

## How our Tatting Princess was designed and worked

By Jennifer Williams



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My tatting groups used to work with others in our area to mount a display of tatted items for the annual craft fairs held in Cardiff. These items were not going to be for sale; they were to show various ways that tatting is used today. We decided that it was necessary to have a different display each year to encourage people to stop and look rather than walk past because they had seen it before. Our demonstrators would also be there to show how tatting is worked and to encourage anyone to have a go if they wanted to.

One year Dinah Craig, a lady in one of my groups, suggested to me that, as we had quite a few tatters in our groups, we could make our own project for the display the following year. We discussed this at the next meetings and thought we would like to make a picture of an angel; but how could this be achieved?

Personally, I don't like tatted faces because they don't look realistic enough, but even if we had our angel facing to the side she would still need to have a face. We gave this a lot of thought but couldn't find a solution. What we needed was a drawing or painting of a face, but there was no one in our groups with that skill. However, Dinah's son did photography as a hobby so she asked him if he could transfer a photograph onto fabric. We knew that this is done in the fashion trade but could it also be done using a home printer?

At the next tatting meeting Dinah brought a photograph, which her son had taken of his wife, facing sideways, with her hair tied back, wearing a camisole top and holding her hands as if she was tatting. Dinah's daughter-in-law doesn't tat so Dinah had to show her how to hold her hands for the photograph.

New tatters had joined our groups from time to time so the skill levels varied from beginners to advanced tatters. I decided that for everyone to have a chance to display their work on this project I couldn't design a dress that was in one piece or one motif to be worked by everyone then joined together. The dress of our angel was going to be made out of strips of tatted lace, and for this, handkerchief edgings would be ideal.

Our angel needed to be large to allow space for everyone to have their work included, so the finished picture would be 34 x 24 in (86 x 61 cm). Angels usually have wings but I decided that these would distract from the dress so our 'angel' became our 'Tatting Princess'. Everyone was asked to tat an edging approximately one inch (15 mm) wide and

17 in (43 cm) long. They could use any pattern they liked and size 20 or 10 thread, which had to be white.

I used midnight blue velvet fabric for the backing and laced this onto a piece of thick cardboard. Dinah ironed the photograph, which was only from the waist up, onto calico fabric. We chose calico because it is tightly woven, so less likely to show any frayed edges, and the right colour not to be visible round the edge of 'the lady'. I trimmed the calico to just a thread or two round the edge of the figure then glued it in place on the velvet. The tatted edgings were arranged to form the full length skirt and some were cut for the bodice and sleeves. For the hair I used a hank of crochet cotton and this was held back in a tatted net snood. The crown was tatted in a silver thread and mounted on silver card cut to shape, then glued in place on the head. The shuttle that the Tatting Princess is holding is two shuttle shaped pieces of card stuck together in the centre and allowed to dry so that some thread could be wound round it. The edging that the Tatting Princess is working on was tatted by Dinah using fine sewing thread.

Finally, the Tatting Princess was backed with another piece of thick cardboard just a tad smaller than the picture so that it wouldn't be visible round the edge. Around this I glued two lengths of ribbon to enable the picture to be hung.