



Society of Antiquaries
of Scotland

‘Remember Now Thy Creator’

Scottish Girls’ Samplers, 1700–1872

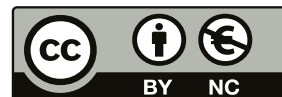
Naomi E A Tarrant

ISBN: 978-1-908332-07-3 (hardback) • 978-1-908332-27-1 (PDF)

The text in this work is published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International](#) licence (CC BY-NC 4.0). This licence allows you to share, copy, distribute and transmit the work and to adapt the work for non-commercial purposes, providing attribution is made to the authors (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work). Attribution should include the following information:

Tarrant, N E A 2014 ‘*Remember Now Thy Creator*’: *Scottish Girls’ Samplers*, 1700–1872. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.
<https://doi.org/10.9750/9781908332271>

Important: The illustrations and figures in this work are not covered by the terms of the Creative Commons licence. Permissions must be obtained from third-party copyright holders to reproduce any of the illustrations.



Every effort has been made to obtain permissions from the copyright holders of third-party material reproduced in this work. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland would be grateful to hear of any errors or omissions.

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a registered Scottish charity number SC 010440. Visit our website at www.socantscot.org or find us on Twitter [@socantscot](https://twitter.com/socantscot).

APPENDIX 3

Reproduction samplers

For those who cannot afford to buy antique samplers, there is a thriving market in producing copies of old samplers for enthusiastic needlewomen to work themselves. Some are very faithful reproductions with an attempt to match exactly the weight and thread count of the background fabric and the colours of the threads. These usually come as kits with the correct amount of fabric and threads to work the sampler. Many museums commission firms to reproduce samplers in their collections with a small part of the revenue from the kit going towards the museum. Others are produced by private owners and sold through their own websites or shops. Some people, though, produce kits from samplers in the collections of other people without any permission from the owner. Strictly speaking, there is no copyright in a sampler's design or pattern, and from a good photograph it is possible to produce a kit to be worked. Such a kit cannot be seen as necessarily getting the right fabric and thread colours if the producer has not seen the original, so these products are less interesting for the embroiderer who prefers to work as exact a copy as possible. It is also very ungracious to copy an item in someone else's private collection or in a publicly funded collection without consent or acknowledgment, and to make money from it.

Reproducing old samplers in exact detail could lead to accusations of fraud. Deliberate fraud in this area is very unlikely to occur, as the

value of samplers is not on a par with most art objects, although some pieces are now sold for quite large sums. There are, however, other hazards to be aware of in copying an old sampler. In 1990 Susan Mayor and Diana Fowle produced a book of large images of samplers that had passed through the salerooms. Shortly afterwards, framed and glazed examples of some of these samplers appeared on the market with no indication that they were prints and not originals. Some buyers were taken unawares, thinking they had an original old sampler for a very cheap price. One of the samplers in this book, that of Elisabeth Stewart of Fraserburgh dated 1812, has an even more interesting tale. It was copied in the past, possibly in the 1920s or 1930s (see Mayor & Fowle plate 25). The copy was in the catalogue of one of the auction houses in Britain and at first it looked to be the original one by Elisabeth Stewart, but it was the wrong proportions and had a fringed end. (See *Sampler Guild Newsletter* for the full story.) Why this particular sampler was copied is unknown but it may well have been done by or for a descendent of Elisabeth's while the original went to another branch of the family. The copy is now in a private collection and the current whereabouts of the original sampler is unknown (Leslie B Durst collection).

Another sampler, by Jane MacNaughton at Miss Logan's school, Edinburgh, 1839, is probably also a reproduction piece. It is beautifully worked on evenly woven linen that gives regularity to



A3.1 Reproduction of Elisabeth Stewart's sampler of 1812. The original sampler measured 16 in (40.6 cm) by 12 in (30.5 cm) so this reproduction is much larger at 24½ in (62.2 cm) x 13¼ in (33.7 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

the stitches that old pieces never have. Where the original of this sampler is now is unknown, but the copy is in a private collection (Leslie B Durst collection). Neither of these examples can be

classified as a fraud because the intention of the worker of the copy cannot be determined as being to defraud, but the moral of this is that all reproductions of samplers should be worked with the name, or at least the initials, and date by the embroiderer so that in the future no such confusion can occur. This detail should also be put somewhere on the sampler where it cannot easily be removed.