

2018 Report by Trustees or their Representative to Regional AGM's

We have much to celebrate as a Guild...

- New branches... Holt, Harwich, Arundel, Sheppey and others being formed as we speak.
- Our first permanent gallery for exhibiting items from the collection at Bucks County is now open.
- Partners and sponsors who see us as an organisation that 'delivers'. Particular thanks to Aurifil, Glasgow Caledonian University, Upper Street and Empress Mills.
- A hugely successful 'Page 17' project and exhibitions.
- The start of the 100 Hearts exhibitions... 13 in total from 5 days to 3 months.
- The World's Longest Embroidery for Schools; the idea works and schools enjoy taking part.
- The library of postcards on the EG website; exclusively available for members to enjoy.
- Our 8 Pinterest boards.
- The quality of entries for the Beryl Dean Award and Guild Scholarships.
- Similarly, the number and quality of YE and adult entries for the Members' Challenge.
- Our following on Face Book is growing and we have just launched our Instagram account.
- Our EG Distance Learning courses continue to grow and should expand considerably in the next few months.
- Our first regional exhibition of items from the collection opens in Ely Cathedral in February.
- And the White Walker is back on exhibition, this time in Glasgow for 6 months.

The CEO has been visiting regions to report to members in more detail and answer members' questions. These two and a half to three hour sessions covered as many as 15 topics in as much detail as members wanted. The sessions in Scotland, the North West and North East, Yorkshire and the South West went well; although we had hoped to see more branches represented at some of the sessions. The aim was to have all branches represented in order that members heard first-hand about the life and work of the Guild. The CEO is still willing to visit the remaining regions.

Our major challenge is the capacity at Head Office to deal with the increasing demands of member and branch support, implementation of new legislation such as GDPR and preparing the Guild to meet the challenges of the future; most recently commissioning a new database and communications tool with only very limited external project support. The Head Office team of three full and one part-time members of staff is insufficient to meet the demands on the organisation and expectations of members. Unfortunately, there are no funds to recruit more staff, the direct result of falling income from the magazines and persistently reducing membership subscriptions. The outcome of the low

key initiative launched last year when we asked members to invite a friend was particularly disappointing – only three directly attributable new members.

And you have all seen the fallout in the form of the difficulties experienced in bringing the new database into commission. There have been errors, in one case a particularly regrettable error in that it caused some concern and worry but members have also been quick to judge whereas the reality is that these occurrences were the direct result of under-capacity and increasing demand in the face of falling income. Too often, the judgmental comments have been excessive and beyond the limits of what is acceptable.

At board level we have 6 trustee vacancies, all of which can be filled by suitably experienced elected or co-opted members of the Guild. However, it is inescapable that the role and expectations on a trustee are no longer satisfied by a three or four meetings a year where papers are considered, voted on and all move on to the next meeting. The demands on trustees are not inconsiderable.

In the last issue of *Contact* the Trustees invited all members of the Guild to contribute to a project on which many hold very strong views i.e. the name of the Guild and how it is communicated. Many say it is one of the biggest barriers to recruiting new members yet, to date, we have only 4 responses. However, our thanks to those who have put forward their solutions. There is still time if you have any suggestions.

We hope you can now see we all share the difficulties; ones that are common to all....

- Regions and branches unable to form committees.
- Post holders who are overworked and overstretched.
- Post holders who have been in-post for many years.
- Difficulties putting on an attractive programme.
- Falling attendances at branch meetings.
- A lack of on-line social media presence.
- Falling branch membership numbers.
- Dealing with new legislation.
- Funding the increased costs of products and services.

This cannot go on.

We have an organisation that is now well thought of and respected by sponsors, donors, business partners, textile artists (many of whom are joining the Guild), auditors, suppliers and exhibition venue owners etc.... and yet this is not translating into our ability (and perhaps willingness) to attract a new generation of members and, in doing so, sustain the organisation for the future.

We hope you can see that we all have stake in reversing these situations.

The trustees and CEO will be considering what we have to do and how we will need to work together to strengthen every part of our organisation... members, branches, regions and Head Office. We will be publishing plans ahead of the 2019 Guild AGM.

Thank you.