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RSN
ROYAL SCHOOL
OF NEEDLEWORK

150 YEARS
Founded 1872



150 Forward Campaign

Help us to secure the future of hand embroidery
for an ever changing world



Introduction

“We want to build on what we have achieved so far, to set us on our way for the next 150 years.”

The RSN has reached its 150th anniversary. This is no mean achievement and our major events this year are all about celebrating where we have come from; the special pieces that we made for royal occasions from Queen Victoria’s funeral pall to work for every coronation of the 20th century, through to working on the wedding dress of the Duchess of Cambridge. The opportunities that we gave to women as embroiderers and designers, enabling them to earn their livelihood. How we worked with the armed forces during both World Wars to offer stitch as occupational therapy, to the lifeline provided to many of our supporters over the past two years by moving activities online, strengthening our community and for many offering the only ‘outside’ contact they had through lockdown and beyond. Throughout, the RSN has run training programmes, which have changed with the times but kept hand embroidery skills to the highest technical level at their heart, so we fulfil our original mission. **But that is only the story so far. Now we must look ahead. We want to build on what we have achieved so far, to set us on our way for the next 150 years.**

Realistically, we cannot know what the future will be, especially after the last two years, but in looking ahead we have to give ourselves the best opportunity.

Quite often in our history we have had to live very hand to mouth, which meant that we could not plan as well as we would like or take advantage of external opportunities and so we missed out on things. More recently we have been able to build funds to offer bursaries, but still, every time we want to start a new programme or project we have to raise new funds which may take several years before we can get started.

In this, our 150th year, we want to raise a pot of money that we can use as our own ‘investment fund’ to help us develop new initiatives more quickly. By being able to take steps more quickly we will enable more people to engage with the RSN to enrich their lives through hand embroidery whether as a career, an absorbing hobby, or for mental health and wellbeing.

We already have plans

This is why we are launching the **150 Forward Campaign**. It is a campaign with people at its heart: **raising funds for**

- bursaries and ultimately scholarships for students on the RSN’s core programmes: Future Tutors and the Degree,
- underpinning new developments such as the RSN Masters programme (MA),
- funding a major review of our Future Tutors Programme so that we can make it more accessible to a greater diversity of participants,
- establishing pilot projects for stitch to support mental health and wellbeing,
- developing an online course on the history of embroidery,
- establishing a sabbatical programme to enable a Tutor or Staff member to undertake a programme of study or research to develop their work or skills,
- supporting major projects such as the digitisation of the RSN Collection so that we can get started on this while we continue to raise funds, knowing that these are underpinned by reserve funds, if needed, before we reach our total,
- and offering seed funding for new projects which we do not even know are on the horizon yet, such as reviewing and developing our portfolio of courses and activities to make sure we remain relevant.

While we will also be asking our trust and foundation donors to support specific projects **we need your help to build our 150 Forward Fund** so we can act quickly, initiating and completing projects more speedily, enabling many more people to benefit from them, We’re asking you, our supporters to come forward and help us raise the **first £150,000**.

“The 150 Forward Campaign is a campaign with people at its heart.”





“By supporting the 150 Forward Campaign you can help us to make our ambitions a reality.”

Why is it needed now? Why does it matter?

This fund is not just for or about an anniversary, it is a commitment to the future.

The RSN has always had ambition. By supporting the 150 Forward Campaign you can help us to make our ambitions a reality

so that more people can engage in stitch and realise its value, potential and benefit.

On the next few pages we have given you more details of some of the projects we want to pursue and show you the different ways in which you can support.

WHY I GIVE:

“What the RSN does with so little is remarkable. I give to show my support and ensure it will be there for the future.”

Margaret, Lancashire



Bursaries and Scholarships

Bursaries play a key role in supporting Future Tutors and Degree students. Practically-based courses require more expenditure than a standard text-book course. Plus, as students develop their skills and knowledge, they aspire to work with better-quality materials so they will have experience of working with these when they graduate.

The RSN raises money every year for bursaries, as well as using money from legacy gifts that we have invested, to give an annual income.

This is of enormous benefit to students.

“The bursary gave me the opportunity to purchase my own laptop. I do not have to wait any more for a device to become available. It is an invaluable resource, for which I will be forever grateful.”

EB Degree Student

“I believe the bursary scheme to be a wonderful opportunity for students as it helps everyone in a fair way. Some people may have already had the financial backing to buy supplies and things they needed, I did not. So having the bursary really made me feel like an equal amongst my peers and allowed me to gain equipment I wouldn't have been able to have without it.”

HP Degree Student

However, most awards for Degree students average around £1,000 and for Future Tutors, £2-3,000. We cannot afford more and we certainly cannot offer full scholarships.

We urgently need to grow our endowment fund to be able to offer scholarships. We are under no illusion that this will need major investment and this will be one of the main areas to which we direct legacy income, enabling us to make a huge difference to participants. When we can offer scholarships it will mean we can really broaden participation especially on the Future Tutors Programme.

“We urgently need to grow our endowment fund to be able to offer scholarships.”

Enabling new developments such as the RSN Masters programme (MA)

The RSN first started talking about an MA almost immediately after the Degree was successfully launched in 2009. However, a number of constraints got in the way, including lack of funding. Now the demand from potential students for an RSN Masters programme, both by practice and by research, has grown substantially from RSN Degree Graduates, RSN Tutors and external candidates. While there are other MA hand embroidery programmes, there is not one endorsed by the RSN.

As part of fulfilling our mission we must put an MA programme in place. To do that we need to fund staff time to research and develop the course.

We are proposing two routes to the MA

By Practice – Tutors and degree graduates may choose to take the practice route and develop new embroidery work out of their RSN experience.

By Research – for those who choose the research route, there is a wealth of material in the RSN Archive to be explored as well as topics the students may bring from outside.

With the recent embracing of online and live teaching, we believe now is the time to take the MA forward, making best use of our physical space across the year and meeting students' needs, so combining on site teaching, between the undergraduate schedule, with online learning.

To bring this to fruition we need additional funding to cover the staff preparation and planning time.



“With the recent embracing of online and live teaching we believe now is the time to take the MA forward...”

Funding a major review of our Future Tutors Programme so we can make it accessible to a greater diversity of participants

The RSN's flagship programme is the Future Tutors Programme; training more teachers is fundamental to the RSN achieving its mission and outreach. This is currently a full time course over three years so there is no opportunity for people to earn while taking the course, severely limiting the range of people who apply.

Frequently we are asked about offering the course part time; as the availability of scholarships is some way off, we need to plan how we can effectively offer the course part time and attract a much broader range of people who in turn might then help us extend our reach to a wider community.

We believe it would benefit the whole RSN community to bring in much more diversity to really show that stitch is open and can be enjoyed by all. This development is long overdue but again it will take investment and time to research and plan to take an intense three-year full time commitment and make it work as a part time course.

150 Forward funding could bring this to fruition more quickly so our first part time graduates could achieve their goal this decade.

Our current course leader is keen to get this going but we need to cover the cost of developing this critical project for the future.

“Training more teachers is fundamental to the RSN achieving its mission and outreach.”





Establishing pilot projects for mental health and wellbeing

We have all seen how, during the pandemic, people felt their mental health and wellbeing deteriorated and they needed displacement activities. One of the most positive was stitch which many people took up for the first time as a constructive antidote to the enforced lockdown. The RSN knows from years of past experience how therapeutic, even meditative, it can be to stitch.

We now want to set up a pilot project to explore how stitch can help a range of people such as those with mental health problems, disabilities, home care duties and mobility issues. We would work with community groups to provide both face to face and online sessions around the country.

As a new initiative we have to raise the funds for it. We have already received a seed-corn donation and are seeking others but we would like to start the pilot this anniversary year so we can trial it and then look to build a bigger programme going forward.

This could have enormous positive benefits for people who feel isolated for whatever reason, introduce them to new friends and give them a skill for life which they can continue to utilise at stressful times. We recognise this is an issue which is not going to go away, and may well become more pronounced so the more the RSN can set up and offer help and support to community groups, the better.

Completing major new projects such as digitisation of the RSN Collection

The RSN has been raising funds for the digitisation of the RSN Collection for a number of years. Over that time costs have gone up so it remains just out of reach. This is heart breaking because it means students and others are missing out on seeing the incredible resources we have in our Collection. It is so sad when the lack of funds so directly affects students' work. During the lockdown, Degree Students were given pieces from the handling collection to explore, research and write about. One had fragments from an Indian address case but these could only provide a vague understanding of what the whole thing might look like and the student was not able to find other examples online. She could not draw appropriate conclusions from her findings and when the Chief Executive read her essay she was devastated as we have multiple examples of Indian address cases in the RSN Collection but at the time the student could not access these. Had they been online the student could have been directed to them and her writing and understanding would have been much enhanced.

While we hope there are no more lockdowns, this really showed the urgency and importance of getting the RSN Collection online for all to appreciate. One of the first year Degree student tasks is to prepare a chronology of embroidery referencing external sources. They seek out the V&A, the MET or the Textile Research Centre in Leiden, they ought to be able to reference the Collection at their home institution.

Likewise with the RSN Archive, our 150th Anniversary has caused more people to ask did my relative train or work at the RSN? We don't have the personnel to do the research for them but if the registers were online, they could find the answer for themselves.

Going forward, having the RSN Collection online will fully bring us into the 21st century and show the world what we actually have including some very rare items. It really would unlock the cupboard door.

We nearly have enough funding but support via the 150 Forward Campaign would enable us to get started now and be able to offer this to current students.



“Going forward, having the Collection online will fully bring us into the 21st century and show the world what we actually have including some very rare items.”



Schools programme

Since 2018, the RSN has offered a schools programme called Stitch a Selfie which was funded by the Worshipful Company of Girdlers. The RSN 150 exhibition also includes a family and school programme funded by the Worshipful Company of Broderers.

Both these programmes have been big successes and one of the strengths is the variety of ways they are being used – as part of a textiles course; as part of PSHE; as part of an after school club; by those for whom academic work is challenging and those who are ‘gifted and talented’ for whom it is a respite from the constant pressure of achievement. The programme was aimed at early secondary pupils but has been used with all ages.

However, we’ve only reached a small number of schools. We would like to build resources so we can reach out to more schools whom we are sure would appreciate it for their pupils.

This programme contributes to student mental health and wellbeing and is about them building resilience and coping mechanisms as much as it is about learning a new skill. We have all heard about the impact of the pandemic on school-age children and this is the kind of project which can really help them to find their own strength and calm.

Perhaps the best testimonial we’ve had was from the teacher who said that her colleagues were very jealous of her quiet

classroom while all students (boys and girls) were focused on their stitching.

Additional funds can help us to provide more schools with the basic kits containing all the materials for one class of students to explore stitching their self-portrait or a positive mantra that they can keep with them.

The power of stitch can be immense as this Mum reported from the Family Day at the Fashion and Textile Museum.

“I visited the 150 years exhibition and family workshop at the Museum of Fashion and Textiles yesterday with my Mum and two children (a girl 10) and (a boy 7) and just wanted to say how lovely it was. We wanted to say thank you to the Royal School of needlework team as everyone we worked with were so welcoming and encouraging. The children both came away very inspired. They had an amazing time. It was lovely to sit & work on pieces together and I was amazed how long they both sat engaged in the activity. [my daughter] even continued after she had finished and worked on the communal piece and is ready to continue doing more at home! They are both very proud of their work.”

And we’ve already welcomed our first degree student who began their stitching on the selfie project.

Develop an online course on the History of Embroidery

There are many courses on the history of art but almost nothing on the history of embroidery and yet it has an equally long-lived and international background.

This programme could link into contextual studies on the degree and for the first time offer a more comprehensive programme to Future Tutors. More widely it would offer people at home the opportunity to learn more about embroidery’s breadth from a historical, geographical and technical perspective.

With funding, we can get started on commissioning sessions from our own tutors as well as sourcing external experts to build into a comprehensive programme exploring the history and variety of embroidery across the world. In return, some of this would feed into the RSN Stitch Bank as we discover new-to-us stitches and it would also link into the Digitisation of the Collection as we explore all aspects of the works in the Collection; fashion, household objects, textile art, samplers and more.

The History of Embroidery Course would be a chargeable offering but we need seed funding to plan it out, prepare an appropriate section of the website and set down the basic parameters for the course.



“There are many courses on the history of art, but almost nothing on the history of embroidery.”

Sabbatical programme for Tutors and Staff



At any major academic institution it is possible for academics and staff to apply for a sabbatical for a period of focused research.

Usually a sabbatical would be for one to three months depending on a number of factors, including length in post. The person taking the sabbatical would be expected to present a paper on their research to colleagues on their return and find ways to use it in their wider work. The research could also be by practice.

This would be a whole new opportunity for staff and tutor development at the RSN, something we have not been able to offer before. We would probably only be able to offer one at a time but we believe such an opportunity would be beneficial to both the individual in their personal development and also, through the sharing, to the RSN, giving us a greater opportunity to learn from others and to encourage staff/tutor retention.

Part of the 150 Forward fund would enable us to pay the tutor while on the sabbatical and for the RSN to hire temporary personnel for a staff post.

Image Angela Bishop

Providing seed funding for new projects not even on the horizon yet

If we have learned one thing from the past two years, it is to expect the unexpected. Sometimes opportunities arise but we just don't have the money to do them at the time – and sometimes that means we completely miss out.

With some seed corn funding 'for a rainy day', this might give us the opportunity to test out or participate in things we would otherwise have had to say 'no' to. At this point, it is impossible to say what they will be, but having an 'opportunity fund' will be a great liberator, an enabler, allowing us to move forward much more speedily than our usual pace.

We need it now, so it is there to call on when required.

How will it help transform the RSN?

Some opportunities need an urgent response and might transform us in ways we cannot imagine today. All such use of funds will be considered and approved by the Council of Trustees so that we use the money wisely, with the aim of achieving a significant return on the investment or reach new, different communities.



WHY I GIVE:

"I have always marvelled at the fine, intricate and colourful artwork made with great skill by embroiderers – and believe that helping to ensure continuance of fine skills and traditions through supporting the RSN is consistent with this."

Anthony, Surrey





How you can help

Be part of the RSN's future by making a donation today

Supporting the **RSN 150 Forward Campaign** will help us to drive all these areas forward. For some, we will also continue to look for external funding, but it helps if we can tell trusts that we already have donations from our individual Friends and Supporters.

As a first tranche, we are looking to raise £150,000 towards this campaign but our long term aim is to secure significant legacy funds to sustain future growth and reach more people.



“The RSN receives nothing directly from the government but one of the ways that you can make your donation worth more to us is by signing to say we can claim the Gift Aid.”

One-off gifts

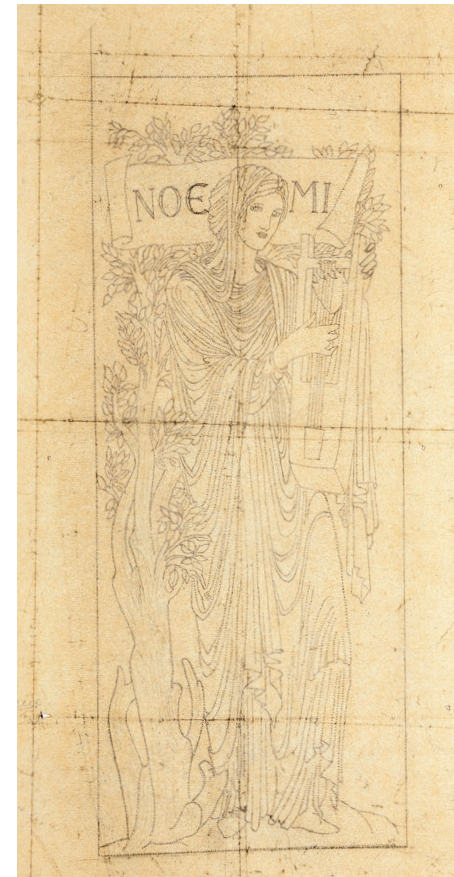
Gifts of all sizes are appreciated but if you can give £150 or more you will receive a limited edition print of a pencil design in the RSN Archive by Walter Crane. Walter's wife did not like him having young women in his studio so many of his models were men, even for female images, but this drawing is much more feminine and charming as the young lady considers what she is going to draw. The work in pencil is on one of the original 1870s design cards and signed W Crane.

If you are able to help at a higher level, for every gift of £1500 or more in cash or in a gift of shares, you will receive a limited edition art print of a pencil drawing by Edward Burne Jones in the RSN Archive.

To give a one-off gift just go to 150 Forward Campaign page royal-needlework.org.uk/150forward/donate where you can make your donation.

Or you can send a cheque made payable to the Royal School of Needlework.

If you would like to give at a higher level and wish to discuss your gift and how it might be used, please contact the Chief Executive on **0203 166 6932**.



Noemi is a typical figure by Burne Jones, all graceful long limbs and here playing a musical instrument. The original was pricked and pounced.

“Be part of the RSN's future by making a donation today.”



WHY I GIVE:

“What I love about supporting the RSN is the sense of discovery: stitches, techniques, threads and friendships forged in classes led by world-class tutors. I hope my contributions help ensure others in the future may discover these delights too!”

Janet, London

Gift Aid

The RSN receives nothing directly from government but one of the ways that you can make your donation worth more to us is by signing to say we can claim the Gift Aid on your gift. Or, if you do not pay tax yourself but a partner does, asking them to make the gift on your behalf. In this way every donation is worth 20 per cent more to the RSN which can make a big difference. If you make your donation online it will automatically ask you if you can give Gift Aid. If you send a cheque please include a note to say you wish us to collect the Gift Aid.

Gifts from American Tax Payers

If you are a US tax payer you can make a donation through our linked system which enables you to receive a US tax receipt for your gift so making it mutually beneficial.

chapel-yorkusfoundation.org/donate-to-royal-school-of-needlework

(Alas we cannot do this for other countries as the fees are prohibitive.)

Regular gifts

We recognise that you might like to give a larger amount but are constrained by monthly income. For this we can offer a regular gift scheme. You tell us how much you wish to give per month until you ask us to stop or at the end of a time you specify. Either way, you are in control and know how much will be going out each month. To do this go to royal-needlework.org.uk/15oforward/donate and click on ‘regular gifts’. We can also claim Gift Aid on your regular donations.

Your message for the future

We know how much supporters like to think about the people who will benefit from their gifts. We thought it would be fantastic to have a digital book where you can write your own message to the students of the future so that it is something that can still be there in 50, 100 or even another 150 years. As well as the message the book will be able to highlight the country you are from. You will be sent details on how to do this when you donate, or you can add your message to your donation in writing or at the end of the donation form and we will add it to the book with your name.

Finally can you put us in touch with any charitable trusts or other organisations you know that you think might be able to help with any of our projects?

The bigger picture

With all of these ambitions the total will cost much more than £150,000, but we need to make a start. That is why we are asking you to help us today. There is so much to do but we can only do this with your help. Every pound will go to these major initiatives of the 150 Forward Campaign.

Please give what you can today and for the longer term please see the ways that you can give to us through a gift in your will. A will gives you an opportunity to reflect on people and organisations that have been most important to you and is an opportunity potentially to give a much larger gift than would ever be possible through your lifetime.

Below you can read about some of the wonderful people who have helped the RSN through this means over the years. All your gifts will go to help people of the future to have the careers they dream of and ensure they can still learn technical hand embroidery.



“All your gifts will go to help people of the future to have careers they dream of...”

Join some amazing people: Remember the RSN in your will

The first known legacy gift to the RSN came from Mrs Pfeiffer in the 19th century as she wanted to promote women’s employment. She left us over £4000 in the 1890s. Her gift made a great start to Princess Helena’s campaign for the 1903 building. Since then gifts in wills have continued to help in many ways.

As a supporter of the RSN, leaving a gift in your will is a special opportunity to support the next generation of embroiderers. A gift in your will

could transform the life of a potential Future Tutor or Degree student, support our Schools programme or a mental health and wellbeing project. Some of these needs are large and require substantial gifts to make them happen but can be transformative for the future, enabling us to introduce more people to the benefit of embroidery. The larger amounts that can be given through a legacy can contribute to our endowment fund. The annual earned income is spent directly to support students.



Victoria Adams



Jean Panter



Wendy Hogg



Mrs Love

Victoria Adams, a Life Friend, left us one third of her estate. This has been invested and contributes to bursaries for the Degree and Future Tutors and course costs for the Future Tutors. This gift has already helped many students over the last 14 years.

Jean Panter left the RSN the proceeds of half her estate and all her stitching materials, collection of pieces and furniture to the RSN. Jean had taken RSN classes and later taught evening school. Her gift was incredibly timely and gave the RSN the support it needed to launch the Degree programme. Jean had made her will many years before the Degree was even mentioned so it would not have been possible to specify it in her will. By not stating how the money should be used, it gave us the greatest opportunity for her gift to be used for maximum benefit.

Wendy Hogg joined the RSN in 1969 on a one month trial. She stayed for more than 40 years. When she died she left a proportion of her estate to the RSN. This money has been used for supporting the Future Tutors Programme, bursaries and awards for mounting which was an area that she taught for many years.

Mrs Love left a small pecuniary gift to the RSN of £2,000. When her family was asked about it they said she was a surgeon who had had to attend many NHS meetings. When the meeting got too boring or tedious, she would get out her stitching for calming.

Within our daily lives the level at which we can give to a charity may be very constrained. At our death, however, there is often an opportunity to give a significant sum, even if only a small percentage of the estate. Family

comes first, of course, but giving a gift in a will might even off-set taxes. Legacies can make a transformative difference to what the RSN can do and the people the RSN can work with.

One reason UK people might choose to give to a charity is to avoid tax liability. Estates not given to a spouse are liable to tax at 40% for estates over £325,000. However, some of this can be offset if you make a charitable donation because this amount is deducted from the taxable amount and is not subject to tax. Please always speak to an adviser (lawyer, accountant) when preparing or changing your will. They will be able to give you more information on dividing an estate and offsetting tax.

“Legacies can make a transformative difference to what the RSN can do.”



Ways to help

Residuary gift

A residuary gift is a proportion or percentage of your estate after your pecuniary or specific gifts have been made. You can leave the whole of your residue to the RSN, or a percentage of it. Many people choose to give a residuary gift because it maintains its value with inflation

As we move forward with different projects and it may be many years between making a will and it coming to fruition it is most helpful if your gift is left to the RSN for most urgent need, or you can say you wish to put it to work for students or education and we can allocate it accordingly to the main needs of the day.

Pecuniary gift

This is a specified gift from your estate, usually an amount of money.

Specific donations

The RSN will generally accept sewing/stitching items, threads, fabrics in good condition, books, excluding cross stitch. However, sometimes the condition of items means we cannot sell them and they have to be thrown away.

If you are planning to leave anything specific, especially worked pieces, it is helpful to get in touch to see if we can accept them. All such items would only be accepted on the basis that they are suitable for our Collection or that we can sell or dispose of any items we can not use.

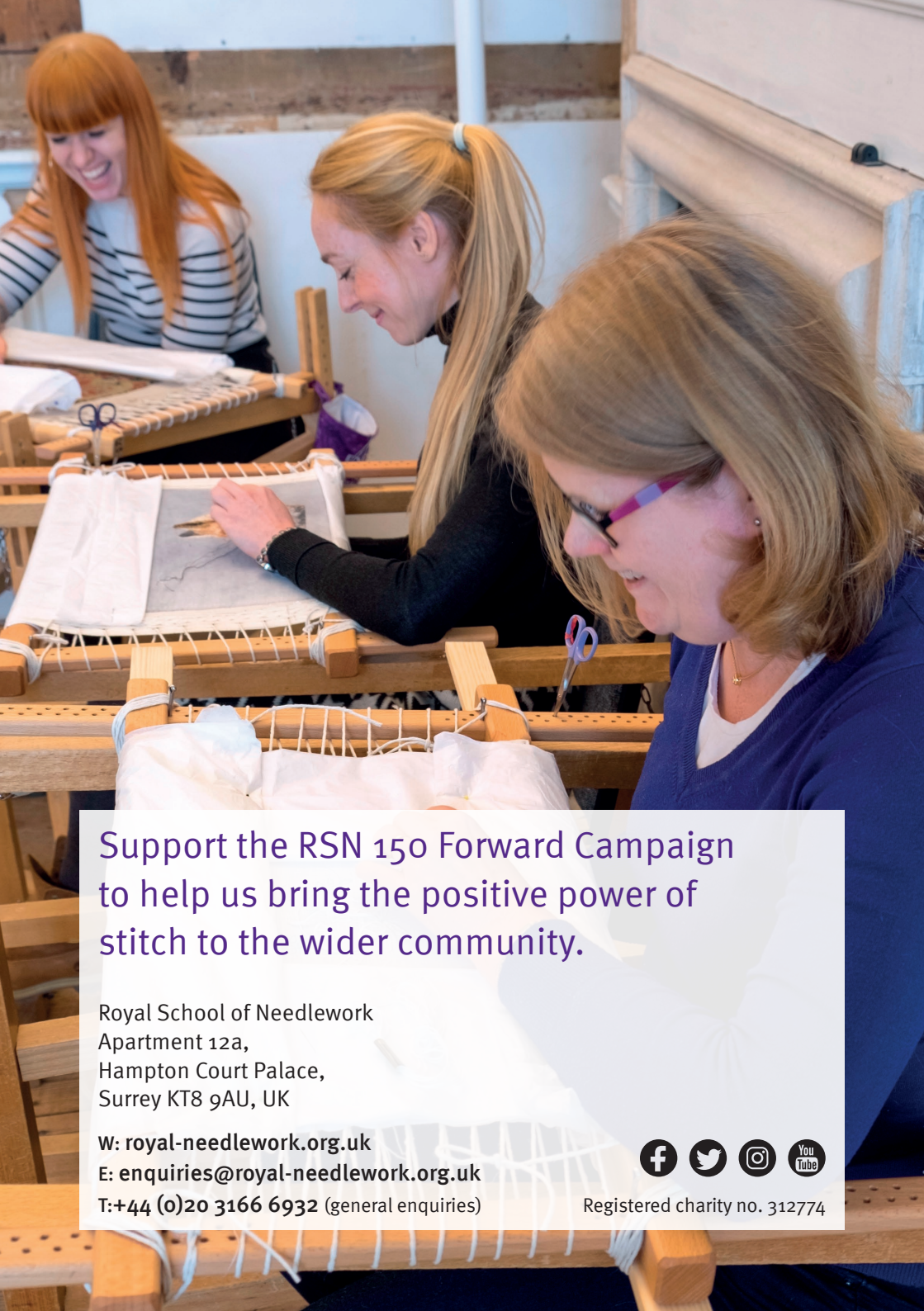
Our Collection is eclectic but, apart from work actually done by students at the RSN, for us to keep other pieces they have to show uniqueness or be something we don't already have in the Collection. We do not have the space for everything people would like to give.



WHY I GIVE:

“The excellent tutors, the opportunities to learn and see some wonderful treasures and the commitment of the of the RSN to preserve the art of embroidery.”

Anne, Surrey



Support the RSN 150 Forward Campaign
to help us bring the positive power of
stitch to the wider community.

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