



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating the Royal School of Needlework's *Royal Connections* in Diamond Jubilee year 2012

Special exhibition tours at the Royal School of Needlework embroidery Studio, Hampton Court Palace

The Royal School of Needlework's **Royal Connections** go back to its earliest days in 1872 – and come right up to date with the work for Sarah Burton on The Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress. This exhibition reflects the RSN's **Royal Connections** through photographs, correspondence, work donated to the Royal School of Needlework (RSN), pieces by Royal stitchers, designs and commissions for Royal occasions as well as royal pieces in the RSN Collection which celebrate special royal occasions

Of particular note from work by the RSN is the sampler for Her Majesty The Queen's Coronation train in 1953, showing the 18 varieties of gold thread used in the work. From the 1937 Coronation there will be samples of the fabrics used to create some of the ceremonial furnishings, along with a recently donated document listing items produced by the RSN for the event. Also on show from Coronations will be one of the RSN stitchers' own souvenir fragments from the 1902 Coronation of King Edward and Queen Alexandra recently donated back to the RSN.

Also from the period of King Edward VII, the RSN will be showing an embellished address and its equally embellished envelope which was presented to Edward VII by the Maharaja of Balrampur on his coronation in 1902, showing wonderful Indian goldwork.

Correspondence ranges from the official to the personal – Princess Helena's telegram to the RSN thanking them for the funeral pall for Queen Victoria in 1901, and photographs document the extensive engagement of members of the Royal Family with the RSN over 14 decades.

From the RSN's own work there will be a series of samplers for Royal events which were sold as souvenirs to keen stitchers across the world. In the RSN Collection is the painted original for the sampler for Edward VIII, post abdication, along with its painted canvas part-worked by two generations of an American family and recently returned to the RSN.

-- Ends --

Notes to Editors:

- The exhibition is open to the public on **set tour days** in 2012: **16 & 17 March, 16 & 26 May and 6 & 7 July** and pre-booking is required. Group tours and individual bookings welcome. Contact Belinda Egginton on +44(0)20 3166 6941 to book your place. Or visit www.royal-needlework.org.uk/visitingus
- The exhibition takes place in the RSN's working embroidery Studio so we are unable to display any large pieces.
- The RSN will continue its tradition of creating Samplers to commemorate Royal events; a Diamond Jubilee Sampler will be on sale early in 2012
- The RSN also celebrates its 140th Anniversary in 2012. Started by Lady Victoria Welby in 1872, Queen Victoria's third daughter Princess Helena was its President and Queen Victoria its first Patron, the RSN was initially established to provide unmarried women with training and employment in hand embroidery, an everyday art-form in the Victorian era. The RSN soon became the 'pinnacle' of English embroidery and the industry leader in the art of hand embroidery. Thriving and forward looking 140 years later, the RSN continues to keep the traditional craft skills of English hand embroidery alive through an extensive education programme and hand embroidery commissions produced in its commercial Studio by highly skilled staff.

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