



Embroiderers' Guild News

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

Enfield & District Branch www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk October 2015 Autumn Issue 15

Chairman's Letter from Suzanne Twomey

At last, after many years, we finally have an exhibition to enjoy and to show off about. Our exhibition at Forty Hall has been the focus of our work this year. It was at this point, when I saw everyone else's professional and creative efforts, that I really had to get going! Everyone has worked hard for this, but particular credit must go to Ailsa for coordinating the work and then at the end for lacing up so many exhibits (including mine)!

The Meet the Artist sessions this Autumn will also be an opportunity to show the public how skilful our art really is. Our collaboration with Forty Hall has been very fruitful this year, including the Strawberry Fair in June, when some of our kind volunteers helped children make small embroidered strawberries and the National Stitch Day in August, both of which have led to interest from new members. So thanks to anyone who has volunteered for these events.

Thanks too must go to Jackie and Helen for organising our group project on buttons which has enjoyed it's first public outing at our January meeting. These group projects are a great incentive to get everyone participating and learning new skills. The committee is working on ideas for a new group project, as well as our commission from Forty Hall to produce two crewelwork panels for permanent display (this will probably take several years to complete). If anyone has any ideas or would like to lead, please let us know.

There were only three workshops this year – one had to be cancelled because of a clash of dates with the regional day, but the others were as entertaining and value for money as usual. In our new venue at Chace Community College we had a go under Ailsa's leadership at a variety of dyeing techniques, producing enough to solve background embroidery issues for a long while! Jamie Malden was unable to lead a block printing workshop so Helen and Ailsa stepped in with a day of experimenting with block printing and mono printing, including using homemade gelli plates. Anne Griffith's Japanese Stab-bound books day was also a success. Many of the talks at the meetings this year seemed to have an educational theme. Susan Kaye who gave a talk on the history Royal School of Needlework is not only an excellent speaker but also a fount of knowledge. Clive Barnett told us about City and Guilds, Chris informed us about Banjara stitching and Ailsa did a talk on the history of crewelwork with two portfolios from the Embroiderers Guild, part of their initiative to share their vast archive with their members. These talks were balanced by a wonderful demonstration of silk painting by Sue O'Hea and talks by Brenda Harley and Cas Holmes.

This is your Guild and we hope you all enjoy what is on offer. However sometimes attendance at some of these events has been lower than in previous years and we really need some feedback on what members would like, so please let us know as Chris is beginning to plan the 2017 programme. As ever the committee have been tireless in their enthusiasm and commitment and I would like to thank them as well as everyone else who has volunteered their services this year and for the valuable work they do.

Diary Dates

24th October 2015
"Working with Scrim"
Chase Community School.
9-30am to 3-30pm

14th November 2015
Cass Holmes "Stitch stories"
Branch meeting
2-30pm

19–21st November 2015
The Stitching, Sewing &
Hobbycrafts Show
ExCel, London
www.ichfevents.co.uk

12th December 2015
Christmas Party.
Members' competition:
"Stained glass windows"
2-30pm

19–21st February 2016
Unravel
Farnham Maltings
Farnham, Surrey
www.craft.farnhammaltings.com

3–6th March 2016
Knitting & Stitching Show
Olympia, London
www.theknittingandstitchingshow.com

Dates of Tuesday afternoon meetings: 1.30pm to 4pm
Friends Meeting House
Winchmore Hill
27th October
24th November
26th January 2016
23rd February 2016
22nd March 2016
Everyone welcome.
www.theknittingandstitchingsho

Branch Competition – Deadline 12th December!



Four Elderly Members went to Letchworth... By Wendy Chrichley

Edna, Pam, Ursula and I arranged to view Ailsa's Cultivate exhibition on 25th July. We parked in Potters Bar station where we discovered the user-friendly parking meters were covered. This entailed having to use a touch screen machine. In the absence of an accompanying six year old grandchild, paying for our ticket took rather a long, frustrating time! Why does adding a car number plate present so many difficulties? Fortunately we had help from a very patient young man behind us in the queue. Our arrival at Letchworth Arts Centre was beset with more problems, and laughter, trying to use the lift. We had to give up and use the stairs!

As usual, the exhibition was held in a very suitable gallery. The exhibits were many and varied and it was interesting to see the different techniques used. The theme of Cultivate was inspired by Jackie Smith having a difficult day dealing with an elderly relative.



She went into her garden and laid a sheet down and splattered it with many coloured dyes with some stitching. She called it Free From Reality.

Mary Wooden's 3D leaves in a bunch was the first exhibit. Her Eden Project was a large piece using dyed materials and stitching depicting the serpent in the tree. She told us that she liked to make embroideries for her church. She also displayed Path to Paradise, inspired by David Hockney and Knotted Tree in purple French knots on felted background.

Ailsa's body of work included 3 pictures called Florentine Fancy using marbling, and machine stitched leaves, Fantasy Flowers made of felt in a felted vase, a framed piece called Beechwood with raised, machined leaves, above this was a mask called Beechwood Spirit. A circular piece of thread-wound wire called Tree For All Seasons. 3 pastel-shaded cushions, 3 framed pieces Moonshine at dusk, midnight and dawn.

3 standing birds similar to the ones made by the Young Embroiderers called Odd One Out. She also contributed to the Teddy Bears' Picnic (made by several members) which was laid out on the floor. This consisted of cups, plates of food, delicious cakes, fruit, sandwiches and sausages. I may have missed out something. Which begs the question, how does she find the time?

At the window end of the gallery stood a very large scarecrow called Frank with stuffed animals, straw, etc. sprouting all over his suit. This was made by Jenny Giles amongst other of her exhibits, including a canvas chair.

There were quite a lot of felted pictures with machine or hand stitching. I particularly liked Judith Coxell's trees on needle felt using expandaprint and thermo

In a pot hanging from branches various sizes of Dorset buttons by Judith Coxell. This was interesting to those of us who had made buttons for our Button Box display.

We enjoyed a delicious lunch in the Gallery cafe, served by very helpful and pleasant people. We all enjoyed a very happy day out and managed to get home without any more trouble with modern technology!

EG East Regional Day 2015 By Ailsa Bulger

Three branch members and a friend travelled to the Open University on the 4th July to explore "Concrete Cows and Roundabouts", our local regional day event. We were greeted by friendly members of the Milton Keynes Branch all wearing aprons embroidered with the dancing concrete cow motif designed for the event. Checking in was conducted at tables covered with beautifully embroidered cloths which I would have liked to examine more closely.

There was limited room for displays which were restricted to one small branch exhibition and the members' competition entries.

The morning lecture by Ruth Issett on colour was inspiring and lead into the afternoon session "Speed Dating with a needle." Each member had



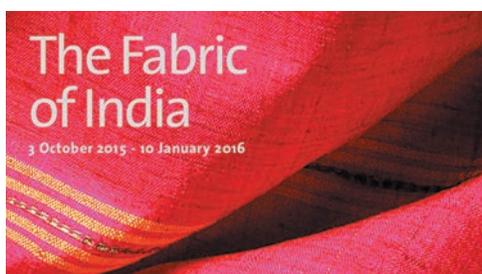
been allocated a table number on registration and this created a mix of members from different branches. We chose threads and material scraps to follow up Ruth's talk with our own colourful creations on small squares of calico. The speedy aspect involved passing on the box of materials to the next table at the sound of the whistle and choosing more from a new box. I enjoyed meeting Trish Zechariah who is helping to organise next year's event at St Albans. (Note the date now: 2nd July 2016) I admired her beautiful needle case which resulted in Chris booking her for a work day next April.

We rounded off the day's celebration as the stars and stripes cover was removed from a table laden with cup cakes for us to share.

The Fabric of India at the V&A: 3rd October–10th January 2016

This exhibition is the highlight of the V&A's India festival. The first major exhibition to explore the dynamic and multifaceted world of handmade textiles from India from the 3rd to 21st century.

India's rich natural resources for making and decorating textiles are unrivalled. Its varied geographical regions and climates provide a huge range of plant fibres and natural dyes for the cultivators, weavers, dyers, printers and embroiderers of the subcontinent. Craftspeople use an astonishing range of skills to process raw materials and produce regionally distinctive dyes, weaves, prints and embroideries. India's embroidery is almost as



famed as its weaving and dyeing. Specific regional styles have developed over centuries, using a huge variety of stitches and materials. The area most associated with embroidery is north-west India, where it was produced by men in professional workshops and by women at home. In the 17th century, the finest Gujarati ari (hook) embroidery was highly prized by both the Mughal court and European consumers. Other outstanding local styles include the kantha embroidery of Bengal, phulkari from the Punjab, and chikan whitework embroidery from Lucknow.

3rd October – 10th January 2016
Tickets cost £14.00, free to V&A members.

Sweet Success by Chris Fraser and Ailser Bulger



New stitchers

Visitors to Forty Hall, Enfield, joined Enfield and District Branch of Embroiderers' Guild to celebrate National Day of Stitch between 12 and 5pm on Saturday 1 August. Inspired by richly decorated samples, and helped by branch members, around 30 stitchers of

all ages and abilities crafted their own 'calorie-free' chocolates to take away.

A crewel work panel, started at last year's National Day of Stitch, was on show together with 'Button Box', the most recent branch project. The afternoon generated a great deal of interest in the Embroiderers' Guild and, after chatting with members, several people left clutching branch information as well as their chocolate!

This was a good opportunity to advertise our current exhibition and walk through visitors on their trip around the house were encouraged to look for our Elizabeth I portrait. We were pleased to welcome several people who had come in response to advertising and even brought some of their own work to share with us. The press photographer invited by Forty Hall stayed most of the afternoon giving us a very good spread in the Enfield Advertise and Gazette.



Sweet success

Staff at Forty Hall were excited to receive our Crewel work panel finally completed from the national stitch day 2015. They were disappointed to realise it couldn't be attached to the bed head in the Raynton bed room without re-covering it, so we are still waiting to see it in situ.

Thailand By Helen Brown



In April I had two wonderful weeks exploring Thailand. We spent time in Bangkok, historic Chiangmai and a beautiful tropical island in the south.

I had imagined that I would return with metres of silk for wonderful projects but it was in fact difficult to find at a reasonable price or I was offered Rayon. But, I had fun looking and ended up in some interesting places. After politely perusing the exquisite, but hugely expensive sarong fabrics in one shop, I was invited upstairs to see their collection of antique textiles. They were surprised by my enthusiasm – I doubt many tourists are interested!

Chiangmai is in the north and there were several shops selling ethically sourced textiles products made

by the hill tribes people. I particularly liked the small purses decorated with fine needlepoint and minute applique work. The town museum also had a good collection of traditional costume.

In Bangkok I had to visit the famous Jim Thompson house. He was an American working in Thailand in the 1950's who was very concerned that the production of traditional silk techniques were being lost and he then almost single handedly revived the art. The house itself is of great interest containing the extensive collection of Thai art and craft amassed by Jim Thompson.

Finally, my brother had a suit made! I was rather sceptical but was proved totally wrong. He was measured once at the beginning of the holiday. Two weeks later the suit was ready, hemmed and fully lined and fitted perfectly!



'Liberty in Fashion' – at the Fashion and Textile Museum

"I was determined not to follow existing fashion but to create new ones." Arthur Lasenby Liberty

For inspiration go to the Liberty exhibition at the Fashion and Textile Museum. Liberty has been at the cutting edge of design and the decorative arts since 1875. The exhibition explores Liberty's impact on British fashion, from Orientalism and Aesthetic dress in the 19th century, through Art Nouveau and Art Deco in the early 20th century, and the revival of these styles since the 1950s. Liberty Art Fabrics and the textile design studio take centre stage as the internationally recognised leader in floral, paisley



and patterned prints and dress fabrics.

Liberty in Fashion celebrates the 140th anniversary of the company. The exhibition charts Liberty's history as 'the' fashionable place to shop as well as its role as the source and originator of key trends in fashion history. Over 150 garments, textiles and objects demonstrate Liberty's strong relationships with designers since 1875, from Arthur Silver of Silver Studio to collaborations with Jean Muir, Cacharel, Yves Saint Laurent and Vivienne Westwood. Susan Collier and Sarah Campbell for Liberty 1961–77.

9 October 2015 – 28 February 2016

Madeiran Embroidery By Suzanne Twomey



their own designers. Agents were used to distribute the work to the women of Madeira to whom in a context of agricultural poverty it was of great social importance and because of this a unique hand embroidery tradition managed to survive the advent of industrial embroidery.

Today there are still many embroiderers on the island and at least three large embroidery houses. The embroiderers themselves are paid by the number of stitches in the design, measured using a curvimeter. Designs are produced in-house on paper and the lines perforated using a pedal operated machine. The design is transferred to the fabric by rubbing a wad of cotton wool dipped in indigo dye over the surface. The pieces of work are distributed and when they come back checked for quality and errors

repaired. Then the work is washed and starched ready for sale. Many of the stitches used would be familiar to anyone doing whitework, but have their own names – Ponte Chao stitch, Matiz, Arrendados and Caseados. Particularly special to Madeiran embroidery are the small raised dots, called Seguidos and large sweeping leaves stitched in Bastidos, a raised satin stitch. They also use a version of Richelieu embroidery and shadow work. What is amazing is the fineness of the work and the amount of stitching involved. This is what makes the embroidery so expensive – up to £5000 for a white tablecloth today.

When I went on holiday to Funchal this summer I was expecting exotic gardens and plenty of hours around a warm, blue pool so it was quite a surprise to find myself enjoying an embroidery workshop in one of the island's leading embroidery houses, Bortal. Madeira is known principally for two exports, its wine and its embroideries, and the latter industry is still very much alive. Embroidery probably came to the island with the first settlers from Portugal but embroidery really took off as an industry when it was promoted by an Englishwoman Elizabeth Phelps in the 1840s. By the end of the 19th century embroidery was the main source of income for many Madeiran families. The industry was dominated by the large embroidery houses, many of which were German, with



My little effort was a corner of a small handkerchief. My teacher was the head of the factory floor. She didn't speak a word of English so we needed a translator. She was however, cheerful throughout and constantly engaged in chit chat with all the other women on the floor. Although she said I did very well, I think she was humouring me! I suspect she found my speed of work slow but I did have the opportunity to see her at work – and at great speed. It was a wonderful experience, particularly seeing behind the scenes and I would recommend this to anyone.

The Forty Hall Big Sunday 7th June 2015 by Wendy Chrichley

Seven of us assembled in the Crystal Room at noon. Chris Fraser brought patterns, felt and thread to make strawberries. Six other members were in attendance to help – Edna, Terina, Marian, Claire, Debra and Wendy. At first we were worried that no people seemed interested as they passed through. This was mainly due to the many activities going on in the grounds of Forty Hall on a very sunny day. Happily, later on lots of children and parents visited our table and we were then inundated with willing participants. The strawberries were obviously an attractive item. Many of the children had not done any stitching before, nor some of their mothers! It was very difficult at times to help two children at once, especially as the felt strawberries needed to be stitched, stuffed and decorated. The children I helped saw the veining on the leaves and wanted theirs to be the same, which took even more time! I was concerned that my rushed stitching was not up to standard. We all agreed that it had been an enjoyable experience, but next time we undertake a similar enterprise we need more helpers. I handed out some information leaflets to the people who expressed an interest in joining the Guild.

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Name Badge Kit

If any members who have not already made a name badge and wish to do so, kits prepared by Chris Fraser are available from Wendy Chrichley on the entrance table.

Beads

Some time ago I was given a lot of beads which I keep stored at home. If anyone needs beads at any time please ask me if I have anything suitable. They are mainly seed beads. From Wendy Chrichley

Knitting Machine

Sue Walker is looking for a Brother knitting machine with punch card. If anyone has a redundant machine lurking under the bed or in the attic please let her know.

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