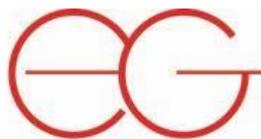


# Embroiderers' Guild South West Region 2017 AGM Minutes



## Embroiderers' Guild

sharing opportunities for discovery and creativity

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the South West Region of the Embroiderers' Guild held at Leigh Park Community Centre, Westbury, Wiltshire on the 21st October 2017

#### Officers present:

Julie Stenning - acting regional chairman  
Judith Mortimore - acting regional secretary  
Penny Hill - acting regional treasurer  
Fran Baigent

- 1. Apologies:** Liz Cran, Ann Emery, Sally Wilkinson (Bristol), Plymouth branch, Jersey branch, Exeter and District branch, Cornwall branch, Val Rowe, Susan Reynolds.
- 2. Roll call of branches**  
The following branches were represented: Avalon, Blackmore Vale, Bristol, Cotswold, Frome and District, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Salisbury, South Devon, South Somerset, Stow on the Wold and Countryside, independent members (two)
- 3. Minutes of the last AGM**  
One correction was noted; the ideas mentioned on page 3 were from Yorkshire and the Humber, not Frome. Linda Harrison (Salisbury) proposed the acceptance of the minutes; this was seconded by Judith Anderson (Cotswold).
- 4. Matters Arising**  
There were no matters arising.
- 5. Chairman's Report**  
Julie Stenning read her report as acting chairman. See Appendix 1.
- 6. Trustees' Report**  
The trustees' report was read by Penny Hill, Acting Chair of the Board of Trustees. See Appendix 2.
- 7. Treasurer's Report**  
Penny Hill read the treasurer's report. It was asked why there was no entry for the previous year's accounts. Penny explained that in the handover, this was not received; she had based her report on what was shown in the bank account and this had been accepted as appropriate by the auditor. This year's figures however would appear in next year's report. This answer was accepted. The acceptance of the report was proposed by Sheila Davies (Stow on the Wold and Countryside) and seconded by Sue Taylor (Blackmore Vale).
- 8. Appointment of auditor**  
This year's report was audited by Paul Mugford. It was proposed by Margaret Gould (Avalon) that Mr Mugford be used in 2018 and this was seconded by Vanessa High (Frome and District).
- 9. Committee appointments**  
At the previous year's AGM, only one member of the committee remained in post; this was Julie Stenning, who at the time was secretary. In the absence of a committee, a steering group was formed comprising Julie, Judith Mortimore, Penny Hill, Fran Baigent and Robbi

## Embroiderers' Guild South West Region 2017 AGM Minutes

Robson. It was noted that Fran Baigent was stepping down from the steering group. Robbi Robson has moved out of the region and was also stepping down.

Nominations had been received for chair (Julie Stenning), secretary (Judith Mortimore) and treasurer (Penny Hill). In the absence of any other nominations, a vote was taken and these posts were accepted unanimously.

There were no other volunteers to join the existing committee members, although there were some offers of general assistance outside of the AGM.

### **10. Any other business**

#### **10.1 Insurance**

Margaret Gould (Avalon) drew the meeting's attention to changes in how pieces being exhibited are to be valued for insurance purposes. In particular, the new rules stated that pieces totalling more than £5,000 in value were only insured for two days whilst at a member's home address prior to the exhibition. This was felt to be far too short, since in many cases pieces were collected at meetings and stored in anticipation of an exhibition, and returned at the following meeting. Pieces could be easily in a member's home for six weeks or more. HQ may be able to assist with additional insurance. An across-the-board increase in insurance to cover a longer period would, however, disadvantage smaller branches, and it was suggested that this should be an optional additional payment for branches about to hold an exhibition.

Barbara Neale (South Devon chair) was concerned that, because insurance monies had been collected late this year, if they were collected earlier next year she would have two payments for insurance going out in one 12-month period, which would be a lot for her very small branch. She was also concerned that her insurance cover note had run out at the end of August and the new one wasn't going to be sent out until after the insurance monies were received. In the meantime, she had arranged some public-facing work with Hobbycraft that required sight of her cover note. Headquarters had sent her one on request, but she felt this could have been an issue. It was felt by members present that the replacement cover note should be issued before the old one ran out.

The meeting noted that the date for insurance to be paid was often an issue with branch AGMs and potential change of branch officers, as well as possible branch closures. It was suggested it would be better if the insurance ran from 1st August or 1st October.

The reduction in insurance costs, particularly for small branches, was however appreciated.

#### **10.2 Back to the Heart**

It was asked how the sites for this exhibition (mentioned in the trustees' report) were to be chosen, since some of the sites for Capability Brown had been less than optimal. It was noted that this information would be circulated as soon as it was known, but would presumably be in agreement with the partner forces charity.

11. It was noted that the 2018 AGM will be held on Saturday 20th October at Compton Village Hall, hosted by Avalon Branch.

The meeting was then declared closed.



## **South West Region Acting Chairman's Report 2016/17**

### **New Committee**

During 2015/16, I was a new member of the committee taking the role of secretary of the region. Apart from organising and minuting the committee meetings, I concentrated on trying to keep members in the region informed about interesting activities in the region, information from branches and HQ. I particularly wanted to include people who lived in the region did not belong to a branch; they had previously been left out of many communications.

We had our previous AGM on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 and all members of the committee apart from me resigned. We didn't have any nominations for the committee. I had been advised that a Region does not need a committee as such, and could operate with a steering group, perhaps involving different people in the region for particular projects. So, I offered to carry on facilitating with the intention of carrying on informing members as I had the previous year. I also told people at the meeting that I would not be able to visit branches as I have full-time caring responsibilities for my husband, who has Parkinson's Disease. I think that everybody in the hall was so relieved that somebody would do something, that they were happy to accept a "facilitator", even if that person would not be able to visit branches. Luckily, that offer spurred on four other people to volunteer to join the Steering Group; Robbi Robson, Fran Baigent, Penny Hill and Judith Mortimore.

When we had our first group meeting in January it became evident that we needed the structure of a committee because we still needed meetings to be organised, finances to be organised, projects carried out etc. So, we took "Acting" roles as there had not been a vote at the AGM. I took the acting chair role, Penny Hill - acting treasurer and Judith Mortimore - acting Secretary. Robbi has moved out of the area but is still willing to help organise things via the phone.

As there were only three of us actively involved in the committee, it was difficult for us to organise many regional activities (I am also chair of Bristol Branch, Penny is the social media trustee and has been acting board chair in recent months and Judith is involved in committees for other organisations). There are lots of things we would like to do as a region (which I will touch upon

later), but we can't do it without help from you and your branch members. I am very grateful to Pam Cooper and her team at Frome branch for organising today's AGM with little involvement from the Regional Committee and also to Margaret Gould and her team at Avalon branch for organising next year's AGM.

We published two newsletters this year and we have been storing up e-mails about National Stitch Day ready for our next newsletter. We will ask you for input into the next newsletter nearer the time.

Judith, ably aided by Penny, has created 60 stitch a fish packs which will be used to create an aquarium for display at various events. They are £1 each with money raised going to regional funds. We have plans to supply free packs to Young Embroiderers. Please talk to Judith or Penny about this.

Whilst on the subject of the Regional Committee, I have been asked by Susan Reynolds from the Tavistock branch to give you some bad news, her husband John died in July. He was our regional treasurer for many years.

### **Public Benefit**

Now, I would like to talk about how our region has benefited the public. Four of the five principal objectives of the Embroiderers' Guild, as defined in the Articles of Association, are to:

1. promote and encourage the art of embroidery and related crafts;
2. encourage the creation of fine articles incorporating the use of, or associated with, embroidery;
3. educate the public in the history and art of embroidery;
4. 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.

Holding an exhibition is one way of achieving these objectives.

The Stroud branch was in the process of closing at the time of the last AGM. They had booked a gallery in Stroud for an exhibition and had paid a non-refundable deposit. As Stroud is reasonably local to Penny, Judith and me, we decided that we would use the space to hold a Regional Exhibition called "Stitch in the South West". We were unsure of how many pieces would be offered, so requested that people advise us by e-mail of the items they would like to exhibit. Luckily, we were able to show everything offered. We had 42 exhibits from 3 branches and 24 exhibits from members who do not belong to a branch, making a total of 66 items. One item was posted all the way from

France! I was particularly pleased that we were able to exhibit on behalf of members who do not belong to a branch, but was disappointed that only 3 of the 17 branches in our region participated. We also found it difficult to steward, apart from members of the committee, we only had 10 members of the region stewarding. As I said before, it is very difficult to create a thriving region without help and support from the members. I would like to thank all of those who worked on the exhibition and also those who came to look. We had many interesting conversations with visitors, and it is possible that some of them will have joined the Guild as a result. As a committee, we decided that the region would pay the remaining balance of the gallery hire and that any profits from sales of cards and items would go to the collection. Consequently, we donated £71.50. We have brought some of those cards with us today, so please be generous. Any funds collected today for the cards will go to the appeal on behalf of the region.

Several branches held exhibitions this year; I had the fortune to visit the Avalon exhibition yesterday; they had wonderful exhibits of both contemporary and traditional work. It was very nice to see so many completed workshop pieces.

Every September and February, Exeter coordinates the Guild stand at Westpoint near Exeter to raise awareness of the Guild and the South West branches. In September they work with Cornwall, Plymouth, South Devon as well as Exeter branch for the Stitching Show. In February they work with South Somerset at Craft4crafters. This is a great opportunity to showcase work, gather interest and work together. In September they had 37 adult enquiries and 4 for YE.

Many branches took part in National Stitch day and Cotswold took part in a Fun Palace. Blackmore Vale and Frome branches held open days. Bristol branch have been invited to give a workshop to a local WI branch. Frome branch also worked on a project "Stourhead in stitch"; This work has been on display at Stourhead. Last December, Jersey Branch's Christmas Tree went on display at St. Peter's Church Christmas and went on to win a bronze at The Eisteddfod. In March, they also participated in the Jersey Eisteddfod Festival of Creative Art and won many awards. There are more exhibitions planned for next year along with National Stitch day activities. Stow on the Wold branch is entering St Edwards Church Stow on the Wold Christmas Tree Festival with the theme "The Sewing Tree".

Penny Hill, our region treasurer and national social media trustee recently created a public Facebook page for the region. This is used to share information about anything Textile Art related that we want to share with you and the public such as exhibitions, conferences, pieces of work and photos that can be used for inspiration. We try to share something interesting at least once a week. The

page was announced in our last newsletter; you can also find the link on any e-mails sent by the region. If you have anything you would like posted on Facebook such as information about Exhibitions, any public benefit activities such as National Stitch day etc. then please e-mail us at [egswregion@gmail.com](mailto:egswregion@gmail.com).

## **Branches**

There is a lot of activity in the region in relation to workshops and lectures, many given by visiting lecturers and tutors, but also several given by branch members. Several branches hold Meet and Stitch, Sit and Sew, Socialise and Sew etc. meetings.

Branches have also had outings; Malmesbury branch visited the Opus Anglicanum along with other branches and are planning a visit to the V&A in 2018.

10 members of our region have received 25-year pins and Katherine Muller from the South Somerset branch received a 50-year pin. Congratulations. My thanks go to Val Rowe for creating the leather presentation pouches.

Maintaining committee numbers is an issue facing many branches. Unfortunately, the Tavistock branch closed this year, they were unable to raise a committee. At least two other branches were at risk of closure due to not being able to raise a committee, but were successful in the end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who stands on any of our branch committees, without you, we wouldn't be able to function.

10 branches in SW Region have contributed to the Collection Appeal. The total raised in the region is £2720. The total raised across the Guild to date is £35,000. The National Guild have worked very hard to reduce the cost of keeping the collection. The costs for the final year at Hampton Court was approximately £75,000, at Walton-on-Thames it was approximately £35,000. At Bucks County the first-year care cost will be £15,000 and will also be £15,000 for the second year. I hope that many of you will take the opportunity of visiting the collection; I know that two branches are planning trips either this year or next.

## **The Future**

We would very much like to do more for members and branches in the region, including run a few events - other regions, for instance, organise committee 'exchange' days, which allow branch officers to share good practice and find out

what other branches do. Given the success of our recent exhibition, it would be good to hold more in the future. We would like to be able to host Guild stands at craft shows, giving demonstrations and recruiting new members. We'd also like to investigate the possibility of holding a regional summer school, with tutored workshops across a residential weekend. We want to organise a moderated private Facebook group. We would also like to hold a festival day in 2018. Lastly, but definitely not least, we'd like to be able to help branches by being the first point of call, offering support and advice, sharing ideas, and being able to step up with help when it is needed. To do all that, we need a few more people - the work won't be that onerous, and the more volunteers we have, the more the work can be shared. We appreciate the issues of travel distances in the region and plan to hold our meetings 'virtually' rather than face-to-face, maintaining contact by email or telephone. In addition, you don't have to be a substantive member of the committee to give us a hand in one or another small project.

We will be organising a road show with the CEO, Terry Murphy either next month or March next year. This is where Regional Chairs invite 2 or 3 representatives of each branch to meet with him to hear a first-hand report on the Guild and ask questions on any topic. Terry has recently met with members of the NE and YKS. Both sessions lasted about 3 hours and both were very productive. We will probably organise two meetings due to the size and shape of the region; one in Wiltshire and the other in North Devon.

The Guild is losing members. In my own branch, this is usually due to people getting older and finding it difficult to carry on stitching. If every branch were to increase their numbers by two each year, then it would go a long way to helping with the Guild finances. During the next year I intend to do what I can to help branches in the region increase their membership.

### **Thank yous**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members, Fran Baigent, Penny Hill, Judith Mortimore and Robbi Robson. Without them we wouldn't have a Region with the potential for doing so much more.

I also thank the auditor Paul Mugford who verified our accounts at very short notice.

I have already thanked members who stand on branch committees, but would like to thank them again. I know that many of you have had your arms twisted, but without you, your branches would not exist.

My final thanks go to members of the region, without members there wouldn't be a guild and we wouldn't have the opportunity to share with like-minded people, make new friends, learn new things, enthuse each other and the public; I could go on.

Julie Stenning Acting Chair  
October 2017

## **2017 Report by Trustees or their representative to Regional AGM's**

These are changing times... some inescapable challenges and some considerable successes.

Let's start with the successes and some new initiatives...

We have secured the future of the Collection in our contract with Bucks County Museum. We moved the collection a year ago. Since then we have developed excellent working relationships with Bucks County Museum staff, attracted new volunteers, some of whom already worked with Bucks County and seen an excellent exhibition of the Collection which is currently on display in their three main galleries. We are now planning the first exhibition in the permanent Guild 'Beryl Dean' Gallery due to open in the spring of 2018. We are also starting to plan a travelling exhibition of items from the Collection to go to six locations during the second half of 2018 or in 2019. All of this is being achieved against a background of increasing the quality of care for the Collection across each of the last six years while reducing the costs of doing so by 70%.

While on the subject of costs we are pleased to be able to report that 67 members, 74 branches and 6 regions have contributed to the Collection Care Appeal. Over £40,000 has been raised so far. The appeal will remain open until the end of the year. Our hope is that we reach the £45,000 target. Contributions averaging £70 per remaining branch would see us achieve our goal of funding the one-off and first two years' costs at Bucks County. This would give us a head-start to our long term contract. To put the £70 into context contributions from branches have ranged from £50 to £1800.

During the course of the last year we established a number of new relationships. Doing so built the reputation of the Guild with some potential long term partners including the National Trust, English Heritage, and many of the Capability Brown exhibition venues. An increasing number of professionals in the textiles community have accepted our invitations to become members of the Guild and taken part in our special exhibitions. The Guild is being increasingly seen as a valuable partner by other organisations, such as, Aurifil Threads, Upper Street Events, English Heritage, SSAFA (The forces benevolent charity) and the Mayflower 400 organisers.

We are starting to add new content to the Guild web site, Pinterest Boards and Face Book pages providing even more places where members can see and experience different aspects of stitch. There are now images of over 100 stitch and textiles postcards available to members to view on the website. These postcard images trace the history of stitch and illustrate the work of contemporary artists. If you have information or postcards you would like to see added, details are on the website and in *Contact*. The Guild website, Facebook pages and Pinterest boards will become increasing resources for members and visitors. There is already a wealth of Guild material on Pinterest... have you seen it?

And did you see the 'White Walker'? He, or I should say 'it,' travelled the country for over a year. It attracted huge audiences and was featured in countless 'selfie' images. The piece is now being retired and refurbished. The plan is to use it or sell it to raise money for the Guild. We are currently investigating our options.

Our latest special exhibition, Page 17, an exhibition inspired by any book, attracted over 100 expressions of interest. Many of the pieces have now been completed and will form the centre-piece of our presence at the Knitting & Stitching Shows and other venues in 2018.

We continue to offer reciprocal YE/YQ memberships; a Guild representative takes part in judging the Young Quilters entries at the 'Festival of Quilts'; and the new 'Postal Pages' initiative is gathering momentum and interest with an increasing number of YE groups.

The pilot phase of the 'World's Longest Embroidery for Schools' has been completed. The results are very encouraging. We can now extend invitations to any school, in particular schools where members already have a relationship.

I would now like to update you on the work of the trustees and contribution made by head office. You may recall that the structure of the board of trustees was approved as part of the vote in 2015 to adopt the new 'Articles of Association'.

The new structure called for 12 seats, each one with special responsibilities or a special interest. At the outset in January 2016 we filled 8 seats and today we still have 4 vacancies. These are the seats for the Chair of Finance; and those trustees with a special interest in one of the following - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Age, Income Generation and matters Legal. The latter seat originally had a focus on matters legal and financial but in discussing a recent application the trustees recognised that, in an increasingly regulated world, the priority is for a trustee with knowledge and experience of charity, voluntary organisation, safeguarding and data protection law. We have now revised the description of the seat to reflect this emphasis and are still looking to fill each of these vacant seats.

Becoming a trustee involves a steep learning curve. Our primary focus is on achieving our charitable aims including the Guild delivering a public benefit and complying with existing and new regulations. We are also focused on the funding we need and risks we face. At the same time, we must be focused on the future of the Guild. Of course none of this is possible without the support, involvement and participation of you, the members, our network of branches and the regional committees. It is important that we reflect and act on the quote by William Morris, 19<sup>th</sup> Century textile artist and designer, when he said, '*We are only the trustees for those who come after us*'.

Those who 'come after us' must include a new generation of members both those who would join a branch and those who will primarily interact with the Guild via the internet... in all its forms.

We are asking you all to 'invite a friend' to join your branch. Many branches are losing members and yet we all know people who might enjoy being part of a branch.... in particular past members who have drifted away in recent years. Your new membership cards come with a leaflet that reminds us all about the Guild, its support for members and branches and the opportunities it offers. Page 4 of this leaflet includes space to introduce your branch to potential new members. Our hope is that each branch in this region will identify and agree 5 things that make their branch attractive to new members. When you invite a friend or acquaintance you can add these points to the invitation you leave with that person. *Refer to your copy of the new membership leaflet.*

I was surprised at the number when it was announced that head office responds to over 10,000 enquiries and requests from members and branches. You may have been surprised as well. On Page 4 of the 'Your Guild' supplement in latest issue of *Contact* there is a list of 35 different services that help our network of 175 branches, 10 regions and 7700 members to function. In addition, Page 6 lists a further 17 member benefits. *Point out these pages in your copy of Contact.*

A large organisation such as ours is increasingly subject to public reporting requirements and compliance. You have seen this is the recent policies on cash handling best practice, safeguarding adults and young persons and our policy on banking. A few members have questioned some of the wording of these policies and we will make sure we review each of them after 12 months. These policies are in place to protect all our members and those who volunteer in whatever capacity. Meeting these compliance requirements has also led to the most comprehensive report on the Guild being published to members and the wider public. It is available on the Guild website and can also be found on the Charity Commission and Companies House websites. It complies with SORP – Statement of Recommended Practice. It is worth reading. It gives the most comprehensive picture of the Guild ever published.

Data protection is the next area we have to address. New EU legislation referred to as GDPR – General Data Protection Requirement comes into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and will involve us all. Brexit will offer little or no relief! We will be publishing more information on this in the next few months. Our plans for ensuring full compliance are well under way.

However, in the immediate future, there is more to look forward to. Not just the 'Page 17' exhibitions but also the creation of hearts to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the first World War in 2018. We aim to create multiple exhibitions each of 100 hearts stitched and illustrated by members of the Embroiderers' Guild. Full details including a call for 'expressions of interest' will be/were published to members at the end of this September. *Thank you.*