



Embroiderers' Guild

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

SOUTH WEST REGION NEWSLETTER – March 2017

Welcome! This is the first newsletter from the South West regional steering group. We would like to start by thanking the outgoing regional committee for their hard work. Due to a variety of circumstances, with the exception of one member the committee stood down at the 2016 Regional AGM and there were no volunteers to take up substantive roles. Terry Murphy suggested a steering group be formed instead, and a number of us put our hands up.

Since that time we have been discussing what we can do to support the region and the guild this year as well as looking forward.

The members of the steering group are Julie Stenning, Penny Hill, Judith Mortimore, Fran Baigent and Robbi Robson. We are also pleased to welcome Clare Russell, who has just joined us. If anybody would be interested in helping the steering group, please let us know – it is not essential that you attend meetings; modern technology allows us to look at other options.

We are working on who will be nominated contacts for specific branches; watch this space! In the meantime, any problems, issues or questions can be sent to egswregion@gmail.com.

WHO ARE WE? PART ONE (more introductions next newsletter!)

Julie Stenning – acting chair: As a child, my mother taught me to knit and sew. I made a lot of my own clothes, mainly for economic reasons, until my late twenties, when I moved to Bristol. It was cheaper to buy clothes in charity shops than purchase the means for making them myself! I found textile art some fifteen years ago, when I attended a workshop with Angie Hughes. I was hooked, with machine embroidery being my preferred technique. I joined the Bristol branch of the Embroiderers' Guild not long afterwards.

I was the branch treasurer for a number of years and have been the chair since the middle of last year. I also performed the regional secretary role from 2015/16. In my role as secretary, I ensured that branch officers and members who live in the region but don't belong to a branch were sent communications about Head Office and Regional matters. The regional committee members stood down at the last AGM and we didn't have any nominations for regional officers. Terry Murphy was at the meeting and advised that we could have a region without officers and co-opt individuals from the region for particular projects. I offered to facilitate this. So, in the absence of any other title, I am the Acting Chair of the region. I am passing on communications as last year and also liaising with branch officers when information is requested by HQ.

Penny Hill – acting treasurer: I have been a crafter for as long as I can remember, stitching from an early age and at every opportunity. My mother is a lifelong member of the Guild, and I joined in 1997, when the Scunthorpe and District Branch was being established, and was immediately coerced into joining the Branch committee. Since then, I have been constantly engaged in Guild activities, supporting the Branch as Programme Secretary and as Branch Secretary, designing and maintaining the Branch website, serving as Chair, and even joining the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Committee for a while. Although moving south in 2014, I have continued my involvement, and – along with my place on the SW Region Group - I am currently a Guild Trustee. I've kept stitching too: over the years I have created pieces for exhibitions, prepared and run a number of workshops for my Branch and even given a lecture or two!

Judith Mortimore – acting secretary: I joined the Embroiderers' Guild in 1998 and was an active member of Scunthorpe branch, although I've never held a committee role. I was fortunate to take my City & Guilds Embroidery Design with Jan Dowson in Cleethorpes. I have always worked in the public sector, and my job kept me too busy to stitch as much as I would have liked, but now I am retired I finally have the time to focus on crafts. I am an enthusiastic amateur, enjoying predominantly hand stitching (including cross stitch). I also dabble in patchwork, loving hexagons and crazy patchwork. I recently moved into the South West region and hope to prove an asset! At present, I am acting secretary for the group.

AIMS OF THE REGION

The region exists to deliver the aims and objectives of the Guild, which as you know are:

Objectives:

- promote and encourage the art of embroidery and related crafts;
- encourage the creation of fine articles incorporating the use of, or associated with, embroidery;
- educate the public in the history and art of embroidery;
- undertake or support research in embroidery;
- collect, document, preserve, exhibit and interpret examples of fine embroidery, which are of historical or educational merit, and to make such articles available to the public.

Aims:

- nurture an enjoyment of embroidery and enable anyone to participate at any level, whether they are young people learning to stitch, a professional artist, or someone who simply appreciates textiles;
- change perceptions of the Guild and embroidery by demonstrating how it is relevant to the 21st century;
- be recognised as the national voice for embroidery in the UK.

To support these aims and objectives we need an engagement with the wider community and the public, exploring ways of promoting the guild and recruiting new membership. We have therefore been discussing how we can promote exhibitions, stitch day events and the like.

ACTIVITIES OF THE REGION

The 2017 AGM will be hosted by Frome Branch on Saturday 21st October. More information will be circulated nearer the time.

No Festival Day is planned for 2017, but we are in the early stages of planning for 2018. The steering group is willing to organise the day and would be glad to have expressions of interest from branches to host. Aurifil will be the official sponsors. Please note the Board has agreed that in order to save money, there will be no formal representation by Trustees at regional days.

The 2018 AGM will be hosted by Avalon Branch on Saturday 20th October.

The Region will be holding a small exhibition at the Lansdown Gallery in Stroud on 10th-16th July 2017. We will be looking for pieces to exhibit and volunteers to assist with stewarding. More information will be circulated by email soon!

Julie, Judith and Penny will be at the Guild AGM in Edinburgh on 1st April; if you are attending look out for us! Julie will be representing the region at the forthcoming Council meeting (a twice-yearly meeting of regional chairs).

NATIONAL APPEAL: FUNDING THE COLLECTION

We hope you are all working towards raising funds to support the collection. As you know, this is a **one-off** funding need to ensure the collection is properly curated and stored in its new home in Buckinghamshire. This supports the Guild's objective of preserving the history of stitching. If any branch has any unanswered questions about the appeal, please send them to us at egswregion@gmail.com.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We intend to produce another newsletter in July this year and would like to include news from our branches. Please let us know if you have any forthcoming events, and we would also like to include a short update from every branch.