

15: Openwork Scrumbling

Openwork scrumbling is more or less what people were doing to make **Irish Crochet Lace** from the 1850s

The main differences between what they were doing then and what we do now are:

❖ **They** used mostly a single, very fine, uniformly plain, smooth, white or ecru, cotton or linen thread for their lace

❖ **We** mostly use thicker textured and often multicoloured 'hand-knitting' yarns of different thicknesses, made of a large range of natural and man-made fibres

❖ **They** created their work mainly by designing it on paper first, including motifs of stylised flowers, leaves, etc; these would be made separately, then basted down in position on a full-size template, so they could be joined and the spaces between them filled with a lacy mesh

❖ **We** ... do much the same, except we are less interested in finalising the overall pattern in advance, our motifs are less formally conceived and arranged and we rarely use a template, preferring to make the extended fabric out of hand; this is because we are experimental 'doodlers', not part of a co-operative or making quantities of complicated garments for sale to order, as they mostly were

❖ And ... ?

- 'Openwork' doesn't have to be 'all holes'
- Just because you would normally be looking to join motifs in openwork with some form of lacy infill, it doesn't mean you can't sew or crochet some together directly
- More care and ingenuity are required to darn yarn ends invisibly into openwork

