

Making Peg Dolls & More © 2014 Margaret Bloom

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SAFETY NOTE

The toys in this book have been designed for handling by children aged three years and above. All materials used to make the toys should be checked for safety and labeled as non-toxic. All loose parts should be carefully glued or otherwise attached to the dolls, and younger children should be supervised to avoid choking if dolls (or other small pieces associated with the dolls) are placed in the mouth.

DISCLAIMER

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Making Peg Dolls & More

toys that spin, fly and bring sweet dreams



Margaret Bloom
Photography by Paul Bloom



Hawthorn Press

To my parents,
who have shown me
their love in so many ways.



And when you work with love
you bind yourself to yourself,
and to one another, and to God.
And what is it to work with love?
...It is to charge all things you fashion
with a breath of your own spirit...

Kahlil Gibran



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Spinning Tops & Dreidels	00
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A Forest of Fireflies Mobile & Rod Puppets	00
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Herbal Comforts & More Sewing Projects

An Herbal Dream-Pillow & Peg Doll Dream-Companion	00
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Foreword

As so much that is fragile in our technological world, the domain of childhood is endangered: play is quietly disappearing from children's lives. Yet, play is the heart of childhood and childhood is the soul of humanity! The young child's drive to play is innate; it is the root-force of well balanced child development. Through play the child makes meaning of her world, life makes sense! And the senses are the fundamental tools the child uses in this pursuit of meaning. Children not only make sense of the world they interact with, of equal importance, through play they also have direct impact on this world. They experience themselves as fully empowered partners in the give and take of life.

Unlike many sense-depriving toys, interactive screens and other products marketed to young children, which actually stand between the child and the true exploration of our beautiful green earth, this little book is an antidote and a balm! The child's senses will come alive while working with wood, wool, paint and felt! When complete, the doll will offer the empowerment of wish-fulfillment, having any adventure the small child can imagine. Certainly in the 21st century the clarion call for a new education is Creativity. Is creativity not the art of Imaginative Play, all grown up? Creativity is cultivated in hours, years really, of child's play. Like play, it is flexible, intuitive, trusting, self-initiated and directed, responsive to the present yet inspired by the invisible.

It is fitting that Margaret Bloom has quoted Kahlil Gibran on her frontispiece. Perhaps it is not

immediately apparent that all work is 'Love made visible,' but all handwork made for, by and with children is the embodiment of the love between the child and the helping adult. One year, in my Kindergarten class, I invited the children's parents to participate in a doll-making workshop. I planned that they make a small doll for their child, one that, like these beautiful peg dolls, did not require great amounts of skill or time. At the end of two and a half hours each child had a little symbol of their parent's love, dressed in colorful felt. Fittingly, we called them the childrens' 'lovies.' At morning, each child walked through the door and ran to fetch their doll from the 'lovie basket.' Doll accompanied child throughout the whole day: sailing in a toy boat, inhabiting a castle, carried in a pocket, whispered to at nap time! These dolls were imbued with love and imagination. They were deeply rooted in the parent-child bond. And they, because of the child's imperative to play, had the wings of the child's creativity to carry them aloft.

With this book in hand you, also, can give your child a little taste of this real magic, a strong brew of love, commitment, thread, felt, and flights of inspiration. The small act of making toys with and for your child not only offers her years of imaginative play, but in its own subtly powerful way reclaims childhood for future generations.

Sharifa Oppenheimer 2014



Preface

When the first *Making Peg Dolls* book arrived in my craft shop in Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, all of us were instantly captured by the charming and inspiring way that Margaret Bloom managed to turn the simple craft of doll-making into an art form and a labour of love. Many of us had seen or even possessed our very own little peg dolls but nothing compares to the purposefully designed and meaningful ‘wee wooden folk’ which Margaret Bloom introduced to us in her book. These wooden dolls have brought endless joy to my customers (children and adults alike) and have encouraged many people around the globe to make their very own peg dolls.

My passion is to get people crafting, and almost daily I hear customers say that they are not creative. I believe wholeheartedly that EVERYBODY is creative! In my experience, many people are led to believe at a young age that they are not creative and lack the skills to create. A thoughtless comment may have been made by a teacher, parent or grandparent. I have heard stories where a child did not quite follow the instructions of a teacher but ventured out on their own to then come up with something a little bit different from what was expected. A child’s belief in his or her creative ability is all too quickly squashed by a shaming comment, with consequences that go on into adult life. As a mother of four I too have had to adapt. When I set out for the first time to do some biscuit baking with my very young children, I had it all mapped out in my own mind: the perfect biscuits to be presented to their



dad in the evening after an afternoon of harmonious togetherness! I remember my despair when I realised that my children had very different ideas about how to make the biscuits. I realised that I had to let go of any expectations I had, and just LET THEM BE! Any intervention from my side should have been aimed at supporting *them* in bringing *their* ideas into fruition, and not my own! So our first biscuits were perfect little piles of shapeless dough!

When children craft with their hands, it is primarily about the creative process that takes place and only secondarily about the finished outcome. As adults we have probably learnt at some point to always finish one thing first before starting another.



Children create in the moment, and not finishing a project is not a big deal to them unless they worry about an adult’s judgement. I strongly believe in the importance of letting children BE in the moment. If we can do that, their creative confidence is sure to blossom and bloom!

This new collection of peg doll and sewing projects by Margaret Bloom are perfect for children and adults alike. There is something for everyone: the perfectionist who wants to copy every detail; the inspired who may need a little encouragement to go on creating; the teacher who is looking for small, manageable and economical craft projects; the parent who wants to craft with, or for, children; and any child who wants to make their own little friend. I can’t think of a more versatile craft activity that suits all ages and skills. As someone who is currently writing a craft book on needlefelting (*Making Needlefelted Animals* (title TBC), Hawthorn Press), I truly appreciate the creative inspiration, care and discipline it has taken to write such a widely accessible, inspiring and contemporary book. It is a pleasure to leaf through this colourful book and be inspired by the simplicity of these creations, which can only have come from the heart and a place of love; love for children and for the spirit of curiosity and creativity. So, this is my message to anyone who is going to make a peg doll: Feel as free as a child and enjoy the process, wherever it takes you. The outcome can only be perfect

Steffi Stern

Author's Introduction

Since the release of *Making Peg Dolls* in early 2013 I have been touched by the kind notes and sweet photos of peg dolls created by readers from all over the world, but there is one letter which has never been far from my heart and mind during the time I have been working on this second book. The letter was written by a mother who told the story of a peg doll made by her young daughter in the image of a classmate who had died suddenly. Her daughter brought the peg doll she had created to school and placed the doll on the desk of the little boy who had passed away. Here is the rest of the story as told by her mother:

Something truly magical happened when the peg doll was placed where the little boy had sat in school. The children in his classroom started to interact with the peg doll, and children who were finding it hard to talk about their friend, talked to peg doll. The children sat with the doll and he was hugged and cradled in little hands. The teachers were amazed and touched by what was happening. They were overcome and saddened by the tragic loss of this lad, and to see the children coming to terms with him passing by means of this peg dolly was meaningful and very touching. I was in tears when the school told me.

The peg doll now stands on the memorial table. I have been told by some children that the peg dolly is looking after all the tributes left on the table. The little doll will then be put in a memory box for the parents of the lad and his family.



Prior to the birth of my elder son I worked in the field of counseling and often used therapeutic art in my work with patients, but I find this story especially tender in the way such love and healing was brought forth through the hands of a young child.

In light of this story, and in tribute, Hawthorn Press asked me to include within this book a project specifically focused on comfort and healing. And so I created a Rainbow of Herbal Comfort Dolls. These dolls can be made for anyone who needs a reminder of love and light; the dolls are small enough to be carried in a pocket, and, with a bit of assistance these tiny dolls can even be stitched up by a young child (later on in this book you can see a doll created by my 10 year old son for my own mother.)

In addition to the herbal comfort dolls, within this book you will find a range of projects which appeal to various skill levels. Many of the toys require sanding wood and painting (perfect tasks for the small hands of young children) while other projects are designed for the skill level of an older child or adult. Additionally, most projects can be completed within an hour or two. As the mother of two young children, my own time for creative work is limited, and so keeping the projects small and manageable was a consideration. However, a larger consideration was this – I wanted to bring peg dolls off the shelf and out of the doll house to spin, fly and travel about in the larger world. Between the covers of this book you will find patterns for dolls to sit on your pincushion and help mind your stitches, dolls

flying through the air on dragons and bright winged birds, dolls to accompany children through the day as they face the world and through the night as they dream on their pillows.

Whether you are making something for yourself, or handcrafting gifts for friends or a beloved child, I hope these little dolls will twirl and fly their way into your heart, and bring joy and comfort wherever they are needed.





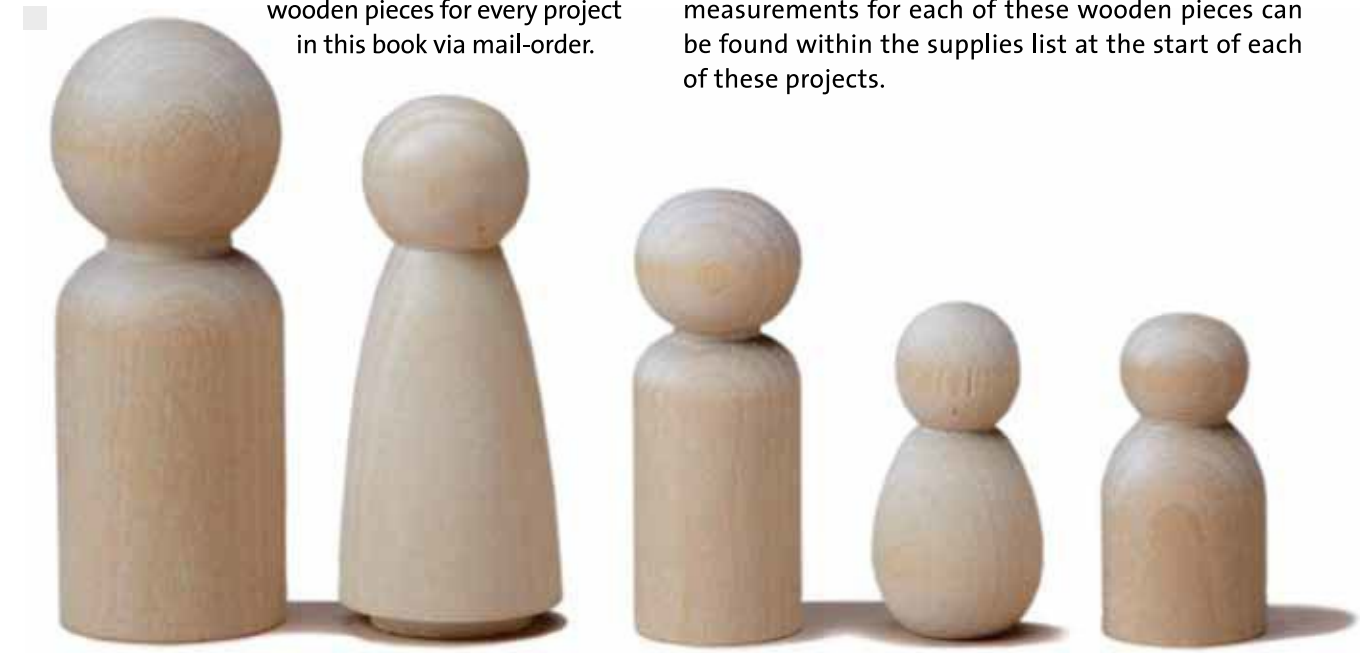
Materials and Techniques

Peg Dolls and Other Wooden Pieces

Natural, unfinished wooden pieces are usually not expensive, and I tend to buy in bulk so that I have extra supplies on hand for my next project (after all, if one spinning top is fun, why not make 3 or 4 or 5?). Most craft supply stores stock a variety of plain wooden shapes, however if you cannot find wooden pieces in your local shops, there is a resource guide at the back of this book listing places where you can purchase peg doll bases and a full assortment of wooden pieces for every project in this book via mail-order.

I have used five different sized doll-bases for the projects in this book: 6 cm (2³/₈ in) standard wood-people pegs, 5 cm (2 in) angel-pegs, 4 cm (1⁵/₈ in) boy-pegs, 3 cm (1³/₁₆ in) tot-pegs and 3 cm (1³/₁₆ in) baby/bee shaped pegs. If you have purchased doll-bases which do not match the sizes or shapes of the wooden bases I have used, you can simply adjust my designs to fit your dolls.

Additionally, there are a number of other wooden pieces such as wheels, wooden beads and dowels used for projects in this book. Specific measurements for each of these wooden pieces can be found within the supplies list at the start of each of these projects.





STRAIGHT STITCH

The straight stitch can be used in many ways. Evenly spaced stitches can be used to form leaves, flowers and stars, and tiny stitches can be used to create a delicate face.



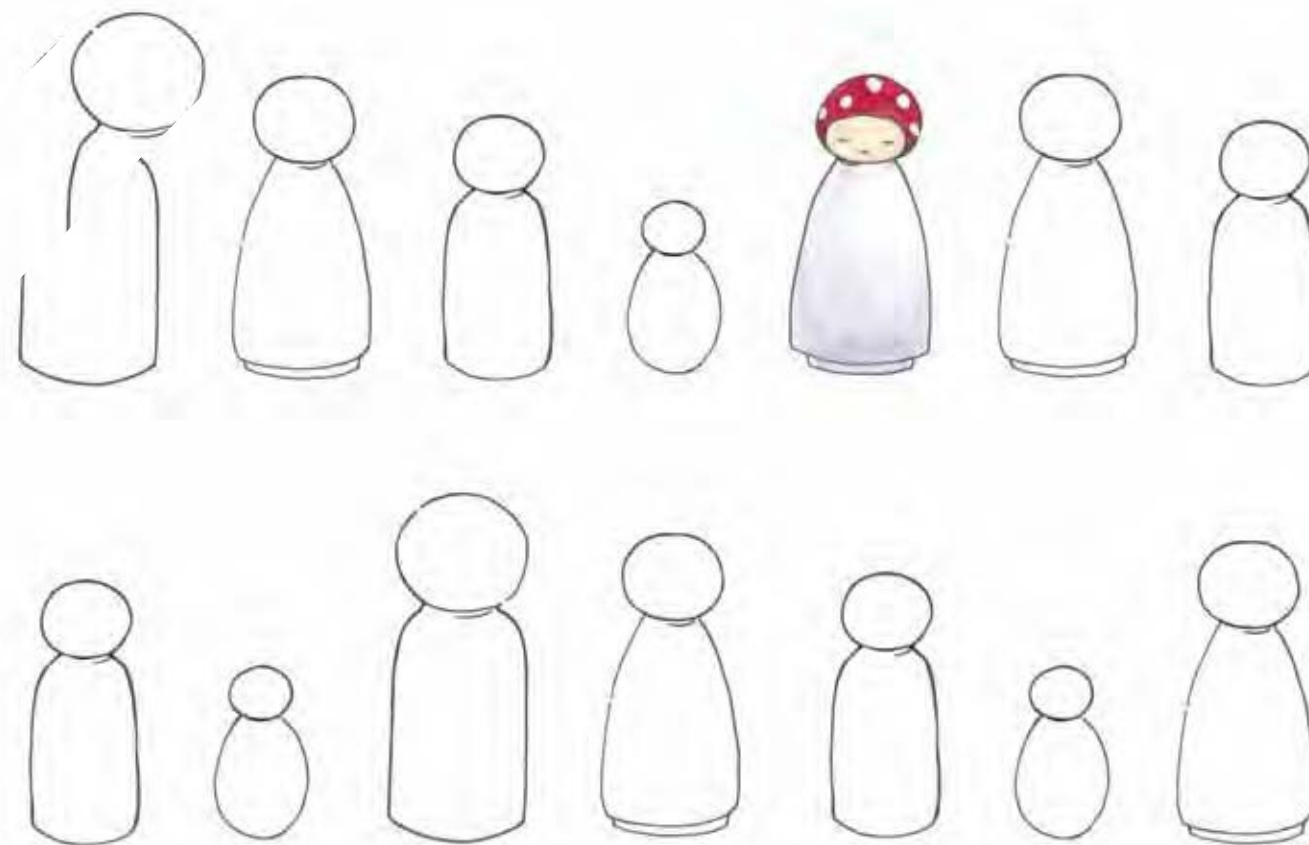
BACK STITCH

Bring your needle through the fabric from the back to the front. Reinsert the tip of the needle down through the fabric about 3 cm (1 1/8 in) to the left of where the thread is emerging and then up again 3 cm (1 1/8 in) to the right of your original starting point.

Pull the thread all the way through, reinsert the needle 3 cm (1 1/8 in) to the left, and then up again 3 cm (1 1/8 in) to the right of where the thread emerges from the fabric.

Doodle Page

I often make small sketches of my dolls before I set to work creating them. Perhaps you would also like to experiment with drawing faces and designing colorful costumes. Doodle away! Have fun!





Part One

Simple Projects



Stringing Beads & Spool Snakes

One of the most basic toddler toys is a set of stringing beads. This easy project can be created by anyone, but it is an especially nice craft for an older child to make as a gift for a younger sibling or friend.

In our house, it is not enough to merely thread our beads together – the fun continues when we each grab the end of a long string of beads and take off running through the house. Much to the delight of my two sons (and to the chagrin of the cat), the bead strings make a happy clatter as they rattle along our wooden floors. This favorite game is how I came up with the idea of painting a face onto the head bead, then securing the beads in place to make an impromptu pull-toy snake.

The large-sized, plain wooden spools and beads required for this project can usually be found at craft supply shops. If the craft shops near you do not stock unfinished beads and spools, the wooden pieces can be purchased by mail order from shops listed in the resource guide at the end of this book.

SUPPLIES

Selection of large wooden beads in a variety of shapes (I suggest at least 7 of each size/shape so that there is a variety to play with!)

3.5 cm (1³/₈ in) sphere shaped beads

2.5 cm spheres (1 in) sphere shaped beads

2.5 cm (1 in) or larger – cube shaped beads

3.5 cm (1¹/₂ in) or larger – disc/wheel shaped beads

5.2 cm (2 in) tall spools

1 cm (3⁷/₈ in) bead (for the snake's nose)

Sandpaper (optional)

Heavy-weight string, cord or shoelaces

Watercolor paint & brushes

Red and black pencils for drawing a face

Beeswax polish and a soft rag or paper toweling for application

PVA or white craft glue

Scissors

SMALL HELPING HANDS

This is a perfect project for small helping hands! Most children over the age of three could help sand the beads, choose the paint colors, apply the paint and afterwards, help rub the painted beads with a little bit of beeswax. They could also help choose the pattern in which the beads will be strung and then string the beads for a snake. Setting up the nose for the snake and tying knots are the only steps in this project for which young children will need the assistance of an adult.

Painting the beads

1. Prior to painting, you may choose to give your beads a quick once-over with some sandpaper to smooth any rough portions.
2. Choose colors, apply paint to your wooden beads and allow to dry.
3. Using a paper towel, rub the beads with a small amount of beeswax polish. This will remove excess paint, preventing it from rubbing off onto little fingers when the beads are played with..

NOTE
Younger children should be supervised at all times when playing with this toy to avoid choking if the string or beads are placed in the mouth.

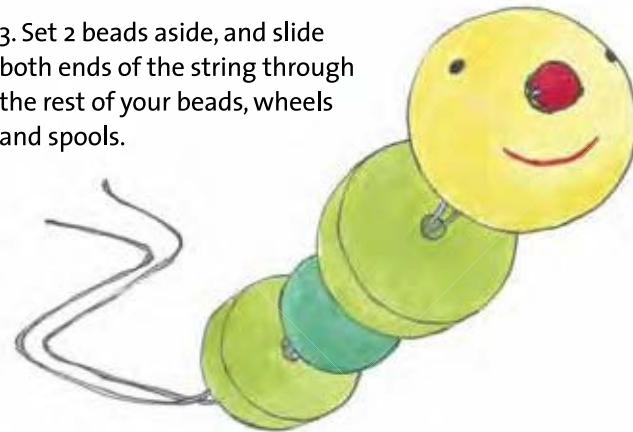
Stringing a wooden snake

1. Cut a piece of heavy string or cord approximately 2 meters (78 in) long. Coat the ends of your string with a little bit of PVA or white craft glue and wait 10 minutes for the glue to dry. This will make it much easier to string your beads!



2. Start off by stringing the small 1 cm (3/8 in) bead for your snake's nose and slide it to the center (i.e. half-way point) of your string. Then take both ends of the string and insert them through the hole in the bead designated as your snake's head. This will leave you with the string looped once through the nose and both ends of the string re-emerging from the same side of the snake's head. Make any adjustments to the beads so that the two halves of the strings emerging from the snake's head are the same length.

3. Set 2 beads aside, and slide both ends of the string through the rest of your beads, wheels and spools.



4. For the final bead of your snake, insert one piece of your string through a bead, and then slide this bead up to meet the rest of the snake's body. Next, using both halves of the string, tie a secure overhand knot right behind this final bead.

5. To keep both pieces of your string together, tie the two parts together at 9 cm (3 1/2 in) intervals using overhand knots.

6. When you have approximately 9 cm (3 1/2 in) left of string, insert one end of the string through an extra bead and pull the bead to meet the previous knot. Make an overhand knot using both ends of the string to secure the bead in place. This final bead will add a nice finishing touch to the pull-string of your snake.

7. For the final step, get out your pencils and draw a face on your snake. The snake I made has a cheerful cerise nose and a friendly smile. He's hardly snake-like at all, but his happy smile is irresistible...



Peg Doll Necklaces & Zipper Pulls

SUPPLIES

4 cm (1⁵/₈ in) boy-pegs
 3 cm (1³/₁₆ in) tot or baby/bee shape pegs
 Thin ribbon, colorful twine, or yarn
 Sandpaper (optional)
 Beeswax polish and a soft rag or paper toweling for application
 A handheld drill and a 1 mm (1/₁₆ in) drill bit
 A woodworking vice and soft plastic vice jaw pads
 13mm (US size 216¹/₂) screw eye rings
 Watercolors (or paint of your choice) and brushes
 Colored pencils
 PVC or white craft glue
 Glitter
 Scissors



These necklaces and zipper-pulls are a fun way for children to take their peg doll friends with them wherever they go. Peg doll necklaces are a perfect complement to any stylish outfit, while the zipper-pulls can be added to brighten up a winter jacket or school bag.

SMALL HELPING HANDS

As much as children love receiving dolls created by an adult, it's my experience that they love creating their own designs even more. For this project, an adult will need to drill a hole in the head of the peg doll and insert the screw-eye, but after that, the doll can be handed over to be decorated. While the paint is drying, a child might enjoy choosing a colorful ribbon.

Preparing the doll

1. Secure one or two dolls at a time in a woodworking vice. Make a small pencil mark right at the top of the head of each doll, and drill $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) down.
2. Remove doll(s) from vice and insert screw eyes into the hole(s) at the tops of the heads.



Decorating the doll

1. Prior to painting, you may choose to give your doll a quick once-over with some sandpaper to smooth any rough portions (especially on the head of the doll where you plan to draw or paint a face.)

2. Paint the hair and body of your doll. Add a face with paint or pencil. If you used watercolor paint, you can apply a small amount of beeswax polish to the hair and body if you wish. Note: *I don't recommend using polish on the face as it can cause the paint to smudge.*



3. Decorations made from felt and glued onto a doll may become damaged when the doll is worn. A fun option is to add touches of glitter. I painted little wings on the backs of some of my dolls. When the paint was dry, I used a paint brush to apply a thin layer of glue over the wings and then sprinkled on some glitter.

4. For a necklace, cut approximately 76 cm (30 in) of yarn, ribbon, or colorful twine, thread it through the screw-eye, use an overhand knot to secure the ends and loop over the head of an eager child. For a zipper-pull, cut approximately 15 cm (6 in) ribbon or twine, thread it through the screw-eye. Then loop the thread through the end of the zipper pull-tag and secure to desired length with an overhand knot. Use scissors to trim ends of excess ribbon or twine.

