



Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
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Top 20 Reasons to do Hand Embroidery



1. "My first experience of hand embroidery was when we were taught to knit in primary school. My pot holder had such a big hole in it, the teacher gave me a large felt bunny to applique over the top and I discovered that embroidery is not only pretty, but also practical. We then went on to make an afternoon tea apron (which I still have!) and, whereas I was bottom of the class for knitting, I came top for stitching. I was hooked. I embroider by hand now because I find it very relaxing. When I'm sewing I can't think of anything but where the next stitch should go, how it should lie and what length it should be. It's totally absorbing. It's also quite frustrating as it never comes out quite as I expect, but that gives me a reason to keep on trying!" Sue Miller, Berkshire, UK

2. "When I sit down to embroider I feel complete." says Fran Harvey, Guernsey, Channel Islands

3. "It's my meditation. It creates heirlooms. It is an outlet for creativity" Lauren Eaton Prescott, New Mexico, USA.



Jacobean Crewelwork, Tree of Life by Emma Frith, Rugby

4. "Hand embroidery, the perfect meditation - beats colouring in someone else's designs any day!" Sarah Brocklehurst, Kent, UK

5. "To relax; to be creative, just for fun, patching knees on grand-daughters tights. A lovely flower turns rags into designer. Same can be done with a stained jumper." Rosemary Kingston, Dublin, Ireland

6. "Why do I embroider? I was somehow blessed with an ability to stitch. My Grandmother embroidered. I was very young and watched. I set out her skeins. I wanted to learn. The photo is a pin cushion I made at age 12. I kept it all these years, I'm 64 now. As a working woman, my stitching slowed, perhaps to be expected, I don't know. When I found RSN on Facebook, my heart burst; the different types of work, the quality, the variety. It was almost overwhelming. I was returned to a forgotten passion." Thilde Peterson, California, USA

7. "I love that I am participating in an activity that, particularly, women have done for centuries. I feel like I am carrying on a legacy, especially when I stitch from an heirloom chart. And I feel like I will leave something behind for my heirs to cherish. I am not an artist. I love beauty, and have sampled many crafts, but I cannot always put my vision to reality. With embroidery, my time and patience are rewarded with a beautiful work of art that satisfies my soul. Stitching is how I realize. The slow steady rhythm allows me to leave my anxieties behind soothe my jangled nerves. I love the community of stitchers that I am a part of. Our group meets regularly. We chose the punning name of Sisters in Stitches because it so exemplifies all we mean to each other. We are very different ages, at different places in life; from different parts of the world, and pretty much avoid political discussion. But we are sisters in this love. We share and care for each other and laugh, laugh, laugh. There is endless variety. There is always another style of technique to learn." Thea Stallings, Carolina, USA

8. "I embroider because I enjoy taking the ordinary--a plain piece of fabric--and making it extraordinary with a kaleidoscope of stitches. I embroider because embroidery is a form of decorative yoga--part creativity, part relaxation and part contemplation. I embroider because embroidery reminds me of my mother who taught me how to embroider many years ago. These are the main reasons why I pick up a needle every day." Sue Ann Tippitt, Townsend, USA

9. "It is a heritage passed through many generations of women in my family. Embroidery is a peaceful and productive pastime. I was introduced to the craft by my mother, aunts, grandmothers and great-grandmother, all of whom I was privileged to share needle time with until I was a mother myself, and many of whom are my needle pals to this day. Now, I have added daughters-in-law and granddaughters to the sisterhood! What joy! There is nothing quite like the sense of satisfaction one gleans from watching a beautiful piece of work come to life. I savour a deep sense of connection with history as I sit quietly working with my needle, especially on cold evenings by the fire. From cave dwelling women who worked with bone and sinew on hides to fashion warm garments for their families to queens who occupied themselves and their ladies with tapestries to my plains pioneer ancestors who frugally embellished their clothing and furnishings with needle and floss, I am part of a long, long line of stitchers. I find that a comfortable thought!" Paula Leftwich, Florida, USA



Silk Shading & Goldwork by Paola Bianchi, Hampton Court Palace

10. "I was taught that it is important, especially girls to be able to sew & mend clothes etc. My mother taught me how to mend and sew buttons and buttonholes at early age. At age eight it was compulsory to work with freestyle embroidery at school, this was a subject; I had to do my own drawing and chose my own colouring embroidery cotton. I embroidered food covers, tablecloths etc. which were sold at the school's summer fair to raise money to buy supplies for replenishing the embroidery stocks. From my primary school days to this day I am always interested in freestyle embroideries and I am still



Goldwork by Elizabeth Crum, America

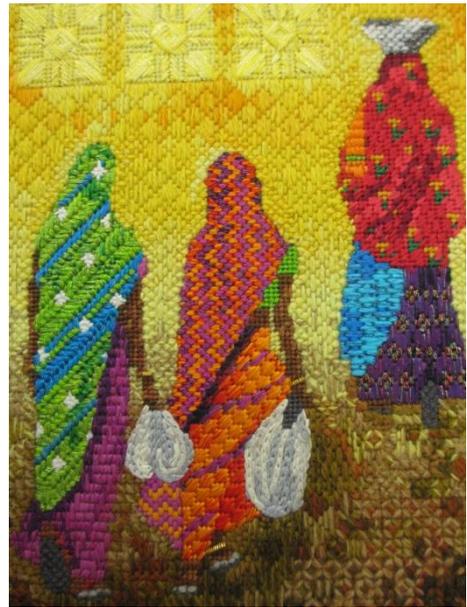
doing them. Before I retired from working full time I was always buying embroideries or have them given to me as gifts, now, as one of my hobbies I personally feel this activity keep my mind and brain active. I never find the time to sit idling. It gives me great satisfaction to admire my finish work hanging on the wall." Ophelia Latchman, London, UK

11. "To maintain a family tradition. My mother taught my sisters and me how to embroider. To master stitches. Crewel is my favourite type of embroidery. It maintains my sanity on New York City's public transport. A small needlepoint project is therapeutic. Making gifts for family and friends, particularly for milestones like weddings and births. Exercising my hands and wrists but most of all, to connect in some way with untold others who have sewn the same stitches for millennia. I've seen beautiful pieces of medieval silk and wool embroidery at the Victoria and Albert Museum, then recognized the very same stitches in a picture made by someone in Latin America or Asia and brought to the United States by a Maryknoll missionary. We embroiderers are like branches on one of those Jacobean trees I like to stitch." Maureen McKew, New York, USA

12. "Apart from the amazingly positive feeling of pride in producing something beautiful, learning something new in older age is known to reduce the risk of developing dementia!" Anne McDonald, Reading, UK

13. "It distracts the stitcher from the woes of daily life. There would be fewer heart attacks and lower blood pressure. There is an end product, visually pleasing. Lifelong friendships result from association with fellow stitchers. There is always something NEW to try so there is no such thing as an embroidery "expert". Our lives get stitched into the pieces...a "happy" time, a "sad" time...and are recalled in years to come." Marion Scoular, Georgia, USA

14. "Although I primarily use embroidery kits, my reasons for doing hand embroidery have always been for the creative outlet it allows and the great sense of accomplishment that I get when I've completed a project. I've taken the liberty of attaching pictures of two projects that I completed this year. (I still have a second pillowcase to complete. It's on my ever growing to-do list. I collect embroidery kits from places where we have vacationed.)" Marianne Hadzima, Riverside, RI USA



Canvaswork by Angela Bishop, Rugby

15. "I, like others, do handwork for the beauty of the finished project. Diversion from the sewing machine, the portability of the project and all the unique stitches definitely play a part in my hand embroidery love. But showing off my finished project to a "non-hand embroider" is the best part. The reaction is priceless. They are in awe of the many varied stitches and threads used. And of course, they always ask "How long did that take?" I reply, "Oh, I never keep track, I just sit down with my needle and thread and get lost in my stitches"." Jean Manna, Indiana, USA



Blackwork by Paris Morthorpe, America

16. "One of the reasons I embroider is to remember my grandmother and the time she spent with me when I was young, showing me how to draw patterns with coloured thread on pillowcases, on table runners and whatever else we had. I particularly remember the afternoon she took a basket of knotted-up embroidery threads from a tearful little girl and pulled them all gently apart so I could keep going. That early example of patience has helped me continue with other projects that seemed doomed, but could be pulled apart and figured out. And I love her for that legacy and for many other memories." Dorothy Taylor, Toronto, Canada

17. "I do handwork because every little bit is another step toward making something beautiful, exquisite. There is an obvious difference between handwork and works created by a machine. What we do by hand has more precision. We put our whole being into what we create and when our creation is completed, we have the satisfaction of sitting back and admiring a work of beauty that we have accomplished by hand. That deep sense of pride and joy does not come from a machine. It can only come from relishing each new choice of fibres and threads and technique, then taking it all and putting together a work of beauty. I love each moment my needle enters the fabric and comes up with a stitch that evokes a smile that goes clear through my body! Pure joy!" Donna Talipsky, Georgia, USA

18. "It is more satisfying to look at the work afterwards and think "I did that with my own hand, using my skills and experience than to have switched on a machine" Charmaine Bourton, Croydon, UK

19. "Hand embroidery allows me to slow down. It is great stress relief. It feeds my creativity! I have tried a lot of activities (scrapbooking, photography, writing, and painting) but this is the one that fits me best. It provides me with companionship as I go to guild meetings and chat with women who share my



Canvas Shading by Helen Jones, Hampton Court Palace
Symons, Sunshine Coast, Australia

interests I can give special gifts to loved ones. It keeps me learning! Whether it is a new technique or new materials or just a new way of looking at something I've done before, I'm always learning and striving to be better. And last but not least, it brings me JOY! Have a wonderful day!" Beth Barter Gianturco, New York, USA

20. "I embroider because it helps me clear my mind of clutter making me mindful, and has helped me overcome illness, and because it's something that you can put down and take up again as life demands. It's timeless." Andrea