

# Annual Review 2022-23



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall  
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

**RSN**  
ROYAL SCHOOL  
OF NEEDLEWORK

Founded 1872



## Mission

To preserve the heritage and lead the development of hand embroidery, enriching lives by inspiring, teaching and innovating to provide the widest access to our knowledge and skills.

## Values

Tradition, Quality and Innovation

The RSN was established in 1872 at a small single site in London to revive and teach the art of needlework and thereby provide suitable employment for poor gentlewomen. In the intervening 150 years we have expanded our activities and extended our reach across the world to protect the future of hand embroidery. Increasingly we have been exploring a more contemporary societal purpose and challenging ourselves to understand better the broader benefits people derive from our activities today. Safeguarding the future of hand embroidery is an outcome that will be achieved if we ensure our activities are appropriate, accessible, attractive and add value to society. This has involved a top-down, bottom-up review to rearticulate the relevance of our work for more modern times.

No other single organisation covers the breadth of work now undertaken by the RSN. We use our 150 years of remarkable history, knowledge and expertise to teach, practise and promote the art of hand embroidery underpinned by our values of Tradition, Quality and Innovation.

Our Education Team runs a degree programme and professional embroidery and tutor course for those interested in pursuing a career in embroidery and we have a range of leisure courses aimed at beginners through to serious hobbyists which are delivered online to participants around the world and in person at locations across the UK and internationally.

Our Studio specialises in creating beautiful bespoke commissions as well as restoring historic textiles and bringing heirlooms back to life. Clients include the British Royal family, cathedrals, synagogues, churches and private individuals.

We further promote the art of hand embroidery through activities including exhibitions, talks and taster sessions and use our extensive Archive and Collection to inform and inspire. We introduced the RSN Stitch Bank in late 2021 to digitally conserve a record of every stitch worldwide and provide a resource for stitchers. An online retail operation and store at our Hampton Court base also provides a range of products, kits and materials.



Jane Peel

**Patron:** Her Majesty Queen Camilla

**President:** HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

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Front cover image of Her Majesty The Queen's Robe of Estate  
designed and worked by the RSN Photo Hugo Burnand used  
with permission



## Chair's Introduction



At the beginning of September 2022, I took on the role of Chair of the RSN Council. Just eight days later we heard the sad news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth had died. It was a sombre time for all at the RSN as we had embroidered numerous pieces for Her Majesty, but we were honoured to be asked to produce several items for the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

The Coronation helped raise not only the profile of the RSN worldwide but also the practice and art of hand embroidery. Our work was a fitting display of the talent and creativity of the RSN embroiderers and provided a window on our wider portfolio.

It is a credit to our small and dedicated team of staff and tutors that they manage to undertake so much, and we are grateful for their hard work and commitment in helping the RSN lead the development of hand embroidery through an unrivalled range of activities.

With participation in courses increasing post-Covid, trustees approved new resources to streamline administrative tasks and create the new role of Director of Education. The new Director is reviewing and improving programme delivery to further strengthen our education provision.

People are now engaging in the practice of hand embroidery in a very different way; we have adapted to online courses and events and broken-down geographic barriers with participation possible from anywhere in the world via Wi-Fi access and a screen. As a result, our operational delivery and customer reach have been transformed and this has led to an array of strategically driven decisions and initiatives.

We are redesigning our tutor course to better prepare graduates for the ongoing needs of both the RSN and a modern career in professional embroidery. The new Professional Embroidery Tutor Programme will start in September 2024 and we are hopeful to be able to fulfil a long-held aim to offer a scholarship place for one student each year.

Recognising and investing in our tutors is critical; we know from research that customers choose to learn with the RSN because of the depth and breadth of our tutors' knowledge and proficiency. During the year we developed the RSN Fellowship programme which is launching in Spring 2024. Fellows of the RSN (FRSN) will all be graduates of our previous Apprenticeship scheme or three-year Tutor programme. They have undertaken and passed the most intensive and rigorous training of all RSN courses and are uniquely qualified to teach and practise, to the highest standards, the

broadest range of embroidery techniques and related activities. Our tutors play an important role in delivering our mission and we look forward to supporting them further through the RSN Fellowship..

We are investing in the ongoing development of new practical and theory programmes which we hope to launch for September 2024. We have started work on digitising pieces in our Collection and Archives so they can be made available online and have continued to add stitches to the RSN Stitch Bank which aims to digitally conserve and showcase the wide variety of the world's embroidery stitches and how they have been used in different cultures and times. You can read more about our activities and projects in this report and on our website: [royal-needlework.org.uk](http://royal-needlework.org.uk).

We have also been reviewing our current operation to help shape our future strategy and the direction of the RSN of the future.

As the new RSN Chair and with a number of relatively new trustees this year it felt an appropriate time to review governance processes and reflect on the RSN's strategic direction. We have updated and introduced new policies, further strengthened our trustee skill set, refined reporting to Council, and introduced an Education Committee to provide additional oversight and help inform the strategic direction of education activities.

We welcomed four new trustees; Keith Pickard joined as Honorary Treasurer in early 2023 helping us to continue to invest funds wisely and generate maximum impact from our work. Dominic Tweddle, Sarah Mumford and Paula Leftwich joined in May 2023 and strengthened our Council further. Thank you to Nicola Clarke, Stephanie Wright and Claire Miller for all their help before standing down last year

As a charitable body we are funded entirely by surplus income from our commercial activities and the kind donations of individuals, charitable trusts and organisations who share our passion for the important role embroidery has, and continues to play, in helping individuals and cultures tell stories, record history, create community and derive pleasure from the creation of a piece of art. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us financially, to the hard work of our staff and tutors who help deliver our vision, and to our students, customers and other beneficiaries who make it all worthwhile. It is very much appreciated.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Wood'.

P Wood

Chair of Trustees



Diploma Applique by Helen Sturdy, HCP

### The variety of embroidery



Degree work by Chloe Rogers and Chloe Angrave



## Public Benefit - RSN Stitch Bank

The RSN has due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. During this year our most significant public benefit offering was the RSN Stitch Bank which goes to the core of the RSN's mission, making knowledge of stitches available to all, so that we ensure hand embroidery will continue in a relevant way. It is now becoming established as the online source of information on stitches, both traditional and new and is designed with users in mind.

This fantastic resource which has been made possible by charitable donations and is offered free at the point of use. Since its launch in 2021 it is now visited by nearly 25,000 unique visitors every month.

The RSN Stitch Bank is open to all and used by students, curators, historians of stitch and practitioners. This service receives thanks regularly for the variety of ways in which each stitch is explained, so that all types of learners can gain from the explanations, especially because with one click, the diagrams can be changed to show how a left-handed embroiderer works the stitch.

At the year-end we had 350 stitches on the site and this number has increased since and will continue to grow throughout 2023-24. This resource is the largest free database of stitches anywhere in the world and is used by a wide variety of people from the Curators of local UK Museums to identify the stitches on a historic garment to Canadian Embroiderers' Guild groups using it as a resource for projects around unusual stitches and

from teachers of textiles in schools and colleges in the UK to researchers at the Victoria and Albert Museum. As more people learn of it, the more they share it with other embroiderers.

The aim of the RSN Stitch Bank is ultimately to feature every stitch in the world so conserving many that would otherwise be lost.

***I think it is an amazing resource and the range of stitches and the quality of the information for each stitch is incredible - I use it all the time and tell all my embroidery friends about it - being a lefty I also appreciate that I can turn the stitch to show for left rather than right hand stitching.***

Numerous other examples of the RSN's public benefit can be found throughout this report relating to Exhibitions, Talks, Taster courses as we continue to improve our accessibility and expand the reach of our activities.

**Images one of our School events, kits from family days and nine examples from the RSN Stitch Bank.**





Recreating our own bit of history. For each coronation since 1902 the media has been allowed to see the work in progress at the RSN on only one day. From 1937 we have the picture below, working on the Robe of Estate of Queen Elizabeth, wife of King George VI. This time, we were also allowed to take our own photographs so we decided to recreate this image with some of the 2023 team who worked on Queen Camilla's Robe of Estate. This was the fifth Coronation on which the RSN has worked.



# The Practice of Embroidery

## The RSN Studio

The longest established part of the RSN is the Studio and it really came to the forefront of activities this year. Originally called the Workroom it is responsible for two things: the training of new embroiderers to professional standards and for working on clients' pieces, both new and conservation/restoration. It works on commissions for a wide range of clients across sectors from the Church to private individuals and from the military to stately homes and occasionally the Royal Family.

The advantages of using the RSN for important work is not only the consistency and high standards but all the work is undertaken in the UK, as we have a pool of our own trained professional embroiderers on whom we can call to work on pieces. The RSN is the only place in the UK with such a quantity of highly skilled people and is one of the main reasons why the RSN was asked to work on nine pieces for the Coronation, both new and conservation.

The first piece commissioned was the Robe of Estate for her Majesty Queen Camilla who has been the Patron of the RSN since 2017. This is the train that she wore to exit Westminster Abbey and traditionally the Queens' trains are extensively embroidered. Her Majesty wanted something shorter and lighter than that of the late Queen Elizabeth, which the RSN had designed and made in 1953. Embroiderers have long looked to the natural world for symbolism and creative design. The Robe of Estate was no exception. The brief was for flowers including the four flowers of the United Kingdom: Rose, Thistle, Shamrock and Daffodil but beyond that, the design was open. The core team in the Studio undertook extensive research and sampling. They wanted to represent both the King and the Queen's interest in the natural world so they selected flowers that were meaningful to both of them, but also populated the design with insects, butterflies, dragonflies, bees, ladybirds, a caterpillar and a snail to highlight Their Majesties interest in biodiversity and the importance of the natural world.

The Studio created new cyphers for Their Majesties and a new crest for Her Majesty while that for the King was reused from the one made by the RSN for George VI in 1937 as the King's crest is the same as his grandfather's.

**In 2023 the RSN's name and work reached more people than ever before, through our work for the Coronation.**

Other pieces were commissioned by some of the City of London livery companies with whom the RSN has long-standing relationships. The anointing screen was to be completely different from the canopy used previously. It was based on a window in the private chapel at St James's Palace, converted into a workable motif by Iconographer Aidan Hart, with the poles used to carry the panels being turned by Nick Gutfreund of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters, from a fallen tree in Windsor Great Park. The audience-facing part of the screen featured a tree bearing the names of the 56 countries of the Commonwealth worked on leaves in gold thread. Because of the scale of this piece, we were able to invite all the degree and tutor students to participate in this as well as representatives of our Certificate and Diploma programme and members of staff.

The Worshipful Company of Girdlers provide the Girdle (sword belt) and the stole for the ceremony. The RSN helped conserve and extend the girdle which had previously been worn by the late Queen, and to work a new stole to a design by the College of Heralds. This featured the four Apostles, the four plants of the United Kingdom, this time utilising the more traditional leek for Wales, as well as reference to the Cosmati pavement, the flooring of Westminster Abbey at the point where the crowning takes place. The stole also featured the gridiron as the symbol of the Girdlers and the palm branch of St Lawrence their patron saint.



Photos this page RSN Studio

The RSN Studio was thrilled to host a visit from the King and Queen prior to the Coronation for them to see the work in progress and talk with some of those who worked on the various items. The nine pieces were initially showcased in the British and international press and seen by millions on the day. They have subsequently been enjoyed by over 450,000 people who visited Buckingham Palace in summer 2023 where the pieces were on exhibition.

In addition to these very special pieces, this year the studio worked on a wide range of other pieces from a Mitre for an American Bishop in the traditional technique of underside couching to conserving pairs of crewelwork curtains and adding a name to a family christening robe to restoring canvaswork chair covers chewed by a new puppy.

As a result of the Coronation projects the Studio has strengthened relations with institutions with which it has had previous links including the royal household, the College of Heralds, the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury and some of the livery companies. This will enable new initiatives to be thought about to work on collectively.

It was not possible to watch the Coronation and miss the work of the RSN Studio Stitchers. With the variety of techniques being used, the RSN really showed how contemporary and relevant embroidery can be in all environments.

*Broadcaster and journalist, Anne Diamond OBE:  
"Your high profile during the Coronation has sparked a great deal of interest! I am fascinated to learn more about The Royal School of Needlework and all you do - and I know our audience would too." Prior to recording a feature for Viking TV.*





## Teaching and Learning

The RSN receives no government funding, it has to raise or earn its income. The principal way in which we raise funds is by fulfilling our mission to preserve the heritage and lead the development of hand embroidery, enriching lives by inspiring, teaching and innovating to provide teaching, providing the widest access to our knowledge and skills. The hallmark of the RSN is technical hand embroidery applied to a wide variety of subject matters. For our Future Tutor programme and the Certificate and Diploma in Technical Hand Embroidery, technical excellence is at their core. It is for this reason that the RSN is sought out for very special work. For those taught through the main training programme (Training School, Apprenticeship or Future Tutor programme) there are two key mantras at the RSN, first that as a result of the teaching, if they need to work on a project collectively, it will be done in such a way that it looks like the work of one person. Secondly, when working to a deadline we invoke the saying 'never a seat shall go cold' because if one person gets up, another can sit down and carry on from where the other left off. These are special skills because, as individual artisans our professional embroiderers all have different styles, but effective collective working has been taught to them through their time at the RSN and put to good effect when required.

## RSN Degree

The student body for the degree is diverse in background, age, gender, country of origin and we have above average numbers who are the first in their family to go to university. Last year the geographic spread was Germany, Norway, Brazil, USA, Hong Kong, and of Lithuanian, Moroccan, Eritrean and Nigerian heritage. Even within the UK we have students from Cornwall, Wales, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Bristol, Cambridgeshire and the Home Counties. This makes for a very dynamic group who can learn from each other and why we encourage working in the RSN rooms as often as possible for peer learning.

The hallmark of the degree programme is that while all learn hand embroidery at the same pace and in the same process they develop into very individual and innovative artists as they are actively encouraged to develop their own practice. At the heart of the programme, alongside skills development is using those skills in third party projects. These provide an external perspective, build student confidence and enable the application of transferable skills to real world projects. In

**The student body for the degree is diverse in background, age, gender, country of origin and we have above average numbers who are the first in their family to go to university.**

this academic year, students engaged with established and high-profile artists, designers and makers including a third project with textile artist Susan Aldworth for an installation at the National Centre for Craft and Design, Sleaford, Lincolnshire; the Great Imagining Festival at the Studio of Gavin Turk and Deborah Curtis; an innovative Couture Embroidery project for Alexander McQueen Embroidery Atelier and projects for Maddux Creative and Fromental for Chelsea Design Centre, WOW!house.

In addition, Degree students from all three years participated in work on the Anointing Screen for the Coronation of King Charles III,

As with Tutor students we encourage participation in major competitions. This year two Degree students received Commended accolades from the Bradford Textile Competition, while at the Hand and Lock Awards, the most prestigious international award for hand embroidery, 2022 degree graduate Sabina Lima won the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers' (GSWD) award for use of metal thread for her work Ablaze, and her piece was then invited to be shown at the GSWD 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition, 2022 graduate Eliza Gomersall won

both the Worshipful Company of Broderers' Associate Award and the Textile Art Student Category for her work 'Palingenesis' (Rebirth): A Story of Transformation. This is the fifth time in the last six years that the Textile Art prize has been awarded to an RSN student and the third time to a degree student.

We also ensure that student work is given every opportunity for exhibition holding shows at Hampton Court Palace and participating in New Designers and Graduate Fashion Week.

The students are taught by the in-house staff supplemented by a range of visiting lecturers to offer breadth of experience to the students. Angie Wyman, Degree Course Leader, was invited by Jamie Chalmers 'Mr X Stitch' to be on the judging panel for his online Competition, she was also on the judging panel for the Fine Art Textiles Award and is a mentor on the Hand and Lock awards for people in the open category, fashion.

**The teaching methods at the RSN, of learning by making, enables everyone to learn at the same pace, becoming conversant in not only the language and methods of hand embroidery but also to develop innovative approaches to creative practice.**

The degree team were contacted by Professor Helen Storey of London College of Fashion about exploring stitch with refugees in Malawi and Mozambique. The RSN agreed to lend pieces from the handling collection to give people an idea of stitching and then they would be encouraged to make their own work. Helen reported back that this had been a very positive project with the refugees really relating to the stitched pieces they saw and worked.

This enables students to become confident practitioners, designers, creative thinkers and innovators. This in turn leads on to student successes not just in competitions but also in their professional lives.

Our graduates are sought after for their highly skilled work and professional conduct within external settings. This may include freelance opportunities in couture including Alexander McQueen, Tamara Ralph, Dame Zandra Rhodes, Erdem, and Cathryn Avison. Of note, one student from last year has gone on to the graduate Traineeship at Alexander McQueen, the third RSN graduate to achieve this honour; a previous winner is now working for Hugo Boss. Other graduates are working for film, for a bridal atelier, creating embroidered jewellery and for an interior design company. Two degree graduates are also now back working for the RSN part time to pass on their skills and experience, while also working for other organisations.

**Degree students from all three years participated in work on the Anointing Screen for the Coronation of King Charles III.**



Rebecca Ash





Final Major Project work by third year Lizzie Gray who was also winner of the prestigious Hand and Lock prize for Textile Art 2023. Lizzie became the sixth RSN winner in seven years.

## The RSN Future Tutor programme

The training of new tutors is the RSN's most important activity. The current Tutor programme had been running for ten years so it was time for a serious review of the course. On the appointment of the new Director of Education this was the primary area for consideration. A thorough review was undertaken holding open discussions with graduates of both the Future Tutor and previous Apprenticeship programmes and with current students. Following these discussions, the Course Leader and Director of Education redesigned the course.

A key change is to split the tutoring element from Studio experience. Going forward the Tutor programme will focus on teaching and learning and the RSN Studio will support an intern programme to develop people with the right skills and who want to work on commissions, restoration and conservation.

The new course is now being advertised and promoted for September 2024 entry.

In November 2022, work produced by the graduates of 2020 and 2021 was exhibited at the Girdlers' Hall in London. This was a wonderful opportunity for the graduates to showcase their pieces, especially as they had not been able to exhibit at graduation during Covid.

**In conjunction with the Degree students, Future Tutor students were able to take part in a Korean Embroidery Workshop.**

Throughout the year, there were numerous opportunities for our students to develop their teaching skills. These included events such as the Knitting and Stitching shows in London and Harrogate, the Artisan Fayre at HCP and the many day classes we hold at the Palace. Many of these are taster classes which we run at low cost to introduce new audiences to stitch.

In conjunction with the Degree students the Future Tutor students were able to take part in a Korean Embroidery Workshop. This was an incredible experience for students, with Korean Masters working with students on site at HCP, to create traditional Korean embroidered pieces.

The year ended with the work of second year student Sue Kim and third year/graduate Abigail Carter being selected to be shown at the Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition.

We encourage students and Tutors to enter awards and we were thrilled that graduates of the Future tutor programme, had had been successful. Tutor Chrissie Juno Mann was awarded third place in Mr X Stitch's online competition and Tutor Kate Pankhurst was shortlisted for the 2023 Hand and Lock prize Open Category Textile Art.

## RSN Certificate and Diploma

The Certificate and Diploma (C&D) programme flourished this year with face-to-face teaching back to pre-pandemic levels and the interest in online teaching still strong. All satellites were operational: Glasgow, Durham, Rugby, Bristol and Japan. In addition, to meet need, one session was run in the USA because while many students are content to work online, others prefer the face-to-face experience and even those doing most modules online like the opportunity to do one face-to-face. As a result, this programme achieved its highest ever income. RSN Tutors taught across three time zones online for more than 1672 hours and for 2616 hours face-to-face; combined RSN Tutors taught over 850 days. After the first module, online students may then join any of the online sessions and at the venues, Tutors have up to six students and all of whom may be working on a different technique. It is the skills and experience of the Tutors which allows them to move from one technique to another effectively for each student.

This year we saw our first 'online only' students complete the RSN Certificate. The level which they achieved clearly showed that we are offering this programme very effectively online. Tutors utilise a range of tools to ensure students are clear in how to make the stitches and are able to give the most effective feedback when they can enlarge digital images.

It has been pleasing to see the continuing, and growing interest in technical hand embroidery. This is a leisure course, but it is unique to the RSN and is sought out by people from all over the world because it enables participants to gain a high level of skill across a range of techniques. The finished pieces are not simply exercises but are works of art in each technique. This was borne out by the exhibition at our Glasgow base. For the first time in ten years, we exhibited student work and held graduation there. We exhibited more than fifty pieces of work, and one visitor was overheard to say *"This is one of the best exhibitions I have seen here"*, no mean accolade given that our base is the Glasgow Arts Club.

**This year we saw our first 'online only' students complete the Certificate.**

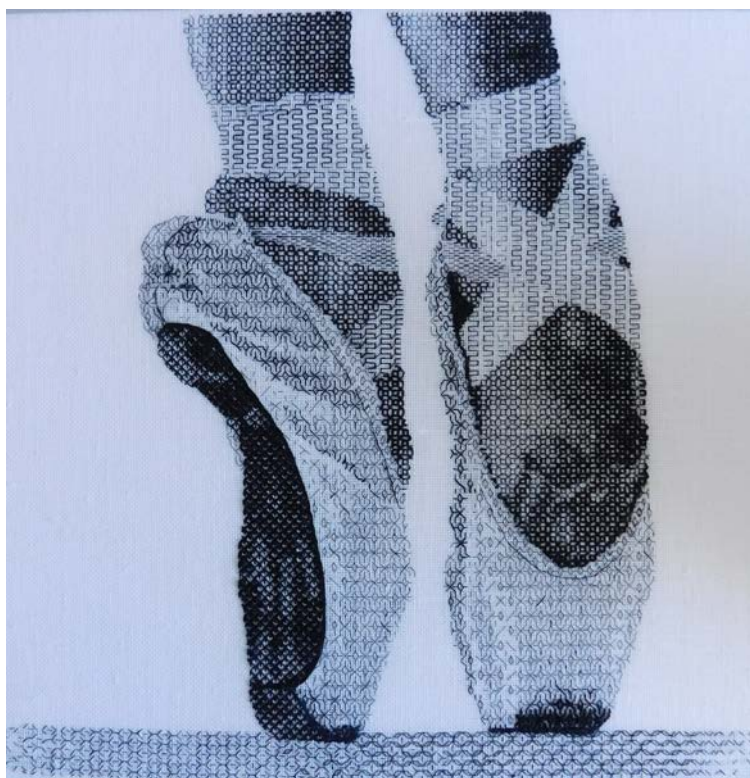
Visitors to our exhibitions come to appreciate the quality of the stitching and the variety of subject matter but the biggest impact is on the students themselves who learn a greater confidence in stitching, enjoy being part of a group when they learn, whether online or in person, and invariably achieve more than they thought they could when they started. This builds personal pride and admiration from family and friends especially when on public display. As one participant put it *'What a joy it is to be part of a group of women acting towards each other in a sisterly manner. It's joyous, and not taken for granted'*.







From top left: Lucinda Batty Canvas stitches Rugby, Jane Casey Goldwork HCP, Rebecca Hamilton Canvas stitches HCP, Christine Phillips Blackwork Diploma HCP, Janine Mendham Fine Whitework Bristol





## RSN Short Courses

Short courses remain an integral part of the RSN programme. They are there to introduce people to the range of techniques, before some might move on to C&D, but also to offer a bit of fun, a sense of collective endeavour and a personal opportunity for learning in a friendly environment. Many participants also mention the support of the RSN community. This year we offered classes at Hampton Court again, as well as online.

We also expanded the range of technical introductory courses (Technical Tuesdays), these courses introduce students to a range of stitches in each technique across 30 weeks, at the end of which they have a really strong understanding of the range of stitches and how they might best be used and participants also see examples from the RSN Collection to put their work in context. This year we ran two of each of three courses, Crewelwork, Blackwork and Goldwork, to meet demand.

The opening up of classes at Hampton Court resulted in a gradual increase in the number of attendees across the year. It is always hard to know what will particularly appeal. This year the top three areas were a series of more unusual whitework techniques, contemporary kit-less classes which gave some people greater confidence to try a more structured RSN course and classes based around mindfulness. Many of our students would think all our classes have a mindfulness element as they are spending time on something they enjoy and the stitching is always about the repetition of making the stitch which is a slow and deliberate activity so engendering a mindful approach.

Online classes continue to attract a diverse worldwide audience and it has become apparent that people will book onto a class that suits them timewise rather than a class, geared towards their geographical location. For example, early morning classes originally positioned for people in the Far East and Australasia have attracted UK/Europe attendees who clearly relish learning before starting their working day.

We strive to ensure we deliver a positive experience for all students, whether new or returning, and offer opportunities to grow and develop through trying different techniques and levels. We look for ways to expand and broaden the appeal and this year were delighted by the success of the Hampton Sampler designed by Masako Newton and taught by Masako and Nao Nagamura – this was a first for the RSN as it was advertised and taught in Japanese. As a result, it attracted new people with some attendees flying in from Japan.

The role of short courses is two-fold, to act as an introduction – to the RSN, to hand embroidery, to different techniques, but also to offer a way to start building skills and confidence for those who want to go on to the RSN C&D or other programmes.

Tutors play a vital role in introductory courses not just as the source of technical knowledge but also as ambassadors and encouragers. Most of the comments we receive for the short courses are to offer thanks to the tutors for their skills, patience, enthusiasm and guidance. As a result, students are encouraged to return and one result of online classes is that people can book more if they don't have to factor in travel and

### Online classes continue to attract a diverse worldwide audience.

accommodation costs, especially at this financially challenging time. We are also benefiting from trying new things, as the Japanese class demonstrated, and we were able to ensure participants were aware of the Japan Satellite should they wish to progress further.

*This is my first experience of the RSN, and indeed Goldwork, and I've already learned so much. Helen sets a good pace for this beginners class, always taking time to explain the techniques* (Susan C UK – Technical Tuesday Goldwork with Helen McCook)

*We all had a difficult time during the pandemic but the RSN*

*going online is one of the good things to come out of this difficult time!* (Anja D Germany – Captivating Crewelwork with Kate Barlow)

## RSN International Summer School

The International Summer School has gone from strength to strength especially in the UK and online. This year we again ran a programme online in July and at Hampton Court in August. As an extra special addition, for all those coming to Hampton Court Palace we took them to the exhibition of coronation regalia at Buckingham Palace one afternoon of the week to see the work of the RSN Studio up close. Altogether we ran 40 courses by 16 tutors, 11 at HCP, 2 at Glasgow and 27 online with a total take up of 356 places.

As a direct result of a live talk during the 2023 Summer School, a US student donated an item to the RSN Collection. New Friendships were forged in the online and onsite classrooms, and for those attending Hampton Court the welcome morning refreshments added to the joy and the sense of inclusion in a very special family.

*I just wanted to say that the gift is wonderful! Such a lovely keepsake and so useful. I was touched by the care you had taken both with the selection and the beautiful way it was presented in the silk bag with the personalised, handwritten label. I know this takes a great deal of thought, organisation and work "beyond normal expectation" and is part of what makes you all at RSN so special to us stitchers* (Vivienne D, UK)

*'Thank you for the most terrific RSN Summer School. Beautifully done and just such a special place to be within Hampton Court. We loved our Tutor who taught her skill with all the patience in the world. What a thing for us to be able to travel with our Group and Tutors to Buckingham Palace and be some small part to have known some who embroidered and therefore had all played a huge part in the Coronation. To follow it up the next day with our own special Tour and Talk within the RSN was special. Thank you to you all for such inspiration.'* (Frankie V, UK, Heath & Harebells with Sarah Smith)

***'I really enjoyed the course and learnt a huge amount – I had been a bit worried about how effective an online course would be, but my concerns were wholly unnecessary.'* (Helen G, UK, Heath & Harebells with Sarah Smith)**



Sarah Smith





Final major project by Jenna Riddell

## The RSN and Sustainability

The RSN was founded in 1872 to help preserve the art of hand embroidery through the provision of education and employment. Today we continue to promote, practise and provide a wide range of educational opportunities to raise awareness and help a global audience access and benefit from the practice of hand embroidery ensuring it remains relevant and is sustained. As well as upskilling thousands of people every year, our professional studio undertakes restoration and conservation work and makes a much-valued contribution to social sustainability.

We aim to drive positive change on sustainable fashion, promoting the conservation and preservation of historic and significant items. We also teach and engage people in visible mending techniques to reduce waste in textiles and fashion and this has been one of our most successful day classes during the year. We actively encourage people to donate unwanted items to our archives, collection, for student and customer use, and in the provision of project resources supplied to beneficiaries such as schools.

We have recently set up a Staff Sustainability Group to help us continue to look at what we can do to further prioritise the efficient use of resources and materials, reusing and recycling and practising responsible procurement where possible. We aim for 'minimum waste' which is essential to the cost effective and efficient running of all our operations.

The RSN is currently based at Hampton Court Palace which is looked after and managed by the independent charity Historic Royal Palaces. In the undertaking of their daily duties, we accept that all staff associated with the RSN will have an influence on the environment. We are committed to adopting working practices that will help to have a positive effect, assist towards continued environmental improvement, and reduce unavoidable negative influences caused by our working practices while acknowledging that our activities must conform with the requirements of operating within a Grade 1 listed building.

We think positively about sustainability, and this is actively embraced by our students. In 2023, final year degree student, Jenna Riddell, used only recycled and repurposed materials for her final major project. She made threads from plastic shopping bags and re-used cardboard and other packaging materials for her submission of embroidered animals, each of which had been chosen for its endangered species status.

Embroiderers have long taken inspiration and resources from the natural world to practise their stitching. Embroidering particular plants or animals in pieces of work provided symbolism and meaning while the appearance of specific species and materials has helped document the extent to which people travelled and explored the world. For centuries, people have used embroidery to play a compelling role in helping societies and individuals impart knowledge, tell stories and influence behaviour. We are in the early stages of reviewing how the practice of embroidery can be more relevant to the current needs of society.

# Promotion of Heritage and Modern Application of Embroidery

## RSN Partnership Classes

Partnership classes are ones which take place at a special venue which has an RSN link, such as holding items made by the RSN in their Collections or showing RSN-made items at exhibitions. These not only bring the RSN to new audiences, but also cement relations with other similar organisations. The partnership classes offer 'an experience' with added value to students, such as access to a normally private venue, entry to an exhibition or private talk by a venue Curator. New venue partners this year have included Canterbury Cathedral, St Alban's Cathedral, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Royal Collection Trust and Historic Royal Palaces. In total we ran 16 partnership classes at eight venues.

The partnership classes offer something extra and enable the RSN to meet its broader ambition to be accessible in more parts of the country. Partnership classes continue to inspire because they offer something that is not usually available and has to be experienced in person.

**Royal Collection Trust** *"Our partnership with RSN is one of our most valuable".*

*"We loved our Private Tour what a special treat. A super day out thank you to you all."*

*"Thank you for the most amazing and inspiring class. It was a wonderful day."*

## Exhibitions

Exhibitions are an important way for the RSN to reach new audiences. At the start of the academic year we held two exhibitions which were aimed at widely different audiences. Both featured recent work by RSN students and both were free entry. The first was held at the Sunbury Gallery. This is local to the RSN's Hampton Court Palace (HCP) base but it reached a very different, local audience as the HCP audience is mostly tourists and visitors.

The second exhibition was held at the Worshipful Company of Girdlers' headquarters in the City of London. This building is rarely open to the public, so this was an opportunity for people to see both RSN graduate work and the Livery Company's impressive building. The event was only open for three days but some 1700 people came despite tube and rail strikes. The event was considered a great success by all involved.

At Hampton Court we continued *A Girl's Education in Stitch* and we still managed to honour all the bookings even while working secretly on the special projects.

After the Coronation we launched a mini exhibition: *The Royal School of Needlework & Five Coronations 1902 – 2023*. This opened in July and was originally scheduled to run until November but such has been the interest that it has been extended to May 2024. The exhibitions at Hampton Court give visitors the opportunity to view pieces from the RSN Collection and also build awareness of the work and history of the RSN.

We also held Degree, Certificate and Diploma and Future Tutor graduate exhibitions at HCP this year both these exhibitions were held in a ground floor apartment at HCP making it easier for the public. We are very grateful to the Palace team for enabling us to use these rooms.

One further exhibition was held when the Degree students exhibited at New Designers which is an essential forum for graduates in creative subjects held at the Business Design Centre in London. These events enable the RSN to engage with people who may not have come across the organisation before and exhibitions have been the source of attracting new learners and supporters as well as showing the students' work to a range of audiences.

On the Curator's tours there are regularly people here from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and America as well as those from

around the corner. All really appreciate the stories of our past coronations and the opportunity to see sampling and prep work for the nine items the RSN worked on for 2023.

*"It really is amazing and wonderful you can get so close up to it to really see the workmanship."* Comment on the sampler the RSN is making of the Queen's Robe of Estate.

*"I wish I had come to this before I went to the Buckingham Palace exhibition, this puts everything in context."*

## RSN Online Talks

Twice a month the RSN has continued to deliver Online Talks. These are accessibly priced and are offered free to our own Degree and Future Tutor students and Tutors. They open up the world of embroidery to more people. The talks are about appreciating and exploring embroidery, so we welcome in an additional group of those who don't, or perhaps no longer, stitch but are interested in embroidery history. Talks highlight the RSN Collection and RSN history and we also invite guest speakers to produce a varied programme. This year guest speakers have also included RSN Ambassadors. In total we delivered 15 talks to 3650 people with many repeat visitors.

In particular, we gave two Coronation presentations, the first on the RSN's involvement with the four coronations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the second on our work for the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. These garnered very high audiences from all over the world. The talks were then put online and many people have gone back to watch one or both again. We have also given talks for other organisations including the Royal Collection which expands our audience.

The talks have built an international community that broadens the RSN's reach and enables us to communicate with more people on a regular basis. This year, we have managed to meet some of our online audience in person and they have shared how much the talks mean to them.

*What a fabulous presentation of the RSN's continuing involvement with such splendid artefacts. So interesting to see the results of the archival research in the RSN's collection.*

*FABULOUS presentation!!!! I've really enjoyed last week's and this week's journey through the Coronations.*

## Collection and Archive Digitisation Programme

We have been able to start this project thanks to successful fundraising. In June we appointed an Archivist and Curator and before the end of the academic year they had researched and selected the best collection management system for our needs. Working with the Chief Executive and colleagues they have also selected the first 100 objects to be digitised which should be complete in early 2024.

The first 100 objects will show the variety of the objects in the RSN Collection and Archive but more than this, it will give students, researchers, curators and historians a much greater understanding of the history of the RSN and the materials the organisation holds.



Embroidered tea cosy, one of the first 100 objects





**Tutor Jessica Aldridge in the RSN Studio with one of the angels for the Anointing Screen, worked as a slip for application onto the finished piece.**



## Schools and Children Engagement Programme

Inspiring the next generation of stitchers is an important part of the RSN's mission. Since 2018 the RSN has offered the Embroider a Selfie project free to schools thanks to support from the Worshipful Company of Girdlers. The project gives schools the opportunity to apply to receive free needlework supplies and access to a host of ideas and stitch demonstration videos. This year we were inundated with requests after one teacher wrote how good it was on a teachers' forum and sent 50 kits to secondary (and some primary) schools around the country. Many schools have applied as time allocated for textiles has been cut due to budget constraints. Teachers have used the kits for lunch time and after school clubs as well as to help promote textiles as a GCSE subject. Many schools also acknowledged the benefit for mental wellness.

This year with the support of the Worshipful Company of Broderers, we have also run Family Days and School Workshops with venue partners. For this programme we created pre-printed designs themed around wellness. Children were given the opportunity to decorate the words LOVE, LIVE and CALM with different stitches and coloured threads. We also created a design of the crown which was popular following

the Coronation. This year, the events took place around the country, not just in London.

The Selfie kits are offered to encourage a whole class to take part. The kits have been used creatively by the teachers for in class, after schools and special initiative programmes depending on what the school wants to help the children achieve.

One of the schools who attended at St Alban's Cathedral so enjoyed the day they also sent an application for the Embroider a Selfie project kit. *"It was a thoroughly enjoyable morning. The students got so much from your tutorials. We all came back so enthused (including our caretaker!) that we have organised a needlework club to run from September this year."*

*"I strongly believe by providing interesting, relevant projects for students in a stimulating environment will help foster their love for the subject and in turn increase the amount of students opting for a creative GCSE."*

*"The task and equipment gave the children the vehicle to have a go which has been tremendous as there was a purpose. Thank you for giving us the opportunity."*

**Below example of a school's engagement with the RSN Selfie project from Bridlington**







Final major project by Fiza Shahid, shortlisted  
for the Hand and Lock prize

## Retail

New management of the RSN's retail operation gave a fresh impetus to the potential for this area. We will focus on where we have specialist or exclusive product, which is already paying off. We also offered more opportunities to tutors to create bespoke kits and we enhanced customer service to good effect, recognising that the RSN shop can be the window to all the RSN's activities.

In addition, we curated a specific selection to tie in with the Coronation featuring products, kits and materials. Following the ceremony, the Studio supplied the shop with a Goldwork inspiration kit for customers to make their own journeys into this technique, especially as access to gold thread is becoming more problematic.

We also set up pop-up shops, such as for the Friends events, which raised profile and income and gave attendees very personal souvenirs. We will look to expand this to grow potential externally as we are limited with the physical storage and space of the retail activity at HCP. This work led to increased sales and profit.

## RSN Friends

Friends support the RSN through advocacy, engagement with core programmes and donations. In return we wanted to offer something special to Friends as a thank you; that opportunity came with the Coronation and the exhibition of regalia at Buckingham Palace. We offered Friends the opportunity to be shown round the exhibition by the Chief Executive and either the Head of Studio or Studio Manager and then meet others who had worked on the project over afternoon tea. So popular was this that the original three events filled overnight and we had to extend it to six sessions. In addition, we offered Friends free access to the talk on the coronation which was taken up by a good number contributing to this being the most popular talk of the year.

The events had a tremendous impact on those who attended (with people coming from across the UK, Netherlands, Austria, New Zealand, Australia and America). Many letters and emails of appreciation were received both from the Friends and their guests.

These events have helped to cement our relationship with Friends, especially those who are newer, as they had the opportunity to meet with some of the stitchers on the project and felt closer to the work of the RSN.

## IT

Digital is the primary method for our educational operations from booking a talk to taking a class, so the enhancement of our digital provision is critical. During the year we upgraded the digital equipment in Degree with new interactive HD screens to improve the teaching and student experience. We also added more MAC machines in the IT suite and reconfigured the set up to improve workflow. Across the organisation we have streamlined printing to multi-function devices which improve copy quality and reduce costs and are implementing cloud migration for more efficient team working while enhancing RSN password security.

We have engaged consultants to significantly enhance the RSN Website to improve user experience and simplify the user interface and initial feedback has been good.

We developed a Teams-based portal for Tutors, Education and customers with various levels of access that can be used to collate information on classes in one place and enable tutors to provide more information to customers.

## Marketing

The Coronation projects resulted in widespread international, national and regional coverage in print, online on TV and radio. Over 3000 pieces of editorial coverage was achieved. During a concentrated media campaign over one weekend, website traffic increased by 350%. The coverage also widened awareness of the RSN around the globe with inclusion in previously untapped markets including publications *Vogue Philippines*, *National Geographic Indonesia* and Japan's *Window of Art*. Awareness of the RSN was further highlighted through Coronation pieces on display at Buckingham Palace where our role was featured in media coverage and at the exhibition itself..

In 2023 the RSN's name and work reached more people than even before through our work for the Coronation. As a result, we are receiving more requests for information on historic textiles, and more visitors. One visitor ensured she could get a ticket for our Coronation exhibition before she booked her flight from New Zealand. We have welcomed people from down the road and round the world for our recent events including America, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand.

Digital marketing is such a key part of spreading the word about our activities now. We added both Tik Tok and Pinterest to our digital presence in response to customer demand. Second only to the online presence is the RSN appearing at key exhibitions such as Knitting and Stitching and Decorex to promote what we do, engage with past and potential customers.

## Staffing and facilities

During the year we worked with Hampton Court Palace managers to identify and lease some additional space for the Digitisation project and to enable the Education team to be housed together.

We also reviewed the staffing requirements and recognised the need to appoint a Director of Education to help us develop and oversee this vital part of the RSN, with responsibility for both the Tutors and the education staff team, especially as we deliver an enhanced programme.

The RSN runs with a very small team of hard-working staff for the range and reach of our activities. We also have a dedicated team of volunteers who help in a number of areas from marketing to retail and especially assisting with tours, for which we are very grateful.

**Below images of retail products in the RSN Shop : brooch by Marg Dier, cushion design by One-Off retail, Candy Cane brooch kit by Kate Barlow, RSN Calendar .**





## Looking ahead

The RSN has 150 years of unique heritage, knowledge and experience but it is vital that it continues to develop and keep pace with what customers and wider beneficiaries want and need today and in the future. During the year we have been reviewing our operation, listening to a wide range of stakeholders, and posing the question 'What If?' to inform our strategic plan over the next few years.

We want to be more inclusive and bring the personal, economic and societal benefits of embroidery to a broader audience. We are currently making significant investment in three core focus areas to support our development, growth, sustainability and impact.

1. Our proposition: we are using our experience and expertise to develop forward looking, needs-driven activities to further strengthen our leadership role in the world of hand embroidery. This will help build awareness, broaden community engagement and increase participation.

2. Strong and secure finance: Like most charities, the RSN has to raise funds to support its operations and we are ever mindful to allocate funds appropriately to get maximum return. Continued fundraising, maximising revenue from current activities and developing new income streams will be complemented by seeking strategic mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships to help elevate our reach and relevance.

3. Strong foundations: We need the appropriate resources and systems in place to support our ambitions. This includes improving our IT capability, keeping pace with appropriate facilities and environments for teaching and learning, and reviewing our locations to ensure we have suitable space for our staff operations, studio and retail business.

Underpinning this will be providing the environment for our staff team, network of RSN trained tutors and volunteers to work together as a cohesive team to inspire, innovate and provide the widest access to our knowledge and skills.



Diploma Whitework by Helen Williams HCP

## Financial Review

The consolidated statement of financial activities for the year shows a net deficit (before investment losses) of £317,373 (2021/22: surplus of £228,203).

The overall income for the year 2022/23 of £2,756,048 was broadly similar to that of the previous financial year (2021/22: £2,747,686). Income from donations and legacies was less than the prior year, at £201,932 (2021/22: £513,330), affected by a charge of £99,473 against legacy income recognised in the prior year. This charge led to legacy income being reported as negative for the year ended 31 August 2023 at (£52,832) (2021/22 income of £260,157). No grant income was received during the year (2021/22: £3,444). Donations and legacies remain an extremely important source of income, particularly for the Degree and Future Tutor programmes, neither of which receives any government funding, and for all new initiatives.

The trading subsidiary's income of £587,577 (2021/22: £383,508) increased by 53% driven by both an increase in retail sales through the shop, and a wide range of commissions in the Studio, including the honour of working on a range of items for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Income from charitable School activities amounted to £1,807,188 (2021/22: £1,694,473) a 7% increase year on year due to the continued popularity of online learning, return to more in-person classes and the International Summer School that was held both online and in-person in July 2023. Investment income fell by 2% to £154,888 (2021/22: £158,419).

The restricted fund income of £143,701 (2021/22: £134,175) consisted of resources earmarked for the Degree and Future Tutor programmes, the RSN Stitch Bank and Collection and Archive Digitisation Campaigns. Restricted expenditure of £182,891 (2021/22: £176,706) was incurred against the Degree and Future Tutor programmes, for the RSN Stitch Bank project, the Schools/Family workshops at the Fashion and Textile Museum and also the ongoing depreciation on the capital costs of the set-up of the new classrooms at Hampton Court Palace in 2015.

For the first time for many years, there is no recorded legacy income in the pie charts below as a legacy from Canada did not generate the expected income which had been incorporated in last year's figures, as per audit requirements, which needed to be corrected this year.

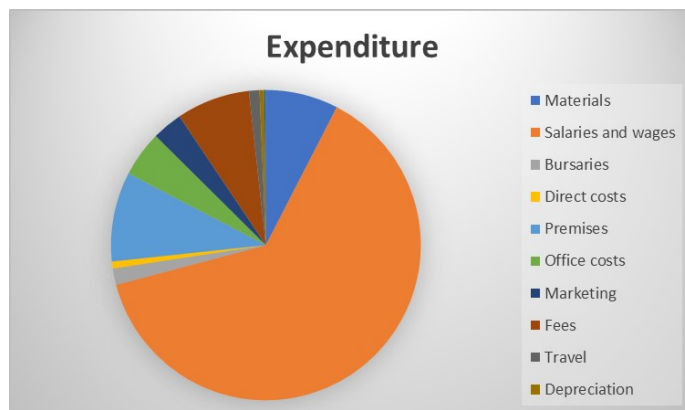
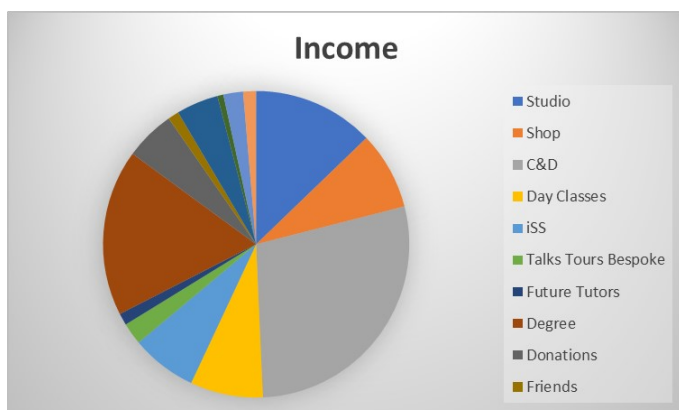
Total expenditure for the year was £3,073,421 (2021/22: £2,519,483), an increase of 22%. Costs have increased in 2022/23 due to the investment in new staff posts and the increased activity in the Studio and shop.

Net realised and unrealised losses on investments for the year amounted to £481,906 (2021/22: £755,541 net realised and unrealised losses). At the balance sheet date, net assets totalled £4,970,099 (2022: £5,770,238) of which £2,100,301 (2022: £2,620,471) are unrestricted income funds.

The Royal School of Needlework has an investment of £100 (2021/22: £100) in the share capital of RSN Enterprises Limited, a wholly owned company which is incorporated in England and Wales. The net trading income of the company for the year amounted to a profit of £44,336 (2021/22: deficit of £3,899).



Tutor Helen Richman's *Majesty of Stitch* kit created for the Coronation and retailed through the RSN shop.





# Consolidated statement of financial activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account) Year ended 31 August 2023

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Endowment funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
<b><u>Income and expenditure</u></b>					
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	58,231	143,701	—	<b>201,932</b>	513,330
Investments	154,888	—	—	<b>154,888</b>	158,419
Other trading activities	592,040	—	—	<b>592,040</b>	381,464
Charitable activities					
School activities	1,807,188	—	—	<b>1,807,188</b>	1,694,473
<b>Total income</b>	<b><u>2,612,347</u></b>	<b><u>143,701</u></b>	<b><u>—</u></b>	<b><u>2,756,048</u></b>	<b><u>2,747,686</u></b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	650,751	400	—	<b>651,151</b>	491,753
Charitable activities					
Costs of school activities	2,239,379	182,491	400	<b>2,422,270</b>	2,027,730
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b><u>2,890,130</u></b>	<b><u>182,891</u></b>	<b><u>400</u></b>	<b><u>3,073,421</u></b>	<b><u>2,519,483</u></b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains and losses</b>	<b>(277,783)</b>	<b>(39,190)</b>	<b>(400)</b>	<b>(317,373)</b>	<b>228,203</b>
Realised (losses) on investments	(25,893)	(69)	(25,517)	<b>(51,479)</b>	(153,951)
Unrealised (losses) on investments	(216,494)	(579)	(213,354)	<b>(430,427)</b>	(601,590)
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(520,170)</b>	<b>(39,838)</b>	<b>(239,271)</b>	<b>(799,279)</b>	<b>(527,338)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
<b>Fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2022</b>	<b><u>2,620,471</u></b>	<b><u>259,520</u></b>	<b><u>2,885,367</u></b>	<b><u>5,765,358</u></b>	<b><u>6,292,696</u></b>
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2023</b>	<b><u>2,100,301</u></b>	<b><u>219,682</u></b>	<b><u>2,646,096</u></b>	<b><u>4,966,079</u></b>	<b><u>5,765,358</u></b>

## Trustees' Statement

The trustees confirm that these summarised financial statements are a summary of information from the full annual report and financial statements which were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 February 2024. A copy of the full annual report and financial statements, upon which the auditor has reported without qualification, will be submitted to the relevant statutory bodies, including the registrar of companies and the Office for Students. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Royal School of Needlework. Further information and the full financial statements are available online or by contacting the Chief Executive at: the Royal School of Needlework, Apt 12a, Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9AU.

## Balance Sheets as at 31 August 2023

	Group		Charity	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible assets	32,368	39,233	32,368	39,233
Investments	4,959,508	5,381,018	4,959,608	5,381,118
	<b>4,991,876</b>	<b>5,420,251</b>	<b>4,991,976</b>	<b>5,420,351</b>
<b>Current assets</b>				
Stocks	94,461	77,535	34,627	31,736
Debtors	199,323	411,357	258,058	492,729
Cash at bank and in hand	514,356	571,937	483,395	559,962
	<b>808,140</b>	<b>1,060,829</b>	<b>776,080</b>	<b>1,084,427</b>
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	<b>(829,017)</b>	<b>(710,842)</b>	<b>(785,715)</b>	<b>(678,864)</b>
<b>Net current (liabilities)/assets</b>	<b>(20,877)</b>	<b>349,987</b>	<b>(9,635)</b>	<b>405,563</b>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>4,970,999</b>	<b>5,770,238</b>	<b>4,982,341</b>	<b>5,825,914</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>				
<b>Capital and reserves</b>				
Called up share capital	240	230	240	230
Capital redemption reserve	4,680	4,650	4,680	4,650
	<b>4,920</b>	<b>4,880</b>	<b>4,920</b>	<b>4,880</b>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>				
Unrestricted funds:				
. General fund	1,399,175	1,764,442	1,410,517	1,820,118
. Designated funds	701,126	856,029	701,126	856,029
	<b>2,100,301</b>	<b>2,620,471</b>	<b>2,111,643</b>	<b>2,676,147</b>
Endowment funds	2,646,096	2,885,367	2,646,096	2,885,367
Restricted funds	219,682	259,520	219,682	259,520
Total charitable funds	<b>4,966,079</b>	<b>5,765,358</b>	<b>4,977,421</b>	<b>5,821,034</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>4,970,999</b>	<b>5,770,238</b>	<b>4,982,341</b>	<b>5,825,914</b>

### Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of the Royal School of Needlework

We have examined the summarised financial statements set out on pages 21 and 22

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and the trustees' report. We also read the other information included in the annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the trustees' report of the Royal School of Needlework for the year ended 31 August 2023.

**Buzzacott LLP**, Statutory Auditor, 130 Wood Street, London EC2V 6DL

7 February 2024



## Fundraising

The RSN has to earn or raise all its income, it does not receive any statutory funding. In particular, we raise funds for all new projects as well as for student bursaries. This year we were able to continue the RSN Stitch Bank and to start the RSN Digitisation project, both of which we have been fundraising for some time. These are two important projects which help conserve stitches and textiles and which provide important reference resources to our students.

The RSN Stitch Bank is an open-access resource which contained 350 stitches by the end of the year with more being added every quarter. This provides inspiration and methodology to students and has already proved itself. Stitches can be supported for twelve months to help us to raise funds for more stitches to be added.

The Digitisation project began this year thanks to funds from both individuals and charitable trusts. When the first 100 objects are revealed we will aim to fundraise for the growing number of objects that are part of the RSN's eclectic and fascinating collection.

We are particularly grateful to those Livery Companies, Charitable Trusts and individuals who supported our students through bursaries this year.

We are very grateful to those who support the RSN which include a number of livery companies: Broderers, Dyers, Girdlers, Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers, Haberdashers and Needlemakers.; a number of charitable trusts this year including The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust, The Coats Foundation Trust, Bancroft Clark Charitable Trust, Newby Trust, Knights of the Round Table, Westminster Arts Society, Radcliffe Trust, Headley Trust, Tripp Family Foundation and Lord Barnby Trust.

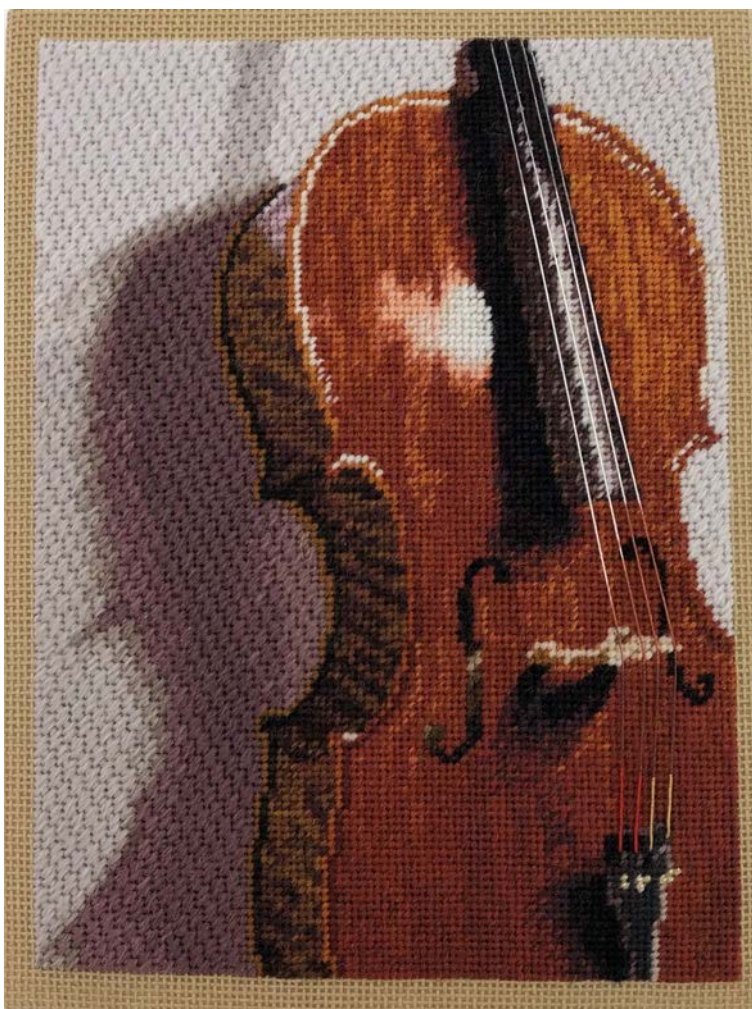
### Ways to help

To get involved and support the RSN you can:

Make a donation to any of the projects or departments mentioned in this review, through our website: [www.royal-needlework.org.uk](http://www.royal-needlework.org.uk)—go to Get involved/donate.

Pledge a legacy to help support our long-term future.

Become a Friend, Life Friend or Special Supporter.



Abigail Carter Canvas shading





Rebekah Stone, HCP



Linda Glasser, Durham



Sarah Wilson, online



Mika Suzuki, HCP



Kenny Damien, online



Alison Struthers, Scotland



Linda Bates Bristol



Vanessa Lu Kwan Wu, HCP



Belinda Strachan Durham

Embroidery has long featured images from nature. These nine pieces by RSN Certificate students celebrate flowers in the classic techniques of silk shading and Goldwork as we celebrate the natural world.