



Embroiderers' Guild News

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

Enfield & District Branch www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk October 2013 Autumn Issue 11

Chairman's Report 2013 by Suzanne Twomey

As the days draw in it's time again to reflect on our year. It has been a year of highs and lows, the lows being of course the passing on of two of our treasured and long standing members – Muriel Evans, our President and founder member and Chris Wilson a committee member. I'm sure we all have fond memories of their exquisite work and their invaluable contribution to the Guild. However we are very flattered that Anthea Godrey, an artist of many talents and an inspiring presence has agreed to become our new President. We would also like to welcome our three new members, Rachel, Lisa and Chris.

As usual we have had an excellent programme of events over the year, including the very interesting talk by Janet Bright on the Foundling Hospital, Debbie Lyddon's fascinating exposé on how she uses the sounds and sights of Norfolk as a basis for her embroidery, Dorothy Tucker in her innovative interpretation of Kantha Embroidery (we are delighted she has agreed to do a workday for us in the next year) and Rachel Gorman's evocative use of colour in her intricate designs. Because of a clash with the Regional Day there were only two workdays this year – one on transfer printing with Mary Gamester and one beading day with Eliza MacClelland, which although very enjoyable was poorly attended. Workdays are an expensive outlay for the Guild but excellent value for what we pay. However, prices are rising constantly and we will need to charge more for these days and ensure we have enough people attending to make them viable.

We are able to balance the cost of speakers at our monthly meetings with a programme of in-house events that have also been very popular. In July was the usual strawberry and cream members' evening and in December at our Christmas party we were delighted to welcome back Anthea to judge the entries - congratulations again to the winner Helen Wilson and to Jackie and Sheila for Highly Commended. Jackie's work was also the Members' Choice.

Pictures of all these are available on our web-site gallery. In addition we had an evening making silk paper candleholders (many thanks to Ailsa) and two evenings working on our in-house Enfield map project - many thanks too to Helen and Jackie for organising this – we hope it will be as successful as our Elizabethan project and plans are already afoot to display it with some old maps of Enfield at the Dugdale Centre.

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Diary Dates

10th to 13th October
Knitting & Stitching Show at Alexander Palace.

26th October
Work day – Felt bag including felt making with Michelle Dibdin.

9th November
Fabric and threads for sale with visit from Empress Mills.

14th December
Christmas Party. Bring and share refreshments, bring and buy sale.

23-25 January 2014
Creative Crafts Show Sandown, Esher www.sccshows.co.uk

30 January – 1 February 2014
Crafts4Crafters Westpoint, Exeter, Devon www.craft4crafters.co.uk

13-15 February 2014
Creative Crafts Show Maldon, Essex www.sccshows.co.uk

27 February – 1 March 2014
Creative Crafts Show Malvern, Worcs www.sccshows.co.uk

Branch Competition – Deadline December! By Ailsa Bulger

SEASONS is the topic for our annual branch competition to be judged by members at our Christmas meeting. There are no restrictions on size or technique – the aim is to encourage everyone to have a go! Entries are brought along on the day, numbered, and then displayed anonymously. This year you will be given 5 tokens to use for voting with the opportunity to place all 5 tokens

by your favourite entry, 1 by each 5 entries or any other combination you choose. The winners receive small prizes and certificates.

It's the taking part that really counts! So do have a go and help make the afternoon interesting for everyone. Photos of previous entries on our branch website gallery may inspire you.

Dates of Tuesday afternoon meetings at :

Friends Meeting House, Winchmore Hill.
22nd October
26th November.



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Quite a number of you attended the tea at Southgate College, a change from our past Christmas lunches, and next year we are planning a country themed dinner perhaps in April since Christmas is so busy for everyone. Tuesday afternoon sessions (every 4th Tuesday of the month at Friends Meeting House in Winchmore Hill) have continued, although attendance has been affected by illness. Even so, some members have still had time this year to make banners for a local church and to help Ursula in her knitting ventures (sensible jumpers this time)!

One of our priorities for the coming year will be to find a venue for our Exhibition. We haven't had an exhibition for several years now and this gives the Guild a focus as well as a forum to attract new members. We are negotiating with Forty Hall (possibly for a themed exhibition) as well as the Dugdale Centre, so hopefully may have news for you soon.

In spite of winning third place in the De Denne competition numbers for Young Embroiderers have been dropping in the last year. We are trying to attract new members and are committed to continuing for a while, but we will need more members to make this viable.

The Embroiderers Guild as a whole has been gearing up this year – have a look at their new web-site if you have not done so already

(<http://www.embroiderersguild.com/>) The Eastern region have also been busy, and there is a lot of information on their web-site about the Winter/Summer schools and their Distance Learning City and Guilds courses (<http://www.embroiderersgildeast.org.uk/>). The Regional Day in Romford was a real success in spite of the heat, and about 8 of us attended. It's the first time I have attended a Regional Day and I was very impressed, particularly by the fascinating headline talk on the history of colour. Next year's regional day will be in Ipswich and Anthea will be giving a talk. Despite the distance it would be really nice to have a strong contingent from Enfield present. There seems to be a lot going on in and around London in the embroidery world, including the opening of the V and A collections at the Clothworkers Centre for Textile and Fashion study in Kensington. This is an exciting time to be embroidering and we hope you will like our next year's programme. Please let us know if you have any ideas for talks or workshops or anything you would like included so we can think about it for the following year.

Of course this branch wouldn't run without the people who make it happen, so many thanks to the committee for their work; to Jill for the newsletter, programme and web-site; for the ladies who run the sales table and all who make the tea; and last but not least, to you for supporting us and allowing us to indulge our passion for embroidery.

CAMAC Student Design Competition By Jackie O'Malley

The CAMAC organisation runs an annual student design competition for wallpaper design. This year for the first time they introduced a textile design competition in conjunction with the Warner Archive in Braintree, and approximately 200 textile students were given one of about 20 images of textiles in the Archive and asked to produce a textile response. As a student on the Advanced Textile workshop at Morley College I was invited to submit a piece.



I only had about a month to come up with an idea and execute it as I was working on another exhibition at the time! As is often the way a deadline focussed my efforts and I produced this work which is in three layers.

The bottom layer is a screen print of an old letterhead of the Warner Company overprinted with an extract from the textile which is intended to represent the printmaker who first made the fabric. The second layer is a machined grid with machine stitch like a drawing partially coloured to represent the designer. The final layer is an extract of the print worked in cross stitch to represent the person who would have bought and used the fabric in the 1950's.

My piece didn't win but was highly commended and was chosen to be made into one of 12 postcards which are on sale in Braintree at the Archive. CAMAC is currently taking part in London Design Week and I was surprised to receive an invite to the private view of their exhibition and to hear that my piece had won a prize in the public vote. I was even more surprised to find that my work has been used on the London Design Festival website to advertise the exhibition!

Summer School, 2013 By Ann Dugdale

Ailsa Bulger and Ann Dugdale attended the EG Summer School at Belsey Bridge Conference Centre in Suffolk. It was a long drive from North London but well worth the trip. They both attended Lynda Monk's workshop. Lynda is a multi-media textile artist and her remit for the Summer School workshop was 'Use of foil'. The workshop was quite intensive and a lot of different techniques using foil were employed, mostly in gold, silver and bronze. A lot of samples were made to start with to get people used to the techniques, and then everyone produced a large piece that could be used either as a wall hanging or as a book cover.



As a 'fun' exercise whilst waiting for paint to dry the group also produced some rather nice bits and bobs using Tyvek and scrim, fixing some to postcard sized cards and covering it with white Gesso. A few pictures of Ailsa's and

Ann's results are included below. Anyone not familiar with Lynda Monk's work can find further information on her website: <http://www.purplemissus.com>.

The lessons provided by Lynda were intense, and everyone worked really hard. However, this was compensated for by the copious amounts of food, all good quality home cooking, that all participants were plied with! The Centre is comfortable and the Summer School there is highly recommended. Other workshops on offer this year were 'goldwork' and 'stuffing', the latter a sort of Trapunto technique for producing small 3D artworks. No doubt there will be similar things on offer next year.



Using embroidery in a tribute to a colleague

by Pat Cuckle

The untimely death of a talented and widely admired member of our team occurred at the end of December. Bella had worked in the education system for more than 25 years and after the news of her death tributes began to pour in. Our team wanted to collect the tributes and compile an album to give to her family and I offered to make a cover. Bella was a regular visitor to Forty Hall and had seen the Stitch in Time ... exhibition there; I had talked about its beginnings and its progress and she admired the final piece. Bella liked the textures, colours and techniques in the work.

Bella was a stylish woman and liked rich colours so I immediately thought of using one of my favourite Liberty prints for the album cover – a good opportunity to use something from my chest full of pieces of fabric. Recently I have been experimenting with embellishing pieces of fabric with stitches, beads and sequins. I tried different ways of making the piece (in the short time that I had) and settled on a panel about A4 size. I quilted it in a fairly random way using my machine and used beads and thread that I got from the sales table to emphasise shapes and colours in the fabric. I stitched

the panel to the dust-jacket cover made from a piece of plum-coloured fabric from my chest. My inspiration was partly from work by the Saheli ladies in our joint project for Forty Hall.

My work is a very simple piece compared to the sophisticated pieces that we see in our embroiderers' group but (though I say so myself) it has been admired by many colleagues. More importantly, I enjoyed the project and feel that I have made something that Bella would have liked. It is my own small contribution to the memorial event that will take place soon when her family will be given the album which is now full of warm, humorous and extremely moving memories of such a wonderful woman.



Margaret G. Nicholson By Anthea Godfrey

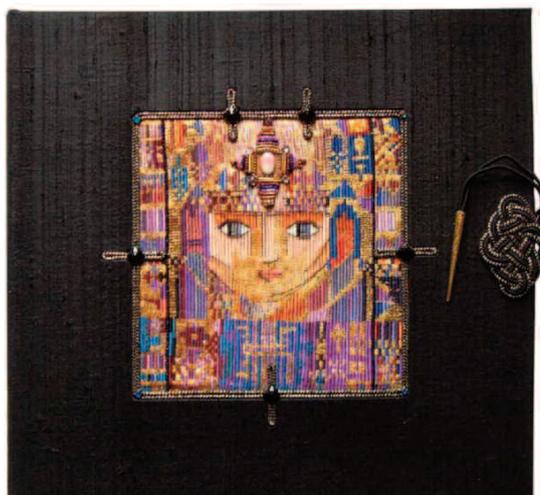
Margaret G. Nicholson followed in the footsteps of her grandfather, father and brother. At an early age it had become very clear that her chosen career would have something to do with the arts. After five years of training at Sheffield College of Art she graduated and entered a midlands consortium as a dress designer until the outbreak of war in 1939. After the war she returned to her career with renewed vigour, and having enjoyed teaching in the community she decided to pursue a path in design education becoming a full-time and peripatetic design teacher. Margaret became an examiner in the world of embroidery; she joined the Craft Council of the Women's Institute and became a member of both the Embroiderers' Guild and the Society of Designer Craftsmen.

In 1965 she joined the staff of The London College of Fashion which was known for its commercial fashion embroidery. Her deep desire to impart to her students a proper and complete design ethic necessitated a massive change to the ethos of the course she ran. It wasn't long before this course, rooted in machine embroidery and tambour beading, had developed into one under-pinned by visual studies and a creative process recognisably in the tradition of schools of art and design. Margaret became the sole City and Guilds of London examiner in embroidery and assistant examiner for the Associated Examining Board.

She undertook the design and embroidery for commissioners for royalty, the church, films and private individuals. She has travelled widely in Japan, New Zealand and Germany where her work found enthusiastic buyers. In 1965 she was asked to design and make the Lady Banner for Coventry Cathedral-known as the Mothers' Union Banner until 2007.

Retirement scarcely saw any abatement in her energies. Her concern for her craft and the desire to see the skills she employed appreciated and handed down to the next generation continued to fire her

astonishing capacity to produce work of the highest order. Three great passions formed her embroidery: the medieval method of couched gold (Or Nue), hand beading, derived from haute couture and surface stitchery, all of which were so important in her teaching and all of which are time consuming and exacting. Concentration and skill were the bedrock of her craft. Margaret was an inspiration to other creative people; to her students and colleagues she has been a role model for the life of a designer-craftsman- industrious, inventive, and generous with both her time and vast experience. The exhibition at this year's Knitting & Stitching Show is by way of being a celebration of her life's work in what would have been her 100th year. She was very fortunate in living until the age of 93. This enabled her to create a large body of very time consuming work since her retirement in 1980, which drew extensively from all the experiences she had over a long and productive life.



Nepal

On our arrival in the Kathmandu hotel we were presented with pale yellow "silk" scarves and had the customary red "tika" painted on our forehead. We were taken to the local Stupa - a circular temple where some of Buddha's remains are reputed to be interred. This temple was used mainly by exiled Tibetans who were perambulating around the Stupa and praying, some using the prayer wheels and some prostrating themselves on the ground. The whole area was surrounded by enticing shops. The following day we went to Durbar Square in the rain to see many Hindu temples and were pestered by the sellers of embroidered bags, jewellery, etc. In the courtyard of one temple we were told the story of the Living Virgin Goddess, Kumari. She is a young girl who had to pass stringent tests at the age of five in the hopes of being selected to be the Living Goddess for as long as she remained free of blood loss (before menstruating). She was looked after by a man and woman and could be visited by her parents.

According to our guide, upon leaving she was able to live a "normal" life with a good pension and able to marry. She appears at a window daily to show herself to the believers. I believe our guide paid a sum for her to be visible to us. She was dressed spectacularly with head-dress and lots of make up. We were not allowed to

take photos, but post cards were on sale outside. The next morning we had an early morning call for our flight to see the Himalayas and Everest. We were given a map to identify the mountains and had two visits to the cockpit. A treasured memory.

bad enough, we had to keep knees tightly squeezed into the elephant to avoid being scraped on the trees. It was pleasant through the forest and near the river, but we did not see much wildlife - two rhinos, one peacock, some deer and some birds. No tigers!



The next day we went to Pokhara surrounded by the Annapurna Range of mountains, passing through a village with houses owned by Gurkhas which were more spacious and attractive than the houses of "ordinary" people. We later visited the Gurkha museum.

Near our hotel was a shopping area called Lakeside! Many of the shops were selling pashminas, mock-suede bags, purses and jewellery. The purses were embroidered with motifs sewn in chain stitch in bright colours. I bought one and on close examination I think they are machine-stitched. The

curtains in our Pokhara hotel had pelmets with beautiful embroidery and lots of Shisha.

Our penultimate day started with a pre-dawn coach ride up to Sarangot in the hills above Pokhara to view the sunrise over the Annapurna range. Another memorable experience. Nepal is a very beautiful country with the mountains, villages and amazing fertile valleys and farms.

Later that day we had a long drive to the Chitwan National Safari Park where we stayed in chalets. We were taken to the local village in bullock carts to meet the villagers who live in a very fertile area, growing mustard and many vegetables. Later in the evening the village girls demonstrated some dancing.

Early next morning we boarded elephants for our ride into the safari park – four of us to an elephant. I was at the back with legs dangling over the side which was a very uncomfortable experience. Getting on was

Fibre East Review

by Jill Bennett



In July I went to the Fibre East Fair, an amazing craft fair in Redbourne Community Hall, Ampthill. It is not a traditional craft fair as its ethos is to support British wool. Showing how wool is used in the many crafts - including spinning, weaving, felting, embroidery, knitting and crochet.

I use the wool tops and adventurous yarns in my own embroideries, so was able to buy

stock of wools and interesting accessories to incorporate into my work. There were some amazing hand made wools and yarns, mixing feathers, sequins and beads in with the wool. The colours were vibrant, or completely the opposite – undyed straight from the sheep. Talking about sheep there was an ongoing display of sheep shearing, which was really interesting, there was also a fleece market, which meant you could buy the fleece you had just seen sheared...

It was a very interesting day out, it was also an extremely hot day, so seemed odd to be looking at woolie sweaters and all things for autumn winter.

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