her arms was a little Brian Frost water mill with brick walls, wooden beams and a russet tiled roof. The exterior, tastefully understated, made only a modest nod in the direction of Christmas.

Jean placed the mill carefully on a table in the studio and a small crowd gathered in anticipation as the frontage was removed. There it was – a ground floor restaurant and two-storey Christmas shop, decked out in an assortment of Christmas trees, fairy lights, wreaths and garlands. The shop floor was laden with baskets overflowing with baubles, a sleigh full of toys, shelves filled with a bounty of goodies, boxes of crackers, little helpers and big fat snowmen. All dusted down with a sprinkling of stars.

Christmas reflected in the face of every onlooker, desperate to shrink small enough to fit inside and have a proper rummage among the trinkets and baubles.

"It didn't turn out as I imagined" said Jean, unbelievably. "I was going to do a grotto where the restaurant is but thought it too predictable."

Coplestone Mill was inspired by the desire to make a Christmas project that is anything but predictable. Like all of Jean's other buildings, of which there are many, she has invented a past for Coplestone. The story goes; Robert Coplestone built Coplestone Mill on the River Mole in Surrey in the 1800. His business flourished through several generations until the decline of small mills in the 20th Century, when the last Coplestone, falling on hard times, left his wife and child to seek fame and fortune in the New World. Sadly, he never returned.

Idea to England

The mill fell into disrepair and for many years was used as a cattle shelter and store until purchased and renovated by a new couple. For some years the couple had lived in Bavaria near a Christmas shop and thought to bring the idea to England. So Coplestone Mill was born.

Once the history was established Jean began work on the outside of the mill. The first job was to decorate the exterior and make it look the part. Jean scored the timbers, painted them light grey and rubbed on black shoe polish for effect. Bricks were glued onto templates and mortared onto the walls. The water wheel was plastered

with good old Polyfilla, applied using a sponge, and weathered, as was the clock tower. After much experimentation Jean plumped for proper roof tiles from Richard Stacey, being the only kind that looked right.

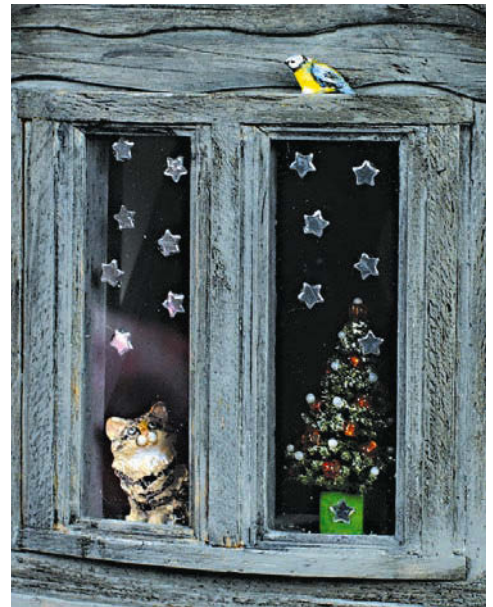
On the street last minute preparations are in hand. The town crier, by Annie Willis, is exercising his lungs announcing the 'Grand Opening' of the store whilst inside, Father Christmas is having forty winks in his grotto. All the interior walls were built on templates so the wiring is concealed behind them. The floorboards were individually cut from dth in wood, scored and stained. To cover any gaps all the joints where walls and ceiling met were filled with sifted Hoover dust.

"It's a mucky job," admitted Jean "but someone had to do it."

In the restaurant, which is operated on a booking only basis, the table is laid for the arrival of hungry guests. Jean customised the plastic Chrysnbon dinner service with gold rub-n-buff to add a touch of class. She made the furniture herself too, from card originally, then in wood before upholstering to finish.

The inglenook fireplace lends itself to a cosy restaurant, with a real fire made by burning logs over a candle to char them and a liberal sprinkling of cigarette ash.





“I was going to do a grotto where the restaurant is but thought it too predictable.”





“An old building deserves to be special, not all baubles and glitz.”

Jean's skills as a florist are evident in the layout and arrangements of stock in the shop. She made all the garlands and wreaths herself from wire decorated with scenic materials, but the spiral feature on the ground floor is her particular speciality. Baskets holding baubles and decorations were

simple to make from string before being painted and filled with buttons, earrings and beads.

In the year that Jean took to finish the project, filling the shelves with toys and trinkets was a matter of keeping her eyes open for useful items. Having filled the shelves, it would have been easy to accidentally send the hole lot flying so Jean secured each item in place with silicone gel, usually used for decoupage. It gripped immediately yet items can still be easily be removed with a twist of the hand. Illuminations are essential to complete the look and Jean's Christmas lights come from Ray Storey, a very helpful man by all accounts.

“It's not too fairground,” explained Jean. “An old building deserves to be special, not all baubles and glitz.”

A sentiment that mirrors the kind of Christmas shop Jean had seen in Germany, packed full of ornaments and hangings but not a plastic bauble in sight. When a similar outlet opened in the UK at Lechlade in Gloucestershire, Jean knew she'd struck gold and found a treasure trove of goodies to inspire her.

With so many temptations how on earth could she know when to stop?

“Once something is done I never add to it,” claimed Jean, who has mastered the art of self-discipline where this project is concerned.



One wonders if she exercises the same restraint in real life. For forty years Jean has collected the 400 decorations that adorn her own home each Christmas.

Not bad for someone that lives in a two-up two-down and does her miniatures on a fold up table in the front room. She knows where the mill is going. It is not to be banished to a cupboard for eleven months of the year. Cobblestone Mill will take pride of place on a shelf over the stairwell where everyone can see it everyday – and experience the tingle factor for themselves.

"I adore Christmas," said Jean, "Now I can enjoy it all year round."



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Jane follows plan to create beautiful festive roombox

An excited miniaturist was inspired by Brooke Tucker's book to put together her very own golden masterpiece

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANE AND PHILIP DATER

I believe I've loved miniatures ever since my aunt gave me a tiny plastic baby doll that was dressed in lace. I began building rooms out of shoeboxes and apple crates and anything I could get my hands on. I saved jam containers from restaurants for baby bathtubs and, on vacation, I spent hours in the woods building houses out of twigs. My only official doll's house was a metal 50's one, with the furniture printed on the walls. I'm sure I found it highly unsatisfactory, although I did have some blocky wooden furniture and a plastic family with their clothing moulded on.

After a career as a registered nurse, I rediscovered miniatures. I found some wonderful books with instructions on how to build miniature rooms and furnish them. I was happy with my first attempts, but soon after I wanted to build rooms that were a bit more complex. I studied the room boxes by miniaturist Robert Off so that I could understand how he created the rooms with angled walls.

I found a copy of Brooke Tucker's *Golden Christmas: Building a Miniature Masterpiece*. I was so excited when I first started and I had no idea how much work would be involved. The actual construction of the room box required that I cut huge pieces of plywood with my circular saw, which was fairly nerve-racking.

Once the pieces could be cut on the



table saw, I was much more comfortable. The most important thing I learned from the box construction was to put a hinged door in each side and in the back. The doors gave access to the back of the illustration board walls and made electrification easier. The top of the box could be used to hold a power strip for some lights and a copper tape strip for lights on the other side of the room. The finished room box includes a lid to cover everything, which can be propped up if needed.

Before I papered the ceiling in the dining room, I drilled a grid of nine holes in the area where I thought the chandelier would be installed. Then it was quite simple to poke a straight pin down from the top when I had finished the dining room and knew where the chandelier should go.

When the box was finished and covered with oak veneer, the fun part began. From Brooke's instructions, I learned to cut the various walls from illustration board. Highly detailed instructions and patterns helped me make the two sets of shelves around the fireplaces. My husband cut the plastic for the shelf inserts with a laser. I made the fireplace in the living room; the one in the dining room is by Lawbre.

One of the most satisfying parts of this project was making the marble tiles on the platform by the windows. After gluing marble paper to poster

board, I cut it into strips and then into squares with a wonderful device called "The Chopper."

The Christmas tree and the wreath over the dining room fireplace were made from kits. I made the lamps on the dining room mantel by attaching cardstock lampshades to electrified candlesticks. I also made the lamps on the living room mantel.

The three windows on the platform were built according to Brooke's instructions, with the wood being cut on a mullion maker. The rounded tops of the windows were cut, very carefully, from layers of poster board. The scene outside the windows is a picture that I found on the Internet. I placed landscaping bushes outside the windows and sprinkled them with powdered snow.

The curtains were constructed using patterns and instructions from two books: *Dollhouse Décor* and *The Big Book of a Miniature House*. Although I had leftover silk from the living room furniture, I chose to make the curtains from soft, subtly striped cotton I found in a quilt shop.

When it came time to make the furniture, I had to get creative because I couldn't find what I wanted in any shops. I designed the two chairs at the front of the room box using the photos of Brooke's chairs as a reference. For the upholstery on the chairs, I sized and printed a rug design on white cotton fabric. I printed the same design on a piece of white velveteen for the





Top left: The chandelier was the finishing touch in the dining room.

Top: A cosy spot to enjoy a glass of wine and some Christmas cookies.

Above: This drinks trolley was fun to make once Jane discovered the small gears that could become wheels.

Above right: The coffee table made from illustration board, a picture frame's glass, and spindles holds a Fabergé flower by Eugene Kupjack and a nativity scene purchased at a show.

Below right: The party guests may be tempted to eat dessert first!





'I had to get creative because I couldn't find what I wanted in any shops.'

living room rug, to which I glued black velvet ribbon as a border.

The two armless chairs were kits and I made the sofa by extending Kris Compas's pattern for an upholstered armchair. The gold side tables were made from pre-cut squares and circles from the craft store, as well as parts of doll's house banisters.

I could not find anything like the glass-topped coffee table shown in Brooke's photos. At one of the craft stores, I found a picture frame which had a 2" by 3" piece of glass and I designed the table around this. I used illustration board for the top and bottom pieces and spindles as the legs.

The drinks trolley was fun to make; the wheels are from a craft store. I had found a small bag of gears and two became front wheels for the cart, which I made out of basswood and painted gold.

Most of the decorative items on the living room shelves are things that I have collected over the years. The framed pictures in the dining room were images that I downloaded from the Internet. I made the frames and

painted them gold. The table in the front of the box between the two chairs was made from another downloaded image, which I printed and then wrapped around a section of dowel. The top and bottom of the table were pre-cut wooden pieces.

My big splurge for the room was a Fabergé flower by Eugene Kupjack. I was thrilled to be able to see the original at a special Fabergé exhibit. The rhinestone picture frames came from a set of inexpensive dangly earrings.

I made the demilune table with pre-cut circles (that I cut in half) and staircase spindles. The tiny fleur-de-lis on the front was a charm. The Christmas presents are blocks of wood covered in paper or cardstock.

The dining room table is just a simple box shape covered with white silk pleated in a Pretty Pleater and some gorgeous lace that I picked up at a show last year.

To hang the chandelier I used the packaging that the chandelier came in, something like an oatmeal box padded with foam. I was terrified that I would hang the chandelier and it would

come crashing down. I used a wooden button and secured the chandelier chain's jump hook through one hole. I threaded the chandelier wire through the second hole. Leaving the chandelier nestled in its protective box, I glued the wooden button to the ceiling and then put small boxes under the oatmeal box so there was no weight pulling down on the chain as the glue dried. The next morning I removed the boxes and flipped the switch to light the chandelier. The chandelier was the last step in the process and was truly the icing on the cake. It always thrills me when I can get miniature lights to work properly.

I learned so much from doing this project and I am eternally grateful to Brooke Tucker for writing the book. At this point, I feel confident that I can design and build my own rooms and I have ideas for several future projects dancing in my head.

Above: *The room in full view. Jane learned how to use a circular saw to cut the wood for the room box.*



TOP MAKERS AT CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The Kensington Dollshouse Festival Christmas Show takes place on December 3 at Kensington Town Hall, London, and provides a festive feast for miniaturists.

Top makers from around the world will be showcasing their talent at the popular annual event.

New exhibitors include Alison

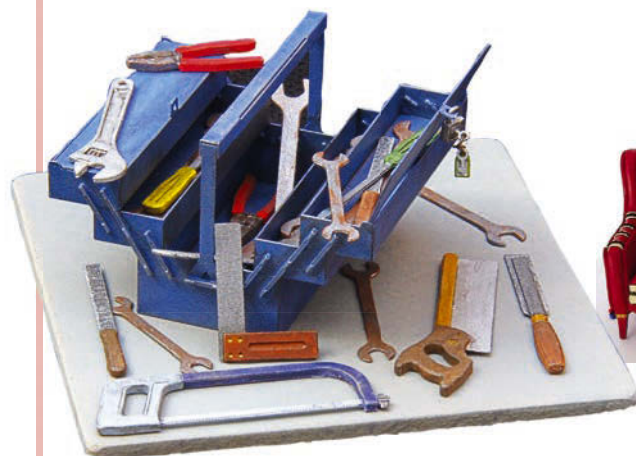
Davies, with her latest range of ornate French furniture and accessories, Italy's Alemikemkri, with her incredible artist studios, and Spain's Minicucadas with her bobbin lace, birdcages and toys.

Italy's Le Mini Di Claudia will be showing delightful small scenes of food preparation, and Poland's Minifanaberia will have their perfect

modern kitchen tabletop appliances as well as fridges and stoves.

Severnmodels have branched out into mini kits of etched brass after years of making kits for model railways, and you have to check out the cut tomatoes and other Italian specialities from food maker Silvia Cucchi.

● www.dollshousefestival.com



● www.severnmodels.com



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Above: The top photo shows the washing table decorated for the Christmas and the other photo shows the wardrobe in the bedroom before the cottage transformed to a festive mini celebration.

Shabby festive chic in this holly jolly house

We pay a visit to a house that Mercedes Spencer has finished decorating and it's full of joy and love for Christmas, along with some surprises

BY CHARLOTTE MERRYMAN

Sometimes a great mini project falls into place in unexpected ways. For miniaturist Mercedes Spencer that is exactly how her Christmas cottage came to be. A letterbox-shaped miniature house was on the build list for her doll's house club back in 2009. Luckily there were other club members that had thirty-plus years of experience there to help her along the way. With their assistance, she learned new skills quickly, and soon discovered that she was much more capable of building anything her heart desired than she ever thought possible.

While the idea of creating twelfth scale French doors once overwhelmed her, now she not only makes her own doors, but also creates custom furniture; a skill that comes in very handy when you only have a small space to work with and need to keep the furnishings as narrow as possible. Mercedes will gladly take you on a tour of her Shabby Christmas Cottage.

"Tis the season to decorate my shabby cottage with tiny decorations! Christmas is the perfect excuse to take a little time to play in the doll's house while I fill it with Christmas decorations. Some of

the decorations have been handmade and given to me by friends, which makes Christmas as special in my mini house as it is in my own home.

My favourite thing about this little doll's house is that I made it exactly the way I wanted so it would fit in with the décor in my real home. It's just the right size and colour to sit in the corner of my lounge. When friends and family visit they are always amazed when I turn it around and they see what's inside. I like surprising people!

It's such fun opening drawers and hearing visitors marvel at the tiny things inside. Several friends from around the world have made me things to go in the cottage, so now it feels like whoever lives there has a story to tell of their travels around the globe. I love every little thing in this house!

All of the Christmas cookies were baked by my friend, Kim Saulter.

The colours of her tiny cookies are perfect for a shabby Christmas. I bought the Christmas cake when I first started making miniatures. I've considered making a new one but, just like with my real Christmas decorations, this little cake has become part of my holiday tradition and I can't imagine





Top: A suitcase full of vacation memories.

Above and right: Mercedes loves to fill drawers with surprises so when visitors peek inside they get a miniature thrill.

not showing it.

A few festive touches were also added to the bedroom, such as fragile gold angels, a potted tree adorned with stars, a pretty wreath for the bed's headboard, and a tree-shaped cookie on the tea tray.





Left: Christmas decorations have been hung, placed, and made. Mini Santa will most definitely be pleased!

Above: The kitchen is full of fresh baked cakes and cookies along with the tiniest of holiday decor. Mercedes has such a special touch for miniature making!



Top: The porch was decorated with a shabby chic style. It looks as though a special package has been left at the front door!

Right: The sitting room has been transformed into a festive room perfect for celebrating the holidays. Note the beautiful tiny slippers tucked under the sofa.

Below: This is a view showing the cottage before it was decorated for Christmas.



I remember my great excitement when I put up the wallpaper in the upstairs room. It was real-size wallpaper and I was worried that the pattern was too large. But I loved the colour so I went ahead with it and somehow the oversized pattern just worked. The wallpaper in the downstairs room is also full-size. I love rosebuds so it was the perfect choice.

I made most of the furniture from scratch. The washstand in the bedroom was a kit from a friend in Holland. The dresser in the downstairs room was sent to me by a friend and I altered it to suit the cottage style. All the other furniture was made by me. I always surprise myself with what I can achieve when I put my mind to it!

Outside on the front porch the usual



Above left and far left: Mercedes was worried that the wallpaper would be too large, but it turned out to be a perfect scale for this lovely room. A tray of tea sits on the bed and the rest of the room has delicate reminders of the season. Beautiful presents are wrapped for special friends. The chair and the small table were hand-made to fill the space perfectly.

Above: The lovely little cottage shown from the back.

Left: A small basket of needlepoint sits next to a precious miniature doll and a soft rose print in a white frame.

green topiaries were replaced with white Christmas trees in keeping with the shabby décor.

Every Christmas I buy my 18 year old son, Noah, and my 11 year old daughter, Liberty, decorations of their own so that one day, when they leave home, they will be able to take them. Noah gets a large glass bauble, which is tricky to store as it is very fragile, and Liberty either gets an angel or a baking-related decoration. Our tree is

trimmed with their decorations, other decorations that have been given to me by friends, or that I have bought in special places.

A couple of years ago I made Liberty an Advent calendar on a tray in our lounge. I had a little chalkboard on it that I changed the date on every day, and each day I added a miniature or tiny decoration so that there were 25 tiny things on display by Christmas Day. By the time several items

had accumulated on the tray, it was a daily challenge to figure out what the newest item was. I wasn't going to do it last year but she begged me to! It was lovely to know that I had started a very special tradition for her. A lot of the miniatures on the tray ended up in the shabby cottage!

Once the miniature Yuletide decorating is complete, the shabby cottage itself becomes a Christmas decoration for the real house!"

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Quick & easy project

BY MARIA NIKOLAJEVA

For this project you can incorporate an AGA-type stove if you have one. In this case, skip steps 12-17. If not, I'll show you how to make one from card and stuff.

Step 1: Consider the size and shape of your styrofoam piece. It should be adjusted to the size of your room, such as the depth and the height. If you are building a surround for an existing stove make sure

it fits. For twelfth scale, a reasonable size might be H 25, B 12 D 4 cm, but your ceiling may be lower. The top of the surround should be flush with the ceiling.



Step 2: You want to keep

as many interesting features as possible from your styrofoam piece. Use a sharp craft knife to cut out suitable shapes. The foam crumbles so make sure you leave margins that you can trim afterwards. My piece came from printer packaging. I cut two bits, giving me lovely shapes for the base and the top. You may end up with different shapes and you may want to add features from discarded bits.



Step 3: It is hopeless to glue foam so instead use toothpicks to stick base and top together. Make sure the front edges are flush. Support with masking tape if needed.



Step 4: Trim the back and side edges. This is a tricky bit because the foam is uncooperative and will crumble. You will have to accept that there will be gaps that

you can mend with filler. If your styrofoam comes from a smaller object, such as a phone, you may be lucky and not have to trim the back.



Step 5: Glue the assembly onto a suitable piece of card (I recycle document folders). Fix with masking tape while the glue sets.



Step 6: Cut the card around the assembly. You may support the back with masking tape, but you want to keep as much as possible of the foam surface. Fill gaps with filler and leave to dry. If you don't have filler at hand use air-drying clay or any other suitable material. Or you may be so deft that your edges are perfectly even.

You will need

For surround

- A piece of styrofoam of the kind used for protection of small electrical appliances
- A sheet of sturdy card or thin cardboard
- Optional: A piece of metal rod approx. 8 cm OR a grill stick
- Optional: a piece of moulding, approx. 16 cm
- A craft stick
- Toothpicks

For stove

- A small card container approx. 12x6x6 cm, for instance, from an electric bulb (or you can make a box out of card)
- Wooden strips or a cheese box
- Two inside lids from

- spice bottles OR two tealight holders
- A small piece of lace OR any small junk jewellery bits
- Envelope clips

Tools

- A craft knife
- Scissors
- An awl
- A ruler
- A pencil
- All-purpose glue
- Masking tape
- All-purpose white paint
- Filler
- Sandstone paint OR fine grain sand to mix with paint OR coffee grounds
- Matt black hobby paint
- Medium-grain sandpaper
- Paintbrushes



Step 7 (optional): Cut away a bit of the side; make two holes in the top and bottom edges with an awl and insert a metal rod or a grill stick in the gap. My metal rod came from a broken Christmas ornament.

This is a good moment to tidy away the foam crumbs.



Step 8: Use a pencil and ruler to draw the chimney hood front on a piece of card (I wanted to keep an interesting feature on the left of the top that looks like a chimney). Cut it out and glue in place.



Step 9: (optional) Glue a piece of moulding to the front to make a shelf or simply for trim.



Step 10: Paint the assembly with sandstone paint. If you don't have any, mix fine-grain sand or coffee grounds with white all-purpose paint. I realised as I went on with this project that I didn't have enough sandstone paint so I used coffee grounds.

Paint the inside of the chimney hood black. You may decide to paint the whole back black, but I think white gives a better effect. You may also use brick or stone paper.

Cut a divider from a craft stick, paint it black and glue across the chimney to separate white from black.

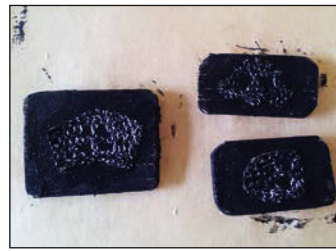
Step 11: Let the sandstone paint dry properly, then paint over with white paint.

Your surround is now finished. If you have a stove already then skip steps 12-17.

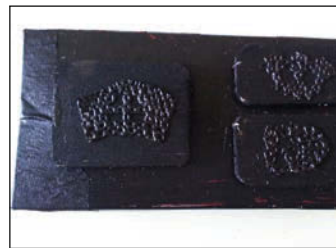
Step 12: Fix the edges of your card box with masking tape if needed and paint it black.



Step 13: Cut three rectangle pieces of wooden strip or cheese box. The



larger piece should be 3 x 2.5 cm and the small ones 2.5 x 1 cm. Round corners and smooth edges with sandpaper. Optional: glue on pieces of lace or bits of metal jewellery for decoration. Paint the doors black.



Step 14: Glue oven doors to the front of the stove.



Step 15: Cut the wings of three envelope clips and glue them onto the oven doors for handles. Bend the remaining parts of the clips to make hinges.

If you don't have envelope clips or want different handles you can use beads, pushpins, jewellery findings, champagne wire or any other material you like. Hinges can be cut from tin foil or wine-bottle foil or paper.

continued on P49.



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Angela's one stop Christmas shop

BY SANDRA HARDING

Angela Harper loves Christmas time so much she was determined that she would make it last all year round, at least in one little corner of the world.

The first phase began in 2010 when Angela made herself a box measuring 16" x 16", adding big windows so she could see inside. Each Christmas the box was put on display and Angela added more and more Christmas-themed items until it was at bursting point and Santa's elves were threatening strike action.

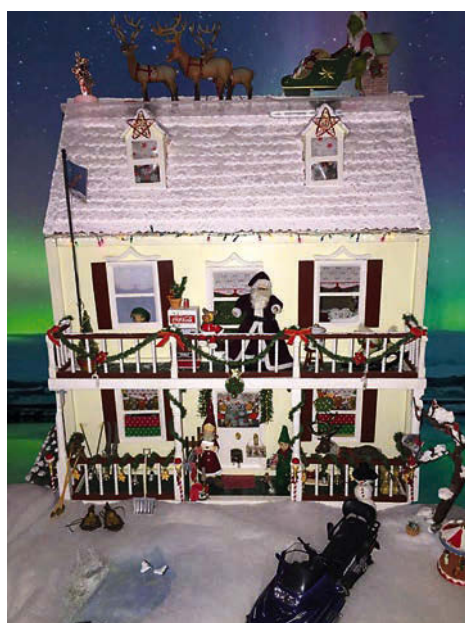
However, by now Angela had discovered foam board which meant that the shop, now called 'Santa's

Little Shop', could be added to and moved around easily. With her head buzzing with ideas there was soon a plan forming, and construction started in July 2015.

Very soon Angela was busy making all the furniture, displays and shelves as well as the soft furnishings, curtains, bedspreads and tablecloths. Mrs Santa, however, insisted on a special table as she had been so patient whilst the work was going on.

What began as a simple room box has become an established place to visit at Christmas, and there are several departments to suit all tastes.





Daniela's delightful Christmas house

BY SANDRA HARDING

This pretty little house tugged at my Christmas heart strings. It belongs to Daniela Frenzl, who found it on eBay very close to her home town. As the sale was collection only, and cheap, she bought it straight away - as any sensible person would. It was obvious it just had to become Santa's home and she started decorating immediately.

She knew exactly how she wanted the finished house to look and as her favourite Christmas colours are the traditional red, green and white, her imagination ran riot. She decided on a flat share for Santa with Ms Santa, elves and imps of course, all happily living in close proximity.

Old biscuit wrappers with pictures on were used to create the Christmas windows, and cotton wool was added to the chimney as the amount of cakes Ms Santa makes would create smoke. It is obvious that there needed to be a sleigh up on the roof (at least to me and Daniela) and one was quickly sourced and given pride of place. Unfortunately, Santa is busy

looking out of the balcony at the frozen pond and is missing the fact that the Grinch is on the roof trying to steal the presents.

I had better explain here that the Grinch is a favourite film of the Frenzl family, and they commissioned him especially for this scene from the UK's talented Emma Butcher (she has a lot to answer for). Coming back to reality now (really?) Daniela decided that Santa needed a lot of extra skis, snowshoes and even a motor sleigh, as he is getting rather old to gad about so much with reindeer, according to Ms Santa.

The lovely Christmas tree is decorated with real glass baubles from Germany and Daniela has added a lot of her own makes, including gingerbread men, chocolate cake, chestnuts and other Christmassy items. The nuts are actually coriander seeds.

The tools in Santa's workshop were all bought at doll's house fairs and were put away in stock for a rainy day.



Step 16: Paint spice-bottle lids black.



OR: Cut bottoms from two tealight holders and paint them black. Save wick holders: they are useful for making perfume bottles, candlesticks and other miniatures where you need a base.

If you have neither spice lids nor tealight holders cut two circles 3 cm in diameter from any suitable material.



Step 17: Glue rings onto the top of the stove.

Step 18: Insert the stove into the surround.

Add logs, pots and pans, copper lids (I made these from champagne caps) and kitchen utensils.



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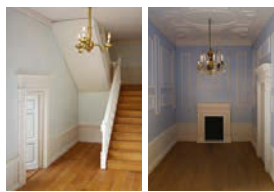
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From crackers to stockings

Brain Long explains some of the myths and legends behind our festive traditions

BY BRIAN LONG

Legend has it that the sheriff of Nottingham cancelled Christmas and some historians say that Oliver Cromwell attempted to ban it. But we are pleased to say that the good guys won and the debate in most homes leading up December 25 is who brings your Christmas presents?

In Syria they remember the three wise men and on January 6 (the old Christmas Day, Twelfth Night or Epiphany) the youngest camel delivers the presents. While in Spain and most of the Spanish speaking world it is the Three Kings themselves who deliver the goodies. A nice touch is that the children put out food for their camels in their shoes.

Lady Befana (Epiphany) refused to go to Bethlehem with the Wise Men and has searched for the Baby Jesus ever since. The children of Italy believe it is she who brings their presents. Much the same story holds true in Russia with the story of Baboushka. Greece is fortunate in that St Nicholas

is their patron saint, yet the bad news is they get no Christmas presents, having to wait until St Basil's Day on June 14.

Christmas boxes was a name given to the thrift boxes which were small earthenware containers of approximately four inches square with an imitation stopper decorated with green glaze. Originally they were used to collect small gifts at Christmas, yet it is these boxes that gave the name to the gift itself and then to the day when traditionally the gift was made; Boxing Day.

Will the real Santa Claus please step forward?

Lucky us, we get our presents from Santa Claus on December 25 and with many variations of name on his passport he visits most of Europe and North America, where he picked up his love for red coats, but more on that later.

In Czechoslovakia he travels as Suaty Mikulas while in Holland he uses Sinter Klaas. But he has many helpers who tend to be elf-like and his sleigh is drawn by various animals, depending on the quarantine regulations in your country of residence. The goats of Thor, the white horse of Odin and of course, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen who could be reindeer, red deer or fallow, depend-

ing on the artist of the portrait.

The best known portraits of Santa were by Thomas Nast, a Bavarian who settled in America in 1846 and it is with his help that Santa changed from the original fur-clad, gnome-like creature of early portraits into the larger than life chap of broad girth with flowing white hair and grand moustache. While most of these pictures are in black and white a few are in colour and these show how Santa disregarded his brown fur and took to the brightest of red outfits that we know and love today. Since the Regency he had worn purple, yellow, green blue, black and grey with a brown fur trim. Charles Dickens commissioned a portrait for use in his new book, *A Christmas Carol* when John Leech came up with a Bachus like ghost of Christmas past dressed in green with a short beard.

Much later in the Thirties, Coca Cola artist Haddon Sundblom put a bottle in Santa's hand and took credit for the red coat. Shame on him.

Trees and evergreens

Evergreens bring life and in the case of holly, ivy and mistletoe, fruit into a cold mid-winter as if in triumph over the season. These have long been used to deck halls with the Christmas tree being the last to be adopted. It was recorded in England at the end of the 18th Century being

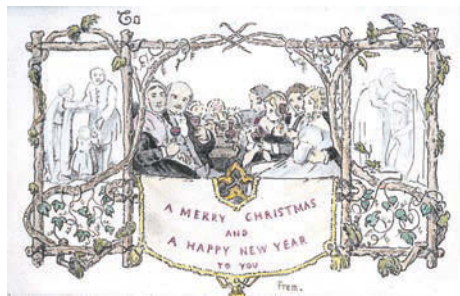


introduced by German metal workers in Manchester and Sheffield and only popularised when Prince Albert put one up in 1840. But the first ever record of one in a house was in 1605 in Strasbourg. The symbolism of the rebirth of the son is high lighted nowhere more than with the yule log drawn home on a sleigh and kept burning throughout the festivities with importantly its last ember kept to ignite next year's log.

Norse legend has it that Baldur was slain by a mistletoe dart at the instigation of Loki. In reparation for this injury the plant was dedicated to his mother, so long as it was kept above the ground, which is Loki's domain. Because of this we hang it from our ceiling and we kiss under it as a sign that it no longer is an instrument of mischief.

Cards

The problem of who to send cards to only came when we had an efficient postal system; previously we used special note paper with Christmas themes to do the job. John Calcott Horsley designed the first card for Sir Henry Cole in 1843, partly to further the development of the post. Just over 1000 were sold at one shilling a time. In 1848 WM Egley



produced the next one being much the same design. New Year cards had been produced for some time previously, which resulted in the fact that many of our present day cards include the two festivals in the greeting. It was only in the 1860s that cards were produced in any number and it is interesting in that the first card made a point of charity for the poor and it is only now that they are returning to the original endeavour.

Crackers

A Roman pastry cook commissioned a poet to write mottoes for New Years Day bon bons. They agreed to supply 500 couplets for six liures but the cook reneged and a lawsuit followed, ensuring the motto's place in history. Much later mottoes were printed on the trenchers or



roundels of rich Tudor families to be read or sung after a meal. Today we find them in our crackers along with an ever-changing selection of gifts, but never without a hat, a relic of Misrule a member of Father Christmas' family; Misrule, Carrol, Minced Pie, Gambol, Post and Pair, New Years Gift, Mumming, Wassall Offering and Baby Cake. Make dolls of that lot if you can! Crackers as we know them were first made in England in 1841.

Stockings

St Nicholas is reputed to have helped a poor man by secretly throwing a bag of gold, for a daughter's dowry, through an open window. As luck would have it she had just finished her laundry and was hanging her stockings up to air when plop - the gold fell into one. This is not the origin of the Christmas stocking, they were recorded for the first time in 1879 when Santa Claus is reported as traditionally visiting people in

continued on P54.



continued from P53.

Exeter and Devonshire where they hung a stocking outside their door. This tradition was of long standing but confined to a small area. Susan Warners best seller, 'The Christmas Stocking,' published in the 1850s tells of an American Santa who was quite philanthropic when he found socks hanging on Christmas Eve and passed the idea to his British branch for general use. But the message got confused so that we hang ours at the foot of the bed. I remember an apple in the toe for health and happiness and an orange in the heel for wealth. The rest filled with small, inexpensive items but what a joy. Every bit as much fun as was had by the French children who left their shoes to be filled by Pere Noel or the Polish children whose gifts came down direct from the stars. Christmas was and still is magic.

Dinner

It was tradition to slaughter a pig for Christmas and make it into special sausages to be eaten after midnight mass, a relic of an ancient sacrificial ritual heralded by the parading of his head in memory of the sacrifice to Frigg at the Pagan mid-winter feast. The venerable bede refers to December as the slaughter or sacrifice month. In late Tudor times the peacock became the prized dish. It was gilded, that is the skin stripped off complete with feathers prior to roasting and when cool it was all sewn back together. This gave way to the traditional German dish of the goose which, prior to the turkey, with its garland of pork sausages, was our most popular Christmas dish. The turkey was brought to Europe by the Spanish who got it from the Aztecs of Mexico (1519). From Spain it went to the Netherlands and so to East Anglia towards the end of the century, or was it the guinea fowl. Legend and history are confused on this point. Be that as it may Bernard Matthews of Norfolk produces more turkeys than anyone else in Britain.

Carole's Yuletide is best of both worlds

Carole Houseman combines the modern and traditional in this Christmas store that's full of tiny prints and full-size ornaments

BY SANDRA HARDING

This is yet another little Christmas delight that I first saw last year and decided it was so pretty you would want to see it too. It belongs to Carole Houseman, and you will have seen some of her reader's tips in DHW I am sure.

Carole created the shop from a Sid Cooke room box bought off eBay, and chose the theme as she loves shops and was in retail herself for many years. As she had been making and selling miniature Christmas items for some time, she decided that she wanted to create somewhere to display them.

Although Carole prefers modern miniatures she wanted it to look traditional too, so aimed for a balance of both. She made all of the boxed and packaged items, knitted the red and white stockings and made the

stitched cushions.

Carole printed the wrapping paper and added it to the white towel rail after putting on a few more bars. The banners and carrier bags were also printed, and she spent many hours making the paper chains. I remember doing that in full-size as a child.

The main light fitting is a tiny bead container, the packs of hanging ornaments are just shiny beads wrapped in cellophane and the garlands are Christmas earrings. The Nutcracker figures are real-size Christmas tree decorations, adding focus to the room, and the shelving on the right was an old thimble display case painted white.

A couple of spare mini drawers were used for display stands and the two plastic stockings were actually a purchase, as were the boy and girl





figures in the window - more real-size Christmas decorations.

A good tip from Carole is to look out for full-size Christmas tree ornaments to adapt to your mini world, along with cake decorations and wrapping paper with tiny prints. Also, look at how real shops lay out their wares as they rarely have just one of anything on the shelves.

Carole was keen to extend the shop to include an outside area, so her husband cut the shaped front onto which she has added a Santa and an elf and two more full size Christmas decoration trees. There are several more elves, all trying to get a message to Santa, and maybe get to the real chocolates in the sleigh before Carole's grandchildren, Jennifer, Benjamin and Toby, spot them.





TALES OF THE TRI-ANGS

Here we take a look at the last four houses to come from the Tri-ang fold

BY MARION OSBORNE

The following description was trumpeted by Tri-ang about this range, which were the last doll's houses to be introduced before the demise of Lines Bros. Decide for yourselves if the comments are valid.

'Little girls and parents asked for these. A delightful range of pretty doll's houses in bright colours giving excellent display value. Rooms planned to realistic size and correct for dolls furniture. Houses of strong wooden construction with sliding fronts, tough resilient plastic roofs, and detailed injection moulded windows and shutters. No sharp edges.'

The flowers that appear on the fronts are no longer transfers, but sticky labels that can be peeled off by a child who does not like them; storing the house in a damp place would not improve them either.

Avon dolls house 1966 - 1969

The measurements of this house are 16.5in high x 33in wide x 12.5in deep. Catalogue Description: TM7705. Special feature –

extra sliding front piece to give sixth room or garage. Also five different size rooms planned for realism. Electric lights and staircase.

Note: The interior is very plain, all white, except for the base, which is painted green, even in the house itself. The colours of the fronts are very bright indeed and the carcass is solidly built. However, the windows have to be treated with care. The front door is yellow plastic, moulded to give a planked look, a diamond peephole and a cut out letter slit. It is unusual to have asymmetrical rooms and it does give a more interesting look to the interior as a result.

In the photograph of the garage doors there is only a blue frame to the printed yellow doors and the surrounds are white. On another house the whole of the garage front is yellow, with the blue frame to the yellow doors and a square window printed on each door. As this is not illustrated in the catalogue it is presumably a later development.

This is an unusual house

in having long flower boxes on the garage roof in yellow plastic. The bay window on the right hand side is also plastic and slots into the front. The glazing is clear plastic and the windows do pivot open. From the photographs you can see that the interior is plain white with white plastic stairs and two lights attached to the upstairs ceiling. The room on the left upstairs is divided into two, giving the five rooms in total. The wall between the garage and house has a doorway to allow access between the two, which is a nice touch and certainly unusual. Interesting to note that the chimney is a wooden one and not moulded in with the roof as could be expected. No models have

yet been seen with the extra room front as mentioned in the catalogue description, only garages.

Broom doll's house 1966 - 1971

Measurements 16.5in high x 25.5in wide x 12.5in deep.

TM7710 Broom doll's house - as 'Avon' without special piece feature, i.e no garage.

TM7715 a second Broom doll's house with same name was sold without lights. 1966 - 1968 .

Note: Bright red roof,





vibrant blue windows, etc. Plain white interior, which does not display white painted furniture at all well. Presumably the same dimensions as the Avon house, minus the garage. The house shown has the moulded roof and the chimney as all one, unlike the Avon houses. Again it has the doorways only, no doors and a white plastic staircase. You can just make out the two upstairs lights and the large coolie hat style shades.

Crest Cottage 1966 - 1970

Measurements 16.5in high x 23.5in wide x 11.5in deep. Catalogue description: TM7730 - Five room cottage.

TM7725 - Crest Cottage packed flat. With complete assembly instructions. (According to the catalogue, this only appeared for one to two years).

Note: This house is the narrower, but longer wing of the Avon or Broom houses. A garage section is added one end, but it does have the special piece mentioned in the Avon description to give an extra room. The

moulded roof has gabled ends, where as the two larger houses have hipped roofs. Two houses have appeared, but surprisingly both have a blue front door with small squares cut out of it and opening plastic window with small square panes on the extra room. Either Tri-ang changed their tooling, which is surprising, or it's the same house with replacement items from different collectors. So if anyone has this model I would be pleased to hear from you to see if it is the same as the catalogue or a variation.

Daisy bungalow 1966 - 1971

Measurements 12.5in high x 23in wide x 11.5in deep. Catalogue description: TM7730 - Threeroom bungalow. TM7735 packed flat. With complete assembly instructions. Only available for one or two years.

Note: Ground floor of the Crest Cottage. No lights mentioned. There have been several examples, but the interior décor is the same as the other houses.

In 1971 Lines Bros went



into voluntary liquidation and it was indeed the end of an era. Lines Bros had commenced in 1919 and had grown fairly rapidly to become one of the largest toy manufacturers in Europe. By 1971 the company consisted of 40 subsidiary companies, which included many famous trademarks such as Pedigree, Meccano, Frog, Rovex, Hornby, Dinky and Minic to mention a few.

Naturally collectors are more interested in the doll's house side of the business and so you may be interested to know that Tri-ang made 128 different designs over the period, which is a large number. Some of them were made for many years, whilst others were a 'one day wonder'. Thanks to the help of many collectors over the years I have managed to track down 104



models, which is quite an achievement, but that still leaves 24 unaccounted for. On the other hand it is nice to still have the thrill of the chase even if it is in photographic form and not in the flesh so to speak.

You might be interested to see the page from the 1971 catalogue with its four doll's houses. In 1919 there were 11 and at the peak period in 1930s there were 30 doll's houses for sale in any year.

The smallest of the small



Hungary is about to be introduced to the amazing world of miniatures thanks to the creative efforts of Fanni Sandor

BY CHARLOTTE MERRYMAN

There aren't many miniature artists who take on the challenge of making the smaller things in a miniature world, such as a butterfly with all six legs, the whiskers on a mouse, or even the nostrils (nares) on the beak of a little wren. But artist Fanni Sandor from Hungary does it with such ease you won't even realise how difficult the process can be.

Fanni happily resides in a lovely house with her family and has a beautiful garden. With a three-year-old son and a one-year-old daughter she is kept busy for many hours of the day, so any free time is dedicated to her art.

At the moment she is a part-time miniature artist

with a small shop online, but she has plans to one day take her business to a full-time venture. In 2014, she received the IGMA Artisan title in the Animal Figures category and was recently awarded IGMA Fellowship.

With a background in microbiology, it is no surprise that small things have always fascinated her. She combines this passion with skills she has learned while attending art school and, on her own, has mastered making the most amazing tiny creatures you will ever see.

With her biggest inspiration being nature she also has a few miniature artists who fuel her to always strive for absolute realism. "I have two miniaturist

idols, Beth Freeman-Kane and Kerri Pajutee. I think they are the best wildlife and animal miniature artists in the world. Their art gives me so much inspiration and pushes me to become a professional miniaturist. So I thank them for that."

Fanni's love of miniatures started at a young age. When she was seven she constructed her first doll's house using a shoebox. But it wasn't until ten years ago when she first discovered miniatures online and it was love at first sight. In the past, she used to make doll's house accessories and then moved on to creating art dolls. She won second prize three times in an international doll exhibition and doll-making

competition in Hungary. At present, Fanni's focus has been more towards making birds, insects, and small mammals.

Her first twelfth scale miniature exhibition piece was a shadow box titled Queen Elizabeth's Kitchen. That was the start of her professional miniaturist career. For that project she made vegetables, fruits, pheasants, and deer trophies. Making the pheasants and the trophies was such fun for her that she continued to make more and more animals. With small amounts of polymer

From far left: Fanni's specialty is creating the tiniest of birds in twelfth scale. As you can clearly see in these photos!





"The tools I can't live without are my hands, eyes, brain, and polymer clay!"

clay, acrylic paint, feathers, cotton thread, paper wire, and glue Fanni brings the smallest creatures to life. She uses no moulds and every one of her pieces are one-of-a-kind. "All my sculptures are made from polymer clay. I love this material very much because I can make really fine details and lifelike figures with it. In fact, the tools I can't live without are my hands, eyes, brain, and polymer clay!"

Being a miniature artist in Hungary isn't always easy because miniatures are not a popular hobby in the country, so her biggest fan is her husband of four years, or as she refers to him, "The most fantastic man in the world." She also has family and friends who love to see her newest pieces and who are interested in learning about this fabulous art form.

Fanni has been busy organising an event that will

bring more recognition to miniatures in Hungary. As she explains, "In my country there are just 12 of us who make miniatures. This year we established the Hungarian Miniature Guild. We started to organise the first miniature exhibition in Hungary, it will be held in September of this year. Our goal is to promote and popularise handmade miniatures as an art form in Hungary."

Besides making miniatures, Fanni also enjoys being surrounded by nature, cooking, reading, painting, drawing, and sculpting. All of these interests fuel her imagination and inspire her to create the most magnificent tiny creatures!



LITTLE LINKS:

Fanni Sandor, IGMa artisan
website: paranyivalosag.blogspot.com
facebook: [fanniminiature](https://www.facebook.com/fanniminiature)
etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/FannimiNATURE
email: fannikov@gmail.com



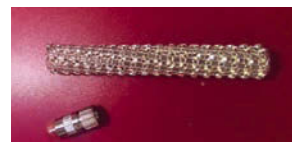
READERS' TIPS

MAKE A BLING FLOOR LAMP SHARED BY LYN HACKSHAW

You will need:

Chunky straw
 Balloon light
 Bling mesh ribbon
 Double sided tape

- Cut the straw and ribbon to desired length.
- Attach ribbon to the tape and then wrap around the straw, making a neat join.
- Place the balloon light into the base of the straw.
- Stand it on its own, or sit it in a finding as a base.



Build your own beautiful tiny gingerbread house

Making this spectacular little gingerbread house takes time and a lot of patience. But the colourful end result will make all of your efforts worthwhile



BY JO BEVILACQUA

Houses:



Begin by using the cinnamon coloured Sculpey. Roll the clay into a large tube (approximately 1 1/4" diameter). Shape it into a square using the wood strips, pressing into the clay till it is 1" square or under.



Once the roll is square in shape, cut the ends off.



Cut off both ends once the length is decided for the house.



Cut the roof on angles. Press until it looks symmetrical.

If you are using the pattern for the front porch that attaches to the house, use the pattern and only make the thickness 1/8" thick before attaching to the house before it goes in the oven.

Two patterns show that option - pattern 1 and 3.

Centre houses on the foiled baking pan; eye each house to make sure the house form is square - make any adjustments now.

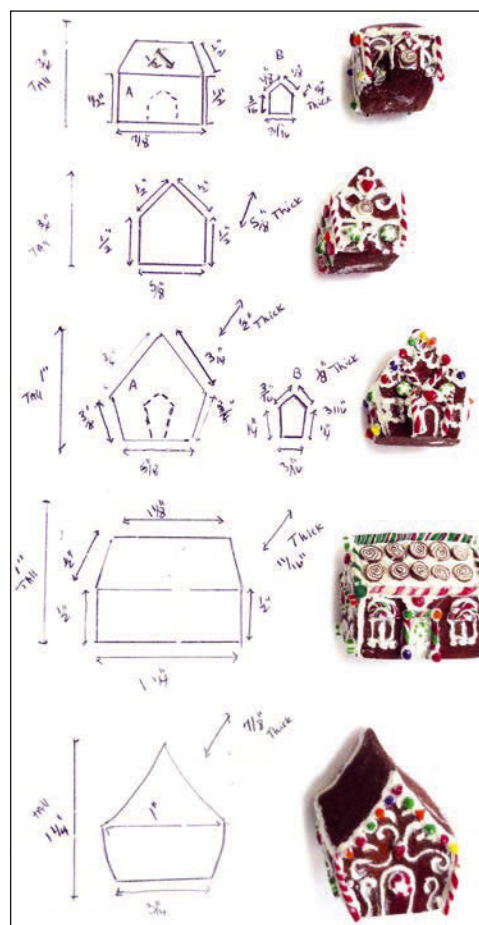
Note: You can't sand the outer walls or front and back. But you can sand the bottoms and the rooftop, but you will need a smooth finish for decorating front, back and sides.

Bake for 20-25 minutes or go by recommendations on package.

Choose the design you want. Test using the T-shirt dimensional paint onto something before applying it to the house sides.

TOPTIP

- Freezing the Sculpey on a porcelain plate may help you hold the form longer.



Begin with front and back. Sprinkle the glitter over the dimensional paint

PROJECT

You will need

- Sculpey Variety colour pack-red-green-yellow-orange-purple-blue-red-white
- Sculpey Translucent
- Sculpey Cinnamon colour
- Modge Podge Satin-Decoupage
- Fabric paint (matt finish, white)
- Stamping Glitter - white
- Wood pieces:
(used to shape the houses)
- Candy; readymade or use above Sculpey to make your own.
- X-Acto knife
- Box cutter with extending blade
- Green cutting matboard
- Pastry vinyl mat
- Confetti sequin - heart shapes
- Blue tape (painter's tape)
- 1/16th inch panel wood (for bases) cut as desired
- For shaping & blocking houses - wood strips
- 1 piece - 1/2" wide x 5" long
- 2 pieces - 1" wide x 5" long
- 1 round dowel for curved roof shape - 1/2" diameter about 4" long or under
- Tweezers
- Snow-Tex – found in craft stores
- To make your own snow use filler with white acrylic paint and the finest sand
- Craft glue
- Tooth picks
- Spray can primer

-let it set up for a couple of hours before you continue further.

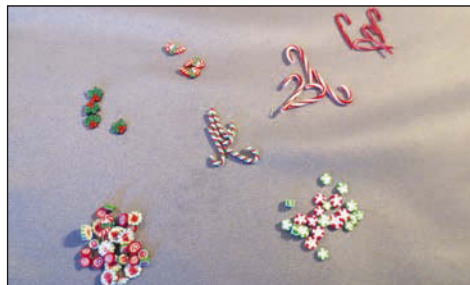
Note: You should have the front and backs done first and must allow drying time before handling them again. Patience is needed during the decorating part.



Once the dimensional paint with glitter has set, continue painting the other two sides, holding the house by the front and back ends. Sprinkle the glitter over the 3D paint-let set.

Once all the sides, fronts and backs are completely painted with glitter on top, if any cleaning up needs to be done use the X-Acto knife to gently scrape off any residue.

Decorating the house



Using any pre-made candies will work; the more selection the better and size as well.

1. Cut candy canes to the desired length using an X-Acto knife.
2. Apply candy to the gingerbread house using Dimensional t-shirt paint in matt white.



3. Simply apply the area you want to adorn using the dimensional paint, then using tweezers, gently apply each piece to that area (let it set).

TIP: You can add this over the glittered painted area of the design, then apply a light sprinkle of glitter over the

candy to fill in the 3D paint. I used a piece of paper to catch excess glitter, folded the paper then poured it back into the container.

4. Once the first design has been applied and is dry, outline the edge of the roof, sides front and back. Sprinkle when applied and let it set.



5. Begin on the second house, repeating whatever you do in steps to the first house.



6. For the roof, begin with the top ridge, add a row of t-shirt Dimensional paint, then apply the candy cane. Spread t-shirt dimensional paint over the roof on one side, only holding the ends of the house. Begin placing your candy pieces 1 by 1 until they all fit within the space, repeat the other side, then sprinkle with glitter over all of it.



7. Once the house is dry, go over the entire house and see if you have any places you need to add more candy to. Simply apply the dimensional paint, press the candy in place. Sprinkle and let set up. To clear the glitter, once the item is dry, use a clean, soft paint brush to gently remove excess glitter.

Making candy

It's easier than you think to get the right combination.

You will need candy for the landscaping once the house is completed and if you don't have a source you can always do this part first to replicate any of the pre made candy shown in the above instructions.

TIP: Use translucent Sculpey with each colour, about 1/5th part to white or a colour. If you want a lighter shade, mix a bit of white with the colour clay.

The translucent clay makes the candy look more realistic

To make gum balls:

1. Roll a long round roll of each colour - the same diameter: approximately 1/8", then smaller.

2. Think the size of a small ball head straight pin - like the kind they use in dress shirts -not the large ball head type. Use this as a guide for the size of your gum balls. Cut off all of the tiny sections at once to make them all symmetrical.

3. Use a vinyl pastry sheet; roll them into a ball, then using an X-Acto blade and your fingertip, roll them back and forth until they are shaped flat-bottomed with a slight dome on top.



4. Lay each one on foil to go in the oven.



Continue all colours: orange, green, purple, yellow, red- blue if you wish, one at a time, laying them all on foil.

Bake as recommended on the package - usually tiny pieces I bake only 14 minutes at 275 degrees.

Begin the brown roof candy roll

TIP: to test the swirl effect, slice it while not baked. If you need to make changes, you can do it before you bake it.

1. Using a light brown (caramel colour clay) roll into a flat long roll about 1/4" diameter - flatten once rolled up, add white clay dots onto the caramel colour clay - then twist. Roll into a tube shape.

2. Roll out another caramel colour clay strip - flat that will roll over that first roll, (don't let it overlap).

Roll over the roll containing the white and caramel clay twisted-roll until you have a long roll of about 1/4" diameter.

3. Lay the roll straight on the foil pan. Bake it at recommended heat and time.

4. When cooled, slice (this will make the roof). Cut into 1/16" slices.

Excess flat swirly candy

1. Mix up any of the leftover colours that were waste from gum balls - roll into a roll, about 1/8"

2. Cover the outside with green or red and roll into a tube shape 1/4" or less.

3. Bake. Let set to cool and then slice 1/16". Go by recommendations on package.



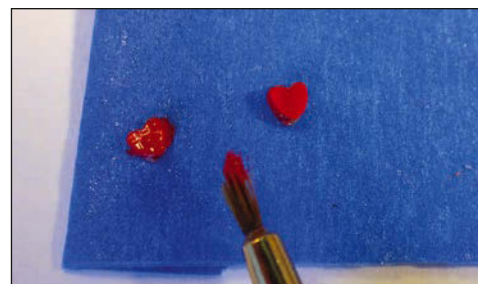
Fancy heart candy made easy.

For the hearts, use the sequin embellishments found in craft stores.

1. Put one heart down onto Painter's blue tape - rolled flat, sticky side up.



2. Add a dot of craft glue onto the heart, then apply another heart on top of that one; press, let dry. Watch excess glue; just a small dot. You may want to let the glue get tacky before applying the second heart.

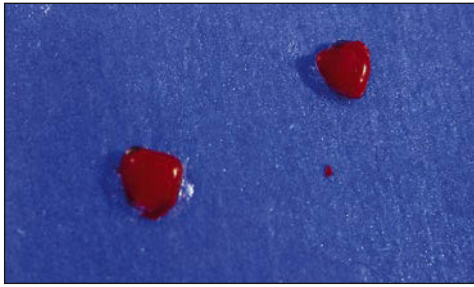


3. Paint using any red acrylic paint onto the heart - takes two coats; do not make the coats heavy.



4. Once the hearts have two coats, apply Modge Podge with a toothpick - do not let it run over onto the tape; keep the edges clean.

PROJECT



Keep on the tape till you use them.

Candy Canes



1. Roll as small a line as you can of white and red or any combination you want. You can use three colours as well.



2. When you get a white row and a colour row, attach at one end, pick it up, slightly twisting it slowly, moving downward. You may want to freeze before doing this.

3. When it is a tight twist, lay on a flat surface, rolling it straight. I use these for borders of the roofs and trims. I use pre-made candy canes as well.

Pin Wheels

1. Take a red tiny line of clay, then a white tiny line of clay; repeat this till you have about two white and two red. Keep individual clay rows tiny and straight.

To better control the "smushing", you can freeze the rows before attempting to add them together, then re freeze.

This makes it stand alone rather than blend. Use this technique as

needed. There are also other clays less soft, Fimo for example.

2. Roll a thin red piece about 1/4" in diameter and the length of your multi coloured row - which should be 1/8" or less in diameter.

3. Cover the multi coloured row inside the red but do not overlap the red; let it meet, then roll smaller - approximately 1/8". Bake, then slice when cool.

There are many candies available that can be bought but I still wanted more combinations for decorating

Gingerbread landscaping

1. Using 1/16" thick panel wood, cut to the size that you choose for your base to set your gingerbread house on. Sand the edges all along the edge, bevelling all around.

2. Use a primer spray can. Pick a type which dries before warping the wood. One coat per side.

3. Sand the base with fine sandpaper then pre-set the house on the base to know where it will go. Add the Snow-Tex to the entire base, smoothing it and keeping it thin! A stiff paint brush can help but swipe it downward like a spatula.

4. Apply the house using a dot of craft glue in the centre to better lock the

house in place. Let dry.

5. Once the house is dry, use the x-Acto knife to cut the snow away from the front door - you can begin laying out the candy - then once the layout is chosen, like decorating the house, apply the dimensional paint to, add the pieces of candy then sprinkle glitter over it. Only do a side at a time.

Remember to take each step one side at a time. Make sure each layer is dry to touch and you don't smudge your hard work.

You cannot complete a house in one sitting. It took me over a week making seven alternating steps. Patience really is a virtue with this project, but the end result is worth it!

Happy Holidays! Jo

SNOW TIP: If you can't find Snow-Tex at your craft store, here's how to make a similar mixture although it is more wet and may warp your bases.

Mix lightweight filler (eg Red Devil) with a tiny amount of white acrylic paint, and then mix in really fine sand. If you need to use this method please practice on a scrap base before using it on your house base. It should be thick and hard to apply if the texture is correct.

Also both caulk/sealant added to the snow mixture can give a little more substance to the artificial snow mix. I would go 1/2 filler, 1/4 caulk and tile - very little sand and white acrylic paint.



LITTLE LINKS:

Spencer's Nook, 110 Holbrook Drive,
Huntsville, Alabama 35806.
tel: 001 256 722 4786
web: www.spencersnook.com

CLUB NEWS

Santa's Workshop is a sparkling team effort

Rugby Miniaturists took on the challenge of creating everything from colour-coded elves to parcels and bows for a busy Christmas scene filled with humorous touches

BY LIZ OVENDEN

After the success of last year's WW1 project, displayed at the Autumn Miniatura, we had the unenviable task of deciding what to do next. Various ideas were thrown around and discussed until Yvonne, our chairman, suggested a workshop showing how Santa's little elves created all the toys for Christmas.

Another member, Penny, brought a bow-fronted shop she had been given to the next meeting and wondered whether it would be of any use. From

this the project now called Santa's Workshop was born.

One of our member's husband, Tony, agreed to make a roof in the shape of a large inverted 'V'. This would fit over the shop and shop front, which were now standing on top of each other – the shop front being at the bottom and acting as a window. Tony then agreed to make roomboxes to fit around the shop forming a first, second and third floor, each of which would represent a different element of the project.



Whilst the boxes and the roof were being made the club ladies decided to make a start on the elves at two separate Saturday workshops. These workshops were led by Joyce who provided head moulds and enough modelling clay to make at least 70 elves (this turned out to be 75 plus 27 'sleeping' heads in the beds).

The most amazing thing about the elves was that no two looked the same which considering the faces were made from only a couple of different moulds surprised us all. Each member was consigned the job of making and dressing six elves for each of the different tasks. These would be identified by colour coding their hats. One member, Catherine, offered to knit the socks and, true to her promise, must have knitted at least 50 pairs (the other elves wore long boots).

Once the roof and boxes were made they were brought into the next meeting and set up so that members could see how the project would look and decide who would do what.

The ground floor consisted of a central main workshop area, surrounded by a sweet shop and the post room with stables and woodworkers on the





two outsides.

The incoming post room is where all the letters from children around the world are collected and collated into different categories and put into their relevant postal slots. One elf was

given the task of catching the letters as they come flying down the chimney. Look for all the postal elves scurrying around with sacks of letters desperately trying to get everything sorted in time for Christmas Eve.

On the right of the post room is where the reindeer are stabled, resting and waiting for when they have to go out and deliver parcels. At least there is a fire to keep them warm whilst they are inactive. Outside in the snow



Santa's sleigh is being loaded with parcels which are coming down the parcel slide ready to be sent out to all the good children around the world.

There is a sleigh of freshly cut logs coming in to be sliced and chopped into correct lengths and sizes, whilst another is taking the prepared wood into the main workshop area. Because it is so cold the elves in here do tend to like a tippie and because of this





accidents can happen. The elf who was operating the round saw table has accidentally chopped off a couple of fingers and Elf 'n' Safety have turned up to make a report. At the front of the scene there are some visiting penguins from Antarctica who are on a cultural exchange with a couple of polar bears and are looking a bit overwhelmed at all the activity.

Through the doors are a sweet-making shop and a toy production area with Santa Claus standing on the stairs with his wife supervising everything going on around him.

The whole project was done in about seven months by approximately

14 members plus two husbands. Each member took responsibility for a room or a table but each room had two sessions of club time when at least two items were made by members, i.e. quilts and Christmas stockings in the bedroom, parcels and bow ribbons in the parcelling room.

The club meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at St Peter and St John's Church Hall, St Peter's Road, Rugby from 7.30 to 9.30pm. Contact is Yvonne Rollins on 01788 311728.

EMAIL YOUR CLUB NEWS AND PHOTOS TO
RICHARD@ASHDOWN.CO.UK

Build your own kitchen cabinets

Build your own custom kitchen cabinets along with the industrious Kris Compass in the final part of this miniature tutorial



BY KRIS COMPASS

So far you should have your farm style sink, painted counter top, and your counter structure built. Now let's wrap up this project and get it into your little house! We are going to make the small crown moulding for the top of the upper cabinets.

Step 1: Cut three strips of 8" long matboard to 1" wide.

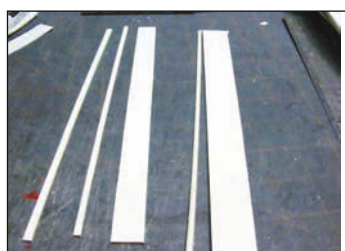
Step 2: Glue two of the strips together to make a thicker piece.

Step 3: Round off one long edge on the thicker, and the thin piece.

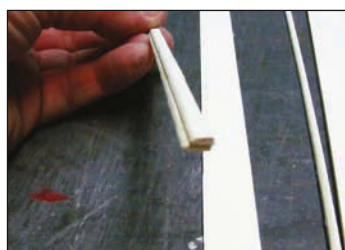
Step 4: Cut the single layered piece to 3/16" wide. Set it aside.

Step 5: Round off a long edge on the left over piece of the single layered piece.

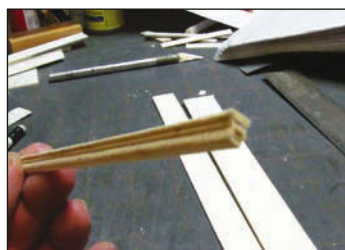
Step 6: Cut another strip from it that is 5/32" wide.



Step 7: Cut a strip of the layered piece of matboard to 1/8" wide. That's on the right. The single pieces are on the left.



Step 8: Glue the 5/32" piece onto the 3/16" piece. Those are the two single layers.



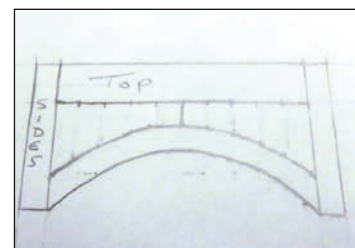
Step 9: Now, glue the 1/8" wide piece, that's the matboard that's been glued double, onto the 5/32" piece. Keep the back flat; you should be able to see

four layers on the back. If you don't, reposition the pieces. See what you can do with matboard!

Step 10: Glue 2 strips of card stock together and cut a strip that is 1/4" wide.



Step 11: Glue the card stock strip to the back of the assembly you have glued together. Make another length.



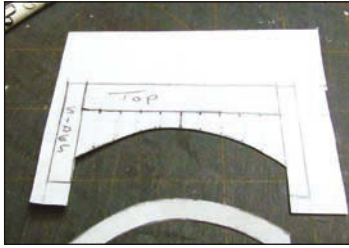
Step 12: This is a picture I drew of the valance that will go over the sink to use as a reference for the curve shape. The curve shape will be different if your cabinet size is wider than mine. So you want to use a compass to draw your custom curve. I've left 1/4" of space in the

You will need

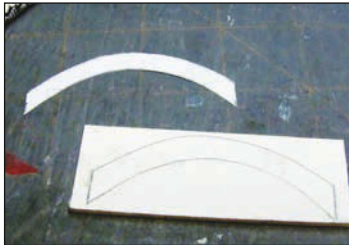
- Matboard
- Card stock
- Scissors
- Craft knife
- 220 grit sand paper
- Wood glue
- T-pin
- Wire cutters
- Drill with bits
- Marker
- Oval template
- Ruler
- 18-gauge bright florist's wire
- Pencil
- Delta's PermEnamel
- Clear Satin Glaze
- Delta's Ceramcoat
- Old Parchment with Magnolia White
- Paintbrush
- Scotch tape
- 26-gauge paddle wire
- 1/16" thick acrylic
- Mitre saw
- 18-gauge covered wire
- Hole punch

PROJECT

centre at the top and 3/4" at the sides.



Use that pattern to trace your curved piece onto mat board.



Cut out 2 and glue them together.

Step 13: Cut 2 matboard pieces at 3/8" x 2 1/2", glue them together. Cut 4 pieces at 1/4" x 1 1/2", glue those together to make 2 each.



Step 14: Glue the top and sides pieces together. Mark the centre and mark 3/16" on either side and continue marking 3/16" until you have 13 marks.



Step 15: To transfer your marks slide the curved piece into the valance. Use a square or ruler to transfer the marks.



Step 16: Use a T-pin to make holes in the centre of the matboard. This will make it easier to start your drill bit where it should be. Do this for the top of the curved piece as well.

Step 17: For the spindles, we are going to use 18-gauge bright florist's wire. It's easier to start with a small drill bit and work up to the size you need for the wire. When you are drilling, squeeze the matboard together.



Step 18: Cut the wire pieces 1 1/4" long and glue them into the top piece with wood glue. Slip your bottom in and keep it flush to the bottom of the sides. Use a marker to trace where the top of the curve is.

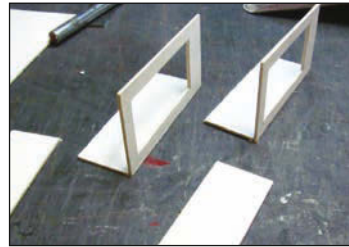


Step 19: Trim the wire leaving a little extra to go into the top of the curved piece. You can dry fit and if all is well glue the wires and the sides together.

Upper cabinets

Step 1: Cut 2 pieces of matboard at 1 1/2 x 2 3/4". These are the cabinet faces.

Step 2: Measure and mark from the outside edges 1/2" down from the top, one short side and 1/4" from the other 3 sides. Cut this centre out.



Step 3: The sides are 15/16" x 2 3/4", cut 4. Glue the sides onto the fronts. The sides are glued to the back of the fronts, see how the cut side of the front is showing.

Step 4: The backs are 1 3/8" x 2 3/4". Cut 2 and glue these between the sides.



Step 5: Cut the bottoms and tops 7/8" x 1 3/8", cut 4 and glue the tops and bottoms into the cabinets.

Step 6: The bottom layer of the doors are 1 1/4" x 2 1/4". Cut 2.

Step 7: The top layer of the doors are 1 1/8" x 2 1/8". Cut 2.

Step 8: Measure and mark 3/16" in from all four edges on the 4 pieces you just cut.

Step 9: Use an oval template to mark a curve on the 1 1/8" x 2 1/8" pieces.

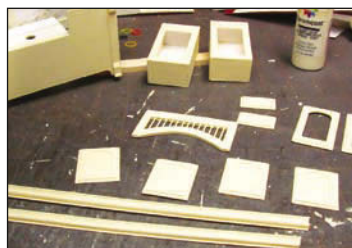


Step 10: Round using sand paper all four of the edges on all four pieces. Cut the centre out of the layers. Centre and glue the smaller layer, the one with the curved top, onto the larger bottom layer. These are your upper cabinet doors.

Step 11: Give all of the raw edges a coat of Delta's Perm Enamel Clear Satin Glaze. Let dry and sand smooth.

Step 12: Mix Delta's Ceramcoat Old Parchment with Magnolia White. Paint a couple of sample boards and put them to the side.

Step 13: Now paint 3 coats of paint on the cabinet parts. Let the final coat dry for a couple of hours. Sand with 220 grit sandpaper. Use a plastic clay tool to run over the grooves in the doors and corner posts just once to maintain depth.



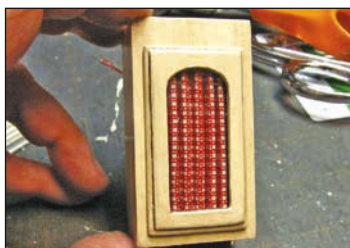
Step 14: After you've sanded and wiped off the surface, paint them again 2 or 3 times. Get a nice smooth surface. Let this dry a few hours or over night.

Optional

If you are interested in antiquing the surface then use that sample piece you made and visit my blog at <http://1inchminisbykris.blogspot.com> under: Kitchen Dresser Tutorial - How to Make a Kitchen Dresser from Mat Board with an Aged Finish. After 24 hours you can wax the surfaces with a finishing wax. Apply the wax and buff it off with a piece of an old "T" shirt.

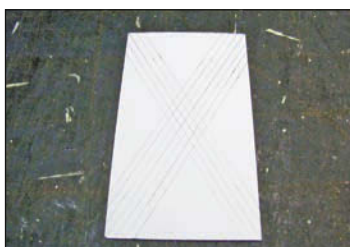


Step 15: Glue the door and drawer fronts to the front of the bottom cabinet. Glue the sink in and the counter top on. Don't clamp too tightly. Put pieces of matboard on the top so the clamps won't leave impressions in the counter top.



Step 16: For the "glass" in the cabinet doors I use 1/16" thick acrylic. If you want curtains you can use a pretty pleater with hairspray.

Step 17: Glue the door onto the cabinet.



Step 18: The handles are made from 26-gauge paddle wire. Cut a piece, fold in half and twist together. Paint black.

Step 19: The escutcheons can be made with a diamond punch.

Or you can draw diamonds on card stock. My card scrap measures 3 1/16" x 1 3/4". I drew an X from each corner. This measured 3/32" between each line. Cut the diamonds with your craft knife.



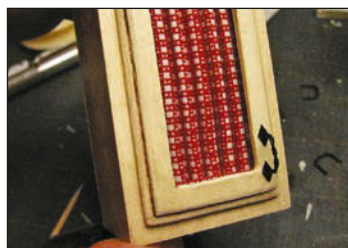
Step 20: To make a form to bend the wire handle cut 4 pieces of 1/4" wide matboard. This is how long the handles will be. Glue these strips together.



Step 21: Bend the twisted wire around the form. Trim the extra wire off even to the form.

Step 22: Wrap tape around a scrap of matboard so that the sticky side is up. Place your diamond here and paint black.

Step 23: Pierce a hole into the centre of the diamonds. Make sure the hole is big enough for the wire to go through.



Step 24: Measure, mark and drill holes for the handles. Glue the diamonds on. Push the handles into the hole.

Step 25: Drill holes into the sides of the valance for toothpicks.



Step 26: Glue short pieces of toothpick into the hole with the points sticking out. Press the points of the toothpicks into the side of the upper cabinet to mark where the holes need to be drilled. Drill the holes into the upper

cabinets and glue the valance to them. The valance is now held securely between the upper cabinets.



Step 27: I have a mitre saw to cut the mitres with. I don't know of any substitute for this.



Step 28: Measure, mark and cut the crown mould for the upper cabinets. If you have gaps fill with paint mixed with glue. Sand smooth and touch up with base coat and a little thinned brown paint. Wipe a little wax on and buff off and you're done.

Step 29: Use 18-gauge covered wire for the faucet.

Step 30: Glue 3 pieces of 1/4" wide matboard together and drilled a hole and glue the wire into the hole. From the top of the curve to the top of the matboard it's 1 1/4".

Step 31: Sand the matboard and paint a layer of yellow glue onto everything to seal it.



Step 32: At the top of the picture is a toothpick that has been filed and sanded to shape. In the middle there is a decorative toothpick. I used the one I shaped with the file. I did use part of the decorative toothpick for the part of the faucet coming from the matboard. I carefully drilled a hole in the "bead", that's the rounded part that sticks out from the rest of the toothpick then glued the handle into the hole.

Step 33: Drill a hole into the bottom of the matboard for a toothpick to dowel the faucet into the counter top.

Step 34: From paper, cut narrow strips and glued them onto the end of the faucet and at the bottom of the part coming from the counter top. In later pictures you will see that I also glued a narrow strip of paper to the faucet at the top of the matboard.

Step 35: Mark and drill a hole in your counter top for the dowel.



Step 36: Paint gesso over the wire and matboard to make it look smoother.



Step 37: To make a drain pipe from card stock use two paper punches to punch a ring for the drain hole in the sink. Punch 4 of them and glue them together.



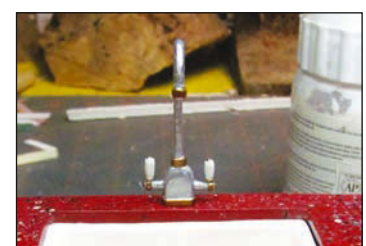
Step 38: Glue the drainpipe in. This isn't really necessary, but I did it anyway. Paint the inside of the drainpipe the ring silver.



Glue the ring onto the sink. Paint around the inside of the hole.



Step 39: For the toe kick, cut a piece of matboard to fit inside of the bottom cabinet.



Paint it black.

Who says you can't make fancy cabinets from matboard? You can make that kitchen you have always dreamed about. Get on Google and Google up designer kitchens and take your pick. All it takes is time, go slowly, have patience and you can do this.

Have fun, expand on it, make it better, just keep making minis!





Painting by numbers

GET THE HISTORY... THEN HANG IT.
TWELFTH SCALE VERSION ON PAGE 77

1. What painting are we hanging in our doll's houses this month?

Portrait of Lady Alston, by Thomas Gainsborough.

2. Who was she?

Gertrude Alston was the sixth daughter of Reverend Thomas Durnford. She married Colonel Rowland Alston in 1753 in London, who later inherited the title of Baron. The Alstons lived mostly in London, though they made frequent trips to Bath, where Lady Alston sat for Gainsborough for three separate portraits.

3. Remind us about Gainsborough?

Famous English portrait painter of the 18th Century - loved by the aristocracy and the Royal Family?

4. But he painted landscapes too?

Preferred them. He eventually said: "I'm sick of portraits, and wish very much

to take my viol-da-gam and walk off to some sweet village, where I can paint landscapes and enjoy the fag end of life in quietness and ease."

5. Did he deserve his reputation?

Undoubtedly. He was one of the most technically proficient artists of his time, but was also known for being experimental. They say: "He painted quickly, and the works of his maturity are characterised by a light palette and easy strokes."

6. What else do the critics say?

This painting of Lady Alston is not as good as the first one he did, an impressive full-length portrait which now hangs in the Louvre.

7. What do we say?

This close-up works better in twelfth scale.

The Likely Ladies

BY SANDRA HARDING

This group of friends met again recently to create fairies, a snowman scene in a dome and a flower display in a clay pot -which beats doing something sensible!

I originally made the fairies so long ago that I had forgotten some of the finer details, and the ladies were putting on the wings before they had wigged the little heads. However, once this was changed, the end results were all lovely. Sharon added white feathers from her tool box for the wings which was a hangover from our Faberge egg making last year. Mind you, the feather wings made a real improvement to my original design.

The snowman in a dome, which was an original idea from friend Valerie, turned out well. The ladies even made easy work of the fiddly bits of making their little hats (a black sequin and tiny bead, in case you are wondering). The snowmen themselves are just cotton buds, and the snow is make up remover wipes.

Each flower pot is stuffed full of anything to hand, and glued in. Glue is added on top and down the sides to create a natural look, and then dipped in green dried herbs. Add green Flower-soft to cover the herbs for the colour you want, and then stick in, or on, your dried flowers. Each one was very pretty.

Our tea break is the highlight of the afternoon. Our hostess today was Julie, who had made us moist apple cake and jam and cream scones.

Well done to Julie, Sharon, Jan and Paula and Julie's visiting sister Shelley who created really lovely items, considering that she is not actually a miniaturist. A hidden talent here I think.



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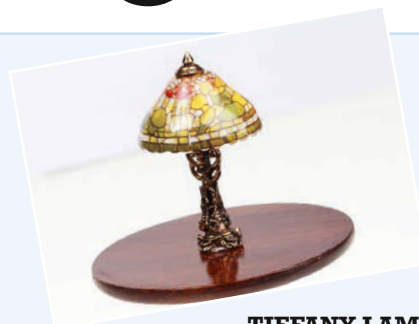
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This fold-up mini village counts down the days

Here's an advent calendar with a difference. Produced in quarter scale by two talented guys this miniature scene folds up to become a jewel box in your hands

BY DEB WEISSLER

As a child I didn't need an advent calendar to count down the long days of December until Christmas, but opening the numbered windows, anticipating the tiny scenes hidden behind each one, was a cherished family tradition. Come New Year's Day the calendar, its Bavarian scene sporting slightly less glitter than the year before, was lovingly tucked away until the next year. That calendar is gone but the memories hold dear, especially in light of the brilliant three-dimensional advent calendar introduced by Jon Fish and Larry Osborn.

Advent has been celebrated since the fourth century, and intended to prepare Christian converts for baptism. The four-week period began on the Sunday nearest the feast day of Andrew the Apostle, but because the date of the first Sunday varied from year to year, the advent calendar began on December 1. Germany is credited with the first printed advent calendars in the early 1900s, and so charmed former president Dwight D. Eisenhower, that he brought the tradition home to his grandchildren.

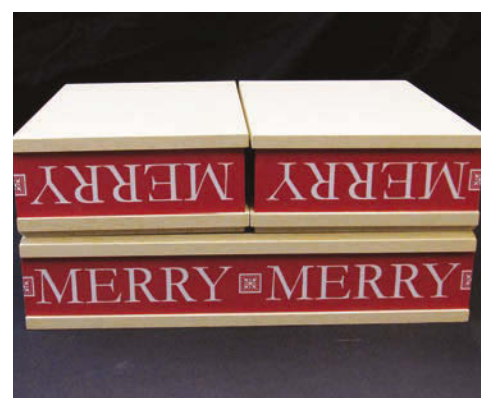
Regardless of who made these calendars a part of the holiday celebrations, The Guys From Texas have put a charming twist on their own version—a miniature village that folds down inside of a box, and all of it in quarter scale! It's like a tiny jewel box in your hands.

"Both of us get bored easily; very easily," Larry admits. "Ideas are tossed

about for days, weeks, months and then dropped or pursued. Some of our best ideas have come on long car drives to and from shows. Recently, after working on a custom structure for eight months, Jon needed to decompress. It was around Christmas and one evening Jon said "I have an idea". A few days later a drawing appeared on my desk. What scale? Quarter! Then out of his mouth came a stunner: "I can fit the entire street into a box". Having seen some amazing things from him before, I just said uh, okay. Several months passed and then, in the span of two days, a raw structure was done and working."

For years this talented team has amazed miniaturists with their eclectic collaborations. Both have strong artist backgrounds—graphic arts, music, painting, and the culinary arts. While Jon briefly searched for his path in life, working as an orderly on a neuro-trauma ward, Larry was working with Swiss pastry chefs at Andre's of Cherry Creek in Denver. Finding cooking infinitely more fascinating than empty bed bags, Jon donned his chef's hat and the pair teamed up and moved to Aspen where they started a catering business.

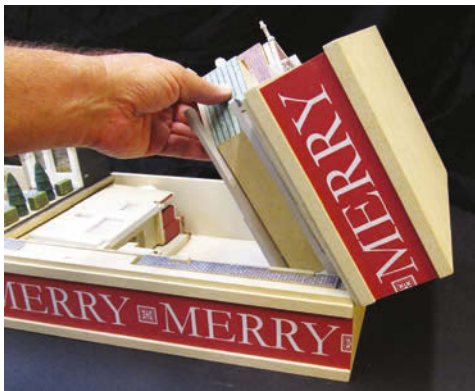
At the time, Aspen was an old mining town with mostly Victorian buildings & houses. "There was a little Victorian house that had been converted into a bookstore called Explore Books. It was one of those places you



could get lost in for days," Jon recalls. "I found several architectural reference books that piqued my interest and set me on a path to making miniatures."

Now both professional chefs, the pair settled in Texas. A decade later in 1992 they quit cooking and moved to the country, where they began building doll's house shells under the name Good Foundations. When someone commented that their business sounded more like a girdle factory, they changed their moniker to The Guys from Texas, compliments of Peg Devine of Miss Peggy's Place in San Diego, who called them "The Guys".

Over the years, the pair created cus-



Top: From left to right is a chocolate shop, a bakery, three tall houses, a church, two short houses, and a garden pavilion.

Left and above: These two photos show how compact this miniature scene can be. Here is the start of how it opens up. Such a brilliant design and a wonderful way to celebrate and prepare for Christmas!

Above right: This project easily reminds us all of the pop-up books we enjoyed as kids.

Above far right: It is simply genius how this miniature village folds out so perfectly.

Right: It was only after first building several prototypes that Jon successfully created the finished product.





tom structures for Carole Kaye, numerous workshop projects for Bluette Meloney, and exhibited their custom work at premiere shows across the country. In 2000 they began sharing their skills with others in workshops.

In the process of developing classes, Jon became enamoured with smaller scales. "The onlooker's point of view is completely different than in larger scales. It's extremely difficult to achieve that immersive effect," he explains. "It comes down to optics and how the human eye and mind perceive space. You have to keep the eyes moving to keep the viewer interested, and it doesn't have to move far in quarter-scale."

Inspired by his mother's love for Christmas ornaments and memories of their own advent calendar, when Jon sat down to design a 3D version, he wanted to impart that same feeling of family history and old-fashioned charm. Here was something he envisioned being taken out year after year for the entire family to enjoy.

Having just completed a commissioned Polish Chopka or Christmas crèche with an exterior that functioned as an advent calendar, Jon learned the mechanics of hanging and hinging minuscule doors, randomly numbered,

just like a two-dimensional advent calendar. Jon's vision of a 3D design harkens back to the pop-up books we all enjoyed as kids. Open the box and tucked inside is a delightful, colourful, multi-dimensional street scene reminiscent of a northern European village. Let's take a stroll!

From left to right is a chocolate shop, a bakery, three tall houses, a church, two short houses, and a garden pavilion. Charming topiaries frame door-

ways and trees shade the walkways. Like Alice in Wonderland, one wishes they could shrink themselves in order to explore every nook and cranny of this delightful vignette.

The buildings are designed to accept standard LED tea lights to not only backlight the windows but to reveal transparencies for the doors and windows. For what would an advent calendar be without surprises hidden inside?

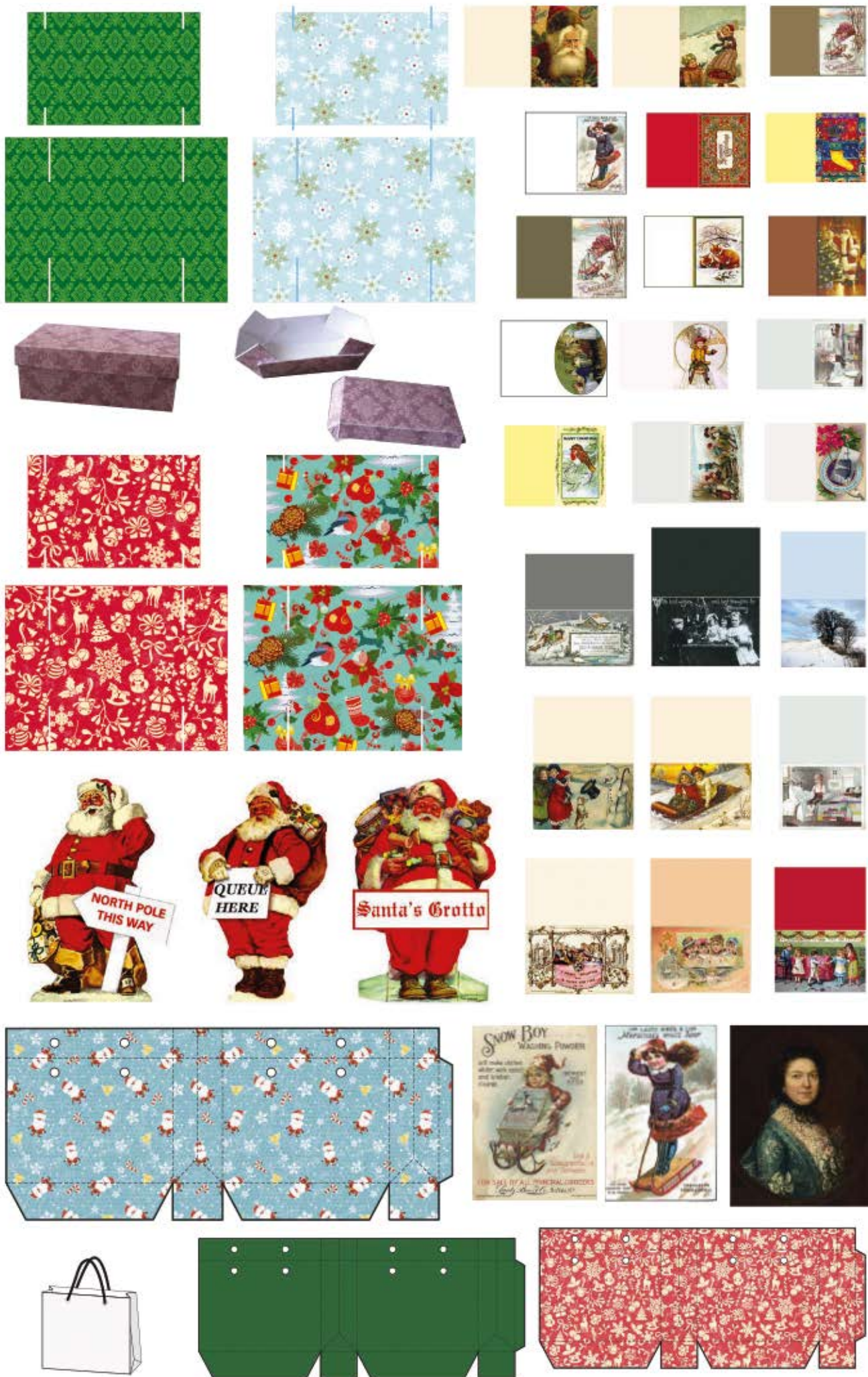
Jon built several prototypes to test for proper fit and function, ensuring that all the mechanics for unfolding the structures and sidewalks would function seamlessly once the final resin structures were cast in custom RTV silicon moulds. It took weeks of prep work and refinement before Jon was ready to cast his pieces.

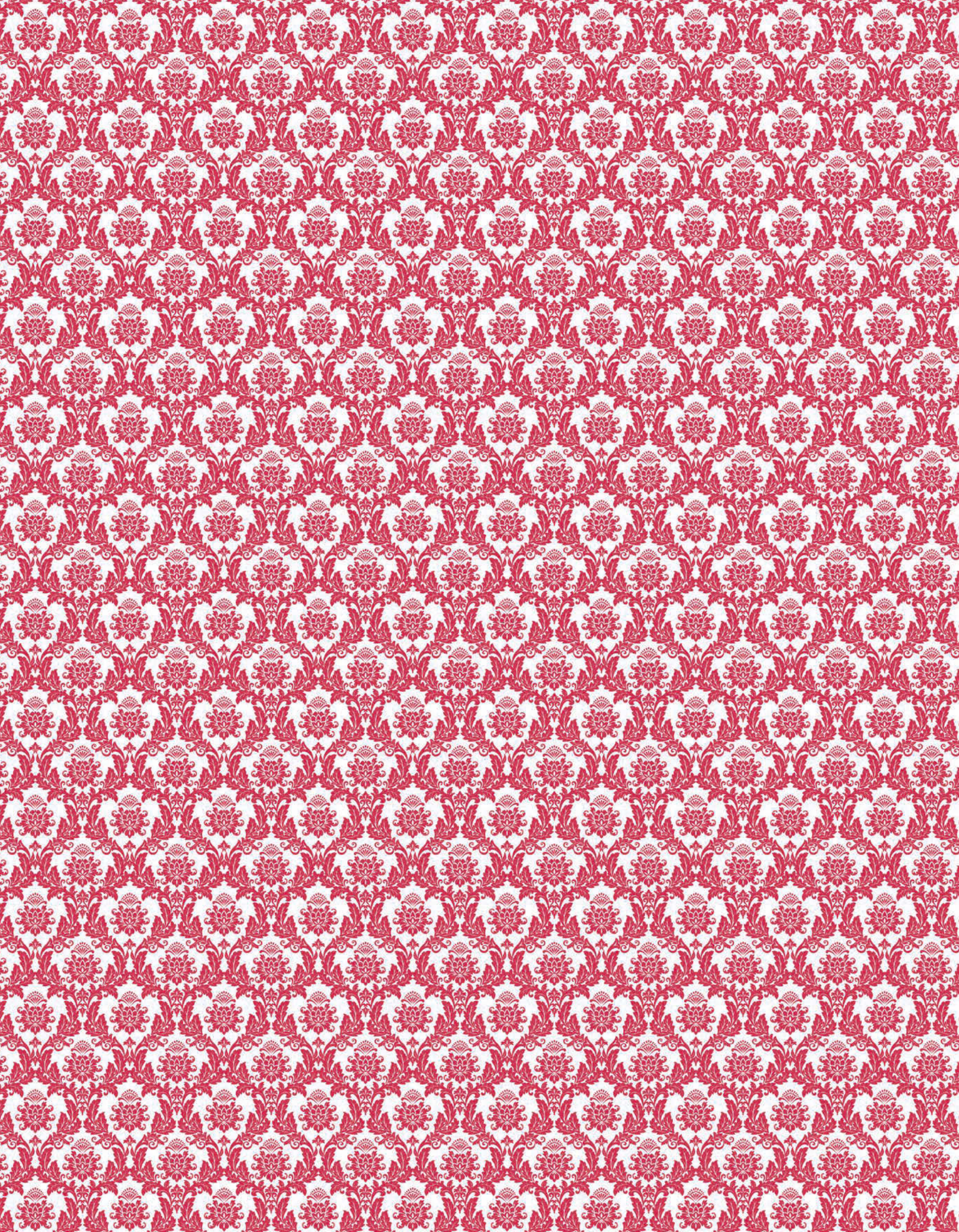
"When all the castings are done, they will be primed with a special water-based primer and painted with an airbrush," Jon explains. "Some details are hand-painted and some applied-paper details are used", similar to the lithograph tin doll's houses of the 19th century.

Since Hanukkah falls in the month of December also, Jon has designed his village to accommodate an Amsterdam-inspired Synagogue to fit the same space as the church. Eight buildings will have tea lights that serve as a traditional menorah.



THE CUTOUTS PAGE





SHOW DATES

A ROUND UP OF PLACES WHERE THE MINI FLAGS WILL BE FLYING AROUND THE COUNTRY

OCTOBER

SATURDAY 30TH OCTOBER

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

The Cedric Ford Pavilion,
Newark Show Ground, Lincoln Road,
NEWARK, Nottinghamshire
NG24 2NY (A46/A1)
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

PAT CUTFORTH'S SALE IN AID OF CANCER RESEARCH

Shaw Farm, Wiltshire SN8 4LU
Open: 10.30am - 2.30pm
Organiser: Pat Cutforth

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY 6TH NOVEMBER

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

Holiday Inn Basildon, Waterfront Walk,
Festival Leisure Park, BASILDON,
Essex SS14 3DG (off A127)
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

SATURDAY 12TH NOVEMBER

LEEDS DOLLS HOUSE FAIR

Pusey Civic Hall, PUDSEY,
Leeds LS28 5TA
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Doreen Jeffries

SUNDAY 13TH NOVEMBER

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

Harewood House, The Ridgeway,
Plympton, PLYMOUTH PL7 2AS
Open: 10.30am - 3.30pm
Organiser: Sue Neeson

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

The Civic Hall, Market Street,
NANTWICH, Cheshire CW5 5DG
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: MM Fairs

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

The Charmandean, Forest Road,
WORTHING, West Sussex
BN14 9HS (on A27)

Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

SATURDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

Dolls Houses & Miniatures Fair

The Assembly Rooms, High Street,
DEDHAM, near Colchester,
Essex CO7 6DE (off A12)
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

Dolls House and Miniatures Fair

York Racecourse, YORK YO23 1EX
Open: 10.30am - 4.30pm
Organiser: Warners Exhibitions

SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

Dolls House & Miniatures Fair

The Inn On The Lake Hotel,
on A2 between Dartford and
Rochester DA12 3HB
Open: 10.00am - 3.30pm
Organiser: D & M Fairs

DECEMBER

SATURDAY 3RD DECEMBER

KENSINGTON CHRISTMAS SHOW

Kensington Town Hall, Horton Street,
LONDON W8 7NX
Open: 11.00am - 6.00pm
Organiser: Kensington Dolls House
Festival

SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

The Town Hall, Upper Clifton Road,
SUTTON COLDFIELD, West Mids.
Open: 11.00am - 4.00pm
Organiser: MM Fairs

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

Portsmouth Marriott Hotel,
Southampton Road,
PORTSMOUTH, Hampshire PO6 4SH
(M27/Junction 12)
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

SATURDAY 10TH DECEMBER

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

The Shoreham Centre, 2 Pond Street,
SHOREHAM BY SEA,
West Sussex BN43 5WU
Open: 10.30am - 3.00pm
Organiser: MGM Fairs

SUNDAY 11TH DECEMBER

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

Felixstowe Leisure Centre,
The Seafront, FELIXSTOWE,
Suffolk IP11 2AE (next to pier)
Open: 10.30am - 3.00pm
Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

OVERSEAS FAIRS

11TH & 12TH FEBRUARY 2017

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ORGANISERS:

Dolly's Daydreams: 01945 870160.

www.dollysdaydreams.com

E: dollysdaydreams@btinternet.com

D&M Fairs: 01634 370420.

E: peapa001@medway.org.uk

Doreen Jeffries: 01274 616539.

www.doreenjeffriesdollshousefairs.co.uk

Kensington Dollshouse Festival: 020 7812

9892 E: kdf@dollshousefestival.com

www.dollshousefestival.com

MM Fairs: Tel: 01332 660428

www.dollhouse-fairs.co.uk

MGM Fairs: Tel: 01225 466533

Mob: 07818 462448

E: admin@mgmfairs.co.uk

www.mgmfairs.co.uk

Niesje Wolters: Tel: 0031 578 628767 Email:

info@dollshouseevent.com www.dollshouseevent.com

Plymouth Dolls House Fair (Sue Beeson)

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Warners Shows: Tel: 01778 391123

www.yorkdollshousefair.co.uk

Wendy's World: 01895 834348

www.wendysworldfairs.co.uk

E: wendyhobday@wendysworld.co.uk

While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of these dates, please do check shows before travelling.

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THE UK'S LEADING GUIDE TO TOP SHOPS, ATTRACTIONS & OTHER THINGS

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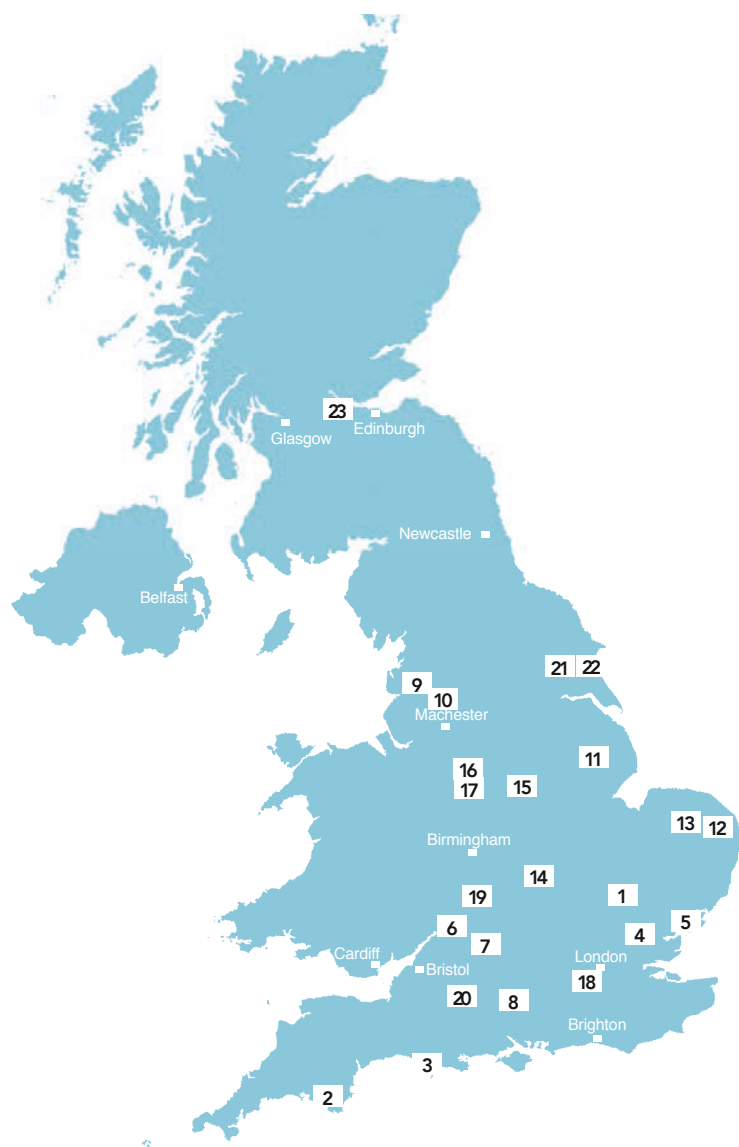
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SMALL TALK

WHERE WE CHAT WITH READERS ABOUT OUR HOBBY. THIS MONTH MEET JULIE GRIMES

Hi Julie. Welcome to Small Talk. What are you working on at the moment?

Four 1/48th scale houses. I decided to try something in small scale as I was running out of room. My main problem at the moment is trying to dress 1" dolls in Tudor clothes.

That can be tricky. Yes. I'm making furniture too. The problem with this scale is that the components are so small that if you drop one you will never find it as they blend in with the table or the carpet.

We hope you work in larger scales too, to keep you sane. I have two twelfth scale houses, one Regency and the other Edwardian. I have recently made two beach scenes, one a beach hut and the other a fisherman's hut.

Do you buy and make? When I first started a doll's house I made everything I could for it and felt a great sense of achievement when they turned out ok. I do enjoy buying furniture and other bits but you get a sense of satisfaction from making things yourself. When making my Regency house I made about 300 miniature books for the library.

How does your husband feel about minis? My husband, Malcolm, is very tolerant of my hobby and in the early days would cut the wood for pieces I wanted to make and even made my Regency house, to my design, from scratch. I think he thought that if I had a house big enough it would satisfy me



but things don't always work out that way do they? I think he is now happy to leave me to work alone.

How did you start on the hobby? I have always loved miniatures and the doll's house my father made for me when I was about five years old, but it wasn't until we retired and moved to Hampshire that I decided to buy a small doll's house kit. Once I started on that things just escalated (as they do) and I now find myself with houses and room boxes in every room in the house.

When did you become mini mad? When I started looking at things with a view to "what can I make that into" I began to realise that I was hooked.

Any other hobbies? I belong to two Women's Institutes and attend a weekly line dance class. I love reading and have always got a book on the go.

Do you buy too much stuff? Yes. If I see something I really like I will buy it even though I don't have anywhere specific to put it, so my houses are quite overcrowded.

Why do you love miniatures so much? I'm not sure I can put into words what I feel about our hobby. I love just looking at the things I have made and adding to them. I can't imagine a time when I won't be making miniatures and hope to carry on for many more years.



"I can't imagine a time when I won't be making miniatures and hope to carry on for many more years."

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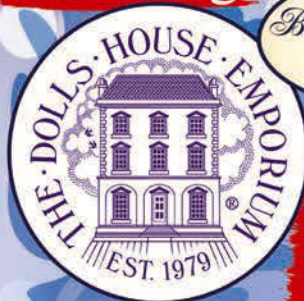
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