Society of Antiquaries of Scotland

‘Remember Now Thy Creator’

Scottish Girls’ Samplers, 1700–1872

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1747
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CHAPTER 6

Designs embroidered on Scottish samplers

SOURCES OF DESIGNS

Many of the patterns and motifs found on samplers can be traced back at least two or three centuries (illus 6.1). Some are derived from the printed pattern books of the sixteenth century. But exactly how and from where the girls and their teachers acquired the designs is unknown, and there was no one source. Some designs, such as maps and later the more elaborate letters, could be bought as prints. Print sellers sold maps printed on silk where only the outline needed to be embroidered, while the more elaborate letters found on later samplers were reproduced in many women's magazines from the early nineteenth century onwards. Another source was possibly roups, where goods were sold at a public auction. This was where second-hand goods could be acquired, and if all of a household's or person's possessions were being sold, a roup could easily include samplers. Gifts and bequests are other sources, but so far only in Orkney in 1710 has a mention been found in a household inventory. A more likely source of designs is from a sampler lent to a friend to copy. Marion Innes lent Catherine Munro her sampler, which was returned with the comment: 'It has been of great use to my pupils and in their name and my own I beg you will accept of grateful thanks for a loan of it.'[152] Girls would also have seen samplers in the homes of their friends and family, and no doubt they or their mothers exchanged ideas. Later, small motifs were copied from the Berlin woolwork designs that were included in magazines or bought from fancy goods stores such as that owned by Jane Gaugain and her husband in Edinburgh.[153]

While individual motifs may have been copied from existing samplers, there is also a possibility that earlier examples were copied in their entirety. For example, a sampler dated 1820 by Catherine Low follows closely a design seen on three much earlier pieces. In 1740, Jean Murray worked a small sampler crowded with patterns (illus 6.2). In the top third are three bands: one a twisted stem with flower, one with pairs of fat birds facing each other across a small plant, and a third with pairs of peacocks with seven 'eyes' in their tails.[154] Below this is a three-storey building with three gables, a man on the steps, and two black dogs at the bottom.[155] On either side of the building is an octagon with the Ten Commandments, Jean's name and the date. In a band at the bottom is a castle with a face in

OPPOSITE. 6.1 A long sampler by Helen Duncan, 1747, with the top half worked with various bands of patterns, many dating back to the sixteenth century. The lower half has alphabets, numbers and initials. Helen was the daughter of Henry Duncan, lister (dyer), and Margaret Allen, of Dalmeny, near Edinburgh and she was baptised on 24 October 1740 so was only seven when she worked her sampler. 30½ in (77.5 cm) x 12¾ in (32.4 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

ABOVE. 6.2 Jean Murray's small crowded sampler is one of the earliest known figurative samplers. It has a three-storey building with three gables and a man of the steps. Below is the motif of a castle with a head in the doorway. So far Jean has not been traced in the records but the large initials worked in eyelet holes of PM and IC are presumably her parents. 12½ in (31.8 cm) x 8⅞ in (22.5 cm). NMS A.1976.588.

OPPOSITE. 6.3 Grizel Henderson's sampler, worked when she was eleven years old, is virtually identical to Jean Murray's of 1740, but she includes her parents' names in the right-hand octagon after the Ten Commandments. Grizel was born in 1790 to James Henderson and Christian Ingles and she married William Thomson on 19 September 1831. 16 in (40.6 cm) x 18½ in (47 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


I HAVE THOU NO
OTHER GODS BUT ME
II THOU SO IMAGE
THY KNEE
III TAKE NOT THE
NAME OF GOD IN VAIN
IV REMEMBER THE SABBATH
DAY PROPHANE
V HONOUR THY FATHER
AND MOTHER TOO
VI AND SEE THAT
THOU NO MURDER DO
VII FROM WHOREDOM
KEEP THY CHAST CLEAN
VIII AND STEAL NOT THO
THY STATE BE MEAN
IX OR FALSE REPORT
BEAR NOT THY NEIGHBO
X WHAT IS THY NEIGHBO
URS COURT NOT
CHRISTEN IN GLASS
IHS AM IHS PHS AS
© Leslie B Durst
Collection

the doorway, on the left a thistle in an octagon, and a rose in a similar octagon on the right. A sampler in a private collection with no girl's name but the word 'Abernithy', presumably the place Abernethy, is very close to Jean's in most details, so it is perhaps near it in date and possibly worked at the same school or with the same teacher. Jean's sampler design is the same, except for very minor details, as Grizel Henderson's, who appears to have worked her piece in 1801 (illus 6.3). This means there are sixty years between the two samplers, so the question arises whether Grizel copied a similar sampler to Jean's or whether they all attended the same school, the latter being unlikely as girls' schools did not usually last so long at this period. Catherine Low's piece of 1820 copies these earlier samplers fairly closely but is less crowded and introduces some new elements, including a very rotund man and a woman in a crinoline skirt. She omits the Ten Commandments and has a dog rather than a head in the castle doorway. So possibly Catherine is copying a much older sampler but adapting the design to suit her own aesthetic.[156]

Samplers rarely follow any set pattern and therefore the dating of pieces by a particular design is not possible. It is clear that, even in schools where a set way of making a sampler was required, the makers had a certain degree of personal choice. The standard of workmanship would also differ, as many girls lacked the ability to embroider with neatness and exactitude. These constraints mean that each sampler is individual to its maker. Nevertheless, over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Scottish-made samplers tended to follow certain design trends, which can be summarised under the following headings.

Alphabets

The alphabets are done in red and green threads alternating.

There is usually more than one alphabet; the majority are worked in upper case letters but there may be one in lower case, and possibly some numbers.

Each alphabet is in a different stitch: for example, cross, cross with curlicues worked in double running – two varieties, and eyelet hole.

Flat-topped capital A.

Buildings

Large building, triple-gabled roof with a man standing on the steps.

Square castle-like building with a higher central portion, often with a man's head in the doorway and often found with the triple-gabled-roof building.

Pedimented house, often with three shades of green chenille lawn, green and white picket fence or stone wall and fence, and a round window in the pediment. Sometimes there are single-storey pavilions at each side.

Initials

More initials are found on later samplers than on the earlier ones, and the mother's maiden initial is used.

Initials are found on samplers from other areas, for example North East England, but not usually with the mother's maiden initial.

Verse

Rarely a long verse, normally only a brief biblical quote, but some have the Lord's Prayer and/or the Ten Commandments in full.

Often the sampler is worked in bands with the rows of letters and initials taking up a third or two-thirds of the sampler, and either small motifs at the bottom or a small house.

Specialist samplers

Specialist samplers that appear to be mainly Scottish are multiplication tables and Dresden work.

Alphabets

It was important for girls to learn how to embroider alphabets because letters were used to mark all personal and household linen with the owners' initials (illus 6.4). In Scotland, household goods might be marked with a woman's own

6.4 Isabel Swan worked this red, green and black alphabet sampler in 1748, and it shows six different ways of embroidering them using only cross, eyelet and double running in wool on a coarse canvas, all within a delicate floral border in a purple shade. The first three alphabets are upper case but the fourth is a mixture of upper and lower case with some oddly formed letters. An eyelet hole version, then one with curlicues and finally a very large one follow, where the centre is in one colour and the curlicues in the other colour. There is no J or U. Isabel was the daughter of Robert Swan and Elizabeth Wilson of Collessie, Fife, born in 1738. 20¾ in (52.7 cm) x 11½ in (29.2 cm).
Leslie B Durst Collection.

initials because women did not lose their name on marriage, whereas in England the husband's surname initial was often worked above the man's and woman's first-name initials. Pieces could also be marked with a date and a number. The date would be that of making and the number would be how many there were in each set. The numbers might be sequential or, alternatively, the same number would be used for each piece in the set, for example 12, meaning that when the linen was checked it was easy to count that all twelve items were present. Isobel Lumisden made shirts for her brother Andrew, who was in exile in Italy after his part in the 1745–6 Jacobite rebellion. She sent them from Edinburgh and enclosed a letter dated 29 September 1748: 'All your shirts are plain as I did not know what sort of ruffles was us'd in France; they are of very good cloth, and are fit for any sort. They are marked with A.L. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, with red silk, on the gushet [gusset].'[157] Households often bought complete bolts of cloth so that a number of similar items were made at the same time. Marking personal and household goods with embroidered initials, names and dates was the general practice until the mid-nineteenth century, when marking ink and, later, woven name-tapes became popular, but some households continued to use embroidered initials. Elaborate initials on large handkerchiefs became popular in the early nineteenth century, together with white-work embroidery and lace borders. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, trousseau items were often worked with decorative initials or names on delicate lawn, usually by professional embroiderers, with some convents specialising in this work. Today hotels often have their names machine-embroidered on towels and bed linen.

The earliest surviving samplers that can be considered Scottish are two alphabet samplers dating to the early years of the eighteenth century and worked in red and green. One is dated 1713 and is in a private collection, while the other is undated, but on the basis of the clothing of the figure on the piece can probably be dated to 1700–20.[158] Other early samplers are those by Isobel Lumisden, of 1729, and Isabel Hutton, about 1730–1735 (illus 6.5).[159] Alphabets continued to be worked in red and green right up to the late nineteenth century and this appears to be a particularly Scottish feature, as does working more than one alphabet on a sampler (illus 6.6). There is no precedent in other surviving samplers in Britain dated before 1700 to show where the idea for this type of letter work in red and green originated. But it is necessary to be aware that not all samplers with red and green alphabets are Scottish, particularly those from the early years of the eighteenth century. The use of family initials and surnames that are more likely to be Scottish, should also be looked for when considering a sampler's likely origin.[160]

A sampler that has been described as Scottish is a sophisticated one worked in red and green colours, dated 1724 and initialled MM, but there are some problems with this identification (illus 6.7). The way the initials are conjoined is not a feature that is noted in other Scottish samplers, or indeed in those from elsewhere in Britain. However, it does show two animals that are found on seventeenth-century British embroideries, the lion and the leopard. These animals do not appear again on a sampler in this style until 1797, when they are joined by another favourite seventeenth-century animal, the deer, in a sampler by Marron [Marion] Scott Graham.[161] MM's sampler is a band one with some popular motifs including the 'boxer and trophy' and an alphabet of large, solid, cross and curlicue letters. But there is also an unusual band of figures representing what is either an Annunciation or Abraham and Isaac. This is definitely not a subject a Presbyterian girl would work, and therefore if the sampler is Scottish it may have been made by an Episcopalian.

Alphabets on Scottish samplers are copying printed letters. Most of the samplers that include

OPPOSITE. 6.5 Isabel Hutton's sampler has been turned into a small bag and dates from about 1730 to 1735. Isabel was a daughter of William Hutton, merchant in Edinburgh, who died in 1729, and Sarah Balfour, and she was born 18 December 1723. Her sampler includes four sets of initials under crowns with MS and MR above denoting the sex. These initials refer to her mother, her sisters Jean and Sarah, and her brother, the geologist James Hutton. 5¾ in (14.6 cm) x 4¼ in (10.8 cm). NMS H.RI 62.

ABOVE. 6.6 This neat sampler dated 1831 worked by Elizabeth Agnes Renny shows only three alphabets, one a lower case worked only in cross and eyelet stitches. It includes J and U and the flat topped A is missing, but the colours are still red and green. Elizabeth was born in 1821 in Edinburgh to William Renny, a lawyer, and his wife Margaret Napier, and married John Mckerrell Brown in 1847. It is not clear if Royal Circus refers to her home or a school. 10½ in (26.7 cm) x 10½ in (26.7 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection

OPPOSITE. 6.7 Sampler in red and green linen by MM dated 1724, showing elaborate letters, bands of patterns and an interesting figural band of an Annunciation or Abraham and Isaac. Note the squirrel and the unusual way the initials are worked; possibly Scottish. 31½ in (80 cm) x 16½ in (41.9 cm). Bryan Collection, USA

more than one alphabet have all but one of them as capital or upper case letters, with only one set in lower case. This is because the sampler letters were to show how to work initials that would, of course, be in upper case. Although they were not so prominent as alphabets, lower case letters were used in any verse or phrase worked on the sampler. A more decorative alphabet based on a cursive script became popular for working initials on handkerchiefs in the early nineteenth century. Patterns for these were often given in the women's magazines of the period. In Scotland these new letters did not replace the more traditional alphabets on samplers to any great extent until the second half of the nineteenth century.


A B C D E F G H
I K L M N O P Q
R S T V W X
1724
I M

Originally printed texts did not use J and U in alphabets because those letters were not found in the Latin alphabet. Until the extra letters came into regular use in English printers' work, the letter I for J and V for U, as well as the long S, were used. This long S is sometimes mistaken for an f in transcriptions. Some sampler makers continued to use these obsolete forms into the nineteenth century.

Alphabets were a more dominant element in Scottish samplers than in those from elsewhere in Britain. Some samplers were entirely worked with letters and some numbers, usually in alternating colours of red and green. Stitches would be different for each alphabet: cross; eyelet; cross with a surround of curlicues in back stitch, sometimes in the other colour, sometimes the same; larger letters with a solid cross-stitch centre with curlicues in back stitch; back stitch forming a square block. The reason for the different stitches would appear to be for use with different kinds of fabric. Cross stitch was the most usual, as it could be worked with very small stitches and produced a neat effect. It was used to mark linen, and later, cotton undergarments, bed and table linen. Eyelet appears to have been used on heavier fabrics such as blankets, but no items with the other stitches have so far been found. On the Continent elaborate letters were worked on textiles, such as towels, that were used decoratively around the house. In some countries the tradition was to embroider elaborate shirts for the bridegroom and elaborate bridal bed linen. In parts of Germany, Bibles and prayer books would be covered with embroidered cloths when carried to church, but none of these uses was traditional anywhere in Britain.

There is speculation that the elaborate letters on Scottish samplers are derived from those from the Frisian Islands in the Netherlands.[162] Scotland had a port at Campvere in the Scheldt estuary for many years, and later in Rotterdam. The Frisian Islands are at the opposite end of the Netherlands from the Scheldt, so the contact that might influence the design of samplers and other aspects of female education is difficult to ascertain. There was regular contact with the Netherlands in the seventeenth century because of religious persecution at home and the fact that the Presbyterianism of the Scots and the Calvinism of the Dutch shared many similarities. Many Scots took refuge from religious persecution in the Netherlands during the latter part of the seventeenth century but their wives and daughters tended to stay in Scotland and look after their estates. However, some like Lady Grisell Baillie and her mother, followed their fathers, so they could well have brought back a sampler to copy. There were Netherlandish traders living in Scotland, particularly on the east coast, but they rarely brought their wives with them. One teacher who is known to have spent time in the Netherlands in the eighteenth century is Jean Duncan, who opened a school in Wester Portsburgh, Edinburgh. She is reputed to have spent several years in Campvere and Utrecht and when she returned to Scotland she opened a school that taught 'white-seam' and spinning. Jean's sister, Mrs Keir, and some of the girls spun linen into sewing thread, while Jean's own thread was apparently sent to the Low Countries and made into Flanders lace.[163] No date is given for Jean Duncan's stay in the Netherlands and at present there is no firm evidence to say that the elaborate letters on Scottish samplers are a direct copy of those on Frisian samplers. One possibility is that the Church of Scotland, which had a good deal of control over its parishioners' lives, disapproved of frivolous motifs but saw the alphabet, however elaborately it was worked, as acceptable.

In England the alphabet was learned from a horn book, a small paddle-shaped piece of wood on which was stuck a small sheet of printed paper with alphabets and the Lord's Prayer.[164] This was protected by a sheet of horn, a material that could be made transparent and was also used instead of glass in windows. Although most often called a horn book, the term 'criss cross row' was also used because a small cross was put at the beginning of the first line.[165] This can also be seen on many English samplers but not on Scottish ones, presumably because it would have been seen as 'Popish'. After the cross, the alphabet followed, usually starting with a capital A, then followed by the lower case version with the rest of the letters in capitals after it. There then

followed a series of pairs of letters combining vowels and consonants, with the vowels themselves sometimes listed separately. The Lord's Prayer occupied the lower half of the sheet. The original horn books used the black letter alphabet but later ones used the roman style and there was no flat-topped A.

Andrew Tuer published an exhaustive study of the horn book in 1897. He examined all the surviving ones he could find, searched literary works and memoirs for quotations, combed paintings, prints and drawings for visual evidence, and corresponded with book dealers and museums throughout Europe. He came to the conclusion that the horn book was very much an English product from at least the sixteenth century to about 1800. The evidence Tuer found for the horn book in Scotland is somewhat contradictory. An earlier writer looking at the history of horn books, William Hone, received a letter in 1838 from an Edinburgh correspondent, W B D D Turnbull, who claimed to have found that the horn book did exist in Scotland. His informant was David Haig, who remembered being taught in Kelso by an old woman called Janet Turnbull, who used to thump her pupils on the head with it. It was known as an 'AB Broad'. Later he passed on a letter he had received from John Jamieson, who had originally denied all knowledge of horn books. Jamieson had now had information from a Mrs J, who had attended a writing-school in Dundee in about the 1770s, where all the copies of the alphabet were framed with a cover of horn over them. In addition, Mr Jamieson's wife recollected a phrase applied to those who had not yet begun their education, 'Ye have na got the length of your horn-book yet.'[166]

A search of the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* does not reveal any evidence for horn books in use in Scotland under either that term or 'criss cross row', but under ABC is a reference dating to 1585, 'Tua dossane of ABC broddis', that is, two dozen of ABC boards.[167] This suggests that the alphabet was certainly put on a board but not necessarily protected by a horn cover. Another interesting fact about the printed sheets used for horn books is that they were produced in the Netherlands, so it is possible that the Scottish market was supplied in this way, at least until the mid-seventeenth century.[168] There is one example of a printed sheet by the Aberdeen printer Edward Raban, which must date from after 1622, the earliest date known for his residence in that city, which has four different black letter alphabets.[169] Raban also printed a calligraphic text by David Brown in 1633, but this shows letters as they would have been written, not as they were used in a printed text, which is what the sampler makers copied.[170] One other interesting example from Scotland is a printed sheet headed 'The Child's Guide to His Letters', dated 1784. This has the usual capital roman A followed by a lower case alphabet, then a capital one, then an italic one, which must have been rather confusing for young minds. After this come the vowels and the Lord's Prayer. The printer's name appears in a handle-like extension at the bottom: 'Glasgow: Printed and sold by J&M Robertson, MDCCLXXXIV'.[171]

Unlike the alphabets found on an English sampler, those in Scotland did not start with a cross, but often with a second capital A worked with a flat top, sometimes with a middle stroke and sometimes without. This letter goes right back to Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, with versions of it found in the Lindisfarne Gospels of the eighth century, for example, but its use in the intervening years is unclear. Girls would have seen the alphabet in the Shorter Catechism, which all children had to learn; there were special versions done for children. Teachers would have copies of this text, which was produced as a 24-page booklet, with alphabets printed on the inside front cover, but these do not correspond to all the types of letters found on samplers.

MOTIFS

The motifs discussed below are found on many Scottish samplers but are not exclusive to them. The motifs, such as bowls of fruit or flowers, little black dogs, deer, rabbits and flowering trees, can be quite small. Larger motifs include Adam and Eve with the serpent coiled round the apple tree, or bands of a reversed flower on a twisted stem.

Other motifs, such as buildings, were larger still and filled the centre of the sampler. Some small motifs were seen as fillers, used to fill in spaces at the ends of lines of initials or letters. Others were grouped in what obviously became a convention, such as a black dog chasing deer or rabbits across the sampler, sometimes over hilly ground or through a row of trees. The band patterns in particular can be traced back to the sixteenth century.

Adam and Eve

In the Adam and Eve motif the standard convention is of Adam on the left of the tree and Eve on the right with the serpent facing Eve, which is not always followed, and sometimes with the apple in the serpent's mouth. Elenor Henderson in 1816 has Eve on the left and beside Adam are two spades, while the serpent appears to have no interest in either human.[172] Very occasionally it is not clear which figure is male and which female, and in one sampler the serpent is handing the apple to Adam: was this a subversive act on the maker's part? The early pieces with this design have a tree with a flat base and three or four humps at the top with small red apples. The earliest so far seen is dated 1734 by Margaret Inglis.[173] The tree is virtually the same as those found on the 1740 sampler by Allison Ruddiman and that of 1745 by Betty Pleanderleath (see illus 7.9 and 7.14), both in the National Museums Scotland's collection, but it is found as late as 1805, used by Catherine Dewar of Perth on her sampler.[174] Other girls used more realistic trees, for example Lilias Simpson in 1831, but Frances Anderson in 1819 embroidered a more fantastical tree with separate branches.[175] Adam and Eve are sometimes naked, as in Betty Pleanderleath's and Jesie Balfour's, and sometimes partly clothed, such as on Frances Anderson's sampler. Janet Mailer includes a rabbit beside Eve, and a black dog which appears to be licking Adam's hand (illus 6.8; see also illus 6.9 and 6.10). For the most part this motif follows a standard design but one odd example is on the sampler by Margaret Renfrew, 1767, where she has depicted the scene from the verse she has sewn about the Angel Michael

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL RIGHT. 6.8
Janet Mailer's sampler has a representation of Adam on the right with a dog licking his hand while Eve on the left only has eyes for the serpent. The solid house above has a curious pattern round the edge, presumably representing stonework. Janet Mailer was baptised on 16 November 1806 in Auchterarder, Fife, the daughter of John Mailer and Janet Cowper. 22½ in (57.2 cm) x 18¾ in (47.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


Let saints below, with sweet accord,
Unite with those above,
In solemn lays, to praise their king,
And sing his dying love.
Janet Mailer Auchterarder 1819
© Leslie B Durst
Collection

OPPOSITE. 6.9 This lively sampler by Isabel Ramage, worked when she was eleven in 1770, shows Adam and Eve beneath a tree laden with fruit and wearing natty little green leaf frills on the hips. In front are a flock of sheep with shepherd and shepherdess to the sides, while above two angels blow trumpets. In each corner is worked a corner motif with large flower heads. Isabel has worked her name in metal thread but the rest is in silk on very fine linen. Isabel was the daughter of William Ramage, a porter, and Janet Ewart, and was baptised in the Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh, on 10 April 1759. She has embroidered 'Isabel Ewart' next to the figure of Eve and it almost looks as if she has identified her with the biblical character but she was possibly an aunt or cousin. 22½ in (57.2 cm) x 17½ in (44.5 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

TOP LEFT. Detail from 4.2. Leslie B Durst Collection.

LEFT. Detail from 7.8. NMS A 1993.103.


A T
I T
et christians faith and hope espel
he fear of guilt and woe
CW
he lord almighty is our friend
nd who can prove a foe
RWMB

expelling the couple from the Garden of Eden, and they are wearing leaves round their waists.[176]

Bowls of fruit and/or flowers

This motif depicts large bowls with various coloured circles and green leaves, which could be either fruit or flowers; it is difficult to tell which is intended.

Boxers

This name was given to these curious figures in the late nineteenth century, but their derivation has been traced by Donald King to a design, found in early pattern books, of a pair of lovers exchanging gifts.[177] The figures are rendered in many different ways. Usually they are found in a band across the sampler, each separated by an elaborate floral display. Agnes Blyth in 1747 dresses them in what appear to be frock coats, breeches and shoes, fashionable dress at the time.[178] MM's sampler of 1724 has them naked but with curls of hair (?), possibly making them into wild men (see illus 6.7). It is not unusual to have a black boxer, which possibly means that they were seen as servants, because they are usually holding out an object as if presenting it to someone. They can be found on samplers throughout the eighteenth century, with the latest date so far found on Scottish samplers being 1826.

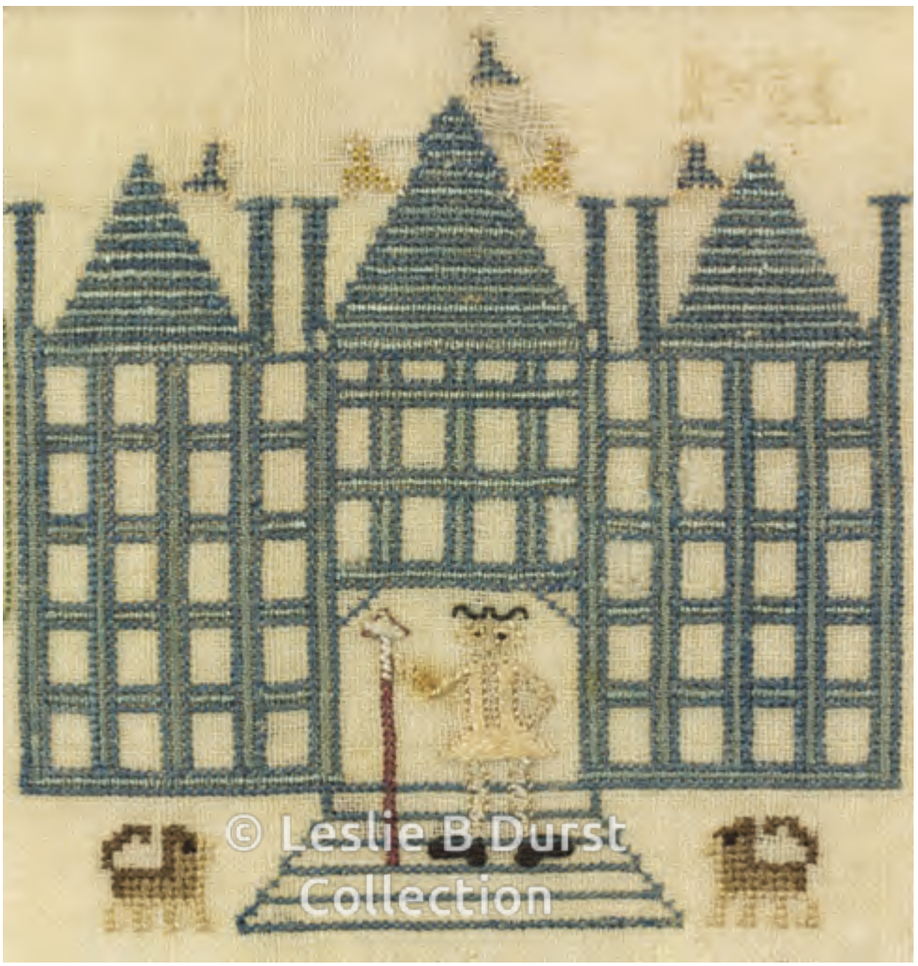
Buildings

Buildings mainly divide into three groups, the earliest being a tall building with three pointed roofs and a man holding a staff standing on the steps. No particular source has been found for this, but it probably represents a wealthy man standing proudly on the steps to his grand house (illus 6.11). A second house is often found in association with the first, but again its derivation is unclear. This is a square building with a central tower and a man's head in the doorway. Quite what it represented is a puzzle, but an undated sampler in a private collection has 'Tower of London' worked above. What relevance this had is uncertain as, besides being undated, the sampler carries no maker's name. Perhaps the last time the Tower of London could have been in the thoughts of Scottish girls was in 1746–7 after the Jacobite Rebellion when Lords Balmerino, Kilmarnock and Lovat and Charles Radcliffe were beheaded in the Tower, the last men to be executed in this way in Britain. One sampler with this motif, however, is dated 1740, so this explanation cannot be correct for all such samplers. The last dated sampler found with this motif is about 1825 by Janet Laidlaw of Thirlestanehope.[179] So far neither of these building types has been found on samplers made beyond Scotland.

The most common house motif used is a small Palladian-style villa, two storeys high with central pediment, usually with a lawn in front, worked in three shades of green chenille thread, enclosed by a green and white fence on top of a low stone wall. This did not make its appearance until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Though many of these samplers are not dated, a general idea of date can often be suggested from other information. So far the earliest piece with this house style is Jannet Bruce's of 1775 (illus 6.12). There are variations on this pattern, some having single-storey extensions at each side.

The first house in the Palladian style in Scotland is considered to be the one built in Glasgow for Daniel Shaw of Shawfield by the Scottish architect Colen Campbell in 1711 and it appears in Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*, published between 1715 and 1725. It was a two-storey house with basement, the centre protruding slightly, with a central doorway and a flight of steps. A low wall hides the basement and there is a heavy balustrade across the rooftop. Its position must have made a huge impact and the interior was equally impressive, with a central staircase leading to four grand apartments on the first floor.

OPPOSITE. 6.10 Jennet Black was ten in 1819 when she embroidered this sampler with Adam and Eve and a very sinuous and menacing serpent. She has also included a little house but the pediment has become a gentle curve. 12 in (30.5 cm) x 17 in (43.2 cm). Micheál and Elizabeth Feller Collection.



OPPOSITE AND DETAILS THIS PAGE. 6.11
Janet Learmonth, 1765, worked one of the earliest samplers depicting the arms of Linlithgow, a black bitch chained to a tree in an octagon, balanced by a thistle and the motto 'I have power to defend myself and others' on either side of a three-gabled building. It is worked on wool in silk. Janet also includes a twisted stem reversed flower band and another of boxers, with a fountain, tulips and small animals and 'Mrs Nimmo', possibly her teacher. Janet was the daughter of Alexander Learmonth, skinner, and Mary Gibbieson of Linlithgow and she was baptised on 27 October 1754. Her great grandson, James Muirhead, married Elizabeth Gardner's grand-daughter, Robina Spencer, see 5.3-5.6, and the samplers were inherited by descendants of this marriage. 15 in (38.1 cm) x 13¾ in (34.9 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

ABOVE. 6.12 Jannet Bruce's sampler of 1775 is one of the earliest with a representation of the pedimented house, three coloured green chenille lawn and a fence and stone wall. She has also included a swag of flowers above and her parents' initials under crowns, WB and AP. Jannet was born in 1761 the daughter of William Bruce, ship owner and merchant in Edinburgh, and his second wife Alison Proctor. She married Robert Rankin, writer, in 1786 and died in 1850. 14½ in (36.8 cm) x 13 in (33 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL OVERLEAF. 6.13 Hectorina Mckenzie has worked a very stylish pedimented house with a rose spray above and floral bouquets in octagons. It resembles the Taylor sisters of Linlithgow's samplers except for lacking the coat of arms. She has included 'Edinburgh' before her name but she was born in 1784 in Dingwall, Ross and Cromarty, the daughter of Hector and Ann MacKenzie, so she was probably at school in the capital. 14 in (35.6 cm) x 16¾ in (42.5 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

While the early use of the Palladian style can only be seen in the houses of wealthy men, by the later eighteenth century this style became very widespread in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain, though quite why it captured the imagination of girls is unclear (illus 6.13). Some owners who have samplers with this design style that have been handed down in their family believe it to have been the girl's own home, but so far this has not been proved. In fact most buildings on samplers appear to be fictitious unless they are named. Surviving examples of the Palladian-style small villa include farmhouses such as Kittochside, near East Kilbride, owned by the National Trust for Scotland and run as a farm museum by National Museums Scotland, and small family villas in towns and cities, such as Gayfield House, Edinburgh. The idea of a pedimented centre can be seen in many public buildings and in rows of houses where a unified appearance was important, such as Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. A book by George Jameson, published in 1765 for working masons, had an elevation and floor plans for such a villa.[180] It was obviously a compact, modest style that suited both town and country houses for the growing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Collection

middle ranks of merchants and small country landowners.

Depictions of real buildings were also worked on samplers. These were often churches or other public buildings such as town halls. Marion Raith's sampler of 1799 included Oxenfoord Castle, built in 1786 (see illus 7.2). Her maternal grandparents lived in the same village so she probably saw the castle at first hand. Not so the pupils of Janet Anderson, who worked at Inveraray Castle on their pieces in the 1820s, as they probably lived in Glasgow. These include one by three children dated 1822 (illus 6.14), one by Catherine Burn, 1820 (illus 6.15), one by Catherine Murray, 1825 (illus 6.16) and one without the Castle by Elisabeth Easdon, 1827 (illus 6.17). The Castle did however, figure as an engraving in various publications, from which it is probably taken. It is not clear if the Orphan Hospital in Edinburgh sampler was the work of children who lived there. Other buildings seen on a sampler include the Old Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh (illus 6.18), while civic buildings included Montrose town hall embroidered by Margaret Low and Jean Watson in 1783 (illus 6.19). Examples of a real churches are Alloa parish church and St Peter's Free Church, Dundee.[181] Many small houses on a more domestic scale were worked, often single-storey ones like the houses that were built in many Scottish villages in the first half of the nineteenth century and can still be seen lining the roads today (illus 6.20). Others are the typical house that a child draws, a little box with door and windows, possibly the maker's idea of her home.

Clock tower

Jesie Balfour works what appears to be a clock tower, looking rather like the gateway to a nineteenth-century seaside pier (see illus 7.3). This motif comes in various guises and on some German samplers it is a guard tower with guards, although on most Scottish samplers it lacks any military overtones. Clocks on churches or other public buildings as well as on freestanding towers would have been well known to early nineteenth-century girls so they probably adapted a motif to suit their own experience.

Coats of arms

So far, no sampler with a family's coat of arms has been seen, but several with the arms of a town are known. The most frequently found are those of Linlithgow, a black bitch chained to a tree within an octagon shape. The earliest is Janet Learmouth's of 1765 and the latest dated one is by Christian McKenzie, 1830. Four of these Linlithgow samplers were probably worked at the same school or with the same teacher. The two Taylor sisters, Margaret and Robina, worked theirs in about 1792 (see illus 7.4), while Jeannie Mitchell's dates to about 1784 and Christina Pringle's to a similar date. There is no date on any of them so they are dated from other evidence. Marion Scott Graham in 1797 included the arms of Grangemouth while Maern Kedglie, about 1800 (illus 6.21), and Gilchris Moody, about 1797, had the arms of Musselburgh on their samplers. A fanciful coat of arms is found on Jean Arthur's sampler of 1832, showing two red horses holding a shield that does not appear to relate to any family or town. Mary Hay in 1813 has the Fleshers' Arms, presumably because her father was a flesher or butcher (illus 6.22).[182]

Crowns

Crowns are worked to show the ranks of nobility and range from king through prince, duke, marquis, earl and viscount to baron; they do not indicate the rank of the maker or her family. There is no consistency in the patterns used and letters are often worked underneath to indicate which rank is depicted. Often the crowns on the samplers are merely there to show that the maker knew how to do them and they are used above parents' and family initials (illus 6.23). Margaret Anderson, for example, in 1821, worked two rather good king's crowns and neatly embroidered her family's initials under them (illus 6.24). Sometimes the crowns are filled in with satin stitch, which makes them look more like turbans; Jean Murray, for example, in 1740, has used them over her parents' initials (see illus 6.2), while Margaret Young, of Becks, in about 1875, has given all her relations a large 'turban'.[183]

6.14 A large sampler worked by the McDonald siblings with teacher Janet Anderson, showing Inveraray Castle, seat of the dukes of Argyll, 1822. This family has so far not been traced despite the names of parents and grandfather being given. 21¾ in (55.2 cm) x 20½ in (52.1 cm). NMS A1923.565.

LEFT. 6.15 Catherine Burn's sampler of 1820 is the earliest so far found by a pupil of Janet Anderson's that is worked with Inveraray Castle. Catherine was the daughter of William Burn and Catherine Petrie, and she was born in 1808 in Falkirk, Stirlingshire. 26½ in (67.3 cm) x 24 in (61 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

BELOW. 6.16 Catherine Murray's sampler of 1826 is virtually the same as that by the McDonald siblings, with Inveraray Castle and family names and initials. It has been possible to identify Catherine, born in 1812, the daughter of John Murray and his first wife Catherine Sharp. John had been born in New Brunswick, Canada, but came to Scotland at some point and became a weaver in Glasgow, later a spirit dealer. Catherine married John Neish in 1841, a sewed muslin garment manufacturer; he made clothes from Ayrshire needlework. 21½ in (54.6 cm) x 24½ in (62.2 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.17 Elisabeth Easdon in 1827 worked a slightly different sampler naming Janet Anderson. Various elements are so similar on this sampler and that of 1822 worked with Inveraray Castle and also naming Janet Anderson that it is thought she was the same person who taught them. Elisabeth was born in 1815 in Glasgow, the daughter of George Easdon, a wright, and Janet Leckie. Her mother was dead by the time she worked the sampler and she includes her stepmother, Agnes Young, in the family at the top. 22 in (55.9 cm) x 22 in (55.9 cm).
Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.18 Christian Lindsay has worked the old Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, on her very imposing sampler dated 1805. Up at the top is a tiny row of alphabets with numbers along the bottom and small motifs scattered overall. As well as a verse, she includes the names of Barbara Wardlaw and Mrs Campbell. The latter is probably a teacher but the former is an aunt of her father's. The blue selvedges of the wool ground can be seen running down the sides and it is worked in silk. Christian was baptised on 22 February 1790, the daughter of William Lindsay, a wright in Edinburgh, and Christian Cochrane.
22¼ in (56.5 cm) x 16¾ in (42.5 cm).
Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.19 The rather peculiar building at the bottom of Margaret Low's sampler of 1783 has been identified as Montrose Town Hall, Angus. Worked in silk on wool she also includes a clock tower and one motif of a twisted stem reversed flower border as well as several initials. She has been identified as the daughter of David Low and Ann Lamb, being baptised at Craig by Montrose on 29 May 1768. 15¼ in (38.7 cm) x 14 in (35.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.20 Ann Wildgooss, aged nine, has worked an ordinary single cottage of the kind found in many Scottish towns, possibly similar to one she lived in. Above are several alphabets in red and green, all very neatly done and showing she was a competent embroiderer. She was born in North Leith in 1798, the daughter of Charles Wildgooss, a shipmaster, and Isobel Paterson. 13 in (33 cm) x 12¼ in (31.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

ABOVE AND DETAIL RIGHT. 6.21 Maern Kedglie, aged nine, worked her sampler in about 1800 and included the coat of arms and motto of Musselburgh, East Lothian, a seaport near Edinburgh. The coat of arms has been split as it should be three mussel shells and three anchors with the motto 'Honesty'. Maern has worked the house in satin stitch alternating the direction of stitch for each block, but she had trouble with the fence. The rear portion of a ship at the lower right is the same as one on Euphemia Doig sampler with a rather brightly clad angel above. Maern was born on 23 August 1787, the daughter of George Kedglie and Ann Cowan. 16½ in (41.9 cm) x 21 in (53.3 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

OPPOSITE. 6.22 Mary Hay's small sampler of 1813 is dominated by the coat of arms of the Incorporation of Fleshers of Edinburgh, of which her father William Hay was a member. Mary was baptised on 16 March 1798 in Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh, and her mother was Mary Porteous. She has included several sets of initials, a house, peacocks, carnations, dogs and rabbits. 11 in (27.9 cm) x 8½ in (21.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

a

b

c

d

a. Elisabeth Low, 1818, has large letters with cross stitch centre and curlicues round them; see 2.4.

b. Elizabeth Duncan, 1786, has an eyelet hole and a fancy alphabet; see 6.43.

c. A peculiar lower case alphabet found on some samplers, including Bethia Campbell's, 1737; see 7.6.

d. Square box-like stitch is the reverse of one way of working cross stitch, and below a curlicue alphabet, Helen Duncan, 1747; see 6.1.

a

a. Face in a castle doorway, detail from NMS A.1962.129.

b. Large decorative letters used by Elisabeth Snowie in 1830 emphasise the parents' initials; see 6.37.

c. Crowned initials from Margaret Anderson, 1821; see 6.24.

d. Crowned initials from Jane Kennedy, 1819; see 6.23.

b

c

d

6.23 Jane Kennedy's paternal grandparents, Daniel Walker and Jean Arrol of Old Kilpatrick, Dunbartonshire, had four children: Isabel (1772), Jean (1779), Margaret (1781) and Robert (1787). Widowed Jean Arrol married George Christie in 1797. George died in 1815 and Jean died as a 'relict of George' in 1829. Robert married Janet Frazer in 1802. All this family history is important because Jane has put *all* their initials on her sampler. 18 in (45.7 cm) x 13 in (33 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.24 Margaret Anderson, 1821, has worked her family initials very neatly under two large crowns. The rest of her sampler is worked with a pedimented house and other small motifs in silk and wool on linen. Margaret was the daughter of George Anderson and Janet Blaikie, born in 1815 in Galashiels, Selkirkshire. 21¼ in (54 cm) x 16 in (40.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


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THIS EIGHT WHEREIL Y DOWE TO SLIP
I GIVE MY SOUL TO CHRIS TO KEEP
WAK I SOW OR WAK I EVER
I GIVE MY SOUL TO GHRIS T FOEVER
1813
© Leslie B Durst
Collection

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL ABOVE. 6.25 Margaret Lindsay includes the rather awkward square-headed flower motif that may be meant to represent a rose. She dated her sampler 1813 and included a large number of initials, many in black indicating people who were dead. She has been identified as the daughter of Henry Lindsay and Jean Wilson of Wester Logie, Kirriemuir, Angus, baptised in 1795. 25½ in (64.8 cm) x 21½ in (54.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

Flower with square head

A curious motif that may derive from a flowering plant that appears to be a rose stem appears on Lady Anne Duff's piece that is tentatively dated to the seventeenth century (see illus.1.1 and illus.1.2). Those worked on later samplers show three rectangular heads, as if they are a square cut in half, and most date from the early nineteenth century (illus 6.25).[184]

Fountain with doves

A popular motif found on many samplers is a standing fountain with two bowls on a central pillar with water coming out of the top. Two birds, possibly doves, with wings outstretched are alighting on the lower bowl. There is usually a wreath of leaves enclosing the fountain, curving round the bottom and up the sides. This may have been intended to represent something such as the Fountain of Life, and is another very old motif found (illus 6.26).[185]

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL ABOVE. 6.26 A neat little sampler by Lucy Adinston, aged seven, showing the fountain with birds motif as well as alphabets, lily in a vase and a dog chasing a rabbit. Worked in silk on wool the blue selvedge lines are visible at top and bottom. Lucy was the daughter of George Adinston and Hellen Hay, and she was baptised in Heriot, Midlothian, on September 1772. 13¼ in (33.7 cm) x 10½ in (26.7 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

Gate of Heaven?

A curious motif is found on the samplers of Elizabeth Eiston, 1806, and her sisters (see illus 7.10, 7.11 and 7.12), as well as that of Jane Gray, 1839.[186] This motif probably represents the opening of the gates to Heaven revealing the City of God, as there are angels hovering over the sides.

Lily in a vase

Another old motif is a stylised lily in a vase. The flower often looks more like a tulip and there are usually some other flowers and leaves in the vase, with the central lily standing upright and the others wilting downwards (illus 6.27 and 6.28). This motif is reminiscent of the lilies in a vase often found on late fifteenth-century Netherlandish paintings of the Annunciation.

Lions

Small lions with tails curved over their backs in an S shape, and often worked in gold or yellow thread, are sometimes found on their own, for example on Margaret Anderson's sampler of 1741 (illus 6.29), or with the boxers as in Allison Ruddiman's of 1740 (see illus 7.8).

Octagons with motto

This motif consists of an octagon with a thistle in the centre surrounded by the motto 'I have power to defend myself and others'. The motto has not been traced but is possibly a translation of the secondary Scottish Royal motto, 'Nemo me impune lacessit', usually rendered in English as 'No one attacks me with impunity'. It is also the motto of the Order of the Thistle and some regiments of the British Army. The story of the possible origin of the motto is that a night attack by Vikings was foiled when one of them stepped on a thistle and cried out, thus alerting the Scots. The earliest example seen is on Jean Murray's sampler of 1740 (see illus 6.2 above), and the latest on Ann Whitson's in 1836.[187] Catherine Henderson, 1821, has a variation, 'Touch me if you dare'.[188]

This device of an octagon with a thistle is usually matched by another one, sometimes with a rose in the centre, or a vase of flowers and sometimes with a coat of arms; the Linlithgow girls were very fond of this latter arrangement.

Peacocks

On Scottish samplers these tend to have very distinctive tails with five to nine feathers each ending in a prominent 'eye'.

Religious themes

Apart from Adam and Eve, which possibly has more significance as a moral tale, religious motifs are not common. Marion Raith in 1799 appears to have Absalom caught by his hair in a tree (see illus 7.2), while Rebekah Mcdonald in 1823 has the Ark of the Covenant and two seven-branched candlesticks (illus 6.30; see also illus 6.31). Elener Henderson has the Tower of Babel and Solomon's Temple, while Jean Craigie has the Ark as well as Solomon's Temple, a wholly imaginary design because there are no illustrations of it in existence (illus 6.32). This latter is not found as frequently on Scottish girls' samplers as it is elsewhere in Britain. Jean also has the typical masonic emblem of set square and compass, a rather rare motif on samplers.[189]

Ships

Named ships are found on some samplers, probably because the maker's father was a ship master or captain. Ann Howie and Mary Higge, both of Ceres, Fife, worked *The Royal George* on their samplers in 1806, while Margaret Scotland names

OPPOSITE AND DETAILS OVERLEAF. 6.27 Janet Kinross has worked a half and half sampler in wool on linen, with the top part having alphabets and numbers in red and green including some joined letters on the second line, and the lower half with various motifs including peacocks and lily in a vase. Between the two parts are initials and the information 'Teached by Mrs Mitchell and Sowed by Janet Kinross in Dunblane Aged 12 18 Agust 1825'. Her parents were John Kinross, innkeeper in Dunblane, Perthshire, and Janet Reid, and she was their youngest child. 17¾ in (44.1 cm) x 14 in (35.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


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THIS PAGE. 6.28 Helen McLucky has marked her sampler 'Edinburgh 1813'. It is worked with large letters and figures in the top half with a central band of the lozenge and carnation motif. Below this are more alphabets and numbers and at the bottom a lily in a vase, more flowers and family initials, all within a honeysuckle border. Helen was the daughter of Robert McLucky and Martha Mackie and was baptised in Port Glasgow on 24 April 1803. 16¾ in (42.5 cm) x 14¼ in (36.2 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

OPPOSITE. 6.29 Margaret Anderson's charming small sampler of 1741 has a curious motif in the centre of two birds, possibly eagles or phoenix. Between the birds she has worked a pyramid of strawberries and below them a golden lion on each side and the remains of a boxer's 'bouquet'. She has also worked the first four of the Ten Commandments surrounded by a wreath of flowers and birds in the style of embroidery found on aprons and other garments of the period. It is possible that Mrs Anderson and Mrs Smith are her teachers. 14 in (35.6 cm) x 11¼ in (28.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.30 Rebekah Mcdonald has made the Ark of the Covenant the central motif of her sampler worked in 1823. On either side is a seven-branch candlestick. Rebekah is most likely the oldest child of Duncan McDonald, a wright, and Rankine Davidson of Dundee and was born on 16 April 1809. 15¼ in (38.7 cm) x 11⅞ in (30 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

6.31 There are three samplers by Margaret Dalziel Inglis. In this one, dated 1831, she has helpfully explained that the motif at the top left of her sampler is the 'Finding of Moses'. At the bottom right are Adam and Eve, and in the centre a three-gabled building with a man on the steps. One of Margaret's other samples is also worked with a religious scene, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, with Adam and Eve on either side of a vase of flowers with no serpent, while Eve appears to have been sunbathing and is wearing a colourful garment. Margaret was baptised in Cramond, near Edinburgh, on 28 May 1815, the daughter of Thomas Inglis and Mary Marshall, and was named after her maternal grandmother, Margaret Dalziel. 17 in (43.2 cm) x 20½ in (52.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL ABOVE. 6.32 Jean Craigie in 1800 has the masonic set square and compass to the right of a ship, and to the left of it Adam and Eve. She also includes Montrose Town Hall, a clock tower, Solomon's Temple at the bottom, a seven-branched candlestick and 'The New Church'. At the very top she has a deer motif found on seventeenth-century samplers. Jean was born 16 September 1788 in Montrose, Angus, the daughter of John Craigie and Jean Law. Her father was presumably a mason, which would explain why she has included this symbol in her sampler. 21¾ in (55.2 cm) x 12⅝ in (32.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

Ebenezer Donald as 'Capt of the *Neptain*' beside the ship on her sampler (illus 6.33). He was probably her maternal grandfather, as her parents are given as William Scotland and Jane Donald. Elener Henderson has 'Admiral Nelson Vanguard' beside a ship on her sampler.

A ship scene more difficult to identify is found on Euphemia Doig's sampler of 1814. It shows three ships in what looks like a harbour with people on the rigging and in a building, with 'Botany Bay' above (illus 6.34).[190] A descendant of one of Euphemia's brothers can think of no reason for her to use this wording. A virtually identical sampler, of the same size, with the same scene, border band and alphabets, but with a different verse and no date, was worked by Jean Donaldson, aged fourteen. Jean, however, does not name the scene as Botany Bay, but she was almost certainly taught by the same person as Euphemia.[191] Maern Kedglie includes the half ship found on Euphemia's sampler (see illus 6.21), and as Maern is known to have lived in Musselburgh and Euphemia in Leith it is possible that they obtained this motif from a similar source. See also illus 6.35.

Strawberry pyramids

Strawberries are the most common border pattern but several samplers also have a pyramid of strawberries.

Thistle

Thistles are found represented in various ways as well as in the octagons with motto. There are more stylised ones, such as that found on Jean Stevenson's sampler (see illus 7.13), and more decorative examples, as on Ann Duncan's sampler of 1826 (illus 6.36).[192]

OPPOSITE. 6.33 Margaret Scotland has a thirteen-octagon lattice with initials and crowns in each space. Below is a ship and 'Ebenzer Donald, Capt of the Neptain'; presumably this should be Neptune, and he was Margaret's maternal grandfather. Margaret was born on 28 October 1825 in Tulliallan, Perth, the daughter of William Scotland and Jean Donald. 17½ in (44.5 cm) x 12¾ in (32.4 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

Trees

A conventional tree design of diamond shapes with the bottom corner cut off is used, making the trees almost triangular. They resemble fir trees rather than the more usual trees that would have been seen in Scotland, but they are very easy to work in cross stitch. Other trees are taken from various contemporary embroidery designs.

Triangular motif

This curious motif may have developed from a name plaque on a grave with drapes on either side, as it often has initials or a name in the centre, and at the top is a stylised bow. It is doubtful if the girls had any idea of what they were embroidering, which probably accounts for the very different interpretations of this design (illus 6.37).

Patterns

Many of the band patterns used in the seventeenth century band samplers remained in use until the late nineteenth century. The most popular of these were variations on a twisted stem with reversed floral motifs (illus 6.38). In this design the framing stem has three twists separating flower stems worked with the flowers alternating right way up and upside down. Sometimes the flower has six petals and sometimes four, and it is probably meant to represent a pansy. Other varieties used are a tulip-like or debased honeysuckle, and occasionally carnations are found. Another band design of reversing floral motifs has the framing stem with cut-off corners, with a central flower and two others all growing out of a lover's knot, sometimes erroneously described as a Celtic knot. The flowers usually resemble carnations. A third reversed flower design, which is found less often, has an undulating stem made up of joined circles with a single lily-like flower on a tall stem.

Other band designs are found less frequently, but a set of samplers worked by Isabel and Jean Swan in 1748 and 1752 each show fourteen different patterns, nine of them common to both (illus 6.39 and 6.40). These start with simple lines,

ABOVE. 6.34 For some reason that is not clear, Euphemia Doig has embroidered 'Botany Bay' above a scene of ships crowded with people in front of a harbour. She has also worked, very neatly, three alphabets and a band of reversed flowers and lovers' knots. Euphemia was born on 7 November 1802 in Edinburgh, the daughter of Alexander Doig, a watch and clockmaker, and Margaret Livingston. 13 in (33 cm) x 12¾ in (32.4 cm). NMS A.1938.528.

OPPOSITE. 6.35 Margaret Doig was from Dundee, a major port on the Scottish east coast where the whaling industry was important, so it is appropriate that she included a ship on her sampler, together with the Lord's Prayer and thistles. She was the daughter of Alexander Doig, packer, and Margaret Christie. Born in 1820 she made her sampler in 1834. 25 in (63.5 cm) x 21¼ in (54 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

RIGHT. 6.36 Ann Duncan, Elgin, in 1826 included a stylised thistle on her sampler. Her father William was a tailor, her mother was Elspet Skene, and she was born on 1 October 1814, baptised on 11 June 1815 in Elgin, Moray. Research indicates that May Dunbar was most likely born in Inverness. 19⅜ in (48.3 cm) x 12⅜ in (30.5 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

OPPOSITE. 6.37 Elisabeth Snowie, 1830, has worked her parents' initials very prominently and below them a motif resembling a plaque. 'Abdn' above her name is a standard abbreviation for Aberdeen. Elisabeth Snowie was the daughter of William Snowie, farmer, and Janet Birnie, and was christened on 11 March 1811 in Old Machar, Aberdeen. 17½ in (44.5 cm) x 12¼ in (31.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


JB
1830
ELISABETH SNOW
© Leslie B Durst Collection

6.38 Betty Ballingal worked at least three samplers and in this one, worked in 1769, she combines alphabets and pattern bands including three reversing floral motifs and border. Betty was the daughter of Reverend John Ballingal, minister of Cupar, Fife, and Jean McIntosh, and was born in 1757. 15 in (38.1 cm) x 15 in (38.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

LEFT AND DETAILS OVERLEAF.
6.39 Isabel Swan, 1748, band patterns in wool on linen. She has worked increasing sizes of pattern bands starting with lines and ending with an elaborate reversed flower motif of roses and carnations. See 6.4 for family information. 20¾ in (52.7 cm) x 11¼ in (28.6 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


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RIGHT AND DETAILS OPPOSITE. 6.40 Jean Swan, 1752, band patterns in wool on linen. A similar sampler to that of her older sister Isabel, Jean has some different patterns ending with 'boxers'. 21 in (53.3 cm) x 11½ in (29.2 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

then zig-zags, followed by small vegetal bands increasing in size and complexity until quite deep bands are worked. Many of these smaller bands were used as border patterns.

An interesting motif that is seen occasionally is that of clasped hands, worked as a band or as a single motif (illus 6.41).

Two corner designs are sometimes found as a band. One has two stems set at right angles to each other with another in the centre, each topped with a large round flower head (illus 6.42a). The other is a spiky floral motif with a square central panel.

Less common is a small Greek key pattern design worked in the centre of a diamond shape, usually three rows deep and in two colours (illus 6.43).[193] Another unusual design is a lattice of thirteen octagons that have initials and crowns worked in the centre. Susanna Robertson and Margaret Sharp both worked this in 1749, but it is found as late as 1847 on a sampler by Anne Kennedy of Ballechin. The 1749 samplers each have the lattice held by lions rampant, while Elisabeth Chapman in 1816 has a lion and a unicorn (illus 6.44); but Anne Kennedy's animals look more like pet dogs.[194]

Another lattice-like pattern is made up of lines of circles intersecting to make the lattice, with carnation flower heads in the spaces. The earliest this has been found is on Martha Dunlop's sampler in 1755.[195] Jean Stevenson of Kirkintilloch used it in 1814 (see illus 7.13) and the latest date found is 1826, on that of Isabella Brown, Edinburgh.[196]

OPPOSITE. 6.41 May Wedderspoon's very neat sampler of 1826 is crowded with motifs around a pedimented house. To either side of the fountain is a clasped hands motif (detail above) sometimes found as a band pattern. May was the daughter of John Wedderspoon, a farmer, and Isabel Morrison of Dunning, Perthshire, born 27 September 1808. 19⅝ in (49.8 cm) x 15⅜ in (39.1 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

Upholstery

Some of the earlier samplers have small repeating patterns that are suitable for working on upholstery, such as chair seats and cushions. One, dated 1749, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which may be Scottish, has several 'flame' patterns as well as smaller diamond and square motifs worked in stitches, such as rococo, which were hard-wearing.[197] Betty Pleanderleath in 1745 includes two small squares of popular square and rounded shapes used for upholstery (see illus 7.14).[198] By the early nineteenth century these motifs were very old-fashioned, but Jean Speir still included one in her sampler of 1801.[199] In the mid-nineteenth century Berlin woolwork patterns were worked on some samplers (illus 6.45) and there are also samplers that consist wholly of these.[200] The patterns are small and were suitable for such articles as slippers, cushions, chairs, braces and hand bags.

VERSES ON SAMPLERS

One aspect of samplers that has attracted comment is the verses and phrases used by the girls. The morbid tone of many of these has been seen as surprising given the youth of the makers, but they reflect the religious, moral and life expectations of their period. Although several authors writing about samplers have reprinted verses, very few have tried to trace the source of the quotations, but the Internet has made this task easier, and digitisation of long out-of-print books in particular has led to many more unfamiliar phrases and poems being identified.[201]

Much of a child's education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was by means of learning by rote, that is, memorising answers to a set of questions of all kinds, from the Catechism to geography. This method of teaching gradually declined but poetry was taught in this way into the mid-twentieth century. Children and their teachers would thus know many suitable phrases

TOP LEFT AND RIGHT. 6.42a Corner motifs from Christian Robertson's sampler (see 4.1 for full sampler).

BOTTOM LEFT. Dog chasing a rabbit from Lucy Adinston; see 6.26.

BOTTOM RIGHT. Triangular motif from Elisabeth Snowie, 1830; see 6.37.

OPPOSITE. 6.43 Elizabeth Duncan in 1786 worked a neat and rather formal sampler with four different alphabets and family initials in the top third. Across the centre are trees, lily in a vase and two geometric band patterns, one a Greek key motif. At the bottom is a rather charming scene of deer in a park, and the whole is surrounded by an unusual strawberry border. 15 in (38.1 cm) x 13½ in (34.3 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.


ABCDEFGHIKLMNOPQRSTVUWXYZ&12345678
ELIZABETH DUNCAN 1786 AD SD MD KD 910
ABCDEFGHIKLMNOPQRSTVWX
ABCDEFGHIKLMNOPQR
ABCDEFGHIKL
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OPPOSITE AND DETAIL ABOVE. 6.44 Elisabeth Chapman, has the thirteen-octagon lattice with initials and crowns in the spaces supported by two dog-like creatures, which presumably represent a lion on the right and a unicorn on the left. She also has little dogs in kennels. 15¼ in (38.7 cm) x 11⅝ in (29.5 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

and verses to put on their samplers. If these are compared to the published poems there are often slight variations in wording, such as might well be made when something is learned by heart rather than copied from a text, though there are sometimes variations in texts between editions of well-known authors, as they often revised their work. Copyright was not recognised for most of the period, so that pirated copies of popular poetry and prose might well be published both in Britain and abroad, a practice that annoyed many well-known authors. Works by those less well-known were often published without any acknowledgement of authorship and this can mean that it is difficult today to find who wrote a piece. They often turn up like this in the compilations of poetry that were popular in the period. Hymns have suffered in a different way, with many verses being withdrawn that no longer reflect contemporary ideas or that are seen as offensive.

Elegant Extracts or Useful and Entertaining Pieces of Poetry selected for the Improvement of Young Persons is only one of the compilations of poetry and prose published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century particularly for children of school age. It was compiled by Vicesimus Knox (1752–1821), an English essayist and minister who was headmaster of Tonbridge School, and it was first published in 1787, then enlarged and reprinted in 1801. Judging by the number of copies that survive, it was a popular work.[202] It contains paraphrases of several Psalms, Pope's 'The Universal Prayer', several of Isaac Watts' hymns, and long extracts of Young's *Night Thoughts*. There was also a companion volume of prose pieces. It is probable that compilations like this provided the source for many of the verses quoted on samplers. The year 1770 saw the publication of *The Lady's Magazine*, the first of what became a growing number of monthly journals for women that combined fashion with fiction, history and poetry.[203] Today these are usually considered only from the point of view of their fashion news and plates, but nearly every volume would contain one or more poems, often submitted anonymously and written by both men and women. For example, *The Lady's Magazine* in January 1792 had four pages of verse, some signed and some only with initials. Some poems are, quite frankly, lacking in any poetic merit, but this was the period when poetry was more highly regarded than fiction. Poets such as Byron, Wordsworth and Scott were hugely popular and amateur poets followed the fashion. It is quite possible that the young sampler makers or their teachers wrote some of the verses that

OPPOSITE AND DETAIL ABOVE. 6.45 Isabella Chalmers in 1850 has included a small vignette of a cottage, probably taken from a Berlin pattern. The rest of her sampler is more traditional. She was the daughter of John Chalmers, innkeeper, and his second wife Janet Fergusson, born on 27 September 1836 in Perth. 20 in (50.8 cm) x 19¾ in (50.2 cm). Leslie B Durst Collection.

cannot at present be traced. They would also have been very familiar with most of the biblical phrases used, which today most people would not recognise. Many of the verses are not the first verse of a hymn or poem, and may well have been dropped from more recent editions of hymn books.

Verses on Scottish samplers

Scottish girls did not use either biblical or secular verses to anything like the same extent as girls living elsewhere in Britain or in America. Biblical phrases appear in the first part of the eighteenth century, but hymns and secular poetry do not start to be used until the 1780s. The most popular verses are from the Bible, particularly the book of Proverbs, as well as the Ten Commandments and a metrical version of the Psalms first pub-lished for the Church of Scotland in 1650, and based on the work of Francis Rous, an English Puritan theologian and Provost of Eton. There was also a metrical version of the Ten Commandments in use in Scotland, much punchier than the one found in England (see 'Have thou no other gods but me', Appendix 2). Both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland used the 1611 translation of the Bible as ordered by King James VI and I, known today as the Authorised Version (or as the King James Version), but they were, and still are, separate churches and each had their own metrical versions of the Psalms for use in services. These were much easier for children to learn and so were encouraged by ministers and teachers. Before the eighteenth century hymns were not popular in either church for doctrinal reasons, but over the next hundred years Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, John Newton and William Cowper all wrote hymns that are still found in the hymn books of most Protestant Christian denominations.

Secular poetry was less popular, but in the samplers seen, Alexander Pope is represented by quotations from his *Essay on Man* and 'The Universal Prayer'. There is only one quotation each from Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns.


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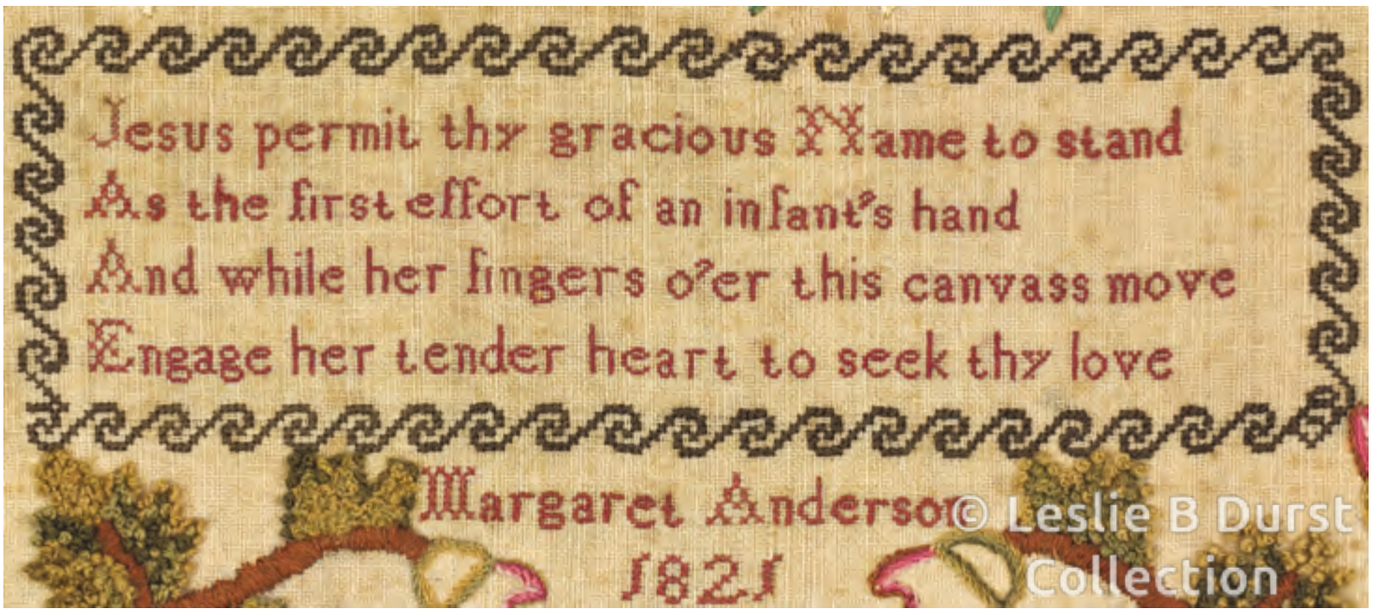
NOTRE PERE QUI ES AUX CIEUX TON NOM SOIT SANCTIFIE TON REGNE VIENNE TA VOLONTE SOIT FAITE EN LA TERRE COMME AU CIEL DONNE NOUS AUJOURDHUY NOTRE PAIN QUOTIDIEN PARDONNE NOUS NOS OFFENSES COMME NOUS PARDONNONS A CEUX QUI NOUS ONT OFFENSEZ ET NE NOUS INDUI POINT EN TENTATION MAIS NOUS DELIVRE DU MAL CAR A TOI EST LE REGNE ET LA PUISSANCE ET LA GLOIRE AUX SIECLES DES SIECLES AMEN
AM GLASSFORD HER SAMPLER



OPPOSITE. 6.46 Ann Glassford has worked a lovely letter sampler with the Lord's Prayer in French. It has not been possible to identify her despite the number of initials she gives, but there is a Glassford parish near Glasgow. 12 in (30.5 cm) x 10¼ in (26 cm). Micheál and Elizabeth Feller Collection.

ABOVE. 6.47 Margaret Anderson, 1821, 'Jesus permit thy gracious Name to stand . . .' See plate 6.24 for the full sampler. Leslie B Durst Collection.

This appears to be a much narrower range than is seen on samplers made elsewhere in Britain or in America, but within these limits the choice is wide and suggests that the sampler makers had a degree of freedom to choose the pieces for their work. It is interesting to note that very few of the verses or phrases are used by more than one girl, except for those from the Bible. There is also one sampler in a typical Scottish style that gives the French version of the Lord's Prayer, perhaps combining two aspects of the girl's education, knowledge of French and needlework skills (illus 6.46).

There are also several verses and phrases used on samplers in both Britain and America for which no author has been found. One is probably adapted from book ownership, along the lines of 'Janet Smith is my name and Edinburgh is my dwelling place' etc., and others have been found on gravestones. Probably the most popular one with no firm attribution is 'Jesus permit thy gracious name to stand / As the first effort of an infant hand', either of four or six lines, with the wording varying slightly (illus 6.47). It has been ascribed to the Reverend John Newton (1725–1807), a prolific hymn writer, but it does not appear in his published work. In *Notes and Queries*, 25 March 1871, vol 7, p. 273, someone signing himself (or herself) SMS, in reply to an enquiry in an earlier edition, asserts that the verse was written by the late Reverend John Newton for a sampler by his niece Elizabeth Catlett, but no firm evidence has been found to substantiate this. Newton wrote letters to Elizabeth while she was at boarding school in the late 1770s and early 1780s but the content is mainly on religious topics and there is no indication that she was working a sampler.[204] Elizabeth was informally adopted by Newton and his wife and was in fact a cousin. After the death of his wife in 1790, Elizabeth looked after the increasingly frail Newton. She spent a year in Bethlem Hospital in 1800 but recovered and later married. The earliest use of this verse so far found by any girl is by Isabella Taylor, 1783.[205]

See Appendix 2 for the verses.