

# Poole Bobbin Lace Circle

## Chairman's Report for PBLC July 2020

We would like to start this report with a tribute to the three ladies who sadly passed away in 2019/20. Jean Lane, Sheila Herridge and Beryl Maw, were all very accomplished lace makers, living long and full lives; they will be very much missed. Thank you to all who gave donations to the various chosen charities.

Ordinarily we would begin with the first meeting in September but it would be unforgivable if we did not mention the five wonderful days in August we spent at The Purbeck school with Dorset Arts and Crafts Association. The whole experience from the setting up to the break down was an absolute joy (pause while we take off our rose tinted glasses) but seriously it really was very well received by both the General Public and by the DACA committee, all of which has been documented due to Linda Burns quick thinking in obtaining a visitors book - which is now a regular part of our demonstrations. The only disappointment was that we didn't get to use all the lace brought in, it was very difficult to decide and probably took most of the time during the setting up, still there is always 2022!! Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone involved from the lending of their lace pieces, Linda King for collecting, cataloguing and looking after the lace, in setting up, in demonstrating and marshalling the exhibits during the day to the break down on the Tuesday you have ALL been very much appreciated!!

Now to September and a very busy month – I would like to say we had a better start to the year in that our speaker *did* turn up..... At least there was a chance to have another look at the wonderful entries from the Dorset Arts & Crafts Exhibition and to clear out our lace cupboards at the Sales Table. We also saw the introduction of two new committee members, Pam Brown and Carol Kennedy, which gave rise to a small committee reshuffle! Pam took over the Sales table from Ruth who moved to shadowing Linda Burn in order to take over as Editor of the Newsletter and Competition Secretary when Linda leaves in July 2020. Carol became assistant demonstrations secretary to Linda King. The demonstrations got off to a good start on the 2nd September at Hardy's Cottage – such a lovely setting and we always seem to get a lot of interest there. This was followed on the 14<sup>th</sup> September at Poole and Wimborne libraries to celebrate National Lace Day and then Canford Needlework Festival on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (which had the added bonus of meeting other crafts people coupled with an opportunity to buy lots of lovely supplies!). Four members of PBLC joined Seahorse quilting on a trip to Bath to visit the American Museum and an exhibition of Kaffe Fassett quilts. We finished off September with a visit to Blandford Fashion Museum, with a new display of Heather Toomer's collection of whitework. Despite the rain it was a very enjoyable day, the staff at the museum are always so helpful and knowledgeable.

In October the Pillow Party was well attended with 15 members working on various projects and another visit to Hardy's for demonstrating. Congratulations also to Lily Wills for having an article and photos of her lace bodice printed in the German Lace Society's magazine 'Die Spitze' (The Lace).

November's meeting and a return to Saturday afternoons, although I feel that Spring is my favourite season (full of hope and new beginnings) Autumn has to be my second, I love a crisp Autumn day..... sadly what we got was more 'wet & windy'! Another excellent talk from Dr Helen Walter on children's wear did much to revive our spirits, I look forward to when we can ask Helen back. The corresponding displays of 'Lace for a Child' had a, much admired, cross section of both antique and modern pieces in several styles of lace. Our thanks go to the Tuesday Group who during the meeting kindly announced they would be introducing a variable fee depending on how many attended each meeting. A demonstration at Blandford Fashion Museum brought November to a close.

December's Pillow party was a cloudy day but luckily not too cold. There were plenty of Christmas themed cakes and savouries with lots of excited banter.... Oh and we did manage a bit of lace making! It has been felt that 2 hours is a little rushed so we will be looking at another review. Sorry that the Pillow parties are being changed so much lately but sadly it is a necessary evil in order to maintain best value for money. Our final demonstration of the year was successfully held at Scaplens Court, who knew that it would be our last demonstration for some time to come!

January's meeting heralded a talk from Forest Holme's representative, Kirsty Perks, and was one of those really inspiring talks from a very enthusiastic individual. We had so many members coming up to us afterwards asking when she could come back and as soon as we can we will rebook Kirsty and may look at including their fund raiser team as well? A new group project was announced at the meeting, designed by Jane Atkinson and redrafted by Eve Moreton. We wanted to have something to put on the demonstration tablecloth that would involve as many members as possible and a chance discussion with Eve proved very fruitful – thank you Eve for all the work you put into the project, which I believe is still going strong.

Our first Pillow party of the year took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 with 16 attendees all working and helping each other with their pieces.

Penny Muddell made a welcome return to our March meeting with a talk on the straw hat industry. This was the first time Penny had given the talk, which did make it a little stilted but it was interesting nonetheless. A display of straw hats and bonnets complimented the afternoon.

Well this is where it all goes awry to say the least!! Shortly after the March meeting the Government started instigating measures to reduce the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and by 23<sup>rd</sup> March we were all in 'lockdown' and I'm sure we all felt very bewildered by the events. The committee started to cancel and/or postpone the upcoming meetings, demonstrations, pillow parties, our trip to Exeter and Lace Day. All monies paid for the trip and lace day will be refunded at the first meeting we can hold, if anyone would prefer to receive their refund earlier please contact a member of the Committee, thank you to everyone who has donated their payments to the charity. Decisions were also taken regarding our charity, Forest Holme, to continue them into next year to make up for the loss of further fund raising and an interim payment of £500 was made to help them continue the excellent work they do. The annual competition has been postponed and will now take place in 2021, the trophy winners of last years competition will be awarded their bobbins also at the first meeting – it could prove to be a very busy time but for now the programme for 2020/21 is quite empty.

And so to the AGM – as you will be aware by now it will be conducted via email and postal voting due to the uncertainty of it all, even now we don't know if meetings will return this year or next? So for the present life is on hold, the Government is starting to relax the lockdown and as soon as we can we will restart the meetings and so forth.

Last July Ruth and I had a sigh of relief at the end of our first year as Joint Chairman. Surely now, having dealt with several challenges, we would find life much easier with our newly acquired knowledge? However, sadly it was not to be, as newer and more difficult challenges faced us all. The Committee would like to thank all of you not only for your patience as we came up with ways round the lockdown (and still are) but also for your help and support throughout. Ruth and I would also like to thank the Committee for their hard work and diligence in dealing with the fallout from the pandemic, maintaining the newsletter and generally dealing with all that has been thrown at them!

*Ruth Oldridge / Penny Stevenson*