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welcome

We unwrapped a whole box of Christmas projects last issue to give you time to get going on your festive miniatures (what do you mean you haven't even started yet?)

So this issue we've put together a light frosting of easy makes for those who want to add a few last-minute touches to a seasonal scene. But our main focus is inspiring you as the New Year issues a challenge to all miniaturists keen to start on fresh projects - and no it doesn't matter that you've still got a bunch of old projects still hanging around that you haven't even finished yet.

Start as you mean to go on, and get organised for the months ahead - a noticeboard is a good place to start and Tanja has come up with one that's pretty and practical. On the Cutouts pages we bring you some calendars to get you in the right frame of mind, and is there a better way of passing the time during the cold winter months than creating icicles to add to the outside of your house or room-box? Well, maybe, but plastic forks and a hot cooker does make for an interesting combination.

If you want to stay in a wintry frame of mind join us on a visit to a seven-foot-tall ice tower, or step into the beautiful bakery featured on the cover. But if you'd prefer a project that has a more summery feel, don't miss Danielle's gorgeous lavender store, inspired by a trip to Provence.

But whatever season you want to create in miniature, the start of a fresh new year is the perfect time to start planning it. From all of us at DHW, have a happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Richard.

email: richard@ashdown.co.uk

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Dress an elegant lady in a gorgeous gown with puff-sleeved style

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Turn a headboard into a winter wonderland that is fun to do

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Marie Rees tells us all about her houses and a long-term project

Quote of the month:

So that's my wish for you, and all of us, and my wish for myself. Make New Mistakes. Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life. Whatever it is you're scared of doing, do it. Make your mistakes, next year and forever.

- Neil Gaiman



HOUSE HUNT



Find the little house hidden inside.
■ Last issue it appeared on page 28.



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Elegant Regency home fulfils Marilyn's dream

Several trips to a costume museum has paid dividends in this house that has people living in a simple, uncluttered period style, but there is one anomaly

BY CHARLOTTE MERRYMAN

For years, Marilyn Verdon longed for a doll's house as a little girl. Her only mistake was that she never told anyone. In the mind of a child, it seemed reasonable to assume that Father Christmas ought to know that she wanted a doll's house, so why on earth should she say so? Poor Marilyn was always disappointed on Christmas morning when she awoke to find that once again, she hadn't got her house.

This unfulfilled desire continued to burn into adulthood, then, Marilyn achieved her dream when a friend took her to a doll's house fair.

"I didn't realise there were adults



out there with doll's houses," said an enlightened Marilyn. "And I have been hooked ever since."

Although Marilyn had set eyes upon her Lectromatic house at one of the early fairs she attended, she looked around at what models, styles and eras were available before finally confirming her choice and ordering the house at a later fair. It was everything she wanted, once certain alterations were made. A window at the back of the house allows for a view through to a garden beyond and lightens the density of the interior. Holes were cut into the walls so that a series of stairs could be inserted to link the rooms, both visually and literally.

To the right of the house is a walled garden, which is a bit special. Pictured here with spring planting, the garden has interchangeable flower beds to give Marilyn the option of enjoying the house in two seasons. Having made spring and summer flower beds from brown plasticard, covered with brown earth scatter, Marilyn can alternate her flower beds depending on the season

and her mood.

The main feature of the garden is a Sue Cook fountain, which after some clever adaptation is fully functioning with a concealed water reservoir and miniature pump underneath. This tricky operation meant carefully drilling through the fountain and out of the top of the cherub, inserting a copper tube, which led into a concealed mixing bowl full of water. The water is then driven using a pump taken from an indoor water feature kit, of the kind bought from garden centres.

Behind the wall are Marilyn's first attempts at making trees. Appropriately, the Regency era saw an increase in the popularity of landscaped gardens and a belt of trees, with views of the countryside beyond, was often planted at strategic points to create vistas and soften or emphasise the vast open spaces. Visiting gardens had become a national pastime and the grand tour of Europe had become a part of every gentleman's education. After seeing the ruins of ancient Rome and Greece, landowners came home to England

Above: An overview of the interior; deliberately uncluttered, it pays homage to the elegance of Regency style. The central window that Marilyn requested for the back wall is really showing its value.

Left: The fountain, which is fully functioning with a concealed water reservoir and miniature pump underneath, makes a central feature and a talking point in the garden.





hoping to create a classic wilderness in their country estates, which included fountains, statues and water features.

Our pictures were taken with only garden on one side of the house while Marilyn was still searching for inspiration for the other side.

Above the roof line Marilyn's ap-

preciation for visual tricks is evident again in two smoking chimneys. This was something she saw at a fair and decided to incorporate in her own house. It is an effect sometimes used in model railways, which involves hiding an electric element that can be made to smoulder and produce soft, harm-

Above: Marilyn's Regency couple take tea.

Below: Some nice pieces have been collected for the dining room, particularly the china.







Left: The gentleman's study has a reserved quality about it.

Below left: The kitchen is coming along nicely. Perhaps a few more plates on the mantel?

Above: Some modifications were made to the house, such as cutting a window into the back wall with a picture of a garden beyond.

Right: The simple and uncluttered style is deliberate.

Below right: Music was essential entertainment in a Regency household.

less smoke.

It may be that she has an eye for these things, but Marilyn is a buyer and collector, rather than maker. The joy of the hobby for her is not in doing the craft, rather than the planning, collecting and arranging. Collectors sometimes get a bad press in the hobby, in that they can be labelled as making little effort, through having a disposable income to buy anything they desire and no craft skills with which to participate. However, this is simply unfair. Collecting is not always about money being no object, it is about buying and assembling quality. Marilyn would rather buy one expensive item, than several cheaper items. "I wouldn't be happy with toys," she admitted.

There is no doubt over her sense of style or period. Marilyn loves Regency





Top: Examples of Marilyn's dolls.

Left: The family prepare for a stroll in the park.

Below: The handsome exterior of Marilyn's Lectromatic doll's house.

and relishes the elegance involved. She has tried not to clutter her rooms and has gone to some length to research the appropriate paint colours, which she bought from a period colours range from a local DIY shop. There is one obvious exception to the truthfulness of the interior and that is the inclusion of a bathroom, which would never have been a dedicated, indoor room with such fixtures and fittings in the Regency period.

Marilyn holds her hands up to this fact and makes no bones about the inclusion. "You know – a house without a bathroom..." she said, and happily shrugged it off.

"It is the thing I like doing most," admitted Marilyn, on the subject of dressing dolls. She clearly enjoys making dolls and has modelled most periods

from Elizabethan to the Twenties. Having researched the appropriate outfit, she bought her dolls and then dressed them herself.

Marilyn's interest and commitment led her to make several trips to the Fashion Museum in Bath, where she was able to research her subject. Within the 30,000 objects in the museum's collection there are examples of fashionable dress for men, women and children from the late 16th Century to the present day. Everything in the collection can be viewed and a study table can be booked in advance – surely a costume maker's dream.

Marilyn is rightfully proud

of her house as it nears completion and is encouraged by the fact that two other friends have got doll's houses since seeing hers. Sadly perhaps, there are no plans for additional projects or more doll's houses. It seems that Marilyn's childhood desire has been answered and that box has been ticked, with or without the help of Father Christmas.



You'll be a fan of this decorative table

Take a cheap wooden fan and easily turn it into a pretty little table that is perfect for showing off a lamp or a plant

BY LINDA DAY

Turn parts of a wooden fan into a decorative table for your twelfth scale setting. Sometimes the simplest things can become original doll's house pieces, you just have to remember to think like a miniaturist.



Step 1. Trim your purchased fan to the desired height. You will need four pieces, one for each side of the table. I purchased my fan a few years ago, but you can find them in pound stores or on the internet. I have also heard that they can be found in pound stores. This will depend on the area you live in, I suppose. Who knows, you may already have one!

You will need

- Wood shapes or scraps
- Minwax wood stain
- Foam brush or cosmetic wedges to apply the wood stain
- Wood cutters
- Wood glue
- Disposable plate



Step 2. If you are planning on staining your little table then stain all the pieces prior to gluing. If you will be painting, that can be done after assembly. I prefer to use cosmetic wedges for this. They tend to hold more, and are denser than foam brushes. But as always, please use what you have on hand.



Step 3. Next, carefully glue all edges of the table together. Let dry.



Step 4. Add a top and bottom by gluing them onto the table.



Step 5. Once everything is dry you can place your new table in your scene.

Top it off with a plant or a lamp. Place indoors or on the porch to add something special to your mini world.

WHERE I WORK

THIS MONTH WE CHAT WITH SUE KIRKHAM OF HOME PETITE HOME

Hi Sue, we know you've been making minis for a long time.

How did you get into the hobby?

It all started with a kit for a Victorian Gothic style house which I completed back in the early 1990s. A neighbour saw the finished house, ordered one for herself... and the rest is history.

So you started taking on more commissions?

Yes, and over the years I have completed commissions for many types of houses, large and small, and making the miniatures to go in them was a natural progression. I have supplied shops and individual collectors, as well as subscription gifts for businesses, and love working for myself.

Where do you work? I have a workshop space in my store in Tunstall Indoor Market, Staffordshire. For many years I worked from a home studio space. Then three years ago it seemed the right time to open a miniature shop, and the lovely Victorian market suited the bill perfectly. It is a light building, the people are fantastic, and I have space to create my miniatures as well as meet customers in person.

And you've expanded your space? I started off in the tiniest unit in the market (fittingly), but have since moved and now have two units. One is packed full of fabulous doll's houses and miniatures, the other con-



tains the DIY section, as well as my own workshop and studio space. It really is the best of both worlds for me.

So now you've moved your workshop, does that mean home is a bit more tidy?

Well for the first time in many years my home has only my own doll's houses on display. Also, we have discovered the dining table again. Our commissions are no longer spilling over into our home life.

Do you work at set times? As the market is open on a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, these are my work days. Of course, work varies from making the miniatures and completing doll's

house building, lighting and decorating commissions, to serving customers and ordering stock for our store.

What makes your space for miniatures so special?

I truly feel that Home petite Home has a very individual feel. As well as an array of my own handmade miniatures I also source items from other miniaturists that I feel my customers will love. We are in a wonderful, traditional indoor market setting, along with other artisans and traders, which means that there is always lots of energy, as well as items to inspire me.

And you're now running workshops there as well?

Yes, another reason for loving our space is that it has





enabled me to start running our very own workshops for inspiring miniaturists to have a go at making their very own minis. The response has been amazing, and we have run workshops for both adults and children. I was so impressed with their skills and imagination.

We guess your workspace isn't private? No, it's designed around the customer, giving them room to browse, as well as offering them help and advice when needed.

Your family help out too? I can also call on help from my husband Mark, who is always on hand to give a fresh eye to the business. My two talented daughters, one a photographer and the other a graphic designer come in very handy too!

Any pets in the workshop? I don't have any animals around, but I do have a little mascot. It is a needle-felted mouse and he features in many of our instagram posts @homepetitehome.

Do you listen to music while you work? I do like to listen to the radio whilst I am working away but, to be honest, the hustle and bustle of the market makes for a nice backdrop.

Name one thing that is banned from your workspace. In a word 'Can't'... that is a 'can't do' attitude. If I can't make it then I will always try and source it for my customer. Plus, I find the challenge of working to commission is always a good thing and often works out even better than expected!

Describe your workspace in five words. Creative. Petite. Busy. Friendly. Inspiring

What is the one thing that your workspace can't be missing? Yorkshire teabags!! (Obviously you can't work without a decent cup of tea). But more seriously, it has to be creativity, that is in every aspect of the business. Whether it is designing a new miniature, creating a beautiful display or even thinking ahead to what might be needed in the weeks and months ahead. Of course, that goes hand in hand with our wonderful customers who often inspire us with their ideas and commissions.

What would be your dream workspace? I think that after years of working in the spare room, kitchen, garden studio and wherever else I have created my miniatures, I now have my dream workspace. The combination of being able to meet customers personally, as well as being able to work on my own creations gives me a lot of joy and satisfaction. And the great thing is it's open for all to share and enjoy as they can now visit Home petite Home.

Thanks Sue. We're sure a lot of readers will be dropping in for a cup of Yorkshire tea and a helping of creativity.

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"I FIND THE CHALLENGE OF WORKING TO COMMISSION IS ALWAYS A GOOD THING AND OFTEN WORKS OUT EVEN BETTER THAN EXPECTED!"

La Boutique de Lavandes reflects love of Provence

The lovely scent of lavender throughout Provence inspired Danielle to create this fabulous shop, which is based on a regional store that had remained in her memory

BY PAM NORTH

France is known to be a beautiful country, especially the south with the tourist magnet of the Côte d'Azur. There are lots of cities and villages to visit, magnificent beaches, and splendid hotels and restaurants.

A notable part is the geographical and historical region of southeastern France called Provence, which extends from the left bank of the lower Rhone River to the west, to the Italian border to the east, and is bordered by the Mediterranean to the south.

Lavender is the symbol of Provence, as the fields there are seasonally abundant with the tall, highly fragrant, light mauve-purple spikes of flowers that are perfectly complemented with grey-green foliage. Some locals say that lavender is the soul of the region.

Danielle has been a regular visitor to the region and when she wanted to make one final project before retiring from making miniatures, she knew just where to start.

Danielle lives in Germany, but dur-



ing many vacations with her husband to Provence, Danielle fell in love with the region, and found much inspiration from the many lavender shops of Provence. One in particular caught her fancy; not only was it filled with the overwhelmingly numerous things that can be made with the fragrant lavender blooms, it also was painted, inside and outside, in that colour.

"At first I thought that it was a little too much," she reminisced, "but the more time I spent inside the shop, the more the colour grew on me." Even though her visits to the shop were many years ago, the image and ambience of the shop became permanently fixed in Danielle's memory. Finally, in 2017, she decided to create its likeness in miniature.

Lavender's uses are many and reputed to be effective. Its oil is used to heal burns and insect bites, soothe headaches when applied to the temples, act as an antiseptic, cure acne, and scent bath water. Its fragrance

helps lull one to sleep, is desirable in aromatherapy, and is used in room fresheners and other home products.

All of these uses translated into the many different products that were sold in Danielle's favourite real-life shop in Provence, but her miniature shop unfortunately was not nearly large enough to accommodate all of those. Choices had to be made.

She began by thinking of a name for her project – Dany's Lavender Shop. She then had to create all the tiny labels for the products featured in it, which involved many hours on the computer, along with the time required to make all the boxes, which had to be printed, cut out, and glued together.

She made all the furniture for her shop, partly because she couldn't find anything to fit in such a small space, but also because she had discovered mat board at that point. "It is so much

Below: Danielle made many miniature items for her shop that would be used to bring the fragrance of lavender into a home.





Top: The twelfth scale lavender shop shown with the front attached.

Above: One of the many shelves full of sweet scented products.

Left: A table displays tiny perfumes.



Above: This table displays fresh lavender plants, designer tote bags, and lavender sachets.

Top left: The amount of items in this shop shows Danielle's dedication.

Left: The mini lavender shop shown with the front removed.

easier to handle than wood, especially when it comes to cutting, and once it's painted, one really can't tell the difference," she explained.

"The first thing I made was a little shelf for my perfume corner, then the one for the soap corner, and finally the larger shelves. The best part about making one's own furniture is that the size, width, and height of the shelves can be adjusted to perfectly fit the items that will fill them. All those items were handmade by me, and encompassed bottles, jugs, boxes, baskets, jars, candle holders, pillows, paper napkins, soaps, cupcakes, jam, liquor with fruit pieces, shopping baskets, gift wrap paper, tablecloths, lavender in pots, lavender bouquets, chocolate, nougat, meringues, perfumes, scent bags, and much more. The bottles and glass jars are filled with ambiance perfume, linen-fresh

water, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel, bath salts, bubble bath, liquid soap, lavender oil, and others.

"I made many baskets, either to



display my items or to be used as gift containers. Suddenly I realised that I needed to stop because the shop was too small to display all the items that I had made!

"In the end, however, I managed to fit everything into and around the shop. I also made sort of an outdoor area, and placed a few shelves and tables outside the shop. The weather in Provence is usually quite good, and such an outdoor area attracts customers."

Despite the success of her creativity, there was a touch of nostalgia in it. "I was a bit sad at the completion of my little lavender shop," Danielle admitted wistfully, "I so liked making it, as it allowed me to escape to another world, so I always will love it." Danielle is closing her miniature store, but she will continue to create miniatures for her own enjoyment.



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Brenda's shabby chic skills create this French Delight

There's only one word to describe this room box by Brenda Hodges which Sandra imagines is home to a fading French film star of stage and screen

BY SANDRA HARDING

'Adorable' is one of my favourite words and I use it quite a lot I know. I suppose I could describe this project as 'pretty', but it's better than pretty.

Another nice word is 'nice' but it's definitely more than that, so you are just going to have to put up with 'adorable' again. Mind you, "enchanted" is another nice word, but I will save that for another adorable room box, another day. That's enough of my non-sense for now.

The project I am of course referring to is this room box by Brenda Hodges. I am told that it was an eBay purchase and measures 16 x 11 x 11 inches. Brenda had already decided to create a French room in it as she had most of the furniture collected from various places over time.

To complicate matters Brenda is severely chemically and light sensitive, so has to carefully consider any project which needs paint and glue, and our hobby certainly needs plenty of both. Luckily, she discovered Lakeland Eco friendly paints and wallpaper paste which have neither toxins or odour.

Using sticky-backed flooring strips from eBay Brenda created planked floor and walls, so glue was not needed. It was then all painted in her chosen colours, and aged in part with cold tea. On a purely personal note here I so admire the skill involved in creating this shabby chic, worn look. I would have made the mistake of dashing off

paint everywhere, filling in the gaps, and that is simply not right for this effect — I think I know now where I have been going wrong!

Brenda bought the gorgeous window and, after attaching a picture of a garden and a piece of Perspex, her husband stuck it on for her. The shutters were just natural wood, painted and distressed in the same way. They were layered to create a double opening look, and the lovely aged lace and flower pot were added — perfect! I love the pictures and posters on the wall and the many more little accessories scattered around.

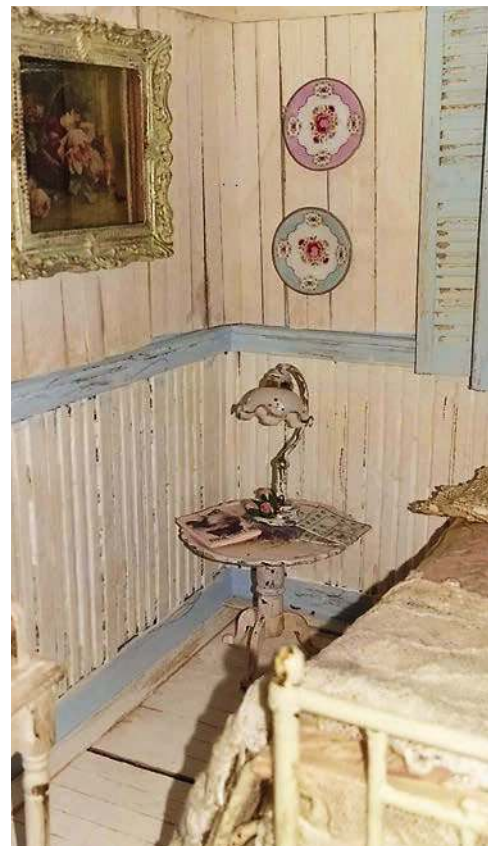
The bed was made by Brenda years

ago from a modern metal bed. She added a picture and frame, an old brooch and, of course, more old lace and bedding, also using lace handkerchiefs and silks.

The wardrobe was an already distressed Etsy buy and Brenda did the same to the rest of the furniture, adding more old lace which she has arranged so well on the table and in the trunk.

The chandelier was from eBay and the lovely little "tea for one" makes me really want to know who this lady is. I see a theatre programme on the table and I reckon she is a fading French star of stage and screen and, if not, she jolly well should be with a bedroom like this.





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Exeter EX5 1DJ

3rd March - LYNDHURST

Community Centre, Main Car Park, Lyndhurst,
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17th March - WESTON-SUPER-MARE

Royal Hotel, Knightstone Road,
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14th April - EXETER

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9th June - LYNDHURST

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23rd June - WESTON-SUPER-MARE

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18th August - EXETER

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22nd September - WESTON-SUPER-MARE

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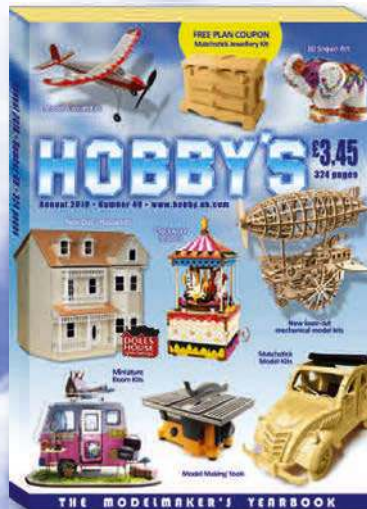
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Work by Jan Southerton - Photography by Rob Tysall

Sunday
3rd February 2019
11.00 - 17.00

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Geoff Wonnacott

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www.dollhousefestival.com

Add a pretty noticeboard to a room in your house

Get organised in your house for 2019 with this noticeboard that is simple to make and will look pretty everywhere from a kitchen to a children's room

BY TANJA JENSEN

A new year, to many, means a fresh start and a promise to stay organised. For this project we'll be making a simple noticeboard with a shelf, hooks for keys, kitchen towels or other items as well as a place to put the mail or other important documents.



Step 1. Cut out the templates, trace them onto the

wood and use a craft knife to cut them out. Then use sandpaper to smooth out any rough edges or surfaces.



Steps 2 + 3. Glue the pieces

together. In image number 3, I've added three coffee stirrers before glueing the letter holder in place – this is just to add some more detail and texture.



Step 4. Cut a few narrow pieces from either the wooden sheet or the coffee stirrers and use these to frame the sections for the bulletin board and the

blackboard. Then paint in any colour of your choosing. After painting it, I chose to go over some of the edges with the sandpaper to add some wear, but this is completely optional.



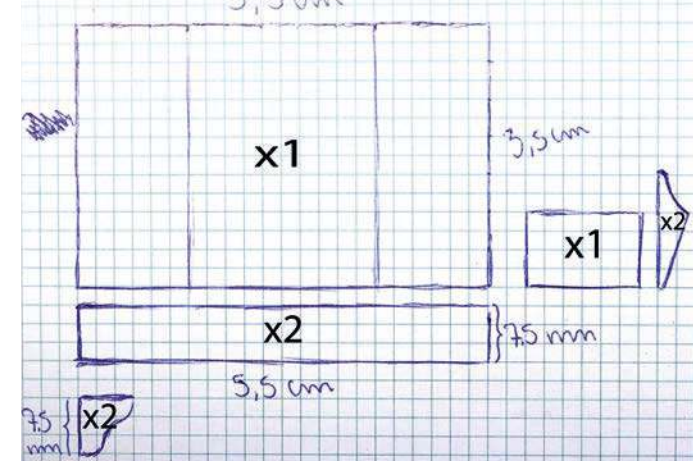
Steps 5 + 6. For the hooks I cut three pieces of wire. I hammered one end of each piece to flatten them, used round nose pliers to bend

You will need

- Sheet of wood (I used a 1mm thick sheet of basswood)
- Wooden coffee stirrers
- Craft knife to cut the wood
- Sandpaper
- Pencil to trace the templates onto the wood
- Pliers and a hammer
- Glue
- Acrylic paint (I used Winsor and Newton's

- Powder Blue and Mars Black)
- Blackboard sticker or blackboard paint (or black paint, if you don't mind that it's permanent)
- Chalk for writing on the blackboard. A white coloured pencil can be used but will be more permanent
- Canvas style fabric
- Wire (I'm using 0.6mm bronze wire)

Pattern



Christmas wreath

To welcome everyone to your door at this time of year make your own wreath. This can be created from many different materials – for the base use fir tree branches; willow canes; moss or even polystyrene. For decoration try to follow a theme; natural – use cones, berries, leaves, straw and fruit. For a traditional seasonal wreath – red ribbon bows; holly and ivy, bells, and baubles.

You will need

- Cane wreath
- 2 x Brass bells
- Red ribbon
- Leaves – maple, holly, ivy
- Lemon slices



Step 1: Collect all your items together.

Step 2: Choose a colour.

Step 3: Spray the base of the wreath and all the components a colour if you wish.

Step 4: When dry, assemble together.



Step 5: Add the ribbon/bows to the bells.



Step 6: Glue the leaves to the lower half of the cane wreath.



Step 7: Add lemon slices.

Step 8: Add ribbon loop to the top.



Other items that could be added to a wreath:

Cones: Basic fir wreath with tiny cones added.

Country: Big ribbon bows and painted fruit.

Forest: Fir cones added to a moss base.

Golden: Cream and gold form the bases for this wreath.

Holly jolly: Traditional holly wreath deco-

rated with ribbon and red berries.

Lights: For the ultimate effect add tiny silver lights to your wreath.

Magic: Tiny little gift parcels and baubles are a novel idea.

Red: Glue tiny red seeds or beads to a polystyrene base – add a few light green leaves.

Snow: For a very wintry scene spray your wreath either with white paint or snow.



the wire and glued them in place. I also added a piece of canvas to the section on the left, as well as a blackboard sticker to the centre section. You can easily replace the blackboard sticker with black acrylic paint for the same look – it may just not erase well.

You can then decorate it however you wish – I shamelessly added a few images of my miniatures, a shopping list, a bowl with a couple of roses as well as a kitchen towel since this, in my case, will be part of a kitchen scene. However, add a few drawings, some crayons or pieces of chalk and this will look great as part of a children's room as well.

● www.sugarcharmshop.dk

Sparkling exhibition shows off beauty of glass on trees

A current exhibition at the Toy Worlds Museum in Basel looks at tree decoration from around 1920, and in particular the fascinating world of art glass

BY ALICE MONROE

A special show at the Toy Worlds Museum in Basel is dedicated to a very special and little-known tree decoration: so-called Art Glass from the period around 1920. Its artistic development into handcrafted glass decoration was influenced by the new era of Art Deco.

These new hollow glass animals, which normally stood on dressers as knickknacks, were equipped with melted-on glass hooks or metal fasteners around the year 1920 and made as Christmas decorations.

Such Art Deco decorations, usually made of white translucent glass, were freely blown in the Lauscha (Thuringia) area of Germany and the surrounding towns. A wide variety of animals, from dogs to elephants and giraffes, were also made of coloured translucent glass with stripes or reflective glass.

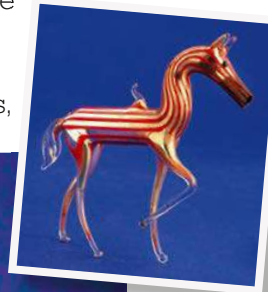
Sparkly and textured glass, which were commonly used in traditional Christmas decorations until that time, were consciously avoided for this new kind of glass decoration. The point was to purposefully emphasise the beauty of the material, the glass.

These extraordinary and extremely delicate Christmas decorations are freshly restaged in the special exhibition. Using the exhibits on loan from collector Alfred Dünneberger of Switzerland, five Christmas trees have been decorated with glass animals



and other glass ornaments. The blue colour of the trees comes together with the glass decorations to form a unique whole.

Christmas tree decorations across Europe used to be defined by two elements: the use of edible materials and the use of gold. The earliest descriptions report glitter, tinsel, gilded nuts,



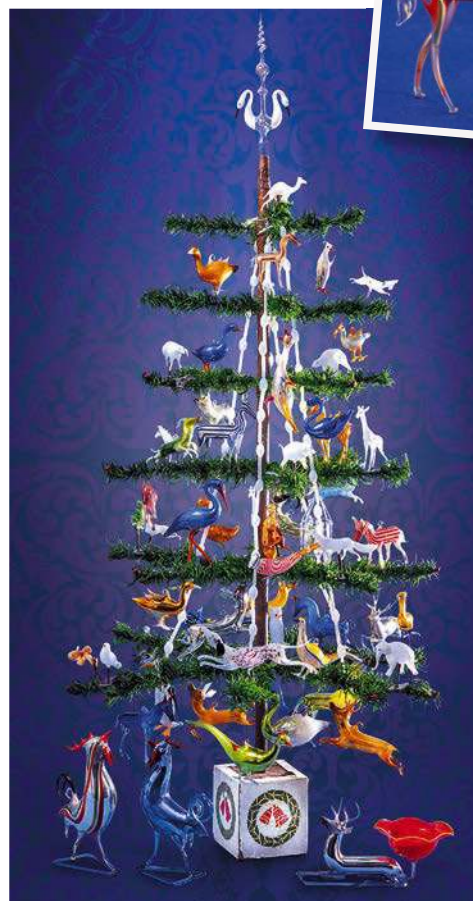
fruit, and even potatoes.

Over time, the golden aspects of tree decoration gained increased prominence in the image of the Christmas tree. In the late 19th century, the festive character of the metallic glow resulted in the permanent use of sparkling decorations.

Up to that point, however, the edible, perishable Christmas decorations were centre stage. Pastries, candies, red apples, and nuts were the main decorations.

In courtly circles, people tried to outdo each other with sumptuously decorated Christmas trees. Napoléon's 23-year-old brother Jérôme Bonaparte hung letters of bestowal for estates for his supporters on the Christmas tree at his first Christmas celebration as the king of Westphalia in 1807. Queen Victoria loaded a 13-meter-high tree with a wealth of gifts valued at around £10,000 pounds after marrying German Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg in 1840. A few years later, an English lord erected an even taller tree with toys and valuable decorations that is said to have been 22 metres tall.

The blue Christmas trees in the special exhibition with their minimal glass decorations are also good for a discussion. The motto for every Christmas tree should always be: decorate it however you like.





Celebrating 50 shows

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www.dollshousefestival.com

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2019

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SATURDAY 9th February

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Visiting a show is still special for so many



Sandra identifies four different groups of show visitors on a trip to Miniatura at the NEC in Birmingham, and immediately knows which one she falls into

BY SANDRA HARDING

I have been going to this lovely show for over 20 years, and it was heartening to see an impressive queue waiting for the off.

This time, whilst talking to visitors, it struck me that they fall into four main groups. Group 1 arrive and their first words are “it’s smaller than it used to be” — I will come back to them later. Group 2 arrive with a shopping list clutched in their hand, and they know just where they are headed and what they want.

Group 3 (that includes me) arrive knowing what to expect, with nothing they “need”, but they will know a “want” when they see it — I’ll come back to that later too. Group 4 are the newbies, or very first-timers at a big show. They are recognisable because their first words are “I’m here at last”, heard by organiser Muriel Hopwood, and they have that giveaway look of wonder in their eyes.

With almost a hundred and fifty quality exhibitors to choose from, the newbies and regulars alike were spoilt for choice. That number does not include the thirteen workshops over the weekend including wiring, flowers, dolls and more, and demonstrations at many of the stands, with exhibitors showing us “how to do stuff”.

Pat Cutforth’s popular charity stand was there, raising thousands of pounds for Cancer Research UK, and there were also stands from the Miniature Needlework Society and the Warley

Model Railway exhibition as well as an amazing display by The Rugby Miniaturists.

Then there was ‘The Armistice House’, made by Lt Col (Retd) Paul Woolnough, on display. I wanted to mention it as he is raising funds for the Mercian Regiment benevolent charity by showing it prior to being raffled. I hope to do a separate feature later.

Going back to my earlier comment with Group 1, in the “old days” I well remember my husband being almost run over in the opening rush of eager visitors, when the great halls were filled with exhibitors. But, in this life, nothing stays the same. We have to accept that there are many new ways of shopping, although there is still nothing quite like looking directly at, and handling, the exquisite pieces for sale at a doll’s house show.

My membership of Group 3, mentioned above, meant that I did find many things I wanted but managed to resist, except that is for a doll from Jane Laverick, a 3D printed clock from Dee



Ella-Rose Miniatures

Daw (I must find out more about this phenomenon), and a book from Criss Cross Miniatures. This was definitely a “must have” and a “want”, as we had been aware of this from its concept, and it’s a beauty based on a real book by David’s mum (see issue 313 for more details).

My husband is also a fully paid up member of the “want” group now, as he wanted a delightful silver aeroplane by Art Forge (maybe because he is a pilot) and a toolbox by Severn Models. This is some kind of man thing, as he has at least 10 real ones in his shed and he still spends ages looking at them in B&Q.

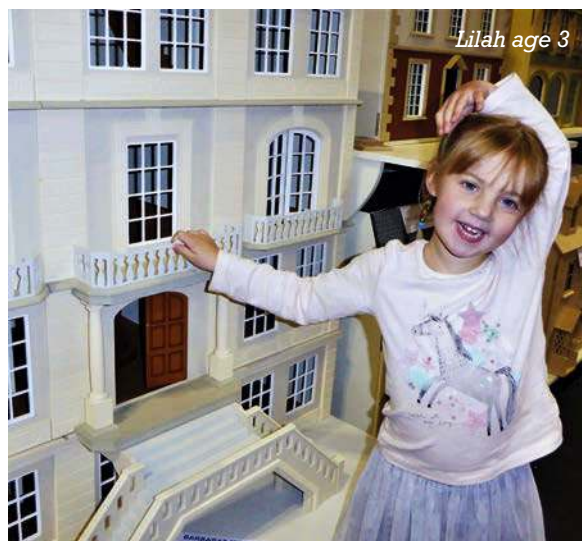
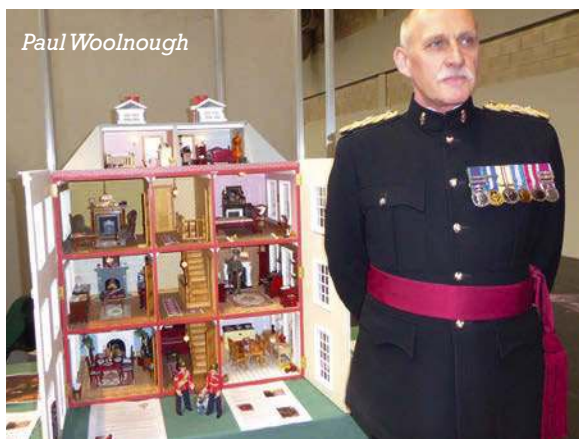
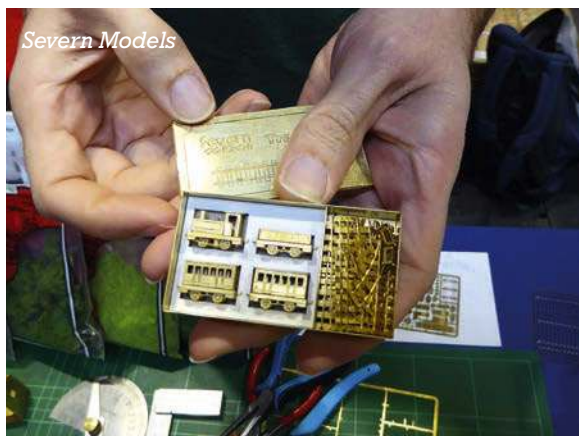
This show is a real treat for visitors and is still amongst the biggest and the best. We all really should keep attending these shows, whichever group we may belong to. We must keep them going for the benefit of the newbies, the younger generation, and the children who may otherwise never get the chance of visiting such an event, and that would be sad.



Criss Cross Miniatures



Julie Campbell



● The next show at Spring Miniatura is on March 30 and 31, 2019, at the NEC in Birmingham. Further details can be found at www.miniatura.co.uk or 0121 783 9922. See you there.

Kathleen completes a childhood kitchen

Kathleen remembers cleaning the grout with a toothbrush, but that didn't put her off wanting to recreate a similar room, or wanting to share the finished room box

BY KATHLEEN HOLMES

For a long time, I wanted a kitchen room box to display in my real kitchen, but never had the space until recently. We moved to a larger home almost two years ago and finally I had the room for one.

As a true miniaturist will often do, I started collecting pieces for my kitchen room box well in advance of the actual construction. My husband built the room box for me, but it stayed stored in a closet for a couple of years before I actually got around to finishing it. When we finally settled into our new home and everything in my doll's house was back in place, I was ready to begin working on the kitchen room box.

Now many of you know how it goes when you have a project in mind, you



start collecting a miniature piece here and there and then another and – you get the picture. But like most creative endeavours, the project takes on a life of its own and your ideas evolve over time. So, some of the things you

purchased may not work. Or maybe, the room box could have been bigger! Anyway, I agonised over the design of the kitchen and what would work and what wouldn't for quite awhile before it all came together.

I had two main pieces, a 50s era lighted refrigerator and stove, both made by Karen Fuller of K & J Miniature Metal Works that I wanted to showcase in my kitchen room box. I had a mishmash of different kitchen cabinets that I had picked up at various times plus some cabinet kits.



I knew I wanted a wooden floor even though linoleum might have been more prevalent in the 50s. And I wanted a tile counter like the counters I grew up with. I still remember how I had to clean the grout with a toothbrush! I wasn't sure what I was going to do for the kitchen sink until a Facebook friend had a Karen Fuller sink for sale. I thought that would be perfect, however it complicated how I was going to put everything together.

Originally I had wanted both a door and a window in the room box, but in the end there wasn't room for the door. It took me awhile to figure out how to pull together the different kitchen cabinets, but finally I ended up making some from kits, bashing others and painting them all the same colour with matching knobs.

The kitchen cabinets are white with green knobs. The Brodnax wallpaper is a soft green flowered print with touches of blue, white and brown. I added a Brodnax wallpaper border that had similar colours; a brown background and green leaves on a vine with blue grapes.

The 'tile' counter is off-white with a matching tile backsplash that is



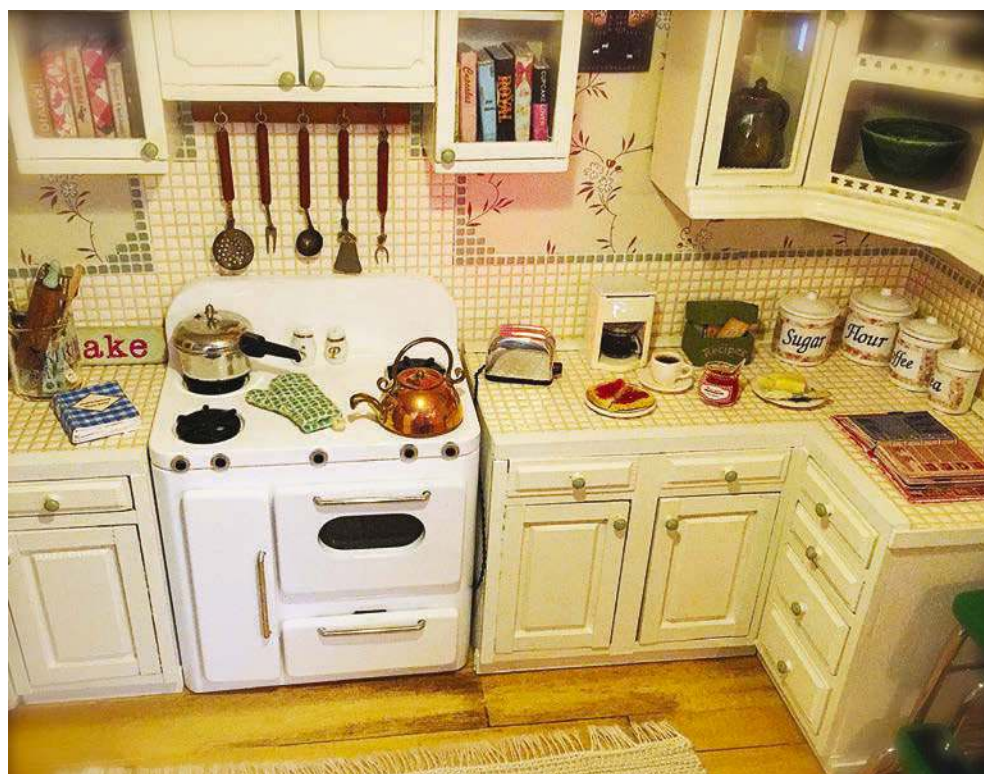
Above: All cleaned up after dinner.

Left: An apple pie is in the works!

Above right: A full view of Kathleen's twelfth scale kitchen.

Right: Another delicious miniature dinner in progress.





Top: Just a few more dishes to clean up then it's time to relax.

Above: A peek inside the fridge.



bordered with green tile. Of course the room box is electrified, especially since both the stove and the refrigerator are lighted. The overhead light is a Lighting Bug fixture and the light by the sink is one that my husband made.

When the kitchen was done, I had fun filling the pantry, refrigerator and cabinets. Many of the cabinets have 'glass' doors so you can see cook-books, teapots, dishes and bowls inside. The pantry also has a glass door and is filled with canned goods, cereals, flour, sugar, etc. I keep the refrigerator door partially ajar so you can see everything in it; the milk, cheese, eggs, wine, produce and the left-overs in the plastic Tupperware containers that were a gift from Linda Martin Day. I had to get creative filling her containers with all kinds of 'leftovers'!

I painted the island work table to coordinate with the colours in the kitchen. The scene on the table changes from time to time as the mini cook tries out different recipes. You might see a pie being made or dinner being prepared. I even made the mini cook a chair from a Chrysnbon kit in case she needs to sit down while preparing food.

On the stove is a copper tea kettle by J. Getzan and a double boiler by José María Bolio. There might be



a Kim Marshall Saulter pie cooking in the oven. Around the kitchen you will see Jane Graber pottery, aprons hanging, baskets and a rope of garlic. Canisters, a recipe box, a page-turning cookbook and a utensil holder are all made by Lori Turner-Dolinsek. I made the clock over the sink by printing a clock face, gluing it on a button and adding hands from watch parts. Dirty

dishes are in the kitchen sink as well as just washed dishes in the drainer. And, as with my doll's house, I will change scenes or add things to coordinate with the seasons or holidays.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to once again share my love of miniatures with you. I hope my new room box gives you some inspiration for your own projects.



SMALL

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WHERE READERS SHARE PROJECTS THEY'RE PROUD OF, HOWEVER SMALL. EMAIL YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO RICHARD@ASHDOWN.CO.UK



Friends take a spin on a new laundrette

BY SANDRA HARDING

I just love Shernelle Scott's delightful ladies as they remind me so much of a granny I once had. She had grey hair and a very kindly disposition, always giving me 2/6d for my birthday and Christmas, which was a lot in those days.

I am also reminded of the kind of lady who loves to help, and usually just pops up where there is an extra pair of hands needed, at a church fete, flower arranging, getting a neighbour a bit of shopping, or just to make tea for the knitting group.

Here, they are obviously very busy on their newest project after pooling their finances to start a laundrette. Beryl is the lady in the floppy hat,

which she insists on wearing all the time as she says it gives her confidence. She is still not too sure about the business, however, and really can't take the pressure. She says it's because she is older than the others and, anyway, she prefers to go shopping.



Sal is the lady in the burgundy turban, which she never takes off because her mother wore one just like it all during the First World War, and if it was good enough for her... She has a kind heart, just like her mum, and has popped out to get chips and sausage for lunch. Luckily there is enough to go round as Mavis has just come in to offer a little help at a busy time.

Mavis is not too sure whether the laundrette is a good idea, because of their age, and keeps trying (unsuccessfully) to reorganise them. She comes in most days, even though she doesn't get paid, as she misses her friends so much, and now only sees them really at the laundrette. She is



rather pleased as they have made her a matching apron to wear when she visits, so she does not feel left out. Beryl Cooke would have been proud!

To be honest, the ladies probably won't keep up the laundry for long as Sal's hands are turning arthritic, and the iron is too heavy. Not only that, Beryl's cats are missing her and starting to make a mess of her furniture, and ignoring her when she gets home.

Knowing the ladies they will have something else up their sleeve, or more mischief to get into, if this fails so we won't have seen the last of them I am happy to say.

A passion for shops

BY SANDRA HARDING



Jenny Dunphy, from Kent, discovered what we all know, that miniatures are addictive and admits she found it "impossible to stop after I had finished my first house". So she turned to shops with a passion.

Jenny bought her first ready made shop box over 10 years ago and was so pleased with it she bought another. She said: "They were originally my sweet shop and pet shop, but as the shops became too small for what I wanted to put in them they quickly had a change of use."

They are now a Cake Shop and Toy Shop. Jenny said: "One of my cousins made cakes and she gave me a few, which gave me the idea. I only made the cake boxes which are in the counter."

"I did the Toy Shop last year, and I really enjoyed doing that because most of the boxes in there are made by me. I have acquired a lot of boxes from Pinterest and scaled them to the right size. The Toy Shop has a few doll's houses in it, and some of them are made from paper. I also have a few doll's houses kit boxes in the corner and furniture boxes in the glass counter."

For the Fruit & Veg shop Jenny made a false wall with windows at the back to give the effect of an inside market stall.

Jenny told us she has only has one wish: "That I had more room to have more shops." We know the feeling Jenny.



Winter bedding that'll brighten a bedroom

If your bedroom scene is looking a little jaded, there's no better way to brighten it up than by adding some new bedding in seasonal patterns

BY DEBBIE BOOTH

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone! I'd like to share a very simple way to sew up some new doll's house bedding for the winter months. Making new bedding always spruces up a bedroom and makes it prettier. This same technique can be used with regular fabric as well so it could be used all year round.

My technique is simple, even for a beginner on a sewing machine. If you can't sew, you could even use the new fabric glues that are out there and follow along for a simple project.

If you will be using the glue instead

of sewing for this project then follow my directions and glue the pieces together with tiny lines of glue.

We will be making an eiderdown, sheet, mattress, pillows, and a few fun little accent pillows.

Eiderdown for the bed

Step 1. Cut 2 pieces of the primary fabric 7" x 7".

Step 2. With right sides together pin the two pieces on all sides leaving a section of the fourth side open. I try to leave a 3"- 4" section open. Using 1/4" (very small) seam allowance, sew around the sides.

Step 3. Remove pins and trim threads. (If using fabric glue, then glue right next to the edge of the fabric, joining the pieces together, and let dry according to manufacturer's directions.)

Step 4. Turn the eiderdown right sides out. Fold the open area inward 1/4", and smooth first. Pin this section closed.

Step 5. Sew around the entire eiderdown next to the edge. This is referred to as top stitching and gives a clean finished look. The eiderdown is now done.

Step 6. Press the wrinkles out of it. Take the white pom pom fringe and carefully pin on to the edge of the



eiderdown. Hold in place with hand while beginning to sew the first stitch. Carefully sew the pom pom fringe on edge of eiderdown. Once it is sewn around all four sides, trim away excess pom pom fringe. Set eiderdown aside.

This technique is simple and will be used for making the sheet, the throw, the pillows (with stuffing). If the bed needs a bigger or smaller eiderdown, make the squares that are being cut out larger or smaller by 1/2".

TOPTIP

... If you don't have a sewing machine or prefer not to hand sew anything you can also use fabric glue for this project.

You will need

- 2 or 3 different (pretty) Christmas or winter fabrics - 1/2 yard for main eiderdown or duvet and pillows, 8" square of other coordinating fabrics.
- Ruler
- Scissors
- White cotton fabric 1/3 yard
- Sewing machine, or sewing needle and thread.
- Polyester fibrefill for pillows - small amount for 7 or 8 tiny pillows
- 1/4" wide flat cotton lace - 2 yards
- 1/4" wide white cotton pom pom fringe



Bed pillows

The miniature doll's house bed has larger pillows at the back, against the headboard. The smaller more decorative pillows are in the front.

Step 1. For the larger pillows, cut out 2 pieces of white or lighter fabric 2 1/4" x 4 1/2".

Step 2. For one pillow, fold the rectangle in half and pin it on two sides. Sew around the two sides. Then trim any extra threads and remove the pins.

Step 3. Turn the pillow right sides out. Using a straight pin work on the corners so that fabric isn't bunched together and the corner forms a nice point.

Step 4. Sew the second pillow in the same way.

Step 5. Stuff with a very small amount of polyester fibrefill. Fold the open raw edge inward 1/4" and pin opening closed.

Smaller pillows

The next set of pillows are a wee bit smaller than the larger ones at the back. I like the look of layered pillows and feel they can make a plain bedding set look better and more put together.

Step 1. Cut out 2 pieces of fabric (I



Bed sheets

Step 1. Cut 2 pieces of white cotton fabric to 6 1/2" x 6 1/2".

Step 2. Following the exact same process as the eiderdown, pin the two pieces together with right sides together. Sew around all the sides leaving a 3" - 4" section open.

Step 3. Remove pins and trim threads. Turn the sheet right sides out. Fold in the open section 1/4" and using several pins, pin closed.

Step 4. Sew around the edge of the sheet, close to the edge, sewing the opening closed as well. Trim the extra threads and remove pins. Press sheet.



‘ Making new bedding always spruces up a bedroom and makes it prettier. ’

used the same fabric as the eiderdown for these pillows) 1 7/8" x 3 3/4".

Step 2. Fold the fabric in half and follow the same directions as the previous larger pillows.

The front pillows should always be made with the prettiest fabric as they are the first thing you see when looking at the little bed.

Mini mattress

A mattress is very easy to make. When measuring beds to make an additional mattress (I like the old fashioned feather ticking look) I measure the width and length of the bed.

For example, if the bed is 4" across and 6" long, I know I will use 1/4" sewing seams on every side. That means I

need to cut the fabric for the mattress 1/4" + 1/4" + 4" wide, and 1/4" + 1/4" + 6" long. Basically add 1/2" to the width and to the length.

Step 1. Cut 2 pieces of fabric for mattress 4 1/2" x 6 1/2" or other measurement that will suit the bed.

Step 2. With right sides together, pin the fabric together leaving a 4" opening to insert wadding or stuffing. Sew around the four edges leaving the 4" open.

Step 3. Turn the mattress right sides out. Stuff with an even amount of stuffing or thin wadding.

Step 4. Turn the raw edges of the



opening inward 1/4". Pin and hand sew closed.

Pom pom blanket

The little pom pom throw is made exactly like the bed eiderdown was. But it is made using a lighter coordinating fabric.

Step 1. Cut 2 squares of fabric 5" x 5".

Step 2. With right sides together pin the two pieces together. Sew around the eiderdown, leaving a 3" section open. See photo.

Step 3. Remove pins and trim extra threads. Turn the throw right sides out.

Step 4. Work on corners to form a nice point. Turn in the open section, folding the edges in 1/4".

Step 5. Pin opening closed. Sew around the edge of the eiderdown on all four sides, sewing the open section closed.

Step 6. Take the pom pom fringe and pin to the edge of the throw, and sew the fringe on all four sides.

Step 7. Trim any excess fringe. When all the bedding is on the bed, the last step is to drape the throw onto the bed.

Step 8. Spray the eiderdown until very damp, fold it and lay it on the edge of the bed to look like it was draped onto the bed. Pin in place if needed until dry.

Add a woodland headboard to your bed. Debbie shows how on P65.

Dolly's Daydreams Events

SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER - 15TH YEAR!

The Assembly Rooms, High Street
DEDHAM CO7 6DE (off A12)

SUNDAY 2 DECEMBER - 20TH YEAR!

Holiday Inn Basildon, Festival Leisure Park
BASILDON SS14 3DG (off A127)

SUNDAY 9 DECEMBER - 21ST YEAR!

Portsmouth Marriott Hotel, Southampton Road
PORTSMOUTH PO6 4SH (M27/Junction 12)

SUNDAY 16 DECEMBER - 16TH YEAR!

Felixstowe Leisure Centre, The Seafront
FELIXSTOWE IP11 2AE (next to Pier)

SUNDAY 20 JANUARY - 29TH YEAR!

Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock
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The Rivenhall Hotel, Rivenhall End
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A miniature world full of loving animals

Kristen and Martha Castenschiold define themselves as “a mother/daughter team who delight in spending time together, and just having a blast making a big old mess!”

BY PAM NORTH

Animals have long been an important element in their lives, so it probably was inevitable that a critter concept would evolve into their creative efforts. They call their latest collaborative project The Heart Felt Pet Shop, and it's an impressive project. As Kristin became more serious in doing her dog miniatures, she began to realise that in order to do shows she would need to have more than just a case full of furred dogs to catch people's interest, so the pet shop concept was born.

Martha purchased an old general store building from the local doll's house shop, and she began transforming it into a pet shop. Together, they made all kinds of supplies for dogs, including bags of food, bowls, and toys to stock the store. Next came the creation of all kinds of other little pets to sell in the store, including reptiles, rodents, parrots, and fish in tanks. The pet shop is intended to draw people to the table to experience a whole array of miniature animals.

Martha did some of the sculpting with Kristin, but found what she really enjoyed was creating the tanks and terrariums, so she began scouring the internet looking at various fish and reptile tanks for inspiration.

One of the most valuable tools used in creating the pet shop was the 3D printer. “I can't imagine designing and assembling the hoods without the ability to print them,” Martha explained.



“Once I get the measurements correct, and an .stl file created for a specific size tank, it's very easy to keep printing them out!”

Kristin's husband, Bruce, is a technology wizard, and one Christmas he purchased a 3D printer for her. He taught her basic CAD and how to use programs like SketchUp, a 3D modeling computer programme featuring a wide range of drawing applications for creating in 3D.

She uses the printer for much of the work with the pet shop miniatures, creating food bowls, water bottles, rodents, lizards, and all the hoods and tops for the cages. “It has been fun, and sometimes frustrating, learning the printer, but the potential is endless,” Kristen said. “Once the animals are printed, each one is gessoed for painting.”

The rodents are hand-flocked to give them their fluffy, furry appearance, and the lizards are painted with acrylic paint, using tiny brushes! The pet shop is a way to showcase a large variety of animals for the min-



iature world. Some of the pieces are purchased items, such as the tanks, and fake plants from fish tank décor. The little tank creatures are either 3D printed or sculpted from polymer clay, and then painted by hand.

Everything is assembled in the tanks. “It's a lot of experimenting,” Kristen remarked. “Some things work, and some things don't, and unfortunately, one learns the hard way. Nothing is more frustrating than finishing a tank and accidentally getting Super Glue on the front, or perhaps the resin doesn't set right.

“The joy is when the tanks finally are assembled and the little hoods are switched on for the first time. They look absolutely magical all lit up! We love the fact you can take a real-life thing like a terrarium and create it in miniature scale. It takes up no space, and



there's no feeding and no watering. There's just joy in admiring it!"

Scale is sometimes a tough one. They have had difficulty finding boxes in the correct scale to use as tanks, and although something actually is in scale, it still can appear too big or too small.

There's also the frustration of finding a product they like to use, going back to get more, and discovering that it's no longer made or has been changed, so they try to stock up when they find something good, but then that takes up space. Most of the items for creating things for the pet shop are kept in bins, and the supplies, as small as they are, tend to take over the house, as they accumulate a lot.

"The real problem is figuring out where we have stored the miniature things the next time we need to use them! No matter how well organised

we are, things always seem to be out of place!"

Below: Exotic birds of all kinds come with their own stands and toys.





“A mini terrarium takes up no space, and there’s no feeding and no watering. There’s just joy in admiring it.”

Martha and Kristin have specific days that they work on one thing: flocking days when they flock rodents, painting days when they paint fish and reptiles, substrate days when they set up tanks, and so on.

They have found that it’s much

easier to work on a group in stages rather than one item at a time.

“The mess we make in the dining room is impressive, so getting a bunch done at once is ideal for cleanup! Since we both have a large variety of craft materials, we take turns making creative messes at each others’ homes.”

Kristen shared their future plans: “There are lots of new animals and new ideas to come. We are constantly working on improving our miniature tanks, and will also be offering more cost efficient items for kids to enjoy, such as miniature turtle bowls and

Clockwise from above left: The hamster cages come with all the accessories; a colourful fish tank with a castle; a colourful fish tank with a castle; a twelfth scale guinea pig; they even have a miniature turtle tank.



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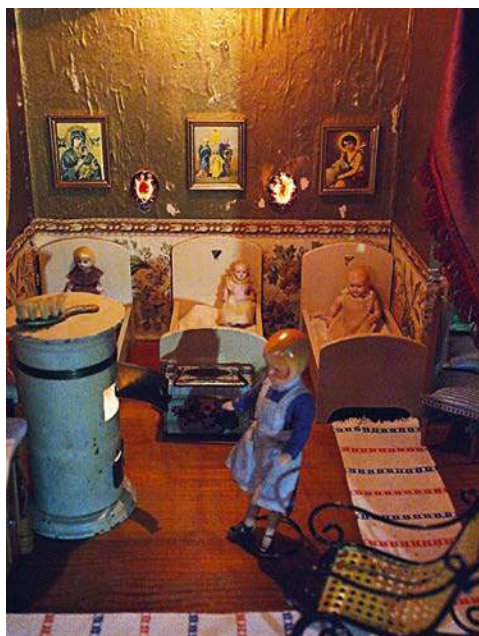
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Cilla helps move seven houses to a new home

Sixty boxes of miniatures had to be sorted and the pieces placed into seven doll's houses being moved to a new museum. Cilla couldn't wait to get started

BY SANDRA HARDING

When I first saw the photographs of a lovely house on Facebook I thought it belonged to Cilla Hallbert, and immediately asked if we could feature it in DHW.

I soon discovered the story is much more complicated and interesting and in fact overlaps into a museum, a maker and a private owner. I bet that's grabbed your attention.

Cilla has been working with miniatures for about 40 years and is certainly no learner when it comes to handling quality miniature items. She was therefore delighted to be part of a team of about 40 people who were tasked with the job of relocating a private toy collection from Sweden's Tido Castle to its new home, Bergrummet, in the heart of Stockholm. Much to my astonishment I discovered that Bergrummet is a series of caves which is a first, and never to be repeated event for me to write about – probably.

There are seven large doll's houses in the collection and Cilla's enviable task was to decorate all the houses and, joy of joys, she was given a free hand, and I am jealous. There was a collection of fragile miniatures housed in about 60 boxes, all dating from about 1900, mostly handmade and all with a lovely patina.

Cilla had to sort and choose what went where and began by putting all the different types together: sofas, tables, dolls, cutlery, porcelain, carpets,

animals — too many things to mention them all.

Gradually, Cilla began each room, matching and designing them as she went. There were lamps which Cilla had to rewire and mend wherever needed, and which were placed in strategic points in the house. I did wonder where and how she managed this mammoth task but, I am told, the caves are enormous and were once used by the military.

To get back to Cilla who is, of course, well known in the doll's house world for her fabulous chandeliers, lighting and other miniatures. She tells me that she is re-opening a miniatures shop in the centre of Stockholm where she also plans to hold workshops. It seems an obvious thing to do, as she claims that making minis is her day to day work and has been for many years.

If you want the pleasure of owning a piece of Cilla's delightful creations then she will be at Kensington in May 2019. The shop and business address is Minst.com and is part of a larger shop called "Old Touch". It's an interesting antique shop which has been on the site for 30 years, and from where Cilla buys some of her mini needs.

I have seen the photographs of the museum by the way, and I hope you will be as amazed as I was when I saw them. Luckily, the owners have agreed to an article, so another first for me. A museum in a cave - whoopee!





Suzette's stories insp

Suzette and Maurice Boyer create tales in miniature that will enchant you.
The smell of fresh baked goods will pull you into this small bakery

BY PAM NORTH

Suzette and Maurice Boyer live in a small village in the Netherlands. Under their business name, Tales in Miniature, which aptly describes the focus of their endeavours, they make miniatures based on stories Suzette writes.

Maurice is interested in architecture, and loves creating fantasy scenes, and

Suzette's talents are decorating and writing stories, so their talents mesh perfectly. Suzette works at a health insurance office and also writes books for children;

She explained how their involvement with miniatures began: "Last year I bought a few stuffed toy rats for my grandson to play with, and, of course,

the rats needed a little room to live in, so that room grew into a sort of a 'Rat Mansion'...."

Combining home life and miniature life is easy for them because their children are grown, and both Suzette and Maurice share an interest in the miniature world. They find inspiration in small French villages, and despite no



pired bakery

formal training, they manage to crystallise their ideas, creating all kinds of alternate worlds while in their kitchen workplace.

Maurice finds that the greatest difficulty involved with working in miniature is that there's always something they cannot make yet themselves.

The Boyer's bakery project is based on a small Christmas tale Suzette wrote a few years ago, which they thought would be nice to turn into a visualisation. They display the miniature bakery with a copy of the story, and invite viewers of the bakery to

read the story to learn the context of the bakery's theme.

The story involves a bit of Christmas magic surrounding a little stone figurine in a Christmas scene under a decorated tree in a real bakery.

Far left: The bakery address sign.

Above left: A young girl holds a fruitcake in a snow globe.

Above right: As you enter the bakery you are greeted by a beautiful fruit wreath and bells that jingle.

Right: All of the delicious twelfth scale baked good were handmade.





Top: All of the rustic details give you the feeling you are in a very magical place.

Above: Just outside the bakery door is a tray of Christmas sweet treats.

The entire miniature bakery, inside and out, from bottom to roof, was hand-made by Maurice. Suzette created most of the bread, pastry, candy, fruit, plants and flowers, of polymer clay. She also finished most of the interior of the workshop, the outhouse, and the attic, and sewed the mattresses, pillows, clothes, and aprons.

The completed bakery is a trip to another world, complete with all the

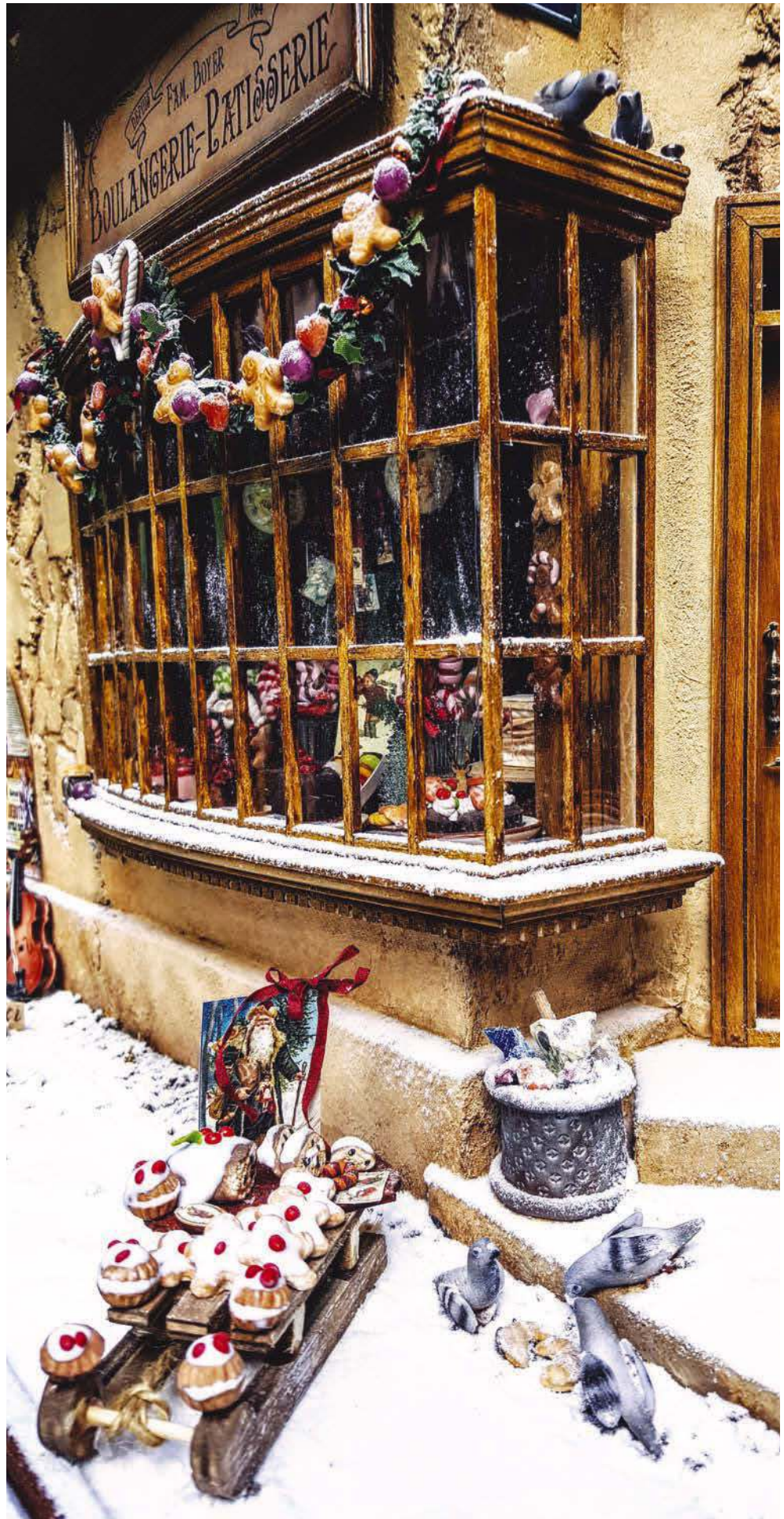


Above: A string of fresh baked pretzels hang as they cool.

Right: Pigeons and fairy folk flock to this wonderful bakery for the best treats.

ambience and perfectly executed details, and lacking nothing but the smell of delicious fresh breads and pastries to further stimulate the appetite.

The basic material of the building is 9mm plywood. In creating the walls and roof, Maurice used a technique they had employed to decorate their garden; it's based on the ideas of the Disney theme parks. The walls are covered with a special plaster that is





Above: As you step up to the counter you will have your pick of fresh baked goods.

normally used to repair walls.

For the roof tiles, Maurice used the same plaster, but painted them in another colour. The floors, stairs, and ceiling are made of wooden paint-stirring sticks. Painting the walls to achieve the effect they desired was the most difficult part, but their patient and determined efforts realised exactly what they had envisioned.

They did include the work of a few

other artists: the bakery lights were purchased from Ray Storey at a doll's house fair; some accessories, such as keys, doorhandles, and cupboard displays are from Artofmini. As it was their first project, it's rather special to them, and they have decided not to part with it. However, they say, if anybody is interested and willing to pay a good price, they will be happy to build another one!

The Boyers plan to visually construct other tales Suzette has written over time, and next will be a set of stories that are situated in an old inn, so the project will be an inn. "I'd like to run workshops," Suzette remarked. "I'd love to be able to visualize my stories for everyone to enjoy. We would like the readers to know that we are over the moon for this opportunity to show our work in this magazine!"

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A Teeny Weeny World that keeps on growing

Sugarcraft and creating full-size wedding dresses provide the background for a shop who are very keen on encouraging their customers, whatever their age

BY SANDRA HARDING

I just love the name of this shop in Hythe, Kent, belonging to Hazel and Geoff but that was not the first thing that attracted me to this business.

Rather it was a simple comment on Facebook by one of their customers, David R. I have to précis what was said but the gist was a 10-year-old girl with a stamped loyalty gift card presenting it to the shop owner Hazel, who gave her a £10 "freebie" to spend, and helped her choose her presents. Needless to say, the little one clutched them tightly all the way home. I am always delighted when the younger generations are encouraged in this way.

The business was started in June 2012 when the couple took a table in the Malthouse Arcade selling their surplus bits and pieces, including hand-made items by Jenny, Hazel's mum. They both had doll's houses and, like all of us dollshousers, they had far too much just waiting for inspiration.

It wasn't long before they realised

that the miniature business was a good one to get into and they started to source supplies. After visiting boot fairs, auctions, eBay and others, they became hooked on miniatures and took on a second table. During his research Geoff found Streets Ahead, arranged a trade account and placed their first order. That's when it became serious.

Sales grew, however, and pretty soon Hazel began making their own miniatures, often responding to customers' requests. Runner beans were the first, which continues to be a best seller worldwide. Well, I would never have guessed!

Since then Jenny has made leather sofas, chairs and footstools, all hand stitched and assembled which is amazing for a lady of 80-years-old (don't tell her I told you). These also sell worldwide on Teeny Weeny World's Etsy site, with more of their own products.

They are continually adding to their range and recent additions include a

fabric chaise longue, many different garden flowers and a metal electric fire, made by Hazel. This talented lady also creates wooden pieces, including sheds, outside lavatories, coal bunkers finished in brick effect, and many other small wooden items, including her latest, a 1950's television (oh dear, I remember them well!).

There are also small, knitted teddy bears and felted cats and dogs. Add to these many wicker pieces, picnic baskets, shopping baskets and trolleys and I am not in the least surprised that customers come from far and wide to buy their lovely wares, and that many have become friends. They have also grown from two tables to two bays in the Arcade, and that's what I call progress.

Hazel has an interesting craft background as she is a dab hand at sugarcraft, and mum Jenny makes (full size) wedding dresses. She now also makes dresses for the Heidi Ott range of dolls in twelfth scale. Geoff tells me





he sticks to admin and promotion as he is only good at driving boats (that's another story).

The shop is only open on Fridays and Saturdays and the couple take advantage of their days off by travelling in their motorcaravan. Mind you, Hazel always takes her craft kit and keeps busy with her miniatures.

To come back to where I started, the couple operate a loyalty scheme based on a card which is stamped when £10 is spent. It has proved very popular and a really good idea for encouraging our lovely hobby.

● If you're keen to visit the shop, the address is: The Malthouse Arcade, Malthouse Hill, Hythe, Kent, CT21 5BW. Tell them Sandra sent you.
Tel: 07469612928
Web: www.teenyweenyworld.co.uk or www.themaltshousehythe.com

Quick & easy project

BY SANDRA HARDING



You will need

- Pack of suction cups
- Packet of wax crayons
- Red beads or small red berries or similar (mine were from a pack of potpourri)
- Gold beads
- Needle and white/cream embroidery thread
- Coriander seeds (to imitate walnuts)
- Glue, tweezers
- Tiny hand drill



Candle table decorations

Cut off the little base if you want the display flat.

Cut off the crayon (candle) to the height you want.

With a tiny drill very gently drill a hole in the centre of the candle, large enough to thread a needle and thread through (a heated up needle might work as well).

Gently thread the needle and thread through the hole to form the wick. Leave the wick to the length wanted; cut it off at the bottom and add glue.

Glue the candle to the centre of the suction pad. Let it dry.

Glue greenery around the candle, leaving a pretty overlap at the edges. Let it dry slightly and then glue on more greenery, beads, berries, coriander seeds, or anything that looks right.

From an idea by Marianne Colijn who used erasers in place of wax candles.

Favourite fairy tale is reflected in Ice Tower

Shiny icicles, glitter and tinsel are just a few of the sparkling ingredients that Christine has used in the creation of her scene from *The Snow Queen*

BY SANDRA HARDING

This seven foot icy beauty belongs to the very talented Christine Kneen and I think it may be the tallest miniature creation that we have ever seen in DHW.

Christine, whom we have featured before in DHW, built it using boxes from Dolls House Concept, some of which were altered to her specifications, including a specially made base. The outside of each box was covered in plaster to which she added plastic icicles and some paper ones which were strengthened with many coats of PVA.

It was then painted and coated in glitter glue and a few outside decorations were added, including a balcony and glass door knobs on top of the roof. The lighting is all by Polar Bear colour changing tea lights.

Inside, the bottom hall is decorated with mirror tiles and the doors are covered in waste material used for holding diamantes, sold as cake ribbon. There are balconies inside, and a broken necklace "door curtain" over the door, shiny

paper on the floor, and lots of tinsel everywhere. Many of the items are Christmas decorations, including the chandeliers.

The story told here is the original 1844 version of *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen, Christine tells me. Pictured is the polar bear who was once a prince, who was in love with the snow queen before she became evil and turned him into a polar bear who stays there to guard her (are you keeping up children?)

The furniture on the second floor was adapted from old pieces and the table is a glass pin dish turned upside down with mirror tiles added. The walls are glitter paper and Christmas tree snowflakes. The third floor has walls covered in more shiny paper with paper die cuts, sequin curtain fabric on the wall, while the fireplace at the back has blue frozen flames.

The fourth floor is covered in blue shiny paper and the mirrors are Christmas decorations. The queen and the prince (as they were before she became evil) are both made by

Elaine Fisher, and the lovely bed was made by William Graham.

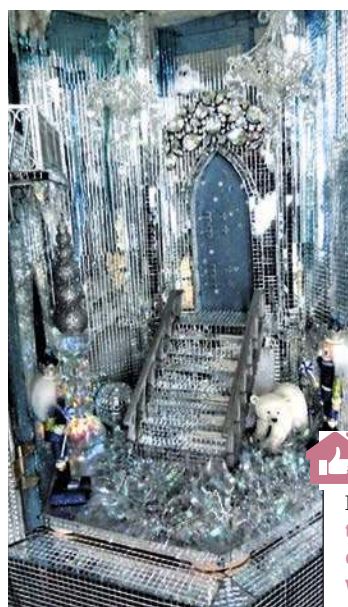
On the fifth floor there is sequined fabric on the back wall and glitter paper on the floor. In here is the evil version of the snow queen who was made by William Graham, and Kai, (made by Elaine Fisher) the boy who has fallen under the queen's spell. He can only be saved if he can piece together the broken mirror, but he has not yet realised that a tiny shard of the mirror went into his eye.

The mirror in question is on a stand, made from a

plate stand, and a Christmas snowflake is stuck to the surface. The shards he's trying to put together are in a glass bowl. In the sixth floor top room is Gerda, Kai's true love who's trying to find him and remembering a rose that passed between them before he disappeared.

The story ends with Kai remembering the rose and a tear coming to his eye, which contains the missing shard of mirror. Kai repairs the mirror and the spell is broken. Kai is reunited with Gerda, the snow queen's icy heart melts and she is reunited with her handsome prince and they all live happily ever after.

I admire the way Christine has made this story come to life, all created so well in just one building – very clever. It shows beautifully the struggle between good and evil in a story that was a favourite of Christine's when she was a child.



LITTLE LINKS:

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Melting forks perfect for making winter icicles

Auralea experiments with making icicles for her Santa house that we featured last issue and finds a fork is just the thing, Here she shows you how

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

Last year I was trying to come up with a way to make miniature icicles. I found a website that showed a few step by step ideas using hot glue and cellophane/Plexi-glas. They only made a quick mention of plastic forks but they had no directions on how to do it. So I decided to try and figure it out, and I think I did!

I first tried to melt the fork tips over a candle but, as I predicted, it left them black with wick soot. I didn't have a lighter on hand so I sat there and kept saying: "Clean fire, clean fire. How do I find clean fire?" Duh, electric stove top!

Step 1. Get your stove warmed up. Mine was set on a low temperature. You don't need it red hot because you want to do this at a slow pace so you can get a feel for your fork and stove top relationship. After all, a slow courting is always nice.

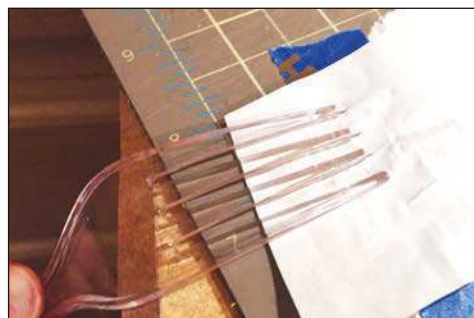
Step 2. Tape a piece of wax paper or freezer paper to the edge of a cutting board, waxy side up. Have another small piece of wax paper handy.

You will need

- Clear plastic forks
- Electric stove heat
- Wax paper
- Wire cutters
- Tacky Glue or white glue
- Gloss varnish



Step 3. Hold your fork over the heat about 1/2" - 1" away from the hot plate for about 30 seconds. Focus on just one side for now.



Step 4. When you think it is warm enough, put the warmed-up side of the fork facing down on the board and rub



it with a piece of wax paper (with the waxy side on the fork).

Step 5. Then warm the other side of the fork tips and repeat the above method.



Step 6. Once you are happy with the shape, lay your fork with the side you just warmed up, facing up. Run the tip of a knitting needle across the tips to make very subtle indents.

I say knitting needle because it has a rounded tip. If you look closely at icicles they have a slight indent as each layer of ice is formed from dripping. It is a soft line not a harsh cut. Honestly you could skip this step if you just want some quick icicles.



Step 8. Consider that your first fork will only be for experimentation with the heat and getting used to the amount of time you hold your fork and the amount of pressure you use with your knitting needle.



Step 9. Here is a photo of what may happen if it is pressed too hard with the wax paper when the fork is too hot.

Step 10. You might have to keep warming the same fork over and over and keep rubbing it to get it just right. I think I heated/rubbed one side of mine about three or four times each for both sides.



Step 11. Snip the tips of the fork with a pair of wire cutters at different lengths.



Step 12. Dip the cut end into Tacky

Glue or white glue and let it dry for half a minute then press up onto the surface you want them to hang from. Check in to be sure they are straight and don't fall. Tacky Glue slowly moves when upside down. You could use a very tiny dot of hot glue too.

Step 13. Once they are dry, use a little gloss varnish to make a frozen water line from melting on the surface where you think it would show. Mine is on a thatched roof so I would imagine that some of the dripping would be coming from under and inside the thatch as well as on the top. I still need to add a bit more around the base of my overhangs as well.

Have fun adding some magic to your miniature winter wonderland!

TOPTIP

- Have fun experimenting with the heat.
- You can make them longer by cutting the prongs off to the ends first and holding them over the heat with needle nose pliers. Try rolling them as you would roll out polymer clay to a tube while they are still somewhat warm. Be careful!

Lolly's love of minis reflected in Hill Top

Lolly Anderson is a retired lawyer, fundraiser, and writer, but her love for miniatures goes on as you can see from this amazing tribute to her old college she has created

BY LOLLY ANDERSON

Hill Top was the finest neo-classical home in Staunton, Virginia when it was built in 1816. Judge Thompson bought it in 1842, the same year Augusta Female Seminary was established. In 1872, Mary Julia Baldwin and Agnes McClung, co-principals of the seminary, purchased Hill Top.

The school, then college, was later named after Mary Baldwin. Hill Top reigns as the oldest building on the campus of my alma mater, Mary Baldwin University and has been used as a coveted dormitory for students all these years.

When I became fascinated with miniatures and doll's houses (starting in Dallas, reinforced in Chicago through

The Thorne Rooms), I knew I had to build my own.

Hill Top was the obvious choice to copy. The life size Hill Top is 50 feet wide, but since birch plywood comes in 48", the twelfth scale was slightly modified. The height of Hill Top is 26", and its depth 24".

Hill Top echoes the exterior of its life size model with sand in the paint to make it look like stucco, intricate trim made from individually cut moulding, the arch in the recessed door shaped by soaking very thin wood, and the fan light fashioned out of white vinyl-covered paperclips.

The six columns were turned on a lathe by a friend's boyfriend. A carpenter cut the ten openings for the doors

and windows as well as the outside walls. Everything else I cut, painted, nailed, and glued. Taking a couple of courses on doll's house making were invaluable, especially the one on the correct glues to use.

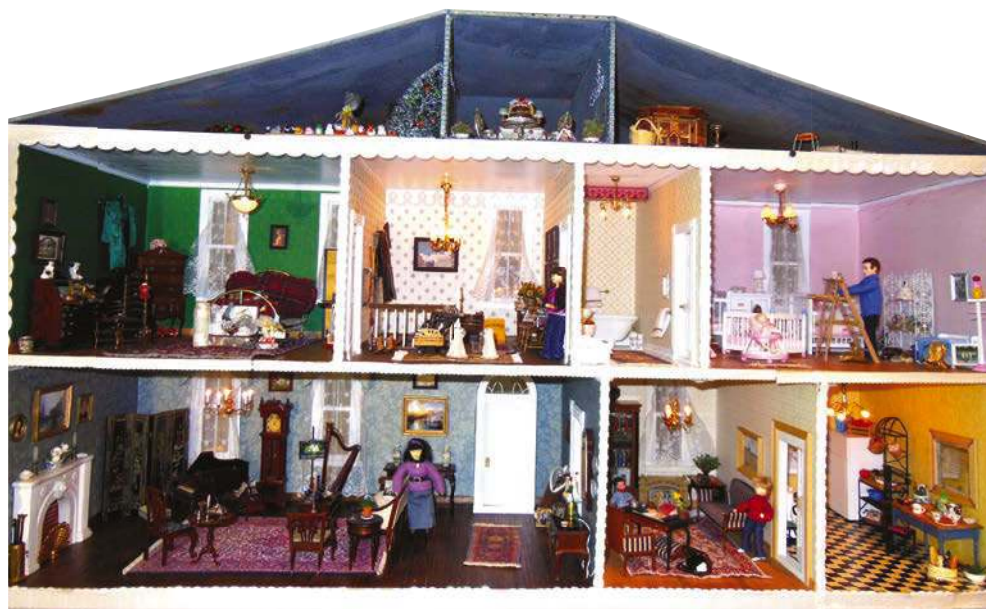
The interior of my Hill Top is completely of my own creation. The living room was inspired by White Marsh Plantation near Williamsburg where I spent many happy times. The brass candlesticks on the mantel are replicas of ones made by Colonial Williamsburg.

The tea table with the silver fluted candlesticks, silver tray, and delicate crystal as well as the other sterling pieces, fine porcelain, harp, and 18th century chairs, tables, and sofa recreate for me this rarified world. I needle-pointed the seat of the armless chair and recovered the seat of the other chair with the same fabric I used for the pillows.

Two of my most cherished pieces are the tiny shells on the mantel that I found years ago on Sanibel Island

Above: The grand columns on the outside of the house were turned on a lathe by a friend, and a carpenter helped Lolly cut out the walls for the doll's house. On the porch is the doll's house to go inside this doll's house.

Left: Lolly dedicated many hours to watching online tutorials and taking a few courses on building a doll's house. This house is filled with many treasured miniature items she has collected over time.





Right and below: A closer look at a few of the desks in the house.





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Above: Lolly had fun with a malfunctioning light in her staging.



beach. The charming magnolias and cachepot, also on the mantel, were made by a dear friend.

Above the living room is the bedroom wallpapered in a beautiful green. A Ralph Lauren men's handkerchief was the inspiration for the bed duvet and

pillows. The chair in front of the desk is a Thorne Room reproduction, but of course I had to recover its seat in red leather from an old purse. The wastebasket is like the ones I decorate in life size; I made this one from a thimble.

The brass typewriter on the desk is one of the first miniatures I ever played with as a child. My mother had given that typewriter, the brass double boiler in the kitchen, and the brass epergne in the office to her grandmother.

When my great grandmother died, the miniatures came back to my mother. I was five-years-old. I was amazed that my mother made 7-Minute Icing out of a real double boiler that looked just like the tiny one I was holding! Those miniatures are my favourites, because of their legacy and because later I became a writer.

In the nursery, the adult male in the house is about to climb the ladder to fix a light in the chandelier. I love all the lights, although electrifying the doll's house was, and is, the most challenging and never-ending aspect of doll's house creation and maintenance.

I used tape and the world's smallest pins for the first electrical system

and nearly lost my mind. The second system is one of covered wires taped to the facing edges of the floors and walls. That darling chandelier in the nursery has been repaired a dozen times. I think I'll leave the ladder with the tiny light bulb box right there.

There are certainly enough things in my doll's house, but I had to add a doll's house of the doll's house! My proudest solution in creating a twelfth scale version of my doll's house was the ridges on the roof: pencil lead from mechanical pencils! I searched all over the house to come up with enough mechanical pencils to empty for their tiny grey lead to complete the roof.

When my three year-old grand-niece comes to visit, the first thing she wants to do is "play doll's house." Yes, her "playing" turns my perfectly ordered miniature world into a tornado-wrecked house, but she won't play with Hill Top if I remove its exquisite furnishings. And she has yet to lose the tiniest, most expensive object. The legacy goes on.

Rococo overmantel was such a grand challenge

Sue, of Sue Cook Miniatures, looks back on some of the commissions she's taken on over the past year and one overmantel which proved particularly challenging

BY SUE DUBOWI

Everything I have made over the years, with one or two exceptions, has been totally originated by hand, without the aid of technology.

For anyone who has ever enjoyed using clay or modelling material, wood, beads and findings, I recommend having a go at making something unique for your doll's house.

For me, it always comes out better than expected and happily suits the doll's house genre of hand made miniatures. There is so much pleasure to be got from making something from scratch with just a very few tools. In my workshop I use mostly hand tools, saws, screwdrivers, that sort of thing, with the detailed work done with dental tools, files, sandpaper and a very old small Dremel drill.

When the original, master or pattern, whatever you like to call it, is made, I can then go on to make moulds, cast the items and paint some of them to suit your wonderful room settings. For that I use an air compressor, one of the few electric tools, to power the very small spray gun. In addition, a variety of paintbrushes, old toothbrushes and rags go to get the finishes on offer.

Grand chimney

A regular customer from Holland was inspired by a Dutch doll's house, Het Grachtenhuis in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. She wanted to make

a similar room from that house but couldn't find an overmantel which was rococo in style. I must admit, the most challenging thing I have made for a while was the overmantel and I was very reluctant to start.

Between spring and summer I managed to fit in making quite a number of new things, like a basilisk for Sean Valentine's Harry Potter themed room, a baroque female head for a greek customer, some columns, a fireplace and finally, the rococo overmantel.

As a one off item, it would have been very expensive, but I knew that there would be some more people who would love to have a grand rococo chimney piece. Even with 30 years experience I was trepidatious modelling the different style, but then thought, why not...have a go... summer is coming...what to do in the holidays? It was a bit too hot to go outside but nice and cool in the workshop! We did go camping a few times as well!

My customer had also sent me a picture of two rooms from a castle in the Netherlands which were the basis for the finished overmantel. I made it to fit my Louis XV french fire surround, PF29. From that decision, cornice and joining pieces in the same style had to be included in my range of items to complete the rococo room setting. It became a much bigger challenge, what with getting the small designs into the cornice so that it can be cut to fit different rooms and still have detail



in the moulding.

As usual I started with some scribbles, the 'back of an envelope' kind. Then worked out proper measurements and finally a drawing of the finished base. I spent quite a while looking at reference pictures, still with no idea of the fine details. When the wooden framework was ready, I drew on the wood to get the flow of the rococo style. It's very free and organic with no symmetry, so using the reference pictures was essential to get the feel.

Tiny parts

The details were then added with tiny wooden mouldings from Wood Supplies and modelling resin. I use Milliput, a two part epoxy material and put the details in with dental tools and scalpel. In order to keep the tiny parts in place, very small dots of superglue did the trick. When the masters were finished they were ready for the moulds. It made sense then to make shorter overmantels.

The first one was very tall so shorter ones would work with most room sizes. Castings were cut to get the new sizes and after giving the plaster a coat of shellac to seal it, the missing details were added and new moulds made. In order to keep some of the original details, I had to jigsaw parts of the overmantel in a certain way, so there was a join in both new fronts. I hoped that I had made them smooth enough to be invisible. Fortunately they came



Reference pictures for the overmantel.



Details drawn and modelled on the front.



The finished pattern with the tools used to make the details.



Removing the mould from the pattern.



The first cast of the overmantel and cornice.



Painting shellac to seal the plaster before adding milliput details.



The 2 new masters from the first overmantel.



Spray painting the three sizes of overmantel.

out of the new mould OK. There is always a period of uncertainty as to how the detail on my patterns will look in the first cast and it's very satisfying when it comes out well.

I was very pleased with the results and was glad I had undertaken the work. After the pieces were spray painted and the pictures in place, I could see the thing as a whole. It looked good but I thought the details of the overmantel would come to life if they were picked out in gold. I always use Humbrol enamel golds and started picking out the details on the tallest one, which took an extremely long time! But when it was finished, like

the cat that got the cream, I felt very pleased with myself. I hope you like it too.

I'm really looking forward to seeing the set used in a doll's house situation. When I am sent photos of your rooms which have used my architectural details, I love to put them in my gallery. The enthusiasm and quality of work you miniaturists can produce is truly wonderful and inspiring.



LITTLE LINKS:

Sue Cook Miniatures
tel: 01822 834092
email: sue@suecookminiatures.com
web: www.suecookminiatures.com



The finished chimney piece set.

Dress an elegant lady in a gorgeous gown

Amelia will make a wonderful addition to any room or scene so just follow along step-by-step to dress your doll in puff-sleeved style

BY DANA

If you have a doll you have been waiting to dress this could be the outfit for her! Follow along and make a gorgeous gown.

You will need

- Doll and doll stand
- Pipe cleaner/cotton
- Black spray paint
- Scissors
- Needle, thread, pins
- Aleene's Original Tacky Glue
- Scalloped lace - 8"
- Pearls
- Nail polish/decor for shoes
- Pink bunka
- 2 yds of straight lace
- Pink check silk material (30" x 4", 6" x 4" and 4 gores and 4" x 1" and 12" x 4"
- Batiste
- White florist tape
- Hair spray for draping
- Styrofoam egg
- Styrofoam cutter or serrated knife



Step 1. I like to use two light coats of white fingernail polish to paint the shoes and then decorate each shoe as desired with lace, thread, pin heads (buttons) etc.

Step 2. Assemble your doll stand, spray it with mat black paint.

Step 3. Tightly twist two pipe cleaners together.

Step 4. Cut in half and glue one end in each shoe. Insert pipe cleaners into torso to check the length. Cut off excess pipe cleaner until desired height is reached. DO NOT GLUE the legs in the torso yet!



Step 5. Cut two rectangles of white cotton for the pantaloons. Turn under the bottom edge, and glue on lace if desired. Now join the side edges, forming a tube, and gather the bottom. Insert the doll leg. Repeat for the other leg. Set these aside.

Petticoat



Step 7. Take a large piece of cotton material and smooth it down over the Styrofoam egg as shown. Pin in the folds to make it lay smoothly over/ around the Styrofoam egg. Cut off the excess.

Step 8. Spray a light coat of hair spray or fabric stiffener. Blow dry and repeat until the underskirt is firm. It might be about 4 layers, depending on what you use.



Step 6. Take a Styrofoam egg (purchased from your local craft store), insert a temporary pin in the top and put on the doll torso. Now cut off the excess Styrofoam from the bottom until the desired height is reached.

I used a Styrofoam cutter, but a serrated knife is also fine. I found a metal stand and pushed my Styrofoam onto this to hold while I was decorating the dress. You can get the same effect, by hammering a nail into a piece of wood.

Further on, after you spray your skirt, you will take the skirt off the egg. This egg is just a platform.

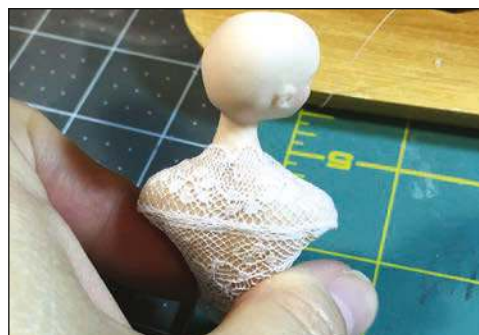
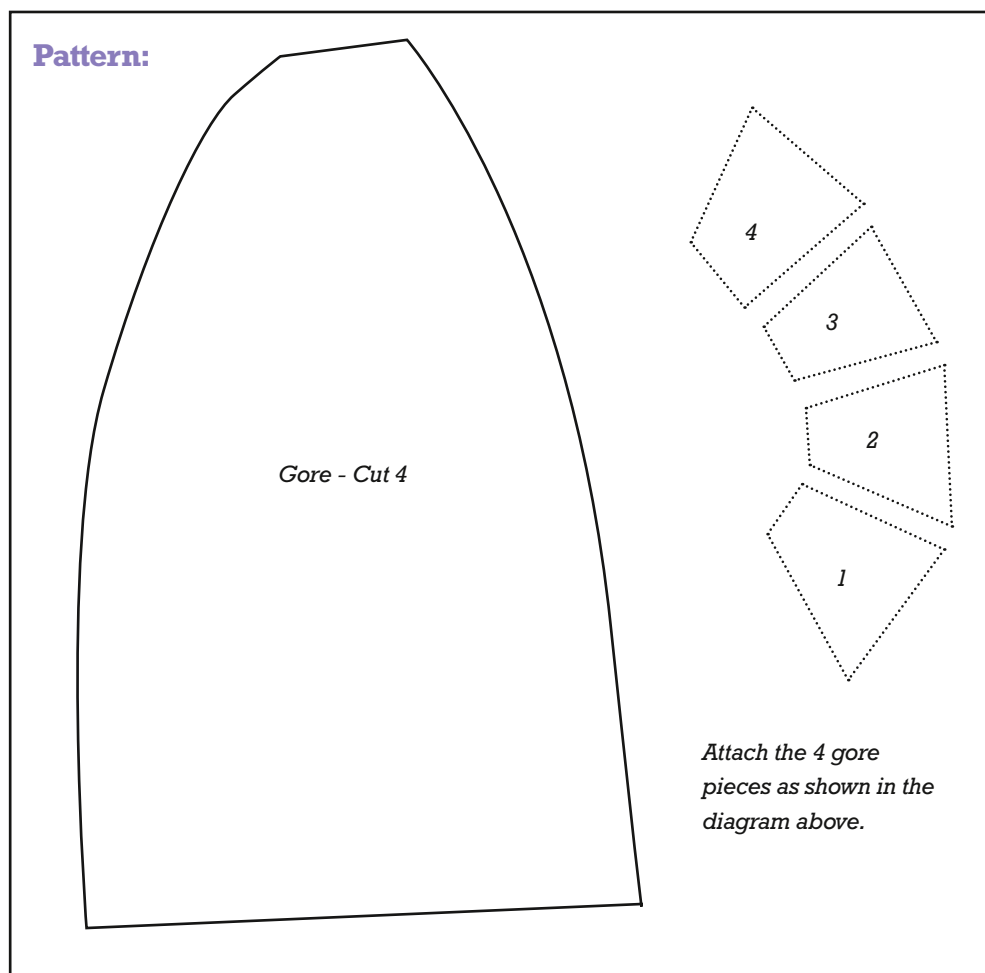
Step 9. When you are satisfied with the smoothness/hardness of this under petticoat, glue lace tightly around the bottom.

Bodice

I started with two yards of lace for this so I would have plenty. This entire bodice is about gluing, folding, and piece cutting the lace to resemble a lace bodice. Following the photos, glue the lace to the torso.



Step 10. Cut a 4" piece of lace to wrap around as shown. Glue the back section, then fold down the side pleats to fit nicely. The front is blank for now.



Step 11. Glue a second piece of lace around the top to make a pretty scalloped edge. Then fill in with more lace. The neck ruff was 3" of lace.

The skirt

I did the ruff and then tried to tuck the skirt gores underneath. HUGE nightmare! So do the skirt gores FIRST, put them on the petticoat base (Styrofoam egg), and then add the skirt ruffle.

The gores

Step 12. Cut out the skirt gores, glue together and put on the petticoat. Pin in place at the top.

Ruffle

Step 13. Cut a 30" x 4" piece of pink silk check material. Fold it in half, with the right sides together. Sew or glue the top seam.



Step 14. Turn right side out and gather 1/8" below the top to make for a decorative gather on the top edge.



Step 15. Pin the skirt ruffle on the top of the gore (skirt). When satisfied with the placement, glue the ruffle on the skirt.



Step 16. When the ruffle glue is dry, gently fluff, plump up the ruffle edge to give volume, then add hair spray in several light layers. Blow dry. Repeat until stiff (3x).

Train

Step 17. Cut a 6" x 4" piece of pink silk. Turn the side and bottom edge to the wrong side and glue (1/8").



Step 18. Gather the top and pin on the back of the dress. Put a gather stitch from the hem up to the desired height. Note how you push in the plump up material to achieve a full effect. Also note how the back of the dress (ruffle) is very flat? I did this so the train laid nicely and to make the bulk of the ruffle on the sides and the front of the dress. So when you gather, pull the bulk of material to the front and sides.



Step 19. Review the photos where the ruffle is glued onto the skirt (horizontal line). That is as high as you glue on lace. When all is set, take the skirt off the styrofoam form. Shown is just the petticoat for example. Then assemble the legs/doll stand, put on the skirt waist over the pipe cleaner, slide on the torso and glue together.

Waist band



Step 20. Cut a rectangle of material, and wrap it TIGHTLY around her waist with the raw edges meeting in the back. Glue.

Step 21. Tie a bow (or make one) and glue over the raw edges.

Before we finish making our dress I'd like to go over a few tips.

1 - READ through the entire tutorial BEFORE you begin. I create/take photos at the SAME time. So sometimes (as in the gore dressing) I find a better way to do something so if you read through the tutorial first you will know this ahead of time.

2 - There will be all kinds of little snippets of lace pieces, decoration etc left over. I kept adding these back on the basic doll and decorating as desired. Please feel free to add your ideas, taste, supplies etc.

3 - PIECE CUTTING - simply refers



to taking a piece of lace and cutting the edges off or a design to decorate a doll.

Sleeves



Step 22. Cut (2) 2" x 1 1/2" rectangles of pink silk. Turn one side under to the wrong side and glue. Now wrap around the arm/pipe cleaner as tight as possible and glue the seam.

Step 23. Then piece cut a pretty edge for a lacy cuff. Set aside for now.

Step 24. Sleeve PUFF. Cut (2) 6" x 4" rectangles. Turn the edges to the wrong side and glue.



Step 25. Gather tightly around the entire square and pull tightly as shown.

Step 26. Poke a hole in the middle and insert the pipe cleaner/arm.



Step 27. Gently fold down the puff so it resembles a gathered sleeve topper, and sew tight in place.



Step 28. Take needle and thread and run stitches through puff at random intervals to make PULL gathers. Remember there is a lot of material to gather small and tight. Follow photos.



Step 29. When satisfied with appearance of sleeves, glue the pipe cleaner/arm into the torso. BE CAREFUL not to have glue drip back down onto the dress! Note how I pulled the bunka, and glued on more lace snippets to 'yoke' to decorate even more!

Amelia is now dressed! Add a small section of lace for a shawl across her back. I glued two strips together to make two pretty edges. If your doll is not wiggled be sure to protect her dress while you wig her.

Make headboard into a winter wonderland

Creating a winter scene on top of a headboard is fun to do, but can easily be adapted to suit other rooms and even other seasons

BY DEBBIE BOOTH

This project is a simple winter woodland/Christmas decoration that could be used on top of a headboard, a shelf or even a fireplace mantel in a miniature doll's house setting.

Step 1. Spray paint all the woodland items that you desire with a light dusting of white spray paint.

Step 2. Sprinkle with sparkly glitter while it's wet.

Step 3. Place a 4" wide x 6" long box in the centre of a Christmas fabric.

Step 4. Add hot glue to the back of the box, and pull the fabric evenly over to the back of the box, overlapping it onto the glue.

Step 5. Smooth the fabric in the front

so it looks like a fabric covered box. The back will not show.

Step 6. Take the doll's house shutter and decide where the reindeer, pinecones, and Christmas balls will go and how many items can fit on the shutter.

Step 7. Place them down in order so when you are gluing the items they will be easy to access. Using a glue gun add a little glue and glue the green Spanish moss down first. Then continue to glue in little sections.

Step 8. Next, put glue onto the feet of the reindeer and place them onto the Spanish moss covered shutter. Put glue on the rest of the reindeer and put them in place.

Step 9. Add the mini pine cones next and then tuck in the little Christmas balls as the last step.

Step 10. For a nice finishing touch, add a little glue to the tops of the pine cones, reindeer, and the Spanish moss at the very end and sprinkle on more glitter. You can use white glue for this if you like. Let dry.

Step 11. Once all the little items have dried into place, glue the shutter to the top of the box, making sure it will be placed flush against a wall and there is no unevenness with the shutter on top of the box.

You will need

- Doll's house shutter - 1
- Assorted greenery (green Spanish moss)
- 4 - 5 miniature pinecones, sticks, 2 - 3 reindeer, 3 - 4 Christmas balls and sparkly glitter
- White spray paint
- 10" x 10" fabric
- Thin box that is a similar width as a doll bed.
- Glue or hot glue gun



Step 12. Place bed up against the box headboard.

TOPTIP

- Be careful, but just in case you burn your fingers with the hot glue gun, you may want to have a bowl of water nearby to dip your hot fingers into.

Fun with snowmen and dogs in the mini playground

Recent winters in the UK have been pretty mild, but this scene reminds us that in other parts of the miniverse the weather can be harsher

BY BARBIE ANDREASON

According to Encyclopædia Britannica, the definition of winter is “the coldest season of the year, between autumn and spring; the name comes from an old Germanic word that means ‘time of water’ and refers to the rain and snow of winter in middle and high latitudes.”

Okay, that sounds reasonably innocuous to someone raised in the desert southwest surrounded by sand, rocks, towering mountains, cactus and bright sunshine 83% of the daylight hours, 302 days a year. The only “White Christmas” I can ever recall was in 1982 – and it was something to celebrate!

Most of my extended family members have always lived in Minnesota and in the early 80’s I made a cross country move there with my immediate family. My dear mother had wanted to “come home” after 40 years of living in Texas. Throughout our childhood, she arranged annual six-week trips for us in order that we would know our close knit family and feel a part of them, even though we lived 1200 miles away.

We were always grateful for those memorable summer vacations. Wow! The lakes, trees, beaches, cabins, fishing, flowers, the cutest animals... heady stuff for kids... adventures were such a drastic and exciting change for us! Never did I anticipate the impact of



witnessing Mother Nature's trick of a real Minnesota winter.

The first January I ever experienced in my newly adopted home of the Twin Cities just happened to be the coldest in 35 years. I quickly discovered what “wind chill” was – a term

I had never heard. Suddenly I was shopping for a down-filled coat, snow boots, earmuffs, thinsulate lined gloves, and knitted hats. Learning to navigate icy walkways and learning to drive in a snowstorm were challenges.

I know now why birds fly south. Birds of all kinds – that is, snowbirds too. Those people who cannot bear to deal with three months of Minnesota winters are often the same people who trek north to escape the brutal Arizona and Florida heat and humidity that summertime brings.

I must say, however, that I find winter in the Midwest to be profoundly beautiful, peaceful, and mysterious. Crystal tree sculptures, patterned snow ridges formed by the wind, rainbows circling the sun, glistening diamond icicles, incredible vistas of spotless white snow stretched over a vast field like velvet, a day's brightest bluest skies dotted with cotton ball clouds, a night's blackest ink sprinkled with glittering stars, moonlight splashed across a shimmering frozen lake. Winter is so lovely it hurts my eyes just to look at it.

My mini winter is one of the four



seasons I made in miniature and the most challenging. Because what I perceive in reality does not allow much room for whimsy, yet the other three evoked all kinds of ideas to make it fun. I loved the idea of putting a variety of dogs in each of them, thus a St. Bernard and a naughty spaniel seemed to fit the stark and empty playground.

The melted snowman was so much fun to make when I started experimenting with two-part epoxy resin. Melted snowmen require no colour and the shapes are random, so I went on a brief melted snowman frenzy back in the day. When I found a little snowman in my ‘stash’, it seemed only fair to have a young little snowman mourn the loss of his Papa during a warm spell before the ‘real kids’ could come along to bring his daddy back to life.

I still have not donned a pair of ice skates, skis, driven across a frozen lake, ridden a jet ski (yikes) or slid down a hill – intentionally, that is. And I still have that Texas “sand in my boots”



and suspect I will always consider myself a Texan in my heart. But I have read many books in front of a cosy fireplace, enjoyed toasting marshmallows with musician friends at lodges up north, learned to crave a White Castle burger now and then and have cried buckets of tears seeing a beautiful deer lying in the bed of a hunter's truck. I have learned to love Minnesota.

As often happens, with small easy projects which are quick and much fun to do, I'm thinking of doing another one as more ideas crop up. In my experience, this does not happen easily after a year's long labour of an intensive creation!

Above: A whimsical winter wonderland in a twelfth scale playground.

Above right: The playground slide is covered in snow and ice.

Above far right: A cardinal enjoys the bird food hanging from the tree.

Right: Don't worry, the human children will come and fix Papa!





A lovely place to slurp

Make your mini bedroom the best it can be with these great tips on staging and decorating

BY FRANCES ROE

Of all the rooms in your full-size house, the bedroom is one that should exude warmth, peace, and tranquillity. It is, after all, a private haven and perhaps the most personal room in the house. This is something that you'll want to try and replicate in your doll's house bedrooms too.

Here we are going to look at a typical Tudor and Victorian bedroom and then indulge in possible embellishments for romantic and modern boudoirs. Make a list of what things you might feature as we go along and work these into your room décor.

Tudor

In Tudor times the bed was the most important item of furniture in the house and as lords moved from one manor to another, their valuable bed usually went with them. Usually a four-poster, the Tudor bed was enormous, with massive pillars, rich carvings and a huge weight of valances and hangings. At the head would be the family coat of arms.

Oak continued to be the dominant timber used, particularly with furniture made in England. Walnut was used rarely, and was only seen in palaces and homes of the rich.

Feather beds were introduced

into English homes in the early 14th Century, imported from France as the English had still not mastered the art of preserving feathers. Only the wealthiest households had a feather bed. The woollen blanket was also said to have been introduced in the 14th Century, which offered warmth, but not much comfort.

The lady of the house might entertain her friends in the bed chamber, a place where romantic and chivalrous courtship took place, as it also performed as the private reception room of the Tudor house. This custom may have encouraged the introduction of the "day-bed", which was more ap-



amber

propriate and convenient than the bed for visiting friends.

Victorian

In the largest of Victorian houses, the husband and wife slept in separate bedrooms with a connecting door. In most cases, each would have their own dressing room and a seating area for the lady. In smaller homes there was one bedroom with a separate dressing room for the husband.

During the early to middle 19th Century, rich colours and strong patterns were popular. However, people gradually realised that bold patterns were harsh on the mind in a room meant for relaxation, so lighter and more delicately patterned wallpapers were common by the end of the century.

Flooring in the bedroom was stained and covered with small, patterned



Top left: Lace and frills are a must for a romantic boudoir.

Top: Pretty in pink; bedroom by Mary Seargent

Above: Pat Pinell chose a four poster bed by Pear Tree Miniatures as the centrepiece to her Tudor bedroom.



Above: Bed in garnet and cream by Artisan Miniatures.

Right: The Victorian lady's bedroom features delicate wallpaper and matching drapes.

Below: A more recent bedroom by Bee-Inspirational.



Essential furniture, besides the bed, was an armoire, washstand, dressing table and privacy screen. For much of the century, dark woods such as mahogany, rosewood and walnut, were fashionable.

The dressing table or vanity incorporated drawers lined with fabric and scented with sachets. The top was usually covered with muslin or lace and displayed ivory, tortoiseshell or silver combs and brushes.

Romantic

If a passionate boudoir is what your heart desires then here are a few suggestions for creating an evocative, enticing bedroom. It may seem obvious, but the key to a romantic room is in choosing furniture, furnishings, and accessories that make a room look comfortable, tactile, and intimate.

Soft textures, serene artworks and muted patterns do this and give the room feminine warmth. Luscious fabrics such as silks, velvet, and chenille are textures that should be used in combination with each other for full effect.

However passionate colours, such

rugs and colour combinations of blue and pink or red, green and gold were favourite. Window treatments were pale, pastel, floral drapes sometimes finished with lace.

While most homes converted to

the more typical open style bed by the mid 1800s, the wealthier homes kept the canopy. Whatever pattern was used for wallpaper was duplicated for the canopy, drapes, window treatments, and sometimes the bed covers.



Above: Wicker bed by Rhea Strange.

Above right: A Victorian bedroom for a gentleman in strong and rich colours.

Right: A patchwork quilt adds country style to this bedroom.



as red, purple, royal blue, rose, and gilt trims add drama and indulgence; animal print fabric can be good fun, but will look a lot more raunchy and brazen than other fabrics.

The main centrepiece of the room has to be the bed and you can't beat the romantic splendour of a four-poster bed, smothered in drapes and trims, or a canopy bed draped with satin, lace or sheer fabrics.

Use mirrors on the dressing table and on the walls and if your doll's house lighting system can accommodate it, try adding candlelight or side lamps. There are some lovely touches you can add to a romantic bedroom.

For example, just the presence of a bed tray with a single rose will suggest that your doll's house family are enjoying the pleasure of romance. Why not include a small wine rack with wine bottles, or a champagne bucket and two glasses beside an opened box of chocolates or bowl of strawberries?

Dressing tables, furnished with feminine accessories and intimate objects, add a bit of mystery and romance. No matter what era or style you are covering the theory is the same.

Modern

In spite of the name, there's more to a modern bedroom than just a bed and a place to sleep. So often the bedroom is also used to read, get dressed, or have a place to sit or work and you'll need to plan the space accordingly.

Lifestyle furniture arrangements feature in the modern room, such as a treasure chest at the end of the bed, a dressing table, wardrobes, and bedside tables with reading lamps. Rich and deep toned woods such as cherry and walnut are modern favourites, but if you can't find all your miniatures in the same shade of wood, then try restaining them in different shades.

Consider the curtains, or perhaps you'll have blinds or shutters instead, particularly if your family like neat, contemporary lines and no fussy frills. Another modern trend is to have large and lavish pillows and throws with smooth, soft textures, such as velvet and faux fur with silks and linens for bedding.

If you are decorating a modern bedroom or one that belongs to a teenager, you may want to include a stereo, guitar, posters and a futon or beanbags. Children's bedrooms are a whole project by themselves that will bring you lots of joy! Whatever style you decide on for your bedroom, have fun creating the look.

Silke's little people are just fantastic creations

We meet a talented doll artist whose workshop is “utter chaos”. But out of chaos, and her imagination, spring beautiful tiny dolls with unique features and expressions

BY DEB WEISSLER

To see one of Silke Janas-Schloesser's dolls is like turning the pages of a beautifully illustrated fairytale book, filled with witches and trolls, fairies and wizards. Growing up listening to the tales and legends of her homeland, each has helped guide her talents.

As an internationally acclaimed doll artist with a seemingly inexhaustible imagination, this self-taught artist has received accolades from around the world, winning coveted awards for her OOAK hand-sculpted dolls. Over the years, Silke has poured through more than 5000 books, from fairy tales to anatomy, costuming to fine art, enabling her to collect an impressive array of features, expressions, and gestures, thus ensuring each doll is truly unique.

“I sculpt some special faces several times, but each has its own unique twist. I especially love noses and wrinkles. I like eyes, mouths, eyebrows, a double chin,” she laughingly admits. Her skill as a former illustrator and makeup and airbrush artist are all evident in her polymer clay sculpts. Each face is a roadmap, taking us on a personal journey through the land of make-believe.

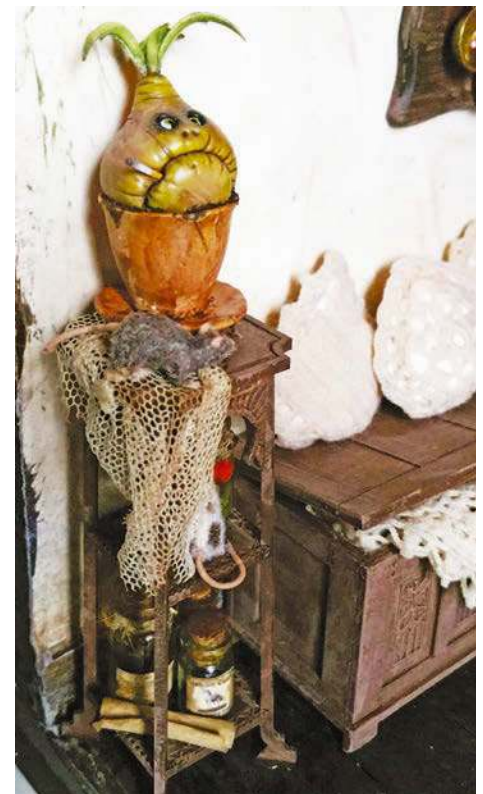
Silke began her career more than two decades ago making much larger dolls. During shows and exhibitions, she would cross paths with miniature doll artists whose works she found



fascinating but did not inspire her. It was while searching online that she spotted Rik Pierce's Hogwarts Castle that the mini bug bit. She found a workshop Rik had scheduled in Germany and she quickly signed up, although she couldn't imagine working in such a small scale.

It was while she was taking the workshop for Rik's Crooked House that it became clear that Silke's dolls would never fit inside Rik's whimsical and quirky twelfth scale cottage. Thus began a new adventure into the realm of making little people.

Of course this was not Silke's first foray making wee dolls. Decades before, her Uncle Norbert spied her hand-sculpted little trolls and pestered her to sell him one. He gave the troll to his wife as a gift and it wasn't long



before her Aunt wanted a tiny wife for the lonely troll. Her venture into wee ones had begun, but it took Rik's class to catapult her in this new business direction.

Beginning by sculpting the face, hands, and feet, Silke lets each doll tell her what they are to become. If the head doesn't turn out right, it goes into the rubbish bin and she begins another. For Silke, the face and hands speak volumes about the doll's personality. Once satisfied with “the look,” she creates a wire armature surrounded by a soft body, posing and re-posing until she's satisfied.

Costuming comes next. Silke's hand-sewn costumes are all natural fibres like silk, velvet, linen, and fine cotton that drape beautifully. In what she describes as her tiny “witch kitchen,” she dyes her own fabrics and wigs.

Her latest vignette was a private commission, and features a collection of whimsical old ladies enjoying a glass of wine in a delightfully cluttered kitchen located in the owner's custom room box made by Marius Schloesser, Silke's son. “The whimsical old ladies are seated in an incredibly detailed scene,” Silke points out, “I can get lost in time watching everything. The old ladies took over a year to fulfil and they

Above: *Rats climbing around by German artist Georgina Marfels.*

Left: *The wonderful pop-up book is by German artist, Jana Wiechman.*



Right and below: Silke's son, Marius Schlösser, designed and built the house box. The wine glasses and the wine bottles were made by artist, Janny Warnaar.





Above: The cheese was made by Silke Fichtner. This piece was a collaboration of many artists.

complete the scene."

In the wee hours of the morning, Silke steals down to her workshop, a series of three rooms in her home. The pink room is her fabrication studio filled with clay, paints, fabric, hair, and glue – everything needed to create her dolls.

The green room holds not only her personal collection but those dolls that

are completed and destined for their new homes. The third room, painted a soothing cream, is her office where she posts dolls on online auction sites, maintains her web site, and chats with others via her blog.

"I thought miniatures wouldn't require much space," Silke laughs, "But I'm always running out of space and am constantly looking for more. The same goes for time and money, because now I not only create miniatures, I also collect them! My workshop is utter chaos where I'm surrounded by



beautiful tiny things I buy or would like to live in. I need more space for my ideas and my collections!"

In addition to selling her dolls at shows or online, Silke's husband surprised her with a little shop window in their home where she can display some of her dolls, and shoppers can stop by and perhaps buy something.

Once she has finished a number of dolls, she sets up her photography equipment, often using those romantic and fairytale structures she made in Rik's workshops as backdrops. She



loves purchasing furniture, tableware, animals, "anything witchy or Christmas" from other artists to enhance her delightful vignettes, thereby ensuring collectors who buy online can fully appreciate the tale she is spinning.

Although she accepts commissions, Silke avoids what she calls a "lazy narrator." Customers who just can't seem to express what they see in their heads well enough so that Silke can picture the outcome. If this happens, she will decline the commission. She also makes it clear she does not do period

dolls like Victorian or Georgian, or naked ones.

Among her admirers and collectors is German author Wolfgang Holbein, whose science fiction, fantasy, and horror fiction has made him the most successful and prolific German writer in the fantasy genre, most notably his Magic Moon series. Silke is thrilled to have him as part of her fan base.

When not doll making, Silke loves sitting in her living room, feet up, her nose in a good book, and her cat curled up in her lap. Who knows, the

next read might just inspire another little person. All she wishes for is that her little people find good homes and that her hands and eyes enable her to keep doll making as she gets older. "My most valuable tools are my glasses," she laughs. "I'm now lost without them."



LITTLE LINKS:

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Widney Road, Bentley Heath,
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DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

York Racecourse, YORK YO23 1EX
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Warners Exhibitions

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 24TH

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 NOVEMBER 25TH

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GRAVESEND, Kent DA12 3HB
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Organiser: D&M Fairs

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

The Civic Hall, Market Street,
NANTWICH,
Cheshire CW5 5DG
Open: 10.30am - 3.00pm
Organiser: MM Fairs

**CHANGE
OF DATE**

DECEMBER

SATURDAY DECEMBER 1ST

KENSINGTON DOLLS HOUSE FESTIVAL

CHRISTMAS SHOW

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

SUNDAY DECEMBER 2ND

DOLLS HOUSES AND 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 DECEMBER 8TH

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

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

SUNDAY DECEMBER 9TH

DOLLS HOUSES & MINIATURES FAIR

Portsmouth Marriott Hotel,
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JANUARY 2019

SUNDAY 6 JANUARY

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Exeter Conference Centre, Westpoint,
Clyst St. Mary, EXETER EX5 1DJ
Open: 10.00am - 4.00pm
Organiser: Wendy's World

SATURDAY 12 JANUARY

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURES FAIR

The Benn Hall, Newbold Road,
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Open: 10.30am - 3.00pm
Organiser: MM Fairs

SUNDAY 13 JANUARY

STAFFORD DOLLS HOUSE SHOW

(Formerly Doreen Jeffries Dolls
House Fair)
Members Pavilion, County Showground,
Weston Road, STAFFORD, ST18 0BD
Open: 10.30am - 4.00pm
Organiser: MGM Fairs

SUNDAY 20 JANUARY

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(off A12)
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Organiser: Dolly's Daydreams

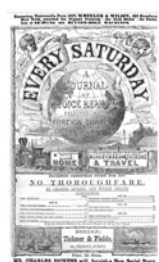
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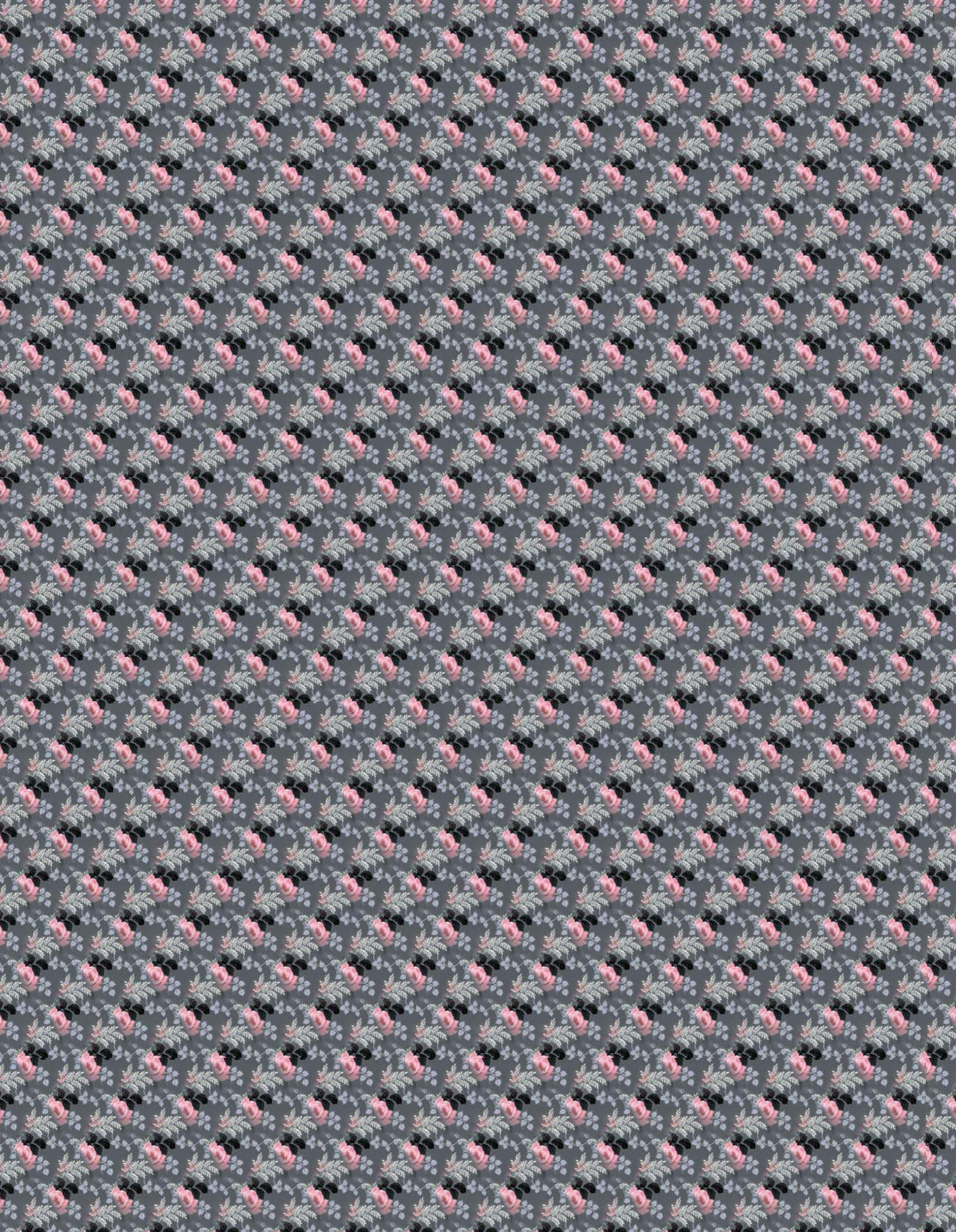
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January 1876	February 1876	March 1876
So Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	So Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	So Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
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SMALL TALK

WHERE WE CHAT WITH READERS ABOUT OUR HOBBY. THIS MONTH WE CHAT WITH MARIE REES

Hi Marie, how long have you loved miniatures? I have been an avid fan of minis since I was a child when my nana bought me a Sindy house. As I grew up I always dreamed of owning a proper doll's house but unfortunately that didn't happen until I was in my adult years.

What was your first house? A secondhand Sue Ryder house which I gave a Christmas theme, and I was so pleased when it was featured in DHW.

So how many do you have now? I currently own three houses, two of which have had a transformation. One is a Dolls House Emporium, with another two waiting to have some TLC on them. One is earmarked to be The Nag's Head, based on Only Fools and Horses (my hubby loves the programme).

And the other one is your main project at the moment? Yes, that's the hotel. It has over 20 rooms and there is a Victorian wedding going on. It has a Model T Ford wedding car outside.

It looks like an intensive project. How long have you been working on it? It has taken me over four years so far, and it's still not finished. Most rooms are decorated and the furniture is in place; now I just need more accessories and guests of course. It's been a real labour of love.

What sort of things do you buy? Most of the bits I buy are from the internet or from Miniatura, espe-



cially my favourite, Julie Jackson of Dee Daw designs. I already have a few of her items including a full bedroom set. It was expensive, but is simply stunning.

And do you make as well? Yes, I love to make many of the things myself, everything from climbing plants for outside to beds and other pieces of furniture. It's very rewarding when you take a plain, basic item and dress it up. You not only get the satisfaction from making a unique item, but you also save money too.

We hear you husband lends a hand with the hotel sometimes. Yes, my husband is a trained electrician and often helps out with the hotel electricity. He also steps in when wood needs cutting into angles, as this is something else he is better at.

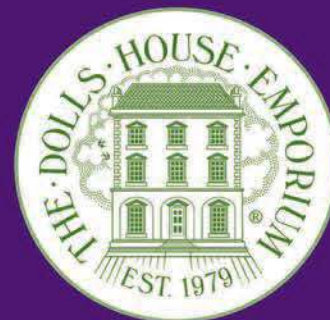
What other hobbies have you tried? I like to think of myself as a crafty person, and turn my hands to most things from book art, up cycling bottles and jars into vases, to Christmas decorations. I also love to help my twins when they bring home arty school projects. But like many of you though, my main love is my minis, and, as everyone knows, it's the best ever hobby to have.

We couldn't agree more Marie. Thanks for chatting to Small Talk.

● *If you'd like to share your love of minis with other readers then why not take part in Small Talk. Email richard@ashdown.co.uk expressing an interest.*

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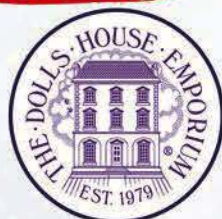


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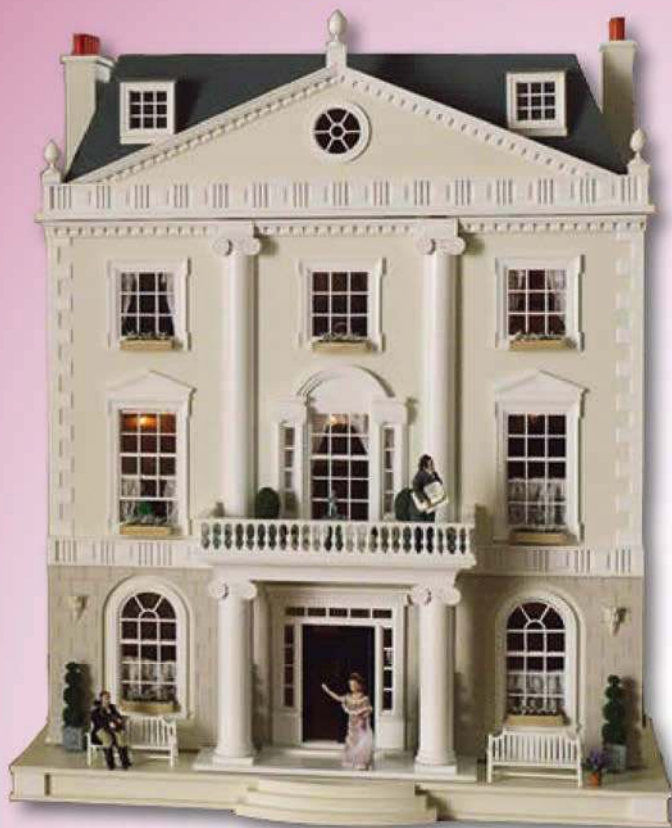
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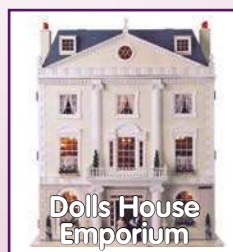
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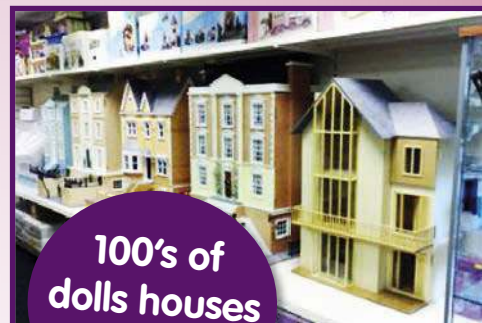


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