

**2024-2025**  
ACADEMIC YEAR

**ROYAL SCHOOL OF NEEDLEWORK**

# **DIPLOMA**

## **ADVANCED GOLDWORK**



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



**Goldwork means the embroidery of metal threads onto a variety of fabrics, but usually cotton velvet, silk or linen. Frequently used for ecclesiastical and ceremonial embroidery.**

**AIM** – To work Goldwork embroidery demonstrating an understanding of design for goldwork and an advanced level of technical skill in the choice, application and use of metal threads. Work will include the use of more varieties of metal thread and padding techniques other than those used in Basic Goldwork. Designs should not be directly copied from other sources; referencing, interpreting or stylising shapes or designs is acceptable however designs should be original you, which your tutor will encourage you to do.

**Please note: All preparatory work (e.g. outlines, drawings, stitch plans, original source material) **MUST** be handed in for assessment or the work will not be marked.**

### **DESIGN**

Try to come with some ideas for your design. The tutors will be able to make suggestions and help you bring your ideas together to create your own image.

**Do be flexible in your approach, listen to your tutors' experienced advice and be prepared to alter your initial ideas if necessary.**

- The design should not exceed 20cm x 20cm (8in x 8in)
- The design needs to be bold, with clear defined areas to work the different Goldwork techniques.
- Try not to have too many small, intricate details.
- Designs with open and closed spaces often work better than designs with lots of solid areas.
- Your design should have a good balance of techniques and not have one dominant type e.g. couching.

**If you are using images from the Internet, please be aware of any copyright restrictions and make sure the image is clear and crisp to use.**

### **TECHNIQUES**

You **MUST** include the following:

- An area of couched Japanese/Passing thread over carpet felt padding in self-colour, in a brick or diagonal pattern.
- A *sharp* turn (less than 90 degrees) and/or corner using the couched Japanese thread. This should be turned and not plunged to achieve the shape.
- An area with a combination of couched threads over padding, including a turn.
- Couching over white string- either Japanese or passing thread is couched in a counted pattern- basket weave effects can be achieved. This area should be large enough to create a distinct pattern.
- An area of couched threads with no extra outline, where the plunging is visible.

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- An area of chipwork, (solid and/or scattered) which must be worked with bright check or wire check (not rough/smooth purl).
- Cut Purls over soft string padding. A minimum of 10cm (4in) collectively using all four types of purl: bright check, wire check, smooth purl and rough purl. One area should show exclusively rough purl (at least 2cm or 1in continuous).
- “S-ing” This looks like stem stitch using cut purls. (Can also include the use of spangles.)
- An area with Broad plate, at least 5cm (2in) worked traditionally in a zigzag pattern over padding. Whipped plate may be used in addition.
- An area with applied metallic kid leather.
- An area padded with carpet felt.
- String padding, at least one end of which must be tapered.
- The maximum number of strings for string padding should be 20.

You may also include an area of Shaded Gold - This is a couching technique using coloured thread to create a pattern.

You may also include an area of couched threads worked of white string that is not worked in a basket weave pattern.

Appropriate embellishment may be added, such as jewels with s-ing or long & short.

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:** Please see *Project Evaluation* sheet for details

### PREPARATION

- Velvet (with the pile running downwards), silk or linen is placed on the slack calico then attached using long & short/herringbone stitch.
- When painting on the design, paint with, rather than against, the pile of the velvet to get a smoother line.
- The velvet, silk or linen should then be further secured to the calico with small stab stitches along the inside of the paint line.
- You may choose to apply extra fabrics onto the background; these can be stitched onto your frame at this stage using small stitches.

### TIPS

- Make sure there is no padding showing or paint lines visible.
- The rows of couched thread should lie flat with no spaces between and no overlapping rows.
- Be careful to get an even tension when plunging threads.
- Be careful not to overstretch the pearl purl. If overstretching pearl purl make sure that it is evenly stretched throughout.
- Be sure to cut the four purls to the correct length, otherwise they are prone to cracking.
- Always use a muller with the cut gold.
- Cutwork is very delicate; this is the final technique in the project so always use lots of tissue padding to protect your embroidery.



- Mounting – a small layer of wadding is needed between the board and the work due to the plunged ends on the back of the embroidery.
- Protect your embroidery with some soft padding when herringboning and stitching on the sateen.

### MATERIALS / EQUIPMENT

- Calico
- EITHER a closely woven, substantial flat silk OR linen OR velvet (cotton or silk, not synthetic) with a good pile, measuring approximately 30cm x 30cm. (12 x 12 ins)
- Needles: Embroidery No.10, No.11, No.12, Chenille No. 24.
- Gütermann polyester thread to match the metallic threads and one to match the background fabric.
- Beeswax.
- Mellor or laying tool.
- Padding – carpet felt; craft felt, soft string, white string
- Gütermann polyester thread No.488
- Velvet board

You will need to purchase the silk, linen or velvet yourself however we keep a limited range of silk fabrics at the RSN. Mellors and velvet boards can be purchased from the RSN shop.

### THREADS

- A combination of gold, gilt, silver, copper and coloured metal threads may be used. *The RSN stock most types suitable for Advanced Goldwork in gilt but if you want to use silver or copper you may need to source this yourself. Please discuss your choices/requirements at your first class (or in advance).*
- All threads used for Basic Gold can be used: Japanese Threads, Pearl purl, Twist, Rococo/Check Thread, Bright Check and Smooth Purls and Spangles. The size of these threads can vary.
- You **MUST** include these other threads:
  - Passing-** similar to Japanese Thread but a more tightly wrapped foil. This is couched down in pairs with a single waxed thread.
  - Broad Plate-** a gold metal 'ribbon'. This is couched down with a single waxed thread and bent back on itself, to form a zig-zag pattern.
  - Kid Leather -** A Synthetic alternative could be used. A paper template is reversed and drawn around on the back of the leather. The leather is then cut out and stitched with a single matching thread.
  - Wire/Dull Check-** This is a matt version of Bright Check.
  - Rough Purl-** This is a matt version of Smooth Purl.

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### **BOOKS**

- Jane Lemon "Metal Thread Embroidery" ISBN 0-7134-5577-2
- Tracy Franklin "New Ideas in Goldwork" ISBN 0-7134-8780-1
- "Royal School of Needlework Embroidery Techniques" ISBN: 0-71348817-4
- Mary Brown "Goldwork Embroidery" ISBN: 978-1-86351-366-1
- Helen McCook "RSN Essential Stitch Guide: Goldwork" ISBN 978-1844487028

### **STOCKISTS:**

- The Royal School of Needlework 020 3166 6935
- Benton and Johnson (metal threads) [www.bentonandjohnson.com](http://www.bentonandjohnson.com)
- Golden Threads [www.goldenthreads.co.uk](http://www.goldenthreads.co.uk)
- The Silk Route (Silk dupion) 01252 835781 [www.thesilkroute.co.uk](http://www.thesilkroute.co.uk)
- Mace & Nairn (fabrics) [www.maceandnairn.com](http://www.maceandnairn.com)
- MacCulloch & Wallis (Silk dupion) Dering St, (Nr Oxford St) London 020 7629 0311  
[www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk](http://www.macculloch-wallis.co.uk)

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