



# Embroiderers' Guild News

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

Enfield & District Branch [www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk](http://www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk) April 2013 Spring Issue 10

## Chairman's Message

First of all I would like to pay tribute to Chris Wilson who died a few weeks ago; she was a staunch member of the Guild and an excellent and prolific embroiderer. She was for many years on the Guild committee and did excellent work for us as a Treasurer; it will be sad not to see her friendly face on arriving for a members' evening. Four members represented the branch at her funeral.

I started to write this when the weather was a cheerful 9 degrees and the sun out, but I think I was over-optimistic in thinking the cold winter was over and spring with all its refreshing colours just round the corner. Our February meeting was however a breath of fresh air as Debbie Lyddon talked us through the way music and the Norfolk landscape had inspired her to create her 22 foot long mural. She passed round many samples and it was fascinating to see her record of the development of the project. The hall was packed that afternoon and it was so nice to see such good attendance and a new face – welcome to Ann Dugdale. It has been good to welcome Julia Gray, Helen Wilson, Linda Moss, Holly Cheng and Lisa Howes as new members in 2012.

Dorothy Tucker's talk on Kantha Embroidery in March was another breath of warmer climes. Her examples of this beautifully simple technique inspired us to hope for a workshop in the next programme. Last but not least, congratulations to Helen Wilson for winning first prize at the Christmas Competition for her mixed media-painted and stitched piece in which Anthea praised the way she captured the moment frost forms on the trees. It was sad not to have Muriel giving out her prize but a delight as usual to have Anthea judging our competition.

**Suzanne Twomey**

**Muriel Evans by Joyce Shilingis**

As a member of Enfield Embroiderers guild for many years, I first met Muriel Evans when I enrolled on a day course to do goldwork at the then Theobalds College. I was asked by her if I would like to attend her weekly embroidery class. I jumped at the chance but felt very nervous at first as my skills were very basic. Over the 25 years she taught me so many things about colour and stitchery, and although for the first few months I seemed to spend more time unpicking my work than making progress I will always be grateful to her for her making me want to show the best results I could with my work. Even to this day if I see a stitch sticking out at the wrong angle and am tempted to ignore it, I can almost feel her looking over my shoulder and have to change it. Although in her later years she was unable to do very much herself after a stroke she was still there as a mentor when I was unsure about something I was working on. I will sorely miss her as I visited her very often and will always remember her with gratitude, as I am sure others will who were taught by her.

**Chris Wilson by Rosemary Watts**

Chris joined the Enfield branch of the Guild in 2001. When we saw Chris's work we were amazed at the detail. She always worked on the finest canvas producing beautiful embroidery in spite of being quite short sighted. At one Christmas competition Anthea commented on the quality of Chris's work.

After one AGM Chris did something that I doubt whether anyone has done before or since! She volunteered to come on the committee as Treasurer, a job that is often very difficult to fill. She proved to be a very efficient and capable treasurer and served for several years. Apart from a short break when her husband died Chris continued in this role until her health deteriorated and she was no longer able to get to meetings or manage the Guild finances. We were very grateful to Chris for her hard work and her companionship at committee meetings and at Branch meetings.

## Diary Dates

**March 9th - July 6th Splendid Stitches at Aylesbury**

7-30pm to 9-30pm

As advertised in CONTACT a collaboration between Embroiderers Guild and Buckinghamshire County Museum. If you go before 18th May you can also enjoy their samplers and smocks exhibition. [http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/museum/county\\_museum.page](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/museum/county_museum.page)

**May 8th in-house**

7-30pm to 9-30pm

Rachel Gornall

'The World in Colour'

**May 18th**

10am to 4pm Workday

Eliza McLelland 'Bead work on Canvass' Booking essential.

**June 12th EG in-house**

7-30pm to 9-30pm

Launch of new project.

**Workshop postponed**

July 6th Workday with Lorna Bateman has been postponed to encourage members to support the Regional Day at Romford Essex. Tickets: Suzanne.

**July 10th**

New Members evening with strawberries and cream. Please bring an example of your work, including results of workshops, to encourage new members.

**July 12th-14th**

The Creative Crafts Show at the Kent County Show [www.sccshows.co.uk](http://www.sccshows.co.uk)

**July 27th-28th**

Fibre East Redborne Community College, Amptill, Bedford [www.fibre-east.co.uk](http://www.fibre-east.co.uk)



# WEFT Art Exhibition

By Rosemary Watts

During a recent short course at City Lit, a fellow student alerted me to an exhibition at the Brunei Gallery at SOAS, part of London University. It was entitled "World Eco-Fibre and Textile(WEFT) Art". It was a rather dull title and a singularly uninspiring flyer which didn't tempt me in the least but the exhibition turned out to be stunning. The work was a celebration of natural fibres, natural dyes and traditional techniques in textile art. Some of the fabrics were extremely fine and were displayed so that the patterns could be seen against the light. The fabrics moved in the air. It was probably the heating system rather than a deliberate plan to achieve movement but the result was very effective.

There were examples of hand painted and wood block printed fabrics from India. There was wide use of Indigo, a dye which has been in use since 2500 BC in ancient Egypt. My favourite piece was a wonderful jacket made from heavy pieces of recycled Indigo dyed fabric which had been decorated with chunky stitching, (like Kantha). A large felted jacket had been fashioned by the shepherd to create a sort of large sleeping bag in which he could shelter from the cold. In contrast there was some delicate jewellery made from plant fibres and even horse hair.

We are familiar with the technique of tie and dye. In Japan it is known as shibori, as Tiritik in Indonesia and as Bandhani in India and



Pakistan. I'd always thought that shibori patterns resulted from wrapping fabrics tightly around a tube or pipe before dyeing. The hand embroidery was exquisite. As most of you know I don't do a lot of what I call proper embroidery these days. I like to print and dye and make felt. These embroideries were magnificent. Some of the very best had been worked by a man – Asif. His work was described as a "clever juxtaposition of contemporary style and traditional textile techniques". The stitching was extremely fine and a lot of it had been done using a tiny hook, like a tambour hook, creating a very fine chain decorated with tiny sequins. I had the gallery to myself which was a surprise. I did send messages about the exhibition so I hope that others were able to visit.

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## American Adventure By Helen Brown

This time last year I was eagerly waiting to hear if I had been given a place at the Haystack Mountain School of Arts and Crafts in America. I was looking for a holiday; somewhere I could go on my own and have a (little) bit of an adventure.

To my delight I was accepted. The school was originally founded at Haystack mountain in Vermont in the 1950's but is now located on the Atlantic Ocean in Deer Isle, Maine. It is a beautiful situation among pine trees and huge granite boulders and is carefully designed to blend in with the landscape and not damage the delicate eco-system. The buildings and walkways are wooden, covered in shingles and supported on stilts above ground level. Accommodation is basic but all the essentials are provided and the food was wonderful; healthy and very indulgent options available. I was lucky that my 'room mate', Mary, had loaded her very large car with all sorts of extras such as a bathmat, wine glasses and Pilates mats! Mary was also quite deaf so could not hear me snoring which contributed to a happy two weeks together in our small woodland cabin – it could have been disastrous with the wrong person but instead we had a complaint from the neighbour about our laughing! During my two weeks there were workshops in blacksmithing, ceramics, jewellery, fresco, 3-D design and quilting. The school attracts internationally acclaimed tutors who were assisted by up and coming artists; often post-graduate students.

I had chosen the quilting workshop because it looked like a new technique for me and I wanted to make something big! Our tutor, Elizabeth Busch could be quite enigmatic and would avoid giving too much direction or indeed, answers saying 'you will find answers through your work'. We did, though sometimes it was a struggle. We began our day in the workshop with an inspirational reading from Elizabeth and lots of 'sharing' of feelings about our 'creative journey' – very American! In contrast to the natives I was always very English; concise and to the point and wanting to get on with mixing the perfect lichen green I had seen on the rocks.

So, to work. We spent the first week applying colour to thick canvas in a multitude of ways; painting, scraping away, masking areas and

printing using textile pigment mixed with extender. I found it difficult to produce abstract patterns because I could not help but be inspired by my surroundings and kept producing compositions. This was something of a problem when we had to cut up our fabrics and reassemble them as quilt tops. My solution was to turn the fabric over and cut from the back although there are some pieces I have brought back uncut so I can stitch into them. The workshop has lots of space and we were provided with huge tables and 1x2m pin boards which were great for pinning up work for contemplation while we sought the answers to our questions! We had 24 hour access to the workshop which meant you could work at your own pace and when the inspiration took you. We sometimes worked late but rumour had it the ceramicists and blacksmiths worked and partied right through the night – they were a wild bunch!

Our last afternoon was spent tidying up and displaying our work for the evening 'studio walk through'. This was followed by an auction to raise money for the Haystack Foundation which funds scholarships and various academic, international and community outreach programmes.

It was not all work though – our group was very sociable and always up to something; early morning power walking, Pilates, swimming, regular cocktail hour, lobster supper on the beach, gallery visits and music making. A definite highlight was swimming at night in phosphorescence – like flakes of glitter on your skin – magical.

Looking back now, what did I achieve? Some lovely new friends, a little adventure and some new directions for my textiles work, a renewed interest in painting and lots of happy memories. This was truly one of the best things I have done. It exceeded all my expectations and I hope I have managed to convey in this piece something of the life affirming experience I enjoyed.



# The Wool House Exhibition'

by Maureen Morley

I recently visited the Wool House Exhibition held at Somerset House in March.

The campaign for wool launched in 2010 by the Prince of Wales unites the wool textile industry with the aim to promote real wool as the superior natural fibre for fashion, interiors and the built environment. The Prince's aim is to prevent further decline in the global sheep population by building better understanding of the fibre.

On entering Somerset House I found a pen of sheep in the forecourt, steps lead up to the entrance hall which was bold black and white themed, leading into contrasting bright and colourful connecting hallways. There were five very different styled rooms. There was a room with a cosy country feel mainly natural colours, a contemporary living space using bold colours, a fantastical nursery, a man's study incorporating suiting wools for a tailored look and a very contemporary room using lots of felt. Other areas were used

for spinning demonstrations, knitting classes with Debbie Bliss, crochet classes, and there was a weaver at work on his loom. My favourite piece of the exhibition was a hummingbird wall hanging in the entrance hall designed by Alexander McQueen. Due to the weave of the fabric it really shimmered in the light, it was really beautiful. This exhibition was so inspirational to see the creative use of wool, with techniques that have not changed through the ages, let's hope this brings the value back to fleece and all its wonderful properties.



## The Mall Galleries

The Mall Galleries are situated near the Admiralty Arch end of the Mall, and have a changing programme of exhibitions throughout the year. It is a spacious venue with a small coffee bar. Open from 10.00am to 5.00pm daily, although some exhibitions close at 1.00pm on the final day. Many of their exhibitions are free, some have a small charge.

The next few exhibitions are:

**April 5th-18th:**

Royal Institute of Painters (in water colour)

**April 23rd-28th**

Food Photographer of the year

**May 9-24th**

Royal Society of Portrait Painters

**May 28th -June 1st**

Liminal (textiles) The annual PRISM Exhibition.

**June 4th – 8th**

Wildlife Artist of the Year

For full detail log on to: [www.mallgalleries.org.uk](http://www.mallgalleries.org.uk)

## Our Next in-House Project – Mapping Enfield

Our last group project, the portrait of Elizabeth 1 was widely admired and considered a great success. Jackie and I are currently planning the next project. The piece will be based on maps of Enfield, old and new, with a section for everyone to complete. The project will be introduced at the meeting on June 12th - don't miss it! Helen Brown

## Our Easter lunch at Southgate College By Terina Foster-Friend

With so many parties, lunches and dinners at Christmas, this year the Enfield Embroiderers' Guild decided that we should break with tradition and have a celebratory lunch to brighten up the dull time just before Easter. With all the rain, snow and freezing wind this turned out to be a real lift! For anyone who hasn't been yet, the Southgate College restaurant has fantastic food, served beautifully by chefs and waiters (and waitresses) who are in training at the college. The menu had a French theme, (fortunately this did not mean we had to turn up in berets carrying strings of onions). We had plenty of choice the only problem was what to choose! I did decide on a lamb dish which was cooked to perfection but I don't think anyone was disappointed whatever they chose.

It was so enjoyable to be able to sit and chat to each other I would strongly urge other Guild members to join us the next time we go. There are other 'themed' menus coming up – how about Italian – I assure you this doesn't mean you have to dress as a gondolier or stick of spaghetti!

## The Knitting and Stitching Show Olympia By Jo Hogg

This year the show was held in different to halls to those of previous shows. They were all on one level and it felt very spacious. This may have been partly due to the much lighter than usual attendance on the Sunday. My experience was, however, a feeling of disappointment compared to the shows at Birmingham and Ally Pally. It was fine if you were looking for cross stitch kits or knitting wool but disappointing in that there were so few textile artists exhibiting. I imagine that having the Creative Stitches and Hobbycrafts exhibition at the Excel Centre coming up so soon (4 - 6 April) will have made a difference to the number of exhibitors. My main reason for going had been to seek out speakers and workshop leaders for our Guild meetings but I came up with only one possible speaker.

The final downside is that travel by public transport to Olympia from our area is far from straightforward. So all I all, I'd wait for the show at Ally Pally next time. But despite this somewhat negative report I did not escape coming out with a slightly lighter purse!

## Foundling Hospital Museum: FATE HOPE AND CHARITY By Ailsa Bulger

Those who listened to Janette Bright's talk on the textiles and tokens of the London Foundling Hospital in November will remember her mentioning this exhibition, showing until 19th May 2013.

We were fascinated by the original work Janette developed from her research the tokens left by mothers hoping to be able to reclaim their babies in better times. Here we see the stories she researched beside the objects. If you missed the Threads of Feeling exhibition a visit to the Foundling museum is worthwhile. I was interested to follow up Janette's talk and see the tokens for myself, but was pleased that my Art Fund pass

entitled me to free admission since I had already explored the rest of the museum.

If you enjoyed Janette's work you may be interested to follow up new developments by visiting [WWW.Easttextile.co.uk](http://WWW.Easttextile.co.uk) to see where her current research has led her.



# My Holiday in India and Nepal By Wendy Chrichley

## India

Rain greeted our early morning arrival in Delhi, but it soon cleared and we were not troubled by any more until one morning in Kathmandu. It was never too hot. Early mornings were quite cold. We were given the traditional welcome of a garland of orange flowers which may have been marigolds. We also had a red tika painted on to our forehead.

I loved colourful, chaotic, fascinating, dirty India. The traffic in Delhi would have given "health and safety" 50 heart attacks. Cars, carts, tuk-tuks, thousands of motor bikes some with women riding side saddle behind their helmeted husbands and, of course, the cows. Nobody seems to get hurt and nobody gets angry! Lots of hooting of horns of course. It was good to be able to see all that was going on from our coach - so many people's lives being lived on the streets - cooking, sleeping, selling, begging, worshipping and delving amongst the rubbish. Plastic stuff everywhere which presumably will never be cleared away. In Delhi we visited mosques, Qutub Minaret, the tallest stone tower in India, Humayun's tomb - similar to the Taj, India Gate, Ghandi's memorial and the Parliament buildings. I was thrilled to see two snake charmers!

Then it was Agra. The Taj is bathed in mist in the early morning but it clears to reveal the shiny, marble inlaid with semi-precious stones. It is not a disappointment. You are allowed into the mausoleum (minus shoes of course) but the tombs are difficult to see behind the "rails". Then we had a long tour of the Agra Fort with its views over the Yamuna River and the Taj in the distance.

Next day we got a train from Agra to Jhansi passing through rural areas. We then visited temples at Orcha and Khajuraho, the latter a complex of 85 temples. Fortunately we visited only one covered with carvings depicting various gods, elephants, people and, of most amusing interest, erotic figures. We flew to Varanasi (Benares) on the Ganges. This is the most amazing, vibrant, colourful place I have ever visited and one the highlights of my life. We were taken to the river to see the daily evening festival from a boat. We bought flowered candle containers to float into the Ganges. There were thousands of people praying, washing, singing, chanting. Every Ghat (stairs to river) alive with people in robes and chanting and so much light. We were not allowed to photograph the burning bodies on the pyres out of respect. After the ceremonies we walked through the busiest throng imaginable, past market stalls, shrines, cooking, and cows for our rickshaw ride to the hotel by now it was dark. We never felt threatened the whole time we were in India or Nepal. People seem very friendly and unaggressive.

The next morning we made the return journey on foot before dawn, once again surrounded by people worshipping at the various shrines and getting ready for the day. We had a boat ride on the Ganges to watch the sun rise over the river - spectacular. This time life beside the river was quieter with people washing themselves, their clothes, bathing and praying in the river. We were then taken for a walk through old Varanasi with its narrow alleys of houses, shops, shrines, being very careful not to walk in the ever present cow excrement.



Of course there are many sellers of artefacts pestering you all the time, but it was not too much of a problem if you ignore them.

Later that day we went to Sarnath where Buddha gave his first sermon. Lots of people worshipping under the Bodhi tree. We also went inside a temple with many wall paintings depicting the life of Buddha. Nearby in the gardens was the tallest standing image of Buddha in India. On the way back to the hotel we visited a silk factory where we watched two men weaving with gold thread and silk. I was given a small spool of gold thread and a twist of silk and gold in exchange for 100 rupees for each man! Some of our party purchased scarves and pashminas.

Although we did not see much in the way of stitching on one occasion alongside our coach came a cement mixer lorry. The rotating cylinder was covered in beige hessian pieces STITCHED together. Ladies you would have been impressed! As you can imagine, the saris were bright, colourful and elegant.

## Young Embroiderers by Ailsa Bulger

Our current membership is small but enthusiastic.

They worked hard to prepare their group entry "BIZARRE BIRDS" For the De Denne competition, but having encouraged them to work three dimensionally, I was challenged to package the work in a way that will (we hope) survive journeys to the Guild AGM at the Knitting and Stitching Shows. Ursula and I decided on a trip to Guild HQ to deliver it in person.

For a small supplement to our freedom passes we travelled by train via Vauxhall to Walton on Thames. With a brisk 10 minute walk to Kings Road the journey took about 2 hours. We didn't expect to spend long on the current postcard exhibition having seen it at St Martin's Crypt. But in the light and airy room they were so well

displayed that we spent a long time examining them in detail. There were also small sections relating to the Needlework Development Scheme and Louisa Pesel, a name which rang a distant bell in my memory and which I decided to look up at home. Imagine my surprise to find that this first chairman of the Embroiderers Guild was born in Bradford my home town and shared my birthday, albeit sometime earlier! There were other examples of work from the guild collection in the corridors, one I remember in particular a beehive box by Heidi Jenkins covered in stumpwork insects. Keep an eye on your CONTACT Magazine for future exhibits that would make a trip to HQ worthwhile.



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