



# Embroiderers' Guild News

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

Enfield & District Branch [www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk](http://www.embroiderersguildenfield.co.uk) April 2012 Spring Issue 08

## Chairman's Message

We are well into our 2012 programme now. I hope you are enjoying the variety of lectures, workshops and activities. Our "in-house" activities led by members, such as the fabric marbling and Christmas decorations at the end of 2011 provided plenty of opportunity for socialising. The gasps of appreciation when the Elizabeth1 portrait was unveiled in January proved that collaborative projects are worth the organisational effort involved. Would members be interested in having a post card of the finished portrait produced for sale ? Do let committee members know what you think, and also share any bright ideas for more member-led activities.

The branch is only as good as its members. Your contributions count !

Suzanne Twomey

## Our Elizabeth 1 at Forty Hall by Jackie O'Malley



Our Branch project for 2011 was to complete a picture in sections worked by as many of our members as possible.

After much deliberation the rainbow portrait of Elizabeth 1 (which hangs in Hatfield House) was

chosen by the committee as it had lots of interesting detail to embroider and we felt that Elizabeth had a connection with Enfield through her time spent as a child at Elsynge Palace which was in what is now part of the grounds of Forty Hall.

By some strange process I was given part of the face to complete, probably because I was busy handing things out and no-one else wanted to tackle it! Once I had decided how to embroider the skin I found it enjoyable to do and soon had to work out how to depict her hair and lace ruff.

Skip several months and I started to collect the finished pieces. It was lovely to see the variety of techniques and materials used. It was hard to imagine how it would come together especially as the colours and textures seemed so different.

Finally the day came for Helen Brown and me to assemble them and as soon as we laid them out on the table and saw the picture emerge for the first time it was clear that the project had been a success. In fact more than a success – amazing, the sum of the parts is greater than the individual pieces!

Well done all!

## Dates

for your Diary

April 28th - Sat 10am  
Workday – Marilyn Pipe:  
Embellishing Day

May 9th - Wed 7.30pm  
Talk: Experimental  
Machine Knitting

May 10th-12th  
Creative Stitches and  
Hobbycrafts: Brighton  
[www.ichf.co.uk](http://www.ichf.co.uk)

June 13th - Wed 7.30pm  
Cate Golding:  
Forty Hall Project

June 30th - Wed 7.30pm  
Workday – Susan Stuart  
Hot Books

July 11th - Wed 7.30pm  
New Members evening  
Strawberries & sales table



The V&A is reopening their fabulous fashion galleries in spring 2012. They are freshly renovated, commencing with a new exhibition of beautiful ballgowns, red carpet evening dresses and catwalk show-stoppers. Not to be missed!



# Forty Hall Project – A stitch in Time... by Pat Cuckle

The Enfield EG met artist Cate Golding in June 2011 when she outlined her ideas for a project to represent the restoration of Forty Hall in embroidery and textile. The project started in earnest in September 2011 with a joint visit to Forty Hall to bring together Cate and Laura from Middlesex University, members of Enfield EG and the Enfield Saheli women's group. We formed two mixed groups and equipped with high visibility jackets, stout shoes, hard hats and cameras we picked our way around the building works with a guide; Cate and Laura took extra photos. I think it would be true to say that we had little idea at that stage of how we would shape our ideas, but we were too busy taking photographs to think any further ahead; we were just hoping for inspiration. What was immediately obvious was that everyone was attracted by different aspects of the building and its history.



While one group toured the building the other group showed each other samples of their work. The EG members were fascinated by the exquisite traditional embroidery of the Saheli group while they were very interested in the different techniques used by EG members. So a bond was formed immediately and the stage was set for a productive working

relationship between the two groups (strengthened, no doubt, by the lunch provided for us by the Saheli women).

In all there were six work days at either Capel Manor or Salisbury House, and of course a lot of work was done at home. Fourteen women from the Saheli group took part in the project and we had a joint session with them at one of their regular Friday meetings – again we were treated to their generous hospitality.

The first work day at Capel Manor was for designing and planning our individual work. Cate wanted to avoid being prescriptive although she outlined some guidelines for the size of individual work, and described her own interest in installation, in the effects of



lighting and in combining our works with video. The idea was to think about layers and produce two pieces each, one solid and one transparent. Some of the EG group of eight seemed enviably clear about how they could interpret their ideas and seemed to get started straight away while others took longer. I had two or three false starts in the privacy of my home, but my Eureka! moment came one Sunday morning over breakfast while I was thinking about how Jackie had described printing photographic images onto fabric. The printing provided a starting point and I worked on the idea of collage based on images and motifs from details of Forty Hall, using different fabrics, techniques and embellishments. My designs used stitches sparingly – I am less experienced and accomplished than other members and very much slower; my work includes a lot of unpicking. Only one piece involved traditional stitching – and it took me HOURS! But after a slow start I became addicted to the project and produced several pieces – mostly variations on the same theme.

Everyone who has been involved has enjoyed the project. For my part I enjoyed the project enormously, I gained great satisfaction from it. I learned a lot and liked developing my ideas and trying different techniques. I started off thinking the project was a good idea, that I would like to take part, but couldn't really imagine how I could progress or what I could produce. However, taking an objective view I found the process of my thinking, designing, rejecting and producing very interesting and stimulating.

There was great camaraderie; it was so valuable to be able to see others' work in progress, share ideas, and be given suggestions and advice from Cate and from fellow embroiderers. There was mutual admiration between participants for each others' work. I found it particularly inspiring to see how the Saheli women used their traditional methods to interpret Jacobean motifs such as, for example embroidered and sequinned patterns on rich red silken fabric based on blue and white plaster ceiling mouldings. Cate encouraged two of the Saheli group to branch out and try something less traditional and I loved their pieces. I attempted to combine some of the Saheli techniques with my own in a transparent panel re-using my favourite motifs embellished with beads and sequins.



## Full Circle by Ailsa Bulger

The group Full Circle is in its third year of making and exhibiting creative textiles; however, its membership of enthusiastic and experienced practitioners has a much longer history. Most met at classes in art and textiles then tutored by Davida Macdonald. Eventually textile work became the main focus and a very successful and well attended Hertfordshire Open Studios confirmed that there was a new group in the making.

The old seed warehouse on Mill Bridge in Hertford was the venue in November last year for our 3rd exhibition when we showed Retrospective +, a collection of favourite pieces both old and new from each maker. Augmented by a successful seasonal sales table and home-made refreshments it received positive comments from the many who visited.

In preparation for cre8, our next and most ambitious project to date, the group has been exploring the idea of wearable art. As ever the results show just how varied the outcomes from a single source can be. These pieces plus many others will be on display from the 3rd to 28th July 2012 at: Letchworth Arts Centre, 2 The Arcade Letchworth SG6 3EW.

Most of us belong to other groups and have exhibited widely, both locally and in larger venues such as the NEC, Birmingham; The



Knitting and Stitching Shows at Alexandra Palace, Harrogate, and Dublin; and The Mall Galleries in London.

We are in every way a truly eclectic group and this diversity plus a commitment to life-long learning and mutual support always makes for lively, interesting, and well-crafted work.

I was invited to join the group at the end of 2010 when other members had already planned their wearable art projects. I decided to work small scale on baby clothes inspired by Suzanne's workshop on boutis work.

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## William Morris at 2 Temple place by Wendy Critchley

### William Morris at 2 Temple Place

Ursula, Pam, Mary and I went to 2 Temple Place on 13th January to view the William Morris exhibition. Apart from the very interesting building, the tapestries were wonderful and so intricate. Some of them were worked by a woman and her daughter and took 8 years to sew. It was so good to see the stitching closely. Every part of the very large embroideries was covered with stitches. My favourite was Pomona, the goddess of fruits and harvests, who personifies Autumn in that piece. It was vibrant with colour as they had used silk floss, cotton fibre and wool (hair). This can be viewed on the various William Morris websites.

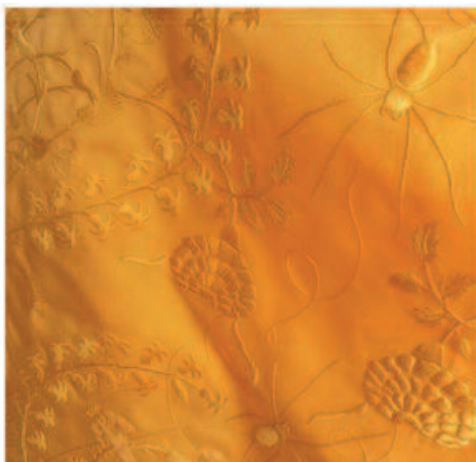
No. 2 Temple Place was built for William Waldorf Astor in 1892-93 and it overlooks the Thames. It has many wooden carvings, panels and stained glass windows. It was bombed in 1941 and restored in the nineteen fifties.

We were fortunate that it was a lovely sunny day and warm for January, so we sat in the gardens of the Inner Temple to await the opening time for the Temple Church built in the 1160s. The Knights Templar used it as their base for London. There are stone effigies of knights in the circular part of the Church and some lovely stained glass windows. We all enjoyed a happy day together.

The William Morris gallery in Walthamstow is currently being renovated. It is due to reopen in July 2012. Visit the website <http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/william-morris>



# Golden Orb Spider by Ailsa Bulger



I love working with silk fabrics and thread, but who would dream of making something out of spider silk? My sister happened to suggest a visit to the V&A on the day the Golden Spider Silk exhibition opened, and if you haven't been yet I urge you to go before the display closes on June 5th.

Golden Orb spiders produce silk that is stronger and more spectacularly colourful than the humble silk worm, but since the cannibal spiders cannot be kept in captivity commercial production of spider silk is not really viable. Never the less Simon Peers and Nicholas Godley, inspired by the history of spider silk hangings in the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900, spent 10 years organising the extraction, weaving and embroidering of spider silk into the fabulous golden cloak. This is displayed in a walk round glass case enabling close examination of the exquisite self-coloured embroidery.

A large video presentation documents the painstaking production by a team of skilled workers. There is also a beautiful shawl woven in traditional Madagascan patterns in the same unbelievably buttery – golden material. This is a must-see experience even for arachnophobes.

## Quilts at Olympia By Helen Brown

I am always keen to interest my students in the textile world outside the classroom and was excited to see the request from the Quilters' Guild for hundreds of quilts to be made for 2012. The aim was to present each participating country, in both the Olympic and Paralympic games, with a quilt as 'a unique sign of friendship and peace'.

This quilt was made by the staff, students and friends of Chace Community School. The makers ranged in age from 11 to 82. Our eldest participant attended the last London Olympics and remembers that the ticket cost her nearly a week's wages. The group had a wide variety of experience in sewing and patchwork; some of the adults had none at all or had tales to tell of traumatic experiences with needlework teachers. I wanted to involve as many people as possible so decided to use the traditional English piecing method to create blocks which could then be assembled by my 'elite' team of stitchers, GCSE and A level students.

The quilt was designed by year 8 students during a maths project on tessellation colours represent our badge and school uniform.



The quilts are to be displayed at the Stitch and Craft Show in March by which time we should know which country will receive our quilt. We are delighted to have taken part in the Olympics in such a creative way and would love to make contact with our team.

For further details about this project logon to: [www.agiftofquilts.co.uk](http://www.agiftofquilts.co.uk)

## Megan's Embroideries

by Wendy Critchley



I visited my two daughters in Australia last September. Whilst I was staying with my younger daughter, Janine, she and her friend took me to a wine-growing area near the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales. After a most enjoyable wine tasting, we went on to visit Janine's friends who live in a wooded area, miles from anywhere! After scones and champagne we looked around their wooden house. To my surprise, Megan had embroideries on her walls. When I remarked upon them, she showed me all her other work. She had made a lovely picture in single-thread French knots, some ribbon embroidery on throws and bedspreads. She mostly concentrates on stump work. I particularly liked the two little toadstool "houses" she had made in which to keep her tape measure and thimble. She very kindly gave me a magazine called "Inspirations Gifts!". It was a nice surprise on my last day there to talk to an embroiderer!

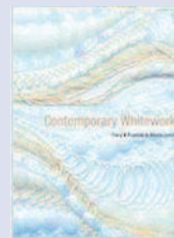


Following the Jessica Aldred lecture see this review on Whitework embroidery.

### Contemporary Whitework

Tracey Ann Franklin & Nicola Jarvis

The term 'whitework' covers a range of traditional but much-loved hand embroidery techniques, including drawn thread work, pulled work, cutwork, Richelien and Mountmellick. Although these techniques have been around for centuries in recent years embroiderers have been developing them to create more contemporary and experimental pieces. This is the first book to cover the new, exciting whitework being produced today. Full instructions, plus ways to explore and develop techniques for more contemporary applications.



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