



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



PRESS RELEASE

29 April 2011

The Royal School of Needlework's hand embroidery expertise helps Sarah Burton create Miss Catherine Middleton's wedding dress

The skilled embroiderers of England's Royal School of Needlework (RSN) contributed their technical embroidery expertise to create the bespoke lace on the wedding dress, veil and shoes and enable Sarah Burton to achieve her artistic vision for the bride

The lace design and process was influenced by traditional Carrickmacross lace which originated in Ireland in the 1820s. Carrickmacross lace uses an embroidery technique called appliqué – the lace is worked by applying organdie fabric to a delicate net background and edging each motif with fine cord-like thread. Sarah Burton sourced a series of lace motifs to create a unique design, applied by the RSN and arranged to fit each part of the dress perfectly following her creative vision. Each lace motif (some as small as a 5 pence piece) was applied with minute stitches every two to three millimetres.

One of the hallmarks of the RSN is that our embroiderers can work collectively on a project yet it will look like the work of one person. The team for this project comprised RSN Studio staff, former staff, tutors, graduates and current students from the RSN's Certificate, Diploma and Foundation Degree programmes. The RSN welcomes students from all over the world and the team for this project included British, Japanese, American, Chinese, Swiss, Dutch, Thai, German and Slovakian students.

Famous for its high standard of technical hand embroidery, since its founding almost 140 years ago, the RSN's mission has always been to keep the traditional art of hand embroidery alive. Essential to the RSN's work is its attention to detail. Hands were washed every 30 minutes to keep the lace and threads pristine; needles were renewed every 3 hours and only short lengths of thread were used, each no longer than 30 cm. Also, to maintain an even appearance, no securing knots were used and it was important that the back of the work looked as neat as the front, another RSN hallmark.

The RSN is proud of maintaining the core skills of hand embroidery and the fact that all embroidery commissions are undertaken at its Hampton Court Palace-based Studio in the UK.

The RSN's Chief Executive, Dr Susan Kay-Williams says

'The Royal School of Needlework was absolutely delighted to be called upon to work on this unique and eagerly-awaited commission. Our involvement with this very special event continues our long tradition of work for royal occasions. The RSN has a bank of highly-skilled embroiderers to call upon for a large commission such as this and their combined experience, knowledge and skills have contributed enormously to this project. I am immensely proud of the way the whole RSN team worked together to achieve Sarah Burton's design for such an exquisite wedding dress.'

- ENDS-

Notes for Editors

- The RSN was founded in 1872 and will celebrate its 140th year in 2012
- The RSN was granted Royal patronage in 1875. Its current Patron is Her Majesty The Queen
- The RSN is a charity. It receives no government support and has to generate all its own funds from student fees, donations and Studio commissions
- The RSN is the only embroidery school in the world which teaches so many types of hand embroidery to the highest standards
- The RSN has created many pieces for past Royal events including The Queen's coronation train in 1953 and the Buckingham Palace balcony hanging for The Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002.
- www.royal-needlework.org.uk

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