

1906



2006

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EMBROIDERERS' GUILD

1906 On 12 January the Society of Certificated Embroideresses was founded by 16 graduates of the Royal School of Art Needlework with the aim "to deal entirely with embroidery and with the first object of keeping up a high standard of work and design". Membership was only open to those holding a teaching diploma and the two years' certificate of the Royal School of Art Needlework. This was widened in 1907 and anyone could apply for Membership by submitting embroidery for assessment by a panel of judges.

1920s After a temporary cessation of activities during WW1 eight Members reconvened in 1920 and changed the name to the Embroiderers' Guild. With only £10 and no premises they started a library and assembled portfolios made available for loan. In 1924 Queen Mary became a Royal Patron and presented the Guild with embroideries from all over the world. The Worshipful Company of Broderers became Vice Patrons in 1928 and other donors presented historical embroideries.



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1930s The first Branch was established in 1931 to carry out the work of the Guild by organising events for Members in their area. Embroidery was first published in December 1932 with two issues per year.

In 1934 The Guild was incorporated under the Companies Act and recognised as a non-profit making organisation. The qualifying entrance exam was also dropped. 1935 saw a representative from the Guild sitting on the Examination Board of the City & Guilds of London Institute and a year later a Diploma for Judges (of embroidery) was awarded.



Embroidery became a School Certificate subject in 1938 with the syllabus drawn up by the Embroiderers' Guild, an annual schools competition was set up at both Junior and Senior level. In 1939 a five-day course on embroidery was held for teachers.

1960s In 1960 the Guild leased a house in Wimpole Street with funds raised by 16 Branches and 3,370 Members. In 1965 the Duchess of Gloucester became the Guild's Patron.

1970s In the late 1970s the Guild applied to the Lord Chamberlain for space at Hampton Court Palace. This was granted but renovations did not begin until Lord Inverforth became President of the Guild in 1979. At this time the collection was allegedly housed in rooms above a chip shop.



1980s The new offices at Hampton Court were officially opened in 1981 and a curator was employed to look after the collection. There were 79 Branches and 6,500 Members. Membership increased rapidly and in 1986 the Branches were organised into seven Regions.

In 1989 the Guild became a registered museum and now holds in trust a collection of over 11,000 embroideries from around the world.

1990s Stitch with the Embroiderers' Guild Magazine was founded in 1999 and is published six times a year. In 1996 Embroidery Magazine increased to six issues per year, having been four per year since 1950.



Today! The Embroiderers' Guild has over 25,000 Members and subscribers throughout the UK and abroad, 238 Branches and 95 Young Embroiderers Groups.

As the UK's leading crafts association and educational charity, the Guild offers a comprehensive programme of contemporary exhibitions, workshops, City & Guilds courses, lectures and tours (UK & overseas) and much more!

